

Common Toad Species Action Plan

Version: July 2009


Next Review March 2010

Introduction

This document outlines the actions required to conserve the common toad (*Bufo bufo*) in Britain and provides a framework for all conservation work. More detail of each action is provided in the implementation guide. Each action has been assigned the appropriate level for implementation i.e. United Kingdom, country, region or local. Key actions have been identified through a 'signposting' exercise; these statements are shown in two shades of green and the corresponding signposted actions are marked with a similarly coloured signpost symbol.

Action Level Key

- UK All high-level actions, including European actions
- C Country
- R Region
- L Local

 Signposted action related to each preceding Signpost Statement

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With support from



Proposed Provisional Targets

1. Maintain and increase the range of the species (10km squares)

2. Maintain the range of the species (vice counties)

3. Maintain and increase the number of occupied ponds

The common toad was included as a Biodiversity Action Plan priority species in the 2007 Priority Species Review. The steering group will refine the target units and develop the appropriate values in the first year of the plan. Additional data will be sought to facilitate these assessments.

1. Action Plan/SAP Management

Objective 1.1

To provide direction and ensure efficient implementation of the common toad Species Action Plan.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| (i) | Coordination | UK, C, R, L |
| (ii) | Produce guidance as required | UK, C, R, L |
| (iii) | Review Action Plan | UK, C, R, L |
| (iv) | Review targets and objectives | UK, C, R, L |
| (v) | Reporting | UK, C, R, L |
| (vi) | Liaison with key BAP Partners | UK, C, R, L |

2. Policy and Legislation

Objective 2.1

To have legislation and policy that is effective for common toad conservation that ensures no nett loss of conservation status and promotes opportunities for enhancement of the status of the species and their habitats and to ensure its effective transposition and implementation.

Common Toad Signposted Action

Wider Action Planning – This amphibian would benefit from recognition of its habitat and management needs at the wider landscape scale- both aquatic and terrestrial. Taking account of/or determining its presence during the early stages of local authority development plans, land allocation (particularly 'brownfield sites') and then development schemes. Habitat management schemes such as agri-environment, highways schemes, and land management by public bodies could significantly enhance its current conservation status. Satisfying the requirements of the Water Framework Directive would help with water quality and supply issues. Countering the effects of habitat fragmentation at the local scale is a very high priority.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|---|---------------------|
| (i) | sign post Evaluate the effectiveness of legislation in attaining conservation for the species, and identify and promote mechanisms for improvement. | UK, C |
| (ii) | sign post Use the Biodiversity Duty introduced by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, to embed species conservation needs in all relevant policies. | C, R, L |
| (iii) | sign post Interpret, implement and enforce legislation and policy in such a way as to ensure effective conservation for common toads. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iv) | sign post For key areas, encourage the preparation and implementation of supplementary planning guidance and local spatial strategies to ensure the strategic long term safeguard and management of populations. | C, R, L |
| (v) | sign post Promote the inclusion of the common toad in development control policy frameworks and relevant strategic policies as a 'species of principal importance to nature conservation'. | C, R, L |
| (vi) | Develop standard guidance and protocols to ensure consistent high quality advice and clear working practices (to inform developers/consultants and local authorities). | C |

Objective 2.2

Ensure adequate information and knowledge base is available for decision-making.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| (i) | Ensure availability of and access to appropriate data and ecological knowledge early in policy development or decision-making and that there is an appropriate framework and skills base for interpretation. | UK, C, R, L |
| (ii) | Incorporate common toad data/knowledge into strategic and spatial plans. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iii) | Ensure understanding of habitat use and distribution, and the extent and impacts of fragmentation and possible changes due to climate change, and that information is available to incorporate these into planning and policy decisions. | UK, C, R, L |

Objective 2.3

To ensure mechanisms are in place to support policies that achieve BAP objectives.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| (i) | Ensure agri-environment schemes are able to support common toad conservation and see that these are developed. Target agri-environment strategies to deliver habitat creation and management targets/objectives. | UK, C, R, L |
| (ii) | Review existing non-agricultural funding mechanisms for habitat creation, restoration and management and population linkages, especially ponds. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iii) | Consider and promote expansion of funding mechanisms where gaps exist. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iv) | Integrate common toad conservation needs into landscape and ecosystem level schemes and approaches. | UK, C, R, L |

Objective 2.4

Ensure effective and appropriate site safeguard.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|---|---------------------|
| (i) | Review the role of all designated sites for common toad conservation in England, Scotland & Wales, and evaluate and refine the selection criteria. (All SAC, SSSI and Local Sites). | UK, C, R, L |
| (ii) | Produce a register of key sites and, where appropriate, forward site details to SNCOs, NGOs and/or local authorities for consideration as protected sites. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iii) | Where appropriate ensure that common toads are noted as SSSI 'interest features' to promote appropriate habitat management. | UK, C |
| (iv) | Pursue opportunities for site acquisition to benefit the conservation of these species. | UK, C, R, L |

3. Species and Habitat Management

Objective 3.1

To maintain the range and populations of the species through favourable management of occupied sites, linking populations and the restoration and creation of sufficient new sites to compensate for local losses.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| (i) | Produce and distribute advice on habitat management and restoration to encourage positive management of habitats and to prevent losses through mismanagement or neglect: target owners/managers of all important sites. Provide information about the creation and management of ponds and associated terrestrial habitat. | UK, C, L |
| (ii) | Identify sites which have potential for restoration or creation of new habitats. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iii) | Distribute information on grant schemes that help conserve common toads to land owners/managers and encourage uptake. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iv) | Implement positive management. | C, R, L |

