

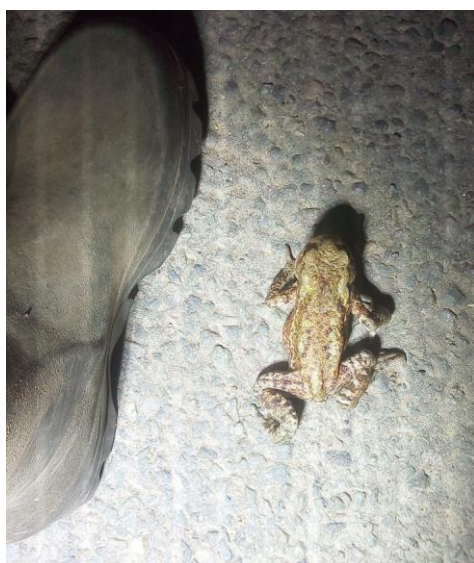
A TOAD RESCUE STORY

Toad patrol can be disheartening work. We see a lot of sadness.

Quiet nights can sometimes be worse than busy nights. On a busy night the number of rescues far outweighs the number of losses. But on a quiet night it may seem as though all efforts are in vain when there are only a handful of rescues amidst as many casualties.

It had been one such night. Or, rather, it felt as though there had been several such nights in a row. It was already late and I did not expect any more amphibians, when I spotted a female toad crossing the road towards the farm on Farley Heath Road.

The female was big, not exceptionally large but of a good size. The photograph shows the toad next to a size 40 cm boot as a comparison.



The toad looked thin. It was obvious that she must have spawned in the pond.

Subsequently to spawning the female toad had undertaken the arduous task of walking back to her terrestrial habitat. She had covered quite some distance, at least 680m, to get to where she was. She would not have spent the entire journey on the road but probably travelled along the vegetation on either side and crossed the road occasionally.

It was marvellous. To think that the toad had made the long and dangerous journey along a busy road and arrived at her safe haven unscathed!

She had received a little help at the end of her trek to move her off the perilous road. Who knows, perhaps she had also received the occasional assistance from caring helping hands, all along her way!

It was a wonderful experience to observe this animal, who relies on nothing but its delicate bare hands and feet for walking, to have successfully completed the long hike of the spring migration not only once, but possibly twice.

Every now and then when things appear to be overwhelming there occur precious little moments of light, special moments that lift the spirits and provide the strength to carry on.

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