

Houston Zoo at Home

HOUSTON TOAD

Historically, the Houston toad ranged across central and east Texas, but a drought and urban expansion in the 1960s saw the population decline. The Houston toad is no longer found in the wild in Houston, however you can find them in Bastrop, Texas just a few hours drive from Houston. The Houston Zoo has a building where staff help to breed toads for release into the wild. Our staff work closely with the other organizations in these breed-and-release efforts.

For these activities watch the video of behind-the-scenes tour of our Houston Toads building. [Click here to watch!](#)

Nighttime Seekers

Ages: 8 and up

Materials: None

Steps:

1. If you are playing inside, find a dark room or rooms. If you are playing outside, wait until the sun goes down to play. Regardless of where you play, be sure you stay safe!
2. Assign everyone that is playing the game a sound.
3. For instance, one person might say “BOP” while another person says “ZIP”
4. Have one person be “it”. Then, as a group, tell the person who is it who they are trying to find.
5. For example, the person who is “it” might be looking for mom. Mom’s sound might be “ZIP”.
6. Everyone runs and hides.
7. Once 20 seconds is up, all the “toads” must start making their assigned noises. The person who is seeking must listen for the appropriate noise and find the “toad”.
8. Play as many rounds as you like.

See if you can come up with different noises.

If you have enough people, you can pair up sounds and you must find each other in the dark.

Time yourselves to see how fast you can find each other.

Share your project with us!

Tag your photo using #HoustonZoo or email us your story at communications@houstonzoo.org.

Hiding in Plain Sight!

Ages: 4 and up

Materials Needed: Food items from your kitchen

Steps:

1. Search your kitchen for food items. Try to find food items of different colors.
2. Find a place to play the game outside. Remember: always be safe when choosing a location to play!
3. One person will be “it”. Have that person hide their eyes or go inside until the game is ready.
4. Everyone else try and hide your food item wherever it will be most camouflaged.
5. Should you put the food in a shady spot or a sunny spot?
6. Should you put something green like celery in the grass or on the concrete?
7. What about something red like an apple? Where could you put that to camouflage?
8. Once all the food items are hidden in their camouflage, the person who is “it” comes out to look. Whichever food item is the last to be found wins!
9. Play as many times as you like. Try choosing different food items. Think about colors, texture, size. Take turns being “it”.

Wetland Band

Ages: 8 and up

Materials Needed: Anything you can find around your house (cups, marbles, legos, paper clips, rubber bands, the possibilities are endless!)

Steps:

For this activity, listen to different Texas frog and toad calls. [Click here to visit the website.](#)

1. Using items around your house, try to recreate these calls by creating your own instrument.
2. Work together to create an instrument for every member of your family.
3. Once all the instruments have been created, have each member grab one and play it as loud as they can. Now you have your own Wetland Band, just like the frogs and toads in your backyard!

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