

**SEA CLOSE
CANNONGATE ROAD
HYTHE
KENT
REPTILE SURVEY**

BY

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D114. Hythe (TR17253497).R2



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APPENDIX

1 SUMMARY RESULTS OF REFUGIUM MONITORING

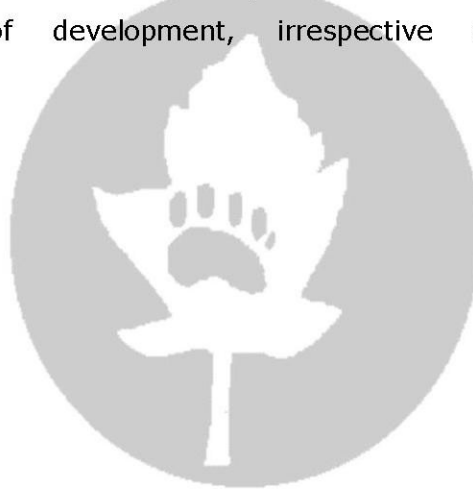
FIGURE

1 SKETCH MAP OF THE LOCATIONS OF ANIMALS ON THE SITE.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document was compiled in order to report upon a reptile survey of garden land at Sea Close, Cannongate Road, Hythe, Kent¹.
- 1.2** The property has been fully described in Newcombe (2015)² which reported the possibility of a reptile presence at the site. Subsequently, instruction was received to carry out a more detailed survey of the reptile activity at the site.
- 1.3** Common reptiles such as common lizards³, slow worms⁴ and grass snakes⁵ are protected from harm under sections 9(1) and 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, so it is necessary to take account of them prior to the commencement of development, irrespective of any planning considerations.



¹ OS / TR17253497.

² Hereafter referred to as 'the first report'.

³ *Zootoca vivipara*.

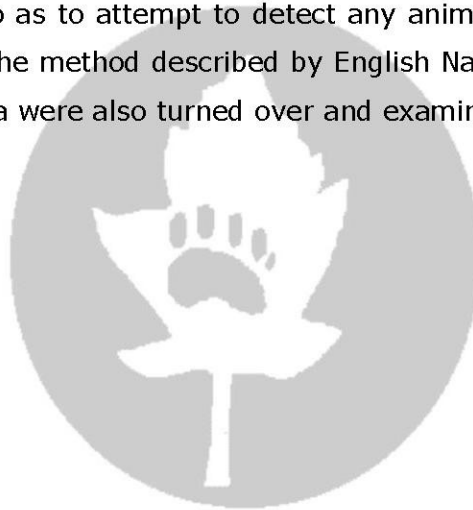
⁴ *Anguis fragilis*.

⁵ *Natrix helvetica*.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Within the site a total of 34 squares of bituminized roofing material measuring approximately 0.75 x 0.75 m were placed throughout suitable habitat⁶ on Wednesday 9th September 2015, in order to act as refugia of the type described by Gent and Gibson (2003). These were allowed to remain in place untouched for approximately eleven days so that the animals could find them, and then were individually checked at intervals on seven subsequent occasions, between 20th September and 28th September 2015, during suitable weather conditions⁷.

2.2 On each occasion, a transect route through the site was also walked slowly and methodically so as to attempt to detect any animals⁸ which might be basking, following the method described by English Nature (1994). During this walk the refugia were also turned over and examined for the presence of reptiles.



⁶ Mainly around areas away from dense shrubberies and tall, dense plants or open lawns e.g. in borders, the vegetable garden, the grassy area in the small orchard in the north – western corner of the site etc.

⁷ The checks had to be completed before the end of September, so sometimes the visits were carried out at the rate of two a day in case the weather pattern changed during the survey.

⁸ Particularly common lizards.

3.0 RESULTS

- 3.1** The results⁹ are shown in Appendix 1. A total of five adult and 32 juvenile slow – worms and one juvenile grass snake were found on site under the refugia whilst the transect was being walked. The grass snake represented 2.6% of the total number of animals that were present, whilst the slow – worms together represented 97.4% of the total number of animals on site. The slow – worm juveniles represented 86.5% of all the slow – worms on site whilst the adults were 13.5% of the slow – worms that were present. The animals were scattered throughout the site as a whole, particularly in the north – west corner and the middle of the site.
- 3.2** No animals of any species were recorded on the transect away from the refugia.



⁹ I.e. number of animals recorded.

