

Have you seen any unusual frog mortalities?

Symptoms of Ranavirus disease



More than 20 years ago members of the public began to report unusual frog mortalities in their garden ponds in increasing numbers. The Frog Mortality Project was set up to collate such reports and an investigation into the cause of death uncovered a virus (Ranavirus).

The disease is responsible for tens of thousands of common frog mortalities in Britain each year but infections of toads and newts are known too. Two overlapping disease syndromes have been described and the following symptoms are common:

- Redness of the skin (see photo 1)
- Abnormal wasting (emaciation; see photo 2)
- Ulcers/sores (see photos 2 & 3)
- Bleeding (particularly from mouth & anus due to internal haemorrhaging)
- Breakdown of limbs (see photo 4 for severe case)

It should also be noted that infected frogs might seem normal and that any mortality event involving multiple amphibians should be considered suspicious.

The spread of this disease is the subject of ongoing research and any unusual amphibian mortalities can be reported by filling out a quick online questionnaire at <http://www.froglife.org/Disease/>.

A researcher from the Institute of Zoology is also available to collect amphibian carcasses. For advice and arrangements, please email stephen.price@qmul.ac.uk or call 07932 509596.