



Toads on Roads

Patrol Pack

Important information for

ALL Toad Patrollers

www.froglife.org

1 Loxley
Werrington
Peterborough
PE4 5BW

01733 602102

Updated February 2018



Patrol Pack

CONTENTS

Contents	2
Background	3

For all Toad Patrollers

1. What does toad patrolling involve?	4
2. Staying Safe	6
3. Patrolling with children and vulnerable people	8
4. Note on your personal information	9
5. Roles	9

Blank Registration Form

PLEASE SEND ALL REGISTRATION FORMS TO

TOADS@FROGLIFE.ORG

Any other enquiries email info@froglife.org

BACKGROUND

Common toads are very particular about where they breed and follow the same migration route back to their ancestral ponds each year. If something is constructed in their path, they carry on regardless. Unfortunately, if this something is a road then the toads are at risk of being killed by traffic or becoming trapped in drains.

To save these intrepid travellers there are various steps that can be taken - including displaying road warning signs to make drivers more aware, lowering kerbs and setting up a Toad Patrol. A Toad Patrol is a group of volunteers who help local toads and monitor the stretch of road that they are crossing.

Froglife holds the database of amphibian migratory crossings for The Department for Transport. A manager of a toad crossing that features on this database is able to apply to the local authority for road warning signs to be installed during the migration period (February to April) or for dropped kerbs to be installed along the stretch of road the toads are using.

Monitoring by Toad Patrols over the last 30 years has shown significant population declines in common toads over the last 30 years. In 2016 we released a report showing on average toads in the UK have declined by 68% in the last 30 years, and the decline has been greatest in the south east of England. You can read the report here <http://dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0161943>.

1. What does toad patrolling involve?

HOW DO I PATROL A TOAD CROSSING?

Patrollers are volunteers who take on the task of saving toads by seeing them across the road in spring at their habitual crossing. This usually involves picking each toad up around the middle and placing in a bucket on one side of the road then transporting them across to a safe release site on the other side.

You need to bring a clean bucket, a high visibility jacket, a strong torch, and any other equipment noted by your Patrol Manager. Most patrols are co-ordinated locally by a volunteer Patrol Manager, who works to ensure a rota, and to understand and communicate safety constraints on site.

Safety is paramount, and we ask that as a patroller, you **read the safety briefing** here, and take responsibility for following it, along with any additional briefings from the Patrol Manager. Please note, if the road is too busy or has poor visibility, **DO NOT** attempt to rescue toads.

Some patrols are very busy and intense with up to a thousand toads crossing over a month, needing many volunteers, others are slower, with rainy nights bringing toads in their tens rather than hundreds. Crossings can be long - a couple of miles; and complex - there may be several ponds in the same area. Toads may also be migrating *along* a road not across it.

For new patrols it may not be known exactly where the crossing is. Sometimes the toads are clearly heading in a particular direction, and just watching them for a few minutes will reveal it. Others may take more time, and a bit of ingenuity. Asking passers-by, looking on maps and peering over hedges might reveal an answer - just remember, toads are not necessarily heading for the pond that is nearest!

When you have read the safety briefing, please fill in and send back the Patroller Registration Form, this will ensure you have status as a registered, insured volunteer, and help with long term communication if there are problems locally.

If you are planning to patrol with child volunteers, we are delighted. However, please read the section on patrolling with children below and consider for yourself if you are happy with the risks in your locality.

WHEN SHOULD I PATROL?

Toads tend to start moving around dusk and will continue into the night, depending on how cold it gets; usually you only really need to patrol during the first part of the evening when there is a high likelihood of them encountering traffic.

Toads can emerge from hibernation any time from January onwards, depending on local weather conditions; they tend to emerge a little later than frogs. The patrol can then last through until May.

Amphibian movements are very dependent on weather so it's crucial to check local forecasts; key signs to look out for are: first mild temperatures (at least $>5^{\circ}\text{C}$), together with rain.

When these conditions have been identified it's a good idea to start monitoring the site - if you can, check the site every evening or at least during/after appropriate patches of weather. It may be easiest to have one person coordinating who can draw up a rota so not all volunteers are out all the time; if a Patroller discovers a particularly busy crossing one night they can then call on reinforcements.

WHY SHOULD I RECORD NUMBERS?

We ask Toad Patrollers to record the numbers of toads and other amphibians they help across the road, and how many they see killed, then give this to the Patrol Manager to collate for the season. The Patrol Manager then returns the numbers to us at Froglife. This data feeds into national monitoring projects and helps us determine how the UK's toad population is faring as a whole. The numbers can give you a good idea of how successfully your patrol is helping local populations, but bear in mind there can be various other influences on toad numbers such as the weather causing them to move later at night when they're not seen.

In 2017 over 82,000 toads were helped across the UK's roads. A recording form is available at the end of the pack. **Please return your form at the end of the season!**

2. Staying Safe

Your own safety is the primary concern, if the road is clearly dangerous, or has poor visibility, **DO NOT** attempt to rescue any toads. Likewise if you have any health conditions that might make you more vulnerable to traffic, please keep yourself safe and do not take on any exposed patrolling without support.

