



# TADPOLE TIMES

Newsletter of Nottinghamshire  
Amphibian and Reptile group



July 2025

Welcome to the third issue of our newsletter. Slow worms are the main feature in this issue, which are another reptile along with grass snakes that are under recorded in Nottinghamshire. If you would like to learn more about these beautiful animals and would like to see them, get in touch! We go out on surveys regularly. Or book onto a free course, details of which are on page 4 along with the latest news from this year's toad patrol.

## From The Chair

The year commenced with our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in February, which was attended by 30 participants. During the meeting we reflected on our activities as a group in 2024, discussed our toad patrols, and outlined our objectives for 2025. We were also pleased to have Margaret Cooper join us for an historical presentation on the 25 years of the road closure at Beanford Lane, Oxtun, during the toad migration period. Margaret talked about how Notts Wildlife Trust and the AA helped out, and how she has to raise money each year to get it closed so amphibians can cross safely.

Kay also gave a report on last year's Toad Patrol (see last newsletter).

Additionally, we welcomed three new committee members: Kitty, Li, and Sandi.

Our new committee is as follows:

- Chair: Maiya Evans
- Vice Chair and Toad Patrol Coordinator: Kay Woodhouse
- Secretary: Mike Reid
- Treasurer: Phil Bych
- Web master: Fraser Dunlop
- External Events and Survey Coordinator: Li Parkes
- Newsletter editor: Cameron Evans
- Committee Members: Kevin Clarke, Sandi Daniels, Kitty Parker

This year has been slow in terms of surveys, primarily due to weather constraints. Our survey areas for amphibians were dry by the middle of April, meaning we weren't able to conduct any events during the breeding season. However, we're very proud to have delivered the Amphibian and Reptile Groups UK Great Crested Newt Training Course in partnership with Derbyshire ARG in April (see page 5).

Although we may have been quiet on the survey side of things, we have been busy behind the scenes! At the start of the year, we managed to organise all of our reptile survey sites, by replacing old mats with new ones and readjusting transects. These transects are now all up and ready for our new pilot project led by our Survey Coordinator, Li. This new project aims get members involved in independent surveys after advanced training run by NARG. For more info please contact Li at



Margaret Cooper with the plaque presented to her by the AA

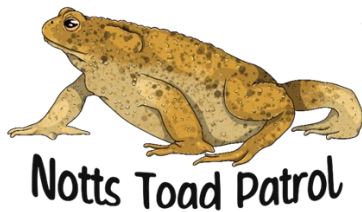
[Nottsevents@hotmail.com](mailto:Nottsevents@hotmail.com).

As well as the survey project we now also have a project focusing on our only known non-native species in Notts, the marsh frog. This project is run in the south of Notts and aims to understand the distribution of marsh frogs. If you would like to get involved, please see page 5 for more information.

It's really encouraging to see families joining us as well, not just for surveys but also running stalls. The young herpetologists get to handle the animals while learning about them, and they teach us facts about them too!

Maiya Evans





## 2025 Toad Patrol Season Our Best Year Yet!

Despite the stop-start nature of this year's spring migration (thanks to some very unpredictable weather), 2025 marked our most successful season yet for Nottinghamshire ARG's toad patrols!

A huge thank you to each and every one of our dedicated patrollers—this wouldn't be possible without your passion and commitment.

This season, our amazing volunteers helped safely move:

- **3,473 Common Toads**
- **221 Common Frogs**
- **83 Smooth Newts**
- **5 Great Crested Newts**

### Growing Our Impact: New Sites and More Volunteers

Three new patrol sites were added in 2025: Cavendish Way (Clipstone), Crown Farm Way (Mansfield), and Limetree Avenue (in Carburton, which quickly became our busiest site yet, with 1834 amphibians helped to safety!)

We're currently looking for more volunteers for Limetree Avenue in 2026. If you're local and keen to help, please get in touch.

We're always on the lookout for new patrol locations. If you've seen amphibians crossing roads in areas without patrols, please let us know.

We also welcomed 42 new volunteers this year, bringing our total to 95 registered patrollers with Froglife. What a fantastic boost to the group!

### Innovations & Improvements in 2025

To streamline efforts for 2025, we started preparations back in late 2024. This included:

- **Publishing our new Amphibian Patrol Guidelines:** Written by Maiya and I to fill gaps in national guidance and provide a comprehensive, easy-to-use resource for volunteers. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive!
- **Hosting an Online Training Session:** Held in February, the session attracted 194 sign-ups, with 80 people joining live. Originally intended for Nottinghamshire volunteers, the event quickly gained national attention and publicity from ARG UK, Froglife, the Wildlife Trust, and the Woodland Trust. Topics included: Toad ecology & why patrols are necessary, safe and effective patrolling, amphibian ID and biosecurity.
- **Launching a mobile-friendly patrol data form** – Thanks to Fraser for building this fantastic tool, making data reporting easier and more consistent.
- **Installing new toad crossing signs** at a site with high casualty rates in 2024, aiming to raise driver awareness and reduce fatalities.



