

natterchat

Froglife's newsletter - amphibians, reptiles & nature news
autumn/winter 2012

£2.50

the wildlife & roads issue

amphibians,
reptiles &
roads

research &
policy

toads on
roads 2012



plus... garden tips : Hugh Warwick : Mike Dilger : John Shuttleworth : John Lister Kaye : book offers

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contact us

Froglife
2A Flag Business Exchange,
Vicarage Farm Road,
Fengate, Peterborough PE1 5TX

Phone: 01733 558844
Email: info@froglife.org

www.froglife.org

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Froglife Ltd is an experienced consultancy offering a range of services including:

- Ecological surveys for amphibians and reptiles and other species
- Pond creation and restoration
- Species and habitat training
- Habitat management plans and improvement works

You can find out more at www.froglifeld.co.uk

or get in touch with Kathy to discuss your requirements on 01733 558844.



from the CEO



Welcome to our slightly longer Autumn/Winter edition of Natterchat. We decided to expand the newsletter to cover a wider range of amphibian and reptile related issues - I am sure that there is something for everyone here.

As mentioned below, our Dragon Finder projects are making great progress. I am very pleased to report that Hugh Warwick, featured on page 5, will be launching the London Dragon Finder

project at the London Wetlands Centre, with Sir John Lister Kaye as a guest speaker at a Scottish Dragon Finder event at the Glasgow Science Centre. More information about these and many other Froglife events can be found on page 14.

We have some great information from Dr Silviu Petrovan, Paul Furnborough and Rob Williams linked to this edition's Wildlife and Roads theme. Between them they cover why amphibians and other animals cross roads, what mitigation can help, scientific research and the complexities of the various legislation and policies that should be protecting our species.

I once paid a visit to

Annemarie Hammond's garden in Edinburgh featured on page 6, and I was utterly enthralled to see how the frogs have made this garden their own. The Toad Patrollers on page 12, like Annemarie, go to extreme lengths to provide a safe place for our amphibians, and once again this year numerous people ventured out on dark nights to rescue these animals.

We are pleased to report that we have had a successful year of fundraising. As highlighted on page 5, most of our grants cover 80-90% of the costs of our work, and without the other funding in place we are often unable to access these grants. We are therefore asking those who can help to please support our Save

our Dragons Appeal. Every penny goes a long way.

Once again, thank you to everyone who has helped us to leap forward for amphibians and reptiles by supporting our work whether financially, through volunteering or in any other form. I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter, and if so, why not pass it on to a friend, or leave it in your doctor's/vets surgery, for others to enjoy?

Kathy Wormald, CEO
kathy.wormald@froglife.org

froglife news : autumn / winter 2012

Updates from a Great Year

April 2011 to March 2012 proved to be a busy year for Froglife, and we were amazed when we added up all the things we got up to! Our sincere thanks go out to everyone who supported, took part in or donated towards our work. Here is a short summary of some of our achievements over that period from our annual review:

- 61 new ponds were created
- 46 ponds were restored
- 32 terrestrial habitats were improved
- 44 wildlife surveys were undertaken
- 164 hours of surveying in Scotland alone led to 432 new records

304 volunteers supported our work, not including the hard working Toad Patrol volunteers who undertook a staggering 1,085 nights of Toad Patrolling
775 people directly benefitted from our educational activities, with many more indirect beneficiaries through 171 talks, training sessions and other events.

Half way through the current financial year, we have already achieved many things and have big plans for the next few months. We hope that you will continue to support our work. There is information on our *Save Our Dragons Appeal* on page 14.

Dragon Finder takes Wing

Our exciting new project inspiring people to take part in action for reptiles and amphibians started in October 2012 with four new staff members. The London Dragon Finder project, funded by the Heritage

Lottery Fund, will work in all Boroughs across the city, improving habitats, training people to survey for reptiles and amphibians and mapping where the animals can be found. The project will create an online Living Atlas of data, including memories about different sites in London. Fun learning events are also planned including Swimming with Dragons family days in swimming pools.
[To find out more about the London project, please contact laura.partridge@froglife.org](mailto:laura.partridge@froglife.org)

We are also lucky enough to have a development grant for Scottish Dragon Finder from HLF. Anna Muir will be working on the development phase - meeting potential partners, finding venues and writing the application for the main project. The aim is to work across the whole of mainland Scotland, gathering important records from often unexplored areas to add to the Living Atlas. [If you would like to find out more about the Scottish project, please contact anna.muir@froglife.org](mailto:anna.muir@froglife.org)



project profile



A new feature that zooms in on one of Froglife's conservation and learning projects around the UK. This time, James McAdie fills you in on our Peterborough-based project introducing young offenders to conservation action.

