



Hampshire & Isle of Wight  
Amphibian & Reptile Group

# Toad Patrols

*Hands on conservation and rescue*



*Pete West, HIWARG Zoom Presentation: 12 Jan 2021.*

*With thanks to Angie and ARG UK for the use of some of their text and images.*

# Toad Patrols and Covid-19

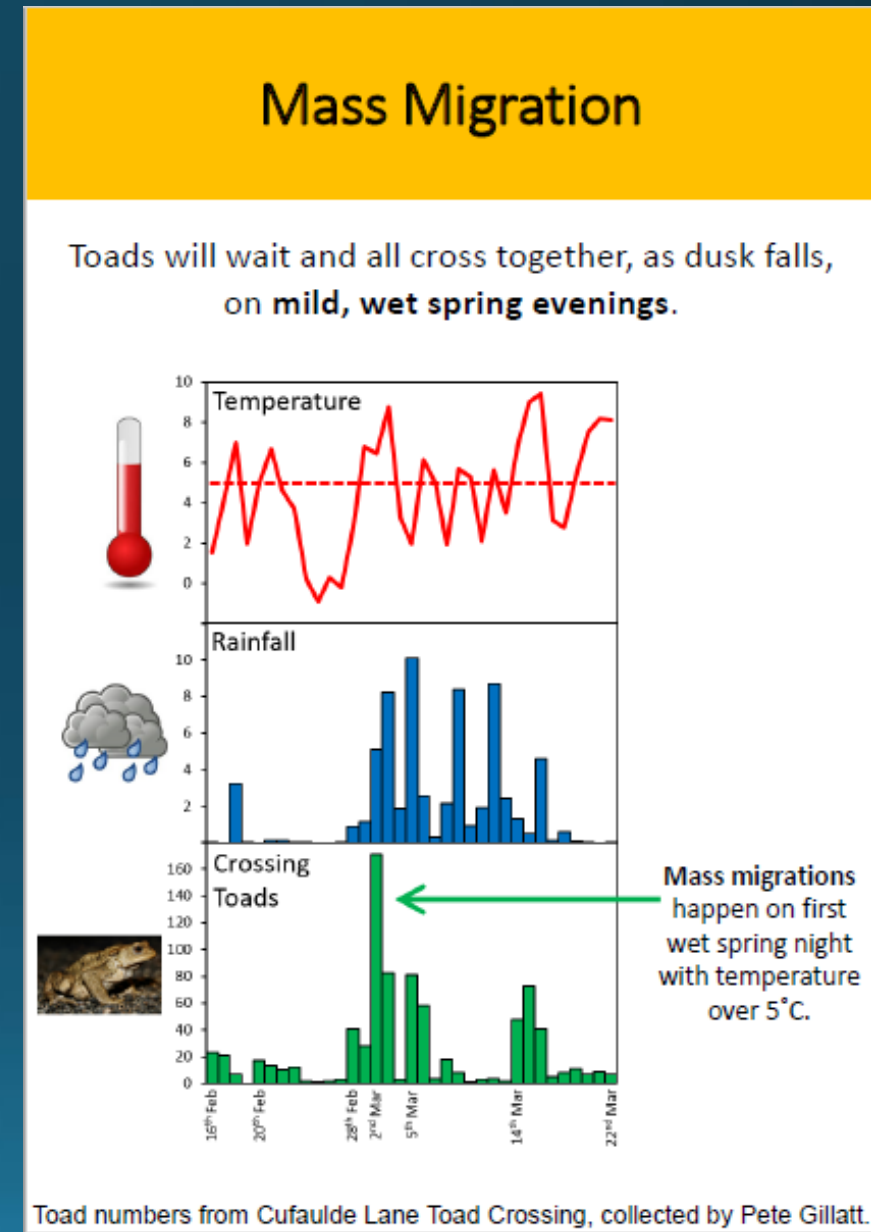
- “You should minimise time spent outside your home, but you can leave your home to exercise. This should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area... meaning avoiding travelling outside of your village, town or the part of a city where you live” GOV.UK
- “You can exercise in a public outdoor place: by yourself, with the people you live with, with your support bubble, in a childcare bubble or, when on your own, with 1 person from another household.” GOV.UK
- This effectively rules out HIWARG toad patrols and it is debatable if the Police will view someone patrolling on their own or in a bubble as a valid form of exercise.

