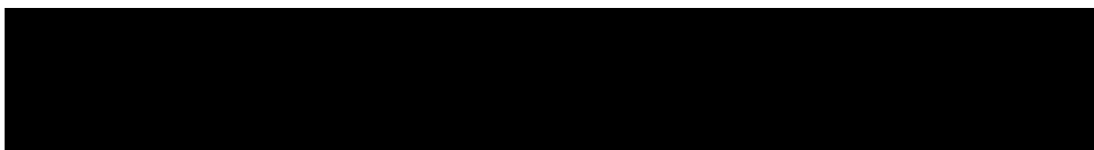




ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Unit 4, Langham Stables, Langham Lane, Lodsworth, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 9BU



Reptile Presence/Absence Survey Report

Land at Toddington Lane, Wick, Littlehampton

Author: Briony Hill BSc, GradCIEEM

Reviewed by: Paul Whitby BSc, MCIEEM, CEcol

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The Ecology Co-operation Ltd
Registered Office: Greens Court, West Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9NQ
Company number: 8905527



Report Summary

1. A reptile presence/absence survey was carried out between 24th March and 18th April 2017 on land at Toddington Lane, Wick, Littlehampton to ascertain what, if any, reptile species were present on the site as there is a proposal to attain planning permission to construct 10 houses on this site. This was completed further to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal carried out by The Ecology Co-op in February 2017 which identified suitable habitat at the site for reptiles.
2. These surveys were undertaken by Briony Hill a Graduate member of Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
3. The site supports ruderal habitat, scrub, bare ground and hard standing tarmac, with a large industrial shed located close to the site centre and some open sided metal storage structures.
4. The survey was carried out by placing 15 artificial refugia in the rough grassland and ruderal habitat across the site. A total of seven surveys were undertaken and the highest count of reptiles from these visits was used to estimate the population of each reptile species on the site as low, medium or exceptional.
5. During the seven surveys a peak count of 1 slow worm was recorded, indicating that the site supports a low population of this species.
6. A Mitigation Statement that details all of the protection measures for reptiles should support any future planning application. This mitigation should include; the whole of the development site boundary being fenced off with a rigid semi-permanent reptile proof fencing, the identification of potential off site reptile receptor sites and the process of the reptile translocation.

This report has been prepared by The Ecology Co-operation Ltd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. This report only becomes the property of the client once payment for it has been received in full.

We disclaim responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report gives details of a reptile presence/absence survey carried out by Briony Hill, a Graduate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, on land at Toddington Lane, Wick, Littlehampton. The grid reference for the site centre is TQ 03403 03856.

The objective of the survey was to identify the presence or likely absence of reptile species on Land at Toddington Lane, determine approximate populations and provide mitigation advice should it be necessary.

This survey and report was carried out and produced at the request of Rapleys LLP on behalf of the Rabbit Group.

1.2 Background

The Ecology Co-operation was commissioned to undertake a reptile survey at Toddington Lane, Wick after potential habitat was identified during a Phase 1 Habitat Assessment, undertaken by The Ecology Co-operation in February 2017 and from biodiversity records requested from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, which identified slow worm records, from 2011 and 2010 and common lizards dated between 2003 and 2009 within 1km of the site.

The assessment was carried out further to a proposal to attain planning permission to build 10 houses on this site.

1.3 Site Description

The site is situated to the east of Wick and north of Littlehampton in West Sussex (see figure 1 to 3). Toddington Lane meets the north and eastern boundaries of the site while an industrial estate meets the western boundary. The boundaries to the south meet three residential properties with gardens and an area of scrub which extends to the south meeting a train line. The proposed construction zone consists of ruderal habitat, scrub, bare ground and hard standing tarmac, with a large industrial shed located close to the site centres and some open sided metal storage structures.

The ruderal and scrub habitat provides foraging habitat for this group of species and a brash pile is considered as a suitable reptile hibernacula (see figures 4 to 7). Furthermore, an area of scrub which extends beyond the southern boundary meets a train line to the south of the site. Train lines are commonly known to act a dispersal corridors for reptiles, owing to the long linear feature of suitable habitat often found on railway embankments.



