

# natterchat

Froglife's newsletter - amphibians, reptiles & nature news

the ponds issue  
spring/summer 2015

Froglife's latest news  
The value of ponds in cities  
Toads in Transylvania  
Toads on roads



Plus...What the animals are doing: River Nene Dragon Finder : Events : Appeal

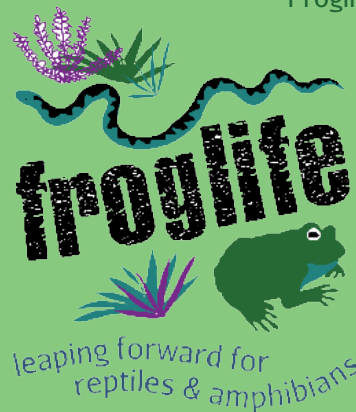
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Newsletter design: Vanessa Barber

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Froglife Intern: Michael Hartup



## contact us

Froglife  
1 Loxley  
Werrington  
Peterborough PE4 5BW  
Phone: 01733 602102  
Email: [info@froglife.org](mailto:info@froglife.org)

[www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)



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## Help us find dragons...

Grab your phone, get your wellies, and go out dragon hunting this summer, to help us map amphibians and reptiles.

Our free Dragon Finder smartphone app will help you to identify all the different amphibians and reptiles you might spot in the UK. You can also use it to record your sightings, adding to our Living Atlas of where the animals can be found.

Search for Dragon Finder in the App Store or Google Play.

Alternatively you can download it from the Dragon Finder website at [www.froglife.org/dragonfinder](http://www.froglife.org/dragonfinder)



## from the CEO



Hooray, spring has arrived! As the season begins to heat up so do our enquiries. They come flooding in through email, Twitter, Facebook, phone and yes some people do still send letters. As we do not receive any funding to provide a formal enquiry service we have to prioritise the most urgent, for example reports of disease/mortality incidents which are high at this time of year. In order for us to manage this as effectively as possible we are asking all enquirers to start by visiting our website, [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org), where there is a wealth of information and advice. Following this we'd request people to contact us via social media or email which enables us to respond efficiently.

Most of the enquiries we receive

are very positive, with people wanting to do as much as they can for the amphibians in their garden. We are keen to gather as much data as possible about amphibians and reptiles, so please do enter your sightings data onto our free to download App: [www.froglife.org/dragonfinder/app/](http://www.froglife.org/dragonfinder/app/). You can also enter the data directly through our website. If you spot animals that are injured or diseased please report these to [www.gardenwildlifehealth.org](http://www.gardenwildlifehealth.org).

Some of the enquiries we get do make us smile and I thought I would share this one with you!

"This is probably a bit of a strange one. However, here goes! My boyfriend has a frog living in his bedroom. The frog is very small frog, about the size of a 50p. I think he might be a bit undernourished as he seems to be surviving on mould. My boyfriend's flat has serious issues of which I am trying to address. I have left the odd fly for him (the frog that is) and made him a small pond in a saucer, albeit not ideal.

I would like to release Horatio the frog back into the wild and do this safely, I would hate to cause he/

she any harm. I have bought a net used for removing fish from their fish tanks and hoped this might be the safest way to capture the poor creature? I worry about the little frog's hands and feet. A work colleague mentioned to me when discussing this that it could be a hibernation period for frogs and release now could prove fatal. I would be devastated as he/she is such an adorable little creature."

We advised that she use a suitable container to capture Horatio without harming him and releasing him in some undergrowth as close by as possible.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter, it certainly is a great read.

Here is to a glorious spring and summer.

**Kathy Wormald, CEO**  
[kathy.wormald@froglife.org](mailto:kathy.wormald@froglife.org)

## froglife news : spring / summer 2015

### River Nene Dragon Finder Launch

February and March saw the launch of our exciting new project the "River Nene Dragon Finder" funded by HLF. The project demanded and deserved two launch events that were hosted at Peterborough Town Hall and Sywell Country Park Pump House. Both events were extremely well attended by project partners, supporters, staff and friends of Froglife.

An overview of the aims of the projects and a history of Froglife's past successes were outlined by Froglife's CEO Kathy Wormald. With the audiences appetite whetted for all things herp related the first of the speakers Jules Howard (nature author and presenter) spoke enthusiastically about the importance of conservation and his time working at Froglife.

Jules was followed by Richard Kerridge (nature writer & literary ecocritic) who gave readings from his enchanting book "Cold Blood" giving the audience an insight into his relationship with nature.

The launch was concluded by Hugh Warwick (hedgehog loving ecologist and author) who through his infectious funny tale of wildlife tattoos brought the launches to a fitting end.



