

Worldwide, amphibians, including newts, are among the most threatened and poorly understood animal classes.

Danube Crested Newt has a very peculiar lifecycle and requires diverse landscapes with different types of water bodies and nearby terrestrial habitats, connected by migration corridors (hedge structures, shrub borders), as well as frost-proof winter quarters, essential for survival.

How to protect the Danube Crested Newts?

The main threat for Danube Crested Newts and other amphibians is habitat loss and fragmentation.

They can be caused by climate change, but also human activity: water regulatory measures, construction, draining of valuable wetlands, introduction of fish and intensification of agriculture all cause loss of small water bodies, habitat mosaics and diversity.



The species only inhabits the Danube River Basin, National Park Neusiedler See, Austria and the March-Thaya Floodlands. It is globally threatened (IUCN: Near Threatened), and its populations are mostly decreasing and its habitats are quickly deteriorating across its range from Central Europe to the west of Black Sea.

Let us protect the endangered Water Dragon of the Danube!

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The Central European Initiative (CEI) is a regional intergovernmental forum established in 1989, following the fall of the Berlin wall. It gathers 17 Member States in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe united by a central mission: working towards European integration and sustainable development through regional cooperation.

More info: www.cei.int

DANUBEPARKS is a Network of Protected Areas from 9 Danube countries working together to:

- ensure the integrity of the river ecosystems and develop the Danube River as a bio-corridor;
- implement practical river restoration activities;
- improve the protected area management practices;
- raise awareness among the general public and decision-makers about the protection of the Danube River.

More info: www.danubeparks.org

The Central European Initiative (CEI) supported the establishment of the **DANUBEPARKS Newt Conservation Partnership**. It was initiated by Public Institution Kopački rit Nature Park, Croatia and the DANUBEPARKS Association as a Danube-wide cooperation to protect Danube Crested Newt and restore and preserve its terrestrial and water habitats.

From mid-February our males become magnificent acrobats who perform an impressive underwater mating dance in the dark.
Have you seen us?

Contact information:

Dr. Vlatko Rožac
Public Institution Nature Park Kopački rit
vlatko.rozac@pp-kopacki-rit.hr

Photos: Grotensohn, Riegler, Hill&Klepsch



Danube Crested Newt: the endangered Water Dragon of the Danube!



DANUBEPARKS
network of protected areas

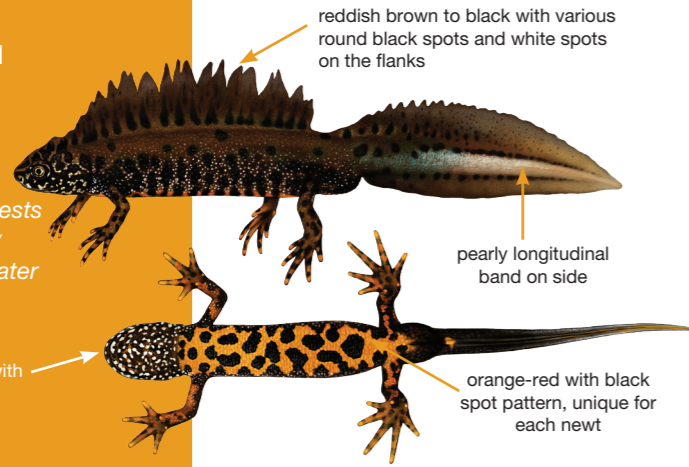


What does the Danube Crested Newt look like?

Danube Crested Newt *Triturus dobrogicus*

Note:
Only males have crests but they are barely visible out of the water

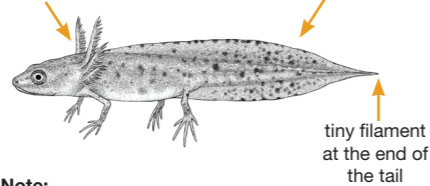
dark throat with dark with large white spots.



