

AMPHIBIAN KEY

This sheet is an identification guide to the five local amphibian species. By following the options of the key and studying the illustrations it should be possible for you to identify your catch.

The newt species are often confused though the Warty Newt, on account of its large size, warty skin and deeply serrated crest and silver tail stripe of the male, is the most characteristic. The Smooth and Palmate Newts are not so easily told apart. The male Palmate lacks a high crest and on closer inspection has the toes of the hind feet more or less fully webbed as well as adorning a thin black filament at the end of its tail. The females of the two species are very similar and can only be told apart by the female Smooth *usually* having a spotted throat whilst that of the Palmate Newt is without spots. Palmate Newts rarely exceed 8 cms in length.

Outside the breeding season newts lose many of their characteristics (crests, etc.) and are therefore very difficult to identify.

Unlike the newts, the males of frogs and toads do not adorn crests though they do develop dark horny pads on their fingers, which are necessary for clasping on to the back of the larger females during mating (amplexus).