## It's breeding time

By, Alan Shearman

As spring ends and with summer fast approaching our reptiles and amphibians are busy reproducing.

Tadpoles emerged from clumps of frogspawn or strings of toadspawn weeks ago. And, having gorged themselves on algae and water fleas, they have grown back legs closely followed by their front legs. Finally they will absorb their tail before emerging from the water as perfect miniatures of their parents, usually in early summer but sometimes as late as September!

The smooth newts breeding cycle starts a little later than frogs and toads and differ in the following ways. Males perform an elaborate courtship dance before the eggs are laid. Individual eggs are laid and wrapped up in the leaves of pond plants. Two to four weeks later larvae (sometimes called newt tadpoles) will hatch out. The larvae have feathery gills around the head, distinguishing them from frog and toad tadpoles. A couple of months after they hatch the larvae

start to grow their front legs (again, different from frogs and toads), followed by the back legs.

At this time of year adult newts spend quite a lot of time in the water and will hunt frog tadpoles. While, later in the summer and autumn, newts can be found sheltering under wood, rocks and paving-slabs, in between feeding up on slugs and insects in time for winter.

Grass snakes are the UK's only egg-laying snake. Adults emerge during March/April, males appearing before females. Mating takes place in April. Their eggs are laid in June/July in rotting vegetation (including garden compost heaps), which acts as an incubator. The eggs hatch in late summer and the pencil-sized juveniles (around 15cm long) look exactly like miniature versions of the adults.

Adders also emerge during March/April and mating takes place April/May. Males are territorial and will



'dance' a duel as they compete for a female. Females do not lay their eggs, instead they incubate them internally and 'give birth' to live young in late summer. The litter can range from 3 to 20 and the young stay with their mother for the first few days. Adders spend their time in undisturbed habitats such as open woodland, moorland and heathland and are rarely encountered in gardens.

Common lizards emerge in early spring and mating takes place in April. Like the adder the female incubates her eggs internally before giving birth to up to eleven young around July/August. Baby lizards are less than 5 cm long and darker than the adults. Lizards feed on worms, slugs and insects and give their prey a good shake, to stun it, before swallowing.



# what can ponds teach us?

*By Jenny Leon, Froglife's Learning Coordinator*

Ponds are incredible. Sit quietly alongside the peaceful edge of a pond and you could be treated to a wildlife show like no other. Insects, birds, amphibians, mammals and even the odd reptile (grass snake) are all attracted to ponds and supported by the habitat that they provide. This is of course valuable in its own right (Hassall, 2014) but it also acts as an inspiring resource for education.

Ponds are often situated close to us; in our gardens, school grounds, local parks and village greens. They encapsulate an entire ecosystem in one small accessible space. With the simple addition of a path and dipping platform everyone can get up close and personal to learn about everything from lifecycles, food chains, habitats and species ID to wider issues such as climate change, pollutions, eutrophication, countryside management and native vs non-native species. One of the schools we worked with on our Leapfrog Schools project told us that their pond area was specifically highlighted in their Ofsted report as

being a useful tool for the school and was fundamental in helping the school attain green flag eco-schools status.

As well as their value for scientific exploration there's also a mystical quality to underwater life as touched upon in Harry Potter, The Goblet of Fire. Under the surface lies a whole new world, unknown to those above. It can be the source of inspiration for writing, art and drama, indeed outdoor education has been shown to also positively impact children's literacy (Scott, 2014).

The very fact that ponds are outside also provides benefits to people's health and wellbeing (Mind, 2007; Moss, 2007). For some people the traditional indoor learning environment is oppressive and doesn't suit their learning style. Whereas by being outside they have the space to think, can use all their senses to learn for themselves and teaching can be responsive to what they see. This can be especially important for people with additional

learning needs and those experiencing mental health problems.

For these reasons, we believe that it is important that every school has access to a pond and wildlife area in or near their school grounds. We can help schools to achieve this through our Leapfrog Schools project. We're glad to say that it's not just us that think this and we are now expanding our Leapfrog Schools project to other community groups, businesses and organisations.



*For more information please see:*

*[www.froglife.org/what-we-do/leapfrog-schools/](http://www.froglife.org/what-we-do/leapfrog-schools/)*

## appeal: become a froglife friend

We are running a special offer to all new friends who join us in June and July 2015. Our friendship rate for these two months is £16.20 and all new friends will receive a terrific drawstring bag. The bags are ideal for wet swimming costumes, for hiking trips or taking to the beach. Please do encourage your friends and family to support Froglife. Our supporters are one of our main providers of unrestricted income, we use this income to support activities such as the Enquiry Service, Toads on Roads and Garden Wildlife Disease. Without this support we would be unable to operate these core services, so please do your bit to promote Froglife to those you know. Thanks to all of you, as supporters you help us enormously with our work.

