

The Great Crested Newt



John Baker

Only the male great crested newt has the crest along his back . He uses it to impress female newts with a special dance.

About the Suffolk Ponds Project

Suffolk's rural ponds are a lifeline for wildlife. They are a haven for many species including the threatened water vole and important populations of great crested newt.

Sadly many ponds are at risk of losing their value for wildlife. Suffolk Wildlife Trust is recording information about the numbers of ponds throughout Suffolk and the wildlife that lives in them. Once we have this important information we can help pond owners ensure their ponds are wildlife friendly.

Great crested newts are one of the most magnificent newt species to be found in northern Europe. In recent years their numbers have declined dramatically because the ponds they live in are disappearing.

For this reason the species is fully protected, which means that not only is the newt protected from harm, but so is all suitable habitat within 500m of their breeding ponds. Suffolk is lucky enough to have one of the strongest great crested newt populations.

Breeding habits

The female will lay about 200 eggs, each one carefully folded inside a leaf for extra safety. If you spot a leaf in a pond with a tiny fold at the corner it is a good sign that great crested newts are around. The larvae that hatch from the eggs have gills and live under water for the first three months of their lives.



Bill Stevenson

The female newt has no crest and when the newt tadpoles hatch they look more like little fish with feathery gills and black spots on their tails.

Where does a great crested newt live?

The newts prefer smaller rural ponds with sunny shallow areas and a good range of plants.

Great crested newts live on land between July and February where they will hide in dense vegetation under stones and logs and look for food. They usually stay within 500m of their breeding pond, but if they have to search for a new pond to breed in they may travel as far as one kilometre.



Fish in ponds are a big threat as they will often eat baby newts.

Great crested newts are very fussy about their ponds and like damp areas with rough grass around the edge. Unfortunately these are often the areas people like to tidy up. It is much more newt friendly to leave these areas as they are.

If you would like to find out more about all British newt species try a visit to the Froglife website

www.froglife.org

Great crested facts



A great crested newt can live up to 15 years



female

Only the male has a crest which grows only during the breeding season and is used to impress the



The great crested newt is the largest newt species in the UK



Newt tadpoles grow their front legs first - unlike frog or toad tadpoles



Great crested newts spend as much time on land as they do in the water



You are unlikely to see a great crested newt in the daytime as they usually come out at night. However, on a warm day you may be lucky enough to see one come to the surface for air.