This is how Newt larvae look like:

outer gills regress only after three to four months, at the end of metamorphosis

large spots in the tail fringe and the filament at the tail end



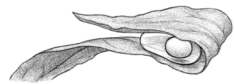
Note:
species cannot be distinguished at this stage

Food: aquatic insects, leeches, water fleas and aquatic snails, earthworms, isopods, small snails and insects and their larvae

Natural predators: fish, birds, snakes, predatory mammals and during juvenile development also aquatic insects and their larvae

Activity: evenings- and night active

This is how a Newt egg looks like:



Newts really look like little water dragons!

Body size:
adults up to 15 cm long

reddish brown to black with various round black spots and white spots on the flanks

pearly longitudinal band on side

orange-red with black spot pattern, unique for each newt

The small water dragons are regarded as “umbrella species” and indicators of well-functioning, water-rich amphibian-friendly pond landscapes, preserved river dynamics and intact natural processes.



Other newt species:

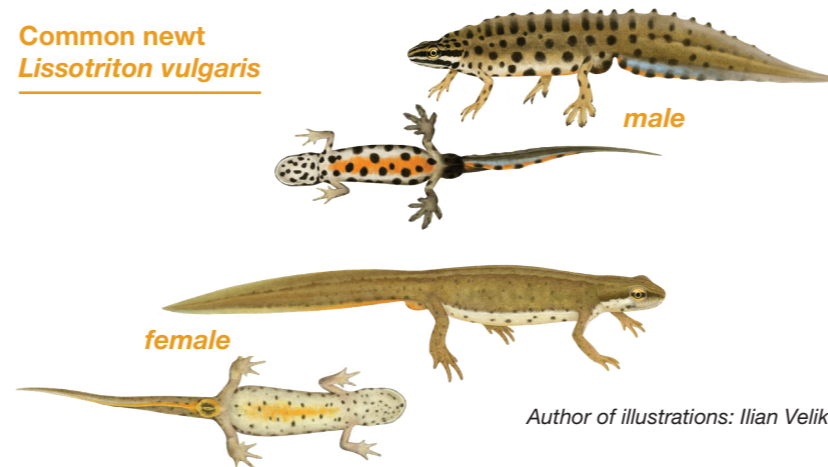
There are many different species of newts found in Europe and the Danube floodplains.

Among them is the Crested Newt complex, which is a group of closely related species that are likely to interbreed where their ranges meet.

Species can look so similar that sometimes only genetic analysis can determine what they are!

The species below is NOT considered a Crested Newt:

Common newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*



Author of illustrations: Ilian Velikov

Italian Crested Newt *Triturus carnifex*



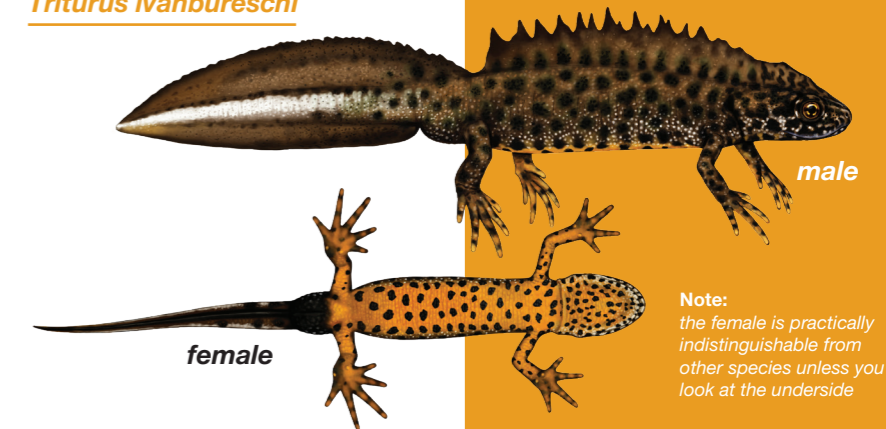
Note:
the near absence of white mottling on the side of the body and the more yellow/orange cloaca in males, which distinguishes this species from other Triturus spp.

Northern Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*



dark throat with small white spots

Balkan Crested Newt *Triturus ivanbureschi*



Note:
the female is practically indistinguishable from other species unless you look at the underside