

## SETTRINGTON TOAD PATROL – WHO ARE WE?



Toads, frogs and newts migrate to ponds and lakes to breed every spring. They spend the winter tucked away, often in small groups, under leaves in woodland, in holes in old walls, anywhere they will have some protection from the cold weather. As soon as there is a warm (about 6C and above), damp night they make their way to the water where they were born to breed often having to cross roads to get there. That's where toad patrols come in.

Froglife is a charity which supports toad patrols all across the UK and data sent in, thus national and regional trends can be monitored.

In Settrington the amphibians make their way to the large lake. We start looking for them on the lanes around the lake on the first warm evening in early February. We put them in a bucket, take them across the road, pop them over the wall surrounding the lake so that they can then make their way safely down to the water to breed. Some of the toads can't wait to get to the lake and so the females have to carry the smaller males on their backs! We continue to do this all through February and March until the third week in April by which time most of them have made the journey. We have 4 species of amphibians needing help in Settrington: common toads, smooth newts, great crested newts and common frogs. Although the roads are fairly quiet even just one car can wipe out many soft bodied little lives.



On warm, wet nights, especially after a prolonged cold spell it can be very busy. The most amphibians we have helped in one evening is 302!

Every year we help in the region of 900 toads, 6 frogs, 45 great crested newts and 300 smooth newts. Every year, on just this little stretch of road, about 100 toads are killed, 6 great crested newts and 50 smooth newts.

There are amphibians crossing roads all over the country, any village with a pond will have amphibians migrating to it. If you see squashed toads on the road why not set up your own patrol? Toads, especially, are declining nationally and need all the help they can get. If you would like to visit Settrington Toad Patrol before starting up your own simply contact us through our Facebook page.

