

What if you don't have great crested newts?

Even if you don't have newts on your land why not choose from these options anyway? By providing good pond and terrestrial habitats you may be able to encourage great crested newts to move in from neighbouring areas. You will also help a wide range of other wildlife in and around the water bodies on your farm.

Why choose the options in this leaflet?

- Great crested newts = stewardship points
- Save time choosing your options
- Make a valuable contribution towards the national Biodiversity Action Plan for the great crested newt
- Reduce run-off of nutrients and sediment into your watercourses and ponds



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For further details and advice on how to apply for Environmental Stewardship contact:

Natural England: Telephone 0845 600 3078 www.naturalengland.org.uk

Regional contact details can also be found at:
www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/pdfs/es/NE_addresses.pdf

For help with your application and further advice contact:

FWAG: Telephone 02476 696 699 email: info@fwag.org.uk to find your local office

The Wildlife Trusts: Telephone 01636 677711 www.wildlifetrusts.org

For further information on great crested newts:

The Herpetological Conservation Trust
655A Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 4AP
Telephone 01202 391319 www.herconstrust.org.uk

For more information on ponds:

Pond Conservation: Telephone 01865 483 249 www.pondconservation.org.uk

Useful publications:

Langton, T.E.S., Beckett, C.L., and Foster, J.P (2001) *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*, Froglife.*

The Herpetological Conservation Trust (2002). *The Conservation of Great Crested Newts: A Brief Guide to Habitat Management*, The Herpetological Conservation Trust (leaflet).*

Gent, A.H., and Gibson, S.D., eds. (1998) *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual*, Peterborough, Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Williams P, Biggs J., Whitfield M., Thorne A., Bryant S., Fox G. and Nicolet P. (1999). *The Pond Book: a guide to the management and creation of ponds*. Pond Conservation Trust, Oxford.

*Publications are available free from The Herpetological Conservation Trust



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Environmental Stewardship

How great crested newts can gain Stewardship points for your farm

Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) and Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Options

Use this leaflet to choose easy options to help great crested newts



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Why do great crested newts matter?

England supports internationally important populations of the great crested newt. Although it is a widespread species, over the last century it has undergone severe declines across its range primarily due to loss of, and damage to, its habitat. Many populations are becoming isolated and are increasingly vulnerable to extinction.

The great crested newt is a priority species in the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan. The plan highlights both the threats to the species, and the conservation measures needed to address them.

Great crested newts on farmland

Lowland agricultural land is the key habitat for great crested newts. Historically, farming has favoured this species, particularly through the creation of ponds.

Today, funding is available for farmers to manage their land to enhance existing wildlife features and provide new habitats, which will benefit this threatened species. Both Entry and Higher Level Stewardship include options of considerable value to great crested newts.



Great crested newt — adult male



Great crested newt — adult female

What do newts really need?

Great crested newts require aquatic and terrestrial habitats to enable them to breed, forage, disperse and hibernate.

Great crested newts prefer ponds that:

- are open (not heavily shaded)
- are close to other ponds
- don't support fish or ducks
- contain clean water
- contain abundant aquatic vegetation

They also require suitable terrestrial habitat nearby. This includes:

- rough grassland, patches of tall herb and scrub
- hibernation sites and refuges: e.g. piles of logs or stones, drystone walls, deciduous woodland or scrub
- habitat corridors linking breeding ponds and terrestrial areas including hedgerows, scrub, overgrown field margins and rough grassland (for example buffer strips).

How do you know there are great crested newts on your land?

If you live in an area where great crested newts are known to occur, and if you have good quality wildlife ponds, then it may be worth getting a survey carried out. Your wildlife advisor may be able to carry out a survey. Local Amphibian and Reptile Groups may also be able to help. www.arg-uk.org.uk

For help with newt identification, consult The HCT's 'The British Amphibians and Reptiles' leaflet and the identification pages on the website www.herpconstrust.org.uk. The leaflet is available both as a printed copy and pdf version (downloadable from the website). To obtain your free copy, contact The HCT (contact details on the back page).

