

Common frog

Frogs are distinguished from toads by their **smooth, moist skin**. Their colour can vary from grey/brown to reddish orange. Frogs breed from March to April and their jelly-like spawn is laid in large clumps in the shallow water of ponds and pools. Frogs love eating slugs as well as snails, beetles, caterpillars and spiders.



Common toad



Toads have **rough, warty skins** and their colour varies from grey to yellow to green or brown. Their eyes are an iridescent copper colour. Toads crawl or hop rather than jump, and breed during March to May. Toads prefer deeper water than frogs and their spawn is laid in long strings. Frog and toad eggs hatch into tadpoles before transforming into miniature adults. Toads eat slugs, worms, snails, ants, beetles, earwigs and spiders.

Palmate newt

This is Scotland's smallest newt, between 6-9 centimetres. The topside of the body and tail is olive to yellow-brown, and both sexes have a pale yellow belly with very few spots. **The throat is pink or pale with no spots.** During the breeding season, the male has a low smooth crest, webbed hind feet and a black filament extending from the end of its blunt tail. This is the commonest newt in the Cairngorms, and is found in upland areas as high as 750 metres.



Smooth newt



Smooth newts are slightly larger than palmates, growing to 11 centimetres, and have an olive to yellowish brown body and tail. The belly of both sexes is orange with black spots. **The throat is whitish with black dots.** During the breeding season the male can be recognised by a wavy crest along its back and top of the tail. Smooth newts are rare in the Cairngorms.

Great crested newt

This is a large and bulky newt up to 16 centimetres long. The upper body and tail is dark brown or black with white spots on the lower flank and **the skin has fine warts**. In the breeding season the male develops an impressive jagged crest along its body and tail, as well as a white tail stripe. The belly of both sexes is bright orange with irregular black blotches. This species is very rare, found in only one site near Aviemore.



Great crested newts are a European Protected Species and fully protected under law. A license is required to handle, survey and disturb these animals. Their homes are also fully protected under law.

Newts are usually found in ponds from March to June and are more readily seen at night around the edge of the pond with the use of a torch. Newts lay single eggs wrapped in vegetation and young newts are called efts. They feed on various insects, worms, spiders and slugs. Newts have a preference for vegetated ponds surrounded by rough grass, scrub and woodland. Like frogs and toads, newts hibernate in winter usually below ground or in rock piles or dead wood.

General Comments (including any signs of disease)

Please complete this form as fully as possible, adding any general comments you wish. If you want to be contacted about future surveys, please add your name and address. Completed forms should be returned to: Stephen Corcoran, Cairngorms LBAP Officer, 14 The Square, Grantown-on-Spey, Moray, PH26 3HG or handed into a local Ranger Service. Thank you for your help.