# Why Patrol for Toads?

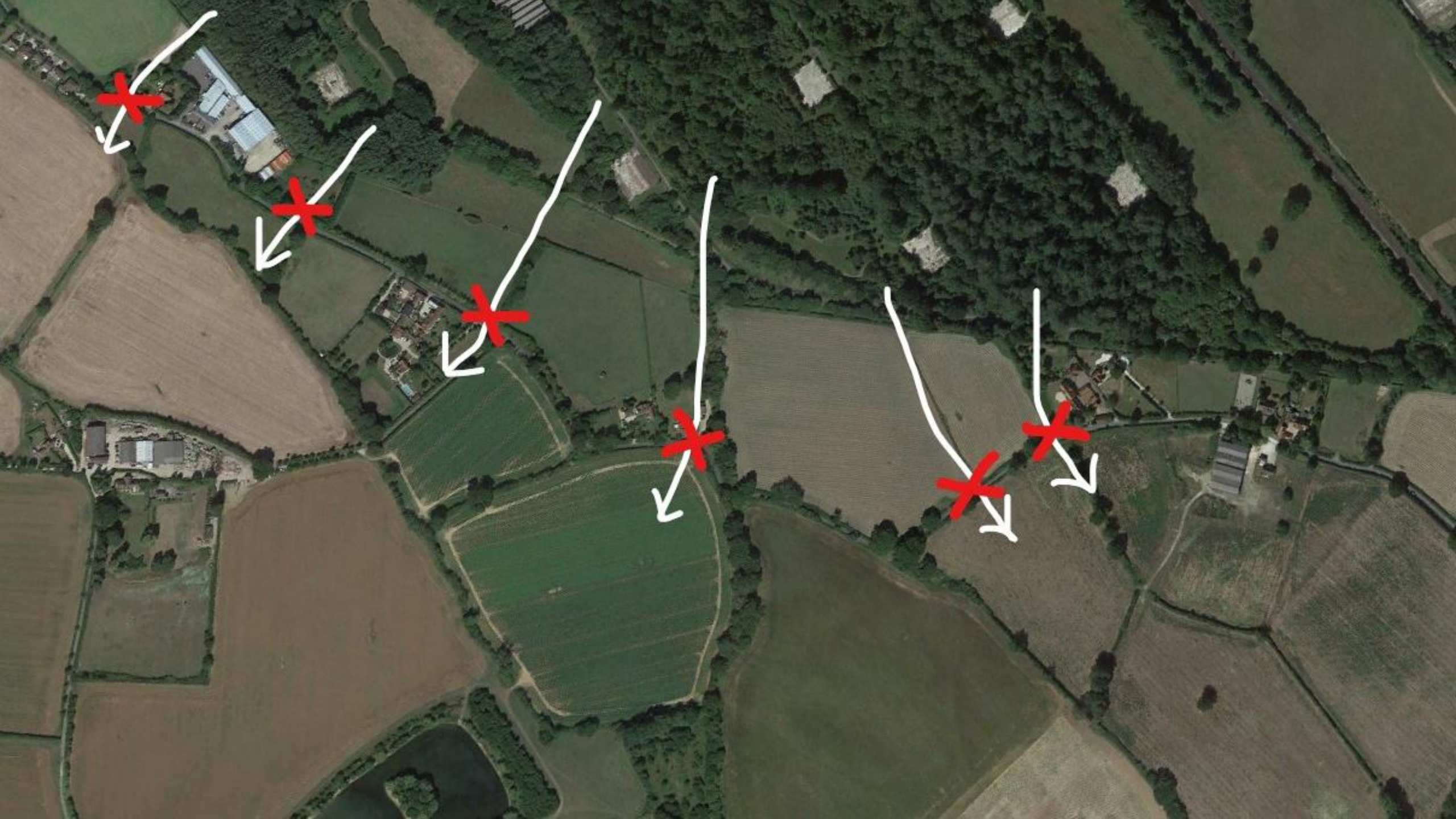
- Toads are very faithful to their breeding pond, and migrate en masse to them each spring (Feb – April).
- They spend most of their life on land, only returning to ponds to breed as adults.
- On land they can be found in hedgerows, woodland/scrub and even in gardens.



