

Mini Project

Frog, Toad, or Newt Spawn Sighting

During spring amphibians will be returning to ponds to breed and lay their spawn. The exact time of this will vary depending on weather and location. It usually occurs later in the north than the south of Britain.

This mini project is to check your pond, or some water you often visit and note the first time you see any spawn. Remember to note where and when seen.

What to look for in spawn and tadpoles.

Frogs

- Spawn is laid in clumps in shallower water (usually the earliest to be laid).



- Tadpoles are black and will stick together in a writhing mass when they first hatch.
- As tadpoles develop, they become mottled/brown and do not shoal.
- Tadpoles grow back legs first.

Toads

- Spawn is laid in long strings, usually wrapped around vegetation in slightly deeper water.



- Tadpoles are jet black (and remain so) and they often form shoals.
- Tadpoles grow back legs first.

Newts

- Eggs are laid individually and are wrapped in submerged plant leaves.
- Larvae (sometimes called tadpoles) have a frill of gills behind the head.
- Larvae develop front legs first.



Frog or Toad?

There are only two types of frog and two types of toad native to the UK. They are the Common Frog and Pond Frog, and Common Toad and Natterjack Toad. You are only likely to see the common ones. The Natterjack Toad likes sand dunes and there are only about 60 populations in the country, the Pond Frog was once extinct and is now only found in a single site in Norfolk.

How to tell the difference between Common frogs and toads?

Frogs have smooth, moist skin, long, stripy back legs and a dark patch behind the eye. They are likely to be found in damp habitats.

Toads have 'warty' skin, golden eyes, a pair of raised glands on their shoulders, short back legs and prefer to crawl rather than hop; if threatened a toad can puff itself up to appear bigger. Toads can tolerate drier habitats than frogs and spend less time in water.

We do not advise that you attempt to move frogs, toads or their spawn away from your pond: by taking them to a different pond you may unwittingly transfer various diseases and invasive plants.