# what I'm up to...

Every edition, we feature a Froglife staff or supporter taking action to help amphibians and reptiles. In this issue, Froglife's Conservation Co-ordinator, Silviu Petrovan, talks about the work Froglife does with ponds, and why we do it.



In this newsletter we have two excellent articles from two researchers, one from Leeds University and the other from Sapientia University in Cluj, Romania. Both discuss the value of ponds in terms of their ecological importance but in two different contexts - this dichotomy usefully illustrates the fantastic variety and complexity of these habitats. Ponds are an amazing place of enjoyment and education for the public. Ponds can sustain a huge range of freshwater species but their wildlife value will be governed by a range of factors, from local to landscape level features. Froglife has been working on creating and restoring ponds for a long time and we've made some amazing progress in recent years, especially with the help of funding through our Living Water and Dragon Finder projects. For example, by the end of 2013, as part of Glasgow and North Lanarkshire Living Waters, Froglife had worked across 33 sites. Creating 108 ponds and 94 temporary scrapes (shallow ponds that are temporal in nature, designed to hold water mostly in winter and spring) with an additional 27 restored or enhanced ponds. The large scale of this work allows us

to ask interesting questions about how well the different ponds have performed in terms of colonisation - not just by amphibians but also other taxa, such as aquatic invertebrates or aquatic and marginal plants species, all valuable additions to the local biodiversity and the general quality of the site. For some species colonisation is a relatively simple process. Pond plant seeds are spread by wind, water or through birds such as mallards. If the new pond habitat is close to other freshwater areas then aquatic wetland invertebrates will also quickly find their way to a new pond, typically by flying. However, colonisation is slow for species such as amphibians and reptiles who are slow moving and with poor dispersal. These species require good connectivity and proximity to other suitable habitats - although the distance varies between species.

In other words, a wonderful, newly created wildlife pond in the middle of an area surrounded by impassable barriers for amphibians and reptiles will almost certainly not be colonised by any of those species, but it will still have potentially high value for species that can get there by other means, by wind dispersal for instance. For the third year in a row we are investigating a stratified selection of newly created and restored ponds with the aim to understand the different values of colonisation by a range of taxa in urban and semi-urban contexts in the UK. We hope to be able to use this information to maximise the value and the impact of the work we do. We expect to have the first results available by early 2016.

For more information contact  
Silviu Petrovan  
[silviu.petrovan@froglife.org](mailto:silviu.petrovan@froglife.org)

Find out more at [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)



## Letters to the Editor

During spring amphibians return to ponds to breed. Amphibians lay large numbers of eggs as a natural way to counter the range of predators that eat spawn and tadpoles. It's thought that around one in fifty of the eggs laid in the pond make it out of the pond as a froglet.

### It's a frog's life: giving nature a helping hand

SIR – The photograph of frogspawn (March 24) is accompanied by the observation that only a tiny fraction of the eggs will make it through to adulthood.

This is not the case if you rescue the emerging tadpoles and place them in rainwater-filled mini ponds (large plastic flexible tubs with some plants and mud inside will do). Feed the tadpoles, look after them and then from about June you

can start distributing froglets at suitable local sites. Instead of only a tiny fraction surviving, I release thousands each year.

There is something truly wonderful about going into the garden of a summer's night, seeing a dozen or more frogs by the light of a torch and hearing the rustle in the vegetation of many more.



Recently we have spotted a number of articles like the one pictured encouraging people to move frogspawn, tadpoles or froglets. While it might seem tempting to give 'nature a helping hand' by catching emerging tadpoles and releasing the little froglets in the local area, we would not advise it.

By taking the animals to a different pond you may unwittingly transfer various diseases and invasive plants. Also, many amphibians may try to return and there is a danger that some may suffer as a result of being placed in an unsuitable area. We advise that you refrain from interfering with the natural events that occur in your pond.



1



2



3



4



5

Can you identify which native amphibian or reptile species these egg and spawn belong to? For tips and clues download the Dragon Finder app. Answers on the back page.

## ponds in cities: an opportunity or a liability?

by Chris Hassall

It turns out that we Brits quite like digging holes. So much so, in fact, that there are around 3 million garden ponds scattered across the British urban landscape and recent surveys suggest that around 1 in 6 households have a pond. While pond numbers overall have fallen by around 90% in the past century (with a small recovery in the past decade), this urban “blue space” remains as a considerable wildlife resource.

