

Here Be Dragons



The Froglife Trust

ANNUAL REVIEW

Covering the period from March 2012 to April 2013



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The Froglife Trust Annual Review
April 2012 - March 2013
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Froglife is a registered charity
(no.1093372 in England & Wales and
no. SC041854 in Scotland) concerned
with the protection and conservation of
native herpetofauna in the wild.

Charity Patron: Mike Dilger



Here be Dragons



Mike Dilger

Rob Williams

WELCOME

From the Chair and CEO

Froglife is a wildlife conservation charity with a specific focus on reptile and amphibian species and their associated habitats. Froglife's vision is a WORLD in which reptile and amphibian populations are flourishing as part of a healthy ecosystem. Our mission is to use practical conservation, education and communication to achieve this vision, and as detailed in this annual review over the past year we have improved the biodiversity value of 125 sites. For a small organisation with limited resources, this is an amazing outcome.



K. Worman

We are particularly keen to ensure that we reach new audiences and use our innovative and creative approach to share our stories. We give individuals who have not had a wildlife experience the opportunity to be inspired and to take action to help us conserve our wonderful amphibian and reptile populations.

Wildlife Ambassadors is a project designed specifically to achieve this. Over the past year this project has worked with 1,013 individuals mostly who were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). Habitats all over Peterborough have benefited from this project including local community green spaces, allotment sites and schools. A number of the *Ambassadors* have moved into employment and some are still volunteering with the project.

My Wild Life, an intergenerational wildlife reminiscence project, managed by Froglife over a two year period came to a successful conclusion in 2103 - or perhaps we should say semi-conclusion, because although the funding has now ended, the legacy from the project continues and weaves through our other work. One of the major conclusions from the project is that young people who have been lucky enough to have explored the outdoors with a 'nature mentor' are far more likely to continue to have an interest in nature when adults. Helping a young person explore the great outdoors is therefore really important as well as a very special thing to do.

L. Warlock

Froglife would be unable to achieve any of this without the support that we receive from so many different sources, please see the back page for a full list of our funders. Thank you to everyone who has funded, donated or volunteered in the last year. We would also like to thank all of those individuals who have supported Froglife through our Friends scheme - your contributions are extremely important as this provides us with unrestricted funding. We use this funding to carry out work that is under funded, such as our Toads on Roads scheme. A special thank you to the following individuals who have all gone the extra mile for Froglife: Graham Fellows (AKA John Shuttleworth), Mike Dilger, Hugh Warwick, Sir John Lister Kaye and Annemarie Hammond. Finally a big thank you to all of our trustees and staff for their commitment to Froglife and dedication to the cause.

We hope you find this annual review interesting and inspiring.

Here's to many more great years to come.

Kathy & Lin





JOIN US

TO EXPLORE, MAP AND RESTORE:

Froglife's conservation action



A spade breaks the ground. . .

Action on the ground to create new habitats and restore those falling into disrepair is a major part of Froglife's work. This involves digging ponds, creating hibernacula for animals to spend the winter in safely, managing trees and scrub, and creating wildlife gardens for all to enjoy.

Froglife's 18 staff and 267 volunteers embarked on many journeys to help save frogs, toads, newts, snakes and lizards and their habitats in the last year. Between April 2012 and March 2013 we created 44 new ponds, restored another 56 and improved 25 terrestrial habitats.

Many amphibian and reptile species are in decline in the UK, with loss of habitats and the breakdown of green corridors between them contributing to the threat. Our work helps to undo this damage, and reconnect animals with areas for them to hunt, breed, hide and hibernate.

Hunting for dragons

A big part of our mission has involved surveying for animals - we can better plan and take conservation action through knowing where species are and how their populations are faring.

In the last year, this involved 133 surveys for amphibians, reptiles, water voles, birds and invertebrates. We completed the Big Newt Count on Hampton Nature Reserve, calculating that this hot-spot for herps continues to be home to over 30,000 Great Crested Newts. Froglife's Dragon Finder project has also launched in London with an online Living Atlas plus a free mobile phone app, enabling people to go out and hunt for dragons and easily tell us what they find.

The annual migration

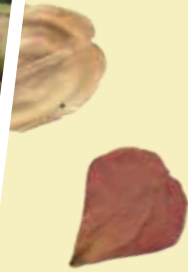
Spring 2013 was a strange one, with late snow and cold weather meaning delayed breeding for many amphibians. A big rush happened as the weather finally warmed in April and, at the last count, volunteers across the UK rescued 22,785 Common Toads as they made their way back to

their breeding ponds, putting in nearly 3,000 days of volunteering. They also sadly found 2,754 dead toads.

