

The gray tree frog (*Hyla versicolor*), pictured on the front cover, inhabits deciduous woodlands in eastern and parts of central North America. Only about four centimeters long, this amphibian blends into its surroundings by turning shades of pearly gray, brown, or green and is usually hard to spot. The adults spend most of their time in trees where their adhesive toe pads enable them to cling to bark and leaves and climb vertical surfaces. They eat mainly small insects, sometimes caught while a frog is suspended from a leaf or twig by the toe pads on only one or two of its feet. In the spring, gray tree frogs descend from the trees and breed in small ponds. Females are attracted by the breeding call of the male: a sharp, ringing or buzzing trill. Where winters are cold, gray tree frogs hibernate under leaves, roots, or rocks, and they can survive temperatures as low as -5° to -7° C. Nearly 50 percent of their body water may freeze, but antifreeze proteins and glycerol in their tissues protect their cells. In some areas, the geographic range of the gray tree frog overlaps that of a very similar species, *H. chrysoscelis* (Cope's gray tree frog). *H. versicolor* has twice as many chromosomes as Cope's species, from which it probably evolved.



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