



TADPOLE TIMES

Newsletter of Nottinghamshire

Amphibian and Reptile group

January 2025



Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter. This edition has lots of news to share and looks ahead to the 2025 Toad Patrol. It also includes details of the AGM and other dates for your diary, as well as information about the new booking system for our events, including scrub clearance and training.

The committee would also like to congratulate Maiya Evans (Chair) and Kayleigh Woodhouse (Toad Patrol coordinator) for receiving the Notts Wildlife Trust 'Wilder Champion Award'. This award recognises those individuals who are having a positive impact on nature in their community. Maiya's award is in the Under 25 section (Highly Commended), and Kayleigh's is in the Over 25 category.

From The Chair

This has been a remarkably successful year for NARG. We kicked off the year with toad patrols, which proved to be highly effective, resulting in the rescue of 1,780 Common Toads, 41 Common Frogs, 80 Smooth Newts, and 13 Great Crested Newts. Our heartfelt thanks to all of the volunteers who dedicated their time to help save our amphibians! In particular, we must acknowledge Kay, our Toad Patrol Coordinator, and the site coordinators for their outstanding organisation of these efforts.

This year, our members had the opportunity to attend 14 events, during which they were able to observe Grass Snakes, Common Lizards, Slow Worms, Common Toads, Common Frogs, Smooth Newts and Great Crested Newts. The most popular event was 'Above and Below', organised in collaboration with the Notts Bat Group. We started by searching for newts, and then conducted a bat survey, during which participants had the opportunity to observe Daubenton's Bats swooping over one of the lakes.

In 2024, we not only conducted more surveys than in previous years, but we also ran stalls at a number of additional events. We acquired new tables, information boards, banners and a gazebo, which significantly enhanced our presence. One particularly notable event was the stall we ran for two days at Sherwood Forest (see pic). Our primary objective was to actively engage children, so we offered a variety of craft activities, and invited kids to make pipe-cleaner snakes, frog masks and snake crowns. By the second day, we had exhausted our craft materials and had to pack up early! In addition to these activities, we also conducted a reptile survey using visual monitoring techniques while searching around fence posts and fallen logs. In total, we observed 32 common lizards.



Throughout the year, our committee also regularly surveyed several new sites across Nottinghamshire, all of which proved fruitful, with numerous species.

In addition to our work in Nottinghamshire, several committee members helped out in other counties. We made multiple visits to Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, where we engaged in public outreach, reptile surveys and pond dipping. Notts ARG also visited Lincolnshire to help train people in in reptile-surveying techniques.

Our group has recently undergone a significant change – namely, we have a new logo! It was time for a fresh look, and we wanted a design that better represents Notts ARG. The new logo appears at the beginning of this very newsletter (top left). We also now have a dedicated Toad Patrol logo, which will be used across all related materials. In addition, we have launched a Teemill store featuring clothing branded with our new logo.

Special thanks to **Anna Maka** for her work on the logo's.

In closing this report, I would just like to thank all those who volunteered with us this year, and special thanks to Nottinghamshire Trent University Conservation Society (CONSOC), Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Forestry England, National Trust, RSPB, Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group, ARGUK, Nottinghamshire County Council, Friends of Newstead and Annesley Country Park and White Post Farm for allowing us to survey their sites/ run events.

Maiya Evans

Chair

Nottinghamshire Amphibian and Reptile Group AGM

Our AGM will be held on Saturday 15th February, 7pm–10pm, at Annesley and Felley Parish Hall, off Byron Rd, Nottingham NG15 0AG. We have decided to run the event in person, as there's a lot to discuss. There are a lot of plans for the coming year, and there will be plenty of opportunities to help if you are willing and able.

We are currently finalising the running order for the AGM, but we've already planned various short talks on some projects we will hopefully be running with your help. There will also be a raffle (please bring unwanted items as prizes – they don't have to be amphibian/reptile-related!)

