

Reptile Surveys

Land to the north of Water Lane,
Angmering

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Contents

1.0	BACKGROUND	3
	RELEVANT LEGISLATION.....	4
2.0	REPTILE SURVEY METHODOLOGY.....	4
3.0	RESULTS	6
4.0	DISCUSSION AND MITIGATION	7
5.0	CONCLUSIONS	9

LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living creatures are capable of migration and whilst protected species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

The views and opinions contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Rydon Homes and Gleeson Strategic Land Limited to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal, at land north of Water Lane, Angmering, West Sussex. As a result of the PEA field margins and some areas of ruderal vegetation were considered to have potential to support common reptiles. As such further surveys were recommended for these species.

1.2 The site is located on land to the north of Water Lane on the eastern edge of Angmering in West Sussex. The site adjacent to the border of the South Downs National Park and adjacent to the border of ancient woodland along the eastern site boundary. Low-density residential dwellings, major A-roads and agricultural fields are present within the surroundings. There are no other designated sites within 5km of the site. The approximate red line and survey boundary of the site is shown below in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Approximate location of the red line boundary

- 1.3 This report presents the results of The Ecology Partnership's survey in and around the site, which aimed specifically to determine the presence or likely absence of reptiles on the site. A suitable mitigation strategy has also been recommended.

Relevant Legislation

- 1.4 All species of reptile are protected through Sections 9(1) and 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure any reptile

- 1.5 The UK Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that those species as being identified of principle importance (including all native species of reptile) should be protected from the adverse effects of development through the planning system. Reptiles are therefore deemed a material consideration within the planning process, and their conservation requirements should be promoted through the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity designs within development proposals.

2.0 Reptile Survey Methodology

- 2.1 A terrestrial survey of the site for reptiles (presence or likely absence) was carried out at the site between the dates of 10th and 30th September 2015 inclusive. Prior to the commencement of the survey, the site was set up with artificial refugia (roofing-felt mats) for reptiles on 7th August 2015.
- 2.2 Refugia were placed around the site (in rough grassland or at the edges of scrub patches) and across the centre of the site and were left undisturbed for a 10-day period of bedding-in prior to the reptile survey (as recommended in the guidance from Natural England).

- 2.3 The timing and number of survey visits completed were based on guidelines produced by Froglife (1999) and Gent and Gibson (1998). A total of seven survey visits were made to the site to check the refugia for the presence of reptiles and to carry out a visual transect. Visits were only carried out if the weather conditions were suitable for locating reptiles and took place at a variety of times of day (some in the morning and some in the afternoon/evening so that different mats would be exposed to the sun), in order to maximise the probability of finding reptiles if they were present. On each visit to the site, a minimum of one circuit to check all refugia was carried out.
- 2.4 Note that whilst checking the artificial refugia a visual check was also carried out of natural basking sites and refugia on the site. Other pre-existing refugia were also searched for evidence of reptiles, whilst the route chosen in moving between the artificial refugia allowed a thorough visual transect of the whole site to be carried out, again in accordance with Natural England guidelines.
- 2.5 The location of the reptile mats is shown in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: location of the reptile mats shown in blue

3.0 Results

3.1 The table below documents the timing and weather conditions of the reptile survey visits.

Table 1: Results from the 2015 reptile survey

Date	Night temp	Max temp	Cloud cover (5)	Rain	Wind	Total
10/09/2015	9	21	0	None	SW light	0
14/09/2015	9	21	25	None	SW	0

					light	
17/09/2015	6	23	0	None	SW light	0
20/09/2015	11	19	100	None	SW light	0
24/09/2015	7	22	50	Light shower	SW light	0
28/09/2015	6	19	50	Light Shower	SW light	0
30/09/2015	8	18	50	None	SW light	0

