

MIDWIFE TOAD

(Alytes obstetricans)



Identification:

- Adults up to 5cm in length.
- Usually grey in colour often with small black, brown, olive or green spots.
- White belly. Chest and throat often spotted with grey.
- Reddish 'warts' often descend from the head to the hind legs.
- Vertical pupil.

Call:

- Distinctive. Clear, high-pitched staccato whistle. Often described as an 'electronic bleeping' sound.



Distribution:

- Non-native species.
- Populations known in Bedfordshire, Yorkshire, Worksop and South Devon.
- Native to Western Europe.

Ecology:

- Prefer to breed in small ponds.
- Predominantly active at night.

Larvae:

- Relatively large tadpoles (6-7 cm in length).

Lifecycle:

- Adult males wrap strings of eggs around their hind limbs immediately after fertilization (hence the name 'midwife toad') and carry them until they are ready to hatch, at which time they are deposited in a suitable pool.
- Tadpoles stay in these pools over winter and metamorphose in spring. Tadpole growth rate is rapid to increase their chance of survival over winter months.

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



INFORMATION
SHEET

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