

Palmate Newt

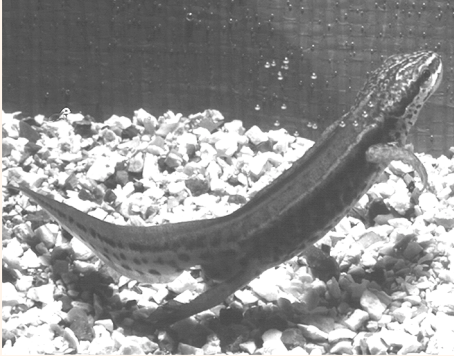


Photo. Jim Foster

Scientific Name:
Triturus helveticus

Current factors causing loss or decline

Loss or fragmentation of habitat, due to factors such as encroachment of housing and other developments, infilling of breeding ponds and pollution of suitable waterbodies, is likely to be the main contributor to any local decline in the species. There is no earlier Glasgow survey with which to compare the recent survey so at present there is no data to indicate local losses. However, nationally figures indicate a decline in the species. There is very little information available on the sizes of home ranges for this species which makes it difficult to assess the degree to which local populations are influenced by changes in landuse or by the other factors listed above.

Current action

Palmate Newt receives no current action at present, although two of the sites where it has been recorded during the 1998 survey (GCC) are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). The species has limited protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). The promotion of 'wetlands' and 'grasslands' conservation through the local Biodiversity Action Plan process will aid the conservation of the Palmate Newt.

Current status

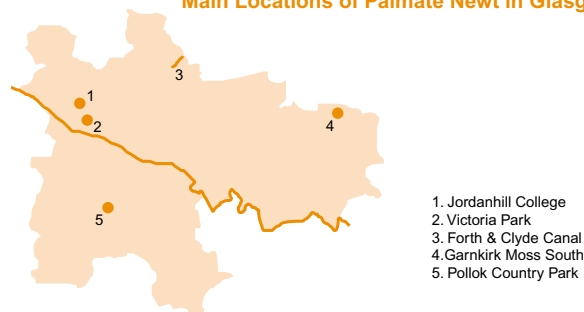
The **Palmate Newt** is one of three newt species native to Britain. The species requires waterbodies for breeding and adjacent wetlands and grasslands for foraging and hibernation. The newts enter the water in Spring to breed, laying eggs singly wrapped in aquatic plant leaves such as Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*) or in edge vegetation such as grass leaves overhanging into the water. The adult newts emerge from their breeding ponds in late Spring, foraging in surrounding habitat on worms and other invertebrates before hibernating during the Winter under logs and stones and in crevices.

The Palmate Newt can be distinguished from the similar Smooth Newt in general by features such as throat colour and markings and tail size in relation to body size. Breeding females can be difficult to identify to species, however throat colour differs to some extent. Throat colour in Palmate Newt females is pale pink and unspotted while female Smooth Newt throats tend to be marked with dark spots. Breeding males may be identified by belly colour, crest shape and, in the Palmate Newt the presence of a tail filament and webbed hind feet.

In Scotland, the Palmate Newt is the commoner of the two small newt species. The species is more commonly associated with acidic, nutrient-poor, upland areas than the Smooth Newt. Within the City of Glasgow it is considered to be uncommon. In a recent amphibian survey of Glasgow (GCC, unpublished, 1998) Palmate Newts were found in only 5 out of 60 wetland sites surveyed. However, it is probable that they were under-recorded in the survey as it was carried out during daylight hours. Nocturnal surveys using torch head counts in ponds are likely to increase records, while factors such as health and safety issues for surveyors and pond accessibility may influence survey results.

The sites where Palmate Newt is recorded are distributed throughout the City, from Victoria Park and Jordanhill in the West End to Pollok Country Park on the south side and Garnkirk Moss in the East End. Further survey work, identified in the Action Plan as a priority objective, should add to our knowledge of the distribution, population sizes and possible threats to this attractive species within Glasgow.

Main Locations of Palmate Newt in Glasgow



1. Jordanhill College
2. Victoria Park
3. Forth & Clyde Canal
4. Garnkirk Moss South
5. Pollok Country Park

Objectives and targets

The Palmate Newt is listed as 'uncommon' in the biological audit. However as there is no historical information with which to compare recent surveys, it is unknown whether local populations are declining. A priority is therefore to complete a survey of the City of Glasgow for this species and to continue to monitor the known populations.

Objective 1: Establish current distribution and status of all populations.

Target 1: Survey all existing populations and search for new sites.

Objective 2: Maintain the current distribution and population sizes.

Target 2: Ensure no further loss or damage to the surviving populations.

Objective 3: Introduce appropriate habitat management to encourage viable populations.

Target 3: Assess current management factors at all known sites.

Objective 4: Increase population sizes and number of sites.

Target 4: Investigate feasibility of increasing known population sizes.

Proposed Action with Lead Authorities

Action	Lead	Delivery	Objective
Policy and Legislation			
Ensure Policy Planning Guidelines include adequate protection policies for water levels and quality.	CARG	GCC-DRS, SEPA, SNH	2, 3, 4
Site Safeguard and Management			
Encourage landowners, managers and users to implement sympathetic management at suitable sites.	CARG	CARG, FWAG, GCC-LS, GfC, SEPA, SNH	2, 3, 4
Oppose, or suggest alternatives to, planning applications, that will cause damage to sites holding significantly large populations.	CARG	GCC-DRS, SEPA, SNH	2, 3
Species Management and Protection			
Continue to implement sympathetic management regimes on presently managed sites, and introduce similar regimes on other sites where possible.	CARG	FWAG, GCC-LS(CG), GfC, SEPA, SNH	2, 3, 4
Advisory			
Advise relevant landowners on the presence of significant populations of Palmate Newt and its conservation management.	CARG	CARG, FWAG, GCC-LS(CG), GfC, SNH, SWT	2, 3, 4
Ensure information and guidance on conservation management is available.	CARG	CARG, FWAG, GCC-LS(CG), GfC, SNH, SWT	2, 3, 4
Future Research and Monitoring			
Complete survey of Glasgow sites by 2002.	CARG	CARG, GCC-LS	1
Carry out surveys to estimate population sizes by 2005.	CARG	CARG, GCC-LS, SNH, SWT	1, 4
Involve public in a survey of private gardens by 2003.	CARG	CARG, GCC-LS	1, 4
Monitor known populations.	CARG	GCC-LS(CG), SWT	1, 2, 3, 4
Communication and Publicity			
Promote Palmate Newt as an attractive local species to landowners and the public.	CARG	CARG, FWAG, GCC-LS(CRS), GfC, SNH, SWT	1, 2, 4
Co-ordinate with proposed plans for wetlands, grasslands and human environment.	CARG	CARG, GCC-LS(CG), SNH	1,2,3,4
Review the progress of this Action Plan by 2006.	CARG	CARG	1,2,3,4

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Glasgow City Council: Development and Regeneration Services(GCC-DRS), Glasgow City Council: Land Services(Conservation Group) (GCC-LS(CG),

Glasgow City Council: Culture and Leisure Services (GCC-CLS), Glasgow City Council: Education Services (GCC-ES), Glasgow City Council: Land Services Countryside Ranger Service (GCC-LS(CRS)),

Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC), Greenspace for Communities(GfC), British Waterways (BW), Forestry Commission (FC), Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), The WISE Group (TWISE)

Glasgow Natural History Society (GNHS), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT).

Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group (CARG), Butterfly Conservation (BC), Concern for Swifts (CfS)