

BILL ANALYSIS

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By: Jackson, Mike
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The State of Texas traditionally has recognized a variety of official symbols as tangible representations of the proud character and colorful heritage of the Lone Star State. Select members of the animal kingdom, including the longhorn, the armadillo, and the Guadalupe bass, are among the species that have been officially recognized, and their designation has served to draw attention to the great biological diversity of the Texas landscape and to highlight creatures who are unique to or closely identified with the state. The large variety of natural habitats in Texas as well as the state's central location on the North American continent have given it a rich array of amphibians; of the many members of that class that share our lands and waters, one species comes immediately to the forefront as an especially worthy symbol of the state: the Texas toad. Aptly named, the Texas toad lives primarily in the Lone Star State, though it is also found in the neighboring areas of New Mexico, Oklahoma, and northern Mexico; known by the scientific name *Bufo speciosus*, it is one of the most abundant toad species in Texas and resides in nearly all regions of the state with the exception of the far eastern counties and parts of the western Panhandle. Ranging in color from gray to brown with dark irregular markings, the Texas toad can grow to more than three inches in length and is easily identified by the black tubercles on its hind feet and by the absence of the back stripe that is seen on many other toads. These adaptable amphibians demonstrate the hardy determination that Texans are known for; in order to survive in a place where the sun is fierce and water can be scarce, they are adept at taking refuge beneath rocks and in below-ground havens; while most well suited to live in areas of sandy soil, they also thrive in other locales and are found in environments that range from desert to grasslands to wooded areas. Relishing nothing more than a cooling shower, Texas toads emerge in huge numbers following a summer rain and head for the nearest pool of water in hopes of finding a mate; the toads have a distinctive sound, with males emitting a call of explosive thrills to charm their lady friends. Possessing a Buddha-like visage, this notable creature is a common sight across much of Texas, and its indomitable spirit and unique relationship with the state for which it was named make it a most appropriate symbol of the Lone Star State.

RESOLVED

That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate the Texas toad as the official State Amphibian of Texas.