

Set 3: Newt Identification Cards - Egg & Larvae Phases

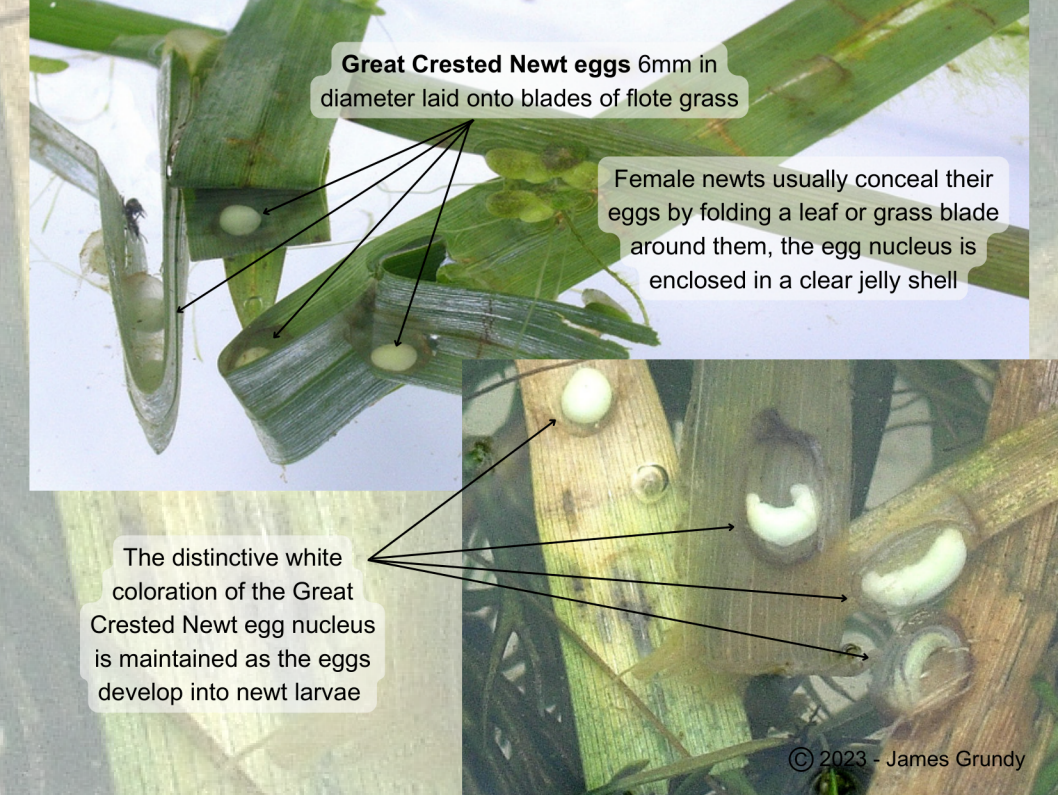
Smooth Newt eggs are 4mm in diameter, nucleus colour varies - normally grey/brown

Great Crested Newts eggs are 6mm in diameter and are a distinctive white colour

Palmate Newt eggs are 3mm in diameter and impossible to visually differentiate from smooth newt eggs

All 3 newt species may lay onto the same water plants, hide their eggs by folding a leaf or a grass blade around them and often share the same ponds

The females, of all 3 native newt species, begin laying their eggs in March. Eggs are laid onto a wide range of submerged water plants; often just below the waters surface at the pond margins. Egg laying peaks in April/May and ends in June



Great Crested Newt eggs 6mm in diameter laid onto blades of flote grass

Female newts usually conceal their eggs by folding a leaf or grass blade around them, the egg nucleus is enclosed in a clear jelly shell

The distinctive white coloration of the Great Crested Newt egg nucleus is maintained as the eggs develop into newt larvae

Smooth Newt eggs - 4mm in diameter laid onto flote grass

Smooth newt eggs are indistinguishable from Palmate newt eggs

The nucleus of all newt eggs is enclosed in a clear jelly shell

Developing Smooth newt eggs, variations in embryo colour can sometimes make it difficult to correctly, identify the species.

**Palmate newt
eggs** 3mm in
diameter laid
onto flote grass



Individual egg
colour varies
considerably

Palmate newt
eggs are
indistinguishable
from smooth newt
eggs



Because of the prolonged breeding season, it is normal to find
newt eggs (of all species) at various stages of development in
the pond at the same time

Great Crested Newt Larvae

The gold ring around the iris is unique to the Great Crested Newt larvae and aids identification

1 week old - 8mm in length, no legs, fully developed eyes, yellow/green body colour with dark stripes and easily injured

4 weeks old - 2cm in length, front legs, dark spots, starting to form. Larvae floats in open water.

