How did they find out toads could climb trees?

* Some scientists were doing dormice surveys. As well as dormice they kept finding toads in dormice nests and hollows in trees. Then one day the dormice scientists were talking to some herpetologists (scientists who study amphibians and reptiles) and they mentioned the toads in the trees, assuming that the herpetologists knew about this, but instead the herpetologists were really surprised!

Is it bad to have to many plants

* Native plants (plants that have evolved and occur here in Scotland naturally) are best for our ponds. However can you have too many native plants in your pond? Yes quite possibly, amphibians and other wildlife in the pond need areas of open water. This may be for example for frogs to have space to lay frogspawn or it could be for male newts in spring as they ‘display’ or dance to attract females – which needs clear open water to be more successful. A prefect pond for wildlife will have a balance of native plants in the pond, open water and not forgetting the native plants around the pond and its margins too.

How long do frogs live

* This is a difficult question to answer! Frogs lay thousands of eggs and unfortunately a very small number of these will develop into adult frogs eventually. So for many frogs their lifespan is quite short. However in terms of how long would a frog usually live if it develops into an adult then anywhere from 5-10 years. Our Common Toad can be a bit longer lived in the wild – however common toads kept in captivity have been recorded to live up to 40 years.

What is the most dangerous animal that lives near a pond?

* There are many different animals that will hunt and eat frogs in Scotland – from small mammals to snakes and lots of different birds. They may also be eaten when they are smaller by insects in the pond such as great diving beetles. One excellent hunter however of frogs and other wildlife you will often see near or in a pond is the Grey Heron – these large birds are expert hunters. They are very patient, standing still in waters for a long time waiting for prey to come close and have a large bill, or beak, to catch animals such as frogs.

Do you have pet frogs?

* Here at Froglife we want to see as many frogs as possible in ponds all across Scotland and the UK. We don’t keep any frogs or take them to events as we want them to be safe in their natural homes, such as a pond or somewhere on the land they can feel safe and get shelter from the weather and anything that might try to eat them.

How do you keep the ponds safe from other predators and dogs?

* Predators that may try to eat frogs around the pond – such as bird and mammals – are natural and it’s important to remember these animals need to find food too. However ensuring we have areas of long grass and plants all around the pond will give frogs, toads and newts leaving the pond a good chance to escape into cover and not run into predators. It’s even better if these areas of long grass and plants connect to other areas of the school grounds or garden where amphibians can take shelter such as a nearby log pile, a woodland or other areas with tall grass and plants.
* Dogs do cause problems for ponds if a lot of them run into ponds. This causes the pond to get very cloudy and plants that are trying to grow around the pond edges and in the pond often get trampled and can’t grow. If we have to put a pond in a place where a lot of dogs will run through them then the best way is to place a fence around the pond. Wildlife can still enter and exit the area and so can people too if we have a gate and allow some space around the pond.

What is a frog's average life span?

* See ‘how long do frogs live’ above for the answer

What happens if you don't add clean water in the pond?

* In Scotland we can rely on rainwater to fill and top-up our ponds in most years. This clean water is great for our ponds and wildlife. If we don’t have clean water in the pond then this will create a pond with bad water quality – this can affect animals such as frogs that would need to lay their eggs and spend time in the pond in the spring and summer and may force them to find another place or it may result in tadpoles and young frogs, toads and newts not being able to develop correctly.

Would the frogs climb out and why are some poisonous

* Yes all of our amphibians need to get out of the water eventually or they would drown – they need to breathe air on the land at some point (although they can breathe through their skin a little bit). Adult frogs would most likely spend the spring and part of summer in or around the pond when it’s time to lay eggs, however after this they would seek out areas of long grass and woodlands to find shelter and hunt for insects, which they mostly do on land. Tadpoles that develop into young frogs usually leave the pond in late summer and again will try to find shelter and food.
* We don’t have any poisonous frogs in the UK although our Common Toad does produce a toxin in their skin that makes them taste bad to some predators. Frogs in other parts of the world are poisonous so they are less likely to be hunted and eaten by other wildlife. Their bright and vibrant colours in other areas of the world are a warning sign to predators letting them know it would be a bad idea to eat them!