We have been working with Toad Patrol sites in Derbyshire, Henley on Thames and Bedfordshire on investigations and habitat works to form case studies for other Toad Patrols, thanks to Funding from Biffa Award, Natural England and Patagonia. This included the first motion capture camera to be placed in an amphibian tunnel and mapping of mortality hot spots in Nature Improvement Areas.

European friends

Our partnership with European bodies involved in the protection of amphibians on roads continues after the inaugural meeting last year of the *European Network for the Protection of Amphibians and Reptiles from Transport Systems* (ENPARTS). There has been a symposium to develop new research and partnership working with a planned scientific session at Europe's largest herpetological congress.



Microscopes and white coats

Disease is one of many threats to amphibians. Across the globe this is causing severe problems and extinctions, and the UK is under close watch to stop diseases spreading here.

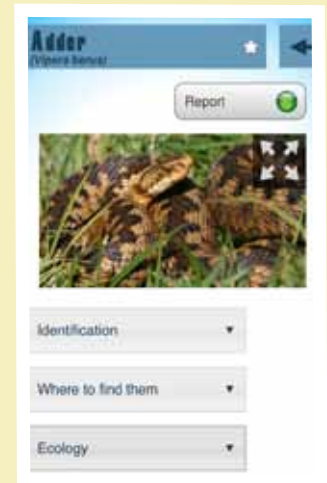
Froglife has been running the *Frog Mortality Project* since the 1980s to help map outbreaks of Ranavirus in frogs. In 2012-13 we took over 160 enquiries from people concerned that the frogs in their garden were dying. Now, working with the Institute of Zoology (IoZ), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), we are partners in the *Garden Wildlife Health* project. We act as a liaison between people finding dead amphibians and reptiles in their gardens and the vets at the IoZ, arranging for specimens to be sent for post mortem.



Year of the water dragon

2012 was the Chinese Year of the Water Dragon and it was a big year for the UK's pond dragons. Natural England has directed a lot of time and resources to investigating the best solutions for Great Crested Newts in terms of their protection around new building development. As a result,

we are working with Catia Matos, a PhD student at the University of Hull, who is researching road tunnel mitigation for the newts with the aim of developing best practice.



"I wanted to write to say thank you very much for meeting with me on 12 July 2012 to visit some of the projects that we have helped Froglife to fund around Glasgow. I thoroughly enjoyed the visit, the weather was good for a change, and I'm pleased that the project has been working out so well since the start. I look forward to hearing from you in the future once you have developed your plans for new projects."

A Grants Officer from Biffa Award after a site visit to our Living Water project



Becca Neal

IGNITING

new passions:

Froglife's education action



Laura Brady

The first spark

Froglife is committed to introducing new people to amphibians and reptiles. Many people have fond memories of pond dipping and finding water dragons in their local pond or watching the magical transformation of spawn to tadpole to frog.

However, we are also very aware that others are missing out on spending time outdoors, meeting and falling in love with their local wildlife. Introducing people to their own frog prince, providing wellies for them to jump in a puddle or teaching someone how to dig their first pond are key parts of Froglife's work.

Wild times

Between April 2012 to March 2013 Froglife organised 645 fun and educational talks, project sessions and training events directly reaching 9,311 people and encouraging them to find out more about amphibians and reptiles. Everyone

can not only learn, have fun, improve their skills and health, they can also then join our mission to halt the decline of amphibians and reptiles and take action to help them flourish.

My Wild Life came to a successful end in February. This was an intergenerational project hosting events for older and younger people to get together and share memories of meeting wildlife and playing outdoors. With support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Cooperative Community Fund and the Garfield Weston Foundation, this project ran 43 events with 2,533 people and resulted in a DVD of interviews about wildlife, a booklet with ideas for families to try outdoors and some really informative reports. We hosted screenings of the film with special guests Hugh Warwick and Sir John Lister Kaye. We also took a 1940s-themed stand to Bird Fair in Rutland Water. The project highlighted the importance of positive role models to introduce people to wildlife at an early age.

Ambassadors for wildlife

Our *Wildlife Ambassadors* project works with those not in employment, education or training, offering a volunteering placement to build skills and CVs and is funded by Access to Nature. 1,013 people have benefited from taster days and training sessions through this project in the last year. Super volunteer Ash Jarvis came through one of the first groups of trainees and is still volunteering with Froglife, as well as working in a garden centre and taking stunning wildlife photos.