However, the biodiversity value of these ponds has been neglected for two reasons. Firstly, the majority sit on private land and thus researchers struggle to gain access to them, and cannot therefore study the animals and plants that use these habitats either as homes or as stepping stones across the landscape. Secondly, there is an attitude that because ponds are small they are not significant.

However, with a new appreciation of urban ponds, including lakes in parks, stormwater management ponds, and even fountains and swimming pools, we are now gaining a fuller appreciation of all the benefits that come with these small “pearls in the landscape”.

### Challenges of urban ponds

For some people, an urban pond is like a regular pond but it has a shopping trolley sticking up in the middle. Sadly this stereotype is partly grounded in fact: an awful lot of the country’s ponds are heavily degraded and this is particularly true in urban areas. Being exposed to high densities of people and their waste means that high levels of pollutants wash into the water from the surrounding (often concreted) land. These pollutants include pesticides and fertilisers from gardens, industrial waste and heavy metals from industry, and salt from road and pavement gritting. This means that the worst urban ponds are a toxic soup of interacting stressors that can be almost completely without life.

The situation is even worse when you look at the landscape within which urban ponds sit: a heavily built-up, inhospitable landscape full of barriers to movement. One study conducted on local amphibians by Susan Hitchings and Trevor Beebee in the 1990s suggested that the urban landscape in Brighton permitted less than 5% of the movement that was possible in the surrounding countryside.

These two factors, habitat quality and the connections between ponds, are fundamental to the way that we have to think about urban green

Find out more at [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)



and blue spaces in order to promote biodiversity in cities.

Fortunately, we are starting to see a way forward. Increasingly town planners are incorporating wetlands into green (and blue) corridors and while the evidence for the wildlife use of these corridors for dispersal is limited, they certainly represent a considerable expansion in available habitat. The design of individual ponds and wetlands themselves is being shaped by inspiration from nature. Landscape architects are as likely to include reed beds and bank-side vegetation as they are fountains and bridges. This addition of vegetation is a big step forward, as many ponds and lakes in cities used to be designed to be “clean”, “neat” and “safe”.

The result was a sterile landscape that lacked the wonderfully messy habitats that so many species call home. Of particular importance to amphibians is a way to exit a pond after the animals have finished breeding, but unfortunately our habit of creating vertical concrete edges to ponds and lakes mean that often amphibians are unable to leave the ponds and so become trapped. We call these sorts of habitats “ecological traps”, because animals choose to use what looks like a highly suitable habitat but which is actually highly unsuitable.

## What use is a pond?

While many conservation biologists would like to see more ponds for

their biodiversity value, this can be a tough sell in a time where every benefit must be monetised to appease those who control budgets. Fortunately, ponds provide a wide array of “ecosystem services” to local communities that more than justify their creation and management.

I have already mentioned stormwater management facilities, which are put in place to slow the flow of rainwater as it speeds across impermeable land. Recent floods in places such as Leeds, Boscastle, and the Somerset Levels emphasise the need to take a more holistic approach to flood management which should include a return to wetland mosaics that hold back water. While there, the water is also cleaned of pollutants: some chemicals bind to sediments, others are taken up by plants, and fertiliser from fields is used by algae in the water turning the ponds green (or even pink!) but saving rivers and lakes downstream from a similar fate.

Finally it is worth noting the less tangible benefits to humans. There is a growing body of evidence that urban green and blue spaces have a considerable role to play in enhancing human well being, although the mechanisms by which this pattern is driven are still the subject of research. Urban ponds also provide an opportunity for people to access nature in a

landscape that is frequently lacking in wildlife. There are also a range of educational opportunities, for young and old, through the installation of school ponds or visits by schools to local wetland sites. This form of “experiential learning” has been shown to enhance not only pupils’ understanding of course material but also their attitudes towards the environment.

## Pearls in the landscape

The role of ponds in urban landscapes has been neglected. These problems stem from ecologically-unsound management and the low priority traditionally afforded to urban green spaces when funding is tight. We have often failed to appreciate the numerous benefits that these, small but, common habitats can provide. It is important that in the future we don’t overlook the many tangible benefits that we receive from these little, wet holes in the ground.

Dr Chris Hassall

Lecturer at University of Leeds

[c.hassall@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.hassall@leeds.ac.uk)



# *Yellow bellied toads in a social-ecological context: a glimpse in Southern Transylvania, Romania.*

Traditional cultural landscapes are receiving increasing attention in Europe. These landscapes evolved as tightly coupled social-ecological systems and have multiple social, cultural and ecological values worth considering for sustainable development. Several plant and animal species, as well as habitats and landscape elements, which have disappeared or are very rare in Western Europe, still have favourable conservation status in many traditional cultural landscapes.

