

Frog Monitoring: 2018 Survey

In late March 2018 the cold weather didn't stop frogs from performing. Some of the spawn had been laid early in the month, some more recently, and spawning was still taking place at some ponds, or had yet to start at other ponds.

Spawning was in progress at Lower Hydes and there were large areas of spawn at the Fishpond, covering three main areas. There was no spawn at Gotfords, Great Hydes, Long Down and Richards.

Despite that, the total count from ponds where there was spawn was

- the highest since annual monitoring commenced in 1983;
- higher than the last peak in 2009;
- the fourth consecutive year of increase since a relative low in 2014.

The low in 2014 was in part due to the loss of much of the generation of spawn in 2012. There was a drought in 2011 and that extended, exceptionally into the winter and early spring of 2012, meaning that much of the 2012 spawn was laid in shallow water of ponds which dried-up before the spawn could hatch or reach froglet stages. Frogs reach maturity at 2-3 years. Ironically, the summer of 2012 was one of the wettest on historic record and there was flooding in some areas of Britain.

The increase since 1983 may be explained by pond restoration and some newly created ponds. This has greatly increased the pond habitat available. Work to improve the surrounds of ponds (including hedgerows, meadows, orchards and woodland / edge habitats) has provided additional habitat for frogs. Adult frogs spend most of their adult life away from ponds.

In 1983 there were few ponds and the total count of Frogspawn at Fryent Country Park was 40 (forty) clumps. In 2018, the total count is in excess of 2,800 clumps.

Information for this year's survey was provided by Barn Hill Conservation Group.

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