

HERP Puppet Presentation Diary of a Frog

Characters

Narrator

Tadpole puppet



Southern Leopard Adult Frog puppet



Raven puppet on dowel rod with props to hold wings out (we used pens)
Person to hold and flip calendar



Other Prop Materials

Stick with bubble wrap "eggs"

Recorded frog calls and speakers

Calendar

Special Stage Set Up

water for ephemeral pool draped over curtain

Pool side vegetation next to water

Pool rug in front of curtain

Stand for 'eggs' prop

Calendar Holder: [sit at pool and hold calendar on February]

Narrator: February 20

[play southern leopard frog call, adult leopard frog comes up at opposite side of pool from vegetation]

Adult Frog: Do you hear that? [play call again, frog puppet looking back and forth between sound and audience] There it was again. [Pause, looking toward sound one more time] Oh, please forgive me, where are my manners. My name is Lucy, Lucy the Leopard Frog. I'm sorry I got so distracted by that sound. Do you know what that was? It was a male Southern Leopard Frog. I'm a female Southern Leopard Frog so I notice such things. Would you please excuse me? [she hops toward the sound and then drops below the curtain.]

Narrator: I'm so sorry friends, it appears that our friend the Leopard Frog has been completely distracted from our little story here this afternoon. However, I do think I know what is going on, you see, it is breeding season for the Southern Leopard Frogs. During warmer days in February, the male Southern Leopard Frogs can be heard calling for the females.

[Someone from behind curtain put up stick with bubble wrap 'eggs' near poolside vegetation]

Narrator: Oh wow, look what we have here [point to egg mass], it is an egg mass. I guess Lucy must have found the male frog. Anyway, this is what a Southern Leopard Frog egg mass looks like. This large, slightly flattened egg mass can often be found in very shallow water. There might be several hundred eggs here! This kind of frog can be heard calling almost any time of the year as long as the temperatures permit but the time that we hear them the most is in February, March and April. They are found almost all over North Carolina except in the mountains in Western Carolina. This egg mass however, is not long for our story. In just one or two weeks the eggs will be gone.

[Someone from behind curtain lowers egg mass and tadpole appears with just his face toward the audience, near the vegetation]

Calendar Holder: [turn calendar to March]

Narrator: March 6

Tadpole: [legs folded up into puch]
Wow, it is great to be out of that jelly-like egg. I don't have any idea where all of my brothers and sisters have gone but there were A LOT of us, probably more than 100. We don't have a mother or father to take care of us so we are on our own. That's okay, I instinctively know how to hide in these plants to keep from being eaten by other animals. My dark colored top helps me blend in with the leaves on the bottom of the pool. I'm sure glad there are no fish here, or I would surely be a goner! [tadpole disappears below the curtain]

Calendar Holder: [turn calendar to April]

Narrator: April

Tadpole : [appears in the middle of the pool now **with legs out of pouch**]
Oh, hi again. It's been a whole month since I saw you last. I've changed quite a bit, do you notice something different about me? [wiggles his tail and hind feet for the audience] Yes, that's right, I still have my tail but I also have these really cool back legs. They just appeared the other day. I forgot to tell you last time, I am a tadpole, some people also call me a pollywog. I have been using my tail to swim around in this pool of water and I use gills to breathe. You might think I am a fish because I have gills, but I am not a fish, no way, I am the larval form of a frog, remember? [tadpole disappears below the curtain]

Calendar Holder: [turn calendar to May]

Narrator: May

Tadpole: [appears in the middle of the pool again. Raven swoops over tadpole] Whoa [ducking and then reappearing] Did you see that? Let me tell you, the last four weeks have been really tough. As a tadpole, I've learned the hard way that you can't get much lower on the aquatic food chain. Most of my brothers and sisters are gone. I saw some being eaten by a snake one night and some others were attacked and eaten by the biggest bugs I have ever seen in my life [shivers]. And that bird just tried to swoop down and eat me! Between dodging all of these predators, I have been eating and growing. I have small rows of teeth-like structures in my mouth that I use to scrape algae and other plant matter. You see, I'm an herbivore, that means I eat plant material. I just wish all those other animals only ate plants too!

Calendar Holder: [turn calendar to June]

Narrator: June

Tadpole: [tuck tail in zipper] Well, it has been 12 weeks since I came out of the egg and I am feeling really weird. I don't really eat anymore and I am starting to feel some arms popping out. The other thing that I notice is that my tail is starting to absorb back into my body and there is some really strange stuff going on inside of me. I feel like my insides are rearranging, could that be possible?

Narrator: It's okay tadpole, that is what is supposed to happen, you are starting to change into an adult frog. As a tadpole you ate mostly plant material and used gills to breathe. When you are an adult frog you will not eat plant material anymore and you will breathe with lungs instead of gills. You are very right, your insides ARE rearranging and that process is called metamorphosis. Metamorphosis means transformation or change and that is what is happening in your body, a wonderful transformation! [tadpole disappears]

Calendar Holder: [turn calendar to July]

Narrator: July

Adult Frog: [appears at opposite side of pool from where eggs were located] Wow, look at me now! Do you see my cool arms and legs? And check out these spots! [turns to show spots on back] You were right, being an adult frog is very different from being a tadpole. Now I mostly come out at night when I can sit at the edge of the water and catch yummy insects, earthworms and spiders. I just can't seem to get enough to eat. I really do love being carnivorous now! I still have to keep a close watch out though: there are still plenty of animals that want to eat me. These strong back legs are a real asset in that department, I am an excellent jumper and can escape my predators by leaping into the water and swimming to the bottom of the pool. My moist, slippery skin also helps me to avoid being picked up by small children [looking out into the crowd, then disappearing below curtain].

Narrator: [play sound of calling Southern Leopard Frog again] Well it sounds like our frog friend is starting the cycle all over again. Do any of you remember what that sound is? Right, a calling Southern Leopard Frog. Our new frog friend seems to be calling. To learn more about frogs and other creatures who live in ephemeral pools, stick around for our next story.