- Unfortunately in the modern world, the migration back to their pond often involves crossing roads during peak evening rush hour, with mass mortality!
- Volunteers 'patrol' known toad crossings on 'warm and wet' spring evenings collecting toads (and other amphibians), and transferring them across the road in buckets.
- The next three slides show how each site has different challenges.



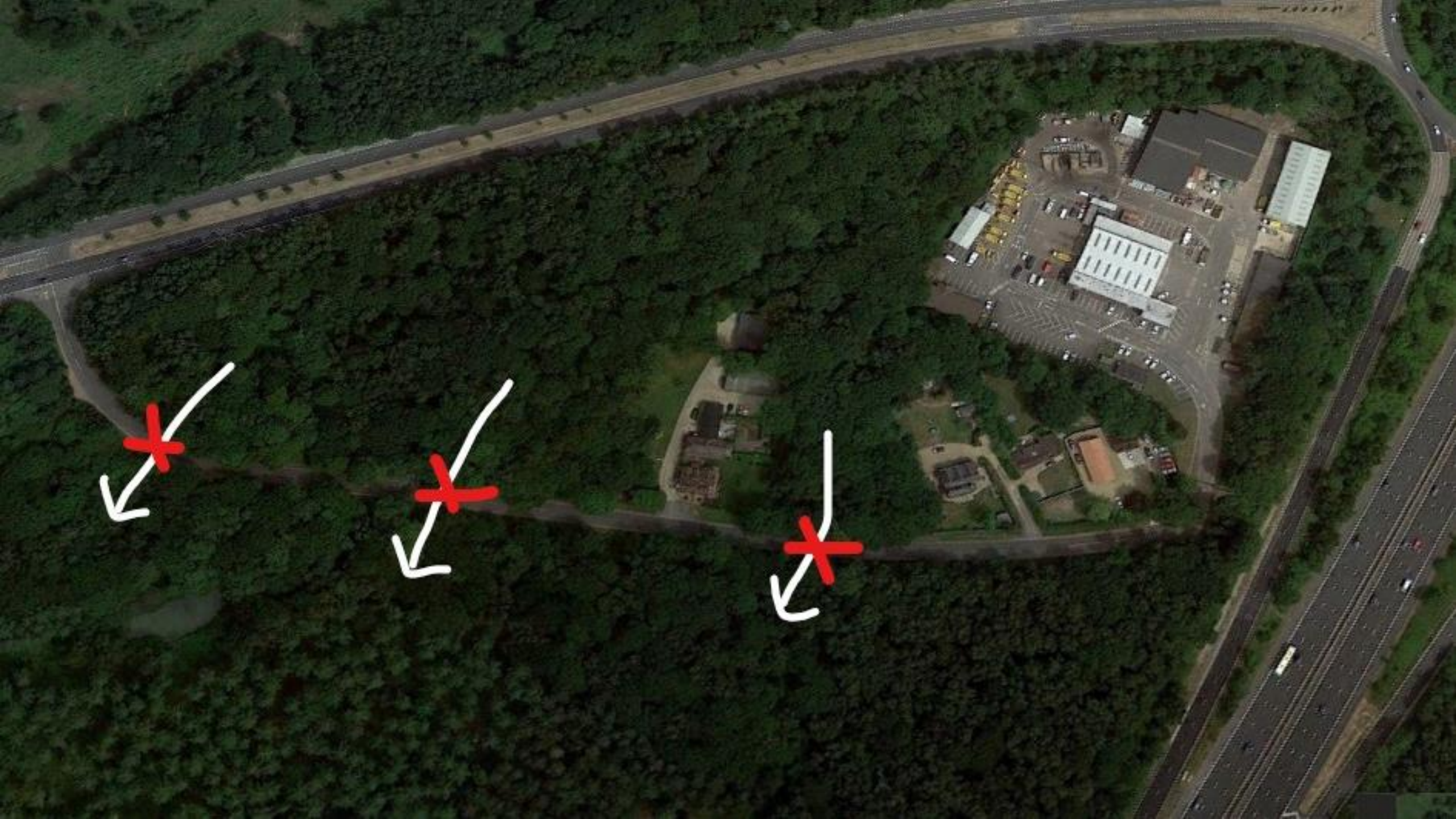










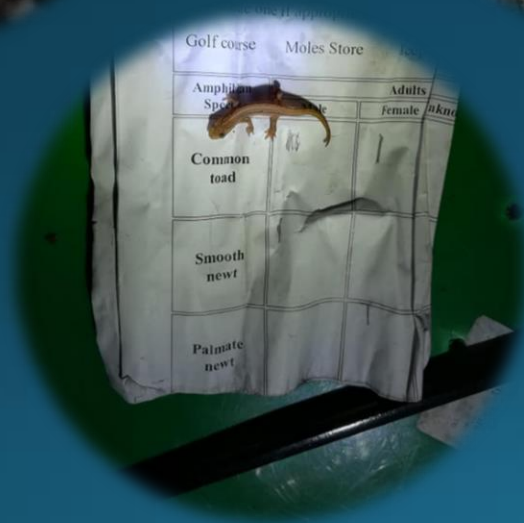




Reasons to help  
at a Toad Patrol



It's a great way to learn how to  
ID amphibians!



You will see a range of species, of both sexes and possibly even juveniles.

