

# Pool Frog Species Action Plan

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Next Review March 2010

# Introduction

This document outlines the actions required to conserve the pool frog (*Pelophylax (Rana) lessonae*) 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

**sign post** Signposted action related to each preceding Signpost Statement

A few of the signposts cover a wide range of issues (and sections of the action plan). In these instances the signposts are used in both parts of the plan, with the relevant section marked in bold.

### Action for the pool frog is targeted to specific counties

The pool frog has been reintroduced to 1 site in England under the Biodiversity Action Plan. Further action will be restricted to the following areas: Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, possibly Peterborough, Bedfordshire, and Northamptonshire.

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## Targets as agreed by Government

### 1. Establish two viable populations within the species historical range by 2010

	Baseline	2010	2015	2020	2030
<b>UK</b>	–	2	5	10	15
<b>E</b>	–	2	5	10	15
<b>S</b>	–	–	–	–	–
<b>W</b>	–	–	–	–	–

### 2. Increase overall population size of pool frog to 50 breeding pairs by 2010

	Baseline	2010	2015	2020	2030
<b>UK</b>	–	50	125	250	560
<b>E</b>	–	50	125	250	560
<b>S</b>	–	–	–	–	–
<b>W</b>	–	–	–	–	–

### 3. Achieve an increase in the range to 2 occupied vice counties by 2010 (within the species historical range)

	Baseline	2010	2015	2020	2030
<b>UK</b>	–	2	3	4	5
<b>E</b>	–	2	3	4	5
<b>S</b>	–	–	–	–	–
<b>W</b>	–	–	–	–	–

## Information about the Species Action Plan targets

Populations to be established by reintroduction (at least up to 2010). The potential area of occupancy should be about 200 hectares by 2010 (i.e. 2 sites of c.100 hectares). Potential reintroduction sites are in the Fens/Brecks area. To ensure that the population is viable in genetic and population dynamics terms, these figures should be regarded as minima. The number of breeding ponds should be at least 6 per site.

The number of breeding adults will be assessed by regular surveys throughout the breeding season (May–June) as outlined in the *Reintroduction strategy for the pool frog*<sup>1</sup>. Annual monitoring will also occur at nearby sites where there is a reasonable chance of colonisation.

Guidance on target delivery is published in the reintroduction strategy.

<sup>1</sup> Buckley J & Foster J. (2005) Reintroduction strategy for the pool frog *Rana lessonae* in England. English Nature Research Report 642 (2005)

# 1. Action Plan/SAP Management

## Objective 1.1

To provide direction and ensure efficient implementation of the pool frog Species Action Plans.

Pool Frog **part** Signposted Action: Single Species Action: **Implement full species action plan** including release protocol, search for further sites for releases, monitor success of reintroduction scheme.

		<i>Action Level</i>
(i)	<b>sign post</b> Coordination	UK, C, R, L
(ii)	<b>sign post</b> Produce guidance as required	UK, C, R, L
(iii)	<b>sign post</b> Review Action Plan	UK, C, R, L
(iv)	<b>sign post</b> Review targets and objectives	UK, C, R, L
(v)	<b>sign post</b> Reporting	UK, C, R, L
(vi)	<b>sign post</b> 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 pool frog conservation that ensures no net 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.

		<i>Action Level</i>
(i)	Evaluate the effectiveness of legislation in attaining conservation for the species, and identify and promote mechanisms for improvement. Ensure Pool Frog receives protection through Habitats Regulations and Wildlife & Countryside Act equivalent to other UK European Protected Species in England; review legislative mechanisms to control release and movement of pool frogs of non-native origin in the wild.	UK, C
(ii)	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)	Interpret, implement and enforce legislation and policy in such a way as to ensure effective conservation for pool frogs.	UK, C, R, L
(iv)	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)	Promote the inclusion of the pool frog in development control policy frameworks and relevant strategic policies as a 'species of principal importance to nature conservation'.	C, R, L
(vi)	Review licensing regime and the impact of derogations on pool frogs and promote mechanisms for improvement.	UK, C,
(vii)	Develop standard guidance and protocols to ensure consistent high quality advice and clear working practices in (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 pool frog 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 pool frog 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 pool frog 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 pool frog 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 pool frogs 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.