Figure 1. An aerial image showing the location of the site. The approximate site boundary is outlined in red.

Land at Todington Lane – Reptile Survey



Figure 2. Existing site plan with the site boundaries shown in red.

Land at Toddington Lane – Reptile Survey

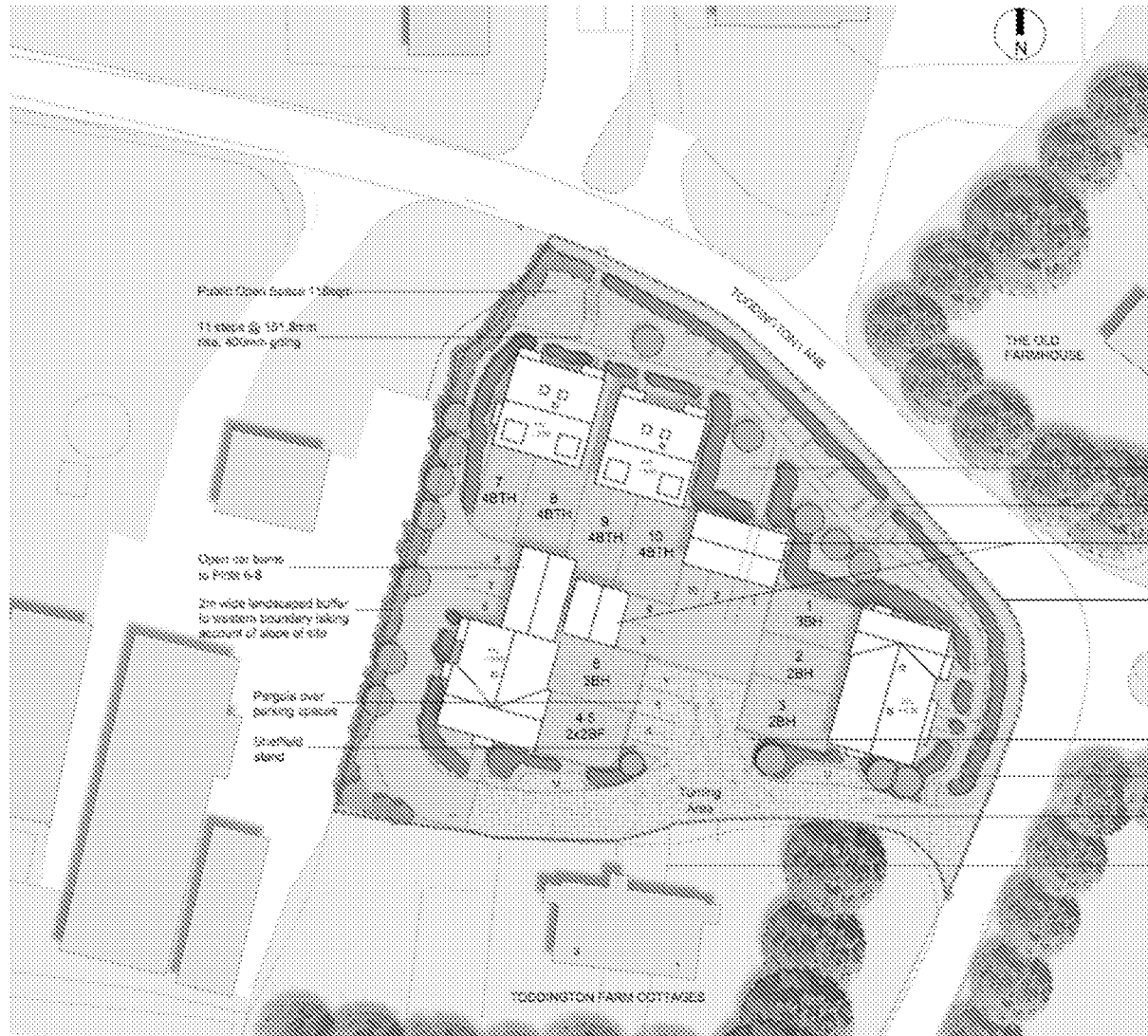


Figure 3. Proposed site plan with the site boundary shown in red.



Figure 4. Ruderal habitat at the site.



