

Revisiting the status of the toad (*Bufo bufo*) on Great Cumbrae Island

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Gibson (1976: 61) was emphatic: toads were completely absent from Great Cumbrae Island. Furthermore, McNerny & Minting (2016) show no post -2000 records of toads on the island. Recently, we received a Facebook posting (12 July 2017) from Millport resident Eddie Williams saying that he had found a toad under logs in his garden and furnished a photograph of same (which we have verified). Another resident Margaret Carson responded on-line that she also had seen a toad in her garden at Bute Terrace. Prompted by these records we sought further comments via social media and spoke to others on the island, particularly those who might have encountered toads as part of their usual outdoor occupations. Phil Lonsdale recounted on-line that toad spawn and tadpoles were “in their usual” sites in pools along the “Targets” (western coast) (see Fig. 1 for approximate locations). David Stevenson Sr. recounted that he had seen toads in the past among the footings of dry-stone walls around the golf course. Exactly how, and when, toads or toad spawn came to the island is open to conjecture but the species certainly seems well-established here now. William McIntyre (Breakough Farm), who informed me that he had seen toads on his farm, suggested that they may have been introduced – he thought perhaps twenty-or-so years ago – during re-stocking of rainbow trout in the reservoir at the golf course. They are, of course, common on the adjacent mainland. Although the Scottish Biodiversity List (2005) does not include common toads as a species of principal importance for conservation, Petrovan & Schmidt (2016) have provided evidence for long-term declines (since 1970) in this species both in the UK and Switzerland. New records, especially from an area previously thought not to include this species, are therefore very welcome.



Fig. 1. Outline map of Great Cumbrae Island showing localities mentioned in the text. Millport town represented by stippled area.

REFERENCES

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