

Amphibians of Albania

Amphibians are species that use both aquatic and terrestrial environments. Embryonic development takes place in water and the larvae breathe with branches.

After metamorphosis, they adapt to terrestrial conditions and begin to breathe with lungs.

The shapes and species of amphibians are diverse. Due to its geographical position and relief, Albania is quite rich in amphibians which are found mainly along the coastline, rivers, lakes, marshes, and ponds. But also in different forests or humid areas.



Salamandra © PPNEA

colors and venom glands are used for self-defense



venom glands located on the underside of her body and secrete neurotoxins

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Amphibians are very important, as they are an indicator of a clean environment.

Fire salamander

Salamandra salamandra, because of its beauty, this salamander has been named in Albanian the 'Beauty of the Earth' (E bukura e dheut). The body is black with yellow or orange spots. Females are slightly larger than males. It prefers habitats, such as moist forests, ponds, or rivers, to protect itself and stay moist. It feeds mainly on insects, molluscs, etc. Lives up to 14 years. It is one of the most charismatic and beloved amphibian species for Albanians, where human features and legends have been attached to it because of its beauty. Unfortunately, this species is threatened by habitat fragmentation and pollution.

Did you know the fire salamander is mostly active at night? Can you find the reason why?

In addition to the salamander, there are many other types of amphibians with very unique characteristics in our country.

Alpine newt

Ichthyosaura alpestris lives in mountain lakes but can also be found in lowlands, and in habitats such as streams or rivers. They also prefer forests. The alpine newt has a blue-black color and an orange underside. Their food includes insects, mollusks, worms, etc. It is endangered mainly by chemical pollution of waters and the destruction of habitats.

Albanian water frog

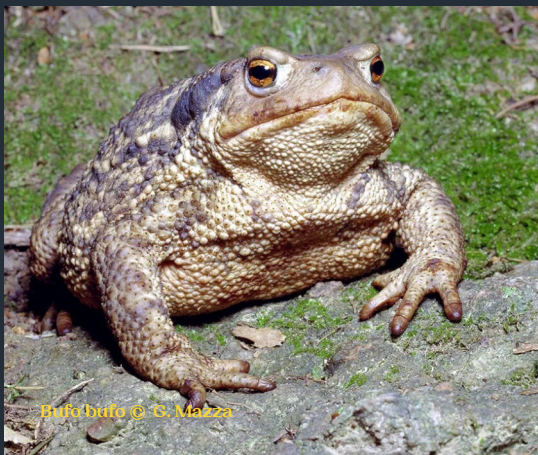
Pelophylax shqipericus is an endemic species of Albania and is found along the coastline of the country. The male is green to brown in color with large spots, while the female has paler shades. It prefers aquatic habitats, such as lakes, rivers, marshes, and ponds that are rich in vegetation. This frog feeds on aquatic and terrestrial insects, snails, spiders, etc.



Other amphibians that are found in our country are the Common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and the European Tree Frog (*Hyla arborea*).

All of these amphibians listed above are threatened by:

- Habitat degradation
- Pollution
- Climate change
- Commercial purposes



Bufo bufo © G. Matesa



Hyla arborea © Mihai Baciu

Amphibian species play a pivotal role in the effective management of insect populations, the unbridled proliferation of which could pose a significant threat to agriculture. Additionally, they serve as vital regulators of mosquito populations, thereby making a positive impact on public health.

These amphibious creatures bestow upon us a multitude of invaluable advantages. Therefore, it is our responsibility to conscientiously contribute to their protection and the preservation of their habitats in the country.

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AMPHIBIANS OF ALBANIA

The fire salamander, Albanian Water Frog and Alpine newt



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