

**Land off Rockingham Roundabout,
Hoyland, near Barnsley**

Gregory Property Group

Report Reference: R-3806-02 A

June 2019

Report Title:	Reptile Survey Land off Rockingham Roundabout, Hoyland
Report Reference:	R-3806-02 A
Written by:	Kate Wright BSc (Hons) MSc Grad CIEEM Assistant Ecologist
Technical Review:	Peter Brooks BSc (Hons), MA, MCIEEM, CEnv Managing Director
QA Review:	Charlie Foreman BSc (Hons) Grad CIEEM Seasonal Surveyor
Approved for issue:	Peter Brooks BSc (Hons), MA, MCIEEM, CEnv Managing Director
Date:	24.06.19
Updated:	12.06.20

Brooks Ecological Ltd has prepared this report for the sole use of the commissioning client. The information which we have prepared and provided is in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions. This report does not constitute legal advice. The report is in accordance with the agreement under which our services were performed. No warranty, express or implied, is made as to the advice in this report or any other service provided by us. This report may not be relied upon by any other party except the person, company, agent or any third party for whom the report is intended without the prior written permission of Brooks Ecological Ltd. The content of this report may, in part, be based upon information provided by others and on the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested. Information obtained from any third party has not been independently verified by Brooks unless otherwise stated in the report. This report is the copyright of Brooks Ecological Ltd. Unauthorised reproduction or usage by any person is prohibited.



Unit A, 1 Station Road, Guiseley, Leeds, LS20 8BX
 Phone: **01943 884451**
01943 879129
 Email: admin@brooks-ecological.co.uk
www.brooks-ecological.co.uk
 Registered in England Number 5351418



Summary Statement

Dedicated surveys carried out during optimal survey condition and spread across the main activity period have determined the likely absence of reptiles from the site.

Work can therefore proceed with minimal risk of impacting upon this group.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological Ltd was commissioned by Gregory Property Group to carry out surveys for reptiles at land located off Rockingham Roundabout, Hoyland (grid reference SE 3533 0081).

Figure 1 Site boundary (red line boundary).



Background

2. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was initially undertaken by Brooks Ecological Ltd in February 2019.
3. There are 18 records of grass snake in the search area, the closest of these being c.750m north-east of the Site. All the records lie to the north of the Dearne Valley Parkway or west of the M1.
4. There is a single adder record dating from the 1980s, being located at Potters Hole Plantation LNR, 2km south-west.
5. The Site contains a mosaic of habitats which is considered suitable for reptiles. Given their presence in the local area, surveys are recommended to establish their presence or likely absence on the site.

Legislation and Guidance

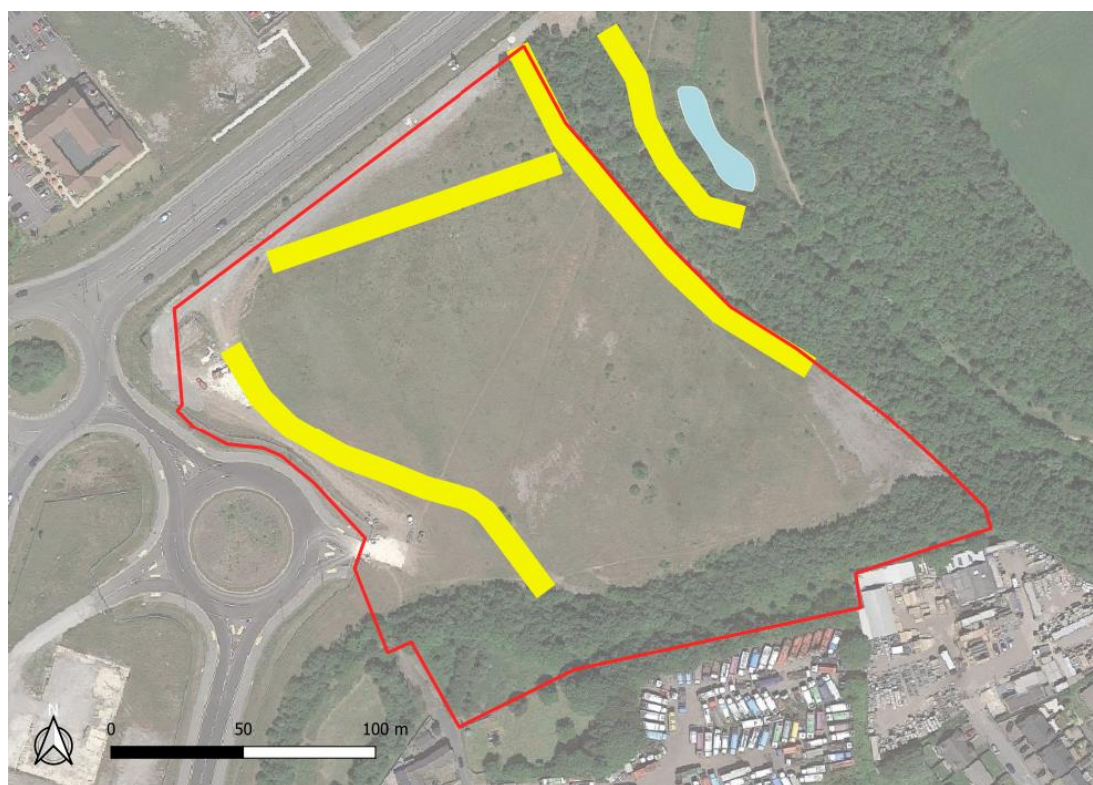
6. The Site lies in the natural range of four widespread species of reptile (common lizard, slow worm, adder and grass snake). These all receive limited protection under part of subsection 9(1) and all of subsection 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This affords protection against intentional and reckless killing or injuring and trade.
7. Destruction of known habitats whilst reptiles are present may therefore lead to an offence of killing or injury.
8. Destruction of known habitat without provision for the safe escape of animals into further suitable habitat able to support them can lead to offences under the Abandonment of Animals Act 1960 (as amended).
9. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) sets out the responsibility of public authorities to Biodiversity. This Act provides lists of habitats and species to which the LPA's consideration must be given when exercising their functions (e.g. considering planning permission). All reptile species are listed under Section 41 of the Act making them and their habitat a consideration of planning.

