



# Focus: Detecting Mobile Boreal Toads



**Research**

**Technology Transfer**

**Science Application**

**Key Findings:**

- Boreal Toads used streams for downhill transportation in summer.
- Combined terrestrial and aquatic movements were up to 12 km in less than one month. This mobility has implications for the reestablishment of populations and for their responses to fragmented habitat.
- Late summer netting of streams was effective at detecting previously unknown populations of Boreal Toads, and can be developed into a new monitoring tool.

**Challenge**

Boreal Toad populations are declining, which makes observation difficult. Therefore, it is critical to develop monitoring tools to help researchers better understand the Boreal Toad's ecology.

**Context**

Boreal Toads have undergone substantial declines throughout most of their range since the 1970s. Researchers have relied on observations from breeding areas in spring to monitor these declines. It was thought that this was a reliable method of detection, that Boreal Toads moved only a short distance from these sites, and that they were almost exclusively terrestrial after the breeding season.

**Actions**

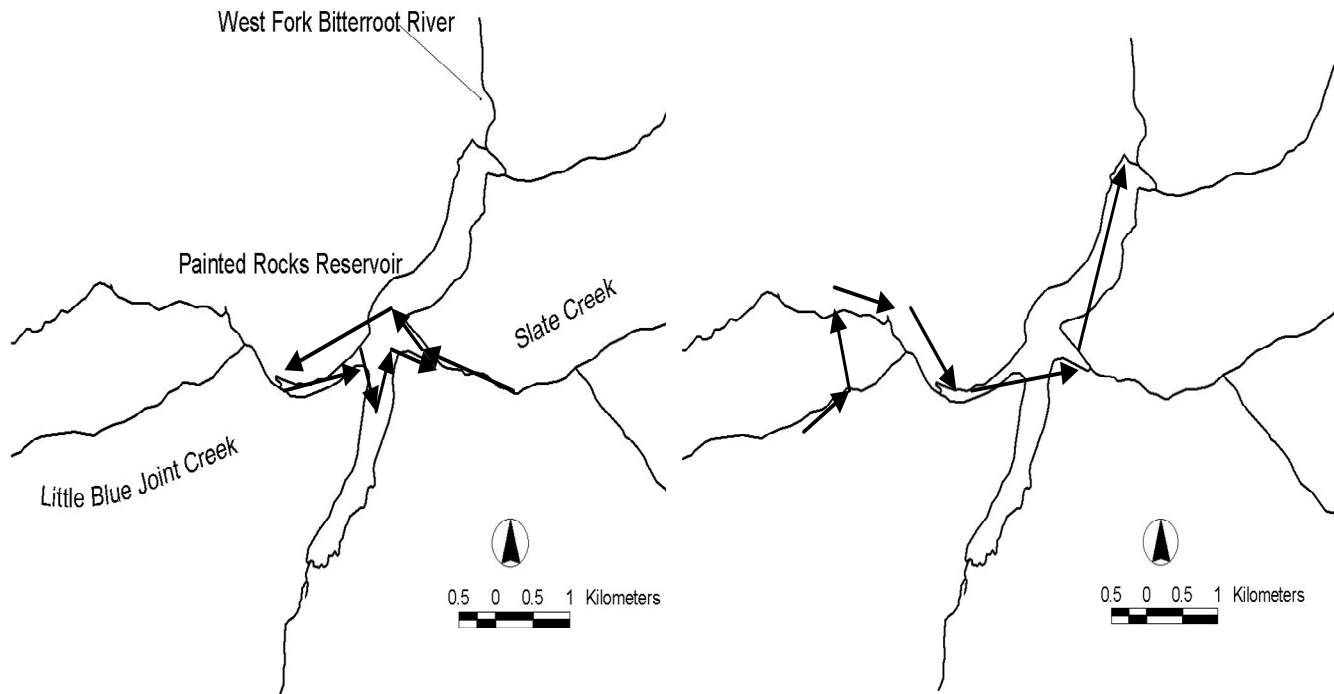
We netted streams in Montana, southern Wyoming, and northern Colorado for Boreal Toads, and used radio telemetry to monitor toad locations in Montana.

**Results**

Boreal Toads were repeatedly captured in stream channels, and downhill movements averaged 1 km in 10 days. Radio tagged toads also made frequent temporary forays into uplands. Netting confirmed the presence of populations in Colorado and Wyoming, and detected additional populations in western Montana.



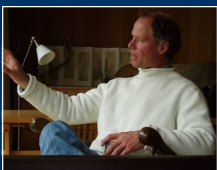
# Detecting Mobile Boreal Toads



Movements of two toads in July-August 2003 in western Montana.

## Publications and Presentations

- Adams, S. B., D. A. Schmetterling, and M. K. Young. 2005. [Instream movement by boreal toads \(\*Bufo boreas boreas\*\)](#). Herpetological Review 36: 27-33.
- Allison, G.T., K. Foster, and M.K. Young. 2006. Detecting presence of boreal toads (*Bufo boreas boreas*) in Wyoming and Colorado: can stream channel trapping substitute for breeding site surveys? Presented at the biannual meeting of the Boreal Toad Recovery Team, Steamboat Springs, CO, 23 February.
- Schmetterling, D. A., and M. K. Young. 2008. [Summer movements of Boreal Toads \(\*Bufo boreas boreas\*\) in two western Montana basins](#). Journal of Herpetology 42: 111-123.
- Young, M. K., G. T. Allison, and K. Foster. 2007. Observations of boreal toads (*Bufo boreas boreas*) and *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* in south-central Wyoming and north-central Colorado. Herpetological Review 38: 146-150.
- Young, M.K., and D.A. Schmetterling. 2009. [Age-related seasonal variation in captures of stream-borne Boreal Toads \(\*Bufo boreas boreas\*, Bufonidae\) in western Montana](#). Copeia 2009(1):117-124.



**Michael K. Young**  
Fisheries Biologist  
U.S. Forest Service  
Phone: (406) 542-3254  
Email: mkyoung@fs.fed.us



**David A. Schmetterling**  
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
State of Montana  
Phone: (406) 542-5514  
Email: schmetterling@montana.gov