

# COMMON TOAD

*Bufo bufo*

**SIZE:** Up to 13cm in length

**HABITAT:** For most of the year in shaded places in gardens, parks, rough grass, hedgerows and woodland

**FOOD:** Slugs, spiders, worms, aphids, ants and other insects

## FAST FACTS

- Vary in colour from greenish to grey brown – sometimes with dark markings.
- Skin is dry and 'warty'. When scared or threatened, glands on the back secrete a vile-tasting substance as a defence against predators.
- Toads sneak up on their prey and use their sticky tongues to catch it!
- In early spring, toads return to the pond in which they were spawned to find a mate and reproduce. Toadspawn is laid in long strings and tadpoles emerge in 10 days.
- After breeding, toads return to drier areas where they may spend long periods over summer, hidden away during the day and hunting for slugs and other food at night. Toads sit out the winter burrowed in mud or under logs or a compost heap.
- Common toad or common frog? Toads tend to be a bit bigger and walk not jump (their legs are shorter).
- The best time to spot toads is February to October. They're most active during the night.

## ENDANGERED IN WANSTEAD

Common toads are classified as a biodiversity priority species under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act because of recent declines. Common toads are no longer common because of loss of the habitats where they live, particularly the removal of ponds and drainage of wet areas of land. As green areas become more fragmented and we build more roads, more toads are being killed by traffic as they migrate to and from their breeding ponds. It is difficult to accurately assess toad populations, but in Wanstead people are saying that they now come across them less frequently in their gardens.

## HELP PREVENT THEIR EXTINCTION

- Create habitats in your garden where toads can live and feed, like a long grass area or piles of old wood or leaves in a shady location. Have an open compost heap for vegetable peelings and garden waste.
- Build a wildlife pond – find out how at: [www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-pond](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-pond).
- Help mini-beasts thrive in your garden – toads will Hoover them up. Don't use slug pellets or pesticides. Invertebrates love dense undergrowth where they can hide away so why not leave a corner to go wild.



More information: [www.froglife.org/info-advice/amphibians-and-reptiles/common-toad-2/](http://www.froglife.org/info-advice/amphibians-and-reptiles/common-toad-2/)

Help scientists track toad populations. Report sightings at [www.gigl.org.uk/submit-a-record/](http://www.gigl.org.uk/submit-a-record/)



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Find out more at [www.wildwanstead.org/Endangered](http://www.wildwanstead.org/Endangered)