Bird Fair 2012



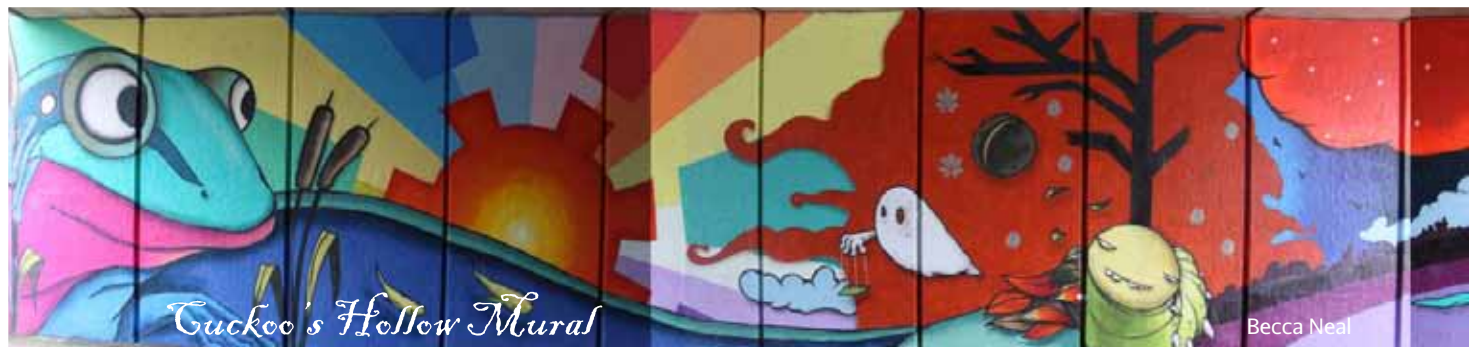
Sivi Sivanesan

Peterborough Museum

Turning over a new leaf

Our work with young offenders in Peterborough also continued in the last year, with 192 people in the *Froglife Active Conservation Team* helping to develop fantastic outdoor classrooms for local schools. Ponds, trees, hedgerows, flower beds and meadows are amazing learning areas for school pupils, and by helping add these to school grounds the young offenders we support give something back to their local community. They also learn new skills, knowledge and a sense of responsibility as they do so. We have been supported in this work by some great volunteers, including the brilliant John Bailey. John has been volunteering with the project for 7 years now, and is a great role model for the young people who come through the project.

We were also thrilled to be awarded the contract for our work with young offenders to continue for two years from April 2013.



A new shoot of green

Green Pathways, a project funded by BBC Children in Need, had its first full year from January 2012 to 2013 supported by 294 hours of volunteer time from 13 different volunteers. 23 different referral agencies in Peterborough have sent vulnerable teenagers to the project. Young people on the project have undertaken 70.5 hours of habitat restoration, 35 hours of surveying, 15 pond dips, 3 bird surveys and 2 reptile surveys. *Green Pathways* has also created a stunning mural in Cuckoo's Hollow.



Dragons in London

London Dragon Finder started in October 2013, with an official launch at the London Wetland Centre in Barnes hosted by author Hugh Warwick. Work has begun on *Life Under the Surface* creative projects with 16 school workshops and 9 family workshops creating giant pond creatures for an installation at the London Wetland Centre.



Vanessa Barber



"I would like to say thank you for your time, kindness and patience to our students. Bringing them to you each week has been a real pleasure and the students really look forward to it. When we were camping last week some of the lads were able to recognise a slow-worm(I think) whilst up on the hills and they often talked about finding a snake. I know that the work you do is impacting on our students' awareness of nature and its inhabitants ... our time with you has developed our group of students' problem solving and time management skills..."

A teacher emailing Rebecca about the Green Pathways Project

TALKING & TECHNOLOGY:

Froglife's communications

Not silent, but secretive

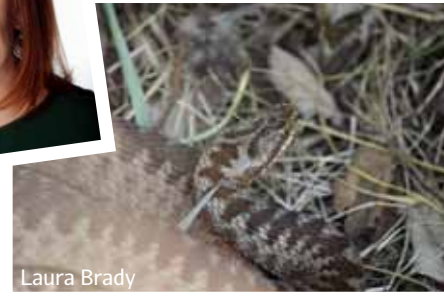
The qwark-qwark-qwark of a common toad in a bucket on his way to mate, the hiss of an adder, the plop as a frog notices you coming and dives into the pond... the world of amphibians and reptiles is far from silent. However, the animals need champions to speak up for them and protect them into the future. We also need to take time to listen to what they have to tell us about their lifecycles, needs and the conditions of their habitats. Froglife's communications via our website, enews, social media, events and publications enable us to shout from the rooftops about the value of amphibians and reptiles and what can be done to help keep them safe.