8 weeks old - 5cm in length, front and rear legs developing. External gills clearly visible. Larvae thickset with flared tail

12 weeks old - 6cm in length the skin is much darker and is starting to become granular/warty. The external gills are slowly shrinking as they are absorbed, the larvae now look like the adults



Smooth Newt Larvae

1 week old - 5mm in length, eyes fully developed, dark stripes, brown body, colour, hard to see and easily injured

4 weeks old - 1cm in length, front legs/external gills are clearly visible



8 weeks old - 2cm in length, front and rear legs well developed, external gills clearly visible, larvae are still delicate/susceptible to injury

12 weeks old - 3cm in length, gills almost absorbed as larvae prepare to leave the pond. Wide variations in colour from light to brown and the skin leathery in texture/appearance

Smooth and Palmate larvae are difficult to tell apart

Palmate Newt Larvae



1 week old - 8mm in length, eyes fully developed, dark stripes, light brown body colour, hard to see and easily injured. Identical in appearance, to smooth newt larvae

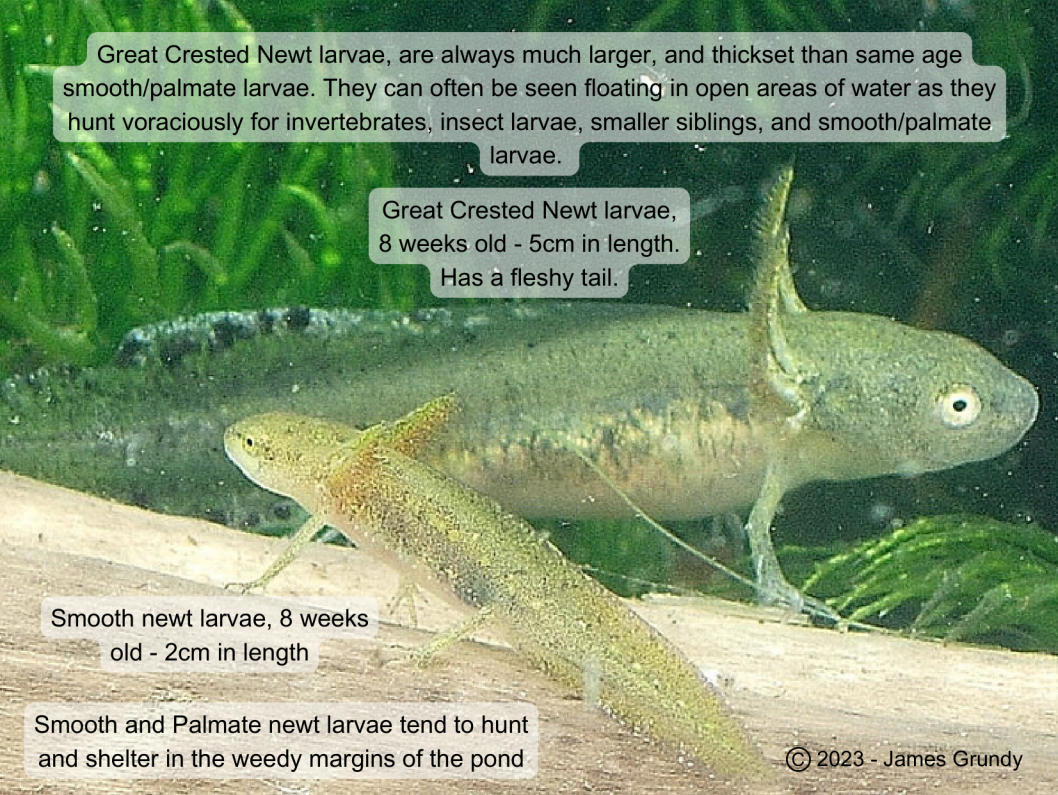


4 weeks old - 1cm in length, front legs/external gills are clearly visible

8 weeks old - 2cm in length, front, and rear legs well developed, external gills are clearly visible. Hides and feeds among pond weed



12 weeks old - 3cm in length, external gills shrinking in preparation for leaving the pond

The image shows two Great Crested Newt larvae in a pond. One larva is larger and positioned in the background, while the other is smaller and in the foreground. Both are resting on a piece of light-colored wood. The water is clear, and green aquatic plants are visible in the background. The larvae have a greenish-brown color with a distinct dark dorsal stripe and a prominent, fleshy tail.

Great Crested Newt larvae, are always much larger, and thickset than same age smooth/palmate larvae. They can often be seen floating in open areas of water as they hunt voraciously for invertebrates, insect larvae, smaller siblings, and smooth/palmate larvae.

Great Crested Newt larvae,
8 weeks old - 5cm in length.
Has a fleshy tail.

Smooth newt larvae, 8 weeks
old - 2cm in length

Smooth and Palmate newt larvae tend to hunt
and shelter in the weedy margins of the pond