There are various roles on the committee that need to be filled this year, as well as some new posts. So we need a few new people who can spare a little time to help out. We have around five meetings a year, some via Zoom, but we try to meet in person. You don't need to come to all meetings.

The new posts are: Survey Co-Ordinator, Project Officer, Fundraiser and External Events Officer. If you want to stand for the committee, either attend the AGM, or get in touch via nottsarg@hotmail.com

We also have a guest speaker – **Margaret Cooper**, who has been running the Oxton Toad Patrol for 25 years, and even managed to close a road each year to help the toads cross!

It will be nice to see you and chat about what you're currently up to and what you would like us to do. Remember, we're all enthusiastic volunteers – just like you!

Work Parties

If you're anything like the rest of the committee, when you see a date announced for the scrub clearance, you think "Oh dear, I'm planning on washing my hair that day" or search for some other excuse to get out of it. At least, that's our first thought...! But sometimes we've even had to cancel scrub-clearance events due to lack of numbers. The fact is that unless we do this work, we can't do surveys – because the reptiles and amphibians will lose their habitat, and the species will be gone. Scrub clearance is the most important part of our work. It has a huge impact on wildlife. Reptiles especially need basking areas and places to hide and forage. Our work parties create these areas for them by spending a few hours clearing spaces. It's also a good way to meet other people who share the same interests – and it's a good workout that's cheaper than the gym! You don't need any experience or equipment (unless you want to bring your own). You'll have a good time meeting new and old friends, and having a chat and laugh. It's a very relaxed atmosphere and the work is not too strenuous – just do what you can. We have lined up a few days in January. See the last page for details.



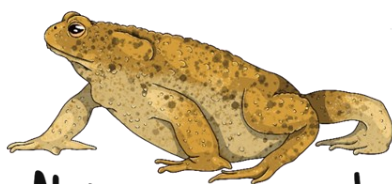
Social Media



Over the last year, we have given our social media an extra push, with more posts and also different types of content. We use our social media platforms to advertise the group and its events, and provide education about Nottinghamshire's herpetofauna, and our following has significantly increased.

You'll find us on Instagram and Facebook (on the latter, we have both our main NARG account and a new Toad Patrol page).

Use our Linktree to find and follow us.

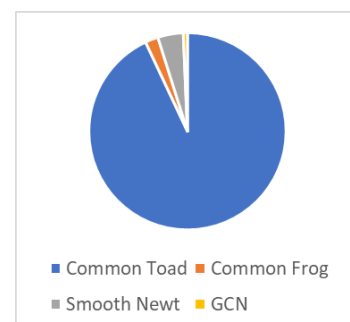


Notts Toad Patrol

2024 Results

2024 marked the second year of Notts ARG's involvement in toad patrols across Nottinghamshire, and my first year volunteering as Toad Patrol coordinator. Patrols commenced early – at some sites, toads began crossing in the first week of February. We observed two distinct peaks in amphibian crossings, interspersed by week-long cold spells: one around 15th February, another around 12th March. During the 2024 season, we successfully saved:

- 1,780 Common Toads
- 41 Common Frogs
- 80 Smooth Newts
- 13 Great Crested Newts (GCN)



This success is the result of the dedication of our hard-working volunteers, coupled with the excellent publicity generated by the patrols. Notably, we were featured on the front page of the *Nottingham Post* and in online articles by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG). Cont. P3

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New Sites Registered and Ongoing Efforts

We registered four new patrol sites during the 2024 season: Oaks Lane, Lamin's Lane, Crow Lane and Pleasley Mills (the site with the most amphibians in 2024). We are continually seeking new sites that require patrols, so if you observe amphibians crossing roads in areas without established patrols, please do let us know. Currently, we have 53 patrollers registered with Froglife, and we have already received enquiries from five new individuals expressing interest in becoming patrollers for the 2025 season.

2024 Challenges and Improvements for 2025

We are currently developing a comprehensive document that addresses gaps in the existing Toad Patrol guidelines. It includes detailed information on species identification, toad welfare and the importance of biosecurity. The document is almost complete, and will be circulated to patrollers before the start of the season.



