

Identifying amphibians



Which species are we looking for?

Priorities . . .

- Great Crested Newt
- Common Frog
- Common Toad



But also . .

- Palmate Newt
- Smooth Newt



Rare species

Rare species – Natterjack Toads and Pool Frogs have very limited distributions. You are very unlikely to encounter these species unless you are surveying a site where their presence is already known.



Non-native species



- Non-native animals are still relatively uncommon and isolated.
- But they do occur and it's worth keeping an eye out for anything unusual.



North American Bullfrog
Lithobates catesbeiana

Common Frog

Rana temporaria

- Frogs have smooth skins and are relatively athletic, for example leaping about if netted.

Dark patch
usually present
behind the eye



Variable coloration and markings



Common Frog



- Occasional large aggregations in excess of 2000 individuals but usually much less
- Often lays spawn in ephemeral ponds which dry up during summer
- Wide range of pond pH recorded 4.5 – 8.5

Green (water) frogs



- Most likely non native species.
- Also variable in coloration.
- No dark patch behind eye.
- Bask in and around pond.
- Call loudly from late spring to summer.
- Difficult to approach.



Marsh Frog
Pelophylax ridibundus

Common Toad *Bufo bufo*

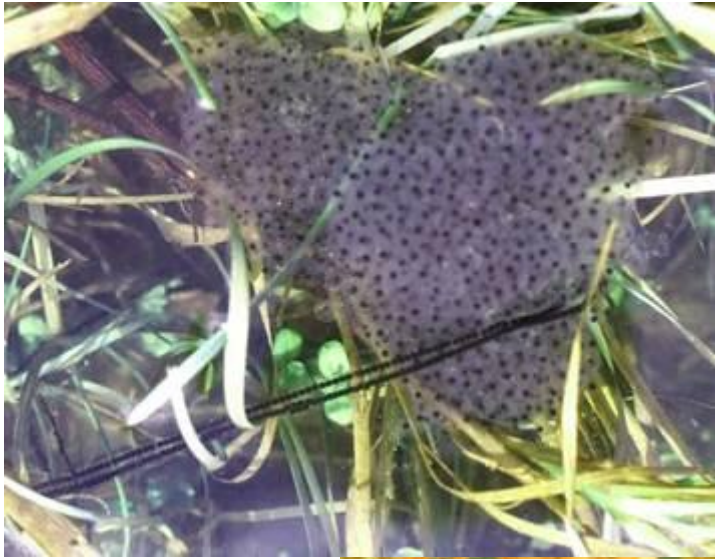
- Toads have rough, warty skins, so are readily identifiable from common frogs.





Toad spawn

- Toad spawn is deposited in long gelatinous strings, wound around water plants. It is usually produced a little after frogspawn. It is harder to spot than the more familiar frogspawn – but it may be revealed during netting.



Common Frog and Toad tadpoles

- On hatching both species are very dark. However, frog tadpoles become mottled with bronze spots.
- Toad tadpoles remain almost black.



