

# natterchat

Froglife's newsletter - amphibians, reptiles & nature news  
**Issue 33: Autumn/Winter 2026**

Impact edition



TRANSFORMING LANDSCAPES

TRANSFORMING LIVES

TRANSFORMING RESEARCH

# Contents

3. From the CEO
4. The Froglife Strategic Plan
6. Inspiring People
8. Toads on Roads Press Day
10. Scottish Green Pathways
11. London Blue Chain
12. Froglife Traineeships
14. The Value of Collecting Records
16. Newts Return Home
18. Green Impact
19. Twenty Years with Froglife
20. Digging Deep
22. The Weather Man
23. Froglife Ponds a Decade On
24. Frogalogue

Editor: Emily Robinson; Design: Victoria Larcombe

Garden Wildlife Health (GWH) is a collaborative project between the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Froglife and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), which aims to identify disease and monitor the health of British wildlife.

Visit:  
[www.gardenwildlifehealth.org](http://www.gardenwildlifehealth.org)  
to find out more.



## The Froglife Board

**Chair of Trustees:** Richard Yates

**Trustees:** Frank Clark ~ Philip Wheeler ~  
Gordon MacLellan ~ Silviu Petrovan ~ Xavier Mahele ~  
Inez Smith ~ Charlotte Regan ~ Melissa Solly

**Patrons:** Kate Bradbury, Jules Howard

**CEO:** Kathy Wormald

## Contact us

Froglife  
Brightfield Business Hub  
Bakewell Road, Peterborough  
PE2 6XU  
Phone: 01733 602102  
Email: [info@froglife.org](mailto:info@froglife.org)

[www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)



froglife



@froglifers



@froglife.  
bsky.social



froglifers

Froglife is the campaign title for The Froglife Trust. Registered Charity Number 1093372 (in England & Wales) & SC041854 (in Scotland); Registered Company Number 438714 (in England & Wales). The views expressed in Natterchat are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of Froglife.

To advertise in or to sponsor an edition of *Natterchat* please contact Kathy Wormald at [kathy.wormald@froglife.org](mailto:kathy.wormald@froglife.org).



## Help us to find dragons!

Help us to understand how climate change is affecting our species by recording your sightings of amphibians and reptiles over the autumn and winter.

Our free **Dragon Finder smartphone app** will help you to identify all the different amphibians and reptiles you might spot in the UK. You can also use it to record your sightings, adding to our living atlas of where these animals can be found.





Dear  
Supporters,

Welcome to this Autumn/Winter 2026 edition of Natterchat – I hope you have all enjoyed a wonderful summer.

This edition shines a spotlight on the remarkable impact of Froglife's work across our various projects and research, Toads on Roads and Froglife Ecological Services (FES). All profits raised by FES are gift-aided to the Trust, providing Froglife with unrestricted funds that allow us to continue delivering the work we are so passionate about.

Ash has written an excellent article titled 'Inspiring People: How Communications Helped Froglife Reach New Audiences', which highlights the power of strategic communications. With nearly 21,000 followers on Facebook, and an incredible 640,000 views during toad migration season, our reach continues to grow. The coverage of 32 media outlets during our Toads on Roads press day is a powerful testament to how strategic communications can drive real behaviour change, with tangible outcomes for reptiles,

amphibians, people, and policy alike.

Our campaigns have been just as impactful. Our #PawsAgainstPonds campaign reached nearly 17,000 people across Facebook and Instagram and it is truly humbling to reflect that toad patrollers have, over more than 20 years, rescued approximately 2 million toads from road mortality. That is 2 million lives saved through the dedication of incredible volunteers.

The data collected through Toad Patrols and our Dragon Finder App continues to make a significant contribution to science, having informed 154 scientific publications to date. We also remain committed to our green journey, actively monitoring and improving our environmental impact.

Equally inspiring is the work of Scottish Green Pathways, which has now engaged with 58 local green spaces, creating 39 ponds. 93% of sessions took place outdoors, connecting communities directly with nature.

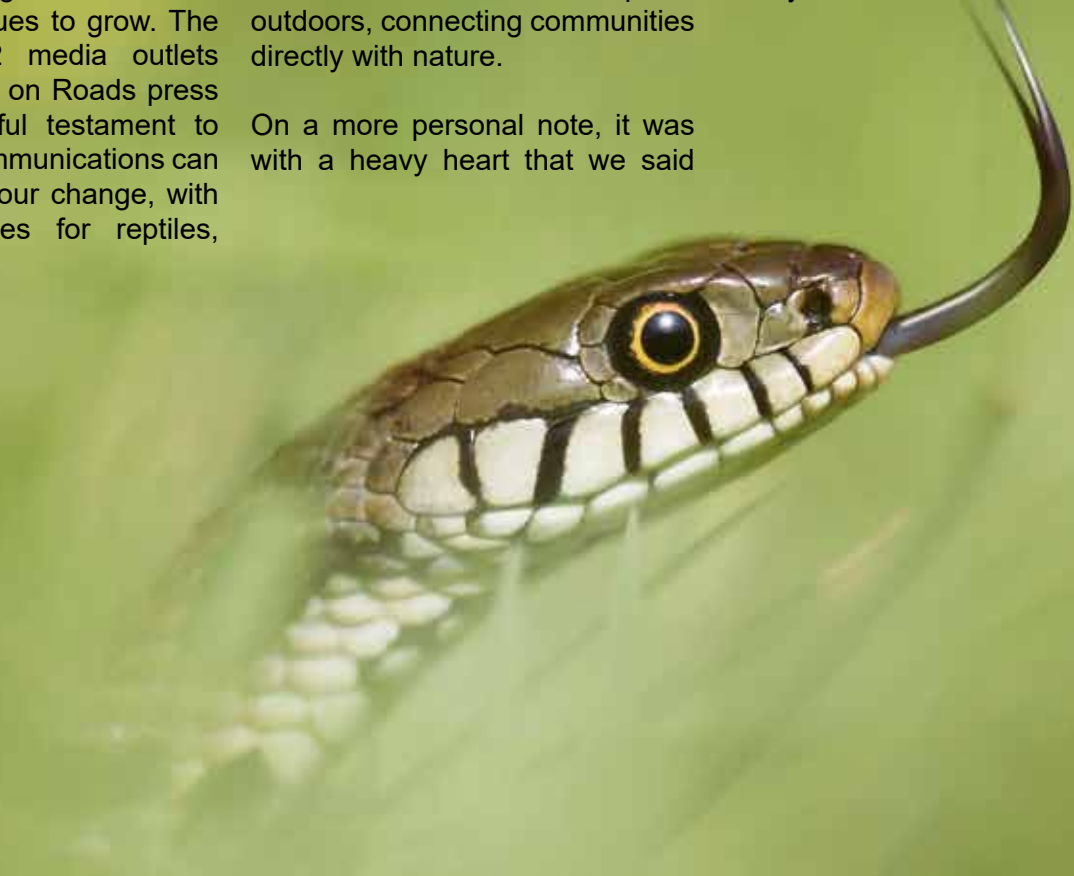
On a more personal note, it was with a heavy heart that we said

farewell to Professor Roger Downie, who has supported Froglife for over 20 years both as a dedicated supporter and a trustee. Roger has been instrumental in developing and expanding our work across Scotland, contributing to policy matters and writing many articles for our publications. While he has stepped down as a trustee, we are truly delighted that Roger will continue as a Froglife Patron. I would like to personally thank Roger for his unwavering support over so many years, and I very much look forward to continuing to work with him in his new role.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter, and to all our supporters, donors and volunteers. Without you, none of the successes celebrated in this edition would be possible. You are at the heart of everything we do.

