

# P-R-E-S-S R-E-L-E-A-S-E



## Beep Beep! Toady upskills to steeplejack!

Seeing a “Toad on the Road” warning triangle whilst driving, may make you raise a smile, but it’s certainly no laughing matter for the adventurous amphibians. These highway signs have become a feature of our roads in recent years in an effort to prevent high-speed killings of our indigenous toads, frogs and newts during the peak times of migration.

Added to the mix of these head-on collisions: road salting, agrichemicals, pollution and habitat damage, and its easy to see why local amphibian populations are becoming imperilled.

But whilst motorists are alerted to the road crossing routes of the migration process, a far more deadly incarceration awaits these creatures in the form of the roadside drain. Gullypots (roadside drains) have long been a problem for amphibians and other animals as a source of entrapment and certain death.

The solution? Gullypot ladders!

An amusing notion perhaps – but extremely effective. Following a six-week trial of 38 gullypots in Scotland in 2014, successful escapes by drain-entrapped amphibians was almost 73%. In the trial jute covered metal strips with a semi-ellipsoidal curve at the top were placed just below the drain grating and had no adverse effect on drainage or maintenance



Now commercially produced, these escape ladders have an Enkamat® covering and a minimum 10 year life. Endorsed by the British Herpetological Society, all proceeds from the sale of the £15 product support further conservation work.

As migration time fast approaches – Local Councils and Highway Authorities are being implored to consider the installation of these small, clever devices in local hot-spots.

## **Notes to the Editor**

The British Herpetological Society is a registered charity established in 1947. Its Herpetological Journal is ranked as one of the leading scientific publications devoted to herpetology. The Society actively supports conservation of native British species, field studies and conservation management worldwide, scientific research, captive breeding programmes of reptile and amphibian species and exchanges knowledge and expertise both in the UK and around the world.

The trial referred to in the article was conducted by McInroy, C. & Rose, T. A. (2015) Trialling amphibian ladders within roadside gullypots in Angus, Scotland: 2014 impact study. Herpetological Bulletin 132, pp15-19.

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