1. INTRODUCTION
The great crested newt is the largest of our three newt species (up to 18cm long) and males in breeding condition have a well developed, jagged crest along the back which is indented at the base of the tail; this is more jagged and less continuously formed than in the commoner smooth newt. The skin is also much wartier than the smooth newt and often appears black. Most of the life cycle is spent on land, adults returning to their breeding sites, typically ponds (but occasionally canals and large water bodies) in early spring. Eggs are laid singly on submersent leaves, which the female folds up around the eggs like a concertina. During the winter, adult and immature newts hibernate in frost-free areas such as well-drained soil, hedgerow bases and piles of rubble. This species prefers relatively large ponds (50-750m$^2$) with a variety of aquatic plants. Closely-spaced ponds, or pond clusters (ponds within 500m of each other), supporting metapopulations can result in greater population viability in an area.

Populations require suitable terrestrial habitat adjacent to their breeding ponds and long-term survival in an area may depend on movement between neighbouring populations (or breeding ponds). Great crested newt dispersal abilities are limited, the maximum dispersal distance is estimated to be up to 1km. Rough grassland, tall herb, scrub and hedgerows around breeding ponds are very important, especially where these create patches or corridors of continuous habitat. They do not cope well in the built environment, intensively farmed countryside or areas subject to regular mowing. Tadpoles and very young newtlets are sensitive to fish predation and so ponds lacking fish or that are seasonally ephemeral (and therefore inhospitable to fish) can provide especially suitable breeding habitat. The great crested newt has not benefited from the creation of garden ponds and remains largely dependent on ponds associated with farmland and those created by quarrying activity.
2. OUR OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

A. Determine the distribution and status of the great crested newt within the county and designate known breeding sites as SINCs as minimum. Target 2010

B. Maintain the range, distribution and size of existing great crested newt populations within the sub-region. Target 2005-2015

C. Restore 10 degraded sites within the sub-region. Target 2010

D. Increase population size and range by encouraging new populations through the creation of new ponds/pond clusters and restoration of neglected ones wherever opportunities arise. Target 2005-2015

E. Maximise the quality of terrestrial habitats around breeding ponds. Target 2005-2015

F. Raise awareness of the great crested newt, its life cycle and habitat requirements. Target 2005-2015

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ASSOCIATED HABITAT PLANS
- Ponds, Lakes & Reservoirs
- Quarries & Gravel Pits
- Parks & Public Open Spaces
- School Grounds
- Wood Pasture & Parkland
- Lowland Grassland (all types)

ASSOCIATED SPECIES PLANS
- White-clawed Crayfish
- Water Vole

3. NATIONAL BAP OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

- Establish populations in 100 appropriate unoccupied sites each year from 1995 to 2005, ensuring that the species is found in sites that are representative of the range of habitats used and the geographic distribution.

- Maintain the geographical range and viability of existing great crested newt populations.
4. CURRENT STATUS

The great crested newt remains widespread in lowland parts of England and Wales, becoming scarcer in the north and west (very rare in Scotland). It has shown a marked decline during the latter part of the twentieth century, primarily as a result of agricultural intensification. It is estimated that there are currently about 18000 ponds supporting great crested newts within Britain although only 3000 of these have been identified. The national decline continues, with recent studies suggesting between 72 and 360 populations are being lost each year. The British population is amongst the largest in Europe where it is threatened in several countries.

The great crested newt is widespread in the sub-region, but there are areas in the extreme south, north-west and north-east where few pond surveys have been carried out. A recent survey in the north of the sub-region, which had previously been under-recorded revealed nearly a quarter of the ponds visited contained great crested newt populations, and there appear to be several significant metapopulations. But recent studies in Coventry reveal that a high proportion of ponds there have either been lost or become highly degraded in recent decades, with evidence of significant losses of newt breeding ponds.

4.1 Legal and Policy Status

Strictly protected under European law (annexes II & IV of the EC Habitats Directive & Appendix II of the Bern Convention) from injury / killing / capture and destruction or deterioration of their habitat. Strictly protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations 1994 (regulation 38) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Schedule 5) from trade, injury / killing, capture, disturbance and damage / destruction to their habitat. A licence is needed to handle them.

4.2 Current Factors Affecting The Species

- **Infilling of ponds** for development, farming and waste disposal.
- **Changes in farming practice**
- **Water table reduction** especially through excessive water extraction and the effects of droughts
- **Introduction of fish**, much of which takes place without a licence
- **Pond loss and deterioration** through successional changes and neglect
- **Chemical pollution and nutrient enrichment** of breeding sites
- **Degradation, loss and fragmentation of terrestrial habitat** e.g. through removal of hedges, scrub and tall herbage
- **Creation of new breeding ponds** - through quarrying and the creation of ponds in business parks and in nature reserves
- **Ongoing pond management and the increasing use of funded pond plans**
- **Legal protection** - which results in much newt survey and protection work via the planning system and subsequent construction work
5. CURRENT LOCAL ACTION

- All known records are stored electronically in the WART database and are passed to Warwickshire Museum.
- Planning applications are checked for potential impact on great crested newt colonies.
- Three surveys within the past six years have helped to clarify distribution & status of great crested newt populations within the City of Coventry and between Bedworth & Coventry (SP38). There are still big gaps in the county distribution where ponds have yet to be surveyed.

