

The **great crested newt** *Triturus cristatus* is widespread throughout much of England and Wales, but occurs only sparsely in south-west England, mid Wales and Scotland. It is absent from Northern Ireland.

The total UK population is relatively large and is distributed over sites that vary greatly in their ecological character. One estimate has put the national population at around 400,000 animals in 18,000 breeding sites.

Many of the largest populations are centred on disused mineral-extraction sites, but lowland farmland forms the majority of great crested newt habitat in the UK.

The species has suffered a decline in recent years with studies in the 1980s indicating a national rate of colony loss of approximately 2% over five years. It is estimated that there are a total of 18,000 ponds within Britain, although only 3,000 of these have been identified. The British population is amongst the largest in Europe, where it is threatened in several countries.