All the best,

Kathy Wormald, CEO



# The Froglife Strategic Plan

*Where we are now and our aims for 2030*

Froglife's current Strategic Plan runs from January 2023 to December 2030 – a seven-year phase that reflects world leaders' commitment to reverse nature loss by 2030. This target has shaped policy at multiple levels: from the UK's '30 by 30' protected area commitment, rooted in Boris Johnson's leadership of the 2019 Global Ocean Alliance initiative, to the UN 2020 Summit Biodiversity Leaders' Pledge for Nature and the 2021 G7 agreement to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

These commitments have also been taken up by the devolved administrations. The 30 by 30 targets have been committed to by the Scottish Government and endorsed by the Welsh Minister and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Froglife's vision is a world in which reptile and amphibian populations flourish as part of healthy ecosystems. Our Mission Statement commits us to make practical differences to improve reptile and amphibian habitats. Central to our ethos is to engage diverse communities and encourage learning about wildlife conservation. Reversing nature loss by 2030 is an enormous challenge. Meeting it will require bold, ambitious plans implemented at scale and with urgency – from government and devolved administrations to agencies and NGOs alike. Froglife's strategy is designed to rise to that challenge.

**By Kathy Wormald.** *Kathy is Froglife's Chief Executive Officer.*

*Where we are in achieving our strategic ambitions*

## TRANSFORMING LANDSCAPES

**Aim** *Carry out landscape scale conservation projects.*

**Target** *Deliver 5 large-scale landscape conservation projects by 2030.*



As of April 2026, Froglife has three large-scale landscape conservation projects operating.

**Neighbourhood Wildlife Corridors: Boston & Beyond** has completed ten large-scale pond creations and restorations, forming a corridor through Boston and beyond, further connected through a Neighbourhood Wildlife Corridor of smaller ponds, hibernacula, bug hotels and wildflower seeding.

**London Blue Chain** has completed landscape-scale conservation work at ten sites, with large ponds created, restored and interconnected through a Neighbourhood Wildlife Corridor running 54 miles alongside the Green Chain walking route. As of March 2026, the team has completed 63 of the 85 target small pond creations.

**Coalface to Wildspace: Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and the Lothians** is our exciting new project, working across 14 sites over three years to create and restore 87 ponds alongside 24 terrestrial habitat improvements.

A fourth project, **Coalface to Wildspace: Yorkshire** has received funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and will work across 17 sites creating and restoring 93 ponds.

**Aim** *Improve connectivity between sites by creating wildlife corridors.*

**Target** *Create 2 wildlife corridors between key habitats by 2030 and 20 Neighbourhood Wildlife Corridors.*

To date, Froglife has completed 11 Neighbourhood Wildlife Corridors with a further 18 in progress, giving a total of 29. The Yorkshire project will add another 5, bringing the total to 34.

# TRANSFORMING LIVES



**Aim** *Ensure Froglife is fully inclusive, focusing particularly on people who are new to conservation and from areas of multiple deprivation.*

**Target** *Directly engage with 50,000 people annually.*

Between October 2022 and September 2025, Froglife directly engaged with 182,107 people – an average of 60,702 people per year.

# TRANSFORMING RESEARCH



**Aim** *Provide evidence for population trends for the 9 “common” UK amphibians and reptiles.*

We are currently reviewing our Hampton Reserve amphibian data and plan to undertake a detailed GIS study to identify potential future survey locations alongside our ongoing monitoring sites, subject to funding. Our Dragon Finder data is also under review; the app features in many of our projects as a tool for engaging citizen scientists.

Common toad records continue to grow alongside the annual increase in toad patrols contributing to the Toads on Roads project. Our Trustee, Dr Silviu Petrovan has updated our toad research. His latest paper ‘Increasingly uncommon common toads: multidecadal, ongoing abundance decline of a widespread amphibian despite volunteer conservation action’ (Petrovan, Moor & Schmidt, Biodiversity and Conservation, 2025) found that common toad populations have declined by 41% over 40 years.

We are also awaiting the outcome of a research bid focused on increasing records of common reptiles across England.

**Aim** *Carry out applied research into the impacts of different conservation actions.*

We have been testing the value of basking banks on a Froglife-managed reserve and continue to gather data on their impact on reptiles. Froglife is co-supervising a research student at the University of Reading investigating best practice for translocation and exploring the long-term impact of pond creation on amphibian habitats. We also have two research bids in place to fund work on developing basking bank habitat for common reptiles and interventions to improve habitat for grass snakes.

**Aim** *Act as the public portal for amphibian and reptile disease mortality reports.*

Froglife continues to act as a conduit for reptile and amphibian disease reports, passing them on to the Garden Wildlife Health (GWH) project. In 2026, Toad Patrollers across the country identified several new bufonid herpesvirus records, which have been reported to GWH. We will be referencing this in our preparation for the 2027 toad migration season.

**Aim** *Ensure Froglife data is integrated, open source and can be used at scale.*

Froglife continues to submit verified data to the NBN, now including Toads on Roads data (masked to avoid disruption of patrol locations). All data is available for free to charities and for educational use through data-sharing agreements, with commercial use fees helping to support the long-term management of the Dragon Finder app. In 2025, Froglife data was downloaded 1,419 times, comprising 159,635 records. Dragon Finder data continues to feature in peer-reviewed publications, with its value growing as the dataset expands year on year. Toads on Roads data, only recently submitted to the NBN, was cited in 8 publications in 2025.

# Inspiring people

*Reaching new audiences through communications*

From toad crossings making national headlines to wildlife advice reaching hundreds of thousands online, the past year has shown just how powerful communications can be in connecting people with nature. Over the last two quarters, Froglife's communications work has helped more people than ever discover our projects, campaigns and conservation advice – growing our online audiences, increasing media coverage and bringing wildlife stories into homes, schools and communities across the UK.

## **A growing audience for wildlife conservation**

Across social media, Froglife's audiences have continued to grow rapidly. By spring 2026, our Facebook page had passed 20,500 followers, our Instagram following almost doubled in the span of two years, and LinkedIn became our fastest-growing platform, raising Froglife's profile across the conservation sector. But follower numbers only tell part of the story, what matters is reaching people with stories and campaigns that inspire action.

The Toads on Roads season was a clear example. In February 2026 alone, Froglife's Facebook content achieved more than 640,000 views as people followed the migration season, shared patrol stories and supported local toad crossings. The response

showed just how much people care about protecting wildlife in their communities, especially when conservation feels practical, accessible and rooted in real stories.

## **When toads make headlines**

This year's Toads on Roads press day was one of Froglife's biggest communications successes to date. It generated widespread national and regional coverage, with 32 outlets picking up the story. Froglife spokespeople took part in 15 BBC radio interviews, while newspapers, online publications and conservation organisations helped spread the message even further. Coverage included LBC, CBBC Newsround, the Institute of Environmental Science and the Amphibian Survival Alliance.

The campaign spotlighted both amphibian conservation and the incredible efforts of volunteer patrollers across the country. Importantly, the media attention drove thousands of new visitors to Froglife's website and social channels to find out how they could get involved.

## **Practical wildlife advice continues to thrive**

Some of Froglife's most popular online content remains our practical wildlife advice, reflecting a



genuine public appetite for ways to help amphibians and reptiles in gardens and communities. Among the most visited pages across the year were:

- Find your nearest toad crossing
- Toads on Roads
- How to become a Toad Patroller
- Spawn and tadpole advice
- Frog and toad injury guidance

These pages attracted tens of thousands of visitors and reinforced Froglife's growing reputation as a trusted source of wildlife advice. Seasonal campaigns also performed well. Bonfire Night, Save the Frogs Day and #PawsAgainstPonds all generated solid engagement, with audiences responding especially well to practical tips, emotional storytelling and shareable conservation messages. #PawsAgainstPonds was the standout campaign of the year, reaching more than 16,800 people across Facebook and Instagram.

