

amphibian and reptile conservation

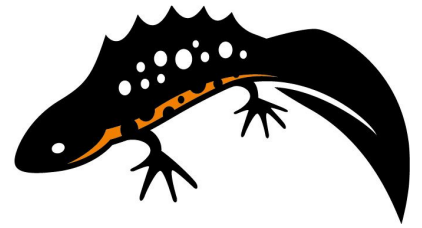


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Natterjack Toad Species Action Plan

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Next Review March 2010

Introduction

This document outlines the actions required to conserve the natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*) 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

Specific counties have been highlighted for action

Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, (Cambridgeshire – extinct), Kent, Surrey, Hampshire, Dorset, Oxfordshire, (West Sussex – extinct), Staffordshire, Flintshire, Denbighshire, (Conwy – extinct), Cheshire – Wirral, Lancashire – Merseyside, Cumbria, Dumfries and Galloway.

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Targets as agreed by Government

1. Achieve an increase in the number of breeding females in the UK, from 2500 to 3500 by 2010

	Baseline	2010	2015	2020	2030
UK	2500	3500	8000	12500	25000
E	2150	2800	6600	11250	22500
S	200	350	700	625	1250
W	300	350	700	625	1250

2. Achieve an increase in the range from 27 to 28 occupied 10km squares in the UK by 2010

	Baseline	2010	2015	2020	2030
UK	27	28	30	35	40
E	22	23	24	27	30
S	3	3	3	3	3
W	2	2	3	5	7

3. Achieve an increase in the range from 17 to 21 occupied vice counties in the UK by 2010

	Baseline	2010	2015	2020	2030
UK	17	21	23	24	26
E	14	17	18	19	20
S	2	2	2	2	2
W	1	2	3	3	4

Information about the Species Action Plan targets

Through habitat creation, and the establishment of new populations by translocation the number of breeding females will be increased. In 2005, the potential area of suitable habitat for Natterjack toads was calculated to be 20,000 hectares, with the plan to increase this area to 50-60,000 hectares of available habitat by 2050.

Two range targets have been agreed. The 10km range assessment provides a measure of magnitude of distribution at a coarse scale. The second range assessment (vice counties) measures overall distribution, ensuring that the species is present in all parts of its natural range (it is not possible to do this with a simple area-based target such as 10km squares).

Natterjack toads will continue to be monitored by site managers and volunteers primarily by counting spawn strings (which equates to number of breeding females) at the majority of sites each year. Recorders will also document pond use during the breeding season to provide data needed to measure progress against the two range targets.

Details on delivery will be provided by Natterjack Toad SAP Steering Group.

1. Action Plan/SAP Management

Objective 1.1

To provide direction and ensure efficient implementation of the natterjack 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 natterjack toad 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.	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 natterjack toads.	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 natterjack toad 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 natterjack toads 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 natterjack 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 natterjack 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 natterjack toad conservation needs into landscape and ecosystem level schemes and approaches. Coastal squeeze is a particular issue for natterjack toad conservation.	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 natterjack 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 natterjack 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 this 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.

Natterjack Toad Signposted Action

Species Specific Action – Occupied sites (both protected and not) require management measures which broadly follow priority habitat condition based actions (refer to habitat action signpost below), but on top of this particular attention has to be given to species specific habitat management requirements (management of breeding pools and any vegetation cover, scrub and tree removal or control, appropriate grazing regimes, prevention of common toad breeding whilst habitats are being restored) are essential.

Natterjack Toad Signposted Action

Habitat Action – The condition of sand dune, upper saltmarsh (merse), and heathland habitats need to be enhanced and maintained to restore this species to its former population levels. This includes water table and chemistry issues. Could be included as part of heathland or sand dune plans, but only if species specific requirements are acknowledged and implemented.

		<i>Action Level</i>
(i)	sign post 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)	sign post Identify sites which have potential for restoration or creation of new habitats. Produce a list of sites which have potential for restoration or creation of new habitats. Update annually.	UK, C, R, L
(iii)	sign post Distribute information on grant schemes that help conserve natterjack toads to land owners/managers and encourage uptake.	UK, C, R, L
(iv)	sign post 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.

Natterjack Toad Signposted Action

Species Specific Action – Increasing the species range (and numbers of populations, by translocation and habitat improvement) is necessary to restore it to its former range. This requires habitat extent to be increased with better linkage between sub-populations. Could be included as part of heathland, saltmarsh or sand dune habitat plans, but only if species specific requirements are acknowledged and implemented.

Specific counties have been highlighted for action – Translocations should also be considered at suitable sites where the species has been lost in historical times.

Natterjack Toad Signposted Action

Natterjack Toad Signposted Action – Habitat Action (expansion and extension): The condition of sand dune, upper saltmarsh (merse), and heathland habitats need to be expanded and extended to restore this species to its former population levels. This includes water table and chemistry issues. Could be included as part of heathland or sand dune plans, but only if species specific requirements are acknowledged and implemented.

		<i>Action Level</i>
(i)	sign post 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)	sign post Encourage landowner/land manager involvement in active natterjack toad conservation e.g. via liaison through local conservation groups, distributing management advice and information on grant schemes.	C, R, L
(iii)	sign post Translocate natterjack toads 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)	Review role of current captive breeding projects; support and use captive bred animals where appropriate.	UK, C
(v)	sign post Undertake positive management to manage/create habitats (ponds, manage 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 natterjack 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)	Develop protocols for informing landowners of the presence of natterjack toads on their land, the legal implications and management requirements.	UK, C
(iii)	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 • 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
(iv)	Train professionals and volunteers involved in the surveying, management and conservation of natterjack toads.	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 natterjack 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 natterjack toad conservation and the appropriate mechanisms and approaches to achieve this.	UK, C, L
(ii)	Undertake activities to further the understanding of natterjack toad conservation including the provision of seminars, conferences and workshops.	UK, C, R, L
(iii)	Produce information on natterjack 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 natterjack toad conservation at country parks, visitor centres and zoological gardens etc.	UK, C, L
(v)	Develop natterjack toad based environmental education initiatives.	C, L
(vi)	Provide opportunities to see natterjack toads in the wild and their habitats.	C, L

5. Research and Monitoring

Objective 5.1

Understand the conservation status and distribution of natterjack toads and changes therein.

		<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)	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)	Undertake monitoring and surveillance exercises.	C, R, L
(iv)	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 natterjack toads.	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 natterjack toad conservation.

		<i>Action Level</i>
(i)	Refine list of research subjects to be addressed, and identify appropriate organisations to undertake research.	UK, C
(ii)	<p>Establish and undertake research.</p> <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 how habitat quality in the terrestrial stage of the species lifestyle (e.g. non-breeding habitat) relates to the presence/absence, extent of distribution and the population status of the species. • Conduct one-off exercise to determine appropriate units for conservation status assessment and target setting. 	UK, C
(iii)	Disseminate results of the research and disseminate conservation messages.	UK, C