

COMMON TOAD

(*Bufo bufo*)



Identification:

- Adults up to 8 cm in length.
- Generally brown or olive-brown but may be darker.
- Belly usually pale with dark speckles. Skin is 'warty' and relatively dry.
- Oval, horizontal pupil. Many individuals have a golden iris.
- Tend to crawl rather than hop.

Call:

- High-pitched, rough "qwark-qwark-qwark".

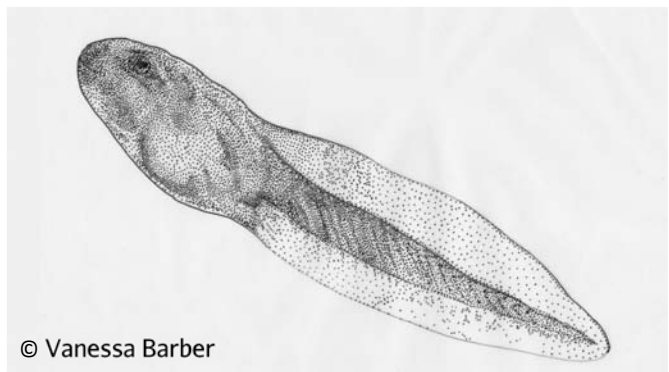


Distribution:

- Native to the UK.
- Found throughout Britain but absent from Ireland.
- Large European range but absent from many islands.
- Widespread in the UK but numbers thought to be declining rapidly.

Ecology:

- Produce a toxin from their skin, which makes them distasteful to predators.
- Prefer deep water bodies for breeding.
- Optimal terrestrial habitats include woodland, scrub and coarse grasslands.
- Largely nocturnal.
- Feed on a variety of invertebrates and small vertebrates.



Froglife is a UK wildlife charity committed to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles - working with people, enhancing lives together for a healthier planet. Find out more about our education projects and activities at www.froglife.org

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Lifecycle:

- Emerge from overwintering in late spring.
- Migrate to ancestral breeding ponds.
- Breed in early spring. Females lay 1,500- 5,000 eggs in strings.
- Larvae hatch after 2-4 weeks.
- Toadlets emerge from water after around 16 weeks (depending on temperature).
- Adults and toadlets spend autumn feeding to build up fat supplies in preparation for winter.
- Winter is spent buried in mud, under compost heaps or amongst dead wood but toads may take advantage of milder weather to forage.
- Reach sexual maturity at 2-3 years.



Photo: Oliver Kratz

Eggs and larvae:

- Long jelly-like strings of spawn. Strings contain a double row of eggs.
- Tadpoles look similar to Common Frog tadpoles but can be distinguished by their shorter tail and bulkier head.
- They remain uniformly dark in colour throughout development.



Photo: Rob Williams

Predators and other threats:

- Threatened by a loss of breeding ponds and disruption of migration routes.



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