



Kent Toad Patrol Newsletter February 2023

NEWS FROM TP LEADERS BRIEFING AND FROGLIFE SE TOAD SUMMIT



Hello Toad Patrol Volunteers

Welcome to the Kent TP Newsletter '**Bond in the Pond**'. The golden eyes of the Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) have been the inspiration for the name of the newsletter. As we approach the start of the annual migration a speaker at the Froglife SE Toad Summit drew an analogy with the big plains' migrations of the wildebeest. So, we thank you for volunteering to help our very own amphibian wildebeest complete their Kentish mini-migration.



Toad Patrol Leaders Event Tyland Barn 15 January 2023

The focus of this event was to clarify the roles of patrol leaders and the new coordinators and also an opportunity to chat to other patrols and swap notes and ideas. Safety was a key aspect as was the need for records. Overriding it all, to save as many toads as possible, as their numbers have been dropping in certain areas.

In brief, we also talked about the importance of everyone signing up so that they are covered by insurance, a new requirement for this being the need to keep records of who patrols each night. Only Krag members are covered by the Krag insurance, but non-members of Krag that go out on toad patrol are being made honorary members from January to April.

They won't get the Krag newsletters and invitations to talks and AGMs but will have the reassurance of being covered while on patrol. Krag membership is only £7.50 though, if anyone would like to join. <https://kentarg.org/members/>.

DISEASE

Please keep an eye out for diseased toads or evidence of mass mortality of tadpoles. If you think there's a possibility of disease it's worth reporting and there's a site interested to hear about it that may provide water testing equipment. www.tadpole-doctor.co.uk.



The leech predation seen has so far just been spotted on the Isle of Wight, but affected toads, frogs and newts. We're usually asked to look out for toad fly too, a particularly nasty thing that eats the poor toads, check for blocked noses. It's not usually seen during the patrol season, but later in summer (May to Sept, most seen July & August), perhaps something to be aware of if you see toads when out and about then. If you find numerous toads dead or other amphibians, report them to <https://www.gardenwildlifehealth.org/> Amphibians are one of the fastest declining species on earth and monitoring disease can help slow the spread.

FUNDRAISING

Each year we are likely to need more equipment as hi-vis jackets fall apart and disposable gloves run out so we will be trying to raise funds at events if we can, while also raising awareness of the plight of our warty friends. If anyone would like to help out at any events, helping out on a stand or fancies doing a sponsored something, we'd love to hear from you. Our first public engagement will be at Belmont House (<https://belmont-house.org/>) on 1st May.

TOAD PATROL NEWSLETTER



Faversham & District Community Lottery is a weekly lottery that raises money for good causes in Faversham & District. Kent Toad Patrol has been selected to participate and 50% of ticket sales will be donated to Kent Toad Patrol. Tickets are £1 each. All you need to do when you buy a ticket is select Kent Toad Patrol as your good cause. Link <https://www.favershamdistrictlottery.co.uk/support/kent-toad-patrol>. All good causes supported by the lottery will benefit Faversham & District and its residents.

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Kent Toad Patrol lottery. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Play', 'Are you a good cause?', 'Menu', and 'Your account'. Below this is a banner image of an elderly man with glasses. A 'CURRENT OFFER' banner says 'Win a whole YEAR of HelloFresh'. The main heading is 'Kent Toad Patrol'. Below the heading, there's a progress bar showing '£182.00 of £1,300.00 target' and '7 tickets of 50 ticket goal', with a 'Buy tickets' button. On the left, there's a 'Supporter count' section showing '3 supporters' and a 'Next draw date' section showing '6d 4h 1m'. The 'About us' section includes text about the Kent Reptile & Amphibian Group's work and a request for help to raise funds for equipment. It ends with a thank you note and the name 'Amanda', Kent Toad Patrol Coordinator.

This graphic contains key information for the lottery. It lists three main points: 'Tickets cost just £1 a week', 'Win a whole YEAR of HelloFresh!', and 'Please help give our fundraising a boost'. Below this, it says 'Save money and eat fresh in 2023'. A 'PLAY NOW:' section provides the website 'www.favershamdistrictlottery.co.uk' and the search term 'Kent Toad Patrol'. A QR code is also present. At the bottom, the Krag logo and the Faversham & District Community Lottery logo are displayed. A small note at the very bottom states: 'Supporters must be 16 years of age or older. See website for Terms & conditions. Enter by 25/02/2023'.

FROGLIFE SE TOAD SUMMIT 28 January 2023

The Froglife Toad Summit started with a fun fact. Did you know that a group of toads is known as a Knot? Quite apt when you see a toad ball! Hugh Warwick was the keynote speaker, followed by a Toads on Roads update by Jenny Tse-Leon, the Conservation, Evaluation and Research Manager of Froglife. She went over the annual figures and updated us on some incorrect information previously sent out.



The figures for 2022 had shown that the number of toads being killed on roads had risen, but when they compared the numbers to those killed in years further back, it was found that the numbers were actually similar.

Kent Data from the patrols below shows some excellent numbers but the worrying trend is one of decline

Patrol site	Total moved in 2022	Peak count in an evening	Date of peak	Weather conditions	Peak year in last 5 years and number moved
Stone Street	4464	1779	16 th March	11°C* wet	
Painters Forstal	1250	264	11 th March	10 °C light rain	4067 in 2018
Foxenden Manor	236	93	11 th March	9 °C light rain	1320 in 2019
Bough Beech	107	31	20 th February	9 °C wet	450 in 2018
Knockholt	50	29	16 th March	11 °C wet	100 in 2019

* Weather not recorded but assumed to be the same as Knockholt

Xavier Mahele of Froglife gave a fascinating talk on Toad Ecology. He referenced some interesting papers which you might like to read:

Do Toads climb trees? Find out in this interesting article:

Petrovan SO, Al-Fulaij N, Christie A, Andrews H (2022) Why link diverse citizen science surveys? Widespread arboreal habits of a terrestrial amphibian revealed by mammalian tree surveys in Britain. PLoS ONE 17(7): e0265156. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0265156>

Peer, M., Dörler, D., Zaller, J.G. et al. (2021). Predicting spring migration of two European amphibian species with plant phenology using citizen science data. *Scientific Reports*. 11, 21611
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-00912-4>

NEXT TIME: News from your Pond

Please feel free to share news about your patrols including photos which you are happy for us to include in the newsletter.

Unlike the common frog, toadspawn is laid in strings (not clumps) are black and their tadpoles form shoals. Toadlets can emerge from ponds in huge numbers during early summer.



Toads crossing

Common toads are most active at night when they hunt invertebrates including ants, beetles, snails, slugs and spiders after rain.

Thank you

The Toads on Roads project, saving toads and gathering data, is a great contribution towards reversing the decline in Common Toad populations.