We have scheduled a training event to introduce and implement the new guidelines.

Book your spot with the QR card at the bottom of the page.

Although this event was originally just for Nottinghamshire patrollers, it is now being promoted by ARG UK and several other ARG groups. This broadens its reach and allows patrollers from across the country to benefit from the training.

Data collection proved to be somewhat cumbersome in 2024, as we relied on Google Drive spreadsheets. After the first week of patrols, many volunteers stopped using the spreadsheets and instead shared their results through WhatsApp groups.

While this helped spread awareness and encourage participation, it also meant that each morning I had to manually update the spreadsheets by reviewing the multiple messages that had been sent overnight. In 2025, we will streamline this process, starting by trailing a mobile-friendly form for volunteers to complete. This will make data collection easier and more efficient for everyone.

Thanks to Derbyshire ARG, we now have four 'toad crossing' road signs. We will be reaching out to local councils to request permission to install these signs where they are most needed.

If you are not yet registered as a toad patroller and are interested in getting involved, please contact me at nottsargtoadpatrols@hotmail.com

Join us – and help make the 2025 Toad Patrol season our most successful yet!



Kay Woodhouse
Toad Patrol coordinator



How can you help?

Nottingham Amphibian and Reptile Group

Upcoming Events

Scrub clearance (members only)

Saturday 18th January 10am-3pm

Join us Clumber where we will be removing small trees and scrub to create basking spots for reptiles.

Scrape and pond creation

23rd January 10am-3pm

We will be meeting at Newstead and Annesley Country Park to create ponds and scrapes for the amphibians on site.

Amphibian training/Toad patrol training

Saturday 8th February 1-3.30pm

We will be hosting an online training session on Toad ecology, why and how we conduct toad patrols, how to ID and sex Frogs, Toads and Newts along with biosecurity.

Notts ARG 2025 AGM

Saturday 15th February 7-10

We will be hosting our annual AGM at Annesley and Felley Parish Hall. Talks will include: our accomplishments in 2024, upcoming projects and events, plans for 2025, toad patrols and 'The History of Oxtou Toad Patrols' by guest speaker Margaret Cooper. More to follow!!

Bits 'n' Bobs

Record Pool is a national database that anyone can use to record any wildlife they see. Access it via the QR code below or the link to the bottom right.

Send us your pictures! We want to see any amphibians or reptiles you've encountered – just tell us where and when you saw them.

What would you like to see in the newsletter? Let us know.

Are you a member? It only costs £5.00 to join. Follow the QR code below or the link to the bottom right, which will take you to our website, then click **join/donate** in the menu bar. By joining, you get to attend members-only events.

[NARG - Nottinghamshire Amphibian and Reptile Group](#)

nottsarg@hotmail.com



We hope you enjoyed this second edition of *Tadpole Times*. See you soon!

NARG T shirts.

We now have some clothing for sale, designed by Anna Maka (Instagram: [@the.raft.girl](#)). We are very grateful to Anna for her fabulous work!

Adult prices

T shirts £20

Jumpers £34

Hoodies £40

Children's prices

T Shirts £15

Hoodies £22

The group makes some money out of each sale.

A variety of colours and designs are available.

The designs will change from time to time, so keep an eye out for new styles!



<https://nottinghamshire-arg.teemill.com>

EVENT BOOKING IS NOW EVEN EASIER

We wanted to make booking events easier for you (and for us!). Although attendance levels were very good in 2024, we had difficulty keeping track of bookings and cancellations.

We have now decided to use Eventbrite. We will continue to advertise events through social media and emails, but instead of messaging us directly, you will be required to book via Eventbrite. Events will remain free to members. We aim to have a few events ready for booking by the AGM for those who wish to get involved.

This will make it much easier for members to book and cancel.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND LINKS

The link below will send you to

<https://linktr.ee/nottsarg>