

A close-up photograph of a Common Frog (Rana lessonae) resting in a grassy, mossy environment. The frog has a brown and black mottled pattern on its back and a white stripe running along its side. Its large, prominent eyes are visible. The frog is positioned in the center-left of the frame, facing left. The background is a dense, out-of-focus mix of green moss and dry grass. The lighting is natural, highlighting the texture of the frog's skin and the surrounding vegetation.



Common Frog © Mark Pollitt

Nationally, studies have shown a significant decline in the distribution of all amphibian species; even the Common Frog and Common Toad have suffered significant declines, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century.

Palmate Newts are the most widespread newt species in Scotland, whilst Smooth and Great Crested Newts are restricted to more lowland areas. The Great Crested Newt is strictly protected by UK and European Law due to significant declines in the last century, and is also a UK BAP priority species. It is illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb them, or to damage or destroy their habitat.



Toad Spawn © Howard Inns

For more information and to submit your records online and upload any photos visit www.whereswildlifeinayrshire.org.uk or contact Where's Wildlife in Ayrshire at c/o Ayrshire Rivers Trust, 1 Gibbseyard, Auchincruive Estate, Ayr. KA6 5HW.
Email info@whereswildlifeinayrshire.org.uk

To encourage amphibians to your garden there are a few things you can do.

You don't need a large water body to attract amphibians. Make a mini pond by using a container such as a half barrel, tub or an old sink which can be left standing, or sunk into the ground. Fill with water and a few aquatic plants and let nature do the rest.

Helpful Hints

- Smooth Newt ©Erni shutterstock Common Frogs ©Stan Wilson



Please fill in this form and send it to us!

Name		Phone	
Address		E-mail	
<input type="checkbox"/> To be added to the Where's Wildlife in Ayrshire mailing list please tick			

Amphibian Sightings: If you see an amphibian, record your sighting here. Please give as much information as possible. Or you can submit your record online at www.whereswildlifeinayshire.org.uk

[illegible]

Comments. Please add any comments, including records of amphibians you may have seen in the past. Older records are as useful as recent ones.

Information submitted on this form will be collated and disseminated manually or electronically and used for environmental decision-making, education, research and other public benefit use. Your name forms and integral part of the record you submit. We ask for your contact details in case we need more information about your record and this information may be stored on computer. Your name (but NO other details) may be passed to third parties with your record. If you object to your personal detail being retained, please contact Where's Wildlife in Ayrshire, although please note this will limit the usefulness of the information provided.

Amphibian survey in Ayrshire

Ayrshire is home to five of the six native species of amphibian in Scotland, with the Natterjack Toad only found on the North Solway in Dumfries and Galloway. These creatures evolved during the Devonian period, approximately 370 million years ago. They are a very under-recorded group in Ayrshire and we need your help to find out how these weird and wonderful species are faring in our local area.

What is an Amphibian?

Amphibians are cold-blooded vertebrates that, in the UK, comprises the frogs, toads and newts. Amphibians are divided into two Orders. Frogs and toads belong to group Anura, meaning ‘tailless’, whilst newts belong to the group Caudata. All of them are distinguished from reptiles by having an aquatic gill-breathing larval stage, followed by a terrestrial lung-breathing adult stage. Adults require semi-aquatic environments to live, and water is essential for them to breed and lay their eggs.



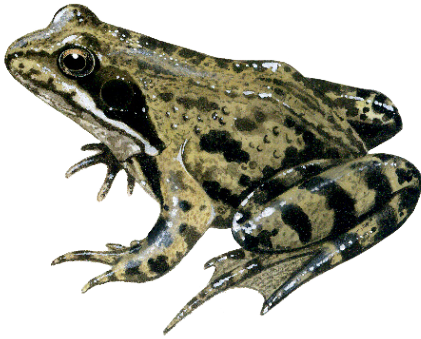
Common Frog Life Cycle

© Chris Shields at Illustrated Wildlife

Identification

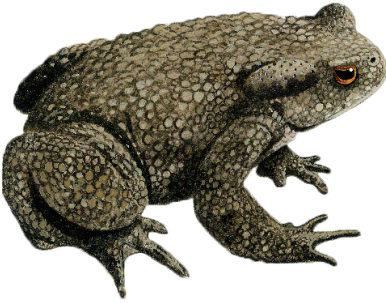
Common Frog - *Rana temporaria*

- Smooth skinned and usually a shade of olive-green or brown with a dark patch behind each eye. An off-white underbelly and stripes on the hind legs. Oval, horizontal pupil and a rounded snout.
- Spawn laid in clumps.
- Tadpoles are dark brown with light bronze speckles with a pointed tail tip.
- Moves with distinct hops.



