



L I Z A R D

Landscape Design and Ecology

REPTILE SURVEY REPORT

**Land Near Nyton Stables, Nyton Road,
Aldingbourne**

On behalf of: Mr A. Baker

Client:	Mr A. Baker			
Project:	Land Near Nyton Stables, Nyton Road, Aldingbourne			
Reference:	LLD3087-ECO-REP-003-00-Reptile			
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Validity:

This report is valid for 18 months from the date of the site visit. If works have not commenced by this date, an updated site visit should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist to assess any changes in the habitats present on site, and to inform a review of the conclusions and recommendations made.



The Old Bank, 34 South Street, Tarring, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 7LH

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The Old Brook, 34 South Street, Tadling, Wokingham, West Sussex, RG11 4 7JH

SUMMARY

Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Mr A. Baker to complete a reptile presence / likely absence survey and population assessment of Land Near Nyton Stables, Nyton Road, Aldingbourne (*Grid Reference: SU 92347 06513 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).

30 no. artificial reptile refugia (*roofing felt; 1.0 x 0.50 m*) were laid out around the boundaries of the site on the 12th of April 2024. Mats were distributed throughout the site within all areas of suitable reptile habitat. Refugia were allowed to bed-in for 18 days prior to survey visits being undertaken between 30th April and 29th of May 2024.

No reptiles were recorded anywhere on site during the survey period. The results suggest that the proposed works would accord with the protection afforded reptiles under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In the highly unlikely scenario that any reptiles are found on site during clearance or construction, all works should cease while a suitably qualified ecologist is contacted for advice.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Mr A. Baker to complete a reptile presence / absence and population assessment of Land Near Nyton Stables, Nyton Road, Aldingbourne (*Central Grid Reference: SU 92347 06513 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).
- 1.2 The site was subject to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in November 2023. The site was found to contain tall ruderal and scrub vegetation around the boundaries which was suitable for supporting reptiles. As this habitat shall require removal to facilitate the proposals a full reptile survey was recommended to ascertain the presence or likely absence of reptiles on site.
- 1.3 This report has been compiled in accordance with current guidelines, including British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and Development, 2013 and CIEEM, 2017 and 2018.

Site Information

- 1.4 The site measures c. 1.4hectares (ha) and is located in Aldingbourne, West Sussex. To the northern boundary is the B2233, Nyton Road, the western boundary is bordered by fields and the southern and eastern boundaries are bordered by a settled traveller site. The main body of the site consisted of modified grassland. The boundary vegetation consisted of ruderal vegetation and scrub along the majority of the boundaries. The northern boundary and northern half of the western boundary consisted of ruderal vegetation on bunded hardcore piles.

Surrounding Landscape

- 1.5 The surrounding landscape consists primarily of rural villages. The city of Chichester is located c. 3.1 miles (m) to the west. The A27 runs on a west east axis, c. 390 meters to the north of the site.
- 1.6 The surrounding landscape is suitable for common UK reptile species, however no suitable habitat for sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* or smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* exists in the vicinity.

Development Proposals

- 1.7 It is understood that the proposals are for 2 residential plots.

Scope of the Survey

- 1.8 The aim of the updated reptile survey has been to:
- Determine whether reptiles exist on site;
 - Provide an assessment of the distribution and population of reptiles within the site, if present; and
 - Provide a mitigation strategy to ensure reckless killing / injury of reptiles is avoided, such that works would comply with *The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)* and net gains for reptiles are achieved.

2.0 LEGISLATION

- 2.1 All species of UK reptile are listed under Schedule 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Reptiles are afforded protection under section 9(1) and section 9(5) against intentional killing or injuring, offering for sale, transport for sale or advertisement of any live or dead reptile. All UK reptile species are also recognised as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, meaning that local authorities must take into account the conservation of reptiles when assessing a planning application.
- 2.2 Smooth Snake and Sand Lizard receive additional protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) which makes it an offence to kill, injure, capture or disturb them; damage or destroy their habitat; or to possess or trade in them.

Licensing

- 2.3 If a site is found to support Smooth Snake or Sand Lizard and disturbance or removal or habitat is unavoidable, a licence will be required from Natural England to allow work to proceed.

