

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE



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Guidelines for trapping Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*)

General

1. Trapping and translocation are highly skilled processes, controlled by both conservation and welfare legislation. Poor standards can lead to prosecution if newts are found to be unlawfully killed, injured or to have suffered unduly while in traps.
2. The licensee is responsible for ensuring they have sufficient experience in the methods and understanding of the ecology, life cycle and habitat requirements of the species to allow good standards to be met.
3. All traps must be retrieved at the end of the trapping-period. To assist this, traps should be numbered for identification and/or mapped on a plan to show their position.
4. Trapping should not take place in periods of extreme weather conditions where any newts taken may be at risk from extremely high or low temperatures or from drying out.
5. Traps must be removed, or securely closed against accidental trapping, when not in use. Broken traps must be removed for safe disposal.
6. Where newt populations are to be surveyed for study (but not translocated) any animals taken must be released at the site of capture immediately following examination and should be handled as little as possible to obtain the survey data required. Day time release of night captives on land should be into thick ground cover.
7. Traps must be robust and designed, wherever possible, to prevent harm to, or predation of, trapped animals.
8. Daily records should be kept to assist in reporting to statutory bodies as a condition of the licence.

Pitfall traps

1. Traps and drift fencing installation should be carried out in ways that ensure that these cause minimal damage to amphibians and their habitats.
2. Pitfall traps should incorporate a “mammal ladder” to allow escape of any small mammals which may fall into them. If pitfall traps are used in areas with shrews the traps must be designed to allow shrews to escape, otherwise a separate shrew trapping licence is required and the conditions on that must be followed.
3. Pitfall traps should have a suitable substrate (eg. grass or hay) at the base of the trap under which trapped animals may shelter and a floating raft (eg. tree bark) or drainage holes in cases where traps may be prone to flooding.
4. Pitfall traps must be checked at least once in every 24 hours between 06.00 and 11.00 hours; preferably they should be checked more frequently.

Bottle traps

1. Submerged bottle traps which do not allow for air breathing by newts must not be left unattended longer than 12 hours in March and April, 10 hours in May, 8 hours in June, 7 hours in July and August and 8 hours in September.
2. Bottle traps that allow air breathing by newts must not be left unchecked between 06.00 and 11.00 hours. Submerged bottle traps must be held firmly in place to prevent tilting and loss of the air bubble.
3. Bottle trapping should be used with great caution in full summer sunlight as the internal temperature of the trap may rise considerably. In these cases the position of the trap or the frequency of checking may need to be reviewed.
4. Any death of crested newts must be immediately reported to English Nature. If more than one death occurs in a bottle trap then trapping must be suspended and advice sought from English Nature. If newts are found unconscious and then recover, trapping should also be suspended and advice sought.
5. From July-September, crested newt larvae may be vulnerable to damage, predation or suffocation in bottle traps. Trapping should be suspended if more than two larvae are found dead and advice sought from English Nature.