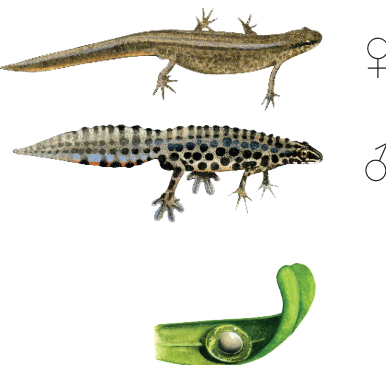
Common Toad - *Bufo bufo*

- Generally brown or olive-brown but may be darker, with a pale belly and dry warty skin. Copper coloured oval eyes.
- Spawn laid in long strings.
- Tadpole is black with a round tail tip.
- Typically walks rather than hops.



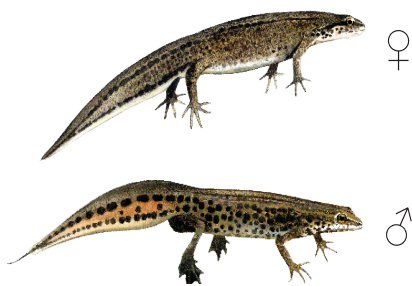
Smooth Newt - *Lissotriton vulgaris*

- Medium sized (up to 10 cm in length) brown newt. Skin can be varying shades of grey or brown.
- Males develop an unbroken wavy crest along the back during the breeding season. Both sexes have a yellow or orange belly with black spots. Throat is off white usually with some dark spots.
- The larva is light brown with a rounded tail tip and has feathery gills.



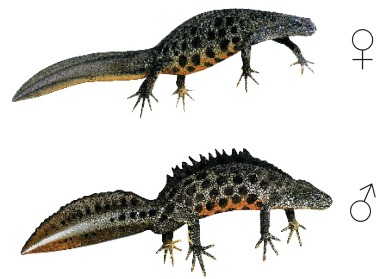
Palmate Newt - *Lissotriton helveticus*

- Scotland’s smallest newt with adults only up to 9 cm in length.
- Smooth skin that is brown, green or grey. Yellow belly, often with dark spots. Unspotted, translucent pink throat.
- During the breeding season males develop a filament at the tip of their tail and black webbing on their back feet.



Great Crested Newt - *Triturus cristatus*

- A large newt with adults up to 15cm in length.
- Skin is black or dark brown and has a rough, ‘warty’ appearance. Underside is bright orange with irregular black blotches.
- Males have a broken crest along their backs which is more pronounced during the breeding season.
- Males have a silvery-white flash on the tail and females a yellow/orange line along the base of the tail.



Illustrations © Chris Shields at Illustrated Wildlife

Where to find them?

Amphibians are found in a wide range of habitats wherever there are shallow water bodies to breed, such as puddles, ponds, lakes and canals.

Frogs and toads tend to be most active at night, with toads often being found a short distance away from waterbodies as they can tolerate the dry conditions such as those found in hedgerows, woodland and moorland.

Newts favour fish-free ponds across a wide variety of habitats. The Palmate Newt tolerates slightly more acidic conditions, and therefore can be found in moorland and bog areas where soil pH levels are lower. The Great Crested Newt tends to favour larger fish free ponds in lowland areas with a neutral pH, whilst Smooth Newts are found in a wide variety of lowland habitats, and quite often inhabit garden ponds.

Where’s Wildlife
in Ayrshire?



Please
Affix
Stamp

Where’s Wildlife in Ayrshire
c/o Ayrshire Rivers Trust
1 Gibbysyard
Auchincruive Estate
Ayr
KA6 5HW