

DAYTIME BREEDING MIGRATION IN TOADS (*BUFO BUFO*)

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It is well known that toads are mainly nocturnal and migrate to breeding sites mainly during the night. In a paper describing the diurnal activity of the Common Toad during a breeding migration Gittins (1983a), however, found that about 8% of males and 28% of females moved to the pond during daylight and suggested that darkness is not an essential requirement for migration to take place. The following account provides further evidence that this is so. Llysdyham Pond, Newbridge-on-wye, Powys, has been surrounded by a drift fence and pitfall traps since 1981, thus enabling the breeding migrations of toads into the pond to be quantified. In 1984, the breeding migration was delayed by cold weather in March, and did not get underway until 6th April. Following this, large captures were made until 12th April. The pitfall traps are normally emptied once daily, at 0900 hrs in the morning, but for two days during the heavy migration period, they were emptied additionally in the early evening (1800 hrs). This enabled the numbers of toads arriving at the pond during daytime to be counted and showed clearly that large numbers of both males and females migrated during full daylight (i.e. from 0900 to 1800). Over the two day period 181 toads migrated to the pond (about one fifth of the breeding population — Gittins 1983b) and of these 52% of males and 59% of females were caught in daytime. This is probably a very unusual situation and may in some way be related to the delayed breeding season in this particular year. It clearly demonstrates, however, that under certain circumstances, toads may abandon their usual nocturnal habit and become very active in daylight.

REFERENCES

- Gittins, S.P. (1983a). Diurnal activity of the Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) during the breeding migration to a pond in mid-Wales. *British Journal of Herpetology* 6: 292-294.
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