

Jersey Toad, Crapaud or Western Common Toad *Bufo spinosus*



The Jersey toad is most often found in the west of Jersey, as well as in garden and amenity ponds elsewhere in the island. It has declined or disappeared from agricultural areas where it was once common. The species is at its northern edge in Jersey, the only part of the British Isles where it occurs, though it is also found in western France, Iberia and North Africa.



Size – A robust toad, growing up to 12 cm, females are larger than males and can be very bulky in appearance.



Features – Blunt snout and a deep head, with beautiful deep bronze-coloured eyes; warty skin (sometimes spiny in appearance) with a large gland behind each eye. Variable in colour but usually brownish or greyish, sometimes with darker markings.

Habitat – Semi-natural breeding populations occur at Les Landes and other western locations as far as Ouaisne; most breeding colonies are now in islanders' gardens, where breeding success can be greater due to ponds being topped up by their owners in summer. Hibernation is November – January.

Feeding – Any small, moving prey, though ants, beetles, spiders etc. are most common in the diet. Tadpoles eat aquatic detritus and vegetation.

Reproduction – Breeding often begins by mid-January (after the annual thermal minimum) but is much more variable than in other toads – spawn strings may still be laid as late as April. This behaviour evolved to cope with the hotter, dryer habitats found further south in the species' range. Each female produces two strings of spawn wrapped around aquatic vegetation. Some early spawn can be killed by late frosts. Tadpole development is variable, depending on the weather, and late tadpoles sometimes fail to develop due to ponds drying up.



The Jersey toad is protected by the Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000.