BEWITCHING FROGS

Become an expert in amphibian hypnosis with our four-minute course.

THE SETUP
You can be the master of a wild creature and put it in a trance. If you are new to casting spells, begin with a frog. In no way does this trick harm a frog so a pet store may let you try it on one of their animals. Pick up a frog in one hand. Turn it upside down. Gently stroke your finger up and down its belly. It may struggle for a few moments but it will be unable to resist your magic touch. Continue stroking for a few more seconds to put it into a very deep trance. At this point you can set it down and it will simply lie there, motionless, completely unaware of its surroundings. Frog trances last anywhere from a few minutes to an hour. Be careful not to let the frog dry out since it needs moist skin in order to breathe. If you turn out to be an especially gifted mesmerizer and your frog is entranced for more than fifteen minutes, sprinkle it with water. The frog will come out of its trance naturally or you can make it “come to” quickly by clapping your hands or gently prodding it with your finger. This is not a one-shot performance. You can repeat it over and over again on the same frog.

INSIDER INFORMATION
Scientists don’t know exactly why belly-stroking hypnotizes some animals. But they believe that trances may be a form of protection. A lifeless-appearing prey is not as likely to trigger aggressive behavior from predators. Just about every frog we’ve laid our hands on has fallen under our spell. We have not been as successful with toads. Some are hypnotizable, some are not. Advanced charmancers have also beguiled lizards, crocodiles, turkeys, chickens, ducks, rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, and snakes.