

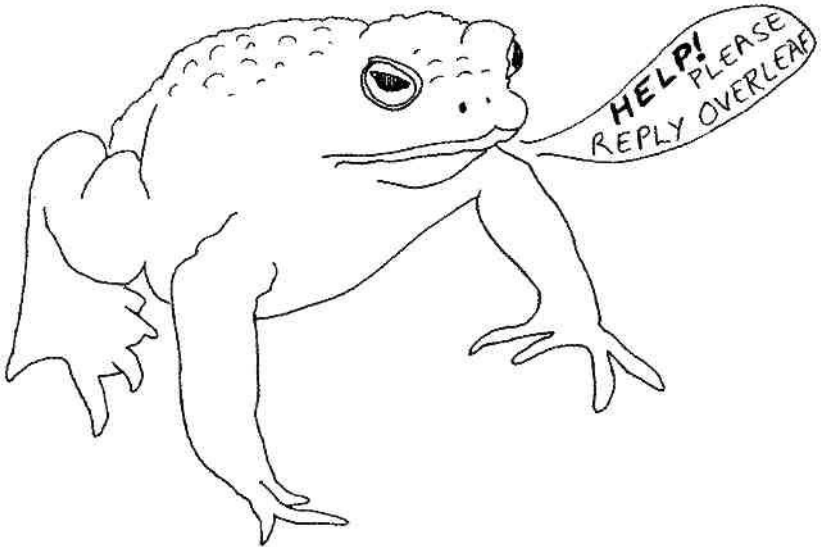
THE ASCOTT TOAD PATROL 1999

Amphibians are declining world wide and a special task force has been set up by the Herpetofauna Groups to investigate the reasons for this decline, including a study on the long-term effects of nitrates on toads.

At our registered site at Manor Farm, Ascott under Wychwood we have also seen declining numbers with only 262 toads helped across the road in 1998 as compared to 1,311 in 1996. This decline makes it even more important that we monitor the numbers and try and prevent the deaths of toads crossing the road in their migration to their breeding pond in the Spring.

Volunteers are very welcome.

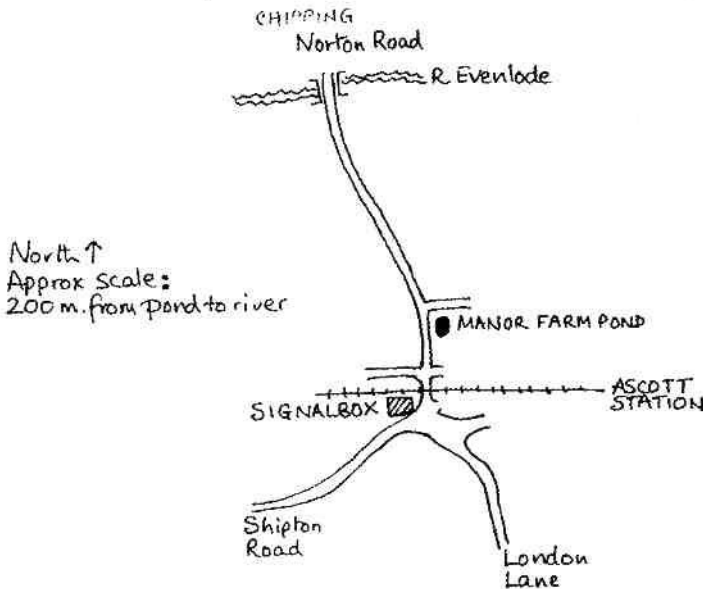
John Gripper



Toads, roads and a railway crossing can make a gruesome combination in early spring in Ascott under Wychwood. The mating urges of these mysterious creatures are tied to warm wet weather as they migrate home to the Manor Farm pond under cover of dusk, and it is at these times that volunteers can rescue them from being squashed on the road. The record number counted was 275 one evening, and the sight of these small, slow, khaki travellers with bright olive green eyes is amazing. If you are willing to forgo the comfort of your central heating and join a devoted band of bucketeers armed with a torch, fluorescent strips and gloves, please get in touch with John Gripper on 830278 or Joan Lilly on 831464.

(continued over)

In 1996 the migration began in late March, but last year the canny toads moved at the end of February, perhaps because 1997 was "the warmest year on record." Committing a named evening to being on call makes the rota, for six to eight weeks of possible toad activity, easier to compile. We have an information sheet for anyone interested in conservation issues. We are looking for rare people and hope to hear from you soon!



Please complete and return as soon as possible to Joan Lilly,
 12 London Lane, Ascott u Wychwood, Chipping Norton OX7 6AN.
 (01993 831464) Thank you.

Name/s.....

Postal address if not living in Ascott.....

Telephone no. Day..... Evening.....

We / I would like to help at peak times YES / NO

We / I can commit to rescue Toads as required DURING end February/
 March / early April on: MONDAYS TUESDAYS WEDNESDAYS
 THURSDAYS FRIDAYS SATURDAYS SUNDAYS
 (if you have flexibility over several evenings please mark an order of
 preference.)

We / I can help only on these dates:-