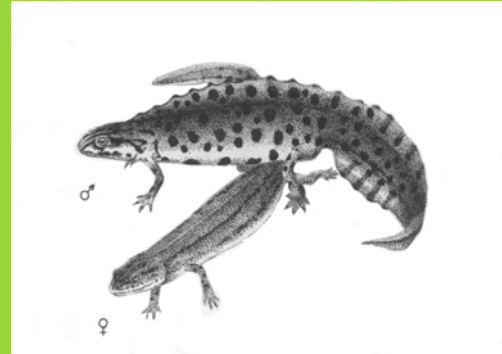


Smooth newt *Triturus vulgaris*

STATUS

Widely distributed.

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 SMOOTH NEWT ?

The smooth newt is the most frequently seen newt native to the U.K. The other two are the great crested (*Triturus cristatus*) and the palmate newt (*Triturus helvetica*). Smooth newts are usually seen in small pools or clay puddles, but the surrounding land is equally important. Pools are used for breeding and are usually occupied between early spring and late summer. The surrounding land is used all year by immature newts and most newts spend the winter on land.

WHERE IS IT FOUND IN THE UK?

The smooth newt occurs across most of England but is rarer in Wales and parts of Scotland. This newt tends to be found in the same areas of the country as the great crested newt.

WHY IS THE SMOOTH NEWT OF CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE?

There appears to be a decline in the abundance of the smooth newt in the UK. It can still be found in most of the areas that it used to occur, but usually in lower numbers. The reduction in numbers of this newt is closely linked to the disappearance of ponds in our landscape, but also to the loss of habitat around ponds which is important for much of their life-cycle.

THE SMOOTH NEWT IN THE DURHAM AREA

HOW HEALTHY ARE THE POPULATIONS OF THE SMOOTH NEWT?

In Durham the smooth newt population is thought by local experts to be stable. It is abundant in parts of the eastern lowlands.

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

There have been a number of surveys of amphibian sites locally, mainly in the 1980s. Our knowledge of smooth newt distribution in the Durham area is therefore better than for much of the rest of the UK. Though 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 SMOOTH NEWT IS AT RISK FROM:

Loss of habitat, mainly due to the infilling of ponds on

agricultural land and to the infilling of flooded quarries.

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 and lakes, sometimes for angling purposes. Fish are a major predator of newt eggs and larvae.

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

THE SMOOTH NEWT BENEFITS FROM:

Protection of ponds, lakes and wetlands.

Better management of habitats adjacent to ponds and lakes.

Creation of new wetland habitats.

IMPORTANT HABITATS FOR THE SMOOTH NEWT:

Ponds, lakes and reservoirs (and surrounding wetlands)**
Grasslands
Scrub
Marshes and wetlands

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

Great-crested newt	**
Common toad	*
Common frog	*
Palmate newt	*
Water vole	**
Otter	**
Freshwater native crayfish	**
Grass snake	**

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

* indicates action plan produced in 2000.

THE SMOOTH NEWT AND THE LAW

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

Smooth newt *Triturus vulgaris*

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

	DATE
Target 1 <i>Maintain the population of smooth 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 smooth newt population in the Durham area.</i>	2005

Target 3 <i>Ensure that all key ponds for the smooth newt are in good condition.</i>	2002 then ONGOING
Target 4 <i>Use the smooth newt to raise awareness of the need to conserve ponds and amphibians.</i>	2002 then ONGOING

SMOOTH 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	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	DWT, 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, 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 smooth newt is stressed to landowners and managers.	ONGOING	EN, LA's, 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	ONGOING	DBAP, EN, LAs, Local specialists, NEARG	4