

## **The Dormant Toad**

Few deserts are more inhospitable than the Sonoran Desert of North America. Life is so hard there that even the Couch's Spadefoot toad must lie dormant for 11 out of 12 months.

Normally, the Spadefoot has only one month out of twelve to carry out the normal business of life. The Spadefoot has an internal clock that tells it when the violent desert rainstorms are near and when to begin to near the surface of the ground. The toads, extremely sensitive to ground vibrations, can hear the pounding rains miles away. The distant rains bring the toads out of the sand so that as soon as pools have formed, the male toads are in them, calling for the females.

Mating and egg-laying are completed by morning, and dawn finds the toads safely protected from the sun's heat beneath the sand. But the desert pools reach 100 degrees and will not last long before they dry up, killing the eggs. Under ideal conditions it takes only nine days for the eggs to hatch. However, even in a good year, the young toads have only a few weeks at most to eat the food necessary to keep them alive for the next eleven months until the next rain.

Our Creator God not only creates life which can survive under the most extreme circumstances, but He is also the source of eternal life.

### **Isaiah 43:20**

**"The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, [and] rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen."**

Prayer: Father, even though life itself can at times seem like an empty desert, help me to remember that Your care for me is much greater than for any of Your other creatures, and that only You are the Source of true life. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Ref: "Spadefoot Toad," Dennis Comejo, September, Science 82, pp. 63-66.