

# Smooth Newt

## Habitat Hero

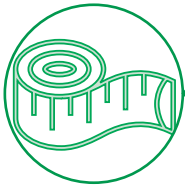


Common Name: Smooth or common newt  
 Irish Name: Earc Coiteann  
 Scientific Name: *Lissotriton vulgaris*

### Seen in Ireland:

Spring to Autumn

Although newts are in Ireland year-round, we generally do not see them during winter as they are hibernating.



An adult Smooth Newt can grow up to 10cm Long.



Newts are found throughout Ireland. They spend the first few months of their lives as tadpoles so will be found in ponds, lakes and other wetland areas. As adults they will spend time on land and in water. They can often be found in gardens, woodlands and meadows.

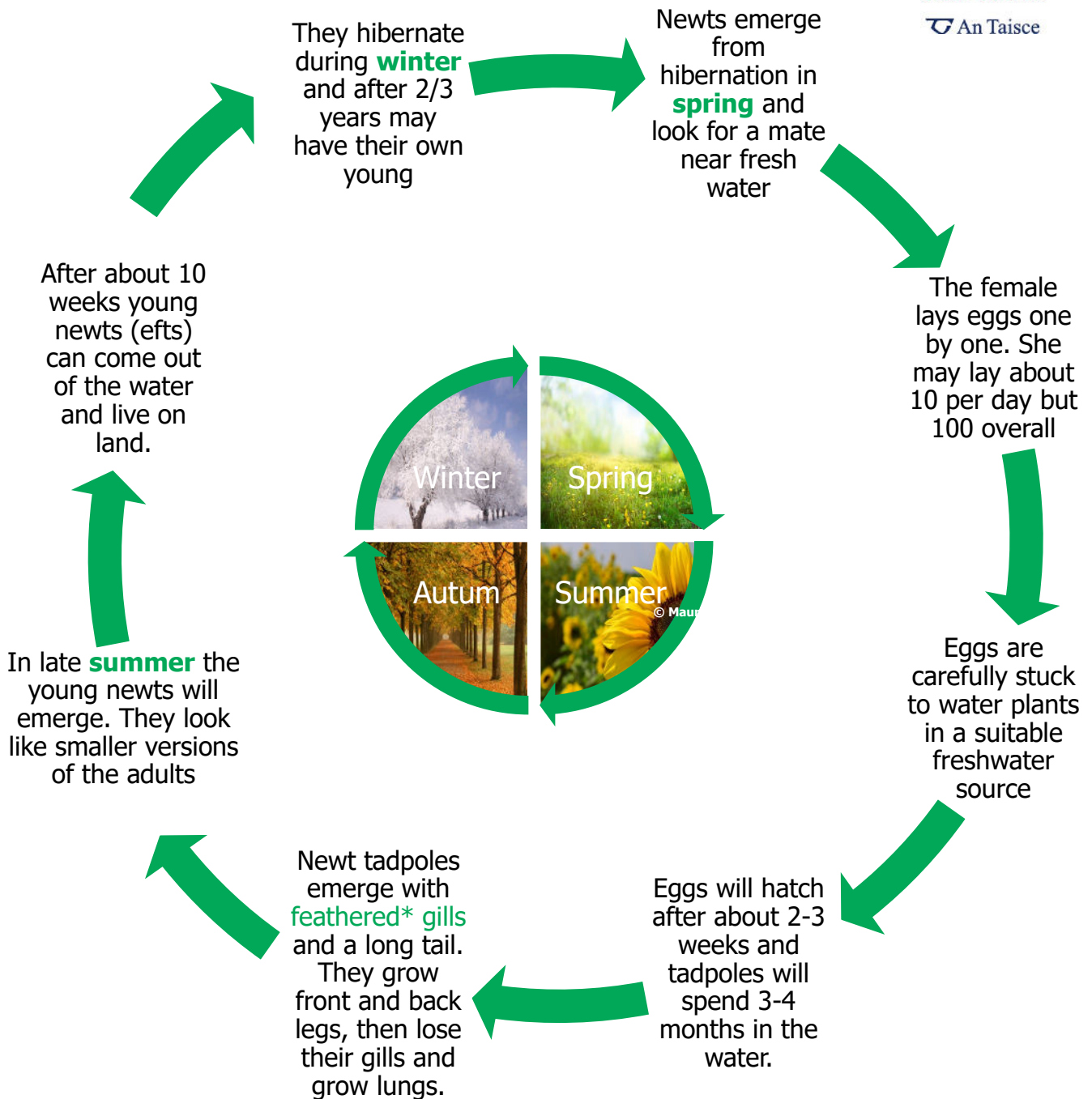


Newts have a varied diet depending on what stage of life they are in. As tadpoles they feed on water insects and tadpoles. As adults they feed on insects on land including caterpillars and worms.



The young adult newts are called 'efts' and they take 2-3 years to grow into full adults. In total newts can reach an age of between 6-14 years in the wild.

# Smooth Newt Life Cycle



\* Feathered gills are slightly unusual looking and can be mistaken for horns or antennae (which newts don't have). These gills have tiny hairlike structures which take in oxygen from the water

# Smooth Newt

## Some more Facts:

- Smooth newts are the only species of newt in Ireland.
- They are an **amphibian** and can sometimes be confused with lizards as they are a similar shape and size.
- The word **amphibian** comes from the Greek amphi, meaning “both,” and bios, meaning “life.” It describes cold-blooded animals with backbones that can live both in fresh water and on land.
- Adults grow up to 10cm.
- They are dark brown/green in colour with smooth, slimy skin and a long tail. They have a lighter, slightly spotted underside.
- During winter they may take shelter in log piles or crevices as they hibernate.
- Male newts will try to attract a female by doing a courtship dance!
- They become more colourful as they approach the breeding season, their underside becomes orange, and their spots get larger and more distinctive.
- They dance in a way to display these colours to impress the female!
- They have several predators. As tadpoles they can be eaten by fish or large water invertebrates.
- As adults they can be eaten by badgers, foxes and a variety of birds such as herons.
- The larger threat is the loss of suitable habitat.
- There has been a dramatic loss in Irish wetlands which make it difficult for newts to find suitable breeding grounds.
- Newts and other amphibians are more effected by the drop in temperature during winter than most other animals.
- This is because they are cold-blooded which means they cannot regulate their own body temperature. It is determined by the outside temperature.
- This leads to newts generally spending winter under log piles or in other sheltered areas.
- Newts rely on camouflage to stay safe from predators in water and on land. In water they are camouflaged on both sides. Their back and head is a darker colour to their underbelly which allows them to appear camouflaged to animals above and below them in water.

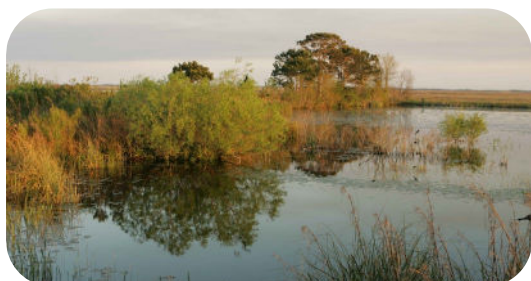


Photo: Steve Herring via Flickr.com