

What good mitigation looks like: common toads

A common toad is shown in a nighttime urban setting. The toad is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the frame, sitting on a dark, textured pavement. It has a mottled brown and black pattern on its back and a lighter, tan-colored belly. Its eyes are large and dark with a prominent red ring. The background is dark, with several out-of-focus yellow and white lights from street lamps or buildings, creating a bokeh effect. A concrete curb is visible on the right side of the image.

Jim Foster, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

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How common *are* common toads?



- Evidence of large-scale, substantial declines – but patchy (Carrier & Beebee, 2003; Petrovan & Schmidt, 2016)
- Minimal legal protection, but on Section 41 list



Potential decline factors

- Habitat loss
- Habitat fragmentation
- Road mortality
- Habitat management
- Climate?
- Disease?



Widespread decliners: The need for better conservation approaches



- Hedgehogs
- Water voles
- etc



How does development impact common toads?

Mainly negative:

Construction impacts

- Loss of breeding habitat (ponds, lakes, ditches)
- Loss of terrestrial habitat
- Decline in habitat quality

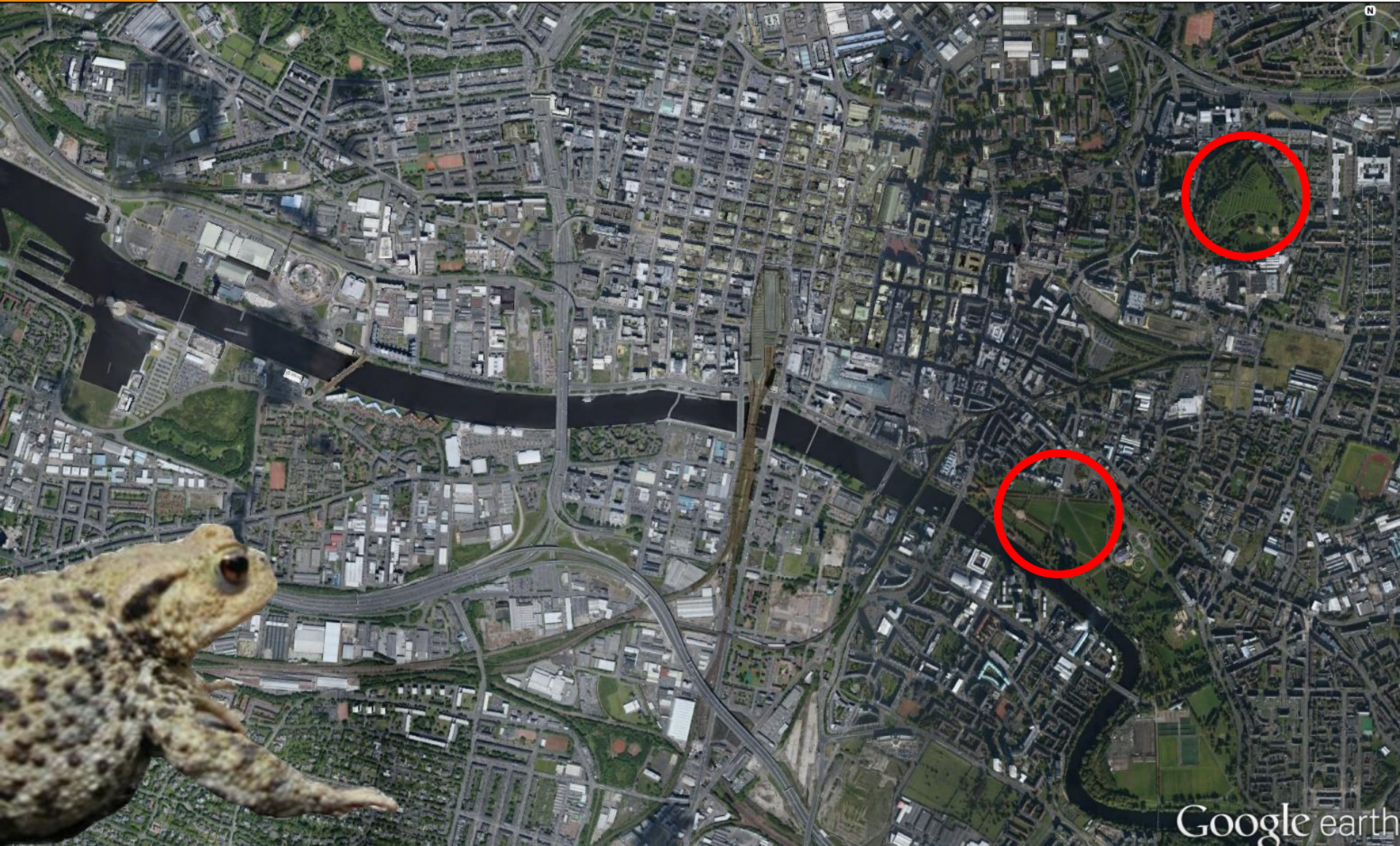


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Long-term or operational impacts

- Fragmentation
- Increased mortality → reduced viability



- Dispersal easily interrupted, mortality increased
- Not just a road problem



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- Positive effects – habitat creation

