



**LOWFIELD ROAD, BOLTON UPON
DEARNE.**

REPTILE SURVEY.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Condition 22 of the outline planning consent for the development of the site off Lowfield Road, Bolton upon Dearne is that a reptile survey be undertaken and a report prepared and submitted to the Local Authority.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a reptile survey of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. This survey was carried out during April and May 2011 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendices I and II of this report provide additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader to understand the contents of this report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The reptile survey was carried out in line with the Froglife Advice Sheet No 10, Reptile Surveys.

2.2. Prior to visiting the site the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.3. During the first site visit the survey area was thoroughly searched for the presence of suitable reptile habitats.

2.4. Reptile refugia in the form of Ondulin sheets, felt and carpet squares were then placed across the site and in particular close to those areas assessed to be suitable reptile habitat. A total of eighty refugia were placed across the site during the first site visit in line with the recommended five to ten refugia per hectare.

2.5. Seven subsequent site visits were undertaken. During each visit all of the refugia were lifted and inspected underneath for the presence of reptiles. In addition, the entire site area was carefully and quietly walked and searched for evidence of reptiles.

2.6. All reptiles, plus other species including amphibians were recorded.

2.7. During the final site visit, all refugia were collected together and removed from site.

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search for existing reptile records in the area around the site was carried out using the NBN Gateway website.

3.1.2. There are existing records of grass snake at Goldthorpe, Barnborough and Mexborough and along the River Dearne corridor. There are no records close to the site and no records of other reptile species within the 10km grid square around the site.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The aerial photograph below shows the approximate survey area outlined in red.



3.2.2. The site has contained industrial buildings in the past but these have all been demolished and cleared. The site therefore comprises large areas of concrete and hard standing and areas of crushed rubble with abundant grass, scrub and trees around the perimeter of the site.

3.2.3. A railway line runs down the western site boundary with a residential area beyond. There is another residential area to the north east and arable land to the north and east.

3.2.4. The site is crossed by numerous paths and is clearly used by dog walkers and other members of the public.

3.3. Survey Results.

3.3.1. The table below shows the dates and the results of the surveys.

Date	Weather	Findings	Surveyor	Comments
31.03.11	Fine and warm		Steve and James	Set out 80 refugia.
06.04.11	Fine and sunny	Nil	Steve	No reptile activity
08.04.11	Fine and sunny	Nil	Steve	No reptile activity
19.04.11	Fine and sunny	Nil	Steve	No reptile activity
23.04.11	Fine and sunny	Nil	Derek	No reptile activity
26.04.11	Fine	Nil	Steve	No reptile activity
27.04.11	Fine and warm	Nil	Derek	No reptile activity
28.04.11	Fine and warm	Nil	Steve and James	Collected 80 refugia.

3.3.2. No reptiles were found during any of the site visits.

4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The site lies in an area where there are few existing reptile records and these are limited to grass snakes only.

4.2. The site lies between open arable land and residential areas although there is a railway line that runs along the western site boundary.

4.3. All of the old buildings have been demolished leaving large areas of concrete, hard standing and bare ground that would provide potential reptile basking areas. Around this there are areas of trees and scrub, grass, bramble and nettles. These all provide potential feeding habitat.

4.4. However, no reptile activity was identified on the site during any of the seven site visit carried out.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. No reptiles or reptile field signs were identified on the site and therefore there are no limitations to the proposed development and no mitigation measures are necessary.

5.2. As a precautionary measure, it is recommended that all personnel be briefed and instructed that if any reptiles are identified during the site clearance works, these should not be harmed and should be left to escape safely from the site.

Derek A Whitcher.

Natural England Bat Survey Licence Number.	20110665
Natural England Great Crested Newt Survey Licence Number.	20110666
Natural England Crayfish Survey Licence Number.	20110663
Natural England Barn Owl Survey Licence Number	20110664

07.05.2011.

Appendix I.

REPTILES - GRASS SNAKE AND ADDER INFORMATION.

The grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) and the adder (*Vipera berus*) are the two most common snakes to be found in the UK. Adders are found all over Britain while the grass snake becomes rarer towards the north and are rarely found in Scotland.

The grass snake is usually around 120cm long, live in a variety of rough habitats and lay their eggs in warm rotting vegetation. The background colour is dark green and the body is marked with vertical black bars and spots that run along its sides. There is generally a dark collar marking.

The adder is the only native species that is venomous but this is rarely harmful to humans. Adult adders are generally up to 66cm long. Background colouration is a light shade of grey or brown with a black zigzag marking along the length of the back. As with all reptiles, colouration varies and becomes duller as sloughing (skin shedding) approaches.

Both snakes hibernate, spending the winter in burrows or under logs protected from the cold and predators. Maintaining the right body temperature is vital to reptiles' survival. In the morning, they find a warm basking site to heat up their bodies, then later they may move back into the shade because they do not sweat and have to be careful not to overheat. During hot summers, adders will try to move to damper, cooler sites.

Both snakes are protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They received greater protection following reviews of the schedules published in 1988 and 1991. This means they are protected against intentional or recklessly killing and injuring and against sale or transporting for sale.

Appendix II. REPTILES - LIZARD INFORMATION.

The common or viviparous lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*) is one of three species of lizard that occur in the UK. They have a dry scaly skin and are variable in colour ranging from brown or yellow-brown to almost green with varying patterns of spots or stripes. The typical length of an adult is 150mm, including the tail.

Common lizards hibernate over the winter, emerging from February onwards depending upon the weather. They begin to mate in April and May and the young are born in late July or August. The lizard gives birth to live young, hence the term viviparous, meaning live bearing.