6. PROPOSED LOCAL ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>By</th>
<th>Meets objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy &amp; Legislation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PL1. Ensure that all relevant species policy is included in Local Planning Documents (see ODPM Planning Policy Statement PPS9).</td>
<td>LBAPSG</td>
<td>WWT NE WART EA DEFRA LAs</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>A,B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL2. Ensure all known great-crested newt breeding sites are considered for designation as SINCs or SSSIs</td>
<td>WBRC</td>
<td>WWT NE WART WM LAs WSP</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL3. Actively encourage Local Authorities to act in line with best practice guidelines throughout the planning process.</td>
<td>LBAPSG</td>
<td>WWT NE WART EA LAs</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>A,B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL4. Consider incentives for pond creation and management (also including adjacent terrestrial areas) on farmland under the agri-environment schemes.</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>WWT WART BTCV FWAG</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>C, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site / Species Safeguard &amp; Management</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>SM1. Review all great crested newt breeding site records and re-survey all records over ten years old.</td>
<td>WART</td>
<td>WWT WM NE</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM2. Locate further great crested newt sites, aiming to identify all breeding sites or to determine the number of site occupancies in 10-km squares.</td>
<td>WART</td>
<td>WWT WM NE</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>A, E</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsible Bodies</th>
<th>Action Period</th>
<th>Priority</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SM3.</strong> Seek to maintain the number and distribution of occupied sites.</td>
<td>LBAPSG WWT EA WART LAs NE</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SM4.</strong> Always state the need for losses to be compensated for through pond creation and restoration, where site loss is unavoidable.</td>
<td>NE WWT LAs EA WART</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SM5.</strong> Encourage the natural dispersal of the species to new sites through creation and restoration of habitat.</td>
<td>LBAPSG WWT LAs WART NE</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SM6.</strong> Propose and strongly encourage that new ponds are created close to existing populations, to expand or restore the local range and to create robust populations.</td>
<td>LBAPSG WWT NE LAs WART</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>D</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Advisory**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory</th>
<th>Responsible Bodies</th>
<th>Action Period</th>
<th>Priority</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1.</strong> Employ a protocol for informing landowners of the presence of great crested newts on a SINC, legal implications and management requirements.</td>
<td>WSP LAs WWT WART NE LOs</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>B, E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2.</strong> Promote training of professional and volunteer surveyors and those involved in the management and conservation of the great crested newt.</td>
<td>WART LAs WWT</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A3.</strong> Distribute management advice and information on grant schemes to site owners/managers.</td>
<td>LBAPSG WWT LAs NE FWAG WART</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research & Monitoring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research &amp; Monitoring</th>
<th>Responsible Bodies</th>
<th>Action Period</th>
<th>Priority</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RM1.</strong> Encourage further surveys to identify important breeding sites.</td>
<td>WART WWT WM NE</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RM2.</strong> Pass information gathered during survey and monitoring of this species to JNCC or BRC in order that it can be incorporated in a national database and contribute to the maintenance of an up-to-date Red List.</td>
<td>WBRC WWT NE WART</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>D</td>
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</table>

**Communication & Publicity**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication &amp; Publicity</th>
<th>Responsible Bodies</th>
<th>Action Period</th>
<th>Priority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CP1.</strong> Develop links between statutory authorities and local conservation groups.</td>
<td>LBAPSG WWT LAs WART NE BTCV</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>A, B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CP2.</strong> Encourage liaison with landowners through local conservation groups.</td>
<td>LBAPSG WWT LAs WART NE BTCV</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>A, B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CP3.</strong> Promote, through publicity, media and environmental education, a wider and more sympathetic understanding of amphibian</td>
<td>WART RINGS WWT HCT</td>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>A, B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. REFERENCES (see LBAP Bibliography web page)

8. FURTHER INFORMATION (see separate Links web page for links to web sites)

- UK Biodiversity Action Plan no.619
- Natural England (NE)
- Joint Nature Conservation Council
- Warwickshire Amphibian and Reptile Team (WART)

  Dewpond restoration for assisting dispersal of great crested newts. A joint project between English Nature and the Peak District National Park. Email: philip.bowler@english-nature.org.uk

  Herpetological Conservation Trust, 655A Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 4AP. Tel. 01202 391319. Website: www.herpconstrust.org.uk

  Amphibian & Reptile Groups of the UK: www.arg-uk.org.uk

  Management of Great Crested Newt Sites – a new Environmental Stewardship leaflet, available from the Great Crested Newt Conservation Officer at HCT. Email: Dorothy.wright@herpconstrust.org.uk

  Natural England - ‘Great Crested Newts on Your Farm’ – booklet available in pdf format from the NE Suffolk Team. Tel. 01733 455000 or email: enquiries@english-nature.org.uk

  RSPB (2007) ‘Farm Wildlife Handbook’ from Publications, RSPB, Unit 17, St Martin’s Business Centre, St Martin’s Way, Bedford MK42 0LF, tel. 01234 263616 or email: publications@rspb.org.uk.

9. CONTACTS

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