Lakes, reservoirs, balancing ponds



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Mitigation issues

- Avoid – mitigate – compensate
- Good survey and impact assessment are critical



Breeding sites

Terrestrial habitat,
especially
hibernation areas

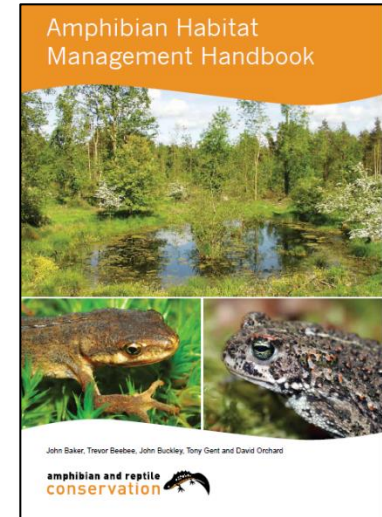
Migration routes



- Avoid key negative impacts, by assessing planned footprint against survey results

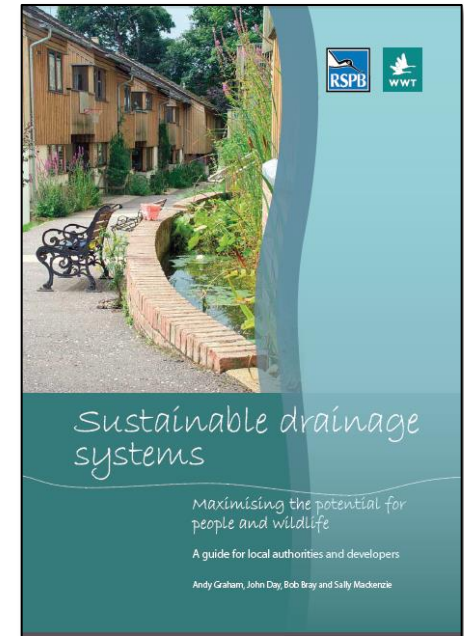


- Compensate for unavoidable losses through habitat creation & enhancement



- Large, open ponds
- Woodland or dense scrub
- Maintain connectivity

- Use SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) wherever possible
- Can reduce impacts (no drains), and create habitat



ARC advice note out soon

YouTube: "SuDS for Amphibians and Reptiles"

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- Ladders for gullypots – helpful for existing sites, but should never be used for new builds
- Tunnels – best as last resort, not desirable for new builds
- Green bridges (ecoducts) a better solution?

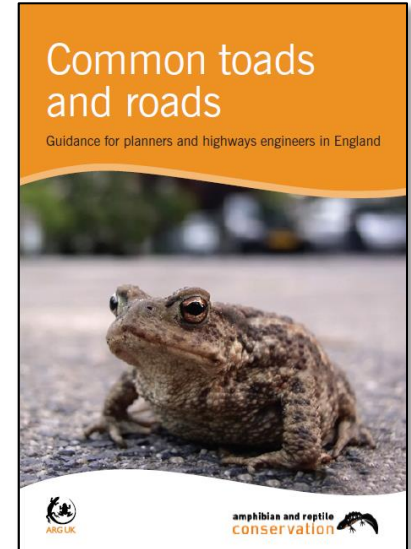


- Green Infrastructure and recreational areas

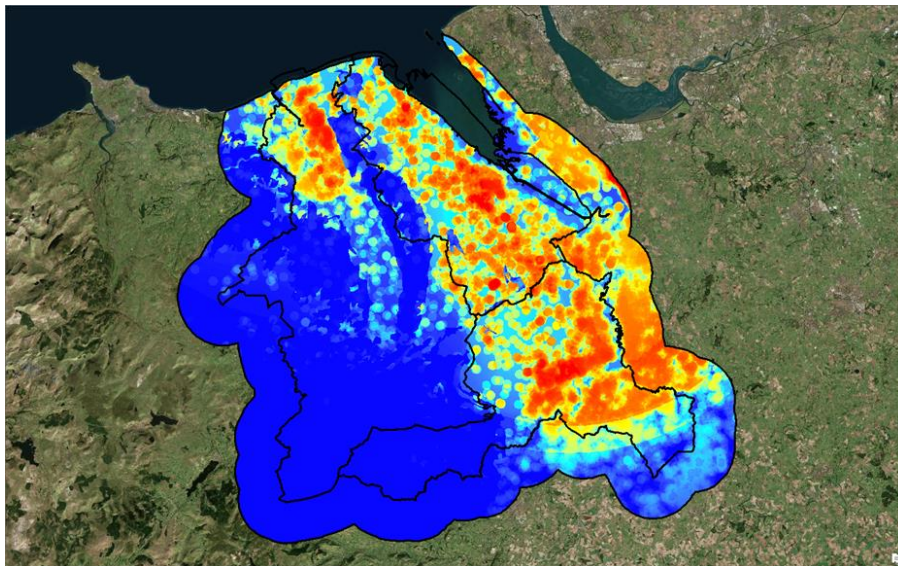


Improving planning outcomes for common toads

- Better guidance on survey and mitigation, with NE and LPA endorsement
- Monitoring of mitigation schemes



- Greater awareness of common toad issues among planners, consultant ecologists – eg flagging major impacts at development control
- Action as part of NPPF restoration or enhancement, and Section 40 Biodiversity Duty – eg SuDS implementation could be a quick win
- Consideration in forward planning – eg use of predictive modelling





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