



TOAD CONSERVATION Toad Patrols in the UK

A presentation for the Froglife West Yorkshire
Toad Summit, on 25th January 2020

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Bagley Wood Toad Patroller

www.arguk.org

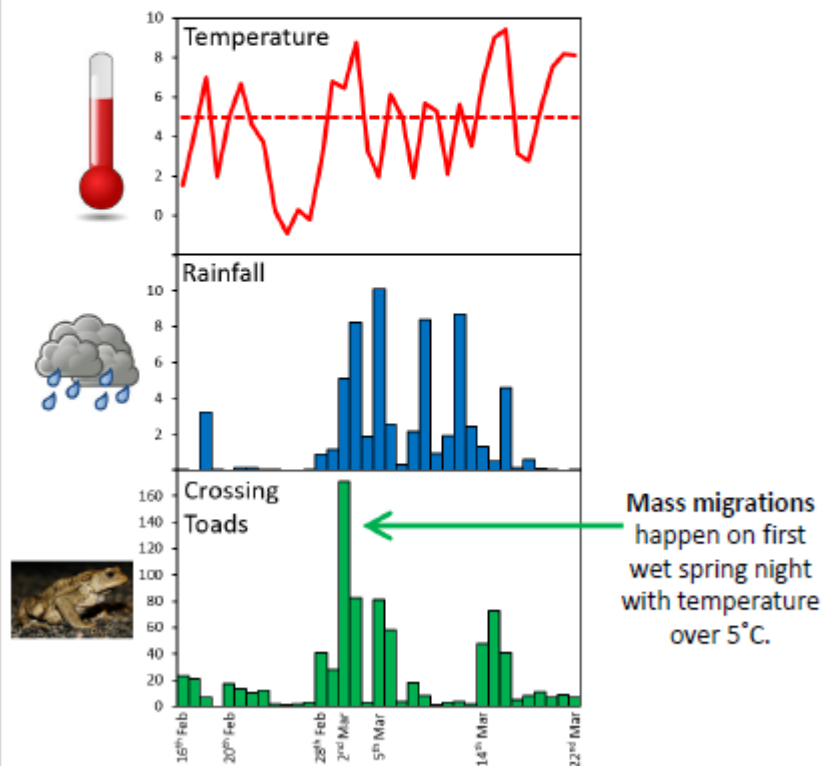


Why Toad Patrols?



Mass Migration

Toads will wait and all cross together, as dusk falls, on mild, wet spring evenings.



Toad numbers from Cufaulde Lane Toad Crossing, collected by Pete Gillatt.

Toads are a very site faithful animal, and migrate en masse to their preferred breeding ponds each spring (Feb – April).

Unfortunately in the modern world this often involves crossing roads during peak evening rush hour, with mass mortality!



Toad Patrols



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Volunteers 'patrol' road side verges from dusk onwards on 'warm and wet' spring evenings collecting toads (and other amphibians), and transferring them across the road in buckets to allow them to reach their breeding (spawning) ponds.



Image copyright Julian Smart





Not just toads!



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Recruiting toad patrollers



Recruiting toad patrollers



- Local householders offer because they are concerned about seeing squashed toads
- Word of mouth – neighbours, friends, relatives, outreach through other organisations e.g. local ARG, Wildlife Trust, Froglife etc
- People see the toad patrollers on the road and stop to find out what is going on
- Information from the ARG or Froglife websites
- Local press release and articles in local community publications
- Adverts in local shops and businesses
- Emails to members reminding them the toad season is coming up

Recruiting toad patrollers



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volunteers needed at the Oxford New Hinksey **toad patrol!**

Every March & April, on warm evenings, toads migrate back to the lakes or ponds where they were born, to breed.

Often the toads' migration routes take them across roads and through traffic, and sadly many toads don't make it.

So we provide a toad taxi service! We use buckets to give toads a ride to safety. But we need more patrollers!

Can you volunteer some evenings in March and April to join the toad patrol at New Hinksey (just off Abingdon Road, Oxford) & help us to save the toads?

for more info or to sign up, email us at:
toadpatrol.newhinksey@gmail.com

facebook: Oxford Toad Patrol twitter: @OxfordToads
(you can learn more about the annual toad migration, or find other toad crossings, by searching 'froglife toads on roads')

Recruiting toad patrollers



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Toad Patrollers

We asked some of the Bagley Wood Toad Patrollers why they go out on wet nights to rescue toads...



Rowan

When I'm not out toad patrolling I work in museum learning and am a mum of two little girls. I've been toad patrolling for 1 year.

I do it because I think it's so sad that precious creatures such as toads are under such threat due to human activity. It's fun to slow down from every day life, have a chance to see toads, newts and frogs close up, and there is comradery with fellow patrollers as we are working together for the same aim.

Sylfest



I'm a retired editor. I've been toad patrolling for more than 10 years.

I do it because it's fascinating to discover more about the migrations of our local wildlife, and important to spread an awareness of nature in the local community. And toads are such fantastic beasts.

Emma

When I'm not out toad patrolling I work as a scientist. I've been toad patrolling for 3 years.

