

Pond Creation and Restoration for Wildlife

This is an old version of the page

Date published: 31 January, 2025

Date superseded: 14 November, 2025

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

Aim

The aim of this item is to benefit a range of wildlife by either creating new ponds or restoring existing ponds.

Ponds are particularly valuable for a mixture of aquatic invertebrates, wetland plants and amphibians, including great crested newt.

Clean water is essential for wildlife ponds and the best ponds are those that are filled from surface water coming from low intensity grassland or woodland, or those that are filled from groundwater.

To help prevent the spread of invasive plants, new ponds should be allowed to regenerate naturally.

In many instances, pond restoration is more beneficial to wildlife than creating a new pond.

Eligibility

All land is eligible for this item.

For pond restoration, if the pond is known not to support great crested newt then restoration is best carried out in late summer or autumn. However, if great crested newt are known to use the pond then work must be carried out in winter, unless a licence is sought from NatureScot.

Application requirements

You must identify on a map the location of the proposed wildlife pond or the pond(s) to be restored.

You must submit approval from NatureScot or Scottish Environment Protection Agency if required for the proposed work.

For Pond restoration only you must submit a plan with your application detailing work to be carried out to existing ponds, which should have a clear map of the area and photographs of the site prior to work.

Requirements

For both pond creation and pond restoration:

- the pond must hold water during the winter and spring, or longer
- to prevent the spread of invasive species, you must not stock the pond with plants. Your pond will naturally vegetate
- if your proposed pond is on a designated site, you must have NatureScot approval
- if your pond is connected to a river, stream, ditch, wetland, estuary or loch, you must have Scottish Environment Protection Agency approval
- you must not use the pond for abstraction
- you must maintain a diary

For pond restoration only:

- you must submit a plan with your application detailing work to be carried out to existing ponds, which should have a clear map of the area and photographs of the site prior to work
- keep photographic evidence of the restoration phase, to include, for example, the removal of silt, excessive aquatic vegetation and any pond re-profiling work (to provide gently sloping margins) carried out

Claim requirements

- you must obtain planning permission, or have confirmation that planning permission is not required for your proposed pond

Payment

You can claim £4.50 per square metre of pond.

Inspections

The inspectors will check for both pond creation and pond restoration:

- the location and extent of the work
- the pond must hold water during the winter and spring, or longer
- you have not stocked the pond with plants (preventing the spread of invasive species)
- you have not used the pond for abstraction
- you have maintained a diary

The inspectors will check for pond restoration only:

- you have submitted and followed your plan detailing work to be carried out to existing ponds
- you have kept photographic evidence of the restoration phase, to include, for example, the removal of silt, excessive aquatic vegetation and any pond re-profiling work (to provide gently sloping margins) carried out

Additional guidance

[Supporting guidance is available for this item.](#)

Recent changes

| Section | Change |
|------------|---|
| Note | Deletion of text 'Pond creation and restoration for wildlife currently suspended for new applications' |
| Payment | Removed text - note: Pond creation and restoration is restricted to 2000 square metres per application with no single pond greater than 600 square metres (Please refer to detail in supporting guidance) |
| Whole page | References to Scottish Natural Heritage change to NatureScot |

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printer-friendly version of this guidance that you can save or print out.