- 2.4 A licence must show that there is no satisfactory alternative to the works proposed, and that they are for reasons of health and safety or overriding reasons of public interest. Licenses are only issued once planning permission has been granted.
- 2.5 There is no formal licensing requirement for sites which support only common UK reptile species (slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, adder *Vipera berus* or grass snake *Natrix helvetica*).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Field Survey

- 3.1.1 30 no. artificial reptile refugia (*roofing felt; 1.0 x 0.50 m*) were laid out around the site boundary on the 12th of April 2024. Mats were distributed throughout the site. Refugia were allowed to bed-in for 18 days prior to survey visits beginning on the 30th April 2024. The locations of artificial reptile refugia are detailed within *Figure No. 01*.



Figure No. 01 – Location of Reptile Refugia

- 3.1.2 07 no. site visits were conducted, where the number, species, age and sex of any reptile present were recorded. Debris piles on-site considered suitable as reptile refugia were checked during the surveys, and repeated walkovers of the site were used to search for active reptiles.
- 3.1.3 Surveys were undertaken during recommended times (08:00–11:00 and 16:00–18:30) with suitable weather conditions for surveying reptiles wherever possible (*guidelines recommend temperatures 9–18°C*) with due regard to professional judgement and best practice guidance (Froglife, 1999).

Table No. 01 – Weather Conditions during Surveys

Survey	Date of Visit	Time	Temp (°C)	Weather Conditions
1	30/04/24	10:10	14	Dry, WF2, 0% cloud
2	08/05/24	09:15	12	Dry, WF1, 30% cloud
3	10/05/24	16:30	17	Dry, WF1, 0% cloud
4	15/05/24	10:00	15	Dry, WF2, 0% cloud
5	20/05/24	16:00	17	Dry, WF1, 0% cloud
6	23/05/24	10:00	17	Dry, WF1, 0% cloud
7	29/05/24	10:15	16	Dry, WF3, 25% cloud

3.2 Population Assessment

- 3.2.1 Where found, reptile populations were assessed in accordance with population level criteria as stated for the Key Reptile Site Register (*Froglife, 1999*). This system classifies populations of individual reptile species into three population categories assessing the importance of the population. These categories are based on the total number of adult animals observed during individual survey occasions and based upon a survey density of 10/Ha.

Table No. 02 – Population Size Assessment

Species	Low Population	Good Population	Exceptional Population
Slow Worm	<5	5-20	>20
Common Lizard	<5	5-20	>20
Grass Snake	<5	5-10	>10
Adder	<5	5-10	>10

3.3 Details of Surveyors

3.3.1 The reptile survey was undertaken by the following ecologists, all of which have extensive experience undertaking both reptile surveys and reptile translocation:

- Hayley Swann – Consultant Ecologist, 3 years' experience.
- Sam Hall - Consultant Ecologist, 3 years' experience.
- Max Day – Assistant Ecologist, 2 years' experience.

3.4 Constraints and Limitations

3.4.1 No constraints were identified during the survey; all surveys were completed in suitable weather conditions at an optimal time of year.

4.0 RESULTS

Desk Study

4.1 Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) returned a minimum of 3 records for common and widespread reptiles such as grass snake, slow worm and common lizard.

Field Survey

4.2 No reptiles of any species, nor any signs of their presence such as sloughs, were identified on site during the surveys.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Reptiles were found to be likely absent on site, therefore no specific mitigation with regards this species group is required.
- 5.2 Should any reptile species be found on site during site clearance or construction all works should cease while a suitably qualified ecologist is contacted for advice.

6.0 REFERENCES

Froglife (1999) *Reptile Survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife Advice Sheet 10*. Froglife: Halesworth

Herpetofauna Groups Of Britain And Ireland (1998) *Evaluating local mitigation/translocation programmes: Maintaining Best Practice and lawful standards*. HGBI advisory notes for Amphibian and Reptile Groups (ARGs). HGBI, c/o Froglife: Halesworth.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (1998) *Herpetofauna Worker's Manual* (Gent, T. and Gibson, S. eds) JNCC: Peterborough