



Herpetofauna Workers' Meeting 2014

Saturday 1st to Sunday 2nd February 2014

The Clifton Pavilion, Bristol Zoo Gardens, College Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3HH

Please note: This programme is subject to change.

Saturday 1st February

09.30-10.00 Registration and coffee.

Morning session: Common toads and roads.

10.00-10.10 *Welcome address.*

10.10-10.35 *Local action for Bristol's threatened toads. (TBC).*

11.35-11.00 *Carpe Bufo: initial results of the ToadSize survey 2013.* John Wilkinson (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation) & Angie Julian (Oxfordshire Amphibian & Reptile Group & ARG UK).

11.00-11.25 *Gully-pots as amphibian death-traps: researching solutions in the Netherlands.* Raymond Creemers (RAVON).

11.25-11.55 *Coffee break.*

11.55-13.25 **Workshop Session 1.**

13.25-14.35 Lunch.

Afternoon session: Researching reptile recovery.

14.35-15.00 *Adder antics in the Malvern Hills: what does radio-telemetry reveal?* Nigel Hand (Central Ecology/Herefordshire Amphibian and Reptile Team).

15.00-15.25 *What can genetics add to conservation strategies?: a case study on UK adder populations.* Chris Durrant (Institute of Zoology).

15.25-15.50 *Harnessing volunteer experience in adder conservation.* Jim Foster (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation).

15.50-16.15 *Conserving Tobago's Sea Turtles : A Caribbean perspective.* Giancarlo Lalsingh (SOS Tobago).

16.15-16.45 *Coffee break*

16.45-17.30 ARG UK AGM

Social evening

19.30-21.30 Gala Dinner

21.30-23.00 "Have I Got Newts For You?" quiz & Raffle (proceeds will be donated to the SOS Tobago Project)

00.00 Bar close & depart.

Sunday 30th January

09.30-10.00 Registration for Sunday Day Delegates & Coffee.

10.00-11.30 **Workshop Session 2.**

11.30-12.00 *Coffee break.*

Morning session: Updates from the front-line.

- 12.00-12.20 *Thirty years of volunteer amphibian surveys at Fens Pools.* Paul Wilkinson (Canal & River Trust).
12.20-12.40 *Current status and conservation of the sand lizard on the Sefton Coast.* Mike Brown (North Merseyside Amphibian & Reptile Group).
12.40-12.50 *News from Amphibian & Reptile Conservation.* Tony Gent (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation).
12.50-13.00 *Herp update from Natural England.* Paul Edgar (Natural England).
- 13.00-14.15 Lunch.

Afternoon Session: Recent discoveries from herpetological research.

- 14.15-14.40 *Grazing effects on population densities of viviparous lizards in the Netherlands.* Raymond Creemers (RAVON).
14.40-15.05 *Amphibian chytridiomycosis: results of a Europe-wide research project and discovery of "Chytrid 2.0".* Matthew Fisher (Imperial College School of Public Health).
15.05-15.30 *Investigating environmental DNA as a survey method for great crested newts.* Jeremy Biggs (Freshwater Habitats Trust).
- 15.30-16.00 Review and close; coffee & departure.

Workshop abstracts.

Workshop 1: Aquatic trapping methods for crested newts. Leaders: Neil Madden, Robert Jehle (University of Salford), Dorothy Driver (ARC), Kathryn Murray (Natural England)

Great crested newts are commonly surveyed using aquatic trapping. In Britain, this tends to be with bottle-traps, a type of funnel trap pioneered by Richard Griffiths in the 1980s. A number of other methods have been used across the range of the great crested newt, not all of which have attracted the attention of British fieldworkers. In this workshop we will display the various traps and present a summary of data on their use. We will assess when aquatic trapping may be indicated by survey objectives, and when other methods are more appropriate. We will then discuss which aquatic trapping methods might be appropriate for wider use in Britain, looking at the pros and cons of each method (e.g. welfare, detection efficiency, capture rate, non-target captures, practicality, cost, biosecurity, licensing issues.) We hope to develop ideas for further research and guidance.

The workshop will involve group discussions so that participants have the opportunity to feed in their ideas and experience. Based on participant feedback, ARC and ARG UK will produce an advice note on recommended aquatic trapping methods for great crested newts.

Workshop 2: Displaying live animals at events. Leaders: Gary Powell (Amphibian and Reptile Conservation), Nigel Hand (Herefordshire Amphibian and Reptile Team)

Many ARGs attend public events as part of their efforts to raise awareness and inform people about herps. County shows, country park open days and school visits are common examples. Anecdotal and scientific evidence suggests that direct encounters with animals can greatly improve the educational experience; it certainly attracts interest at these events. Yet there are no widely agreed standards for how to display live animals at these events. Indeed, some workers even query whether it is acceptable at all, citing concerns over welfare or the tacit approval of capturing wild animals. This workshop will discuss the pros and cons of using live animals at public events, and the issues to consider if using them. If the discussions are sufficiently productive, the outcome will be a joint ARG UK/ARC advice note, covering issues such as: how to make the decision to display animals or not; sourcing of live animals (wild vs captive, native vs exotic); husbandry; biosecurity; welfare; legal issues; interpretation associated with live animals. The workshop leaders have years of experience of public events and are looking forward to your contributions to a productive workshop.

Workshop 3: Engaging with the Planning Process. Leaders: Andy Glencross (Wokingham Borough Council), Chris Monk (Derbyshire County Council, ARG UK & Derbyshire ARG)

As Government pushes for development led growth, together with financial and staff cutbacks at local authorities and NE, SNH & NRW, how can we help to ensure that the native amphibians and reptiles are protected? Local authority planners and ecologists need accurate information and expert advice to make informed decisions, so how do you engage with them to ensure that our native herpetofauna are fully considered in the planning process? Would the adoption by Local Authorities of the new British Standard on *Biodiversity: A Code of practice for Planning and Development* or other new proposals such as Biodiversity Offsetting, assist with ensuring favourable conservation status for our native herpetofauna?

The workshop leaders are both members of ALGE (Association of Local Government Ecologists) working at Wokingham Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council respectively, as well as being involved with the Berkshire and Derbyshire ARGs.