### Stronger stories, stronger connections

This year saw Froglife place a greater emphasis on storytelling – sharing the voices of volunteers, project participants, supporters and partner organisations to demonstrate the real-world impact of our conservation

work. Campaigns tied to International Women's Day, Black History Month and Disability History Month helped to highlight diverse perspectives and strengthened community engagement across our audiences.

Supporter communications remained strong throughout. Monthly editions of our Croaks newsletter kept readers engaged with wildlife gardening tips and seasonal nature updates, while our Spring/Summer 2026 edition of Natterchat reached hundreds of supporters, volunteers and project participants, celebrating the communities making conservation possible and sharing stories across Froglife's work.

### Looking ahead

One of the biggest lessons from the year is the power of integrated communications – combining media coverage, social media, website content and supporter communications to create campaigns that reach people in multiple ways. The results show that people respond most strongly to hopeful, practical conservation stories that connect wildlife protection with community action. As Froglife moves forward, communications will remain central to helping more people discover nature on their doorstep, take part in conservation and feel connected to the wildlife around them.

Every shared story, every website visit and every social media post has the potential to inspire someone to care, and ultimately, to act.

**By Ashlea Mawby.** *Ashlea is Froglife's Communications Manager and Toads on Roads Coordinator.*



# Toads on Roads press day

*Amplifying impact for people and nature*



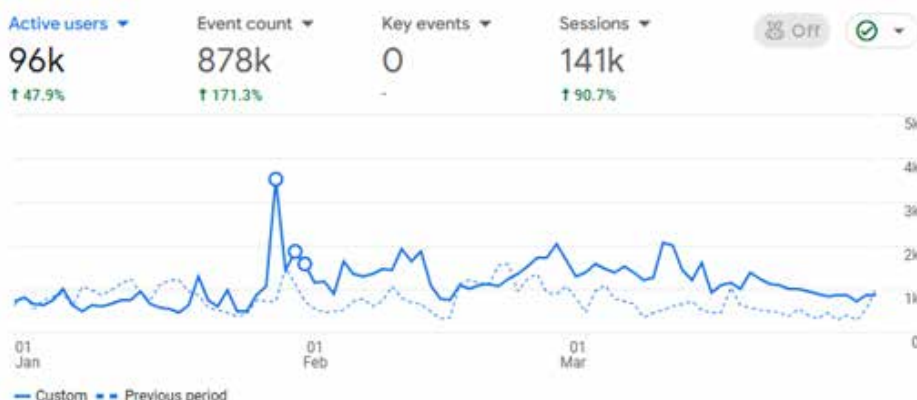
This year's inaugural Toads on Roads press day marked an important step forward in how Froglife shares its conservation impact with the wider sector and public. Built around a clear, proactive media strategy, the day was designed not just to celebrate success, but to shape the narrative around amphibian conservation and to motivate people to act.

At the heart of the story is scale and urgency. The stark reality is that long-term data points to a 41% decline in toad populations over the past 40 years. Since the project began over twenty years ago, volunteers have helped over two million toads safely cross roads, with 156,227 recorded as saved in 2025 alone across a record 280 patrols. By pairing hope with evidence, the press day highlighted both the power of community action and the ongoing need for conservation.

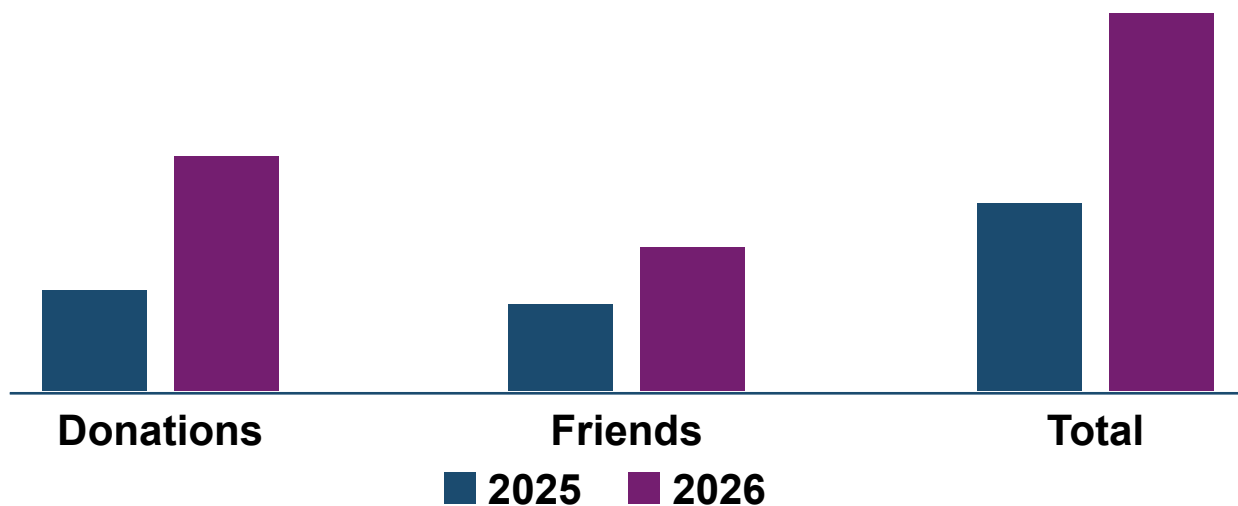
**PRESS COVERAGE  
WAS PICKED UP BY NEWS  
OUTLETS SUCH AS THE  
GUARDIAN, BBC AND THE  
INDEPENDENT**

The approach drew inspiration from successful national campaigns such as Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count. Toads on Roads has always attracted press interest as an unusual, positive story about a quirky species bringing communities together. By creating a dedicated press moment, Froglife was able to coordinate messaging, prepare spokespeople across the country, and ensure systems were ready to handle increased attention and to track impact in a way that hadn't been possible before.

The press day's impact extended across multiple areas: strengthening the visibility of



*Google Analytics data comparing website views during the 2026 season (January–March, bold blue line) with the same period in 2025 (dotted line).*



*The graph above shows the growth in Froglife Friends and donations between 2025 and 2026.*

citizen science data, reinforcing the value of grassroots conservation, and highlighting clear benefits to people through volunteering and community engagement. It also created opportunities to raise policy implications through the Clean Water Now campaign. Crucially, targeted calls to action led to a significant increase in our website visitors, starting earlier in the year than in previous years, which in turn brought more people to local patrols, new Froglife Friends and an increase in donations. This will not only strengthen patrolling efforts, but help fund the behind-the-scenes coordination that keeps Toads on Roads running as

it is one of our least-funded projects, relying heavily on core funds.

The Toads on Roads press day shows how strategic communication can drive behaviour change with tangible outcomes for amphibians, people and policy. Thank you to everyone who helped make the day a success – and to all those who volunteered, donated or became a Froglife Friend as a result!

**By Jenny Tse-Leon.** *Jenny is Froglife's Head of Conservation and Impact.*



# Scottish Green Pathways

We're celebrating the Scottish Green Pathways project and the impact it has made over recent years!

Green Pathways has been running in Scotland since 2014, and in its most recent areas (Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow and Renfrewshire) from late 2020 to the end of 2025. The project works with vulnerable and disadvantaged young people aged 8–18 (or up to 25 for those with additional support needs) to improve local greenspaces for wildlife, with a particular focus on amphibians and reptiles. Many of the groups and partner organisations we work with are based in the 10% most deprived areas of Scotland, according to the 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

While the engagement numbers speak for themselves (see our stats!), the most meaningful impact has been on the young people themselves. Week to week, we see real improvements in confidence, gross and fine motor skills, social skills and teamwork – and above all, a growing knowledge and appreciation of amphibians, reptiles and the wider natural world. That learning doesn't stay in the session; it carries forward through their lives and spreads into their communities, contributing to a better future for people and wildlife alike.

