

Great crested newts

What?

- ❑ the great crested newt (GCN) is the largest and the rarest of the three species of newts found in the UK but quite common in southern England
- ❑ there are now thought to be only 360 000 left and, despite conservation programmes, its numbers have been declining rapidly over the past 30 years due to loss of habitat
- ❑ GCN and their habitats are protected by law.

Identification

- ❑ grows to around 170 mm in length with a rough, granular skin
- ❑ back and flanks are brownish black with darker spots
- ❑ vivid orange or yellow belly has an irregular pattern of black spots or blotches.



Male

- ❑ jagged crest on the back with a smoother edged crest above and below the tail
- ❑ white, silver or grey stripe running from the tail tip, fading as it reaches the abdomen
- ❑ crest only present during breeding season
- ❑ yellow stripy toes.

Female

- ❑ does not have a crest
- ❑ yellow-orange stripe running along the lower edge of the tail.

Suitable habitat

- ❑ ponds and very slow moving watercourses, particularly during spring to autumn
- ❑ woodland, scrub, hedgerows, rough grass land, piles of stone, ballast and derelict sites surrounding ponds and watercourses at any time of the year, but particularly during spring to autumn
- ❑ not normally found in regularly mown grassland
- ❑ any land within 500 m of a suitable pond will potentially hold GCN.

Why?

- ❑ **avoid prosecution:** it is an offence to:
 - intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture, trade or even to disturb a GCN
 - damage, destroy or obstruct habitats where GCN live or breed
- ❑ prosecution could lead to a fine of up to **£5000 per newt and/or up to six months in prison.**

Questions

- 1 Where on this site might GCN be found?
- 2 How are GCN identified?
- 3 If GCN are suspected to be present what should be done?

Do

- ✓ stop work in the immediate area and contact a line manager for instruction if GCN may have been identified on site
- ✓ watch out when moving logs, stones or rubble or clearing the site near to ponds as these are favourite habitats for GCN.

Don't

- ✗ try to touch or otherwise disturb any GCN
- ✗ move log piles or rubble on site if GCN are present