Toad tadpoles

- Sometimes form shoals



African Clawed Frog

Xenopus laevis



Midwife Toad

Alytes obstetricans



Newts

Egg-laying – March-May



Newt eggs



Unwrap to identify



Great crested newt



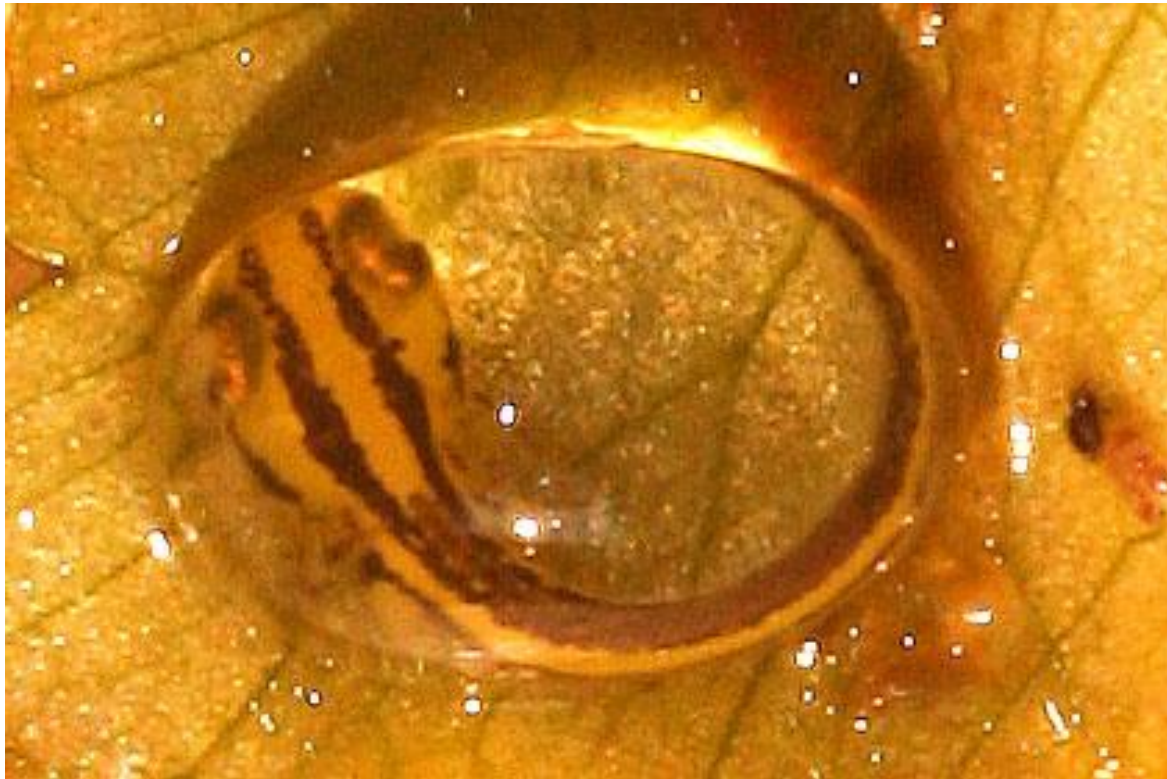
Smooth/palmate newt

Great Crested Newt eggs on...



Newt eggs

- Focus on newly-laid eggs

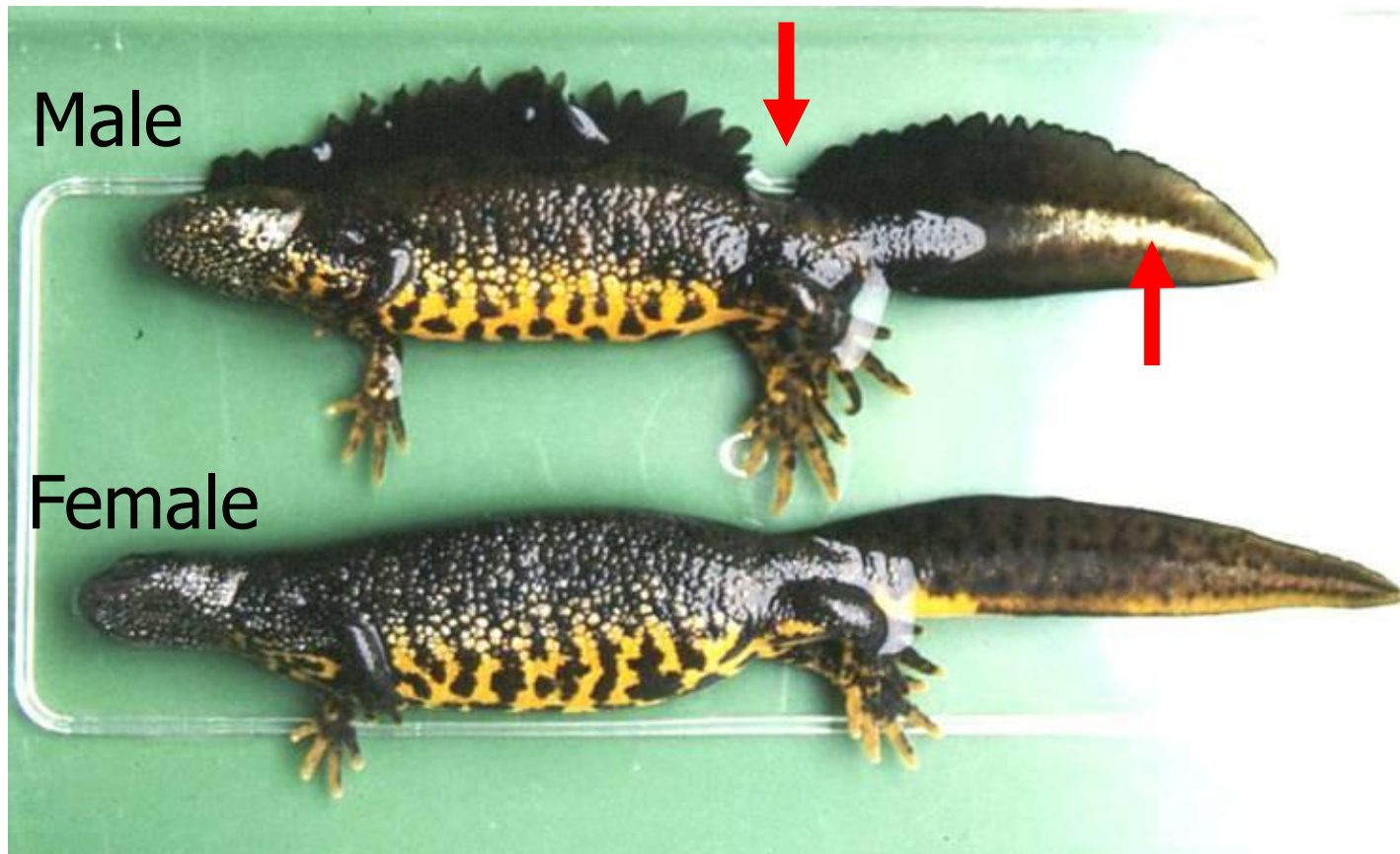


Harder to identify when larva developing

Smooth Newt (male) *Lissotriton vulgaris*



Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*



Larger than smooth newt (to 16 cm)
Male has break in crest at base of tail
Silvery/white tail stripe on tail prominent.

