



# Reptiles and Amphibians IN YOUR GARDEN

## Getting started

Thank you for offering to help us find out which factors influence the presence of particular reptiles and amphibians in gardens. As well as asking you about which amphibian and reptile species you have seen in your garden, we also need to ask you some questions about the habitat surrounding your garden and the sorts of features that are present within it. As you might expect, a lot of the questions concern the nature of any ponds present and, since some people have more than one pond in their garden, we would like you to provide information for each pond individually (Section E. of the form).

In the main, we would like to know about reptiles and amphibians seen since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 (and up until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009) but the question about frog mortality (Section F.) covers a somewhat longer period, going back to January 2006.

**Please return completed forms to GARDEN HERPS SURVEY, BTO, THE NUNNERY, THETFORD, NORFOLK, IP24 2PU.** The BTO Garden BirdWatch Team is collating the results on behalf of the three organisations involved in this project (Froglife, Herpetological Conservation Trust and the British Trust for Ornithology). If you have any queries about the survey, or about reptiles and amphibians in your garden, please contact one of the organisations involved (contact information on the back of this form).

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS IMPORTANT SURVEY.**

## Filling in the form

Please use a black pen (not a felt tip) to complete the boxes on the form and try not to mark or crease the form; this will help us to ensure that your form goes through our special scanner without any problems. The form should be folded once, along the 'fold here' line. If you make a mistake please make a note on a separate piece of paper or a post-it note, detailing what correction is needed and leave us to make the correction for you. Attach the note to the form with a paper clip. If you have a query about how to interpret a question on the form, please email us at [gbw@bto.org](mailto:gbw@bto.org) or call us on 01842-750050.

## SECTION A:

Please enter your name and address on the form so that we can send you a copy of our findings and also identify where in the country your garden is located. We will not pass or sell your contact information to a third party. BTO Garden BirdWatchers should enter their GBW number in the box provided. Please leave this box blank if you are not a BTO Garden BirdWatcher.

## SECTION B:

Please refer to the pull-out identification guide supplied to help you identify the reptiles and amphibians seen in your garden. We would like to know about those seen over an 18-month period, 1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2008 TO 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2009. 'Green frogs' include Edible Frog, Pool Frog and Marsh Frog – all of which are rare in gardens. Other species rare in gardens are marked with an asterisk.

## SECTION C:

### **Question 1. What size is your garden?**

**Small** gardens less than 100 square metres (120 square yards) or about half a tennis court in size.

**Medium** gardens between 100 and 450 square metres (120–540 square yards).

**Large** gardens more than 450 square metres (540 square yards) or larger than two tennis courts in size.

### **Question 2. How old, in years, is your garden?**

Please assume that your garden is the same age as your house unless you know otherwise.

### **Question 3. Please indicate the percentage of your garden that consists of the following:**

**FLOWERBEDS** – cultivated areas of flowers and/or ornamental shrubs, 1 metre (3 feet) or less in height.

**SHRUBBERIES** – areas dominated by bushes/trees more than 1 metre (3 feet) tall.

**WILD** – areas which are untended and have become overgrown naturally.

**BARREN/BARE GROUND** – areas such as concrete, patios, paths, buildings, etc..

### **Question 4. Please indicate the percentage of your garden's boundary made up of the following:**

Don't include hedges, walls or fences that are entirely within your own garden.

### **Question 5. Which of the following do you have in your garden?**

**COMPOST HEAPS** – are open heaps readily accessible to reptiles and amphibians.

**COMPOST BINS** – are typically less accessible to reptiles and amphibians.

## SECTION D:

**MIXED WOODLAND** – has at least 10% mixture of broad-leaved trees in a coniferous woodland or vice versa.

**DECIDUOUS/CONIFEROUS WOODLAND** – blocks of more than 10 trees, five metres (16 feet) tall.

**SCRUBLAND** – vegetation dominated by woody shrubs and/or trees less than 5 metres (16 feet) tall (this includes young plantations of trees).

**DRY SEMI-NATURAL GRASSLAND** – areas dominated by grasses not apparently managed intensively for farming with probably no herbicides and probably no, or very low, direct fertiliser inputs. These are open areas not greatly enclosed by hedges, walls etc.. Includes unenclosed grass moor and chalk downland.

**MARSH** – wet plant communities dominated by rushes (*Juncus*), sedges (*Carex*) or reeds (*Phragmites*) etc., not apparently managed intensively for farming (*i.e.* probably no herbicides and no, or very low, direct fertiliser inputs). It includes water-meadows, saltmarsh and reedbeds.

**MOOR** – upland areas dominated by heather (*Calluna*) and heaths (*Erica*). May include waterlogged peaty areas covered with spongy moss (*Sphagnum*).

**LOWLAND HEATHLAND** – lowland areas on sandy soils dominated by heather and heaths.

**MAJOR ROAD** – an 'A' or 'B' road.

**PLOUGHED FARMLAND** and **FARMED GRASSLAND** – areas of fields enclosed by walls, fences, hedges etc.. Farmed grassland includes both traditional enclosed grazing meadow and 'improved' grassland.