**By Louise Smith.** Louise is the Development Officer for Froglife's Green Pathways project in Glasgow.

## Achievements

**7,284 people engaged in project activities** – including 4,474 young people, 1,985 family members, support workers, teachers, and 825 children under 8

**913 sessions delivered**, 93% outdoors, totalling 1,822 hours

**39 ponds created or restored** - 23 new and 16 restored

**58 local greenspaces improved for wildlife**; 40 more explored through learning activities

**40 additional habitats created** – including bog gardens, hibernacula and wildflower meadows

**60 events attended** to raise awareness and support partner organisations, **reaching 2,701 people** (1,464 aged under 25)

**128 partner organisations** – including schools, colleges, youth groups, after-school clubs, councils, allotments, community gardens and greenspace managers

The 2020–2025 project was principally funded by The Robertson Trust, with additional co-funding from The RS Macdonald Charitable Trust, the Hugh Fraser Foundation, Neighbourly, Queens Cross Housing Association Participatory Budget, Action Earth, Alpkit, Gillespie Macandrew, the Sabina Sutherland Charitable Trust and Waitrose.

We also thank Young Start and The Stafford Trust for supporting the Scottish Green Pathways project, now delivering in Glasgow, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire. Young Start is a grants programme run by The National Lottery Community Fund, funded through dormant bank and building society accounts – those with no activity for 15 or more years. It aims to create opportunities for children and young people aged 8–24 across Scotland to help them reach their full potential.

"The pupils have really enjoyed this; we can see them improving their motor skills and balance getting to the pond every week and they'd never engage like this at a different project." – Mr C, Mary Russell School.

# London Blue Chain

As the London Blue Chain project enters its third year, it's a good moment to reflect on its impact on both urban wildlife and local communities.

To date, the project has created or restored 85 of 100 planned ponds across southeast London, contributing to the development of five wildlife corridors. These connected habitats are essential for supporting native amphibian and reptile species as well as mammals, birds and invertebrates. Alongside pond creation and restoration, we've delivered over 75 terrestrial interventions including dead hedges, log piles, rockeries and hibernacula, giving species places to forage, shelter and breed.

A key strength of the London Blue Chain project is its focus on communities historically underserved by the conservation sector, including ethnic minority communities, LGBTQIA+ people, refugees, migrants, and disabled and SEND groups. Ensuring these communities have meaningful access to the green and blue spaces they live alongside is vital not only for the sustainability of the project, but also in terms of community wellbeing and nature connectedness.

Many of our ponds are created in direct collaboration with these groups – dug within homeless hostels, youth and community centres, and at sites used by refugee and migrant groups. Involving communities in the process fosters a sense of ownership and encourages long-term stewardship of these important species.

The project also engages these communities through a wide range of creative workshops and activities. Recent highlights include a collaborative tapestry project with LGBTQIA+ peer support group Queer Minds to celebrate the culture, heritage and wildlife of southeast London, and a workshop run in partnership with the Indoamerican Refugee and Migrant Organisation (IRMO). The latter explored how we can support native amphibians, reptiles and their habitats, delivered with live Spanish translation by project trainee Diana Hernandez.

Educational work with young people remains another important focus. Many participants live in highly urbanised areas and experience a lack of meaningful access to nature. Through creative sessions, pond-dipping and practical habitat work, the project is helping to inspire the next generation of conservationists and environmental stewards to make a difference for urban wildlife.

**By Kat Richards.** *Kat is a trainee on Froglife's London Blue Chain project.*

The London Blue Chain is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we can deliver this project to create and restore 100 ponds with local communities, transforming habitats and lives across southeast London.



# Froglife Traineeships



Froglife has been recruiting salaried trainees since 2014, training 33 trainees and 4 trainee placements to date. The traineeships vary depending on Froglife's needs and the project, and they have covered project delivery, habitat and species conservation, public engagement, nature reserve warden training and, most recently, project development.

We actively encourage applicants with an interest in nature conservation who haven't yet had the opportunity to volunteer or work in the sector. We have been consistently impressed by our trainees who have showed dedication to furthering their careers in conservation and their commitment to Froglife's mission.

Our analysis of trainee progression from 2014 to February 2026 found the following:

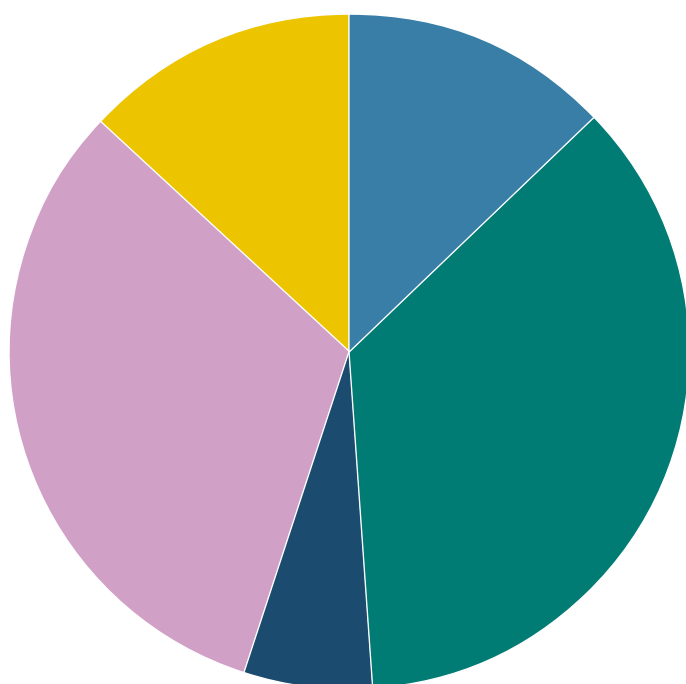
In total, 58% of our past trainees have gone on to work in the conservation sector. 79% of trainees

completed their traineeship, with a further 18% currently in training and on track to complete – bringing the projected completion rate to 97%. Only 3% did not finish.

Given that many of our trainees started out with limited pathways into conservation employment, a 58% success rate is something to be proud of. It's a shame we've been unable to trace 36% of our former trainees, so if you completed a Froglife traineeship and you're reading this, we'd love to hear from you!

Froglife is committed to continuing its salaried traineeship programme. Our London Blue Chain, Coalface to Wildspace Yorkshire, and Coalface to Wildspace: Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and the Lothians projects will all be recruiting trainees soon, so watch this space.

**By Kathy Wormald.** *Kathy is Froglife's Chief Executive Officer.*



**6%**

are in unrelated employment

**13%**

work for ecology companies

**13%**

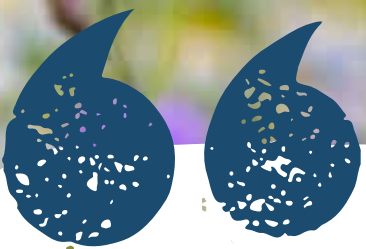
progressed into other roles at Froglife

**32%**

now work in other conservation organisations

**36%**

are unknown



"I want to say a big thank you for the last year here at Froglife – I have really appreciated the support that Froglife has offered, and it's been a joy to work for such a fantastic and friendly organisation."

Before applying for the traineeship, I was feeling stuck and didn't have a great amount of hope about my future. I was unsure which direction to go in and didn't feel that I had many options available to me. I had been through some difficult things in my personal life and with my health, which led to gaps in my employment record. My experience felt like it was becoming less relevant to where I wanted to be in life. I was working two part-time jobs and throwing myself into volunteering whenever I could outside of work, but a career in conservation never felt like it was attainable. So many organisations have such high barriers requiring things like a degree, several years of experience, or a car.

