

PALMATE NEWT

(*Lissotriton helveticus*)



Identification:

- Adults up to 9 cm in length.
- Smooth skin that is brown, green or grey.
- Yellow belly, often with dark spots.
- Unspotted pink or yellow throat (unlike Smooth Newts, which have spotted throats).
- During the breeding season males develop a filament at the tip of their tail and black webbing on their back feet.



Photo: Dave Kilbey

Distribution:

- Native species.
- Distribution across the UK is widespread but patchy: common in Scotland, Wales and southern England but absent from much of central England and Ireland.
- Found across western Europe.
- Numbers thought to be declining due to loss of habitat.



Photo: Glenn Upton-Fletcher

Ecology:

- Preferred habitat is heathland, moorland and bogland.
- Preference for shallow ponds in acidic soils.
- Active during dawn and dusk.



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- Feed on a variety invertebrate species.

Lifecycle:

- Adult newts emerge from overwintering in early spring and the breeding season begins.
- Males perform an elaborate courtship dance before the eggs are laid.
- Newt larvae hatch in 2-4 weeks.
- The larvae lose their external gills and grow legs.
- In August efts (terrestrial juveniles) leave the pond to feed.
- Palmate Newts overwinter under rocks, in compost heaps or buried in mud, but take advantage of milder weather to forage.



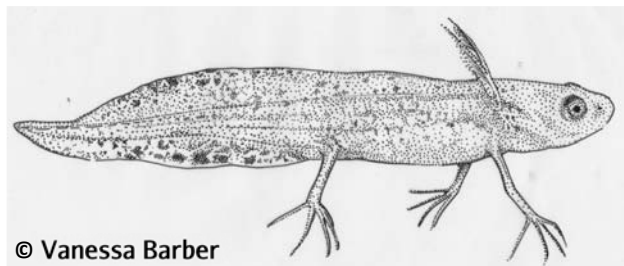
Photo: Kees Marijnissen



Photo: Kevin Keatley

Eggs and larvae:

- Very difficult to distinguish Palmate Newt Eggs from Smooth Newt Eggs. Greyish-brown or dirty white eggs surrounded by a transparent jelly capsule that is about 3 mm across.
- Eggs deposited individually on leaves of aquatic plants.
- Very difficult to distinguish Palmate Newt Larvae from Smooth Newt Larvae. Light beige or brown, sometimes with fine black speckling.
- Larvae reach 30 - 40mm before metamorphosis.



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Predators and other threats:

- Habitat loss.



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