Can amphibians drown?

* Yes amphibians can drown if they can’t escape from a pond and get trapped. Tadpoles have ‘gills’ that allow them to breathe in the water – however when these tadpoles develop into froglets and juvenile frogs they lose these gills and develop lungs, so need to breathe air out of the water. That’s why it’s really important, no matter what kind of pond you have, to make sure it has gentle sloping edges to allow wildlife to enter and exit easily – or rocks for example in a mini-pond so there is a way to escape.

When is the best time of year to make a pond - winter or spring?

* This depends on how you are making a pond and also where. If you are creating a pond by hand, using spades, in an area that wildlife doesn’t already use then you can create a pond at any season of the year – just be careful to check for small animals if you are creating a pond in spring or summer. The best time to create a pond can be early autumn – your pond can fill with rainwater over the winter and start to attract wildlife and plants when spring comes round.

How big can toads grow?

* The male Common Toad can grow to around 8cm with females larger up to 13cm.

How do animals get into the pond?

* So long as the pond edges are not too steep then animals can enter a pond very easily! In terms of finding ponds, different animals have different ways of doing this. For example our Common Frog can smell the water when they are searching for a pond – though many do return to the same pond from which they first came from.

How many types of frogs are there?

* In the UK we have two species of native frog – the Common Frog and the Pool Frog, though the Pool Frog is only found in England.
* Worldwide there are over 8,000 species of frogs that we know about – but many frogs will live in areas of the world where we don’t know much about them and they may be quite hard to find and study.

How many babies can a frog have?

* Our Common Frog can lay up to 2000 eggs per year.

Is it bad to have algae in a pond?

* Some algae is ok to have in a pond, in fact tadpoles will use algae as food in the pond. However too much algae in the pond is not ideal – it will choke up the pond with less areas of open water available and can cause less oxygen to be in the pond when it starts to break down.

How do you remove algae from a pond?

* Removing algae from a pond can be difficult sometimes but the following steps can certainly help:
  + Stop the source of nutrients entering the pond – if you can stop nutrients entering the pond then the algae won’t be as widespread. Nutrients can come from nearby compost heaps, areas of a garden where nutrients are used for growing plants or near to farmland for example.
  + Soak up the nutrients – planting native plants in and around the pond will ‘use up’ these nutrients so they won’t all be used by spreading algae. You can also use bog gardens to soak up more nutrients before they enter a pond and then also have a great extra space for wildlife. For example if you do have a compost heap etc. on one side of the pond then creating a bog garden between the compost heap and pond would soak up a lot of these nutrients through the plants that would grow in the bog garden.
  + Use barley straw – barley straw manages to stop the growth of algae without affecting other plants
  + Remove by hand – this is difficult to do but can help along with the above using a stick or net. However be very careful when you do this – in spring or summer especially you will tend to find wildlife tangled up in the algae as you remove it which needs to live in the water – so this is better done in autumn with care.

Do frogs travel to different countries?

* No frogs will hopefully stay put in the country they are in. Some wildlife, possibly frogs, can accidentally be transported from one country to another by boats or planes. However wildlife from other countries can carry with them diseases which are very bad for the wildlife in the country they come to and this can be very dangerous.

Could you use a bin bag for a pond liner?

* Unfortunately no – bin liners could easily have small holes or tears in them and with just one of these the water would drain away. They would also break down over a short period of time and not lead to a long-lasting, happy pond. Pond liners are made of a stronger material which will hold water for many, many years if not damaged.

What should you do if you find a sick frog?

* Many frogs will unfortunately get sick, get a disease or simply be tired during spring when they are most active. The best thing to do is leave the frog where it is or move it to a nearby sheltered area so it will have chance to recover without being spotted by predators. Don’t move them too far or to a nearby pond as you may accidentally spread the disease over a large area and have bad effects on other frogs using the pond. If you find a frog with a disease you can report this to Garden Wildlife Health (<https://www.gardenwildlifehealth.org/gwh-database/>) where there is also lots more information on wildlife diseases.