The traineeship has given me some much-needed confidence in myself. I always knew that I was enthusiastic and capable, but in a world that values professional experience above all else, and which seemed to always favour people from particular backgrounds, I was never given the opportunity to prove it. It was very demoralising to not be able to use or show those skills even though I knew I had a lot of potential. To see that potential recognised and to be given the opportunity to develop my skills, knowledge and growth both personally and professionally has been wonderful. The traineeship has been truly life-changing for me."





# The value of collecting records

## *How survey data is used*

Froglife collects a lot of data. As of May 2026, our 280+ Toad Patrols submit over 3,000 records annually, and our Dragon Finder app holds over 7,000 records. We share all our data with the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas and Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), making it available to the public and conservation organisations. Some locations are 'masked' to a 10km radius to protect sensitive species and locations, but we're always open to share detailed data with anyone who contacts us asking for a data-sharing agreement – normally free of charge for non-commercial use. The distribution of our records across the UK between 2000 and 2024 is shown in Figure 1 below.

### Growing records

To get an idea of how our records grow year on year, we only need to look at our Dragon Finder and Toads on Roads data. Figure 2 shows the number of Toad Patrols returning data since the 1970s. Dragon Finder record numbers tend to be more variable and is linked to projects that engage more with Dragon Finder in particular years.

Research for the 2024 Froglife Research Conference found that between 2004 and 2024, Dragon Finder generated 2.1% of amphibian records and 1.4% of reptile records submitted to the NBN – placing it 7th in submissions for both groups during its first eight years of operation. That may sound modest, but the top four contributors account for around 85% of records and as the number of organisations sharing

reptile and amphibian data with NBN has fallen in recent years, Froglife's contribution has become increasingly important.

### Data quality

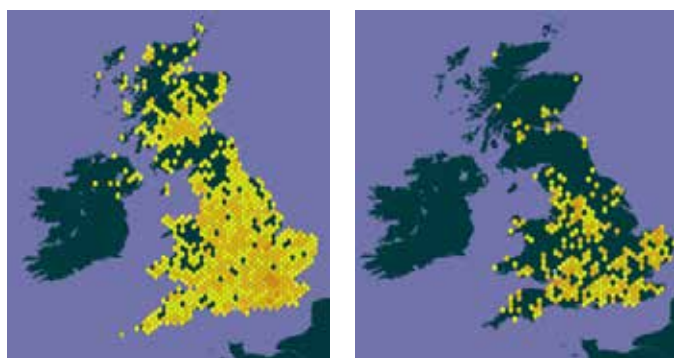
Dragon Finder records are verified by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers, often university students, who check submitted photos against the species record. Thankfully, most people can now send good-quality images from their phones, though some records need extra research. Green frogs in particular can require cross-referencing with maps of nearby known records, and we have a number of expert advisers happy to give a second opinion on tricky images. The app also lets recorders log the habitat where a species was found, giving us useful insight into where our recorders are based and where different species occur.

### Scientific impact

Dragon Finder records from citizen scientists have been downloaded 8,878 times between 2016 and 2024, with 189,125 occurrence records used to support over 154 scientific publications. It has supported academic research at Heriot-Watt University, the University of the West of Scotland and research undertaken for Natural England, as well as public engagement in disadvantaged areas and our work with schools across the UK. Figure 3 shows how use of the data has grown over the past decade.

Toads on Roads records have been downloaded 1,190 times between 2023 and 2026, with 3,166 occurrence records supporting 8 scientific publications. This data has been invaluable to university researchers, including students using it for their degree and master's dissertations to explore how toads migrate.

Fig 1. Left – Froglife's common toad and great crested newt records from the Toads on Roads project, 2000-2024. Right – Froglife's amphibian and reptile records from the Dragon Finder App, 2016-2022.



Dr Emma Gardner and colleagues at the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology used the data to develop a model mapping common toad habitat use. Dr Remi Martin at the University of Wolverhampton used it for research into common toad genetics at sites across the UK.

Two landmark papers by Dr Silviu Petrovan at the University of Cambridge, working with colleagues at the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology and the University of Zurich, used Toads on Roads data to model changes in toad numbers over time across the UK and Switzerland. This research has been instrumental in changing the way people and government think about the common toad as a 'priority species' for conservation.

Our other survey data also contributes to conservation science. Working recently with Dr Brian Pickles at the University of Reading, data from one of the reserves we manage supported an investigation into the value of reptile basking banks and we hope to extend this work in the future. We continue to survey ponds on our sites, building a baseline of data that will support wider survey work and study should funding become available.

### How you can help

So, please keep sending in those valuable Dragon Finder records, and if you haven't yet, please download the app and encourage friends to do the same. Our Toads on Roads project continues to grow and if you'd like to get involved, find your nearest toad crossing and see how you can help next spring. Neither project has direct, dedicated funding – both rely on volunteer time and whatever small funds are available each year. If you can't get out in the field, please consider and encourage others to become a Froglife Friend, or support these projects with a donation.

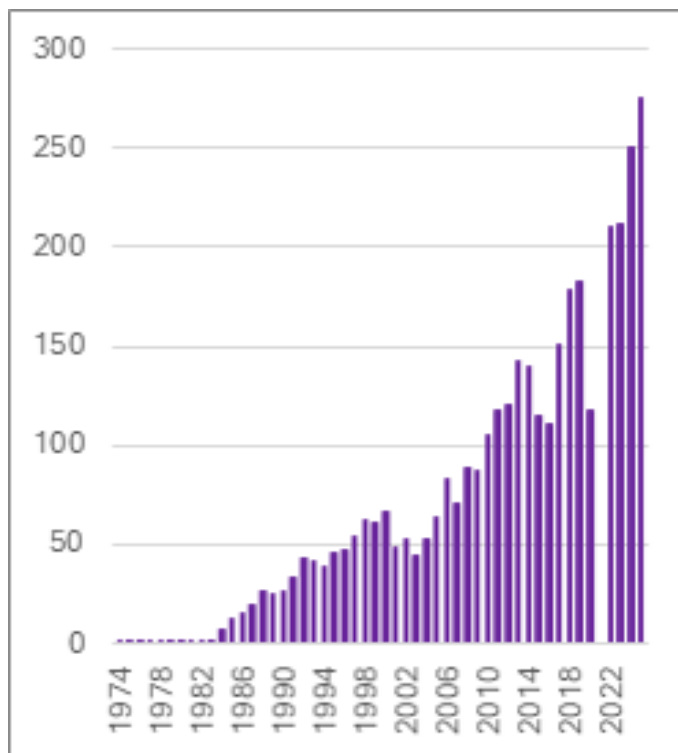
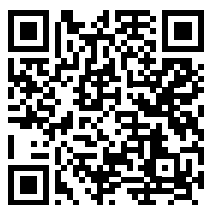


Fig 2. Number of Toad Patrols reporting each year.

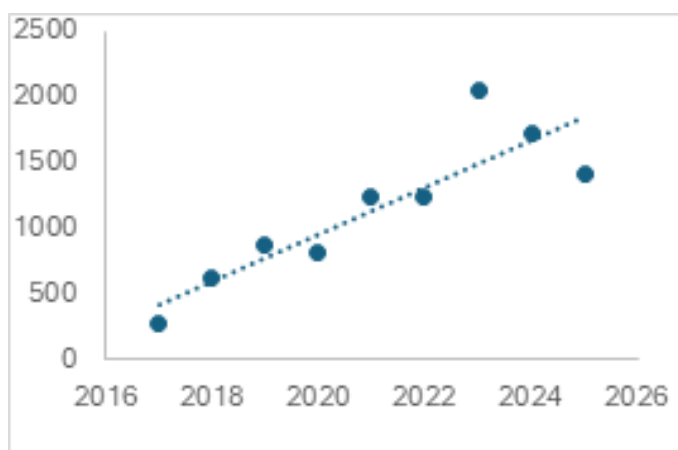


Fig 3. Growth in the number of Froglife-sourced NBN data download events.