#### Pool Frog Signposted Action

Single Species Action – Continue releases from Swedish stock. Continue habitat management at release site, expanding pond numbers by tree clearance/thinning and managing the terrestrial habitat.

		<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.	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 pool frogs 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.

### Pool Frog Signposted Action

Single Species Action – Seek to improve the condition of suitable habitat in former range for further releases.

		<i>Action Level</i>
(i)	<b>sign post</b> 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 pool frog conservation e.g. via liaison through local conservation groups, distributing management advice and information on grant schemes.	C, R, L
(iii)	Translocate pool frogs where appropriate according to good practice (e.g. JNCC/ IUCN guidelines): develop & promote 'best practice' for deciding when translocations are appropriate. Produce a priority list for re-introductions.	UK, C, L
(iv)	<b>sign post</b> Undertake positive management to manage/create habitats (ponds, manage terrestrial habitat) and link sites.	C, R, L

## 4. Advisory and Communications

### Pool Frog *part* Signposted Action

Single Species Action – Implement full species action plan including **release protocol**, search for further sites for releases, monitor success of re-introduction scheme.

#### 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 herpetofauna 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)	Develop protocols for informing landowners of the presence of pool frogs on their land, the legal implications and management requirements.	UK, C
(iii)	<p><b>sign post</b> →</p> <p>Produce and disseminate documents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guidance on habitat management</li> <li>• guidance on legislation and its application</li> <li>• the re-introduction process</li> <li>• bio-security</li> <li>• application of agri-environmental schemes</li> <li>• amphibians, reptiles and roads publication</li> <li>• produce release protocol</li> <li>• measures to prevent accidental killing/capture</li> <li>• FCS Conservation Strategies for key areas</li> <li>• non-native species (animals and plants).</li> </ul>	UK, C
(iv)	Train professionals and volunteers involved in the surveying, management and conservation of pool frogs.	UK, C, L
(v)	Provide advice to landowners/managers.	L

## Objective 4.2

To achieve, through publicity, media and other approaches, a wider and more sympathetic understanding of pool frog 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 pool frog conservation and the appropriate mechanisms and approaches to achieve this.	UK, C, L
(ii)	Undertake activities to further the understanding of pool frog conservation including the provision of seminars, conferences and workshops.	UK, C, R, L
(iii)	Produce information on pool frog 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 pool frog conservation at country parks, visitor centres and zoological gardens etc.	UK, C, L
(v)	Develop pool frog based environmental education initiatives.	C, L
(vi)	Provide opportunities to see pool frog in the wild and their habitats.	C, L

## 5. Research and Monitoring

### Objective 5.1

Understand the conservation status and distribution of pool frog and changes therein.

#### Pool Frog *part* Signpost Statement

Single Species Action – Implement full species action plan including release protocol, search for further sites for releases, **monitor success of reintroduction scheme.**

		<i>Action Level</i>
(i)	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)	<b>sign post</b> Undertake monitoring and surveillance exercises.	UK, C, R, L
(iii)	Define appropriate measurable units/descriptors of status and develop a measure of Favourable Conservation Status.	C, R, L
(iv)	Consider developing appropriate indicators to reflect the status of pool frogs.	UK, C
(v)	Identify threats to the species, the risks of incidental capture and killing, and the activities that give rise to them.	UK, C,
(vi)	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
(vii)	Promote distribution surveys amongst volunteer groups, local authorities.	UK, C, R, L
(viii)	Make distribution data collected under contract available to local/national recording schemes wherever possible.	UK, C, R, 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 pool frog conservation.

		<i>Action Level</i>
(i)	Refine list of research subjects to be addressed, and identify appropriate organisations to undertake research.	UK, C
(ii)	Establish and undertake research. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct Population Viability Analyses especially as related to isolated or fragmented populations.</li> <li>• Increase understanding of population genetics and their significance in different contexts e.g. populations on brownfield sites, those isolated by new development etc.</li> <li>• Define population parameters while the species still exists at only a single site and continue to monitor population status in the future.</li> <li>• Conduct one-off exercise to determine appropriate units for conservation status assessment and target setting.</li> </ul>	UK, C
(iii)	Disseminate results of the research and disseminate conservation messages.	UK, C