# *A chance to spot the unusual*

Amphibians remarkable regeneration abilities: Polymely, etc



Pigment variations: Albinism, melanism, erythrism, etc



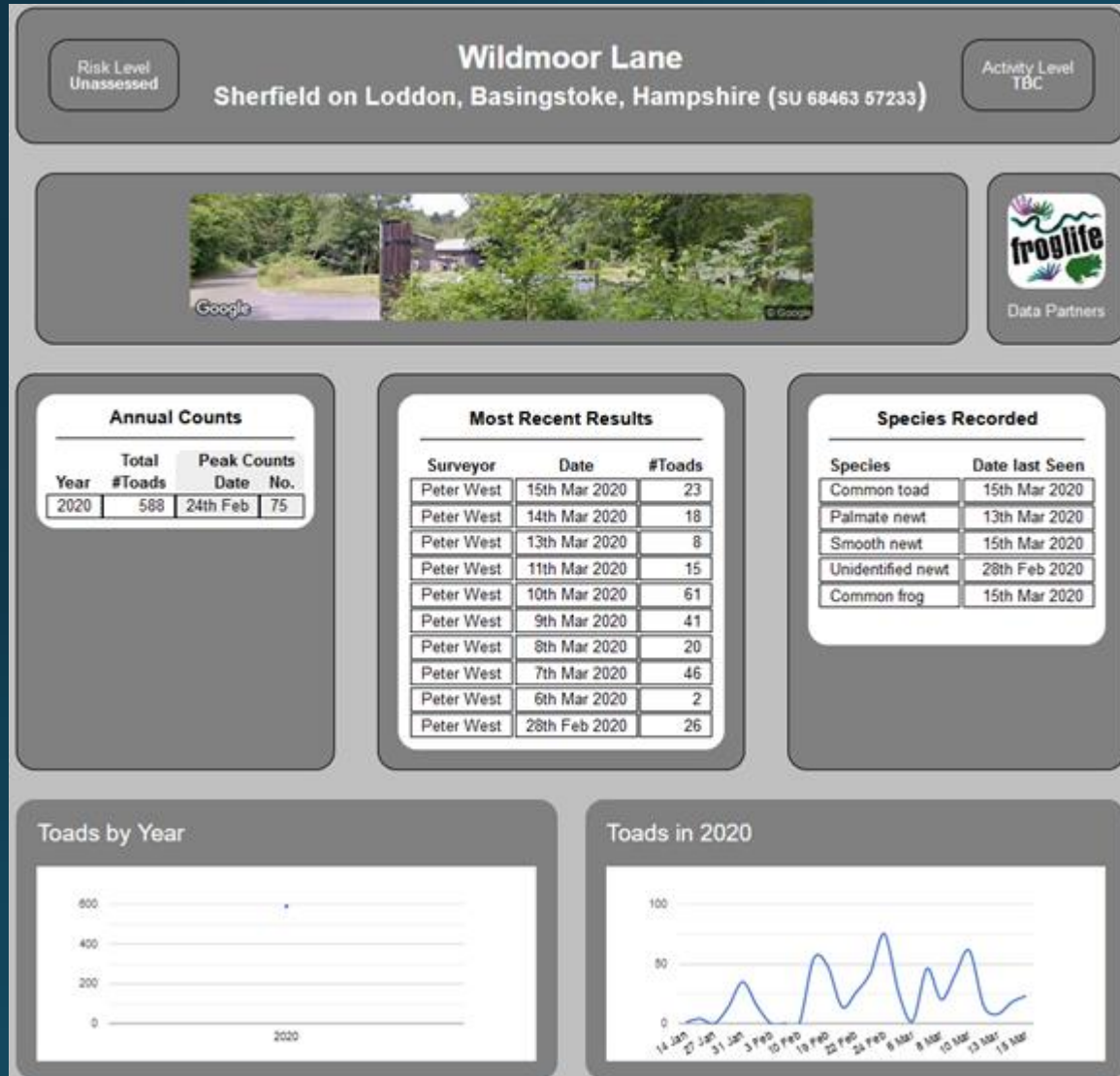


*Other wildlife are around after dark as well...*



# Last & definitely not least...

## saving lives!



## Wildmoor Lane 2020

(cut short by COVID-19 lockdown)

- Total toads 588
- Total deaths by traffic 68
- Roughly 12% casualties
- This is with toad patrollers out every suitable night!

Busier crossings are often much worse, Cufaude Lane has been known to have 30%+ casualties on some patrols.



# *What equipment do I need?*

- Hi-Vis vest or other reflective clothing.
- Wear plenty of warm layers with a waterproof jacket, hat, gloves and waterproof or stout shoes.
- A strong torch with good battery life, a rechargeable torch will save you a fortune in batteries.
- A clean bucket (no cement residue, chemicals, etc). If patrolling on more than one site, its best to use site specific kit and keep everything clean.
- A notepad and pencil can come in handy.



# *First time patrollers*

- Meet with the Patrol Manager at the crossing, before it gets dark if possible
- They should ask you to sign the Froglife patroller declaration form
- They should also walk the crossing route and point out specific hazards
- The Patrol manager will explain why amphibians are crossing the road and where they are going, along with other details of the crossing
- You will be given a risk assessment and do's and don'ts which you should read and follow



# Keeping safe – do's and don'ts

- Never patrol alone & carry a mobile phone in case of an incident
- Always wear hi vis (be careful not to obscure with a rucksack or bag, if you are kneeling down turn sideways so that reflective strips are visible)
- Never step into the road when a vehicle is coming (even to save an amphibian), and be aware of road/traffic conditions
- Take a torch, but be careful not to shine in the eyes of other patrollers or at approaching cars which could dazzle the driver. Always carry a spare torch or batteries.
- Stay warm and dry – toads like wet nights, so wear warm and waterproof clothing. If you feel cold or unwell tell your coordinator and stop immediately.
- Sign in and out with the patrol coordinator for that evening (log your time)
- Always be respectful and polite to drivers, pedestrians and other patrollers.