**By Andrew Smart.** *Andrew is Froglife's Head of Science and Research.*





# Newts return home

As with most nature conservation projects, a lot of the work we do here at Froglife is quite long-term. Our site management plans usually span five years, and our vision and strategies look even further ahead. This forward planning is vital for setting our future direction. The UK's wildlife continues to come under threat from development, habitat fragmentation, changes to planning laws and legal protections, disease, non-native invasive species and, of course, the climate crisis. It is

essential, therefore, that as an organisation we look at the bigger picture, plan ahead, and make the best strategic use of our resources if we are to protect our beleaguered amphibian and reptile populations.

With all this in mind, it is wonderful when we can make on-the-ground habitat management interventions and see an almost instant impact. It is a real, tangible reminder that our work is making a genuine difference where it's needed most.

*"Wow, look at all those eggs. I can't believe we did that!"*

Hannah Keeley, Green Talent, Project Manager



Such a situation arose recently at the Boardwalks Nature Reserve in Peterborough. The site is a mix of wet woodland and grassland adjacent to the River Nene, managed by Froglife on behalf of the owners, Peterborough City Council. The reserve boasts several small ponds, home to common frogs, common toads, great crested and smooth newts, and grass snakes. These ponds vary in size and depth, and as our climate warms and recent springs become drier, some are starting to dry up – far from ideal if you're an amphibian that relies on these vital habitats to complete your life cycle.

Action from our amazing Green Talent trainees solved the problem. Green Talent is a three-year project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, through which Froglife recruits trainees from under-represented sectors, giving them the opportunity to gain paid work experience in the conservation sector. The hope is that trainees will develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take their first steps toward a career in nature conservation. Six trainees joined us in September 2025 and quickly found their stride, managing habitats at Boardwalks and elsewhere.

A survey of the many small ponds at Boardwalks identified one, known as Pond R (perhaps we ought to give them more prosaic names?), as a prime candidate for restoration. It had dried out completely and became overgrown with bulrush and sedges. Last winter, the trainees set to work, diligently clearing the vegetation before scraping away a layer of dried sediment, taking care not to damage the

liner underneath. The arisings were put to good use, forming reptile basking banks and piles of vegetation for grass snakes to lay their eggs in.

Not long after the work was completed, a long spell of rain filled the pond, and within a few months aquatic vegetation and invertebrates began to reappear. Fast forward to March this year, and the trainees were being trained to survey newts when, to everyone's delight, they spotted plants with folded leaves. All our newt species lay their eggs (around 300 per individual) one at a time on a leaf, then fold it over to protect the developing embryo. An inspection revealed these particular eggs belonged to great crested newts! Within a couple of weeks the pond was teeming with tiny newt larvae, and by the time of writing in June, many had fully developed and were ready to leave the pond.

The habitat management work we do on our reserves is always carried out for a targeted reason, though the benefits aren't always immediately obvious. Examples like this are a wonderful reminder of the real difference our work makes for amphibians and reptiles.

This work couldn't happen without support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and National Lottery players – thank you!

**By Darren Starkey.** *Darren is Froglife's Operations Manager.*





# Green impact

Conserving amphibians and reptiles is Froglife's core mission, but how do we pursue that while keeping our own environmental impact as low as possible? Our species are particularly vulnerable to climate change and pollution, so as an organisation we need to lead by example in reducing our carbon footprint and minimising our environmental impact through our operations. To do this, we calculate our carbon footprint annually. This helps us understand our overall impact and identify where the greatest emissions lie, so we can plan how to reduce them.

For the period 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025, Froglife's carbon emissions were 143.43 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (see table below). Our Scope 1 (direct emissions) and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions (indirect emissions from electricity and heating etc.) accounted for just 0.04 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, or 0.03% of our total greenhouse gas emissions. This is extremely low compared to similar organisations<sup>1</sup>, largely because we have a small head office and many staff work from home.

The remaining 99.97% of our emissions, 143.39 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, fall under Scope 3, covering materials, travel, accommodation and homeworking. The materials category makes up the bulk of the emissions, and these figures are similar to other organisations of our size. Our travel footprint is low because we encourage

staff to use greener transport wherever possible and some projects do much of their travel by bike.

Across all our projects, we minimise waste by reusing and recycling materials. Our Leaping Forward for Dementia project in Somerset uses reclaimed wood for all woodwork and avoids single-use plastic and non-compostable materials. The Peterborough Neighbourhood Wildlife Corridor project uses reclaimed clay roof tiles and bricks to create wildlife habitats in school grounds. For our Green Talent project, we made mallets from wood rather than buying them.

Our Boston and Beyond project have been working with the Boston Men's Shed, a woodworking group that makes items for the local community while supporting men's mental health and reducing loneliness through shared practical projects. They assembled bird box kits which our volunteers then installed in allotments and school grounds.

Froglife's resourceful approach keeps our environmental impact low, and with good data we can track our progress and identify further improvements going forward.

**By Sheila Gundry.** *Sheila is Froglife's Head of Operations.*

<sup>1</sup>Office of National Statistics: Emissions per employee by industry, 2026

| Scope and category                     | Activity type | GHG emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e) | % of total |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| Scope 1 & 2                            | Total         | 0.04                               | 0.03%      |
|                                        | Office use    | 0.04                               | 0.03%      |
| Scope 3                                | Total         | 143.39                             | 99.97%     |
|                                        | Materials     | 133.04                             | 92.75%     |
|                                        | Travel        | 9.77                               | 6.8%       |
|                                        | Accommodation | 0.49                               | 0.34%      |
|                                        | Homeworking   | 0.11                               | 0.08%      |
| Total reportable emissions (Scope 1–3) |               | 143.43                             | 100%       |

# Twenty years with Froglife

## A trustee's tale

In summer 2008, I had been a Froglife supporter for a few months when I received an invitation to contribute to a project launch in Scotland. My research was focussed on Trinidad and Tobago's frogs and marine turtles, but there were few herpetologists working in Scotland at the time, so the list of possible speakers must have been quite short. Accepting that invitation turned out to be a life-changing decision, leading to nearly 20 years of involvement in Froglife.

The launch took place at Edinburgh Zoo, which, ironically, had recently closed its aquarium and dispersed its amphibian and reptile collections. I brought along a group of Glasgow staff and students; my own talk covered two Trinidad frog species, the Open University's Tim Halliday spoke on the global amphibian crisis, and CEO Kathy Wormald introduced the new project. The project was Glasgow Living Waters, which began in early 2009 and was soon followed by a similar project in North Lanarkshire. Froglife's Scotland staff found office space in the Zoology building where I worked and it soon made sense for me to become a trustee. I was the only trustee based in Scotland and I took on a role in developing Froglife's work north of the border.

Becoming a trustee meant attending four meetings a year in Peterborough: a long day, involving a 6am train from Glasgow Queen Street and a return around 9.30pm (if the trains were on time!). The covid pandemic changed this; meetings moved online and have largely stayed that way, reducing travel for everyone. The trustee role is primarily about governance rather than direct project involvement, but it is crucial, as charities are held to a high standard of practice. As a Scottish trustee, however, I have

been closely involved in the rollout of Froglife's work in Scotland, including:

- Contributions to conferences and other events, notably at the Scottish Parliament and the International Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, where Froglife was among the few NGOs invited to have a stall.
- Contributions to scientific papers, including a widely cited review of the status of Scotland's amphibians.
- Input to Scottish Environment Link (SEL), which brings together Scottish NGOs to provide a unified voice on devolved environmental and wildlife policy. SEL's species champion programme has secured an MSP for nearly every Scottish amphibian and reptile species.
- Input to Nature Scot's Scottish herpetological conservation strategy.

