

*Have you ever found GCNs away from water?*

OS map grid reference 

T	Q	7	2	9	6	7	8
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Site name .....

Site owner .....

*What is the land use surrounding this site?*

Garden  Woodland  Park  Grassland  Arable  Wetland

Other (please describe) .....

.....

*Are there any problems or threats to this site?*

Neglect  Pollution  Litter  Potential development

Invasive plant growth  Intensive management

Other (please specify) .....

.....

*Would you be interested in a licensed surveyor visiting your site to help look for Great Crested Newts?*

Yes  No

Please tick here if you do **not** want us to store your contact details on our database

We may wish to send you information about Essex Wildlife Trust.

Please tick here if you would prefer **not** to receive this

Please return to:



Biodiversity Coordinator, Essex Wildlife Trust,  
Joan Elliot Visitor Centre, Abbots Hall Farm,  
Great Wigborough, COLCHESTER CO5 7RZ

*Thank you for taking part in this survey*



# Identifying the three types of newt that you may see

## Great Crested Newt



male



female

- UK's largest native newt grows up to 14-17cm long.
- **Dark, warty skin** speckled with tiny white spots.
- During the breeding season, **males have a jagged crest** which dips between the body and tail and a white flash on the tail.
- Belly is bright orange-yellow with irregular black blotches.

## Smooth Newt



male



female

## Palmate Newt



male



female

Smooth and Palmate newts are much smaller (8-10cm) and have much paler colouring. Although a breeding male smooth newt has a crest – it undulates along the length of the body and tail with no dip between the two. Male palmate newts have webbing behind their hind toes and a filament at the tail tip.

The Great Crested Newt is strictly protected under UK and European law. This makes it illegal to disturb the species or its habitat and you will need a licence to survey for, or handle them.

## *Threats to Great Crested Newts*

- Unsympathetic development
- Disappearance of ponds through neglect or deliberate destruction
- Lowering of the water table through drainage or abstraction
- Introduction of fish
- Chemical pollution
- Loss of suitable surrounding land used in winter and after breeding
- Isolation from nearby ponds
- The spread of invasive exotic plant species which can cover ponds

## *What can you do to help?*

- Take advice on making new ponds near existing ones
- Improve neglected ponds
- Carry out pond maintenance in late autumn after the newts have left the water
- Manage the surrounding landscape for newts by leaving areas of long grass and by putting logs or rocks adjacent to the pond
- Keep areas of your pond weed free for displaying male newts
- Think carefully before putting fish in your pond
- Fill in and return this questionnaire

### *Essex Biodiversity partnership*

*At the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, governments acknowledged that the planet's biological diversity was being seriously depleted.*

*As a result, over 150 world leaders signed the Convention on Biological Diversity and in doing so agreed to play a part in restoring the richness of our natural world.*

*It was soon realised that an enormous amount could be achieved at a county level, and so an Essex Biodiversity Action Plan was produced in 1999 by a partnership of more than 40 organisations and individuals called the Essex Biodiversity partnership. Organisations involved include Essex Wildlife Trust, DEFRA, Essex County Council, English Nature, plus many local authorities.*

Contact us at: Essex Wildlife Trust, Joan Elliot Visitor Centre, Abbots Hall Farm, Great Wigborough, COLCHESTER CO5 7RZ Tel: 01621-862960 or visit [www.essexbiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.essexbiodiversity.org.uk)



*Essex*  
**Biodiversity**  
partnership  
*More than 40 partners working together  
for the biodiversity of Essex*



*Newts in your  
Neighbourhood*

*Essex Pond and Great Crested Newt Survey*

**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

## *Essex Pond Survey*

*“The national pond survey carried out in the 1980s indicated a 75% loss of ponds across the country in the last 100 years”*

A pond can be an important place for wildlife, especially when it's close to other ponds. Is there a pond in your garden, your neighbourhood, or local school grounds?

*Help us...*

find out where our ponds are by filling in this questionnaire. Even if you don't think your pond is valuable for wildlife, the information you give is still important. The details you provide will help us build a better picture of our county and will contribute towards the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

## *Essex Great Crested Newt Survey*

*“It is estimated that only around one sixth of UK Great Crested Newt breeding ponds have been identified, and in some areas the knowledge is very much poorer”*

The Great Crested Newt (GCN) is the UK's largest newt and despite being widespread, numbers declined very markedly during the latter part of the twentieth century. In Essex, our knowledge of where GCNs are found is poor, and surveys to determine the status and true distribution of the species have been identified as a conservation priority in the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Perhaps you know of a pond where newts live or you have found them by accident in your garden?

