

# Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*)



The Common frog has smooth, moist skin. It can be in mottled shades of green, yellow or brown and they have a Distinct brown patch behind the eye

They have a narrow body and waist

They move in springy leaps (hops) using their long legs (especially hind legs) which combined with their webbed toes makes them fast swimmers. Their call is a soft repetitive croak

They tend to be most active at night when they feed on a wide variety of invertebrates.

Common frogs live in semi aquatic habitats During winter they hibernate under rocks, in compost heaps, or underwater buried in mud and vegetation.

They prefer to breed in shallow water bodies such as puddles, ponds, lakes, and canals.

Depositing 'rafts' of spawn, often containing up to 2000 eggs.

Each small black egg is surrounded by a clear jelly capsule

Tadpoles are black when they hatch but develop light bronze speckles as they mature

Native to the UK.

Found throughout Britain and Ireland.

Widespread and common across Europe but numbers thought to be declining.

Threatened by degradation of habitats and the introduction of disease.

The Common Frog is easily our most recognisable amphibian. They're found throughout Britain and Ireland, in almost any habitat where suitable breeding ponds are near by.

Garden ponds are extremely important for common frogs, particularly in urban areas.

A year in the life...

## Spring

- Adult frogs emerge from their overwintering sites in early spring
- Head straight to a pond to breed
- Frogs reach breeding age at 2-3 years old. Males have a single vocal sac under the chin and may 'piggy back' to the pond on a female.
- Clumps of spawn (eggs) are laid in ponds anytime from January (in south-west England) onwards.
- Depending on local weather conditions, two to four weeks later tadpoles will hatch out.
- Tadpoles feed on algae and water fleas.
- After around 16 weeks the tadpoles start to grow back legs, followed by front legs.

## Summer

- When tadpoles have fully absorbed their tails, they leave the water as tiny froglets.
- Adult frogs may be seen around ponds or in damp areas of the garden as they attempt to cool off in the hot weather.
- Summer is also the time when the frog disease ranavirus is active.

## Autumn

- Adults and tiny new froglets spend autumn preparing for hibernation.
- They feed on insects, slugs and worms.
- If the weather stays warm, then ranavirus outbreaks may continue into autumn.

## Winter

- Common Frogs spend the winter sheltering under rocks, in compost heaps or at the bottom of ponds.
- They don't hibernate as such, and may take advantage of milder patches of weather to come out and forage





# Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*)



Generally brown-grey in colour the Common toad skin is 'warty' and relatively dry.

They produce a toxin from their skin, which makes them distasteful to predators.

They have broad and puffy body appearance with short legs which are used for crawling rather than hopping. Their call is a high-pitched, rough "qwark-qwark-qwark".

They are largely nocturnal and feed on a variety of invertebrates and even small vertebrates

They inhabit terrestrial areas which include woodland, scrub and coarse grasslands.

Common toads prefer deeper water bodies in which to breed, including fish ponds, farm ponds, reservoirs or village ponds.

They lay long jelly-like strings of spawn. Strings contain a double row of eggs. Tadpoles can be distinguished by their shorter tail and bulkier head.

Native to the UK. Found throughout Britain but absent from Ireland. Large European range but absent from many islands. Widespread in the UK but numbers thought to be declining rapidly. Threatened by a loss of breeding ponds and disruption of migration routes.

The common toad is one of the UK's most charismatic animals and for many of us it is one of our earliest wildlife memories.

A year in the life...

## Spring

- Adult toads emerge from their overwintering sites in late spring and start migrating towards the pond on mild, damp evenings.
- Toads tend to return to ancestral breeding ponds along the same routes each year and are at risk of being killed on the roads.
- Males wait near to the pond and 'piggy back' on females as they make their way.
- Breeding is usually a little later than Common Frogs.
- Females lay strings of spawn (eggs) wrapped around vegetation.
- Depending on local weather conditions, two to four weeks later tadpoles will hatch out.
- The tadpoles are black and may form shoals. After around 16 weeks the tadpoles start to grow back legs, followed by front legs.

## Summer

- When they have fully absorbed their tails the tadpoles leave the water as tiny toadlets, usually after rain.
- Adult toads spend little time in water and can tolerate much drier conditions than frogs.
- They may remain in one area for long periods over the summer months, hunting for slugs, spiders and insects at night.

## Autumn

- Autumn is spent preparing to see out the winter.
- Some adults make a return migration to overwintering areas.

## Winter

- Toadlets and adults spend the winter buried down in mud, under compost heaps or amongst dead wood.
- They do not hibernate as such and may take advantage of milder patches of weather to come out and forage.





# Natterjack Toad (*Epidalea calamita*)



Natterjack toads can be green, brown or cream, with dark 'warts' on their backs often with yellow or red tips. They have a obvious pale cream/yellow stripe along back

They have shorter legs than Common Toads and are quite quick on land – being known to run rather than walk or hop – but they are poor swimmers. Their call is a loud rasping rolling croak 'errr...errr...errr'. Which can be heard from up to 2km away on quiet nights.

They are active at night and like to feed on moths, woodlice and other invertebrates

They inhabit coastal sand dune systems, coastal marshes and sandy heaths.

They are often associated with shallow, warm ponds in sand dune slacks as they require warmer water in which to breed successfully.

They lay long jelly-like strings of spawn similar to the common toad, however, eggs are in single rather than double rows.

Natterjacks are native to the UK, but very rare and are confined to just a handful of sites. Common across Western Europe. They are threatened by the loss of coastal habitat

Natterjack Toads are found on about 60 sites in Britain and occur on a small number of sites in south-west Ireland. Notable populations exist on the sand dunes along the Merseyside coast and on the Scottish Solway; in Cumbria, there are notable populations on the coast and a single colony on an upland fell site. The Natterjack used to be quite common on the Surrey and Hampshire heaths and also around the coast of East Anglia but sadly only one or two colonies now remain. Re-introduction programmes have now started to boost populations and restore the range of this once widespread amphibian.

A year in the life...

## Spring

- Adults emerge during March/April and breeding takes place from April onwards.
- Males wait by the edge of the pond making loud rasping noises – this is where the Natterjack toad gets its name from.
- Females lay single strings of spawn (rather than double strings like the common toad).

## Summer

- Breeding can continue into early summer.
- Natterjack tadpoles are slightly smaller than common toad tadpoles and have a grey spot on the throat.
- The yellow stripe becomes obvious as the tadpoles start growing legs.

## Autumn

- Adults and newly metamorphosed toadlets spend the autumn preparing for winter.

## Winter

- Natterjack Toads spend the winter sheltering from the very coldest weather – buried down in mud, under logs and rocks, etc.

***N.B. Natterjack Toads have full legal protection under UK law making it an offence to kill, injure, capture, disturb or sell them, or to damage or destroy their habitats. This applies to all life-stages.***