Froglife's impact in Scotland since 2008 has been immense. Locally based projects like Living Waters, Come Forth for Wildlife and now Coalface to Wildspace, in addition to the wide-ranging Scottish Dragon Finder, have created and improved large numbers of ponds and other habitats. They have all been delivered with Froglife's characteristic and innovative approach to public engagement and it has been a privilege to be involved.

**By Roger Downie.** *Roger is a semi-retired University of Glasgow zoologist, former Froglife Trustee and current Patron.*



# Digging deep

## *Froglife Ecological Services*

Often, I am asked by a customer how and when wildlife will arrive after works on a newly created or restored pond and surrounding habitat is completed. It is not an easy question to answer and after all these years, the question still surprises me. There is nothing more rewarding than watching nature return to a place where it once struggled.

When people think about environmental impact, they tend to picture vast rainforests, sprawling wetlands and dramatic wildlife documentaries, but some of the most meaningful conservation work happens much closer to home. The wonder on the faces of participants on one of our recent great crested newt training courses as they observed these magnificent creatures swimming under torchlight shows just how powerfully nature affects people. Often our first wildlife experiences happen in quite modest places: an allotment, local park, roadside verge, behind a warehouse, or down the bottom of the garden.

Over the years, Froglife Ecological Services (FES) has created and restored habitats across a huge variety of projects up and down the country, helping transform spaces that might once have been little more than a damp corner or a litter-laden ephemeral pond, into functioning ecosystems rich with life.

### **From bare ground to biodiversity**

Some of the great success stories of habitat creation are about how quickly wildlife responds when given the chance. A newly created pond may look at first like an oversized puddle with ambitions, but nature wastes no time. Within weeks, insects arrive, soon followed by amphibians, aquatic plants, birds, and all the wonderful things that make ecosystems work.

Post-creation surveys on a number of sites, many carried out by volunteers trained through Froglife projects, have shown just how effective these habitats can be. Areas once considered ecologically poor are now supporting breeding amphibians, pollinating insects, reptiles and wetland plants. In some cases, species appear so quickly it's almost as though they were watching from nearby hedges, waiting for us to leave the site!

Additionally, whilst FES has a strong focus on habitat creation and restoration for our native amphibians and reptiles, these improvements also benefit the wider ecological community. Improved terrestrial habitats surrounding ponds support bees, birds and butterflies, with native planting providing food and shelter. My wife was amazed at how fast word spread about our new garden pond. The morning after it was





finished, it looked like a wildlife lido, with birds bathing and drinking in groups.

### Bigger projects, bigger impact

Some projects operate on a truly impressive scale. One FES project in Sheffield created a wildlife and wetland corridor connecting two sites with great crested newt populations through a network of ponds, hibernacula, log piles, grasslands and green corridors designed to reconnect fragmented landscapes. A recent training attendee who had surveyed the Sheffield ponds through a university project, afterwards confirmed that wildlife appreciates a good corridor just as much as humans do, with newts found using the ponds as stepping stones between the two sites.

Connectivity is one of the most important principles of conservation. Amphibians need to move safely between habitats to feed, breed and maintain healthy populations. By creating linked habitats rather than isolated patches, projects can have impacts far beyond the site boundary.

Then there's the long-term impact of FES work. Habitat creation isn't simply about putting ponds in the ground and hoping for the best. Monitoring and post-creation surveys show what's working and where habitats are thriving. In many cases, sites continue to mature and improve year after year, becoming more species rich as ecosystems establish naturally. In other words, patience pays off.

### Not just good for wildlife

Of course, environmental impact isn't only about rare species and survey results. Access to green space and water is proven to improve wellbeing. Ponds strategically created around developments can also reduce flooding, improve air quality, lower urban temperatures and make places more pleasant to live and work. A pond full of life tends to have a more calming effect than a concrete ditch designed to move water away as quickly as possible.



There's also something genuinely hopeful about habitat creation. At a time when environmental news can feel relentlessly gloomy, these projects offer visible proof that positive change is possible. Given the opportunity (and usually a digger or two), nature is remarkably resilient. Perhaps that's the real impact of our work: every pond created or restored is a small act of optimism, a step towards a landscape that is richer, healthier and more alive tomorrow than it is today. Plus, somewhere out there, a newt is probably extremely pleased about it.

### Shaping the future

As sustainability and biodiversity become increasingly important across the construction and infrastructure sectors, habitat creation is no longer a nice extra. It's becoming an essential part of responsible development.

FES continues to play a role in shaping that future, helping create places where people and wildlife can thrive side by side. Our recent project in Epping Forest saw the creation and restoration of almost thirty ponds, excavated just last winter, and is already home to great crested, smooth and palmate newts!

Real environmental impact isn't always best captured by statistics or papers. Sometimes it looks like a freshly planted wildlife pond, a restored woodland pond alive with toads, or the first frogspawn appearing where none existed before. And that, quite simply, is magical.

**By James McAdie.** *James is Head of Operations at Froglife Ecological Services.*



# The weather man

Hampton Nature Reserve is a mix of habitats, from the woodland of Jones Covert to open grassland, scrub and numerous ponds at its heart. The ponds are interconnected and the central area dips to a low point where an electric drainage pump lifts collected water into a ditch, which feeds into the wider fen drainage system.

As well as recording water levels, which have risen by over two metres at times, I've kept weather records since 2008. It would be lovely to call it a weather station, but what we have is more honestly described as a weather recording place using the most basic hygrometer and rain gauge. The current setup has been in use since 2012 and its readings closely match those of other local recorders.

As this is very much a one-man operation, up to 30 days a year go unrecorded when I'm on holiday. The access paths can be particularly hazardous after heavy rain, though ever the optimist I am, I always assume that this deters all but the most determined prowlers.

The numbers: annual rainfall has ranged from 424mm in 2022 to 824mm in 2024. The wettest month on record was October 2023 at 138mm; the driest was June 2018 with none at all.

Beyond giving an older volunteer a reason to get out and get some exercise, these visits are a chance to listen to the birds. Some days I've heard around ten species singing their hearts out and I like to think they're singing just for me. In April, there's always a special moment when I hear the first cuckoo.

**By Frank Clark.** *Frank is one of Froglife's Trustees and an active volunteer on Hampton Nature Reserve.*



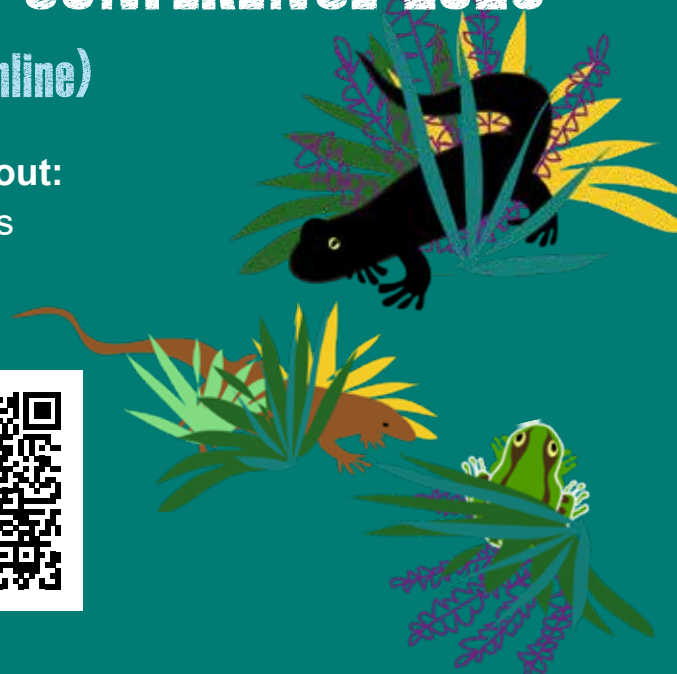
## FROGLIFE ONLINE RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2026

13.30-16.30 on Wednesday 21 October (online)

Join our free conference to discover more about:

- The impact of Froglife projects on communities
- Citizen Science Dragon Finder data
- Amphibian tunnels (subject to confirmation)
- Pond restoration
- Toadlet emergence
- Adders in Cornwall

TO REGISTER, FOLLOW THIS QR CODE  
THAT WILL TAKE YOU TO OUR WEBSITE.



