The green toad (*Bufo viridis*)

The green toad is a stocky, about 10-cm-long amphibian. It is usually light grey, with conspicuous dark green mottles and red dots between them. When alarmed, a green toad expels a poisonous secretion that may cause an inflammation in a wound or eye.
Similarly to the natterjack toad, the green toad is a predominantly crepuscular and nocturnal animal, which usually spends the day sheltering under house basement or under rocks, emerging to forage only in the twilight of night. In spring during the breeding time (late April and early May) one can hear the gentle twittering call of males but it is very easily confused with that of the mole cricket.
The green toad has much wider distribution range than the natterjack toad, occurring from northern Africa to central Asia. It inhabits the largest variety of habitats than any other amphibian of the Palearctic and occurs often in anthropogenic landscapes (villages, fields, gardens, parks etc.). The green toad can breed both in fresh and saline waters, being one of the most salt tolerant amphibian species in Europe. However, the green toad is still rather threatened species in many European countries, especially in the north of its distribution area. This is also the reason why the species is listed in the Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive.
Like the natterjack toad, the green toad is adapted to open landscapes. On the coastal areas of the Baltic Sea it prefers to occur on managed coastal meadows, breeding often in shallow brackish lagoons, pasture-puddles and cattle watering ponds. In contrast to the natterjack toad, which breeds in temporary ponds, green toad requires slightly deeper water bodies (with depth ca 0.5 m).
During the 20th century the green toad has witnessed a steady decline in its numbers in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Estonia, having by now reached a point where this amphibian species has disappeared from many parts of its distribution area. Destruction of meadows, drying of wetlands, urbanization and recreation has probably been the main causes for such a rapid decline. On coastal meadows the ceased management (grazing and mowing) causes the overgrowing of relatively shallow water bodies, which leads to the decline of the breeding success causing the extinction of the species in a long term.
To stop the decline of the green toad's still existing coastal meadow populations, and re-establish the populations in the areas where the species has disappeared, a large-scale habitat management and restoration will take place during the LIFE project. In order to improve the breeding conditions of the toad, a great number of coastal meadow ponds and lagoon margins will be restored and cleaned from tall vegetation. Also the cattle grazing will be initiated in many coastal meadows, creating suitable terrestrial habitats for the green toad. As the green toad has a very good migration abilities, it can migrate long distances, up to 2-5 km. Therefore the natural colonisations can take place from neighbouring populations to the restored areas and new breeding ponds, especially along the Danish coast and islands, where several vital green toad populations are still present due to long-term active protection measures. In the other sites the re-introduction of the green toad should be done by project experts, because the species has disappeared from the large areas of its previous distribution range and natural colonisation is not possible.

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