

Report of: Conservation Officer, Communities & Environment

Report to: Outer North East Community Committee

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To note

Funding for pond creation & restoration for great crested newt conservation

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Outer North East Community Committee with an update on new funding available for pond creation and restoration, for the purpose of the conservation of great crested newts through Natural England District Level Licensing (DLL) scheme.

Overview

2. Great crested newts (GCN) have seen dramatic declines in their populations over the last 60 years despite being legally protected. The new 'District Level Licensing' scheme (DLL) better protects this species by using conservation payments from developers to create new ponds in locations that will benefit the species.
3. The DLL scheme is not 'live' yet in West Yorkshire but the aim is to kick-start pond creation so developers can see where their payments are going.
4. The scheme will create a network of ponds providing vital habitat for GCN, helping to join up sometimes isolated populations and helping them to thrive.
5. Natural England, in partnership with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, will invest developer payments not only into creating or restoring new ponds but also maintaining and monitoring the ponds too, for the long term (25 years).

6. Natural England randomly sampled ponds throughout the Leeds district in 2018, using a technique called eDNA analysis which can detect the presence of GCN through water samples. This data, combined with existing biological records has enabled them to map Strategic Opportunity Areas for GCN conservation. These are the areas targeted for this funding.
7. Land within the Strategic Opportunity Areas must also meet other criteria to be eligible.
8. Enquiries for this funding should be made to info@ywt.org.uk

Recommendations

9. To note the contents of the update.