

Preface

By far the most effective way of conducting an amphibian survey would be to know from the start exactly what data you were going to generate and how you were going to use those data (having read every relevant publication and designed your survey protocols accordingly). Few of us, however, have that luxury for most of the time. The aim of this book is to set out the considerations and techniques needed for conducting amphibian surveys so that you will obtain data you can use. I have also used published amphibian survey studies as guiding examples and suggested further reading. With a little forethought, you can make your amphibian survey interesting, useful and effective in achieving its goals.

What is covered?

The *Amphibian Survey and Monitoring Handbook* is divided into three main chapters: covering *before*, *during* and *after* your survey. What questions do you need to ask before you start? How will you carry out the survey and what equipment will be needed? Having completed your survey, how will you arrange your data and what is the best way to tell everyone else what you've found out?

Having read this far you have probably started to ask some of these questions: good! Use the sections of this book to make checklists of the resources and techniques you will use throughout your survey. When planning any kind of study or survey project, I start with a long list of notes and things to do, some of which need to be ticked off near the start and others of which can be dealt with as the survey progresses. As you become familiar with surveying amphibians (or if you already have some experience), your lists become shorter as you acquire the skills and equipment required. Good planning (and some flexibility!) goes a long way towards making your amphibian survey successful.

As well as actual survey techniques, I have also included a section on *handling* amphibians. Believe it or not, I have in the past been asked to advise on ambitious and well-planned surveys of amphibians in remote parts of the world, by people who have never actually held a frog!

What is not covered?

This book does not cover species identification, though the different groups of amphibians are discussed in the first section. It is, however, very important to have a good idea of the range of species you are likely to encounter during your survey, so refer to one of the many excellent national and regional amphibian guides now available (see Chapter 5). Also, though I haven't covered in detail all possible studies involving amphibians, some of these are discussed in Chapter 4. A huge variety of investigations can be carried out, and perhaps your amphibian surveys will inspire you to look more deeply into the biology of these intriguing animals.

And finally...

Most of my amphibian research and surveying has been carried out in the British Isles, where I live and work, so I have drawn on these experiences to populate the chapters of this book. I have, however, tried to include examples and illustrations from different parts of the world to illustrate important points. Many thousands of people around the world now conduct amphibian surveys, whether out of personal interest or for professional or academic reasons, and find it a fascinating and rewarding activity. I very much hope that you do too.

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