

# **How Many Great Crested Newt Ponds Are There in Kent?**

Lee Brady

*Calumma Ecological Services, 13 Woodside, Dunkirk, Faversham, Kent ME13 9NY*

## **ABSTRACT**

The great crested newt is believed to be experiencing a national population decline greater than that of the other widespread amphibian species. In Kent the species remains relatively widespread, displaying a county distribution that appears to be dependent upon pond density. Surveying for newts is labour intensive and requires multiple pond visits to reliably confirm presence/likely absence. Assessment of newt populations using simple counts is problematic due to variation in detection rate between ponds and observers. Habitat proxies are increasingly being used to predict the likely presence of great crested newt. This study collected habitat proxy data using a published Habitat Suitability Index. Ponds were ranked based on apparent quality and surveyed to determine the relationship between predicted and actual presence.

*Key words:* great crested newt, habitat suitability index, Kent