



Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
RESEARCH REPORT 11/02

PRIORITIES FOR NON-NATIVE AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN THE UK

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*We think too small, like the frog at the bottom of the well.
He thinks the sky is only as big as the top of the well.
If he surfaced, he would have an entirely different view.*

Mao Tse-Tung

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RATIONALE

This short report is a simple summary of the introduced amphibians and reptiles now known to be found in the UK, as well as a subjective indication of priorities in terms of “concern” and research. It was first produced in 2009 in response to other assessments taking place (which fed into reports to the Statutory Agencies) and the need for a concise and readily-available source of information. All assessments are summarized in Table 1.

In addition (Fig 1.), we present a map showing current record locations for the alpine newt (*Ichthyosaura alpestris*) in the UK, taken from the ARC database and reports to the *Alien Encounters* website. The species is of particular concern because of its potential as an asymptomatic vector of the chytrid fungus.

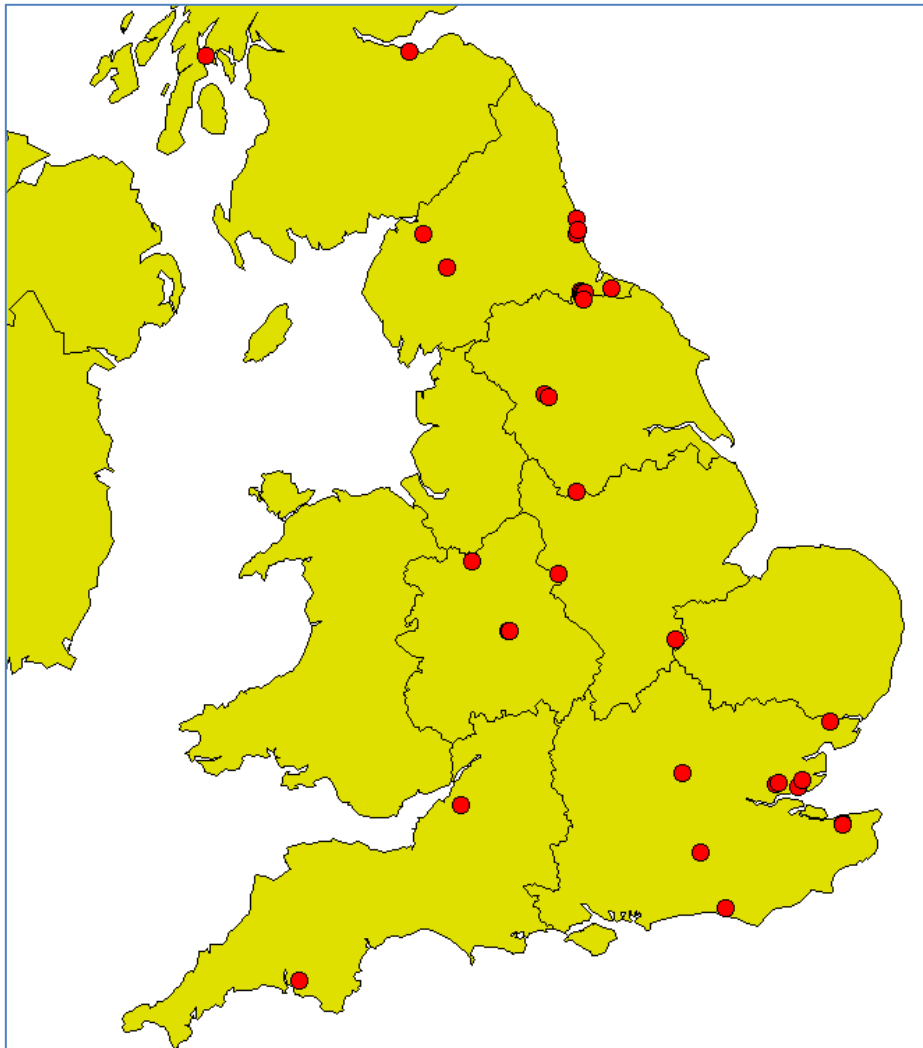


Fig 1. Current UK record locations for the alpine newt.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Alien Encounters: <http://alienencounters.arc-trust.org/>

The Chytrid Survey:

<http://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/uk-europe/ukchytridiomycosis,842,AR.html>

GB Non-Native Species Secretariat:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/home/index.cfm>

Surrey Amphibian and Reptile Group Wall Lizard Project:

<http://www.surrey-arg.org.uk/SARG/02000-Activities/SurveyAndMonitoring/WallLizard/PMSitePicker.asp>

Table 1. Summary of alien amphibians and reptiles in the UK, including levels of concern and research priorities.

	Species	Latin name	Issues	Research Priority	Notes
LEAST CONCERN	Various temperate amphibia and reptilia in the pet trade	E.g. fire-bellied toads, salamanders, corn snakes, garter snakes, many lizards	Disease/s, competition, predation	LOW	Populations of many species known to have established briefly in the past
	Common midwife toad	<i>Alytes obstetricians</i>	None current but see Notes	LOW	No concerns re existing populations; concern re future introductions as sp. known to suffer from chytrid
MEDIUM CONCERN	Italian crested newt	<i>Triturus carnifex</i>	Hybridization and competition with <i>T. cristatus</i> , disease?	LOW	2 populations known in England
	Marbled newt	<i>Triturus marmoratus</i>	Hybridization and competition with <i>T. cristatus</i> , disease?	LOW	Population reported recently (JF)
	Marsh frog + related spp.	<i>Pelophylax ridibundus</i> , <i>P. perezi</i> etc.	Predation, competition, disease?, poss hybridization with native-type pool frogs	MED	Kent population of <i>P.r.</i> spreading through S. England along water courses etc., now also recorded in large numbers from Midlands (Tamworth)
	(Introduced populations of) pool frog and edible frog	<i>Pelophylax lessonae</i> and <i>P. esculentus</i>	Predation, competition, disease?, poss hybridization with native-type pool frogs	MED	Populations of these species not currently a threat to reintroduced (native-type) pool frogs, would become so if spreading
	Aesculapian snake	<i>Zamenis longissimus</i>	Predation, disease?	MED	2 known populations, London one apparently flourishing/ spreading
	Western green lizard	<i>Lacerta bilineata</i>	Predation, competition, disease?	MED <i>but see also wall lizard</i>	Well-established on south Eng coast (Boscombe), other populations likely
	Terrapins, sliders, cooters etc.	Various aquatic chelonian genera e.g. <i>Trachemys</i>	Predation on native wildlife, poss. diseases	MED	Breeding still unconfirmed in the UK, mapping needed
HIGH CONCERN	African clawed frog	<i>Xenopus laevis</i>	Disease (chytrid), predation	MED	Vector for chytrid
	Wall lizard/s	Mainly <i>Podarcis muralis</i> but possibly also <i>P. sicula</i>	Disease (reptile pmv) may threaten sand lizards, competition, predation	HIGH	IoZ project currently investigating contact zones with wall/sand lizards and disease – same issues may apply to green lizard
	Alpine newt	<i>Icthyosaura alpestris</i>	Disease (chytrid)	HIGH	See Fig. 1. Chytrid positively identified in at several locations
VERY HIGH CONCERN	American bullfrog	<i>Lithobates catesbianus</i>	Disease (chytrid), predation	MED	Known chytrid vector, voracious predator, breeding at several English sites was recorded, eradication imperative.