- **Trialling 'toad ladders':** A big shoutout to Cameron for crafting and installing two amphibian escape ladders at a problematic site. This solution made a huge difference with only one stuck amphibian recorded this season (which was swiftly rescued by volunteers!)

### Get Involved for 2026!

We're already planning for an even bigger and better year ahead. If you're not yet a registered patroller and would like to join us in saving local amphibians, we'd love to hear from you!

Contact: [nottsargtoadpatrols@hotmail.com](mailto:nottsargtoadpatrols@hotmail.com)



# Slow Worm

The slow worm (scientific name *Anguis fragilis*) is a legless lizard and is one of three native lizards in the UK. (The other two are the sand lizard and viviparous lizard or common lizard).



It is sometimes confused as a snake, but like other lizards it has eyelids and the ability to sever or eject its tail. This is known as autotomy and distracts predators so the lizard may make an escape while its abandoned tail wriggles and is possibly eaten. The lizard's tail then generally heals over leaving a stubby end.

Slow worms spend a lot of time hidden in taller grasses, under items like logs, or below ground. They favour warm and humid areas—compost heaps are a favourite and can provide everything a slow worm needs to sustain itself. Its usual diet is slugs and snails, which make it the keen gardener's friend.

They are one of the first reptiles (the other being the adder) to be seen in the spring during surveys.

Slow worms give birth to live young and have been known to live to up to 50 years old. Adult male and female slow worms tend to be sexually dimorphic (different), with the female having dark flanks and the male being a more uniform colour all over. Older males have been known to show a blue spotting colouration, which can be quite vibrant and extensive.

They are widespread across the UK and are found in a variety of habitats, from gardens and heathland to woodland and coastal sites, but can be localised and more abundant in some areas, which is not fully understood.

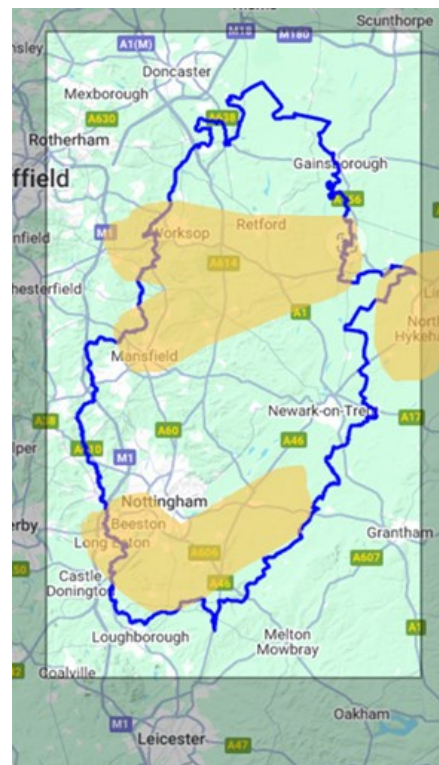
The current situation regarding records is highlighted on the map with most of the records in the north of the county (shaded areas).

Nottinghamshire slow worms are as widespread as the national distribution, with certain areas seemingly holding more numbers than others. Historic records show most districts have recorded them at some point. In my home village of Clipstone I remember seeing two juveniles at my local allotment in the 80s, so they are probably still in the area somewhere.

Since Nottinghamshire ARG was reformed it has been one of our main aims to try and locate slow worms in the county, through gathering records from land managers and the general public, and surveying sites to determine their presence or absence.

So far, we have been very successful, although having too few people to survey does hinder our progress a little.

Moreover, there must be lots of undiscovered sites in the county that hold slow worm, and we must keep trying to find them. Only by finding them can we protect them and ensure any habitat management is sympathetic to their needs so slow worm can be a success story in Nottinghamshire.



By joining the ARG and getting involved you can help in habitat work or surveying for these enigmatic animals in Nottinghamshire.

Kevin Clarke



## A chance to gain herptile survey training with NARG

11th/12th July 2025

We are offering a new training course for volunteers who would like to gain experience in identification of reptiles and learn about their ecology and how to find them in the field. We are also hoping some of you would like to have your own survey site once you are confident, which you survey whenever you want and send in the results. We are getting access to more sites than we can cope with, so any help would be gratefully accepted.



There are two in-person events, one in north Notts and the other in south Notts, plus a Zoom call which both groups must attend.

