

RUSHCLIFFE AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE SURVEY

Introduction

Nottinghamshire has nine of the UK's native amphibian and reptile species, as well as several non-native species. Twenty years have elapsed since the first designated public survey of these species that culminated in the publication of *Frogs and Friends - The Distribution and Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles in Nottinghamshire* in 2004. Data has continued to accumulate since then resulting in over 6,000 site records of amphibians and reptiles in the county database.

There are numerous sites, such as garden ponds, where there has been no update of information since the 1990s. Ponds have disappeared and new ones created and considerable development has taken place and continues to do so, together with new roads and transport links that have contributed to further habitat loss and isolation. We now need to update the current information on amphibian and reptile distribution in Nottinghamshire, as well as gathering data on any population changes for each of the species.

Communication methods have also radically changed over the last twenty years with the decline of local newspapers and the onset of the smart phone, social media and citizen science. For spring 2019, we are piloting a new amphibian and reptile survey of the Borough of Rushcliffe, mainly aimed at using social media and internet, with the aim that if it produces good results, the survey will be rolled out across Nottinghamshire in 2020.

Identification

Correct identification is key to the survey not only for obtaining the right distribution of species but essential in the possible designation of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). We are, therefore, requesting photographs to be sent in wherever possible as confirmation of records. To assist identification guides published by the Amphibian and Reptile Trust can be downloaded from (www.arc-trust.org).

[Amphibian ID Guide](#) and [Reptile ID Guide](#)

Another aim of the survey is for recorders to look out for a variant of Smooth Newt that has occasionally been seen in the county and is possibly being mistaken for Palmate Newt. At present, it is deemed rare but widespread in the county. The variation is apparent in the males, which are of normal Smooth Newt size, and manifests itself in the newt having webbed hind feet and a seemingly filamentous tail. Photographs of such a newt found at Martin's Pond, Nottingham in 2011 are featured below (Appendix 1) in comparison with a Nottinghamshire Palmate Newt, for which, at the present time, there is only one verified site.

Submission of Records

Please submit records (including any photos) via the Nottinghamshire Amphibian and Reptile Group website <https://groups.arguk.org/nottsarg>. You do not need to create a log-in but your records will be passed to the Nottinghamshire Amphibian and Reptile Recorders for verification and the local biological records centre. If you have problems submitting records by this method please email them to the Southern Conservation Officer Ben Driver at Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust bdriver@nottswt.co.uk

Where are the gaps in Rushcliffe?

We are interested in all records but we do have a lack of records in certain parishes.

Amphibians

Common Frog – widespread but surprisingly no recent records in the following parishes:

Colston Bassett, Elton-on-the-Hill, Flawborough, Granby cum Sutton, Hawksworth, Kingston on Soar, Langar, Normanton, Scarrington, Sibthorpe, Thoroton, Thrumpton, Tithby and Wiverton, Upper Broughton

Common Toad –no recent records in the following parishes, which could be due to a lack of suitable large ponds for breeding or due to lack of terrestrial habitat.

Colston Bassett, Elton-on-the-Hill, Flawborough, Granby cum Sutton, Hawksworth, Kingston-on-Soar, Langar cum Barnstone, Normanton-on-Soar, Plumtree, Scarrington, Screveton, Sibthorpe, Stanford-on-Soar, Thoroton, Thorpe-in-the-Glebe, Thrumpton, Tithby and Wiverton, Tollerton, Upper Broughton, West Leake, Whatton-in-the-Vale

Smoot Newt – we expect they are widespread but there are some gaps in distribution, perhaps due to lack of suitable field ponds, especially in more arable dominated parishes. We have no records in the following parishes:

Bradmore, Car Colston, Colston Bassett, Elton-on-the-Hill, Flawborough, Granby cum Sutton, Hawksworth, Kingston-on-Soar, Langar cum Barnstone, Normanton-on-Soar, Orston, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Rempstone, Scarrington, Screveton, Sibthorpe, Stanford-on-Soar, Sutton Bonington, Thorpe-in-the-Glebe, Thrumpton, Tithby and Wiverton, Upper Broughton, West Leake

Great Crested Newt – central and southern part of the district are a particular stronghold, especially near to the A46 corridor. We would be interested in new records for the following areas:

Aslockton, Barton in Fabis, Bingham, Bradmore, Car Colston, Clipston on the Wolds, Cropwell Bishop, Flawborough, Flintham, Granby cum Sutton, Hawksworth, Kingston-on-Soar, Kneeton, Normanton-on-Soar, Normanton-on-the-Wolds, Plumtree, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Rempstone, Scarrington, Screveton, Shelford & Newton, Shelton, Sibthorpe, Sutton Bonington, Thoroton, Thrumpton, Tithby and Wiverton, West Leake, Whatton-in-the-Vale

Reptiles

Common Lizard – we are very interested in records for this species as the only parish we have recent records for is Cotgrave

Grass snake - they are fairly widely distributed, especially near ponds and water courses. We have no records in the following parishes:

Barton in Fabis, Bingham, Car Colston, Colston Bassett, Elton-on-the-Hill, Flawborough, Granby cum Sutton, Hawksworth, Kingston-on-Soar, Kneeton, Normanton-on-Soar, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Rempstone, Saxondale, Screveton, Shelford & Newton, Shelton, Sibthorpe, Stanford-on-Soar, Sutton Bonington, Thoroton, Thrumpton, Tithby and Wiverton, West Leake, Whatton-in-the-Vale

Slow-worm – only recorded in 11 of 56 parishes, we are particularly interested in any records of slow-worm. These legless lizards will usually be found under objects and rarely do they bask in the open, which makes them hard to find.

Adder – please contact us and send a photo if you see adder. We only have historic records for this species in Rushcliffe.

John Osborne,
Nottinghamshire Amphibian & Reptile Co-Recorder,

Ben Driver
Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

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APPENDIX 1

SMOOTH NEWT VARIANT



Fig 1: Webbed back feet of Smooth Newt

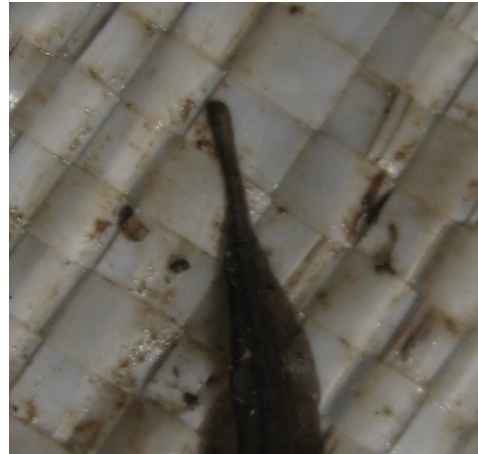


Fig. 2: 'Filamentous' tail of Smooth Newt



Fig 3: Belly pattern of male Smooth Newt

PALMATE NEWT



Fig. 4: Male Palmate Newt showing webbed feet



Fig.5: Truncated tail of male Palmate

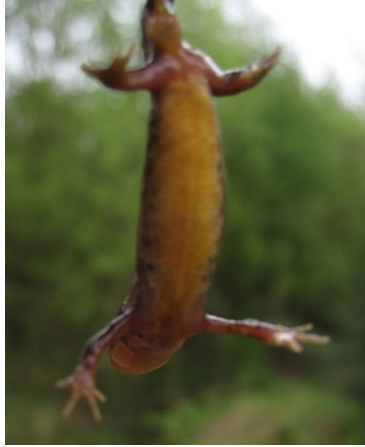


Fig. 6: Belly of female Palmate