The sustainability of these multiple ecological values is inextricably linked with the rural communities which shaped and maintained these historic landscapes. Below I will exemplify the need to examine social-ecological context in the conservation of a dense population network of the yellow bellied toad in traditional cultural landscapes of Eastern Europe (Transylvania, Romania). The yellow bellied toad provides a particularly insightful case study, because it reproduces in temporary, often ephemeral ponds and the viability

of populations is dependent on the presence of multiple ponds scattered across the landscape.

These small ponds often depend on the existence of specific disturbances and precipitation. Furthermore, changes in land use and land conversion are likely to impact the small, temporary water bodies.

The yellow bellied toad has disappeared from large parts of Europe due to the above mentioned factors and their interactions.

Nevertheless, this species is still represented by a dense population network covering large areas in our study region. The region studied by us covers ca 3000 km<sup>2</sup> and is situated in a hilly area (ca 300-600 m altitude above sea level). The dominant landcover types are the broad leaved forests, pastures and hay meadows, these being still managed in an environmentally friendly way (i.e. with low levels of chemicals and without heavy machinery). Historically, farmers grazed their pastures mainly with buffalo and cattle, and to a lesser

extent with sheep and goats. The pastures and forests were communally managed. The traditional grazing has increasingly been abandoned, especially after the collapse of communism (1989), when the number of cattle and buffalo dramatically decreased and the number of sheep increased. Furthermore, the communal pasture management is dissolving, as private persons, including from other countries, also have the right to own parts of the pastures.

We inventoried 811 still water bodies from Southern Transylvania. The yellow bellied toad was present in at least 70% of them. This result is remarkable, given the fact that the yellow bellied toad has disappeared (or severely declined) in other, more economically developed regions of Europe which are similar from altitudinal and geomorphological perspectives.

In order to understand the importance of traditional land management for the yellow bellied toad in this region, we categorized the inventoried wetlands according to their origins. We found that for 99% of the inventoried ponds some level of human related influence was crucial for their persistence, while for the remaining 1% the importance of human activities was not obvious.

The most common examples of temporary ponds created and maintained by human related disturbances were 'dirt road ponds' (formed along unpaved roads, after activity of horse carts and machineries used in agriculture and forestry, 43% of the surveyed ponds) and 'cattle and buffalo ponds' (situated in pastures and maintained by buffalo and cattle activity, 34% of the surveyed ponds). The yellow bellied toad was present in over 70% of each of these pond categories.

Other pond types created by human activity such as 'ditches', 'livestock drinking troughs', 'fishponds' and



A pond maintained by buffalo, and used by yellow bellied toads. This is one of about 40 ponds that exists in the pasture. Photo: Tibor Hartel

origins' were represented by up to 7% in our sample. The yellow bellied toad had high occurrence in all these pond types (over 60%), except fishponds.

To summarize, a high density of temporary ponds suitable for the yellow bellied toad is created as a by-product of everyday human activities. The abandonment of grazing with buffalo and cattle, as well as the overall abandonment of those activities which maintained the temporary ponds will result in the development of dense vegetation in ponds (in our area typically rushes- *Juncus* sp.), reducing pond hydroperiod. For example, the occurrence of the yellow bellied toads in pasture ponds where grazing with buffalo was abandoned in past years was below 30%. Similarly, the merging of small arable fields into one, big field managed mechanically is also decreasing the suitability of the landscape for the small, temporary ponds used as breeding habitats by the yellow bellied toad. Another threat to temporary ponds is the paving of formerly unpaved (dirt) road systems, resulting in the physical destruction of ponds and draining of water from the surrounding areas. The negative consequences of these changes on the yellow bellied toads are imminent, and will likely increase in the future.

The traditional cultural landscapes such as those from Transylvania are at the frontier of global change. While much of the rural communities suffer from poverty, the possibilities for generating incomes using still rich natural resources are increasing, as well as possibilities to improve rural livelihood through various funding opportunities that emerged after accession to the European Union.

Nevertheless, land grabbing (i.e. land purchased by foreign companies) is increasing, which in most cases will imply intensification or land use change and



## Fire Bellied Toads (*Bombina* species.)

Fire-bellied Toads (including the European Yellow-Bellied and Fire-Bellied toads and the Oriental Fire-Bellied toad) are sold in pet shops and have been released at several sites in Britain. Froglife does not condone this behaviour.

They're small, usually less than 5cm (nose to tail), and have bright yellow and black or orange and black bellies.

disturbs the traditional links between the local communities and their lands (often creating conflicts). Will the yellow bellied toad populations maintain (or lose) their viability in this inevitable socio-economic transition process?