The in-person events will involve surveying established reptile mats, placing your own mat, and surveying the site for any tracks or signs of reptiles. It should not take longer than 2.5 hours but do allow a bit of flexibility as you never know what might happen!

The Zoom call will include presentations on ID, habitats and ecology of herptiles, and census techniques and practice, health and safety, and how to survey.

### Schedule

11 July, 18:00 to 20:00

Zoom call (all attenders)

12 July, 10:00 to 12:30

In-person event at Newstead & Annesley Country Park, north Notts (12 places)

12 July, 14:00 to 16:30

In-person event at Cotgrave Country Park, south Notts (12 places)

Places should be booked via Eventbrite. Please choose which in-person event you would like to attend and book a place for both that **and** the Zoom call. Places are very limited, so book while you can!



North <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/north-notts-survey-training-evening-and-day-tickets-1416467204539?aff=oddtcreator>

South <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/south-notts-survey-training-evening-and-day-tickets-1416468869519?aff=oddtcreator>



## Fundraising and Merchandise

To fund our new signage and toad ladders, we launched a Ko-fi donations page, raising £85, and created a toad patrol merchandise range via Teemill.

Toad patrol merchandise is still available and can be purchased here: <https://nottinghamshire-arg.teemill.com>

### Where your money goes:

- 20% supports Froglife's national *Toads on Roads* campaign
- 80% funds equipment and conservation efforts in Nottinghamshire



## Great Crested Newt Course

In April Notts ARG and Derbyshire ARG ran the Amphibian and Reptile Groups UK GCN training course on one of the sites known for its great crested newts. Chris Monk (Derbyshire ARG Secretary), Maiya Evans (Notts ARG Chair) and Angie Julian (National ARG UK Co-ordinator) developed the course to aid ARGUK volunteers to obtain their GCN licence, which received Natural England approval. This intensive two-day course covered all the skills necessary to apply for a CL08 licence, which allows those who hold the licence to survey GCN.

Day 1 covered legislation, ID and ecology, survey methods and techniques. It was followed by practical sessions in the field, including DNA sampling, netting, bottle trapping, and a torchlight survey. On Day 2 we met early to collect the bottle traps deployed the night before, and participants were delighted to have caught a sub-adult male GCN. We want to thank everyone who came and hope their licence applications will be successful in the future.



Volunteers from Derbyshire and Notts ARG learning from the tutors and power points and thinking 'when are we going outside?'



Their patience was rewarded!

## MARSH FROGS

A couple of years ago we were made aware of a population of non-native marsh frogs in the south of Nottinghamshire. Since then, we have started a project to identify where about the population is distributed and establish how quickly they may be spreading. This year is the first time we have managed to set a team up to help survey marsh frogs, and if anyone wishes to help, please contact us at [NottsARG@Hotmail.com](mailto:NottsARG@Hotmail.com). We can get you started with ID, location, etc.

## Notts ARG Stalls

We have a few stalls lined up for the end of the year so we will be looking for extra pairs of hands to help out. No experience or knowledge is needed to help out with these events, or any of our events for that matter, you will learn on the day as we do. So if you fancy spending a few hours helping us educate the public in amphibians and reptiles then keep your eyes peeled as these will be advertised in due course. See upcoming events on the last page.

## Nottingham Amphibian and Reptile Group

### Upcoming Events

**27th July (Sunday)** Notts ARG stall

Woodlands and Coachwood Green in Shireoaks

Family Nature Day: Bug hotel building, pond dipping, butterfly & dragonfly counts, narrowboat trips on Chesterfield Canal

**27th August (Wednesday)** Notts ARG stall (not yet confirmed, see Facebook/website for confirmation)

Wildlife day at Rushcliffe Country Park with the Friends of Group

**6th September (Saturday)** Notts ARG stall (see Facebook/website for confirmation)

Environment Day at Gedling Country Park with the Friends of Group

**14th September (Sunday)** Notts ARG stall (see Facebook/website for confirmation)

Nottingham Green Festival at Nottingham Arboretum

**8th November (Saturday)** Notts ARG stall

DANES annual showcase with DARG at Brackenhurst

### 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.

**Old newsletters** are found on our website to download if you missed any.

**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](https://nottinghamshire-arg.teemill.com)

[nottsarg@hotmail.com](mailto:nottsarg@hotmail.com)



We hope you enjoyed this third edition of *Tadpole Times*.

See you soon!

## How can you help?

### NARG T shirts.

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

#### Adult prices

T shirts £20

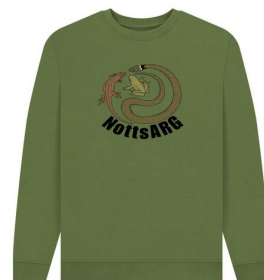
Jumpers £34

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>