*Help us...*

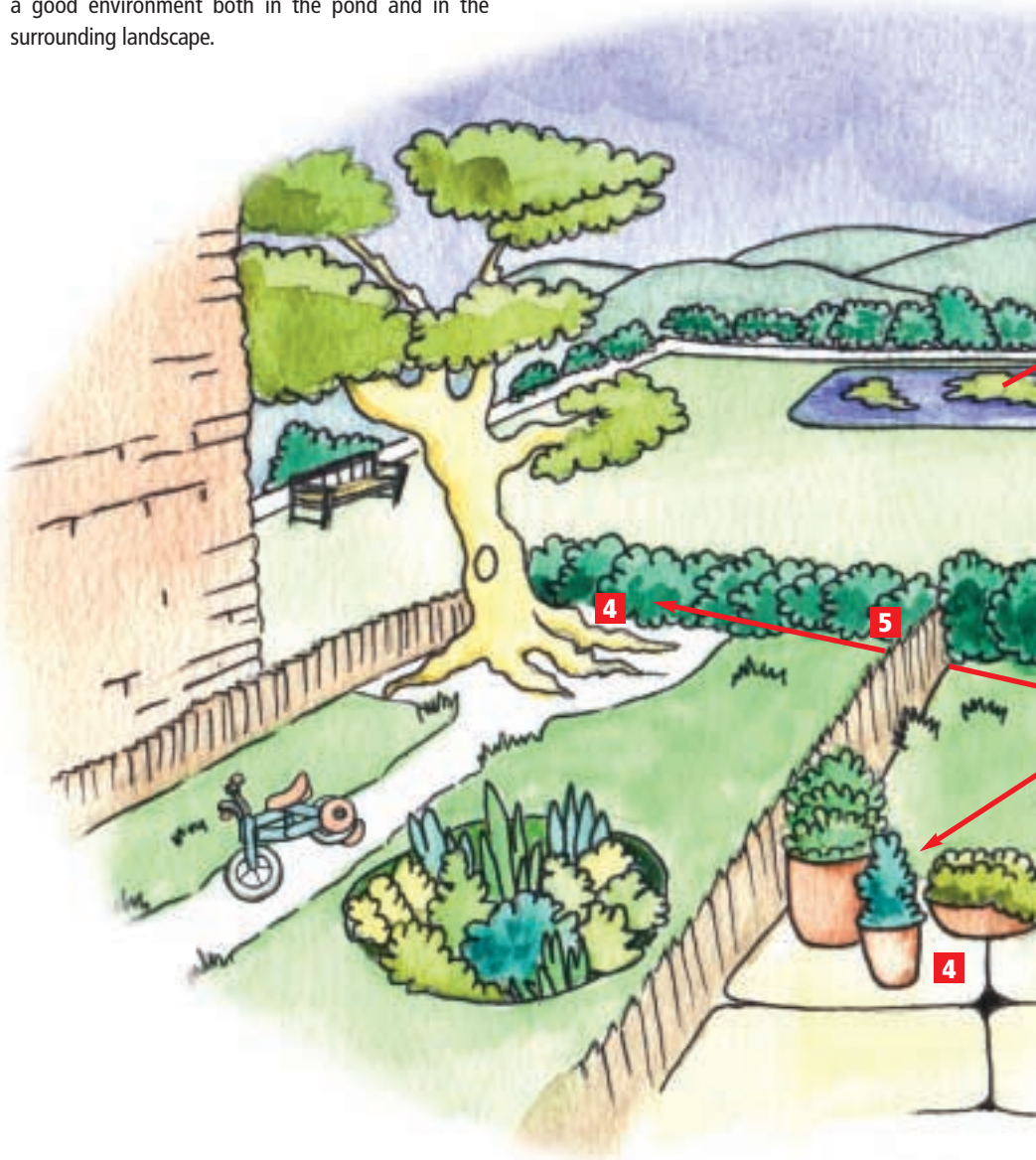
find our GCNs by filling in this questionnaire. It is just as important to tell us where surveys have been carried out but no GCNs were found.

Biological diversity – or 'biodiversity' – is the variety of life on earth and includes all plants and animals, together with the soils, rocks and water on which they depend.