Palmate Newt (male) *Lissotriton helveticus*

- Male does not develop crest – but rather a low ridge running along the back.



Fred Holmes

Palmate Newt (male)

- Male has tail filament



- And hind feet have black webbing

But note Smooth Newt (male)

- Male smooth newts in peak condition can develop skin flaps around hind toes



- Male palmate

Female Palmate vs. Smooth Newt



Smooth



Palmate

Can look very similar

Smooth vs. Palmate (female)



Smooth



Smooth



Palmate

Underside of foot of female Palmate Newt

Two pale
tubercles/
nodules



Immature Great Crested Newts

Most immature newts remain in terrestrial habitat.



- However, this is not always the case in great crested newts.

Newt larvae

- Newly-hatched great crested newt larva



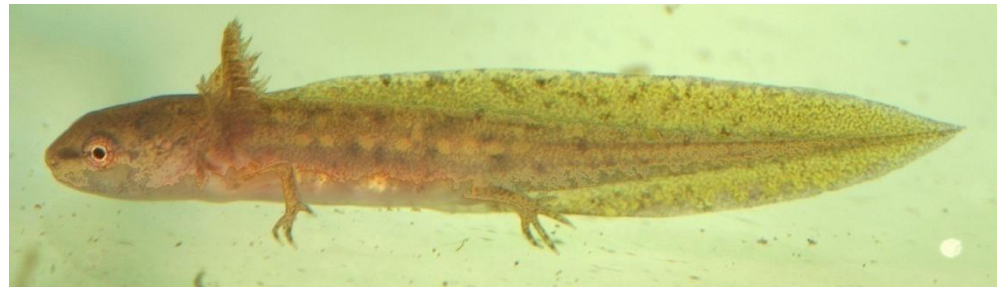
- During the early developmental stages, newt larvae can be difficult to differentiate.

Newt larvae

- Great Crested Newt



- Smooth / Palmate Newt

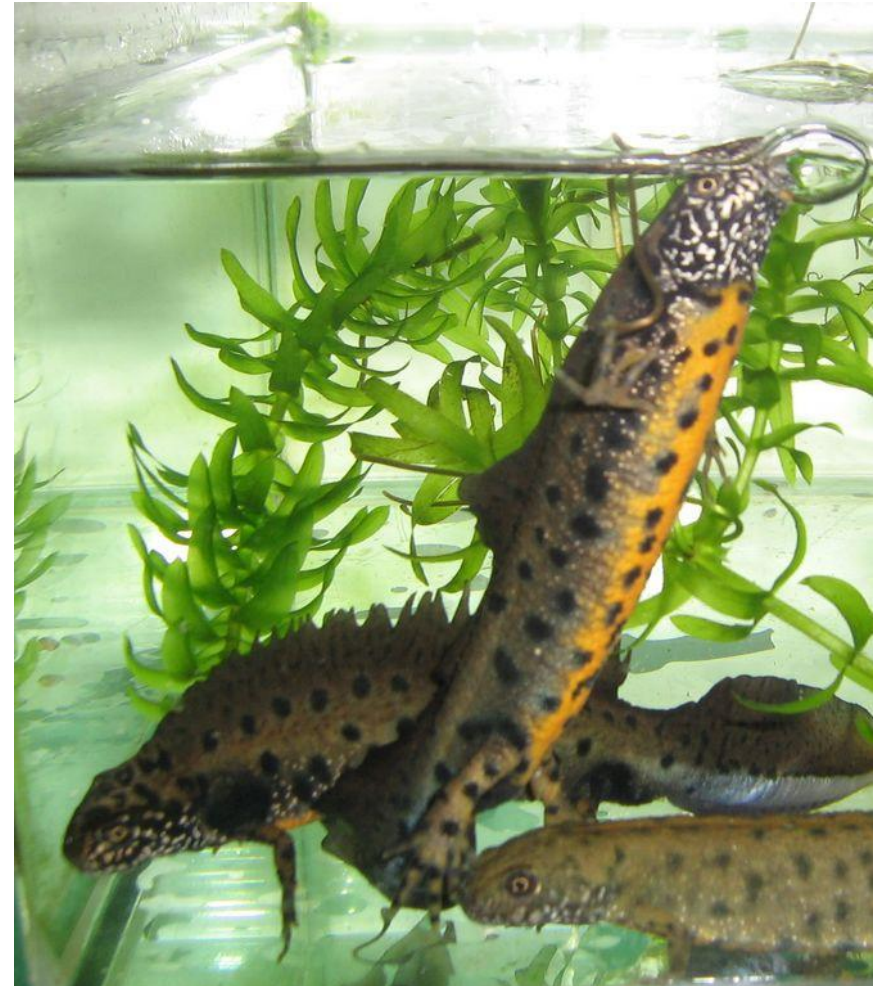


Alpine Newts

Mesotriton alpestris

Italian Crested Newts

Triturus carnifex



Away from the pond









Other species

Grass Snake



Terrapins



Acknowledgements

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