

My Campus and Other Animals

Supporting you to access and engage with the nature on your doorstep



Our Campus Amphibians

Great Crested Newts



Male Great Crested Newt (GCN)



GCN Larvae



Female Great Crested Newt (GCN)



GCN belly pattern

At the University of Kent, we have a Great Crested Newt Field Study site which is home to a population of around 300 individual Great Crested Newts. Great Crested Newts are the largest type of newt in Great Britain and can be up to 17 centimetres long. Breeding males have a spikey crest along their back but females do not have a crest. Once mature, Great Crested Newts only live in the ponds during breeding season (between February to late Spring) and spend the rest of their lives on land, hibernating in log piles or damp burrows over winter. Females lay their eggs on leaves underwater and then fold the leaf around the eggs to protect them. The eggs then hatch into larvae which spend around 3-4 months developing in the ponds before spending 1 to 2 years developing as juveniles into mature adults. Every Great Crested Newt has a unique spot pattern on their bellies which can be used to identify individuals during surveys. Great Crested Newts are highly protected in the UK and can only be handled with a licence.



Our campus is also regularly home to other amphibian species including (from left to right) Palmate Newts, Smooth Newts and Common Frogs. Both Palmate Newts and Smooth Newts are much smaller than Great Crested Newts, with Palmate Newts growing up to around 9 cm and Smooth Newts up to 11 cm. Male Palmate Newts do not have a crest along their backs but during breeding season they do have webbed back feet (which is what gives the species their name) and a filament at the end of their tail. Smooth Newt males have a smooth undulating crest from their head to the bottom of their tail. The females of these species can be hard to tell apart as they are both brown and a similar size however, smooth newts have a spotty belly and throat whilst palmate newts have a pink throat that lacks pigment. The other amphibian species that we see at the newt site is the Common Frog. Common Frogs are found throughout the UK especially in garden ponds. Females typically lay their spawn in early spring and can lay up to 4000 eggs at once. Due to the high population of Newts at the University of Kent the population of other amphibians tends to be lower.