

# 10 Pondlife of London



## About the London Natural History Society

The London Natural History Society traces its history back to 1858. The Society is made up of a number of active sections that provide a wide range of talks, organised nature walks, coach trips and other activities. This range of events makes the LNHS one of the most active natural history societies in the world. Whether it is purely for recreation, or to develop field skills for a career in conservation, the LNHS offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Beginners are welcome at every event and gain access to the knowledge of some very skilled naturalists.

On top of its varied public engagement, the LNHS also provides a raft of publications free to members. The London Naturalist is its annual journal with scientific papers as well as lighter material such as book reviews. The annual London Bird Report published since 1937 sets a benchmark for publications of this genre. Furthermore, there is a quarterly Newsletter that carries many trip reports and useful announcements.

The LNHS maintains its annual membership subscription at a modest level, representing fantastic value for money.

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The selection of species is a subjective decision of the contributor(s) and not based on quantitative criteria such as population numbers, database records or presence on recording grids in surveys. These PDFs are not available in print form from the LNHS.

## Taking your interest further

Details of other organizations with an interest in wildlife and a whole host of information is on the LNHS website. Past copies of the printed LNHS publications are available from Catherine Schmitt. Details on [www.lnhs.org.uk](http://www.lnhs.org.uk).

## Contributing to the LNHS Education Series

If you would like to contribute to LNHS Learning please get in touch with one of the following section chairpersons in the LNHS or Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne who is coordinating the series.

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## Credits

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Photographs taken at Creekside Discovery Centre, Deptford: [www.creeksidecentre.org.uk](http://www.creeksidecentre.org.uk)

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## Common Frog

(*Rana temporaria*)

Varying in colour from yellow, through green and brown, Common Frogs can be recognised by the dark face stripe covering their eyes. Their skin is smooth with dark patchy markings.

Frogs are mostly active at night when they hunt for invertebrates.

They hibernate in the winter and emerge in the spring to breed and produce frogspawn.



## Common Toad

(*Bufo bufo*)

Toads have rotund bodies and warty skin, they walk rather than hop. Spending the majority of time away from water, they can be found in damp areas of gardens and woodlands.

They hunt on the land at night, resting in sheltered places during the day and hibernate in the winter. They return to water to breed, producing eggs in long jelly ribbons.



## Smooth Newt

(*Lissotriton vulgaris*)

Growing up to 10 cm long, Smooth Newts range in colour from yellow to dark grey. They have striking orange undersides with dark spots.

During the breeding season males develop a wavy crest along their back. Like frogs and toads they hibernate on land but are tied to water for breeding. Juvenile newts are called efts and have external feathery gills.



## Greater Water Boatman

(*Notonecta glauca*)

Also known as the Backswimmer, the Greater Water Boatman hangs upside-down at the surface of the water and uses its long hair-fringed back legs as oars. This pond predator feels for prey from within the water, eating other invertebrates, amphibians and even small fish. Dragonfly nymphs may spend up to three years below water. They vary in appearance according to species, with Emperor Dragonfly nymphs reaching 56mm in length.



## Pond Skater

(*Gerris lacustris*)

A surface dwelling insect, the Pond Skater has water repellent hairs on its feet which assist with standing on the surface tension. The four back legs move the insect at speed across the water whilst the front set of legs grab items of prey, such as other insects. Pond Skaters have wings which help them to travel and colonise new ponds.



## Lesser Water Boatman

(*Corixida punctata*)

The Lesser Water Boatman is very different to its larger cousin. It does not swim on its back and is mainly herbivorous. It spends most of its time at the bottom of the pond, searching for debris which it sucks up and filters to extract plant material. Water Boatmen have wings and fly to colonise new bodies of water.



## Dragonfly Nymph

(Suborder: Anisoptera)

Dragonfly nymphs (juveniles) can be top predators in a pond habitat. Using an extendable lower jaw they snatch prey from within the water, eating other invertebrates, amphibians and even small fish. Dragonfly nymphs may spend up to three years below water. They vary in appearance according to species, with Emperor Dragonfly nymphs reaching 56mm in length.



## Damselfly Nymph

(Suborder: Zygoptera)

Damselfly nymphs are smaller in size and more delicate in structure than dragonfly nymphs. Both types of nymphs have very large eyes and rely on sight to catch prey. When the nymphs are ready to emerge as adults they climb up waterside vegetation and crack out of the nymph exoskeleton, revealing two fully formed pairs of wings.



## Pond Snail

(*Lymnaea spp*)

These snails have shells which are coiled into the shape of a ram's horn; round and flattened. Ramshorn snails often appear reddish in colour. This is due to presence of the red pigment haemoglobin in their blood, which helps these snails absorb oxygen. In the largest species, the Great Ramshorn Snail, the shell can reach 3.5cm in diameter.



## Ramshorn Snail

(*Planorbis spp*)

These snails have shells which are coiled into the shape of a ram's horn; round and flattened. Ramshorn snails often appear reddish in colour. This is due to presence of the red pigment haemoglobin in their blood, which helps these snails absorb oxygen. In the largest species, the Great Ramshorn Snail, the shell can reach 3.5cm in diameter.