Solutions exist for the yellow bellied toads as well as for the local communities of this region. First, context placed financial incentives should be developed to promote grazing with cattle and buffalo. This would be in line with the traditional grazing system applied in these landscapes over centuries, and would maintain an important historical cultural-ecological driver for the maintenance of amphibian ponds.

Second, ways should be found to help keep the rural communities with their lands. This would imply both economic links (through grazing) and aesthetic, cultural links (most of these wood-pastures contain large, old trees). This would be in line with traditional land (forest, pasture) ownership, but also would make the landscapes less vulnerable to major changes.

Third, infrastructural development projects should put more emphasis

on the assessment of suitable yellow bellied toad habitats and creating fish free artificial ponds and bypasses along newly built roads.

Fourth, educational projects aiming to increase awareness at the level of the local communities to create and maintain fish and predator free garden ponds, would certainly benefit the yellow bellied toads. There are many examples where small wetlands exist within the villages (e.g. in people's yards) that are colonized by this toad.

Finally, funding permanent monitoring projects targeting the small water bodies and their communities from this region is crucial in order to assess and maintain favourable conservation status for the yellow bellied toads in the future.

For more information email:  
[hartel.tibor@gmail.com](mailto:hartel.tibor@gmail.com)  
Professor at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania,  
Department of Environmental Studies



Every edition we feature news from our national Toads on Roads project, where thousands of volunteers all over the UK help to rescue common toads on the way back to their breeding ponds. John Heaser, toad patrol co-ordinator for Norwich discusses 'Toad Web'.

Some years ago, I inherited responsibility for several toad patrols, near Norwich, which went by the name of Toadwatch. As a result of local publicity, there are now 17 patrols operating in a loose federation under the Toadwatch banner and the administration of hundreds of volunteers, organization of rotas and recording of animals has become a major task that needs computer systems to keep on top of. Toadwatch has been working with Froglife to provide a system (called Toad Web) that can assist all toad patrols and also Froglife.

At present the system is being used by Froglife to maintain records of toad patrols and patrollers. This year we will provide a mechanism to import patrol records - which should save a lot of manual effort. Toad Web is also being used to power the Toad Patrol finder on the Froglife website and over 700 potential patrollers have used the Patrol Finder to make offers of assistance to existing toad patrols.

The next phase of Toad Web will focus on assisting patrols and in particular making it easier for people to start new patrols. Experience at Toadwatch suggests that it is relatively easy to get people to help with patrolling but very few people are prepared to take on the organizing of rotas and managing a patrol. Two of the Toadwatch patrols have used a shared web document to run a self organizing rota for the last four years and it has worked well with very little manager effort. We plan to use this experience in order to provide online tools that will allow patrollers to manage their own rotas and to report animals saved and lost. Of course no two toad patrols are the same - Toadwatch patrols

vary from one that saves around 50 toads per migration to one that saves over 10,000! We also recognize that a significant number of toad patrollers don't use computers, so Patrol Managers will continue to be essential at all patrols but hopefully we can reduce their workload and make it easier for them to recruit more patrollers.

Once we have a working demonstration system we will publish more information on the Froglife website and invite people to trial the system. Announcements will be made via Croaks so please sign up to kept informed. [www.froglife.org/whats-new/blog/](http://www.froglife.org/whats-new/blog/)

Froglife does not receive funding to keep the Toads on Roads project going, so every penny donated really helps! The profits from our colourful toad greetings cards go to our Tuppence a Toad appeal, and you can find them in our online shop at [www.froglife.org/shop](http://www.froglife.org/shop)



Find out more at [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)

Rebecca Neal, Froglife's Conservation Worker  
reviews Richard Kerridge's  
'Cold Blood'