# Froglife ponds a decade on

*What happens to ponds created for amphibian conservation in the long-term?*

High-quality ponds provide essential breeding habitat for our native amphibians, making pond creation a cornerstone of amphibian conservation for decades. Every year, dozens of ponds are created for conservation purposes – by Froglife, nature-friendly farming schemes, development mitigation projects, other wildlife organisations and individuals. However, existing research on the benefits of pond creation often focuses on short-term impacts. Understanding how created ponds deliver conservation benefits as they age is one of the key aims of my PhD.

To investigate this, I've been travelling the UK to assess Froglife-created ponds of varying ages, exploring what proportion provide suitable amphibian breeding habitat in the long term and what factors affect this.

This year, I visited over 50 ponds in parks and nature reserves that were created through the Sheffield Living Waters projects which ran between 2013 and 2019. Tracking some of them down was a challenge as vegetation can grow considerably in a decade and several ponds were surrounded by dense scrub.

At each site I recorded invertebrate diversity, site management, pond dimensions, public engagement, and carried out amphibian surveys across the breeding season to assess amphibian usage, breeding success and spawning success. It was a joy to find so many tadpoles, newts and clumps of spawn. By assessing each pond's suitability for amphibian breeding, we can learn how ponds deliver benefits to amphibians over time, and how pond design, placement and management affect this.

Preliminary analysis carried out partway through the survey season shows a small proportion of ponds (18%) were no longer holding water during the amphibian breeding season, primarily due to natural succession. This is comparable to a Sussex dewpond study which recorded a 23% loss of created ponds (3 of 13 new ponds lost; Beebee, 1997).

Of the remaining ponds still holding water, nearly half (48%) were used by amphibians this year. This

demonstrates that created ponds continue to benefit amphibians in urban greenspaces around a decade after creation, often with no dedicated management. A

comparable English farmland study found 65% of new ponds (median age 5 years) supported amphibians, though in 20%, common frogs were introduced (Baker & Halliday, 1999).

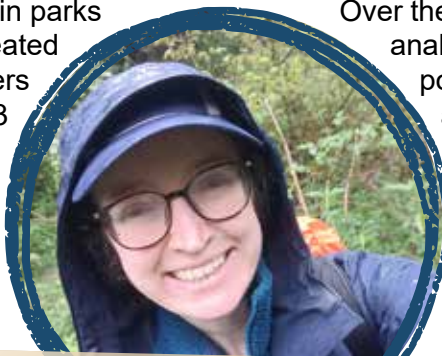
Over the coming months, I'll be busy at my desk analysing the full dataset to understand which ponds have succeeded in the long term and why. I hope to draw conclusions that can help to inform future conservation practices, via improved guidance on pond design and management.

**By Emily Seccombe.** *Emily is a PhD student at the University of Reading and is working in partnership with Froglife to research the effectiveness of amphibian and reptile conservation interventions in the UK.*

## References:

- Baker, J.M.R. and Halliday, T. (1999). Amphibian colonisation of new ponds in an agricultural landscape. *Herpetological Journal*, 9, pp.55–63.
- Beebee, T.J.C. (1997). Changes in dewpond numbers and amphibian diversity over 20 years on chalk downland in Sussex, England. *Biological Conservation*, 81, pp.215–219.

A SHEFFIELD LIVING WATER POND ALONG THE ROTHER VALLEY WAY, SHEFFIELD.



EMILY CONDUCTING FIELDWORK ON A RAINY DAY IN SHEFFIELD.

TADPOLES FOUND DURING A POND DIP AT SHIRE BROOK VALLEY NATURE RESERVE, SHEFFIELD.



# frogalogue

To order visit [www.froglife.org/shop](http://www.froglife.org/shop)  
or call 01733 602102

See what you can find in your garden or on a walk this autumn! You can purchase an FSC guide from our online shop to identify the creatures you spot: [www.froglife.org/shop](http://www.froglife.org/shop)



Help us to keep our conservation work going and keep an eye out for any sessions and events near you. Even the smallest donation makes a difference. You can scan the QR code to the left to take you straight to the donation page on our website so that you can make a one-off donation hassle-free. We really appreciate your support!



**SUPPORT  
FROGLIFE'S  
CONSERVATION  
WORK BY  
SPONSORING  
ONE OF OUR  
SPECIES  
FROM £10**

Give Froglife Friendship as an extra special gift to someone you know who cares about frogs (and all amphibians and reptiles!). As well as knowing your contribution is going toward the conservation of the UK's amphibians and reptiles, your friend or family member will also receive a special pack. Friendships start from £18



Common toad populations in the UK have declined by 41% over the past 40 years. By purchasing one of these prints you will help Froglife continue to protect common toads and their habitats. Price £29.95



## FROGLIFE IS SUPPORTED BY

Beveridge Herpetological Trust  
~ Action Funder Thames Water  
~ Action Funder Suez ~ Alan Boswell Group Charitable Trust  
~ Anglian Water Community Fund ~ Awards for All ~ Aviva ~ Brewers Decorating ~ Cambridge Community Foundation ~ CLA Charitable Trust ~ Chapman Charitable Trust ~ Edinburgh Airport Community Fund ~ Edward Cadbury Trust ~ Esmee Fairbairn Foundation ~ Frome Town Council ~ Garfield Weston Foundation ~ Glasgow Natural History Society ~ Greater London Authority - Green Roots ~ Greenwich Neighbourhood Growth Fund ~ Henocq Law ~ Hospital Saturday Fund ~ Hugh Fraser Foundation ~ Lincolnshire Community Foundation ~ Masonic Charitable Trust ~ National Lottery Reaching Communities ~ Natural England ~ Nene Park Trust ~ Peterborough City Council ~ Saturday Hospital Fund ~ Sabina Sutherland Charitable Trust ~ Sheffield Town Trust ~ Simon Gibson Trust ~ Tesco Stronger Starts ~ The Gibson Charitable Trust ~ The Swire Trust ~ The Jean Sainsbury Animal Welfare Trust ~ The Kestrelman Trust ~ The National Lottery Heritage Fund ~ The Stafford Trust ~ UKSPF Grassroots Fund ~ Value Nature Ltd ~ Young Start Lottery

## CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

Wales Cottage Holidays  
~ Environmentjob.co.uk ~ HolidayCottages.co.uk ~ Puddleplants ~ Cornish horizons ~ Waterside Nursery

## TRUSTEES

Richard Yates (Chair) ~ Inez Smith ~ Frank Clark ~ Philip Wheeler ~ Gordon MacLellan ~ Silviu Petrovan ~ Xavier Mahele ~ Charlotte Regan ~ Melissa Solly

## PATRONS

Jules Howard ~ Kate Bradbury ~ Roger Downie

## VOLUNTEERS

And last, but certainly not least, a big thank you to all our volunteers including all those toad patrollers who continue doing such a terrific job each year.