

4Bs Pond Watch: Amphibian Survey Guide

Welcome!

Amphibians are some of the most enchanting (and secretive) wildlife in the UK. Frogs, toads and newts live part of their lives in water and part on land, which makes ponds incredibly important places for them. By keeping an eye on local ponds this spring, you'll be helping us build a picture of how amphibians are doing across the 4Bs. This is a **relaxed, fun survey**—no special equipment, no expert knowledge needed. Curiosity is enough 😊

When to look February to late April

You can visit the same pond more than once—different things appear as the season unfolds. In milder wet weather amphibians start to migrate to ponds to breed in early February.

🦎 Who you might see

Frogs & Toads (mainly March)

- **Common Frog** – smooth skin, often seen in garden ponds; frogspawn appears in **large clumps**
- **Common Toad** – drier, warty skin; toadspawn forms **long strings** wrapped around plants
- **Tadpoles** – tiny black commas at first, then wriggly swimmers

Newts (mainly April)

- **Smooth Newt** – small and common, often easiest to spot
- **Great Crested Newt** – larger, rarer and protected (admire only, never disturb)

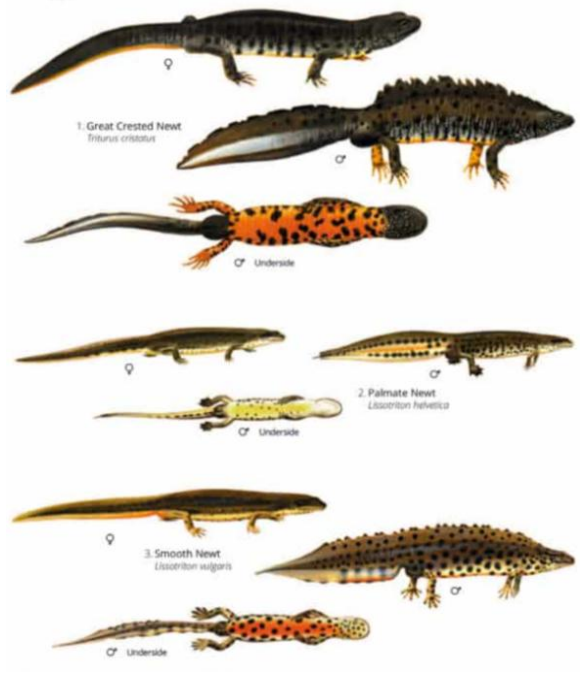
Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*): Variable color (green, brown, yellow), often with a "mask" behind the eye. They breed in shallow, sunny ponds between January and April. 📷



Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*): Olive-brown with warty skin and, notably, copper-colored eyes. They prefer deeper water for breeding and are more land-based than frogs. 📷



Natterjack Toad (*Epidalea calamita*): Rarer, with a yellow stripe down their back, a loud mating call, and short legs. Found on sandy heaths and coastal dunes. 📷




How to do a Pond Watch

Daytime pond check

Great for spotting **spawn, tadpoles and basking frogs**.


1. Stand quietly by the pond for a minute or two
2. Look for:
 - Frogspawn (clumps) or toadspawn (strings)
 - Tadpoles near the edges
 - Frogs or toads resting in shallow water
3. Use your phone camera to zoom—no need to lean in

 Please don't put hands or nets in the pond.

Night-time pond check (optional but magical)

Best for seeing **newts** and breeding behaviour.

- Go out after dusk (a torch helps)
- Shine the light **across** the water, not straight down
- Look for:
 - Newts swimming or rising for air
 - Frogs or toads moving in the shallows

 Be careful around slippery edges and don't trample plants.

Taking photos

Photos are really helpful and very welcome.

- Take pictures **without flash** if possible
- Try to capture:
 - The animal (side-on is best)
 - Spawn type (clump or string)

Sharing what you find

Please share your sightings in the **4Bs WhatsApp Nature Group** and include:

- Location so we can include on a map
- What you saw (frogspawn, tadpoles, smooth newt, etc.)
- A photo if you have one

No sighting is too small—or too ordinary.

Alternatively, **text Norman 07810462403** or email **biodiversityinitiative1@gmail.com**

A few gentle rules

- Get permission from the owner of the pond
- Look, don't touch
- Never move spawn or animals between ponds
- Don't disturb vegetation
- Enjoy being a quiet observer

Thank you

By taking part, you're helping us understand how well our ponds are supporting wildlife. More importantly, you're joining a shared moment of noticing, care and curiosity.

Happy pond watching   **4Bs Biodiversity Initiative Team**