

**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**(European) Green Toad, *Bufo viridis* LAURENTI, 1768**
(Synonymic: *Epidalea viridis*, *Pseudepidalea viridis*)

You can find a short info about the Green Toad also on page 2 of our leaflet No. 027-04/E at [http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/027-04E.pdf].

The Green Toad is a batrachian (*Anura*) from the species of real toads (*Bufo*) within the family of toads (*Bufo*).



Pictures are showing (from left to right) calling at night male, females and older female, nocturnal on the island of Crete. The pupils of the eyes are wide open.

Range and haunt:

The toad appears as "collective style" continental-Mediterranean in East Central Europe, in South- and South-Eastern Europe on many Mediterranean island (on Crete not rare), and up to Central Asia and North Africa. The most northern stocks in Europe are at the southern tip of Sweden with its Islands Oeland and Gotland and Estonia. The toad is incomplete common in Germany and is missing in the Northwest.

It was introduced by humans to the Balearic Islands during the Bronze Age probably to mythological reasons. Toads and frogs are found in almost all cultures myths and often with similar meaning. For example in Greek as a fertility symbol.

Toads prefer dry and warm habitats. The nocturnal batrachians are mostly found on gravelly floors and partially missing, open vegetation. Due to their adaptation to dry, arid habitats and high tolerance to drought and salinity they cope with habitats which are hostile to life for many other amphibians. They remove sometimes very far from open waters. The spawning waters are shallow and vegetation arm, on Crete often in temporary water (with mineral soil) in canyons. They tolerated a slightly higher salinity of spawning waters.

Appearance:

The shape of the Green toad is similar to the common toad (*Bufo bufo*), However, the Green toad is not quite as large as the common toad. The males can reach a body size of 8 cm, the females of 9 cm. Charac-

teristic is the light basic colour with dark green, definite spots. The shout of the males, a melodic trill, resembles the sound of a cricket. The toad has almost parallel arranged ear glands and a greenish Iris. The eardrum is most clearly seen. The Webs range only half of the longest toe. The hump at the bottom of the toe joints is just trained.

The body is light (often Sandy colour) with greenish spots. Especially the female warts on the flanks are often reddish coloured. The belly is light-grey to whitish with small dark green spots; an easy gender dimorphism can be made. The males are distinguished from the females by a slightly larger header, more trained front legs and a blurred back. The young indicate a grey base colour with blackish spots after the metamorphosis; the latter recolour slowly to green in the further development.

Reproduction:

The generated with the “throat echo bladder” nocturnal mating call of the male is a sustained, not very far carrying trills which will be gradually louder and higher. There are longer breaks between the trills. When mating the male clutching the female from behind in the armpit area, which sells the eggs in the form of spawning cords.

The deposited spawning strings (see fig. left) are mostly 2 to 4 meters long depending on the strain. The brown to black eggs lie in two to four rows in a gelatinous shell line and may include 2,000 to max 15,000 pieces. The diameter of an egg is approx. 1.5 mm. The larvae hatch after 3-7 days and develop fast and often reach after six weeks the metamorphosis. The back drawing of the tadpoles (see figure right: tadpole of Toad standing close to conclusion of the metamorphosis in a temporary pond in the Sarakinas Gorge / South Crete) is brownish to greenish grey; their fin fringes are bright. By the end of the metamorphosis, they reach a size of up to 5 cm. Toads reach a maximum age of 9 years.



Lifestyle:

Once the daily average of air temperature reach about 10 ° C, first the older females leave the winter habitat and begin the search for spawning grounds, younger females and males follow later. Toads in land habitat can mostly be found during the night between mid August and mid September. From October the animals search for appropriate winter habitats. The food of the toad is comprised of ants, weevils, ground beetle and other insects, spiders, slugs and worms.

Conservation status:

Flora fauna Habitat Directive (FFH-RL): Annex IV: strictly to protect species. In Germany the toad is also strictly protected after the BNatSchG.

Hybridisation:

In nature a hybridisation of the European Green Toad (*Bufo viridis*) with the two other European toad species is possible, more often with the Natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*), less with the common toad (*Bufo bufo*) but there only where the types often meet.

Picture source: H. Eikamp & Wikipedia