I do it because toads are such slow, determined animals, who just want to get to the pond and have no chance of getting out of the way of a car in time. When you patrol the crossing, you really get to know their habits and it's very interesting to



Image credit: Julian Smart

see their individual characters. Plus it's a really great feeling when you watch toads you've rescued reach the pond and safely join the other toads!

Induction for new patrollers



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Image copyright Suffolk ARG

Induction for new patrollers



- Meet your new recruit at the crossing in daylight.
- Take contact details, and ensure they sign the Froglife patroller declaration form (for data protection personal information should not be circulated or used for any other purpose)
- Walk the crossing route pointing out the hazards
- Ecology briefing - explain why amphibians are crossing the road and where they are going, explain what makes a good crossing night ($> 5^{\circ}\text{C}$ 'warm n' wet') and how to tell different amphibians apart
- Biosecurity – use a clean or dedicated bucket for each crossing site, wear latex gloves if possible (but not hand sanitiser which could harm the animal)
- Health and safety briefing – do's and don'ts:

Keeping safe – do's and don'ts



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Image copyright Sylfest Muldal

Keeping safe – do's and don'ts



- Never patrol alone
- Always wear hi vis (be careful not to obscure with a dark rucksack or bag, if you are kneeling down turn sideways so that reflective strips are visible)
- Never step into the road when a vehicle is coming (even to save an amphibian), and be extra careful on fast roads and other hazards e.g. bends, brow of the hill
- Take a torch, but be careful not to shine in the eyes of other patrollers or at approaching cars which could dazzle the driver. Always carry a spare torch or batteries.
- Stay warm and dry – toads like wet nights so wear plenty of warm layers with a waterproof jacket, hat, gloves and waterproof or stout shoes. If you feel cold or unwell tell your coordinator and stop immediately.
- Carry a mobile phone in case of an incident
- Sign in and out with the patrol coordinator for that evening (log your time)
- Always be respectful and polite to vehicles, pedestrians and other patrollers.

Children and vulnerable persons



- ARG UK does not allow unaccompanied children (under the age of 18) to attend any ARG activity
- Even when accompanied, we have concerns about children under the age of 16 on busy roads – in case of accidents (a child is more likely to dash out in front of a vehicle to save a toad), the adult in charge has to supervise very closely
- We do allow 16-18 year olds as long as a parent/carer/guardian is present
- Similarly with vulnerable adults we require a carer or guardian to be present at all times.
- We dissuade large groups of children e.g. school or scout/guide groups as it would be difficult to supervise safely
- BUT – this is a great opportunity to engage the next generation so why not run a special ‘toad demonstration night,’ where children accompanied by their parents can be shown a toad crossing and receptor ponds (where accessible) in a safe and supported environment.



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Children and
vulnerable
persons

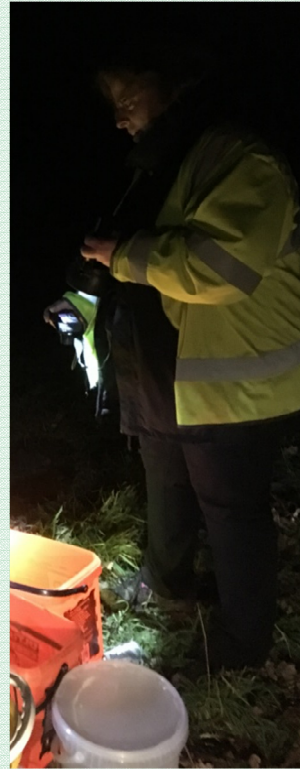


The issues - coordination

Unfortunately, as with every volunteer activity, there are pitfalls we can all fall into:

Overloading a single individual

while it is great that one person will take charge and be responsible for every aspect of the crossing, in a long toad season this is a huge commitment, not to mention the burden of responsibility. Some coordinators become very stressed, or find they are juggling toads, work, and family time to the detriment of the last two.



ARG UK

Some of our
lovely
toad patrol
co-ordinators

Solutions - Coordination ?



1. 'Toad Meisters' – a core group of 4-5 people any of whom can take responsibility on any given night. This will work better if they all know each other, and live relatively locally.

2. Kent ARG (KRAAG) crowd funded for a paid toad patrol coordinator to liaise all of the Kent toad patrol groups for 100 hours during the main toad patrol season (mid Jan - mid April). The role includes recruitment, administration, health and safety, equipment supply, record collecting, report writing and publicity. It has worked well so far and helped to build up a close knit toad patrol network in Kent



Image copyright Cumbria ARG

The issues – organising the rota



How many toads are rescued?



Despite their best efforts, 10% of toads found were still killed before they could be rescued.

A record-breaking total of 714 amphibians were rescued during one single night...

This was the night the closure of the A34 coincided with the first spring rain, bringing hundreds of toads to the crossing during tripled traffic levels.

It is important to stay in regular contact with patrollers – to make sure there is an even coverage, highlighting 'big' nights (and less favourable toad crossing nights), checking no one is alone, checking no one is overloaded

The solutions – organising the rota



We are looking for answers to this??

