

Common toad

Bufo bufo

STATUS

Stable. Listed on the UK Steering Group Report long list 1995, Partial protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



WHAT IS THE COMMON TOAD ?

The common toad is an amphibian, which hibernates over winter. It has a fat, thick set body with a broad, round head. Its skin is covered with warts.

Ponds rivers and canals, sometimes ditches, where the water is deeper than 40cm, are usually chosen for spawning purposes. Shallow waters, which are preferred by the common frog, are often avoided. Toads and frogs frequently breed in the same pond, the toad choosing the deeper parts, the frog the shallows. Toad eggs are entangled in waterweed, in rows of two to four strands.

WHERE IS IT FOUND IN THE UK?

This species is widespread in Britain, its absence from certain districts being probably due to lack of observation in those areas. It is not as abundant or as widely distributed as the common frog.

WHY IS THE COMMON TOAD OF CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE?

The common toad 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, though to a lesser degree than other amphibian species.

THE COMMON TOAD IN THE DURHAM AREA

HOW HEALTHY ARE THE POPULATIONS OF THE COMMON TOAD?

Durham has quite good populations of common toads. There have however been some losses from farmland, as a result of agricultural drainage of natural pools and wetlands. But increases in suburban areas have occurred due to the growth in the numbers of garden ponds.

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

There have been a number of surveys of amphibian sites locally, mainly in the 1980s. Our knowledge of common toad 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; distribution being thinner in areas of magnesian limestone geology, where there is less surface water.

THE COMMON TOAD IS AT RISK FROM:

Loss of suitable habitat, mainly due to the infilling of ponds on agricultural land and to the infilling of flooded quarries.

Increases in road traffic on roads adjacent to breeding sites

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

THE COMMON TOAD BENEFITS FROM:

Protection of ponds and lakes.

Creation of new wetland habitats.

IMPORTANT HABITATS FOR THE COMMON TOAD:

<i>Ponds, lakes and reservoirs</i>	**
<i>Rivers & streams</i>	*
<i>Grassland</i>	
<i>Scrub</i>	

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

<i>Great-crested newt</i>	**
<i>Common frog</i>	*
<i>Palmate newt</i>	*
<i>Smooth newt</i>	*
<i>Water vole</i>	**
<i>Otter</i>	**
<i>Freshwater native crayfish</i>	**
<i>Grass snake</i>	**

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

* indicates action plan produced in 2000.

THE COMMON TOAD AND THE LAW

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

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

- Target 1** *Maintain the population of common toads and ensure that its range does not decline from its current extent.* **DATE** **ONGOING**
- Target 2** *Carry out a survey to discover the current state of the common toad population in the Durham area.* **2005**

- Target 3** *Ensure that all key habitats for the common toad are in good condition.* **ONGOING**
- Target 4** *Use the common toad to raise awareness of the need to conserve ponds and amphibians.* **ONGOING**

COMMON TOAD 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:9.	ONGOING	LAs, DBAP, DWT, EN, 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 creation.	ONGOING	EN, LAs, Local specialists, DWT, Site Owners, FWAG	1, 3
<u>SITE 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	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	Local specialists, NEARG	2
<u>ADVISORY</u>			
6. Provide guidance for LAs, developers land managers and others on legal obligations for the species' management and availability of local expertise as necessary.	ONGOING	EN, DBAP	1, 3, 4
<u>ACTION</u>			
7. Ensure that the importance of terrestrial habitat surrounding ponds for the common toad is stressed to landowners and managers	ONGOING	DWT, EN, LAs	1, 3
<u>COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY</u>			
8. Promote through publicity media and environmental education a wider and more sympathetic understanding of amphibian conservation.	ONGOING	DBAP, EN, LAs, Local specialists	4