

GCN eDNA Frequently Asked Questions

Why do you separate the cost of the kit and the analysis?

We have found over the years that on average 88% of kits come back to us. Kits don't come back to us for several reasons such as ponds being dried up. However, if this happens to you, then it will have only cost you the price of the kit at cost at £20.00 plus vat and the analysis is not charged.

How much does a GCN eDNA pond sampling kit cost?

- Each kit is priced at £20.00 +VAT
- Free delivery. If ordered before 13:00, kits will arrive the following working day.

How much does the analysis cost?

Once you have purchased your kit(s) and collected your samples you can send them back to the lab for analysis which is available at three different turnaround times:

- Super-Fast Track for a 1 working day turnaround: £320.00 +VAT
- Fast Track for a 3 working day turnaround: £220.00 +VAT
- Standard for a 10 working day turnaround: £120.00 +VAT

We will send through the results as soon as they come available. Unlike other laboratories there is no need to pre-book analysis slots ahead of time. Simply send the kits back whenever you're ready and we will guarantee to complete the analysis by requested turnaround deadline.

When can I collect a sample?

Natural England has defined the GCN eDNA sample collection period to coincide with great crested newt breeding and will accept samples collected between the dates on 15th April to 30th June. Samples may be taken outside of this time, provided GCN activity is noted in the area. Dates outside of this can sometimes be accepted on a case by case basis with prior Natural England approval.

How many kits do I need per pond?

One kit is required for one pond up to approximately 1 hectare (2.5 acre). For ponds larger than this it is recommended to collect one kit per hectare. Generally, the most accepted way of collecting samples for a large pond of say 4 acres, is that two kits be used, one to collect 20 sub-samples around one half of the pond and the other kit to collect 20 sub-samples around the other half of the pond. These kits are analysed separately (and therefore charged at two kits and two analyses) as to not dilute the sample and give best chance to detect GCN DNA.

How do I collect a sample?

Samples should be collected following the technical advice note WC1067 as approved by Natural England. We provide a replicated version of this protocol in each sampling kit, with all of the details required to collect a viable sample. It is important to avoid collecting sediment, plant matter and algae when sampling, as these can interfere with the analysis. Inhibitors may be more concentrated within sediment, leading to inaccurate results.

How long can I keep the kit before (and after) sampling, is there an expiry date?



Our kits are designed to have an expiry date with a minimum of three months from manufacture, if kept in ambient or chilled conditions. For 2019, our kits will have a minimum expiry of the 30th June 2019 (the last date of the season). After sampling, kits can be kept for 4 weeks in the refrigerator or 2 weeks at ambient conditions. For best results, please try to sample and send samples back as soon as possible.

How do I return my kits to the laboratory?

Please send completed kits back to our Laboratory by courier at:

SureScreen Scientifics Ltd, Morley Retreat, Church Lane, Morley, Derbyshire, DE7 6DE.

We also accept hand-delivered kits between 07.30 and 16.30 Monday to Friday, and by appointment 24/7. For a collection charge of £40 per batch we can arrange sample collection from you with our preferred courier, APC. However, it may be logistically or financially beneficial to arrange the return courier service yourself.

How do I dispose of my unused kits?

Kit components can be disposed of or recycled according to your locally available recycling facilities. Sample preservative solution can be disposed of by pouring down the sink with copious amounts of water. If you would prefer, you can return kits to us for correct disposal.

Are you part of the GCN eDNA proficiency testing scheme?

SureScreen participate in the proficiency testing, have done since its birth in 2017 and were actively involved in setting the scheme up. Our results will be accepted by Natural England this season.

Where can I find my results?

Once your results are available they will be sent to the email address provided on the sample collection form before the deadline. If you have not received your results before this date make sure that you checked your spam or junk email folder.

How do I interpret the results?

A positive result is indicative of GCN presence at the time of sampling or within the 3-4 weeks (GCN eDNA degrades to below detectable levels between 7-21 days). A negative result suggests that there are no great crested newts within the sample area. Inconclusive results are rare, however, indicates that although GCN DNA has not been detected there may be some underlying degradation or inhibition which could be affecting the interpretation of results. This could be due to sediment, algae or plant matter within the sample, or an unusually high concentration of inhibitory molecules within the pond water. For inconclusive results it is recommended that analysis is repeated with a fresh sample from the site in question.

Can I send you another company's kit to analyse?

We are unable to analyse kits manufactured by other eDNA service providers as we would not be able to detect their DNA spike to check for degradation.

Additional questions: Please email edna@surescreen.com