## Where and when would I see newts?

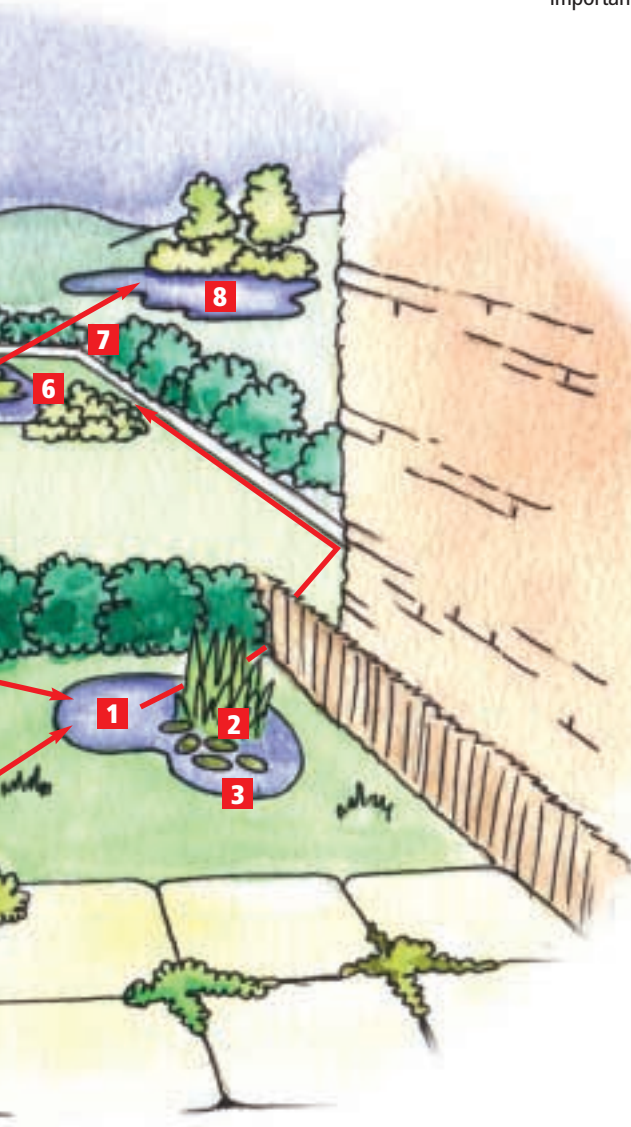
Great Crested Newts are amphibians so spend part of their life cycle in water (where they breed) and the remaining part of the year on land. This means they need a good environment both in the pond and in the surrounding landscape.

Adult GCNs can travel up to 1000m between ponds when they are joined by suitable habitat, and such



networks are thought to be very important to their long-term success.

Wildlife does not recognise man-made boundaries such as walls or fences. This means that although you may not have a pond, an area you look after can still be important to the newts in your neighbourhood.



**1** GCNs have an elaborate courtship (April-May). The male chooses an open area of pond and behaviour includes tail whipping and fanning to waft sexual attractants to the female.

**2** Egg laying on floating or submerged marginal plants (April-May).

*Newt egg tucked in folded leaf*



**3** Newt larvae feed on insects in pond (May-September).

*10-week old larva*



**4** Adults and juveniles take refuge on land during the day – under plant pots, paving slabs, in mammal burrows and in tree stumps.

**5** Adults and juveniles search for food including earthworms, insects, spiders and slugs.

**6** Adults will move between ponds.

**7** GCNs spend the winter on land (October-February).

**8** Some adults and immatures will disperse to distant sites.



# Essex Pond and Great Crested Newt Survey

To help us, please PRINT and use black ink

Name .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

Telephone ..... E-mail .....

## *Do you know of a pond in Essex?*

OS map grid reference 

T	Q	7	2	9	6	7	8
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(An accurate Ordnance Survey grid reference will help us find your pond easily. You can find a map of your area on **multimap.com**, print it out, mark your pond and enclose it with your form. Alternatively, please enclose a sketch map showing identifiable landmarks)

Parish/town .....

Site name .....

Site owner .....

## *Are there any Great Crested Newts in or near this pond?*

(It's just as important to tell us if you have a pond but have never seen GCNs)

Yes  No  Don't know

## *If no, have there been GCNs in the past?*

Yes  No  Don't know

## *Have you seen any other amphibians or reptiles in this area?*

Smooth Newt  Palmate Newt  Common Frog  Slow Worm

Common Toad  Grass snake  Adder