Froglife Project: FACT
Froglife's Active
Conservation Team

Staff and volunteers involved: James McAdie, Project Officer supported by Better Together volunteers through the YMCA.

How long has the project been running:
Since 2006.

The aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes: Froglife provides sessions for young people between 10 and 18. These are similar to community payback, in reparation for low level crime. Young offenders are given a set number of hours to complete, and we play a part in helping them to integrate back into the

community through sessions focussed on conservation.

The results so far: We have worked with 690 young people since 2006, delivering 1,290 hours of reparation in 2012 alone. The sessions are varied and can include pond creation & management, carpentry, artwork, wildlife gardening, habitat creation and much more. We have created secret gardens and wildlife areas at schools, built a timber outdoor classroom at the Froglife allotment, created a wildlife corridor, installed ponds at community gardens and improved a number of other habitats. The project can be assessed on the positive feedback from the young people (many of whom have returned to help

voluntarily), the feedback from young offenders' case managers, the visible work that has been completed in community spaces and the conservation skills and understanding learnt by the young people. Peterborough YOS also attained a glowing Ofsted report for its work, with a low rate of reoffending.

Any highlights: Sessions impact on the young people in a number of positive ways; quite often it is the first time that they have used tools, created a pond or worked in a team towards a common objective. I often see young people take ownership of an area they have been working on. Working closely alongside the young people gives me an opportunity to talk to them about a host of things, including their

ambitions. This has been beneficial to several that have gone on to college courses.

Funded by: Peterborough Youth Offending Service

How Froglife Supporters can get involved: The FACT project doesn't really have a budget for resources, so we have to make or recycle a lot. Froglife supporters could help by sending spare vegetable or wild flower seeds, gardening tools, or donations. You can also register with Better Together in Peterborough to become a volunteer and help out on the project.

For more information:
james.mcadie@froglife.org

the spotter: hugh warwick

Spotting amphibians, reptiles and people who are passionate about them



According to author and ecologist Hugh Warwick, hedgehogs are the most important animals on the planet. After explaining why in *A Prickly Affair*, Hugh was contacted by hundreds of other wildlife enthusiasts begging to differ. This led to his next book, *The Beauty in the Beast*, which details his introductions to 15 other animal species in the UK, including Adders in Norfolk and Common Toads in the Midlands.

Hugh grew up in Chester, spending his formative years at a boarding school on the Wirral. "Very early on I was reading and looking at pictures of wildlife - I was obsessed," explains Hugh. "For a while, I was going to be James Herriot as I'd read all his books about being a vet and I thought that sounded good...but then I realised you had to be really clever." The self effacing author moved onto ecology, with his hedgehog obsession beginning

studying an introduced population of the animals in the Orkneys. "What I found fascinating was that there was this animal, which everybody knows - everybody recognises the hedgehog - but very little was known about what they actually do." Hugh went onto further research, writing and presenting, becoming a hedgehog expert. This reached a "peak of peculiarity" with Hugh being decorated with his "first and last" tattoo featuring a hedgehog for the ExtInked art and science project.

If things had been different when Hugh was young, it might have been Natterjacks that stole his heart. However, despite escaping from boarding school to romp through areas home to the toads, Hugh was never lucky enough to see one of these beautiful amphibians. "I grew up knowing that there was this rare, elusive, amazing creature somewhere in the sand dunes, and every time we went out we'd get caught by the teachers and dragged back by our hair. So I never, in 5 years of persecution, misery and horror, got to see the Natterjack toads along the beach at Hoylake, which I find absolutely terrible. The teacher should have had me out there every day saying 'here is what's important in life; Natterjack

Toads!'"

In *The Beauty in the Beast*, Hugh meets passionate advocates hoping to win his affection for their particular favourite animal. Using the (highly scientific!) RICH -T index for "Researchability, Importance, Cuteness, Helpability and quality of Time spent" with each animal he meets, Hugh then compares them to his beloved hedgehogs. I don't want to give too much away, but *Natterchat* readers won't be surprised which animal came to feature on Hugh's second (and possibly last) tattoo.

"I realised this was a way of looking at the natural history of the UK, through the eyes of people who are passionate about particular species. And the story ends up becoming as much about the people as it does about the creatures. Everybody sees beauty in a different beast. All of these creatures provide some people with some amazing heartfelt connections."

You can enter our prize draw to be in with the chance of winning a copy of *The Beauty in the Beast* by sending an email with your name, address and the subject 'Hedgehog Hugh' to sam.taylor@froglife.org by 1st December 2012.

