



What else lives by the pond? Guide to amphibians



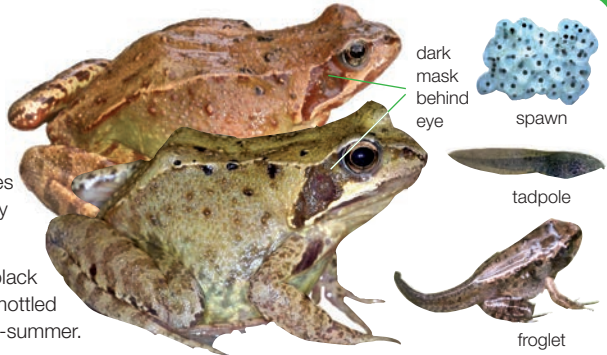
Whilst pond dipping in the **OPAL Water Survey**, you may see frogs, toads or newts, or their eggs or tadpoles. You may even catch them in your net! This guide will help you to identify all the amphibians you are likely to find. Tell us what you see! Enter your sightings at www.OPALexplorenature.org.

Common Frog

Rana temporaria

Adults 6-7 cm. Smooth, moist skin. Colour varies from brown to yellow and orange. Has varying amounts of black spots and stripes. Some females may have red markings on lower body and underneath.

Breeds in early spring. Tadpoles are black when they hatch, but soon become mottled with bronze. Froglets leave water mid-summer.



Common Toad

Bufo bufo

Adults 5-9 cm. Rough skin. Brown with darker markings. Occasionally some are almost black or brick red. Makes small hops rather than the jumps of Common Frog.

Breeds in spring. Spawn is laid in jelly-like strings, wrapped around plants. Newly developed toadlets are often very dark in colour.



Marsh Frog

Pelophylax ridibundus

Adults up to 15 cm. A non-native frog, which is becoming increasingly common. Colour varies, but usually includes bright green. Often a pale stripe running along the back.

Breeds in late spring / early summer. Males call loudly at this time by inflating a pair of balloon-like vocal sacs, one either side of the head. Prefers larger water bodies and stays in or near water throughout the summer.



Always exercise caution around water: please see health and safety guidance at www.rospea.com/leisuresafety/adviceandinformation/watersafety



Smooth Newt

Lissotriton vulgaris

Grows to 10 cm. Both males and females have orange / yellow bellies with rounded black spots. Breeding male has a wavy crest running from head to tail tip.

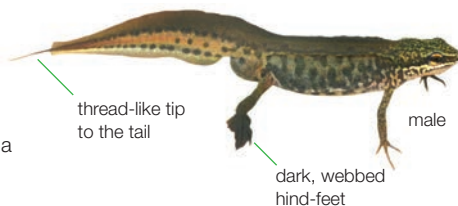
A widespread species often found in garden ponds. Adults are seen in spring, tadpoles from late spring and throughout summer (occasionally over winter).



Palmate Newt

Lissotriton helveticus

Grows to 9 cm, but sometimes much smaller. Breeding male has a ridge running along back (rather than wavy crest). Female looks similar to a Smooth Newt, but has a pale or pink throat.



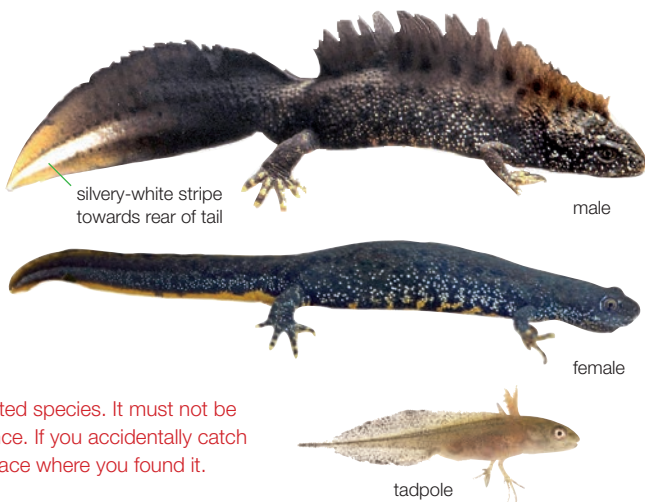
Great Crested Newt

Triturus cristatus

Grows to 16 cm, but usually smaller. Skin is rough. Both males and females have orange / yellow bellies with irregular black spots. Males have a jagged crest running along the back, with a break at the base of the tail.

Tadpoles have long fingers and toes and dark blotches on tail fin. Grow to 5 cm by late summer.

The Great Crested Newt is a protected species. It must not be handled or disturbed without a licence. If you accidentally catch one, return it straight away to the place where you found it.



The **Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK** are a volunteer network. Each group has its own programme of activities concerned with the conservation of amphibians and reptiles. Recording where amphibians (and reptiles) are found is the primary activity of most groups. Group contact information can be found at www.arguk.org.

Text by John Baker (ARC) and Lucy Carter (NHM). Images courtesy of Fred Holmes (ARC and ARG UK).