3.2 No reptiles were identified during the survey period.

4.0 Discussion and Mitigation

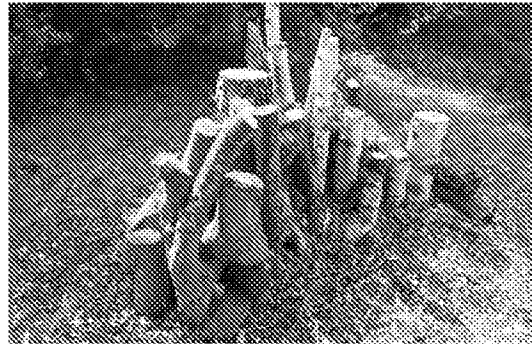
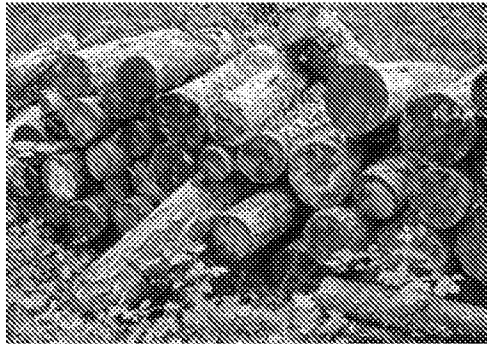
4.1 No reptiles were found during the survey period which was undertaken throughout the optimal period of September. As such it is reasonable to assume that reptiles are unlikely to be present within the red line boundary, therefore mitigation, such as the translocation of individuals, is not considered necessary.

4.2 The habitats within the redline boundary have been subject to rotation of use and as such the edges which provided some, albeit limited, suitability for reptiles, have also been subject to high levels of disturbance. This will reduce the suitability of the site for reptiles. Furthermore, it must be noted that surveys undertaken on land to the south of Water Lane, and in other sites off Dapper's Lane have also been recently conducted, with no evidence of reptiles being found.

4.3 Enhancements for a range of wildlife are recommended below. These enhancements would also enable the development to provide net gains in biodiversity by improving existing habitats through supplementary planting and creating new habitats through the creation of log piles and SUDs. These would improve the site for reptiles alongside other

wildlife. Suggested enhancements would be focused around the provision of green corridors and infrastructure through the site and around the edges of the site to ensure the ecological network between the habitats is retained and enhanced.

- 4.4 Buffer zones between the built environment and the woodland to the east will be required, as this area supports ancient woodland. Furthermore, aspects within the site, such as species rich hedgerows are also considered to be a primary focus for enhancements for the scheme.
- 4.5 Log piles can be placed within the terrestrial buffer areas, creating good hibernacula for invertebrates and reptile species. These habitat piles provide many niches which such species can exploit during the winter months.



Pictures above showing how log piles can be created within the edges of the site or in the retained habitats on site

- 4.6 It is also recommended that a new pond be created as part of the development. Creation of swales and/or SUDs as part of the development can further enhance the site. These waterbodies should be linked to the wider landscape through the protection and enhancement of tree lines and associated grassland strips. Wetlands and ponds, swales or ditches can be planted to enhance invertebrate species on the site and provide breeding opportunities for a range of other species including common amphibian species. These habitats can also be an important water source for mammals, including badgers and birds.

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- 4.7 It is recommended that additional native species are planted within the hedgerow, in particular in any sparse areas and gaps. Species of benefit to the site would be hazel, beech, sweet chestnut, wild cherry, field maple, field rose, dog rose, blackthorn, elder and dogwood. These native species will enhance the existing hedgerows and add food sources at various times of year for local wildlife.
- 4.8 The hedgerows have some understorey of vascular plants and this should be maintained. To this end, a buffer on either side of the hedgerow is recommended to be created and bramble control should be exercised between September and March. The use of wildflower mixes to increase the biodiversity of existing species poor grassland, will enhance the ecological value of the site for a range of important invertebrates.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The survey did not identify any reptiles being present within the site boundaries. As such no mitigation is recommended for the site in terms of reptile translocation.
- 5.2 The development will result in the loss of ruderal habitat and grassland habitats which are sub-optimal for reptiles. It is considered that the loss of these habitats can be mitigated and compensated for by improving the retained habitats and creating new habitats for wildlife on site.
- 5.3 Recommendations for enhancing the site for reptiles as well as other species have been included in this report. These enhancements aim to provide net gains in biodiversity on site by improving the retained habitats and creating new habitats for wildlife on site. It is considered that these enhancements would also help to maintain the existing green links within and around the site and providing enhancements linked to hedgerows and provision of wildflower areas.

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Date: 26/10/2015

Re-issued: 31/01/2018