



## Occurrence of an albino newt and albino Common toads (*Bufo bufo*) in the same garden pond.

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AS reported in the preceding paper (Pash *et al.*, 2007), one or more albino toads were present in a small garden pond in southern England in 2004 and 2005. In 2006, after that paper had been written and submitted, a probable albino newt, together with two albino common toads, were found in the same garden.

The newt had the same salmon-pink body colour as the albino toads (Figure 1; see also Figure 5 on page 10). Its eyes, however, were pink, like those of the toads. There were no black spots on the body, nor any yellow, orange, or blue stripes or other marks on the animal. The lack of any black spots in particular suggest that the newt was



**Figure 1.** An albino Common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and an albino Smooth newt (*Triturus vulgaris*) found in the same small garden pond in west London in April, 2006. Photograph © J. Spooner.

unable to synthesise the black pigment melanin, and strongly supports the assignment of albinism. As far as we are aware, there are no reports in the open literature of albino newts, and so it is not possible to compare the colouration of the one reported here with previous records.

We consider it most likely that the newt was a male Smooth (or Common) newt (*Triturus vulgaris*). The obvious, though not especially pronounced, crest along the upper body and tail (Figure 1 above and Figure 5 on page 10) suggest the newt was a sexually-maturing male. The lack of a fine filament on the end of the tail, and lack of palmated (webbed) rear feet, make it unlikely that the newt was a Palmate newt (*Triturus helveticus*). The newt was also possibly too large to be a Palmate newt. Further support for this identification comes from the fact that previously

only Smooth newts have been recorded in the pond (although palmate newts do occur in at least one pond locally).

The occurrence of albino newts seems to be extremely rare. Most albino newts and salamanders that have been reported have also been neotenuous (Beebee & Griffiths, 2000). However, the newt reported here was

obviously not neotenuous; there was absolutely no sign of external gills, for example.

The most interesting, and remarkable, fact is the co-occurrence of albino toads (now for 3 consecutive years) and an albino Smooth newt in the same pond (and a very small, urban one at that). This probably represents a unique situation, making it very tempting to conclude that a common environmental factor must have been responsible for inducing albinism in both species. However, if that reasoning is correct, the nature of the factor (perhaps chemical) is unknown currently.

## REFERENCES

- Beebee, T J. C. & Griffiths, R. A. (2000). Amphibians and Reptiles. London: Harper Collins.
- Pash, S., Spooner, J. & Sumpter, J. P. (2007). Albino common toads (*Bufo bufo*). *Herpetol. Bull.* **100**, 8–11.