

Publicity and your Toad Patrol

Over the years, toad migrations and toad patrols have been featured regularly on regional TV, radio and in newspapers. You might decide that you'd like to raise awareness of your toad crossing in this way – if so the following might be of use...

DOES YOUR SITE REALLY NEED PUBLICITY?

In some cases, media exposure can have a positive effect on a toad crossing: it can make drivers drive more slowly; it can raise awareness of the site to the local council, increasing the likelihood of required action (e.g. sign installation); or it can attract volunteers to help. All of these have positive implications for your toads.

On the negative side, media exposure can sometimes lead to anti-social repercussions, where signs are stolen, or where toads (or worse, patrollers) suffer abuse - a situation which unnecessarily affects your safety.

These are issues you must weigh up before publicising your toad crossing.

WHO DO I TELL?

Should you decide to publicise your toad crossing, there is a draft press release in this pack, which you can use as a template. Send this to local media outlets. A good place to start is by phoning up your local newspaper and asking for the newsroom, where you can then speak to a journalist about your toad crossing. Another good idea is to get in touch with your local BBC news office - the email will be: 'county name'@bbc.co.uk (e.g. Devon would be devon@bbc.co.uk). This could then lead to both BBC radio and TV coverage. If you would like a copy of this template emailed to you just get in touch: info@froglife.org

BE PREPARED!

It's notoriously difficult to tell how much publicity your site might get: it might be that you hear very little, or it might be that you are overcome with enquiries. One thing



that's really important is that you have some key messages ready for when the journalists ring: (e.g. "we want volunteers", "we want the council to listen to us", "we want to help our local toads" etc.) this way you can get your message heard clearly, before the interviewer takes you off the subject with other questions.

OTHER RESOURCES

There might be other people you could forward media enquiries to should you need: your County Coordinator (if there is one in your county, find out from Froglife) or your local Amphibian and Reptile Group (www.arguk.org), will be good contacts for local enquiries. For more national information on Toads on Roads, contact Froglife on 01733 558960 or email info@froglife.org. Information on free photos is available in the notes section of your press release template.

FEEDBACK TO FROGLIFE

Keeping track of where your Toad Patrol has appeared in media is really useful for a number of reasons - it means you can re-contact journalists should you need the following year, plus it means you have a public record of the site's importance, which could be useful if the site should become threatened in future years. Please also send photocopies (or web links) of any coverage to Froglife, who will insert this information into your Toad Crossing file, and feedback the level of publicity the Toads on Roads project has received nationally each year.

