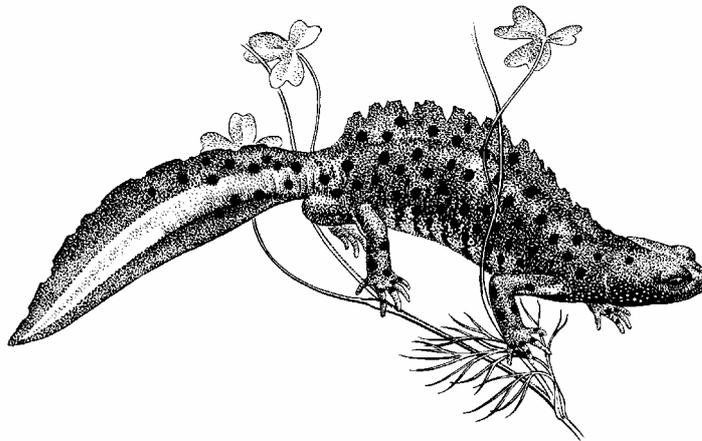




Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)



This Plan is in need of review. The text included is from the 2002 plan and is for general information only. This plan will be reviewed during 2009.

The great crested newt is the largest British newt, reaching up to 16cm in length. They have dark, often warty, speckled skin, with a bright orange or yellow belly. In springtime, male great crested newts develop a wavy crest along their backs and tails which have a silvery-blue streak along each side. Female great crested newts do not have a crest, but have a yellow or orange streak along the bottom of their tails.

Newts spend up to two-thirds of their life on land, and only return to water at the end of winter to carry out a complex courtship display and breed. Females lay their eggs on leaves of marginal plants under the water, folding each leaf up to protect them. The eggs take approximately one month to hatch, and the tadpoles three months to develop. Some will over-winter in the water until the following spring. Most will leave the pond to spend three or more years on land until sexually mature.

Great crested newts require several different types of habitat. To breed they require ponds (often in clay soils, marl pits or brick pits), slow moving canals, or ditches. They also require large areas of land around the water to find food and shelter. At least a hectare of good habitat is needed to support a viable population. Appropriate habitats include gardens, derelict industrial sites, tussocky pasture or open woodland.

1 Objectives and Targets

1.1 Objectives

- A. Conserve and maintain existing populations of great crested newts ensuring no further loss or fragmentation.
- B. Enhance the size and range of newt colonies through the restoration or creation of areas of open water near existing populations.
- C. Establish and maintain a comprehensive understanding of the distribution, status and ecological requirements of great crested newts in Shropshire through research, survey and monitoring.
- D. Promote communication, education and awareness of the status and needs of the great crested newt.

1.2 Targets

- Conserve existing populations and increase their viability through appropriate habitat management by 2003.
- Create 5 ponds at sites within the range of existing populations to increase the size of great crested newt populations by 2005. (Target exceeded due to plan action).
- Determine the distribution of the species in Shropshire by 2002.

2 Current Status

2.1 Importance

The great crested newt is a priority species for conservation action in the UK Biodiversity Programme. A national species action plan was published in 1995.

The great crested newt population in the UK is one of the largest in Europe. In Shropshire the great crested newt is fairly widespread throughout the county. The conservation of this endangered species is important, and in addition the presence of great crested newts gives a valuable indication of the status of freshwater habitats.

2.2 Trends

The species has suffered a serious decline over the last 50 years, mainly due to destruction or neglect of its habitat.

In Shropshire, the intensification of farming practices and the increase in housing development has greatly affected great crested newt populations. The Shropshire Wildlife Trust Pond Survey 1992 illustrates that, in the Shrewsbury area alone, there were 465 ponds in 1903, 330 in 1965, and only 55 still in existence in 1990.

2.3 Population and Distribution

The great crested newt is quite widespread in Britain and numerous locally in parts of lowland England and Wales.

The Shropshire Amphibian Group's survey of great crested newts in 1999/2000 revealed that the newt exists in 23 of the 51 one kilometre grid squares surveyed in the county. Great crested newts are widespread and occur at 51 individual sites.

3 Current Factors Affecting the Species

- Destruction of habitat through infilling of ponds, due to agricultural intensification, development, or landfill operations.

- Degradation of breeding habitat due to pollution, stocking of fish, introduction of alien aquatic plants and over-abstraction.
- Neglect of habitat management resulting in shading of ponds and increased siltation.
- Fragmentation and isolation of populations due to loss of valuable wildlife corridors between ponds.
- Loss of surrounding terrestrial habitat for foraging and over-wintering.

4 Current Action

4.1 Policy and Protection

- The great crested newt is listed on Annexes II and IV of the EC Habitats Directive and Appendix II of the Bern Convention. It is protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations, 1994 (Regulations 38), and under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- Froglife have appointed a great crested newt conservation co-ordinator, part-funded by English Nature and The Herpetological Conservation Trust. The co-ordinator will help implement the government's species action plan for the great crested newt.

4.2 Management, Research and Survey

- The Shropshire Great Crested Newt Survey 1999/2000 was undertaken by Shropshire Amphibian Group volunteers and funded by the Environment Agency. The survey confirmed new records of the species in Shropshire and identified existing sites where management and further monitoring work is required.
- The new great crested newt pool on land owned by Epson in Hortonwood, Telford is maintained and monitored by the Shropshire Amphibian Group. The pool was created to receive an existing population of newts threatened by development.

5 Key Habitats

- Disused canals
- Shallow pools/ponds
- Marsh
- Rank grassland
- Scrub, open woodland
- Derelict land

6 Complementary Plans

UK Great Crested Newt SAP
 Shropshire Peat Bogs HAP
 Shropshire Standing Open Water HAP

7 Actions

Habitat / Species	Action code	Action text	Location of action	Start date	End date	Lead	Assisting
Great Crested Newt	SHR GCN HC 02	Seek to manage existing sites or create new sites within migrating distance, through planning gain	Shropshire	2002	-	SC, T&W	EA, SWT
Great Crested Newt	SHR GCN HS 01	Maintain suitable habitat for great crested newt around ponds on the Ironbridge power station site until 2015.	Ironbridge Gorge Power Station	2009	2015	E.ON	
Great Crested Newt	SHR GCN SP 01	Ensure that sites with important populations of great crested newt are designated as county Wildlife Sites until 2015.	Shropshire	2006	2015	SWT	SC, T&W

KEY TO ORGANISATIONS

EA Environment Agency
 SCC Shropshire Council
 SWT Shropshire Wildlife Trust
 E.ON E.ON UK Plc
 T&W Telford & Wrekin Council

Pdf correct 23.03.2009