"When Froglife emailed to say, "Joan, we think you'd make an excellent champion for the adder," I was a bit unsettled. What could they mean? Rob Williams, Froglife's conservation co-ordinator, said the snake is found in the south of Scotland region I represent. Its presence is also an indicator of a healthy ecosystem, just like me, I guess. Ever the diplomat, he added: "While snakes are not everyone's favourite creature, you're indirectly championing many other species and habitats too." So anticipating years of dreadful puns ahead, I've agreed to fight the adder's corner as the snake's parliamentary champion."



*Joan McAlpine in an article in the Daily Record,
26th February 2013.*



Bring on the champions

We were really pleased to be part of SCOT Link's Species Champions project, linking up Members of Scottish Parliament with species in Scotland, and thrilled when some of the animals we had put forward were adopted by MSPs. Joan McAlpine has agreed to champion Adders, Elaine Macfarlane Natterjacks, Drew Smith Common Toads, John Wilson Great Crested Newts and Bruce Crawford from Stirling to champion the Slow-Worm. With many of these species in decline or found in limited areas in Scotland, having such powerful allies is a great step for amphibians and reptiles.

Watching the spring

In April 2012, the incredible landscape of Hampton Nature Reserve was visited by Martin Hughes-Games and the BBC SpringWatch team to film the Big Newt Count. These stunning water dragons were then watched by 3 million viewers.

Froglife also issued 55 press releases leading to appearances on BBC local radio and television, local papers, The Guardian, BBC Wildlife Magazine, The Primary Times, Vegetarian Living Magazine, the Amphibian Specialist's Group FrogLog magazine and the International Herald. Frogs, toads, newts, snakes and lizards have been in print and online throughout the year, with peaks of interest during breeding and other active times.

Talking without speaking

The Froglife website was visited 91,978 times in the last year. We have 1,500 followers on Facebook, enabling us to reach thousands more people when content is shared by our passionate fans, and we have 4,500 followers on Twitter.

We were lucky enough to be part of the Animal Friends Pet Insurance Facebook competition and benefit from a £1,000 donation thanks to votes. Last year we also set up a new online shop and built the beautiful new Dragon Finder Living Atlas area of the website. People also supported us as they shopped online through the Give as You Live Scheme. We sent out 71 Croaks, our enews stories, including 12 tips on what you can do to help amphibians and reptiles in 2012 and 12 Dragon of the Month stories to 2,000 people. This year we also revamped *Natterchat*, our twice yearly newsletter, to include more stories from our projects and our volunteers.



Roll up for the Dragon's Den

Froglife staff and volunteers went out championing amphibians and reptiles in person through 55 events reaching over 1,000 people and giving out copies of our publications encouraging people to take action to conserve the animals.

This also involved a lot of fun and creative activities - we ran a Great Crafted Newt competition, and took our *Dragon's Den: The Life of a Newt* activity from National Science and Engineering Week 2012 to Mr Bloom's Nursery Tour in King's Lynn and dressed up hundreds of children as newts to learn about their lifecycles.

"We thought your activity yesterday was simply wonderful and just the sort of thing we had been hoping to offer on this tour - a truly interactive experience for the children! We really couldn't do these events without wonderful, enthusiastic volunteers like yourselves..."

BBC organiser of Mr Bloom's Nursery Tour after our Dragon's Den activity

Great Crafted Newts



Laura Brady

think like a dragon



Laura Brady

TREASURE, CHESTS POUNDS & PENCE:

Froglife's finances & accounts summary

	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i>	Total
<i>Income</i>			
Grants, donations & legacies	£579,589	£42,607	£622,196
Commercial operations in trading subsidiary	£ -	£185,150	£185,150
Other income	£ -	£11,830	£11,830
Total	£579,589	£239,587	£819,176
<i>Expenditure</i>			
Cost of generating funds: commercial activities	£ -	£126,719	£126,719
Conservation of amphibians & reptiles	£398,498	£41,753	£440,251
Education & training	£165,647	£33,329	£198,976
Information & awareness	£ -	£15,395	£15,395
Governance costs	£ -	£3,357	£3,357

The majority of our funding comes through grants. We are very proud of our ability to spot a problem or challenge and put together practical and innovative solutions. We're grateful to every funder who recognises Froglife's abilities to undertake and complete a project to a high level.

