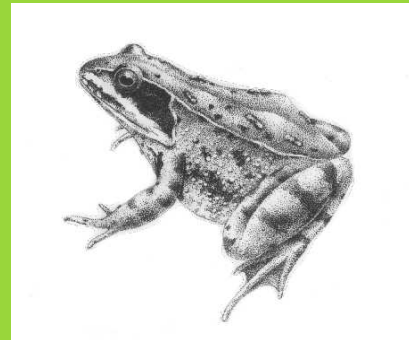


Common frog *Rana temporaria*

STATUS

Common, widespread, but perhaps declining.



WHAT IS THE COMMON FROG ?

The common frog is an amphibian, which hibernates throughout the winter. Its coloration is extremely variable in both shade and markings. This ability to change colour from light to dark, according to its surroundings, is strongly marked.

It lays clumps of spawn in a variety of ponds, but favours those that have water flowing in and out of them.

The chief diet of frog tadpoles, in the early part of their life is filamentous algae. When spawning is over the habits of the common frog are mainly terrestrial, although a certain number of males and females remain in the breeding pond after mating, particularly if the weather is cold. They return to the same pond year after year.

WHERE IS IT FOUND IN THE UK?

Widespread in Britain, though known to be declining in many areas.

WHY IS THE COMMON FROG OF CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE?

The common frog, like all amphibians is a good indicator of the ecological health of wetland habitats. They also form an important part of the food chain for water birds and other animals.

THE COMMON FROG IN THE DURHAM AREA

HOW HEALTHY ARE THE POPULATIONS OF THE COMMON FROG?

Durham has quite good populations of common frogs, having suffered less from agricultural intensification than the south of England. There have been some losses in farmland, but increases in suburban areas due to the growth in the numbers of garden ponds.

HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMON FROG IN THE DURHAM AREA ?

There have been a number of surveys of amphibian sites locally, mainly in the 1980s. Our knowledge of common frog distribution in the Durham area is therefore better than for much of the rest of the UK. However, there is a need to update these surveys, perhaps on a selected sample basis, to determine trends.

WHERE HAS IT BEEN FOUND IN THE DURHAM AREA ?

This species is widespread over the Durham area in both uplands and lowlands although the distribution is thinner in areas of magnesium limestone geology; where there is less surface water.

THE COMMON FROG IS AT RISK FROM:

Loss of suitable habitat, mainly due to the infilling of ponds on agricultural land and to the widespread drainage of wetlands in the wider landscape.

The introduction of fish to ponds and lakes, sometimes for angling purposes.

Increased mortality as a result of increased road traffic.

THE COMMON FROG BENEFITS FROM:

Protection of ponds and lakes.

Better management of habitats adjacent to ponds and lakes.

Creation of new wetland habitats.

IMPORTANT HABITATS FOR THE COMMON FROG:

Ponds Lakes and reservoirs (and surrounding wetlands) **
Permanent Grasslands
Scrub

OTHER SPECIES ACTION PLANS COVERING ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE COMMON FROG:

Common Toad	*
Great crested newt	**
Palmate newt	*
Smooth newt	
* Grass snake	**
Water vole	**
Otter	**
Freshwater native crayfish	**

N.B. ** indicates action plan produced in 1998.

* indicates action plan produced in 2000.

THE COMMON FROG AND THE LAW

It is illegal to kill, injure or sell the common frog.

Common frog *Rana temporaria*

TARGETS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE COMMON FROG IN THE DURHAM AREA:

	DATE
Target 1 <i>Maintain the population of common frogs and ensure that its range does not decline from its current extent.</i>	ONGOING
Target 2 <i>Carry out a survey to discover the current state of the common frog population in the Durham area.</i>	2005
Target 3 <i>Ensure that all key ponds for the common frogs are in good condition.</i>	2002 ONGOING
Target 4 <i>Raise awareness of common frog conservation issues.</i>	ONGOING

COMMON FROG ACTIONS			
ACTION	DATE	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	MEETS TARGET NO.
<u>POLICY AND LEGISLATION</u>			
1. Seek to ensure that all ponds known to hold viable populations are identified in Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans and that the protection and enhancement of the ponds is taken into account in accordance with paragraph 24 of Planning Policy Guidance Note: PPG9.	2002	LAs, DWT, EN, DBAP, NEARG	1, 3, 4
<u>SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION</u>			
2. Encourage the natural dispersal of the species to new sites through habitat management and	ONGOING	EN, LAs, Local specialists DWT, Site owners	1, 3
<u>SITE SAFEGUARD AND MANAGEMENT</u>			
3. Protect all key sites from habitat loss and adverse development.	2005	DWT, EN, LAs, Site owners	1, 3
4. Ensure sympathetic management of key sites, working with landowners and managers.	ONGOING	DBAP, FWAG, Site owners	1, 3, 4
<u>RESEARCH AND MONITORING</u>			
5. Revisit 1980 survey sites and any other known sites identified since the survey, to establish the current status of the species	2005	NEARG, Local specialists	2
<u>ADVISORY</u>			
6. Provide guidance for LAs, developers, land managers and others on legal obligations for the species, local management and availability of expertise for translocation where necessary.	ONGOING	EN, NEARG	1, 3, 4
7. Ensure that the importance of terrestrial habitat surrounding ponds for the common frog, is stressed to landowners and managers.	ONGOING	DWT, EN, LAs, NEARG	1
<u>COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY</u>			
8. Promote through publicity, media and environmental education, a wider and more sympathetic understanding of amphibian conservation	ONGOING	DWT, EN, LAs, Local specialists, NEARG	4