The lizards draw their body warmth from the sun and consequently spend long periods basking in the sun. They are commonly seen on road and railway embankments and on walls where they sit for long periods soaking up the heat of the sun before going to find food.

They occupy a wide range of habitats including woodland, marshes, heathland, moors, sand dunes, hedgerows and bogs.

Common lizards hunt insects, spiders, snails and earthworms. They stun their prey by shaking it and then swallow it whole.

At night, and when startled, they will shelter beneath logs or stones or under other refuges that may be available.

Common lizards are protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They received greater protection following reviews of the schedules published in 1988 and 1991. This means they are protected against intentional or recklessly killing and injuring and against sale or transporting for sale.

Common lizards should not be confused with the somewhat larger sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*). These are typically 190mm long and stockier than the common lizard. Their markings are distinctly different being considerably more colourful. Sand lizards are confined to moorland and coastal sand dunes where they lay their eggs in the warm sand. The range of the sand lizard in the UK is therefore very limited. Sand lizards are a European protected species.

The third species of lizard is the slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), which is frequently mis-identified as a snake. The firm body of the slow worm is distinctly cylindrical in shape and the tiny smooth scales result in a very smooth, shiny appearance. Colouration is typically a uniform grey to brown although there is a wide variation from straw coloured to almost black and some animals have very fine stripes or a zig-zag along the centre of the back. The typical length of an adult is 400mm.

Slow worms can be found in a wide variety of habitats throughout Britain and is the most likely reptile to be found in urban and suburban environments.

Slow worms hibernate over the winter, emerging from March onwards depending upon the weather. They begin to mate in April and May and six to twelve young are born in August or September.

Their favourite food is slugs but they will also eat insects and spiders.

Slow worms are hard to find. They will bask in the sun but they quickly and quietly move into cover when disturbed and do not generally attract attention as they retreat from a basking spot.

Slow worms are also protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They received greater protection following reviews of the schedules published in 1988 and 1991. This means they are protected against intentional or recklessly killing and injuring and against sale or transporting for sale.

Appendix III. REPTILE TOOLBOX TALK.

Toolbox Talk : Reptiles.

Identification : Grass Snakes.

The grass snake is usually around 120cm long. The background colour is dark green and the body is marked with vertical black bars and spots that run along its sides. There is generally a yellow marking around the neck.



Identification : Adders.

The adder is the only native species that is venomous but it is rarely harmful to humans. Adult adders are generally up to 66cm long. Background colouration is a light shade of grey or brown with a black zigzag marking along the length of the back. As with all reptiles, colouration varies and becomes duller as sloughing (skin shedding) approaches.



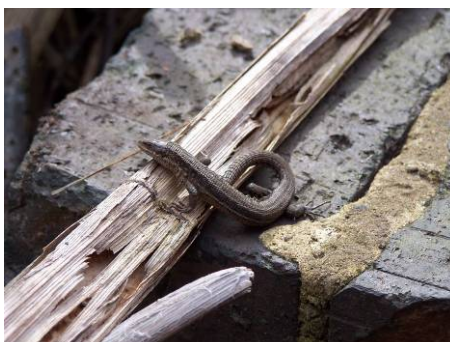
Identification : Slow Worms.

Slow worms grow to around 45cm in length. The males and females display a marked difference in colour when fully grown. Females often have a dark vertebral stripe, the flanks are flecked or striped with dark brown or black, the ventral surface is nearly always uniform black. Males are more uniform in colour dorsally and on the flanks, the belly is usually mottled black or dark grey, they also have larger heads and occasionally distinct blue spots. The upper parts of the body vary from light or dark brown, grey, bronze or brick red.



Identification : Common Lizards.

Common lizards grow to around 16cm. They are grey brown to dark brown, often with a darker streak that may run the entire length of the spine. A continuous dark band bordered by light yellow or white spots is often seen on either side of the body. The underside of the males is egg yolk yellow to orange spotted with black, females are yellowish grey.



Habitat.

Maintaining the right body temperature is vital to reptiles' survival. In the morning they find a warm basking site to heat up their bodies, then later they may move back into the shade so as not to overheat. Hence, reptiles require a habitat that provides a range of suitable refugia for shelter such as dense vegetation, rubble or log piles, or crevices and open areas for basking such as bare ground, rocks or railway ballast shoulders. During hot summers reptiles may be found in damper, cooler sites.

Reptiles hibernate, spending the winter in burrows or under logs protected from the cold and predators.

When disturbed in their natural habitat reptiles will usually move away quickly.

Other Reptiles.

In addition to the reptiles outlined on this document there are also two other reptile species in Great Britain, the smooth snake and the sand lizard. These reptiles are a lot less common than the four species covered with the smooth snake being predominantly found on heathland in southern England and the sand lizard found throughout Great Britain in coastal dune areas.

These species are also afforded a higher level of protection because they are European Protected Species.

Legislation.

Reptiles are protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They received greater protection following reviews of the schedules published in 1988 and 1991. This means they are protected against intentional or recklessly killing and injuring and against sale or transporting for sale.

DO's.

- ✓ Stop work if any reptiles are found and let them move away safely of their own accord.
- ✓ Stop work immediately if large number of reptiles are found and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
- ✓ Avoid handling reptiles where possible.
- ✓ Seek medical attention immediately if you are bitten by a snake.
- ✓ If in doubt of the species, photograph the reptile and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd regarding identification.

DON'Ts.

- ✗ DON'T handle adders. Their bite is poisonous.
- ✗ DON'T kill or injure any reptiles.

Further information. Contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
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