Got a suggestion for a person, book, film or place for the spotter? Get in touch: sam.taylor@froglife.org

Photos: Hugh Warwick, Jules Howard and Sivi Sivanesan



froglife fundraising appeal

We have ambitious plans to help amphibians and reptiles and we need your help. Most of our grants only cover 80-90% of the costs of our conservation and learning projects. So every £1 you donate to our appeal is equivalent to £10 worth of funding for us. We can do much more for amphibians and reptiles with your support!



Please help *Save Our Dragons* by:

Sending a cheque made payable to Froglife to 2a Flag Business Exchange, Vicarage Farm Road, Peterborough, PE1 5TX with a note saying it's for the Dragons Appeal

Giving Froglife a call to donate over the phone using credit or debit card on 01733 558844

Donating online using your card at www.froglife.org

Or texting NEWT13 with a £1-10 donation to 70070

what I'm up to...

Formally Wild

Wild or formal, all gardens can have wildlife value



Annemarie Hammond's garden is open to the public under Scotland's Garden Scheme, which facilitates the opening of gardens of horticultural interest to the general public. Froglife are lucky enough to be Annemarie's chosen charity so I went to meet her to find out a little bit more about her passion for gardening and amphibians.

Annemarie has been supporting Froglife since 2000, when she read an article about us in the Telegraph outlining our work and our need to get help with fundraising.

For the first 20 years of its life with

Annemarie, the garden was of a more classic design with a lawn and shrubs. It was only when Annemarie could no longer teach the flute that the need for another creative outlet inspired an interest in gardening, which has lasted for another 20 years. Annemarie's motto is "aesthetically pleasing, botanically interesting and wildlife friendly."

"The interesting thing is to keep those three in balance," explains Annemarie. "You can make it wildlife friendly by allowing it to become a meadow, but that's not a garden to my way of thinking."

Annemarie's passion for frogs really came about after she had made her first experimental garden pond, which was absolutely tiny. "Almost as soon as it had water in, along came the frogs. I could sit there for hours watching them, noses out of the water or sitting on the stones. A lot of frogs do sit on hot stones in the summer and become quite catatonic and that's when I can feed them the slugs! I also have newts in my garden, but have only ever seen two toads, which I think were escapees from predators, as it's mostly a frog garden."

Find out more at www.froglife.org

Every edition, we feature a Froglife supporter taking action to help amphibians and reptiles. For autumn / winter 2012, Public Engagement Officer Sivi Sivanesan drops in for a peek at a stunning wildlife garden.

If you would like to let us know what you're up to or to suggest a friend who should be featured please email sivi.sivanesan@froglife.org.

Annemarie's Top 5 Tips for a beautiful and frog friendly garden

1. Build a pond, even the smallest pond or tub pond can support frogs. These can be raised ponds if you have very small children, or put in later when the children are older.
2. Create somewhere for frogs to hibernate over winter. This could be a log pile, or Annemarie found a specially made product online. "I've always found frogs in there throughout the year including all but the worst winters, when I've seen lots of frogs huddled together."
3. Make a pond close to shelter if possible to help animals find cover quickly from predators - while Annemarie was always a cat person, she admits to going off them due to how they play with and kill frogs.
4. Rockeries and rocky edges on raised beds are great features for gardens of any size which can house all sorts of wildlife including amphibians.
5. 'Tumps and tussocks' of plants are where Annemarie finds the most frogs - low growing plants that produce cover close to the ground, with a loose structure for animals to access. Froglets benefit from heather clumps that are grown near her main pond for cover as they emerge after metamorphosis.

She has an amazing collection of plants. "I started at garden centres as everyone does. I think they are a brilliant way of getting to know plants to begin with. Now I more or less use a mixture of plant nurseries and mail order with a few good garden centres. The garden is chock-a-block with unusual plants, not necessarily pretty plants, but interesting ones. And I've been introduced to Alpine plants and Alpine beds to which I've now gotten hooked."

Annemarie has seen a lot of benefits from her wildlife gardening - both for the wildlife itself and in her own life. "You're in the fresh air, walking miles every day and you meet lots of people. I've never been so happy or made so many good friends since I started gardening."

Natterchat Autumn / Winter 2012

Photos: Sivi Sivanesan



Why did the toad cross the road?

Roads, wildlife, ecology and us
by Dr Silviu Petrovan

The science of road ecology

Road ecology might sound like an absurd concept, as there is little “ecological” in the typical image of roads. Instead, roads bring to mind busy, grey, fast, loud places unfortunately often littered with animal corpses. However, there is a branch of ecology called just that, which investigates the interactions between transport systems and the natural environment. This includes considering animals, plants, air and water quality and, of course, the wellbeing of human communities.