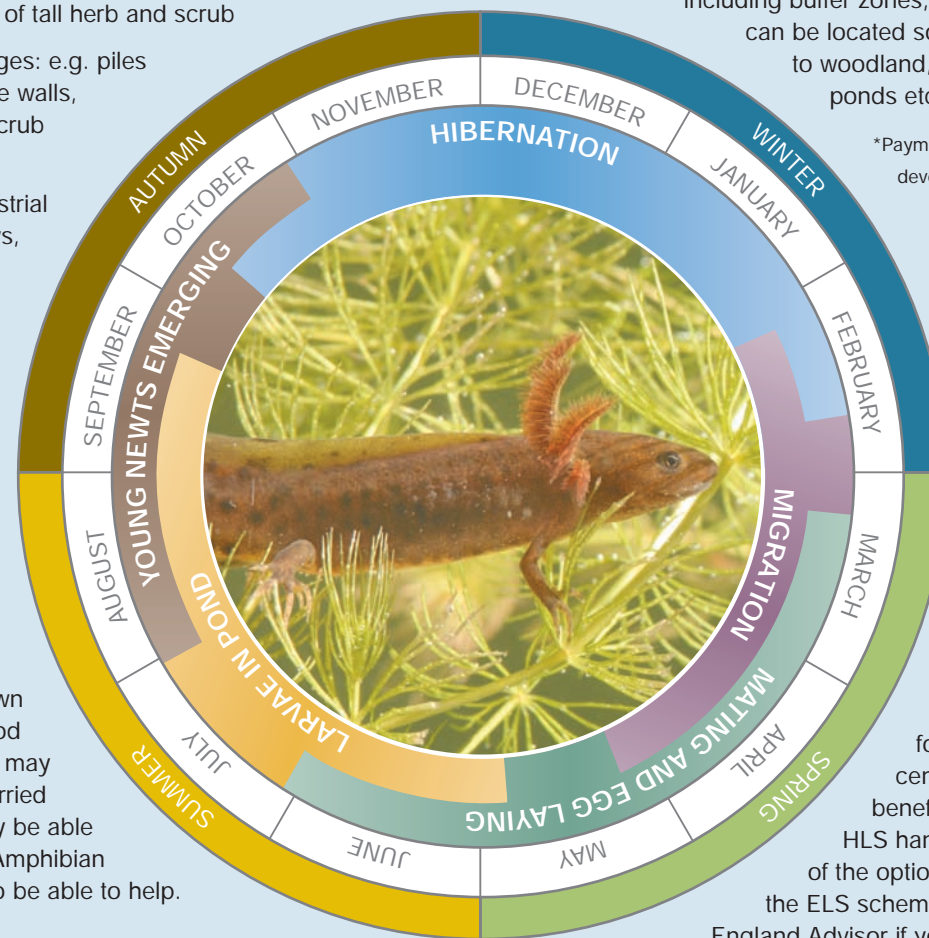
Great crested newt larva photo © John Baker (The HCT)

Helping you choose your Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) options

To be accepted into ELS and receive a payment of £30*/ha, or £60*/ha for organic farms, you will need to select from a range of point-scoring management options. To receive payment you will need to score 30 points/ha for conventional farms or 60 points/ha for organic farms. If you have ponds on your land, choosing options to protect them will provide you with valuable points.

Options available under ELS (conventional or organic) that will benefit great crested newts are illustrated on the central pages, along with guidance on where best to locate these options; creating linkages is a key element to making your farm newt-friendly. Simple options, including buffer zones, beetle banks and ditches can be located so that ponds are connected to woodland, areas of scrub and other ponds etc..

*Payments subject to change with development of the scheme.



Higher Level Scheme (HLS)

If you know great crested newts are present on, or near your holding, why not consider them in your HLS application? This is likely to earn you valuable points towards successful entry into this competitive scheme.

Contact Natural England, your Wildlife Trust or FWAG for advice and refer to the centre pages for options that benefit great crested newts. (The HLS handbook only contains details of the options that are not available within the ELS scheme.) Contact your Natural England Advisor if you are thinking of submitting an HLS application.



Great crested newt eggs

Pond creation

Targeted pond creation is the best way to encourage newts on your farm; capital payments are available under HLS to undertake this work.



Newly created pond



The same pond after two years

Pond restoration

Some farmland ponds are unsuitable for great crested newts; for example they may be heavily shaded or silted up. Cutting back shading trees and the removal of silt (especially if it is polluted) will increase the value of these ponds for newts, as will creating buffer zones to reduce pollution inputs. Capital payments are available under HLS for this work, but care must be taken to avoid damaging ponds which are already of high value for other wildlife. Consult your advisor to determine which ponds to target for great crested newts.

Management of ponds

HLS also offers payments for ongoing management of ponds of high wildlife value, including periodic small scale de-silting or annual management of potentially invasive species such as reedmace (bulrush). However, not all ponds will require management, and others may only need management after several years. This approach will help to maintain a variety of ponds across the landscape.

All ponds will benefit from the creation of buffer zones as this management option protects ponds from agro-chemicals and nutrient enrichment.