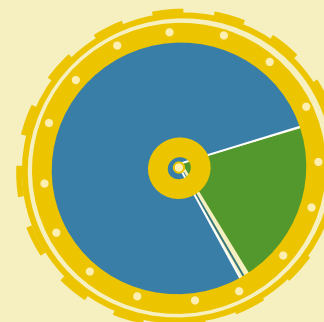
However, this situation does mean that most of the money we get is restricted funding, with

many projects only part funded and generally in arrears. Froglife staff and trustees have worked hard in the last year to keep on top of this and bring in more finances from diverse sources.

One source of income is Froglife Ltd, our consultancy arm which undertakes practical work for amphibians and reptiles. Although this work is linked to development and the loss of habitats,

we take a pragmatic view that once it has got beyond the planning stages, the works are going to go ahead and we are doing what we can to minimise the impact on the local wildlife. Froglife Ltd also provides advice, creates new habitats and undertakes surveys. The profits made by Froglife Ltd are then donated to the Trust, with Gift Aid adding an extra boost to this important source of funding.

Income

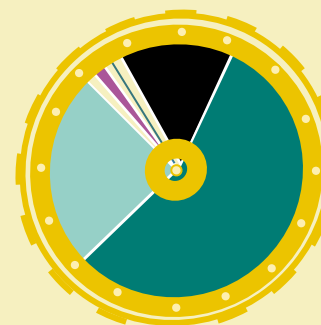


Grants, donations & legacies: 76%

Commercial operations: 23%

Other income 1%

Expenditure



Cost of commercial activities 16%

Conservation of amphibians & reptiles 56%

Education & training 25%

Information & awareness 2%

Governance 1%



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: *what happens next*

Dragons take wing

With *London Dragon Finder* established, we have completed a development phase for *Scottish Dragon Finder*. The main application has been submitted, with hopes that we will start the project later in 2013. Excitingly, we have also started to create *River Nene Dragon Finder* to work along the river in Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. We have received a development grant for this project with plans to launch in full in 2014. These projects bring together Froglife's on the ground habitat work with educational activities, events, creative projects and outdoor excursions. The reminiscence and oral history elements of *My Wild Life* will also be enveloped into *Dragon Finder*, with everyone encouraged to share their stories of local sightings and experiences.

Gardens packed with flourishing wildlife

The *Garden Wildlife Health* project will continue to develop in the next year, and we are really pleased to be a partner as a new website is launched with advice and an online system to record any instances of unhealthy creatures

being spotted. This will really help to discover what is going on with wildlife in the wider community, and we are recruiting people to monitor what they see in their garden every week. Visit www.gardenwildlifehealth.org for more information.

A spreading network of blue oases

In 2013 we applied to expand *Living Water*, our pond creation and management programme, from Glasgow, North Lanarkshire and London to Sheffield and Northampton. We are really excited about creating and improving new habitats in these areas.

Growing opportunities

The *Wildlife Ambassadors* project will end in 2013. Following this, Froglife is developing training and apprenticeship schemes to help people get their foot on the very first rung of the employment ladder. There are two trainee placements built into *Scottish Dragon Finder*, and we will be looking for ways to add these opportunities into our other areas of work.

Sources of support

We are looking for diverse ways for people to support our work and using new technologies. With our first text giving scheme in place, we are revamping our memorial and celebration giving options and have also created a new menu of packages for schools and businesses. For business, this ranges from advertising in our *Natterchat* magazine, sponsoring projects and team building days. For schools, we can now offer different, great value sessions and activities for young people, linked to the curriculum and the Natural Childhood agenda.

With a new website launching later in 2013 and a project investigating ways to communicate the amazing lives of amphibians and reptiles, we will be looking for innovative and appealing ways to keep telling the story of these beautiful species.

Find out more at
www.froglife.org



A big THANK YOU from all the Froglife family to all our supporters and donors, including:

Animal Friends Pet Insurance, Cooperative Community Fund, Garfield Weston Foundation, Glasgow Natural History Society, J. P. Getty Junior Charitable Trust, The Tudor Trust, The Wakenham Trust, The Veolia Trust, The University of Nottingham, Patagonia and The Tides Foundation, The London Boroughs of Enfield, Bromley, Richmond Upon Thames, Lambeth, Ealing, Tower Hamlets, Camden, Brent, Haringey, Kensington & Chelsea and:

