



THE NATIONAL TRUST

INFORMATION SHEET

MANAGING RISK – European Protected Species Natterjack toad *Bufo calamita*

Status and distribution

UK	Native. Rare, UK is the northern edge of its range. Occurs in northern England and Scotland, notably on the sand dunes along the Merseyside coast, the coast of Cumbria and on the Scottish Solway. Once quite common on the heaths of Surrey and Hampshire and around the coast of East Anglia but now only a few colonies survive. Occurs in south-west Ireland. Priority Species in UKBAP. Protected Species under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and CroW Act 2000.
EU	Annex IVa of the EC Habitats Directive, Appendix II of the Bern Convention.

In the twentieth century the natterjack population suffered a 70% decline in the UK. It suffered the greatest losses in eastern and southern England due to reductions in its habitat.

Natterjack toads are found in two critical habitats for reproduction they need: unshaded, ephemeral, warm water bodies that have a pH of between 5 and 7, shallow, with gradually shelving margins and few competitors or predators such as dragonfly and beetle larvae, e.g. ephemeral slacks, pools or ditches. On land they favour open, unshaded terrestrial habitat (coastal dunes, upper salt marshes, lowland heaths) with extensive areas of unvegetated or minimally vegetated ground (i.e. vertical plant growth no more than 1 cm or so). They need a substrate (usually sand, occasionally slag or rock piles) into which to burrow and escape the heat of the midsummer sun and subzero temperatures in winter.

Presence within NT properties

In the last decade natterjack toads have been recorded from NT properties in Lancashire, west Norfolk and Surrey (Cirencester Recorder Database, 2002).

Threats and risks

Whilst there is limited chance of encountering natterjack toads on Trust land, properties in the current range should be aware of this species. Any works that may disturb natterjacks must only proceed under licence or with advice from EN. Not only must the Trust abide by the law, but as a partner to the UKBAP, it should also ensure that it maintains all breeding populations and their habitats occurring on its land. Maintenance of all breeding populations is a target within the UK Action Plan for this species.

Examples of works likely to affect natterjack toads and their habitat and which may require safeguards such as licensing include:

- Restoration of industrial sites (disused quarries, ironworks).
- Removal of slag, rock piles.
- Infilling of ephemeral, permanent, artificial ponds or wet places.
- Altering drainage.
- Chemical or agri-chemical pollution.
- Ungrazed/unmown vegetation around pools.
- Increased recreational activities.

References and further information

Beebee, T. and Denton, J (1996) *Natterjack Toad Conservation Handbook*. English Nature, Peterborough.

DEFRA (2002). *European Protected Species Guidance Note. (WLF 11 (5/02))*. DEFRA, Bristol. www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulat/forms/cons_man/wlf11.htm

HCT (1999) *The Conservation of natterjack toads a brief guide to habitat management* – leaflet. English Nature/Herpetological Conservation Trust, Bournemouth, Dorset. E-mail: HerpConTrust@hcontrst.force9net

Action Plan for Natterjack Toad (*Bufo calamita*): www.ukbap.org.uk

Natterjack Toad



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12/2002**