Title: *Cold Blood*

Published by: *Chatto and Windus*

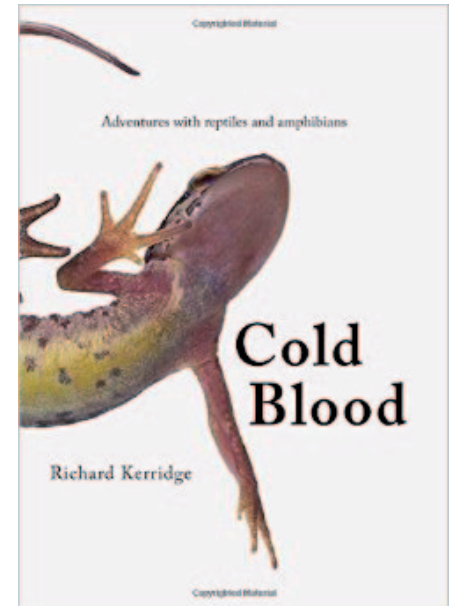
ISBN: 9780099581390

I think of this book as a warning on what we have lost. Kerridge is passionate about reptiles and amphibians, this comes across clearly in his book "Cold Blood", and he also had a free-ranging childhood experiencing animal's first-hand. The story tells mostly of his youth during which the herp spark was struck. He lived in an age where boys were allowed to run with smouldering coals, so the spark became flames. The fire kept him warm through adolescence and he metamorphosed into adulthood with knowledge, and concern for wildlife. Laws and convention prevent young people doing this now and whereas tighter restrictions do protect our children and wildlife, what is lost from modern childhood is independence and consideration. Thank goodness for innovative projects such as Froglife's Green Pathways.

What I found odd about "Cold Blood" was the intrusion of personal thoughts about the author's relationship with his late father; cathartic to him perhaps but as a reader I struggled to see the relevance. I also felt Kerridge was irresponsible towards his readership in some of the more contentious topics; perhaps a more rounded view could have been presented without needing to be owned by the author. I feel the book is trying to be too many things; a treatise on childhood's past, an exploration of natural history, a discussion on modern conservation and a dialogue with the author's father.

However, what this book does really well is anecdotes. I felt I was really there; freewheeling down the hill on his collecting trips with friends about the British countryside. I loved the giant frog story and the drama behind adding an adder to his collection.

"Cold Blood" has inspired me to do a bit of hunting of my own. Maybe this year I will spot a sand lizard or a smooth snake and tell you about it in the next issue.



## Could you be a Froglife Trustee?

Froglife has recently grown substantially and we are now keen to expand our Board of Trustees to help direct the organisation. We are seeking trustees with an interest in wildlife conservation and who have both business and charitable sector expertise. The Board of Trustees meet four times per year in Peterborough and we encourage our trustees to actively promote Froglife at other networking/social events.

If you are interested in joining this dynamic and growing charity then please send a two page CV with a one page covering letter explaining what you can offer to Froglife to [Info@froglife.org](mailto:Info@froglife.org). If you wish to discuss this further please contact CEO Kathy Wormald, [kathy.wormald@froglife.org](mailto:kathy.wormald@froglife.org).

# out and about with froglife

Date and time	Type	Details	Event location
London			
Sunday 24th May 2-4pm	Family swimming session	Swim like a frog. Join Froglife for amphibian themed games and relay races.	Chelsea sports centre, London
Tuesday 26th May 12-4pm	Family fun day	take part in amphibian and reptile themed crafts, pond dipping, and nature trail	Islington ecology centre, London
Wednesday 27th May 10.30-3pm	Family fun day	take part in amphibian and reptile themed crafts and nature trail	The Hub, Victoria Park, London
Saturday 6th June 12-3pm	Family fun day	take part in amphibian and reptile themed crafts and nature trail, and lots more	Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, London
Sunday 21st June 1-3pm	Wildlife gardening workshop	learn how to identify amphibians and reptiles, and ways to improve your garden or allotment for wildlife	Culpepper Community Garden, London
Friday 14th August 11-3pm	Family fun day	take part in amphibian and reptile themed crafts and nature trail, and lots more	Mudchute City Farm, London
Scotland			
Friday-Sunday 29th-31st May 10am-5pm	Gardening family festival	Join us at Scotland's gardening festival to discover how to encourage wildlife into your garden. Tickets available from <a href="http://www.gardeningscotland.com">www.gardeningscotland.com</a>	Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh
Saturday 13th June 10am-4pm	Family fun day	Join us for a Bioblitz day at RSPB's Lochwinnoch site to learn more about reptiles and amphibians through pond dipping and fun amphibian and reptile themed crafts and games	RSPB Lochwinnoch, Largs Road, Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire
Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st June 8am-8pm and 8am-6.30pm	Family fun day	Join us at the Royal Highland Show with RSPB's Give Nature a Home campaign where we will be giving lots of great advice on how to encourage amphibians and reptiles into your garden. Tickets available from <a href="http://www.royalhighlandshow.org">www.royalhighlandshow.org</a>	Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh

We have an exciting diary of opportunities for you to meet some of the Froglife team, get involved with projects or help out through volunteering.