Figure 5. A view of the ruderal habitat to the east of the site meeting the road.



Figure 6. Dense/ continuous scrub at the southern section of the site.



Figure 7. Dense scrub located to the north of the site. Toddington Lane which boards the northern site boundary is seen in the left of the image.



2 LEGAL PROTECTION

This section briefly describes the legal protection afforded to reptiles. It is for information only and is not intended to be comprehensive or to replace specialised legal advice. It is not intended to replace the text of the legislation, but summarises the salient points.

Common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*), grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), and adder (*Vipera berus*) are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), in respect of Section 9 (5) and part of Section 9(1). This protection was extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Under the legislation it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill or injure any individual of these species; or
- Sell or attempt to sell any part of these species either alive or dead.

3 METHODOLOGY

The survey was carried out by placing artificial refugia around the site, in areas of suitable habitat for reptiles, which heat up in the sun and provide cover. 15 roofing felt sheets were used and placed in areas of long grassland and ruderal habitat and of the edge of scrub located across the site. Reptiles are attracted to these refugia to warm up in the mornings and late afternoon to regulate their temperature and a suitably qualified surveyor is able to count the number and in some cases the sex of each species present.

A total of seven surveys are undertaken and the highest count of reptiles from these visits is used to estimate the population of each reptile species on the site as low, medium or exceptional.

The survey refugia were placed around the site, focusing on the areas of long vegetation where they would warm up in the morning or afternoon sun. The coverage of the survey sheets was spaced evenly around the site where possible avoiding areas that would be constantly shaded by trees.

4 RESULTS

A total of 15 survey sheets were placed across the land at Toddington Lane on the 14th March 2017 and left for a minimum of ten days to 'bed in' before the commencement of the survey process. As March was an uncharacteristically warm month, the survey process began towards the end of this month, rather than waiting until April, which is usually when these surveys would commence.



Land at Toddington Lane – Reptile Survey

Table 1: Results of reptile survey undertaken on land at Toddington Lane. SW – Slow worm, GS – Grass snake, CL – Common Lizard, Juv – Juvenile, SA – Sub adult, F- Female, M – Male.

Date	Start Time of Survey	Air Temp/ Refugia Temp °C	Weather Notes, cc = Cloud cover	Species Total
24/03/17	15:15	13.5/15.5	0% cc, Light breeze	None
28/03/17	15:00	16/18.5	40% cc, Light breeze	None
5/04/17	10:50	13/18	20% cc, Light breeze	None
7/04/17	11:15	14/21	10% cc, hazy, Light breeze	None
10/04/17	9:50	12/16	40% cc, Light breeze	1 x M SW
12/04/17	13:30	12/17	40% cc, Medium breeze	1 x F SW
18/04/17	10:50	10/19.5	20% cc, Light breeze	None

4.1 Constraints/Limitations

Reptile surveys typically begin in April however March this year has been unseasonably warm with reptile activity observed from February onwards. Furthermore, all surveys were completed within the allocated temperature range stated in the national guidelines (9-18°C) and without the influence of rain. All surveys were therefore deemed to be suitable.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The surveys undertaken at this site identified the presence of reptiles with a peak count of one slow worm being recorded. No other reptile species were identified during the survey or any other amphibian, mammal or invertebrate species of note. Given this result it can be concluded that the site supports a low population of slow worms.

The identification of a low population of slow worms means that precautions will be necessary in order to protect this species, specifically a reptile translocation is necessary. As a result, semi-permanent reptile fencing would need to be constructed around the entire site boundary. This area can then be trapped out by placing artificial refugia around the site at a density no less than 100 refugia per hectare. All reptiles will need to be translocated to a suitable off-site receptor site as there will not be a sufficient area of suitable well connected habitat remaining.

A Mitigation Statement that details all of the protection measures for reptiles should support any future planning application. This mitigation should include:

1. The whole of the development site boundary being fenced off with a rigid semi-permanent reptile proof fencing that is strong and durable.
2. The identification of potential off site reptile receptor sites.
3. The process of the reptile translocation.

Should you need any further advice on the information provided above, please do not hesitate to contact The Ecology Co-op.