It is almost 90 years since the first scientific paper described wildlife road mortality in the journal *Science* in 1925. The most conspicuous impact of roads on the natural world probably still is the fleeting sight of some unfortunate squashed creature, (most likely a fox, badger or pheasant in the UK). Wildlife on roads can also cause

serious accidents, with at least 350 people injured annually in deer and vehicle collisions in England alone (Langbein, 2011). However, this is only a small part of a very complicated picture, as road effects can be much more insidious and subtle.

Wildlife impacts: A growing concern

Only 60 years ago the extent and impact of roads would have been hugely different in Western Europe (and on most continents). In Britain, for example, the number of licensed vehicles has increased by more than 800% since 1950 (Transport Statistics GB 2011) and the total road length in the UK in 2010 was 245,000 miles!

The impacts of this growing network of roads on wildlife are varied. Across the world, roads are linked to habitat fragmentation and isolation of populations. Roads

also reduce the quality of available habitat, increase disturbance and help the spread of wildlife diseases and invasive plants. They can also pollute nearby surface waters. New roads and increasing traffic gradually split the habitats and populations into smaller and smaller units, making them much more vulnerable to extinction. As a side effect in tropical areas roads also mean easier access for illegal logging and bushmeat for hunters.

Effects on amphibians and reptiles

Worldwide some of the animal groups most heavily affected by direct road mortality are amphibians and reptiles. As much as 80% of all carcasses in locations across Europe are those of toads and frogs.

Reptiles such as snakes and lizards are often attracted to warm road surfaces on cool nights.



Amphibians are particularly vulnerable due to *en masse* migrations in spring and autumn, slow movement and often immobility when faced with lights and vibration of approaching cars at night. Depressingly, the probability of mortality for a toad crossing a road was calculated at between 34% and 98% depending on the traffic (Hens & Buchwald, 2001). The worst situations are when the road passes in the vicinity of the aquatic breeding habitat (also true for newt species). To further complicate the matter, preventing amphibians from accessing the road with fences would spell disaster for these species as almost always the need to cross a road relates to the fact that it is placed between their terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

Stopping them from crossing the road would also stop them from breeding.

So what can we do?

This is still very much a developing area, but there are a number of solutions which have been shown to work to varying degrees.

Replacement ponds

New ponds created on the "right" side of the road can offer some help. Success will depend on how comparable the old and new pond are, and in some cases this may need to be combined with other solutions.

Volunteer support

Volunteer Toad Patrols make a phenomenal difference by saving thousands of animals every year. This is hard work for the volunteers and depends on having a constant commitment to going out on cold nights to rescue animals and help them back to their breeding ponds safely.

Fences and traps

Temporary fences and pitfalls used to collect amphibians which are transported by volunteers have been used successfully for decades, including at the largest toad crossing site in the UK at Henley Marlow. Here sometimes more than 10,000 adult toads are transported annually. This still relies on constant effort from local volunteers.

Wildlife tunnels under roads

The most adequate long term solution for amphibians in many cases would be tunnels under the roads. This is not a simple solution as these can be expensive and have sometimes suffered technical problems which have reduced their efficiency. They also need annual monitoring and maintenance. Tunnels, especially long ones under wide roads, can create very different conditions compared to the exterior. The cold, dark spaces which sometimes results can be entirely avoided by amphibians without careful

planning. Small tunnels can easily become clogged with leaves and sediment or fences can become damaged making them ineffective, so monitoring and maintenance are vital. Worryingly, a preliminary study by Froglife suggests that monitoring of wildlife tunnels is rare to non-existent in the UK.

However, on the more positive side, a 5 year monitoring of the tunnel and fence systems for newts by Froglife near Peterborough does show that such systems can offer a solution for maintaining connectivity and preventing isolation of amphibians. This is promising as newts are notoriously more difficult to help through fence and tunnel projects, moving small distances and climbing even vertical fences.

The future

It seems likely that worldwide we are going to continue to build new and bigger roads for the next few decades, so we are also going to need to work hard to mitigate their effects on wildlife and habitats. In terms of what Froglife can do, constant work to improve data collection and to provide better support to the amazing Toad Patrollers is continuing more strongly than ever. We will also keep pushing for better science to support different solutions and for the effective use of these options. For example, another Froglife project aims to install camera traps in tunnels in an effort to create an inexpensive and effective system for monitoring the success and conditions.

Hopefully, the coming years will see us making important steps in the field of road ecology in relation to understanding and implementing the most effective ways for protecting amphibians and reptiles.



research round up

a summary of the science: toads on roads



by Paul Furnborough

Paper 1: 'Usefulness of volunteer data to measure the large scale decline of "common" toad populations.'

