

Newt Surveys NIEA Specific Requirements

The smooth or common newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* (formerly *Triturus vulgaris*) is the only species of newt found in Northern Ireland. They are protected under Article 10 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5 of this Order, which includes the smooth or common newt. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly: damage or destroy, or obstruct access to, any structure or place which newts use for shelter or protection; damage or destroy anything which conceals or protects any such structure; disturb a newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.

Although newts are widespread across Northern Ireland, suitable habitat for the species is in decline. Newts breed in ponds and areas of standing water with vegetation cover close by. Ponds are exceptionally vulnerable, and face many threats, including drainage and infill. To ensure your development proposals comply with the Wildlife Order, The Northern Ireland Environment Agency has asked you to carry out an appropriate newt survey. You should follow these guidelines:

- The surveyor contracted to undertake this work must have relevant experience which is deemed acceptable to the Department, for example an ecological consultant with experience of, and/or qualifications in, amphibian surveying.
- The date and time of the survey and the qualifications of the surveyor must be included in the survey report.
- Newt surveys should be carried out between **Mid March** and **Mid June**.
- Surveys must be carried out within one year of submission to the Department.
- A licence to survey for newt presence and abundance must be obtained from the NIEA Wildlife Team before commencement of the survey.
- The survey should establish whether newts are active or inactive in the waterbody and surrounding terrestrial area. The survey should include the surrounding 200m of terrestrial habitat associated with the waterbody.
- The information must be presented in a written report and include large scale maps. The methods used for survey must be included within the survey report (note: bottle traps are not permitted in Northern Ireland). All evidence of newts found, for example eggs, or sightings, must be included.
- If necessary, the report should recommend the most appropriate ways in which newts can be protected from adverse impacts caused by the development. Mitigation measures should cover all phases of the development - before, during and after construction. The survey should also stipulate whether the proposed mitigation measures will require a Protected Species Licence.

- In the event that the planning application goes to appeal or public inquiry, persons contracted to carry out surveys may be required to appear at, or give evidence to the appeal or inquiry.

NIEA reserve the right to determine whether the survey is adequate or when additional information is required.

For more information on newts and development, and for licence applications, contact:

Wildlife Team
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Tel: (028) 905 69605

Wildlife Management and Licensing web page:

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/wildlife_management_and_licensing.htm