# Children & vulnerable persons

## ARG UK Guidance

- ARG UK does not allow unaccompanied children (under the age of 18) to attend any ARG activity
- Even when accompanied, we have concerns about children under the age of 16 on busy roads – in case of accidents (a child is more likely to dash out in front of a vehicle to save a toad), the adult in charge has to supervise very closely
- We do allow 16-18 year olds as long as a parent/carer/guardian is present
- Similarly with vulnerable adults we require a carer or guardian to be present at all times.
- We dissuade large groups of children e.g. school or scout/guide groups as it would be difficult to supervise safely

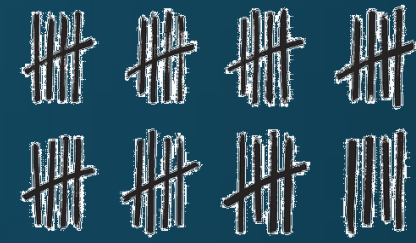


# Amphibian welfare (Biosecurity)

- Wear vinyl gloves or nitrile at a push - **gloves must be powder and latex free**  
or
- Bare damp hands can be used **but only if you are not using hand sanitiser** which could harm the animal.
- Use a clean or dedicated bucket for each crossing site to avoid spreading disease
- ARG UK Advice note 4 - Amphibian Disease Precautions, A Guide for UK Fieldworkers



# Recording animals found

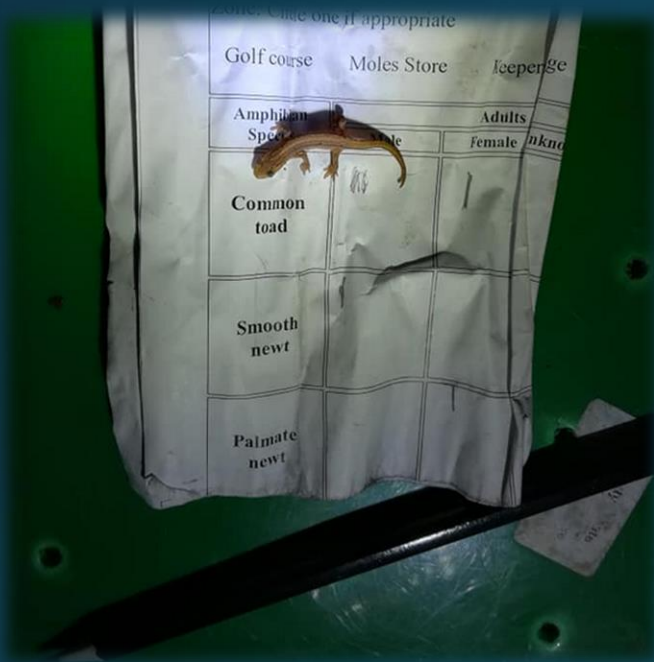


Different patrols have different methods.

Patrollers either keep a tally as they go, or numbers are counted at a central point.

If keeping a tally, pass your numbers on to the patrol manager when you leave or message them as soon as you get home.

HIWARG members can add their count via their members portal if at a HIWARG crossing.





