

Palmate newt

Triturus helveticus

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 PALMATE NEWT ?

The palmate newt is the smallest newt native to the U.K and, in its general appearance, it closely resembles the smooth newt, *Triturus vulgaris*. The palmate newt prefers slow-moving water, pools and lakes in wooded and hilly country and will tolerate water with a lower pH than other native species.

WHERE IS IT FOUND IN THE UK?

The palmate newt prefers hilly areas though it has been known to occur at sea level, often in the company of the other two newt species.

WHY IS THE PALMATE NEWT OF CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE?

The palmate newt like other 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 PALMATE NEWT IN THE DURHAM AREA

HOW HEALTHY ARE THE POPULATIONS OF THE PALMATE NEWT?

In Durham the palmate newt population is thought by local experts to be stable. It is abundant in parts of the western uplands.

HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PALMATE NEWT IN THE DURHAM AREA ?

There have been a number of surveys of amphibian sites locally, mainly in the 1980s. Our knowledge of palmate newt 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 PALMATE NEWT IS AT RISK FROM:

Loss of habitat, mainly due to the infilling of ponds on agricultural land.

The loss of suitable habitat for newts around ponds. Areas of grassland, scrub and woodland around ponds (especially within 250 metres) are important for shelter, food and hibernation sites. The decline in quality of land around ponds for wildlife has been a major factor contributing to the loss of newts. It is important that this

land is not overgrazed or too intensively managed.

The introduction of fish to ponds, sometimes for angling. Fish are a major predator of newt eggs and larvae.

Pollution e.g. run off of chemicals from agricultural land and roads.

THE PALMATE NEWT 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 PALMATE NEWT:

Ponds, Lakes and reservoirs surrounding wetlands **
Grasslands
Scrub
Marshes and wetlands

OTHER SPECIES ACTION PLANS COVERING ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE PALMATE NEWT:

<i>Great-crested newt</i>	**
<i>Common toad</i>	*
<i>Common frog</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.

TARGETS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE PALMATE NEWT IN THE DURHAM AREA:

	DATE
Target 1 <i>Maintain the population of palmate newts and ensure that its range does not decline from its current extent.</i>	2005
Target 2 <i>Carry out a survey to discover the current state of the palmate newt population in the Durham area.</i>	2005

Palmate newt *Triturus vulgaris*

Target 3 Ensure that all key ponds for palmate newts are in good condition. 2002 then ONGO-

Target 4 Use the palmate newt to raise awareness of the need to conserve ponds and amphibians. 2002 then ONGO-

THE PALMATE NEWT AND THE LAW

It is illegal to kill, injure or sell the smooth newt.

PALMATE NEWT 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, DWT, EN, NEARG, DBAP	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 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	Local specialists, NEARG	2
<u>ADVISORY</u>			
6. Provide guidance for LA's, developers, land managers and others on legal obligations for the species, local management and availability of expertise as necessary	ONGOING	EN, DBAP	1, 3, 4
7. Ensure that the importance of terrestrial habitat surrounding ponds for the palmate newt is stressed to landowners and managers.	ONGOING	EN, LAs, DWT, NEARG	1, 3
<u>COMMUNICATION 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, NEARG	4