Authors: Anna Bonardi et al

Source: The Journal of

Biological Conservation 144 2011 2328 - 2334

Research summary: This paper splits neatly into two elements: a statistical walk-through of how to analyse messy data from large-scale volunteer surveys, and some herpetological conclusions from Toads on Roads data from Italy.

Volunteers rescue tens of thousands of toads from roads during the breeding season migrations each year, creating a huge dataset, repeated over a series of years. Understandably data collection is often a secondary priority in the heat of a busy night of toad lifting, and there are many pitfalls which can lead to false conclusions. The researcher needs to consider how many volunteers were out, for how long, weather conditions and how these factors vary between sites and years. The Bonardi study analysed data from 33 populations of Common Toad in Italy, with each population surveyed between 3-18 years and included over 1,000,000 toads!

This study showed that it was possible to analyse volunteer-gathered data and came up with some very interesting - and disturbing - results. The meta-analysis showed most populations were in decline over the last decade. Over the same period the analysis showed a 76% cumulative average decline in populations. To put this in context, official criteria for a species to be considered 'endangered' is "population size declines more than 50% per decade or in three generations."

There is some debate as to how applicable these guidelines are to widespread species with large ranges and often abundant populations which could be considered unlikely to go extinct. However, even within this study one population of 6,000 became extinct in 7 years, so the risk must be recognised. These trends have also been identified in Switzerland and the UK. Teasingly, this study didn't offer any insight into causes of these declines, beyond the usual suspects: habitat loss and fragmentation, chytridiomycosis, road mortality, pollution and climate change, or some combination of these. It does however suggest that additional data collected by volunteers could help provide answers.

Paper 2: 'The role of road traffic in the near extinction of Common Toads (*Bufo bufo*) in Ramsey and Bury.'

Author: Arnold Cooke

Source: Nature in Cambridgeshire 53, 45-50 (2011)

Research summary: This paper has a more local focus, as Arnold Cooke has been monitoring toads in Ramsey since 1974. In 2004 he reported a decline which since then has worsened to a near local extinction.

Daytime surveys of dead toads were undertaken throughout the breeding season. Daytime breeding counts have been taken yearly since 1990 in one of the ponds. In 2004 a vehicle survey was undertaken soon after dark for each of the twelve roads. Predictably perhaps, traffic flow varied significantly throughout the week, which suggests that the night of the week on which peak toad migrations occur could be an important factor in mortalities.

Although casualty (road) counts decreased significantly between 1990 and 2010, this was significantly correlated to the decrease in live (pond) counts of toads. By 2007 live counts had dropped to zero.

Widespread population declines of the common toad in Britain have been logged since the 1950s. Several factors highlighted in this paper indicate that unsustainable road mortality is the prime cause for this recent decrease. When data from Ramsey was fitted to a model, the probability of a toad being killed during a single crossing on one of the roads was 67%.

The pattern of casualties on one site is consistent with a road traffic increase since 1974, until losses hit an unsustainable level in the 1980s and casualty numbers declined, reflecting a decreasing population. The rate of decrease in casualties tended to be greater on roads with more traffic. Finally, adult toads have a tendency to migrate to and from breeding ponds from a certain direction; it appears that their direction of migration is changing with relatively fewer deaths in later years on the busier roads.

Both of these studies highlight that roads can have a significant impact on local toad populations.

policy page *wildlife & roads*

Road to Redemption? by Rob Williams

The policy and legislation surrounding the building of roads in Britain is as intricate and complicated as the road network itself. What do all the 'policies & paperwork' mean for the nation's wildlife?



National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF was published in March 2012 as part of the government's strategy to cut 'red tape' on development to promote economic growth. The ultimate goal of the NPPF is to encourage 'sustainable development' and to achieve this the planning system needs to perform a number of roles, including 'improving biodiversity'. The new framework places more emphasis on ecological networks, requiring their creation rather than simply maintenance and repair. It also goes as far as to state the planning system should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. However, the effect of this policy will be governed by how it is interpreted at a local level, particularly in relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. So whilst the new policy has been relatively positive there are still many potential pot-holes remaining for our native wildlife!

Protected Species Legislation

As well as policies and legislation promoting conservation of biodiversity, there are also laws to protect specific declining or threatened species. These laws can affect development work, such as road building, and actions may be required to minimise and compensate for any negative impacts. The four 'common' reptiles (Adder, Grass Snake, Common Lizard and Slow-Worm) are protected from killing, injury and/or sale. Whereas, the Pool Frog, Natterjack Toad, Great Crested Newt, Smooth Snake and Sand Lizard, known as 'European Protected Species' receive additional protection from disturbance, possession and destruction of breeding and resting places.

Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006.