ROAD SAFETY:

- Where there is no footway or verge, walk in single file along the right hand side of the road.
- Cross busy roads in a group, and if applicable, at the point designated by the Patrol Manager.
- Wear reflective clothing -- *when picking up toads, kneel sideways on to the road so to ensure that the high visibility strips are visible to both sides of traffic, and where possible make sure that your reflective clothing is not covered by coats and bags.*
- Wear good, solid shoes on so you don't slip or trip.
- Carry a torch and take spare batteries or a spare torch – to find toads and to warn approaching traffic
- Be sensible and remain aware of your surroundings.
- Keep your ears open - do not use headphones or your mobile in the road.
- If traffic is coming towards you and a toad; encourage the driver to slow down with your torch, before rescuing the toad. If the driver does not slow down, please move out of the road.
- Please remain courteous and professional to drivers, neighbours, and each other.

BIOSECURITY

Due to their permeable skin, amphibians can absorb chemicals and other substances from your skin. If possible, please use disposable gloves when handling amphibians. If you are unable to obtain these please ensure that you do not use hand sanitiser or liquid soap prior to handling amphibians.

OTHER SAFETY MEASURES

- Make sure you have someone with you, or that someone knows where you are.
- Stay in touch - If possible carry a mobile phone and the numbers of other patrollers if you are in a group.
- Wear a warm waterproof coat and trousers, with gloves, if it is cold – *toads like wet weather more than we do.*
- Make sure you know where the safe place to release toads is.
- Keep safe from germs – *You may want to wear disposable gloves when handling amphibians. Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.*
- Be careful of cuts and scratches, and avoid contact with dirty water. If patrolling away from home, carry a first aid kit.
- Some patrols may find it appropriate to place advance warning signs for drivers to help protect both the toads and yourselves – these might be provided by the Council, or homemade. Please see the Patrol Managers section on signage.

Follow any additional safety instructions from your patrol manager, which may be verbal, or may be written here.

Make sure you fill in and return the Patrollers Registration Form, which will ensure you are insured. Please return to toads@froglife.org

*You are under **no obligation** to undertake or take part in a Toad Patrol. If you are uncertain or have concerns about undertaking or taking part, under no circumstances should you continue.*

3. Patrolling with children and vulnerable people

Froglife welcomes and endorses children who volunteer at Toad crossings, this is a rewarding way of supporting nature for a stronger future, moreover, children bring sharp eyes and toad-rescuing energy.

However, we cannot ask children to take the same responsibility for themselves that adults do, nor can we ask them to decide if a patrol is safe for them – this is entirely down to the parent or guardian. You are the best person to make these decisions as you know your child and his or her capabilities. We thus ask that anyone under 18 is accompanied by a parent or guardian, and that they are registered by the parent or guardian too. On the other hand, we suggest parents listen to the advice of Patrol Managers, who know the area and the hazards well.

The same applies to vulnerable adults in need of support, in which case we would ask that a keyworker or parent accompanies the adult participating.

While the final decision is down to the parent, we would suggest that patrols with children will be safer and more satisfying in some of these circumstances:

- If the collection area is wide and level and with space for children to rescue toads away from the road.
- The road is a minor road with slow traffic and good visibility.
- In ideal circumstances: the edge of the road is fenced, or a temporary fence is erected.
- Children collect toads into a bucket on one side of the road, then are escorted across the road by an adult for release.
- Children are briefed not to follow toads onto the road, and not to rescue toads from the road or its verge.
- All parties follow the safety instructions

Occasionally we have enquiries from groups such as scout groups about helping with a patrol. Unfortunately Froglife cannot take liability for children without their parents or guardians if they are working at the roadside, however it may be that the group's own insurance covers you for this activity.

4. Note on your personal information

Froglife commits to hold your data securely and only for the purposes it was given.

When you volunteer with us as a toad patroller, your contact details automatically pass to the Patrol Manager, and Area Co-ordinator where there is one. We request that the Patrol Manager, and Area Co-ordinator, also holds your information securely and only for the purpose it was given.

In most cases, the Patrol Manager and Area Co-ordinator are volunteers. In a small number of cases, they are professional or voluntary representative of an organisation, for example a Wildlife Trust, Amphibian and Reptile group, County Council, or local city farm. In all these cases, the organisation will only keep the information for the purpose it was given and will not share it.

5. Roles

Patroller – A volunteer who helps toads across roads. They must read the safety information and fill in a registration form for official status.

Patrol Manager – Co-ordinates the local patrol. In some cases they are the only patroller. Responsible for risk assessment, communication, general support, and data recording at the end of the season. Usually a volunteer, occasionally a professional.

Area Co-ordinator – supports all patrols in an area. Not all areas have one. The Co-ordinator will usually help with volunteer co-ordination, liaison with the council and profile raising across the area. In some cases, they will stand in for Patrol Managers when absent.

Council – Is responsible for making decisions about signage. In some areas, they have an ecologist who can help and champion Toads on Roads crossings. They may be able to provide other help.

Froglife – Co-ordinates the overview of all crossings across Britain, and updates the official Department of Transport database of crossings. This work is currently unfunded and we are seeking support to develop it to provide more.

