



Tool Box Talk

Focus on Performance

Great Crested Newts

Sust. 20

What?

Great crested newts are amphibians, able to live both in water and on land. They are the largest newt species living in the United Kingdom. Adult great crested newts are up to 170mm long, dark brown or black in colour with bumpy or warty skin. Both males and females have a distinctive bright orange or yellow belly, and males have a large crest on the back during the breeding season.

Great crested newts can be found in ponds and slow moving watercourses during breeding periods (spring to autumn). They spend much of their time on land, including woodland, scrub, hedgerows, ditches and derelict land under logs and stones. Any land within 500m of a suitable pond could potentially provide a home for a great crested newt.

Why?

Great crested newts and their habitats (including breeding ponds) are protected by legislation. This includes causing injury or death of great crested newts and damage or destruction of habitat. Prosecution can lead to fines of up to £5,000 and 6 months in prison.

How?

- Check the site and adjacent areas (especially areas within 500m of suitable ponds, such as ditches, woodland and hedgerows). Suitable habitats may have been identified in ecological surveys.
- If you are unsure whether your work may affect a great crested newt habitat, seek expert ecological advice.
- Stop work immediately and report any sightings after works have started.
- Only licensed workers are permitted to handle great crested newts. Never pick up and move any newts, or disturb log piles or stones where they have been sighted.

If the works are likely to disturb a great crested newt habitat, a licence is needed from the relevant body:

- England: Natural England
- Scotland: Scottish Natural Heritage
- Wales: Countryside Council for Wales



Questions

1. Where do great crested newts breed?
2. How far away from a suitable pond might you find a great crested newt?
3. How might you recognise a great crested newt?

If you have any queries regarding the content of this tool box talk please contact your Sustainability Advisor or Line Manager.