Suggestions include:

- Round robin email each morning/beginning of the week – but very time consuming for the coordinator if everyone responds (when they may be at work)
- Doodle poll – but not everyone uses the system
- Word of mouth – but plans can change
- On line calendar – use Google?
- Closed Facebook, WhatsApp or other social media group

Data Collection ?



3. Collect data on the night – at the roadside use paper forms on a clipboard, wipe clean laminated boards that could be kept in a secure spot at the toad site (if this is possible), or one patroller to record data on a smart phone or tablet.

- Data includes – sign in and out times for patrollers for health and safety/ insurance purposes but also to help log 'effort'
- Information on the amphibians spotted/moved to include – number of toads (male/female), frogs, newts and any other animals spotted. Record number alive and number dead.
- Accident log book



Images copyright Julian Smart

Solutions for data collection?



4. Upload data to a central point – google sheet, excel sheet on drop box, online data recording sheet each night so that all patrollers can see amphibian numbers (but not personal information)

5. Return your data to Froglife, your local ARG and your local records centre. Froglife also upload their data to NBN Atlas.

ARG UK are piloting a new system – ARGWEB




- ARGWEB is an internet-based software solution for ARGs – “Let the computer do the admin”
- Continually developed by SARG since 2005
- Now available to all ARGs
- Manages ARG membership, integrates with PayPal subscription
- Multi-tier security access, based on role, licences held and training completed
- Allows set up of reptile transects
- Incorporates a pond database function
- Online recording
- Directs surveyors, providing survey and priority information
- Full data analysis functions and GIS Built-in distribution model (CASM4)
- Land manager data portals



ARGWEB – Toad Crossings – Online Reporting



**HIWARG**


Hampshire and Isle of Wight Amphibian and Reptile Group (HIWARG)


Amphibian Survey Reporting Menu


Pete Gillatt


The AnimalsMembers Area


Click an icon for more information


**BACK**


Pond Survey
Reporting (map)


Pond Survey
Reporting (text)


Toad Crossing
Reporting


Terrestrial Transect
Reporting


Natterjack Transect
Reporting

Paper forms
for on-site
recording,
online upload
facility.



Online Recording!!



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Step 1 - Survey Parameters

Surveyor name:

Steve Langham

Surveyor email:

steve@surrey-arg.org.uk

Toad crossing name:

Earlswood Lakes, Woodhatch Rd

Patrol start:

23-01-2020 20:40

Patrol end:

23-01-2020 23:00

Next

Cancel

Paper forms
for on-site
recording,
online upload
facility.



Online Recording!!



ARG UK

Paper forms for on-site recording, online upload facility.

Enter numbers of amphibians observed in the appropriate cell

Records from the Night Survey of The Grange Pond at The Grange, Holt Farm, Holt Lane
by Pete Gillatt (chair@hiwarg.org.uk) on 20 Jan 2020 between 08:36 and 11:30

Species	Adults			Juveniles	Larvae	Eggs*	Corpses	Total
	Male	Female	Unknown					
Common toad								
Natterjack toad								
Great crested newt								
Smooth newt								
Palmate newt								
Unidentified newt								
Common frog								
Water frog								
Unidentified frog/toad								
Survey Comments (optional):								

*For toad spawn, enter estimated number of adult pairs. (1 pair produces about 3m length)
For frog spawn enter estimated number of clumps².

Back

Submit Sightings

Cancel



Surrey Amphibian and Reptile Group (SARG) Toad Patrol - Recording form



Site name: Name of recorder: Date: Time ON: Time OFF:

	Animals Rescued			Animals Killed
	Male	Female	Unknown	
	Counting box	Counting box	Counting box	Counting box
Common toad				
	Total	Total	Total	Total
Common frog				
	Total	Total	Total	Total
Great crested newt				
	Total	Total	Total	Total
Smooth newt				
	Total	Total	Total	Total
Palmate newt				
	Total	Total	Total	Total
Unidentified newt				
	Total	Total	Total	Total

"Care and preservation of the amphibians and reptiles of Surrey"

Social events – ‘Toasting the Toad’



At the end of the season many toad patrols have a social gathering – in a local pub, or even a picnic in the park.

It's a chance to say thank you to the volunteers, swop experiences – and see what we all look like in daylight!



Extra steps – Outreach in schools

In Oxfordshire we are working with local schools. Many of the children are already aware of the toads crossing the roads.

We hope they will tell their parents – and spread the word through the local community

We ran school days making amphibian bookmarks and acrostic poems – and an army of clay toads



Extra steps – Outreach in the community

In January 2020 Bagley Wood toad patrol ran a pop up 'Animals on the Move' exhibition and art competition in the village by our toad crossings. We had a massive 89 competition entries and 526 people visited in the two days. We also signed up 21 new toad patrollers!!



ARG UK

Big thank you to all the ARGs
and toad patrols who helped
with this presentation from
Oxfordshire, Hampshire,
Surrey, Somerset, Kent, Suffolk
and Cumbria



Thank you
for listening

