

**Matthew Armes | Birmingham Project Officer and Treasurer**

**Birmingham and Black Country Amphibian and Reptile Group**

14<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Pond near WV Active Aldersley** - No amphibians seen after a quick torch of the pond, but there may be amphibians using it that we just didn't come across. For management, it would be good to remove enclosing vegetation and open up the edges, particularly on the south side. Desilting and deepening about half of the pond would also help it retain water.

**Old Nursery pond** - We saw 15 male GCN and 9 smooth newts (4 male and 5 female), so this is definitely an important pond on the reserve. The pond itself looks in good shape, so I would suggest that digging at another pond in the damp area nearby could be beneficial. This would then give any newts the chance to disperse further north. For the surrounding terrestrial habitat, maintaining a varied grassland with tussocks will help, particularly in summer and while newts are moving across the land. This can be cut every 1-2 years as required, preferably by hand to reduce injury to wildlife if possible, and in a rotation so every year some mature grassland remains.

**Willow pond** - A single male GCN and smooth newt were seen here, with some common frog tadpoles. One reason for the low numbers may be the reduced visibility due to the vegetation. Removing some of the willows to the south could be beneficial, along with hand removing some of the floating vegetation, to allow more light in.

**New ponds** - The new ponds have a significant level of disturbance so it would be good to prevent dogs from entering the ponds, possibly via fencing or hedge-laying. Once the ponds have a chance to settle down, that should hopefully give the aquatic vegetation time to develop and attract amphibians.

**Boardwalk pond** - We had 2 male and 3 female smooth newts from this pond. Removing some of the rushes would open up some areas for the newts and other amphibians to use, this can be just 2 metres from the boardwalk edges. That way the wider area of rushes are left, while also providing some openings for amphibians.