This act places a 'biodiversity duty' on all public bodies to have regard for biodiversity conservation when carrying out its functions. This 'duty' applies to a list of species and habitats which are of "principal importance to conserving biodiversity." The amphibian and reptile species on this list are: all six native reptiles, Natterjack Toad, Common Toad, Great Crested Newt, Pool Frog, Leatherback and Loggerhead Turtles. This duty extends not just to protecting sites, habitats and species, but also to seeking opportunities to enhance and restore biodiversity. Unfortunately in many cases work still focuses on damage limitation for biodiversity, rather than achieving positive gains.

So with all this protection the nation's amphibians and reptiles are safe, aren't they...?

Most definitely NOT! Even with all this legislation amphibians and reptiles are still sometimes overlooked or ignored during development. So here are some great ways to make sure this doesn't happen:

Get surveying - many suitable areas have no records simply because no one has ever looked! So check out your local patch and see what you find!

Submit your records - this highlights to planning authorities that a species is present and needs planning consideration.

Take action - if you are sure protected amphibians or reptiles are being ignored by developers then inform the local planning authority or wildlife crime officer (if there is one in your area).

Get publicity - generate support for local conservation action and let other people know if more could be done to protect our native wildlife!

The latest news from Froglife's Toads on Roads project.



Every spring committed volunteers across the UK rescue thousands of Common Toads from busy roads as they migrate to their breeding ponds. Public Engagement Officer Sivi Sivanesan has been taking a look at the Toads on Roads project and working with Conservation Coordinator Dr Silviu Petrovan on all the historic data.



Firstly a big thank you to those of you who have been able to submit data this year. We still have some toad counts coming in, and if you've not had a chance to send yours feel free to email it to me at toads@froglife.org

Given that 2012 has been one of the wettest summers in recent years, it seems crazy that we were worried about droughts at the start of the spring. The weather certainly appears to have had an effect on the number of toads found on some of the sites.

As data has come in a familiar theme cropped up...many Toad Patrols reported seeing much lower numbers than in 2011. Some sites reported decreases of 30% in the number of toads being seen (both dead animals as well as those being saved).

Thanks to some of the Patrollers who have helped to fill in gaps in the historic data we were able to compare numbers from 2010-2012 for 57 sites. This is a very simple comparison of toad numbers only.

While some of the sites have seen reductions in 2012 compared with 2011 and also 2010, there are a few sites that have seen increases in numbers of toads saved. As Paul explained in the Research Round Up, there are a lot of factors to consider as to why this is the case.

What is clear, however, is that in 2012 the site with the highest number of toads saved was Lower Bodham (Sellbrigg) with 10,153 toads moved to safety. Well done, and thank you to all the volunteers involved in the project.



Find out more at www.froglife.org

111

total number of
Toad Patrols
returning data
in 2011

7,785

the most toads moved
on one site in 2011
(Henley Marlow)

80,856

total number of toads helped in 2011

91

total number of
Toad Patrols
returning data
in 2012

10,153

the most toads moved
on one site in 2012
(Lower Bodham)

54,967

total number of toads helped in 2012

UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

We are in the process of working on a new Toads on Roads area of the Froglife website, with John Heaser of Toad Watch (and the Norfolk Toad Patrols). You can keep an eye on progress at www.froglife.org/toadsonroads.

THANK YOU PATAGONIA

Froglife have been given a grant by Patagonia Environmental Grants to work with two Toad Patrol sites in the UK to explore solutions to some of the problems that they face. As well as working towards improvements at these key sites, the project will build better protection for the declining amphibian populations of the UK by creating case studies, best practice guidelines, and other tools that can be used to tackle similar situations for amphibians and road mortality in other locations in the UK.

Photos: Sivi Sivanesan, Jules Howard

FOCUS ON: EBFORD, DEVON

Every Toad Needs a Friend

by Dick Downer

Our involvement with Toad Patrolling came about some 15/16 years ago when we noticed a substantial number of squashed toads in Lower Lane, Ebford, Exeter. Lower Lane is approximately 1/3rd mile in length and we rapidly realised it was a toad migration route. What was to be done?

Following useful information from Devon Wildlife Trust and Froglife, we were able to persuade East Devon Council to provide portable signs and even the police came to our rescue with two battered warning signs for our use. The stage was set for the following year and neighbours were approached, then an appeal was made in the Parish News for volunteers.

Then came the first problems: toads only move when weather conditions are right - cold weather brings a halt to the proceedings. Volunteers are volunteers: they cannot be press-ganged; they have other lives to lead. Timing (18:00-22:00hrs) each night is a big commitment, especially when the migration can last as long as six weeks due to inclement weather.

