The great crested newt is the UK’s largest and arguably most impressive newt species. Growing up to 17cm long these newts are characterised by their large size, black/brown colouration and having warty skin. In the breeding season male newts develop a large jagged crest which is where the species gets its name.

Great crested newts typically inhabit medium – large fish free ponds. They are widely distributed throughout Britain but this distribution is extremely patchy. In Scotland, Great Crested Newts are found only very locally and large gaps often exist between colonies. They are protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, and across Europe under the Habitat Regulations, 2010. They are also classified as a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

**DESCRIPTION**

**DISTRIBUTION MAP**

**THREATS**

- Development & agricultural intensification
- Deliberate filling in or destruction of ponds
- Habitat fragmentation
- Loss of terrestrial habitat
- Chemical pollution and nutrification of ponds
- Introduction of fish
- Pond loss through natural succession

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

- **Increased Habitat Management** to create and restore aquatic and terrestrial habitats to suitable conditions. Targeted agri-environment strategies to be encouraged to achieve this and reverse effects of agricultural intensification.
- **Improved Planning Processes** to take better account of presence during early stages of local authority plans and development.
- **Increased Survey & Monitoring** is essential to allow species status assessments to be made.

**MSP SPECIES CHAMPION**

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