

# Bentley Pond

## Advisory Notes on Great Crested Newt and Management of Bentley Pond



For  
Bentley Parish Council

Notes dated 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019



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## 1.0 Background

Bentley Parish Council is proposing to conduct enhancement works to Bentley Parish Pond, OS National Grid ref SU 7874 4408. Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Tristurus cristatus* are protected through Wildlife & Countryside Act (WCA 1981), Habitat Regulations (amended 2010), Countryside Rights of Way Act (2000) and other amendments to these Acts. In summary this legislation prohibits the following:

- *intentional disturbance or harm,*
- *reckless damage to a breeding site or resting place or a place used for shelter and protection*
- *intentionally obstructing a place used as shelter*

GPM Ecology was commissioned by Bentley Parish Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019 to conduct a Great Crested Newt (GCN) survey of the pond, provide advice on management and conduct a 'show and tell' of amphibians living in the pond to Bentley Primary School.

## 2.0 Survey Methodology, Results and Evaluation

Two survey visits took place on 19<sup>th</sup> March and 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019, with lamping only taking place during the March visit and 20 bottle-traps deployed during the April survey visit, with newts caught during the trapping used for a 'show and tell' during the Primary School Assembly. The pond was assessed for its Habitat Suitability Index (HSI, Oldham et al 2000<sup>1</sup>), a useful tool to determine suitability to support GCN. The HSI index scores a pond as 0 (unsuitable for GCN breeding) to 1 (ideal for GCN breeding pond).

**Table 1** below provides a summary of the amphibian survey, while **Appendix I** provides detailed survey results. The pond supports a medium sized population (peak count of 15 GCN on 29<sup>th</sup> April), which appears to have increased in status since 2015, when there was a peak count of 3 GCN (on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015) following six survey visits, which is indicative of a low population size class. The Habitat Suitability Score of 0.77 indicates the pond features provide good suitability for GCN.

**Table 1: Summary of GCN Survey**

Date	GCN Count	HSI (Suitability)	Eggs	Min/max temp oC	Other species
19 <sup>th</sup> Mar	10	0.77 (Good)	Yes	11 – 13	1 frog (30 clumps), 37 smooth newts
29 <sup>th</sup> Apr	15	-	Yes	1 - 10	1 frog, 10 smooth newts

## 3.0 Recommendations

The pond restoration works need to ensure that the habitat suitability remains good for GCN and that this species remains a management priority. To this end the following features need to be considered:

1. Removal of sediment, shade and reducing leaf fall, will be positive for GCN;
2. The island should be removed during restoration, to prevent wildfowl breeding;
3. Care must be made not to allow fish to colonise, once the water quality is improved; and
4. Locate the bonfire site for Fireworks Night well away from the pond.

It is further recommended that every 3 to 4 years a Pond Health Check takes place to include:

1. A GCN trapping / lamping visit to determine presence (or otherwise) during mid-April;
2. Assess the Habitat Suitability Index and provide notes on status / management; and
3. Present a 'show and tell' at the Primary School assembly after emptying traps.

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<sup>1</sup> Oldham RS, Keeble J, Swan MJS and Jeffcote M 2000. Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt. The Herpetological Journal Vol.10, No. 4 (WITH REVISIONS)