Volunteers need buckets and torches and the children wear reflective clothing. Ponds are prepared for the new inhabitants; numbers (including deaths) are recorded. We provide encouragement, and photographs supporting an article are sent to the local paper. The telephone message "the toads are on the move" always raises a smile from volunteers.

Since we started we have saved well over 10,000 toads, innumerable frogs and newts. On one evening in 2008 we collected 129 toads, but on other occasions it was as low as 13 over the 22 days we were on patrol.

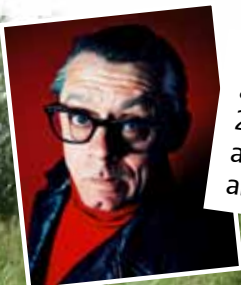
My wife was approached on many occasions in the early years to give interviews, the most amusing being the Arthur Black show, Vancouver, Canada. She only learned later that she was considered one of the world's weirdest women...

out and about with froglife events / volunteering / talks / training

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

Date	Event	Details	Type
Every Thursday & every other Saturday	Hampton Nature Reserve Volunteer sessions, Peterborough	10.30am-2.30pm on Thursdays and 9.30am-3.30pm on Saturdays. Please contact paul.furnborough@froglife.org or 07977 250048 if you would like to get involved.	Practical volunteering open to all
Saturday 1st December 10am-3pm	Pond Lining Day at Palacerigg Country Park	Please contact Iain to book as above.	Practical volunteering open to all
Saturday 12th January 2013 10am-3pm	Pond creation day at Glencryan Woods, North Lanarkshire	Please contact Iain to book as above.	Practical volunteering open to all
Wednesday 16th January 5pm-8pm	<i>My Wild Life</i> film screening and Dragon Finder networking event at the Glasgow Science Centre	Hosted by Froglife Trustee Professor Roger Downie with guest speaker Sir John Lister Kaye from the Aigas Field Centre. Find out more about the plans for our Scottish Dragon Finder project and see the <i>My Wild Life</i> film. Places are limited. Please contact Jodie as above if you are interested in attending	Networking for Scottish based partners
Monday 21st January 11.30am-1.30pm	<i>My Wild Life</i> film screening at the Cresset Theatre, Peterborough	A special screening of interviews and memories of encounters with wildlife, hosted by wildlife presenter and Froglife Patron Mike Dilger. Please contact jodie.comber@froglife.org or 01733 558844 to book	Fun event for adults and school groups
Friday 25th January 1pm-5pm	<i>My Wild Life</i> film screening and Dragon Finder Project launch at the London Wetlands Centre	Hosted by author and ecologist Hugh Warwick. Find out more about getting involved in this exciting new London-based project and see the <i>My Wild Life</i> film. Places are limited. Please contact Jodie as above if you are interested in attending	Networking for London based partners
Wednesday 27th February at 7.30pm	John Shuttleworth's <i>Out of Our Sheds</i> comedy gig at The Riverhead Theatre, Victoria Road, Louth, Lincolnshire	Comedian John Shuttleworth has fallen for amphibians and kindly agreed to donate proceeds from his hometown show to Froglife and the Zoological Society of London's EDGE project. To book call the box office on 01507 600 350. All tickets £15. <i>"His stand up is second to none, his timing is impeccable, and you can practically warm your hands on his good nature."</i> - The Guardian Guide.	Fun evening event
Saturday 23rd March 10am-3pm	Free Common Lizard Training at Palacerigg Country Park, North Lanarkshire	Help us find out where Common lizards are in Scotland, learn how to identify them and record your sightings. The day includes a classroom session and a site visit (weather permitting). Please contact robert.williams@froglife.org or 07772 308540 to book	Free training

Photos: Rob Williams, Dennis Low, Dr Joanna Smith



Join John Shuttleworth at his comedy show on 27th February in Louth and help fundraise for amphibian conservation



The One Show's Mike Dilger hosts our *My Wild Life* event on Monday 21st January in Peterborough

Find out more at www.froglife.org

froglifer factfile: roger

amphibians & reptiles from Glasgow to Trinidad



Sphaenorhynchus lacteus

Name: Professor Roger Downie

Volunteer role: Trustee

What does that involve? Providing oversight of the work done by Froglife staff. We also act as a sounding-board for ideas with particular trustees bringing specialist knowledge and qualities to the the role.

How long have you been volunteering with Froglife? 2 years and a bit.

What else do you do? I am a Professor of Zoological Education at the University of Glasgow. Technically retired, I still do some teaching and research and am heavily involved in conservation and wildlife organisations. My own herp interests are in Trinidad and Tobago. I visit Trinidad most years with a group of students to carry out research on the island's frogs and reptiles, especially marine turtles. We also

contribute to conservation education and are currently helping with an exciting link between Trinidad and Glasgow schools.