# Recording for HIWARG members

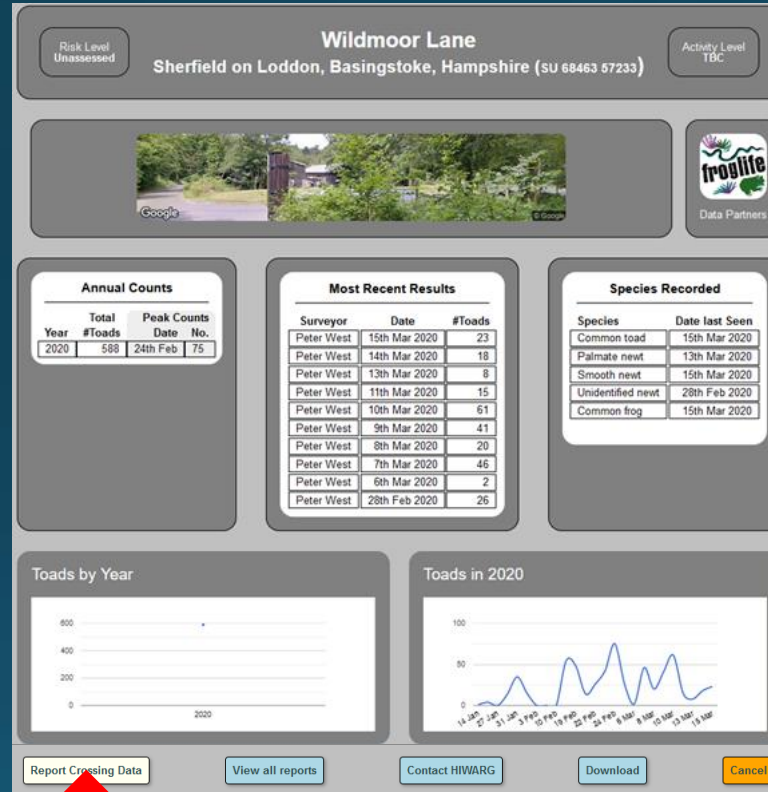
1.

Click the Toad Crossings Icon in the Members Portal



2.

Click on your Toad Crossing on the map



3.

Click on Report Crossing Data

### Step 1 - Survey Parameters

Surveyor name:  Surveyor email:

Toad crossing name:

Patrol start:  Patrol end:

Enter numbers of amphibians observed in the appropriate cell


Records from the Toad Crossing at Wildmoor Lane  
by Peter West (petewest74@hotmail.com) on 2020-12-22 between 19:50 and 22:30

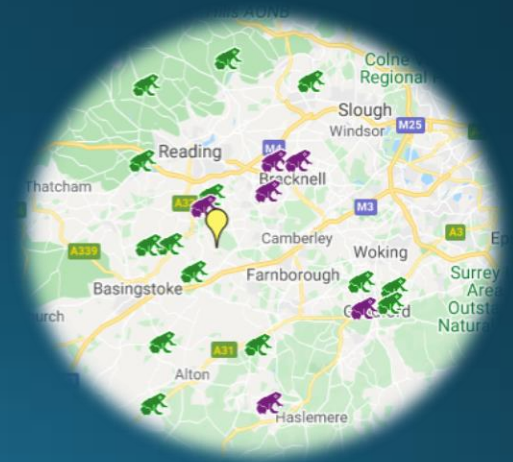
Species	Adults			Juveniles	Corpses	Total
	Male	Female	Unknown			
Common toad						
Natterjack toad						
Great crested newt						
Smooth newt						
Palmate newt						
Unidentified newt						
Common frog						
Water frog						
Unidentified frog/toad						
Survey Comments (optional):						

4.

Enter start and end time, then enter records of animals found and click Submit

# Want to help?

- Contact us to volunteer  
(  Facebook or email [info@hiwarg.org.uk](mailto:info@hiwarg.org.uk) )
- If we don't have a toad crossing in your area, we can help identify your nearest crossing.
- [www.froglife.org/what-we-do/toads-on-roads/tormap/](http://www.froglife.org/what-we-do/toads-on-roads/tormap/)





Chris Packham & Megan McCubbin joined the Cufaude Lane Toad Patrol, to film the following video in March 2019



# Toad Patrolling is...

So I get it!

It starts with being horrified 🤢 that a creature you are terrified of is getting squashed on the road. So you go to wave at a few cars 🚗 and within 5 minutes you are holding these creatures and falling head over heels in love ❤️ as you scoop them up into your bucket. You spend the next couple of weeks of your life doing this every evening. The following year you spend nearly every evening for two months patrolling said stretch of road. Just when you think sanity is restored you find yourself spotting some splodgy green stuff in a stream and spend 10 minutes every day staring at it. Then find yourself whooping with delight 😄 when it starts squirming about.

What is the next stage of this illness?

And they say Covid-19 is highly contagious! 🐸😊🐸😊🐸😊

Debbie,  
Cufaude Lane Toad Patroller,  
April 2020

Every single person makes a difference!  
Come And patrol with us.