**OTHER FARMLAND** – other types of farmland.

**GARDENS** – other privately owned gardens.

**PARKS/RECREATION AREAS** – public areas with regularly mown lawns (*e.g.* playing fields, golf courses etc.).

**ALLOTMENTS** – small areas used for the cultivation of crops and used by the local community.

**WASTE GROUND** – urban brownfield site or other similar piece of unmanaged, non-natural ground.

**RAILWAY** – active or disused railway.

**REFUSE TIP** – active landfill site or similar refuse tip.

**SMALL WATER BODY** – areas of freshwater up to 450 square metres (540 sq. yards or 2 tennis courts).

**LARGE WATER BODY** – areas of freshwater greater than 450 square metres (540 sq. yards or tennis courts).

**STREAM** – flowing freshwater less than 3 metres (10 feet) wide.

**RIVER** – flowing freshwater more than 3 metres (10 feet) wide.

**CANAL** – slow-flowing, canalised freshwater over 2 metres (7 feet) wide.

**SEASHORE** – open coast, estuarine areas and brackish lagoons.

## SECTION E:

Please start by telling us whether or not you have one or more ponds in your garden. If you do have a pond, please provide an answer to each question for EACH pond that you have. Please contact us if you have more than five ponds within your garden.

### **Question 2a. How LARGE is the pond?**

**Small** ponds less than 2m<sup>2</sup>.

**Medium** ponds between 2m<sup>2</sup> and 6m<sup>2</sup>.

**Large** ponds more than 6m<sup>2</sup>.

### **Question 2b. How OLD is the pond?**

New ponds may be more or less suitable than well established ponds and we need to know the age of your pond to examine this.

### **Question 2c. POND MANAGEMENT**

We want to know a bit more about each pond and how it is managed to see if this influences how it is used by amphibians.

### **Question 2d. Are there fish in the pond?**

Koi carp and Golden Orfe should be recorded under 'Other Fish'.

### **Question 2e. Which amphibians have you seen in this pond?**

By telling us which species you have seen in each of your ponds we can match pond characteristics and management practices to the presence of particular amphibians.

### **Question 2f. Have you ever introduced frogspawn into this pond?**

Please tell us if you have introduced frogspawn into the pond, either from another pond in your garden or from a pond located away from your property.

## SECTION F:

Globally, many amphibian populations have been threatened by various diseases and there have also been reports of specific diseases from amphibian populations within Britain and Ireland. Your responses to the two questions within this section should provide us with valuable information on the distribution and occurrence of disease and other mortality events in frogs. We can then use this information to target more detailed work. We have decided to look back to January 2006 with regards to the mortality section, because 2006 was so much hotter than 2007 or 2008, and we believe temperature may be important. SPRING is defined as March–May, SUMMER as June–August, AUTUMN as September–November and WINTER as December–February.

**Thank you for your help with this survey.**

**Please return completed forms to:  
GARDEN HERPS SURVEY  
BTO, THE NUNNERY  
THETFORD  
NORFOLK  
IP24 2PU.**

## The Organisations involved



The BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) is a partnership of birdwatchers and professional ornithologists, all keen to understand what is happening to birds within the United Kingdom. By supporting the Trust financially and by contributing to national surveys, members provide valuable information on Britain's birds and their habitats; research that forms a basis for sound conservation. Thousands of BTO members and other volunteer birdwatchers are involved in this monitoring work, coordinated by local organisers and scientists based in offices in Norfolk and Stirling. The BTO's 16,000 Garden BirdWatchers collect information on birds, mammals, butterflies, reptiles and amphibians in gardens, highlighting how and why these creatures use the garden habitat. The British Trust for Ornithology is a not-for-profit trust, registered in England and Wales as a charity (no. 216652) and also Scotland (no. SC039193). The BTO is also registered as a limited company in England and Wales (no. 357284).

**To learn more about the work of the BTO, please visit the BTO website at [www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org), write to BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU, telephone 01842-750050 or email [info@bto.org](mailto:info@bto.org).**



Froglife is a UK wildlife charity committed to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles. The organisation speaks out for amphibians and reptiles, promoting best-practice and encouraging new audiences to understand and appreciate the needs of the thirteen UK species they represent. Central to the Froglife ethos is that 'everyone is invited'. Froglife's projects work to encourage a wide audience into amphibian and reptile conservation efforts, including those often excluded from the traditional conservation arena. One of Froglife's longest running projects is its Wildlife Information Service, which deals with thousands of enquiries each year about amphibian and reptile conservation. The service answers enquiries covering a range of topics including: species identification; advice on pond-building; encouraging reptile-friendly gardening; and collecting important information on amphibian disease in the wild. Froglife also runs a number of national campaigns including Just Add Water (offering free advice on pond-building in gardens) and Toads on Roads (helping coordinate measures to save toads when migrating across the UK's roads in spring). Froglife is a Registered charity (no.1093372).

**To learn more about the work of Froglife, please visit the Froglife website at [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org), write to Froglife, 9 Swan Court, Cygnet Park, Hampton, Peterborough, PE7 8GX, telephone 01733-558960 or email [info@froglife.org](mailto:info@froglife.org).**



The Herpetological Conservation Trust (The HCT) is dedicated to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles. Founded in 1989, The HCT manages approximately 1500 ha of nature reserves that are important for amphibians and reptiles. The Trust is lead partner or joint lead partner for the UK Biodiversity Action Plans covering amphibians and reptiles; this involves undertaking and supporting site management, captive rearing and release programmes and advocating legislative and policy change. The HCT furthers the understanding of the ecology and habitat requirements of amphibians and reptiles through research and provides expert advice and training to others. The HCT works with volunteers, supports the national network of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK and coordinates the National Amphibian and Reptile Recording Scheme. The focus of work is largely within the UK, but The HCT's remit and influence extends into Europe and beyond, working with other nature conservation organisations, government bodies and European Institutions, such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission and the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum. The HCT is a Registered charity (no. 1109031) and a Company limited by Guarantee (Registered in England number 5389839).

**To learn more about the work of The HCT, please visit the website [www.herpconstrust.org.uk](http://www.herpconstrust.org.uk), write to The Herpetological Conservation Trust, 655A Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 4AP, telephone 01202-391319 or email [enquiries@herpconstrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@herpconstrust.org.uk)**