

ANIMAL FACTS TOAD



Scientific name: *Bufo bufo*

ALL ABOUT TOADS

Toads are one of our most familiar amphibians, but have declined in numbers due to a number of causes. Many of their usual breeding places are disappearing as ponds become filled in or polluted because of housing development or intensive agriculture. Large numbers of toads are also dying on the roads, especially as they make their way to their breeding sites in spring.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Although quite similar to frogs, toads grow larger, up to 15 cm long, and appear more flattened than the frog. They also have a dry and bumpy, or warty, skin.



Darin Smith



Sean Browne

WHEN & WHERE TO SEE

During the breeding season toads can be found in very similar areas to frogs, in almost any standing body of water, from ponds to ditches and lakes. However, at other times of year toads can be found on land in damp areas, particularly wet woodlands. Once a year, toads congregate to breed in ponds, frequently forming colonies of over a thousand; these are very easy to spot.



DID YOU KNOW?

John Smith



Although toads mostly eat insects, snails, slugs and worms, larger animals may even eat slow worms, small grass snakes and harvest mice!



Toads tend to live in drier places than frogs as they have better developed lungs for breathing air and skin which does not dry out so easily. On land toads tend to walk rather than leap, except when they are disturbed.



During mating, the smaller male clings onto the female ready to fertilise the spawn as soon as it is laid by the female.



Toad spawn forms long strands which look like bead necklaces winding around aquatic vegetation in deeper water. It takes six to eight weeks for the small black tadpoles to become toadlets.



NEVER collect spawn from the wild or take it back into the wild from garden ponds. This can deplete the wild population and spread disease and invasive, non-native plants.



You can help by providing places in your gardens where toads can hide from the sun and keep moist in summer and be protected from the cold in winter. Log piles, rockeries, compost heaps and areas of dense vegetation are all useful for this purpose.



If you do build a pond to attract frogs or toads, make sure it is safe for children by building a fence around it or by installing strong wire mesh just beneath the surface of the water. It is also important to make sure that the young toads or frogs have an easy way out of the water. This can be achieved by using gently sloping pond sides or by placing planters at the edge of the pond which animals can use to climb out.



Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

We are Nottinghamshire's largest environmental charity. We care for more than 70 nature reserves around the county, working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. Alongside 47 other UK Wildlife Trusts, we stand up to protect local wildlife and habitats. For further information please visit our website:



www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org

Address: The Old Ragged School, Brook St, Nottingham, NG1 1EA.
Email: info@nottswt.co.uk Telephone: 0115 958 8242
Charity no. 224168R. Registered in England, no.748865.