What makes you get up in the morning?

My alarm clock! More seriously, I find that being 'retired' gives me the chance to do lots of the things I want to do - like make a better job of my allotment, spend more time with grandchildren, and get more research done on frogs.

What do you love about amphibians and reptiles? For me, 'interest' is a better word than 'love'. I'm fascinated by the complexity and diversity of frog life histories, especially tropical species. There's lots to be found out.

Had a great wildlife moment?

This summer, it was seeing two kinds of tadpole I'd never seen before, both belonging to Trinidad and Tobago

frogs: Tobago's glass frog tadpoles are very weird, with really long snaky tails; and the tadpoles of the silky skinned tree frog *Sphaenorhynchus lacteus* have been very elusive. Turns out they are dark amongst roots and floating aquatic vegetation - no wonder we didn't spot them at the bottom of pools!

What's the number one bit of kit that helps you do your job?

For any tadpole work, a good long handled net is vital: the kind with 3 piece handles that screw together are great for taking from Glasgow to Trinidad.

What could Froglife Supporters do to help the work you do?

Providing tangible support for amphibian conservation worldwide: although thousands of species are declining in developing countries, we might be able to reverse the declines.

Saving a Million Species: extinction risk from climate change.

Edited by Lee Hannah. Island Press, Washington, Covelo and London, 2012.

The debate about climate change has focused heavily on whether it is happening, what is causing it and what can be done to mitigate its effects. The idea that climate change could result in mass extinctions of wild species came to prominence in 2004 with the publication of a paper co-ordinated by Chris Thomas. The paper included cautious comments about the uncertainty of many of its calculations, but the headline figure was that one million species were at risk of extinction in the foreseeable future as a result of the climate changes.

Hannah's book is a serious academic work aimed at "conservationists, researchers, teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, and policymakers". A total of 32 scientists have contributed to the 20 chapters. Multi-author books of this sort can often appear disjointed and indigestible but Hannah has done an excellent editing job. Herpetologists will find two chapters of particular interest. Alison Cameron reviews the various ways in which Thomas et al's extinction estimates have been refined: one is the IUCN's effort to distinguish animal groups with characteristics making them susceptible to extinction through climate change: their finding was 52% of amphibians (reptiles were not analysed). Sarah McMenamin and Lee Hannah review evidence of climate-linked extinctions in recent times and their principal focus is amphibians.

Overall, I found the book surprisingly easy to read (though a few chapters are somewhat technical) and would certainly recommend it to all conservationists.

We have a free copy of *Saving A Million Species* to give away. To be entered in the free prize draw, please send an email to sam.taylor@froglife.org by 1st December 2012 with your name, address and the subject line 'Million species competition.'

We have a range of cards, books and gifts suitable for Christmas and other occasions in the recently revamped Froglife shop. There are some examples below - do have a look to see what else is on offer at www.froglife.org/shop. All funds raised support our conservation and education work.



Froglife Christmas cards featuring creations by Ruby Tingle and Sara Collins

Pack of 6 cards, 2 of each colourful design: £3.00



We also have cards for Valentine's Day, weddings, birthdays and other occasions!



Toads on Roads button badge
Show your support for this vital project and the hard working volunteers who rescue thousands of toads every year

Button badge: 99p



This Student Explorer Pack contains a range of publications and gifts suitable for the budding herpetologist. Family and Friendship Packs are also available.

Student pack: £15.00



AND

Better Together Volunteers ~ Biffa Awards ~ Big Lottery Fund: Awards for All ~ BTCV ~ City Bridge Trust ~ Co-op Community Fund ~ Cory Environmental ~ Ecominds ~ The Ernest Cook Trust ~ The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation ~ Garfield Weston Foundation ~ Glasgow City Council Landfill Community Fund ~ Glasgow Natural History Society ~ Groundworks West London ~ London Amphibian and Reptile Group ~ Mears Ltd ~ Natural England ~ J.Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust ~ Northamptonshire County Council ~ North Lanarkshire Council ~ O&H Hampton Ltd ~ Patagonia ~ Perkins Engines Company ~ Peterborough City Council ~ Peterborough Youth Offending Service ~ The Robertson Trust ~ SITA Trust ~ The Tudor Trust ~ University of Glasgow ~ Wakeham Trust ~ WREN Waste Recycling Environmental

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TRUSTEES & VOLUNTEERS

Lin Wenlock, Frank Clark, Roger Downie, Heather Jones, Rob Oldham, Desmond Quinn and Inez Smith; Ashlea Jarvis and all the other volunteers we couldn't do without!