

Close Encounters of the Toad Kind

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March 13, 2009

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What if toads could talk? What would they say? Toads actually do have their own secret language, but what if we could understand what they were talking about?

Being a keeper of many toads over the years, I have had opportunities on many occasions to stop and listen to their conversing. Before you jump to any conclusions, let me explain. All that you need is a quiet location and a toad or two. Just like holding a seashell up to your ear to hear the ocean, you can do the same thing with a toad! Am I crazy? Maybe. But that's for someone more qualified than myself to determine.

If you listen very carefully, a toad will share his or her secrets with you. I don't just mean their mating call, or chirping, or other loud outbursts that toads make. These vocalizations are made while searching for a mate, when agitated or while protesting some randomly perceived injustice. What I'm talking about is hearing their "indoor voice" when you hold them very close to your ear. It's a bit hard to describe the noise that is made, but it can be compared with faint clicking sounds, kind of like Morse-code or more fittingly, Morse-toad. This activity can be attempted at home with your own toad, or borrow a neighbor's, whatever ... however, before this is done, you may want to ensure that your toad has been given the option to completely empty his or her bladder first. Otherwise, your experience may not be what you were hoping for! You don't want to have any accidents, like the amusing one with Mr. Munchy at the reptile show.

This quiet language is so much more secretive and compelling to me than the average toad chirp. If only we understood what was being said. Maybe they are telling each other where the best bugs are located, or where to find affordable housing in their area. Or maybe they are just sending messages via toad-code back to their home planet. Whatever it is that is being relayed, their code will not likely soon be broken. Who knows, maybe they could become the carrier pigeons of the 21st century! Regardless of my inability to understand their cryptic messages, I still like to listen to them anyway, and yes, I do respond back to them when they interact with me. I guess that is why I remain...

-The Toad Talker

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