

ALPINE NEWT

(*Ichthyosaura alpestris*)



Identification:

- Adults up to 11 cm in length.
- Dark in colour, often with a marbled pattern. Blue tinge is often visible.
- Belly is bright orange/red and unspotted.
- Dark spots along sides and tail.
- During the breeding season males develop a yellowish crest with black spots or bars.

Distribution:

- Non-native species in UK.
- Native to northern, central and eastern Europe.
- Widespread but not common in the UK.



Photo: Kees Marijnissen

Ecology:

- On land the Alpine Newt favours wooded areas.
- Prefer ponds with vegetated areas that lack fish.
- Active during the night, but they may be seen during the day especially in the breeding season or following rain.
- Hibernate on land.
- Adults feed on invertebrates. Larvae feed on small, aquatic invertebrates.

Lifecycle:

- Emerge from hibernation in early spring and the breeding season begins.
- Females lay around 200 eggs per year.
- Larvae develop into terrestrial juveniles (efts) by autumn.
- Adults spend the summer foraging for food on land.
- Adults and juveniles hibernate on land from October to February.
- The newts reach sexual maturity at 2 or 3 years.

Predators and other threats:

- Adults are hunted by birds, hedgehogs, snakes and rats.
- Larvae are eaten by dragonfly larvae, adult newts and fish.
- Alpine Newts are known carriers of the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. This disease can seriously affect native amphibian species.

N.B. The release of exotic species into the wild is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



INFORMATION
SHEET

Froglife is a UK wildlife charity committed to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles - working with people, enhancing lives together for a healthier planet.
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