More information on our events can be found on the website at [www.froglife.org/events](http://www.froglife.org/events)

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<i>Date and time</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Event location</i>
Wednesday 15th July Timings TBC	Family fun day	Take part in fun day of pond dipping and amphibian and reptile themed crafts up in the Scottish Highlands at Torridon Estate.	Pressmennan Wood, Stenton, Dunbar
Tuesday 11th August Timings TBC	Family fun day	Take part in amphibian and reptile themed crafts and nature trail at Gartmorn Dam Country Park for the launch of their Forest Adventure week course.	Langlands Moss, East Kilbride, South Lanarkshire

### River Nene

Saturday 13th June All Day	Dragon boat Race	Come meet and support the Froglife team whilst taking in all the fun of the Dragon Boat race	Rowing Lake Thorpe Meadows, Peterborough
Friday 26th June 10.30am-3pm	Mapestry workshop	Help to create a textile "Mapestry" of the River Nene and its wildlife	Sacrewell Farm, Peterborough
Saturday 27th June 10.30am-3pm	Mapestry workshop	Help to create a textile "Mapestry" of the River Nene and its wildlife	Sacrewell Farm, Peterborough
Tuesday 21st July 10.30am-3pm	Mapestry workshop	Help to create a textile "Mapestry" of the River Nene and its wildlife	Ferry Meadows, Peterborough
Friday 24th July Timings TBC	Ferry Meadows Dragon Boat tours Boat trips	All aboard for an educational and exciting tour of the Nene learning about our native species and seeing Wildlife up close. Booking Essential	Ferry Meadows, Peterborough
Friday 07th August Timings TBC	Ferry Meadows Dragon Boat tours Boat trips	All aboard for an educational and exciting tour of the Nene learning about our native species and seeing Wildlife up close. Booking Essential	Ferry Meadows, Peterborough
Monday 10th August 10.30am-3pm	Mapestry workshop	Help to create a textile "Mapestry" of the River Nene and its wildlife	Flag Fen Archaeological Park, Peterborough
Tuesday 11th August 10.30am-3pm	Mapestry workshop	Help to create a textile "Mapestry" of the River Nene and its wildlife	Flag Fen Archaeological Park, Peterborough

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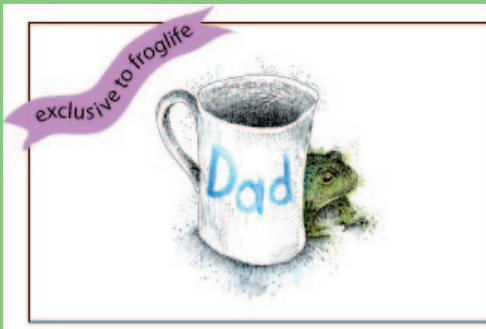
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## THE FROGLIFE SHOP SPRING/SUMMER SPECIALS!



Ever wondered what Reptiles and Amphibians could be hiding in your garden? Why not buy this useful FSC information guide for £3.00 from our online shop.

Father's Day is June 21st. To grab a card in advance hop on over to our shop for this lovely card for just £1.50



Find a range of cards and goodies at [www.froglife.org/shop](http://www.froglife.org/shop)

Spring has sprung; why not get your budding little outdoor explorers a pond dipping kit for £7.50 complete with magnified collection jar, a net, information cards, a Jotter and pencil to record their findings.



Not sure what to buy someone? Why not give a Froglife Friendship as a gift, and your friend will receive a pack of goodies. £18

Answers egg and spawn quiz: 1) Smooth or Palmate newt 2) Common Toad 3) Great crested newt 4) Grass snake 5) Common frog

### FROGLIFE IS SUPPORTED BY:

Angus Environmental Trust - BBC Children in Need - Better Together Volunteers - Biffa Awards - The Bromley Trust - Central Scotland Forest Trust - City Bridge Trust - Clark Bradbury Charitable Trust - Cory Environmental Trust - Defra - Ernest Kleinwort Trust - The Ernest Cook Trust - The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation - The Heritage Lottery Fund - Garfield Weston Foundation - Glasgow Natural History Society - GrantScape - Lee Valley Regional Park Authority - London Boroughs - Mackintosh Foundation - Mears Ltd - Natural England - J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust - Northamptonshire County Council - O&H Hampton Ltd - Patagonia - Peterborough City Council - Peterborough Youth Offending Services - The Robertson Trust - Scottish Natural Heritage - SITA Trust - SSE - Sheffield City Council - Staffordshire County Council - Turcan Connell - University of Glasgow - Western Riverside Environment Fund - William Dean Trust - Young Start.

### CORPORATE SUPPORTERS:

Animal Friends Pet Insurance - Birdsong Charity Consulting - CSS Copiers - Environment Jobs - Water Gems

### TRUSTEES:

Lin Wenlock (Chair), Roger Downie (Vice Chair), Frank Clark, Heather Jones, Richard Donahue and Inez Smith.

### VOLUNTEERS:

And finally, but certainly not least, a big thank you to all of our volunteers especially all those toad patrollers who did such a terrific job again this year.