Objective 3.2

Increase the number of populations and range through habitat creation and management by encouraging natural dispersal and translocation where needed.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| (i) | Develop means for effective targeting of habitat creation/expansion/management using spatial planning techniques and see targets integrated into landscape level projects, sub-regional and local plans etc. | UK, C, R, L |
| (ii) | Encourage landowner/land manager involvement in active conservation e.g. via liaison through local conservation groups, distributing management advice and information on grant schemes. | C, R, L |
| (iii) | Translocate herpetofauna species where appropriate according to good practice (e.g. JNCC/ IUCN guidelines): develop & promote 'best practice' for deciding when translocations are appropriate. | UK, C, L |
| (iv) | Undertake positive management to manage/create habitats (ponds and terrestrial habitat) and link sites. | C, R, L |

4. Advisory and Communications

Objective 4.1

To ensure understanding of habitat needs and management requirements, survey, conservation objectives and legal obligations by local authorities, land managers, volunteers, conservation professionals and others to raise standards and gain their further involvement to benefit common toad conservation.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| (i) | Review the need for advice; produce a list of desirable publications with suggested lead organisations for their development. | UK, C |
| (ii) | Produce and disseminate documents including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guidance on habitat management • guidance on legislation and its application • re-introduction process • bio-security • pond creation and management • application of agri-environmental schemes • amphibians, reptiles and roads publication • measures to prevent accidental killing/capture • FCS Conservation Strategies for key areas • non-native species (animals and plants) | UK, C |
| (iii) | Train professionals and volunteers involved in the surveying, management and conservation of common toads. | UK, C, L |
| (iv) | Provide advice to landowners/managers. | L |

Objective 4.2

To achieve, through publicity, media and other approaches, a wider and more sympathetic understanding of common toad conservation and provide opportunities for engaging more people.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| (i) | Identify main audiences and messages to be conveyed to them to further common toad conservation and the appropriate mechanisms and approaches to achieve this. | UK, C, L |
| (ii) | Undertake activities to further the understanding of common toad conservation including the provision of seminars, conferences and workshops. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iii) | Produce information on common toad conservation, including via articles, press releases, websites, television and radio etc. to reach a wide audience. | UK, C, L |
| (iv) | Encourage positive interpretation material and displays about common toad conservation at country parks, visitor centres and zoological gardens etc. | UK, C, L |
| (v) | Develop common toad based environmental initiatives. | C, L |
| (vi) | Provide opportunities to see common toads in the wild and their habitats. | C, L |
| (vii) | Encourage the appreciation of the common toad, and management to benefit them in schools, gardens, allotments and similar open spaces. | C, L |

5. Research and Monitoring

Objective 5.1

Understand the conservation status and distribution of the common toad and changes therein.

Common Toad Signposted Action

Monitoring – The National Amphibian and Reptile Recording Scheme (NARRS) should be implemented and resourced to improve survey data of this species, but also to monitor population levels in the long-term so that success criteria and targets can be reported against.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|--------|---|---------------------|
| (i) | sign post Develop monitoring and surveillance schemes to address the information needs. Further refine and develop the National Amphibian & Reptile Recording Scheme (NARRS) projects. | UK, C, R, L |
| (ii) | Maintain and develop monitoring/surveillance networks, including via workshops/training etc. Clarify and develop relationships between recording bodies/organisations and establish effective mechanisms for data exchange and the flow of information. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iii) | sign post Undertake monitoring and surveillance exercises. | C, R, L |
| (iv) | sign post Define appropriate measurable units/descriptors of status and develop a measure of Favourable Conservation Status. | UK, C |
| (v) | Consider developing appropriate indicators to reflect the status of the common toad. | UK, C, |
| (vi) | Identify threats to the species, the risks of incidental capture and killing, and the activities that give rise to them. | UK, C, R, L |
| (vii) | Develop recording and monitoring schemes to assess the impact of threats e.g. incidental capture/killing, and relate these to impacts on Favourable Conservation Status. | UK, C, R, L |
| (viii) | Promote distribution surveys amongst volunteer groups, local authorities. | UK, C, R, L |
| (ix) | Make distribution data collected under contract available to local/national recording schemes wherever possible. | UK, C, L |

Objective 5.2

Disseminate appropriate information to stakeholders and fulfil reporting requirements.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| (i) | Prepare an analysis of stakeholder information needs as part of surveillance strategy. | UK, C, R, L |
| (ii) | Ensure data from wide range of sources is available in an appropriate format. | UK, C, R, L |
| (iii) | Undertake status reporting. | UK, C, R, L |

Objective 5.3

Undertake research that benefits common toad conservation.

Common Toad Signposted Action

Research – Recent large population declines in this species have been determined in southern and eastern England. Although there are several possible causal factors (changes in habitat management, mortalities on roads, climate change) research is needed to guide remedial action both generally and at site specific level.

| | | <i>Action Level</i> |
|-------|---|---------------------|
| (i) | sign post Refine list of research subjects to be addressed, and identify appropriate organisations to undertake research. | UK, C |
| (ii) | sign post Establish and undertake research. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Population Viability Analyses especially as related to isolated or fragmented populations. • Increase understanding of population genetics and their significance in different contexts e.g. populations on brownfield sites, those isolated by new development etc. • Determine whether breeding ponds represent discrete populations. • Determine whether breeding aggregations can act as an accurate measure of population size. • Conduct one-off exercise to determine appropriate units for conservation status assessment and target setting. | UK, C |
| (iii) | sign post Disseminate results of the research and disseminate conservation messages. | UK, C |