



DERBYSHIRE AMPHIBIANS - INFORMATION

COMMON FROG

Grows to a length of about 100mm (4 inches) with a smooth damp skin. Colour and patterns on the skin can vary greatly from the usual olive-green colour. There is a dark patch behind the eyes, covering the eardrum. Lays clumps of spawn with dark eggs surrounded by clear jelly, usually in the shallowest part of a pond. Widespread and common across the County and often colonises garden ponds.

COMMON TOAD

Grows to lengths of 75mm (3 inches) for males and between 100 & 125 mm (4 to 5 inches) for females. Dry and warty or rough skin on back which is usually a brown to dark brown colour. Eyes have a horizontal pupil and a coppery to gold coloured iris. Lays a string of spawn jelly with a twin row of black eggs, usually wrapped round plant stems or debris in the pond. Prefers larger and deeper ponds to the common frog it is widespread across the County.

GREAT CRESTED NEWT

The longest and bulkiest of the newts, adults are usually about 150mm (6 inches) long. Generally dark brown or black in colour, with the skin surface being very granular (its other name is the Warty Newt), there is often a very fine sprinkling of white on the sides. In the breeding season males develop a very prominent jagged crest along their back and a smoother crest on the top of their tails, which have a noticeable white streak, often fringed with blue, along both sides. The lower side of the animals is bright yellow to orange with a varied pattern of black blotches, the lighter colour extends along the bottom of the tail in females. Widespread but not common across the County, it is not often found in garden ponds or those with fish.

SMOOTH NEWT

Usually between 60 & 100mm long (2 1/2 to 4 inches) with a smooth skin. In the breeding season males develop a continuous crest along their back and tail, the upper edge of which has a very gentle undulating top. Males are usually brown to greyish brown with prominent dark spots, females are more olive brown in colour and have a pink throat with varying numbers of spots. Found across large parts of the County but usually replaced by the palmate newt in areas with acidic rocks such as the Dark Peak. Frequently found in garden ponds.

PALMATE NEWT

The smallest newt rarely more than 75mm (3 inches) in length. In the breeding season males develop a short black filament at the end of its tail and black webs between the toes of their rear feet. Both sexes are olive brown in colour and females, which are very similar to female smooth newts, can be distinguished by their unspotted pink throat. Mostly found in areas of acidic rocks, where it can also be found in garden ponds.

Newt Eggs These are not prominent as they are laid individually, usually folded into the leaf of a water plant or onto grass floating on the water surface. The egg laying period can extend from April to early July in Derbyshire. The eggs are an oval of jelly with a central nucleus and it is impossible to distinguish between smooth and palmate newt eggs.