



TOADSIZE 2015

Getting the Measure of Toads and Traffic

Background

Traffic is a threat to common toads when they migrate across busy roads during the springtime. The current project will investigate the possibility that road deaths can affect the average body size of populations by killing toads before they reach their full potential size. The size of individual amphibians is an important factor - bigger animals tend to fare better than small individuals.

Collecting a sample of toads

1. We would like you to collect and measure **male toads** on different nights of the crossing. If you have the time, you could include up to as many as ten crossing nights.
2. Try to measure at least 10 and up to 20 male toads on each night. The toads measured should be a random sample. To do this collect 'the next five live males' on the road and repeat this two to four times over the course of the evening.
3. Put the sample of 10-20 toads in their bucket in a safe place and leave until you are free to measure them. This may be at the end of the evening.

We want to sample the more numerous male toads only in the ToadSize project.

Although females are bigger than males, try not to select males on the basis of body size alone as this may bias your sampling. Male toads are usually smaller, and thinner than females. Males also have distinctive nuptial pads. These are dark pads present on the innermost two toes on the front foot (see photo).



Male toad with nuptial pads
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Return your data to: info@arguk.org or John.Wilkinson@arc-trust.org



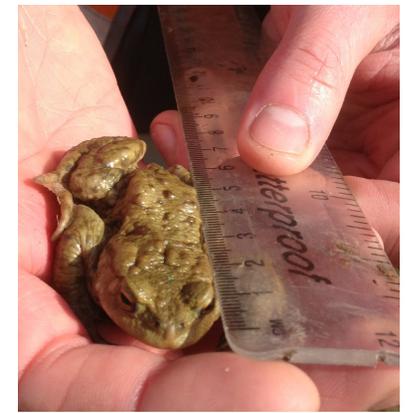
amphibian and reptile
conservation



Measuring toad body size

Toads should be measured in a location safely away from the road. Measuring toads is easiest with at least two people. You will need to measure overall body length, from the tip of the snout to the hindmost point of the body, the snout-to-vent' length (SVL).

Measuring the SVL of a toad can be achieved quite quickly and simply. It's important to be consistent - hold the toad in one hand and lay a ruler down its spine, measuring the distance between the tip of the snout and the vent in mm. Hold the toad so that its body is as flat as possible.



Recording traffic volume

Please rate the traffic volume at your road crossing as either:

- Minimal (includes roads closed to traffic)
- Medium (e.g. minor roads)
- Heavy (e.g. A-roads)

Please do not take males that are paired up with a female .

Assessing Road mortality

We need some measure of the impact of traffic on the toad population being sampled. To do this it would be useful to compare counts of toads assisted safely across the road with the number killed by traffic.

- Count or estimate the number of toads safely helped across the road on each night of sampling and record in the box Assisted (or estimate for whole patrol period).
- Count or estimate the number of toads found killed by traffic each night of sampling and record in the box Killed (or estimate for the entire patrol period).

Health and safety

The safety of volunteers is of greatest importance. Participants in ToadSize should adhere to the safety measures recommended for all toad patrolling work.

