

Brief History of the State Symbols Adoptions

In 1985, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission ran an "Arizona Wildlife Awareness" program. Part of this program involved thousands of schoolchildren from around the state voting for an official state mammal, reptile, fish and amphibian.

Students studied 800 species in an effort to determine the best choice, and four finalists were chosen for each category. For example, in the amphibian category, the choice was limited to the Arizona treefrog, the Colorado River toad, the red spotted toad and the spadefoot toad. Eventually, information flyers were developed, similar to the one attached, which gave information about each of the choices.

Students were then allowed to vote for their favorite. The table below shows the results of each of these votes.

Amphibian	Votes	Mammal	Votes
Arizona Treefrog	11,622	Ringtail	9,627
Colorado River Toad	8,520	Whitetail Deer	8,963
Red Spotted Toad	6,346	Desert Bighorn Sheep	5,680
Spadefoot Toad	3,486	Javelina	3,524
Fish	Votes	Reptile	Votes
Arizona Trout	17,213	Arizona Ridgenosed Rattlesnake	9,456
Colorado River Squawfish	8,404	Gila Monster	7,837
Desert Pupfish	5,751	Desert Tortoise	6,457
Bonytail Chub	3,049	Regal Horned Lizard	4,855

Representative Larry Hawke introduced the winners to the Arizona State Legislature for approval. On August 13, 1986, the Arizona treefrog, ringtail, Arizona ridgenosed rattlesnake and Arizona trout (later renamed the Apache trout) joined the cactus wren, saguaro blossom, and palo verde as official state symbols of Arizona.

Below is an excerpt from the Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 41, Article 5, Section 41-859, which made the decision official.

**TITLE 41. STATE GOVERNMENT.
ARTICLE 5. STATE EMBLEMS.
SECTION 41-859. STATE ANIMALS**

41-859. State animals. The ringtail or *bassariscus astutus*, the Arizona ridgenosed rattlesnake or *crotalus willardi*, the Arizona trout or *salmo apache* and the Arizona treefrog or *hyla eximia* shall be known respectively as the state mammal, reptile, fish and amphibian.

Information was provided by http://www.netstate.com/states/symb/amphibians/az_tree_frog.htm, <http://www.geobop.com/world/NA/US/AZ/Mammal.htm>, <http://www.geobop.com/world/NA/US/AZ/Fish.htm>, and <http://www.geobop.com/world/NA/US/AZ/Reptile.htm>



Pictures courtesy of the Arizona Game and Fish Department