Methodology

10. Reference was made to The Herpetofauna Worker's Manual (Gent and Gibson, 2003) for the survey methodology with seven official reptile survey visits being carried out.
11. The Site comprises a largely flat vacant plot currently occupied by rank grassland with small amounts of scattered scrub, crossed by several wet and dry ditches. Woodland plantation is found along the south and east boundaries.
12. In order to increase the chance of finding any reptiles present, artificial refuges were placed across the site in locations most likely to support reptiles. 48 artificial refuges were placed around the Site - this exceeds the recommended guideline of using a minimum of 5-10 refuges/ha set out in the Froglife Advice Sheet 10.
13. An appraisal of the site by surveyor allowed an assessment of the location of target habitat features such as potential hibernaculae, refuges and foraging grounds. This allowed surveys of the site to be targeted, depending on season and conditions - a strategy which will considerably increase the potential of surveyors encountering reptiles.

14. On each survey visit both the new and existing artificial refugia, such as scattered rubble, were approached quietly to observe any basking reptiles. These were then lifted to observe any reptiles that may be sheltering beneath. Additionally, the site was systematically walked (transect surveys) looking for reptiles that may be basking or foraging away from refugia.

Figure 2 Approximate location of refuges (yellow).



15. These transect walks were carried out carefully with the surveyor walking slowly and looking well forward to attempt to spot reptiles at distance. This technique is necessary because reptiles have very good eyesight and generally are aware of surveyors at short distances, rapidly taking cover to avoid detection.
16. Reptiles can also leave evidence of their presence in the form of shed skin and holes in the ground (e.g. from lizard burrows or grass snake egg laying pits). This form of evidence was also searched for during the survey.
17. Refuges were placed on the site on 10th April and left undisturbed for a short period prior to the commencement of surveys. The surveys were carried out during suitable weather conditions as summarised in the results section.

Results

18. The results of the surveys are presented below:

Table 1 Summary of Survey Results.

Survey	Date	Conditions	Results
1	15 th April 2019	Sunny with 40% scattered cloud; dry; 9°C -11°C; light wind (B1-2).	No reptiles.
2	1 st May 2019	Overcast; dry; 12°C; light wind (B1).	No reptiles.
3	13 th May 2019	Warm and sunny with 15% cloud; 18°C; light wind (B1).	No reptiles.
4	16 th May 2019	Scattered 50% cloud; 14°C; light breeze (B3).	No reptiles.
5	22 nd May 2019	Sunny intervals with cloud cover 30-60%; 10°C; light breeze (B2).	No reptiles.
6	6 th June 2019	40% cloud cover; warm 17°C with an occasional slight breeze (B1).	No reptiles.
7	15 th June 2019	Clear, dry and humid with 10-40% cloud; 10°C; light breeze (B2).	No reptiles.
8	20 th June 2019	Sunny intervals with 50% cloud cover 30-60%; 14°C; light breeze (B2).	No reptiles.

Evaluation & Recommendation

19. No evidence of reptiles or reptile activity has been recorded anywhere within the site.
20. As such, (likely) absence can be concluded and further action in relation to reptiles will not be required. The proposed development can proceed with very little risk of affecting this group.



Figure 3

View across the Site showing rank grassland and scattered scrub.



Figure 4

Main ditch running across north of Site to the pond along the eastern boundary.

References

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

Gent T and Gibson S (2003) *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual*, JNCC

Hill et al. (2005) *Handbook of Biodiversity Methods*. Cambridge.