4.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1** The methodology of the survey has been used before on other sites, and the number and position of refugia was more than adequate for a survey of this type.
- 4.2** The weather was also suitable, especially since the site was fairly sheltered from cold winds by adjoining properties; the latter half of September 2015 was generally fairly sunny with typical temperatures and other weather for the season¹⁰.
- 4.3** Initially it was thought that one or two common lizards would be found as well as slow - worms, but it is not really surprising that no lizards were found and that slow - worms were present instead. It is also not surprising that most of the animals were clumped in particular parts of the site. This is probably a reflection of the microhabitat and distribution of different heights and aspects of vegetation which helped to maintain the reptile presence, as a result of maintaining basking sites and by localised increase of overall soil invertebrate biomass¹¹. Areas with a mosaic of scrub - like vegetation, tall ruderals and shorter vegetation, such as occurs on parts of the site, can often have a very good reptile fauna¹².
- 4.4** The results suggest that there is a small population of slow - worms over the whole site, but this is based on previous experience as there is no reasonably accurate way of assessing the population size more accurately. However, based on previous experience of such sites, it is probable that there are between 20 and 50 adult slow -worms present and an unknown number of juveniles.
- 4.5** The presence of the juvenile grass snake was not entirely unexpected as this animal often occurs at very low densities throughout its range¹³. The site may host another three or four animals of this species¹⁴.
- 4.6** Given the presence of the reptiles there is a requirement for further action to be taken with respect to them because they are protected. When the time comes for development, the reptiles will need to be dealt with as the first

¹⁰ Personal observation.

¹¹ Including the soil organisms that slow - worms feed upon.

¹² Gent and Gibson 2003; Mortimer et al, 2000).

¹³ Beebee and Griffiths, 2000.

¹⁴ This would be a large population.

operation on site. The guidance given under the guidelines¹⁵ necessitates the erection of a reptile fence¹⁶ in appropriate places in the development area and an as – yet indeterminate number of subsequent visits for translocation, for which a receptor site will have to be found in advance. Translocation will have to be undertaken at some time during the period of usually April to September inclusive, depending upon weather conditions. Further discussion of general mitigation and procedure is given in English Nature¹⁷.

4.7 But just where can the reptiles go to? Ideally, all the reptiles should be translocated on site¹⁸ as recommended by the guidelines. However, given that the development plans for the site are not known, and given that the animals will have to be kept away from any harm, it is hard to see how any limited amount of landscaping on the site can either be created or modified in order to host the animals before and during the development, nor how landscaping would be arranged to suit them. Ideally, too, the animals should not be subjected to translocation from the development site and then being moved again. Aside from any guidelines considerations, the Animal Welfare Act 2006 also applies, since the process of translocation involves reducing the animals into temporary captivity when moving them from one site to another, and then depositing the animals in an area of land where, if they do not have adequate food and shelter, a breach of the legislation may occur. So a suitable site will need to be located.

4.8 Failing on – site translocation, the other option would be to find a receptor site somewhere else, which could be improved for the animals if necessary. The important thing about this would be the need for the site to be free of animals beforehand¹⁹, not least because there is evidence from common lizard studies²⁰ of prior residence advantage. Clearly there could again be implications in terms of the animal welfare legislation if a satisfactory site is not found. Finding a suitable site may therefore involve some further investigation. Provided that the animals can be safely translocated to a

¹⁵ Herpetofauna Groups of Britain and Ireland, 1998. Hereafter referred to as 'the guidelines'.

¹⁶ The purpose of a reptile fence is to prevent animals from coming into a site which is being subjected to translocation so that the vacuum created by removal of animals is not continuously filled and the translocation therefore goes on for a lot longer than without a fence.

¹⁷ 1994; 2004.

¹⁸ As opposed to going to a new site.

¹⁹ Unless the site was very close by and the animals from Sea Close were likely to be part of the population in the receptor site.

²⁰ Massot, Clobert, Lecomte and Barbault, 1994. This may also apply to slow – worms since they are a lizard too.

suitable site, this would be some mitigation for the negative impact of the short – term loss of the site to the animals. In the long – term the site would be likely to be recolonised from adjoining areas so there would be only limited long – term impact.



5.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SEVEN VISIT SURVEY RECORDING FORM (Unnumbered traps)(All data approximate)														
LOCATION: Sea Close, Cannongate Road, Hythe, Kent.														
DATE REFUGIA LAID DOWN: 9th September 2015.														
NUMBER OF REFUGIA: 34														
Visit number	Inspection date	Time (24 hr clock)	Number of reptiles:											
			General description of weather	Adder	Grass snake	Common lizard	Common lizard juveniles	Slow worm adult	Slow worm juvenile	Slow - worm indeterminate stage	Total lizards	Total slow worms	Total reptiles	Additional notes
1	20/09/2015	1500	17 degrees C., light wind but mostly sunny and dry.	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	
2	24/09/2015	1610	18 degrees C, dry, sunny and warm, with occasional cloud.	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	11	11	
3	25/09/2015	1300	16 degrees C, clear sky, dry and hot.	0	1	0	0	2	6	0	0	8	9	Juvenile grass snake
4	27/09/2015	1350	17 degrees C, sunny and warm with light breeze.	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	4	
5	27/09/2015	1530	17 degrees C, sunny and warm.	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	5	
6	28/09/2015	1415	17 degrees C, sunny, breezy.	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	3	
7	28/09/2015	1700	17 degrees C, sunny, breezy.	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	4	4	
Total:				0	1	0	0	5	32	0	0	37	38	
Mean:				0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.7	4.6	0.0	0.0	5.3	5.429	

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY RESULTS.

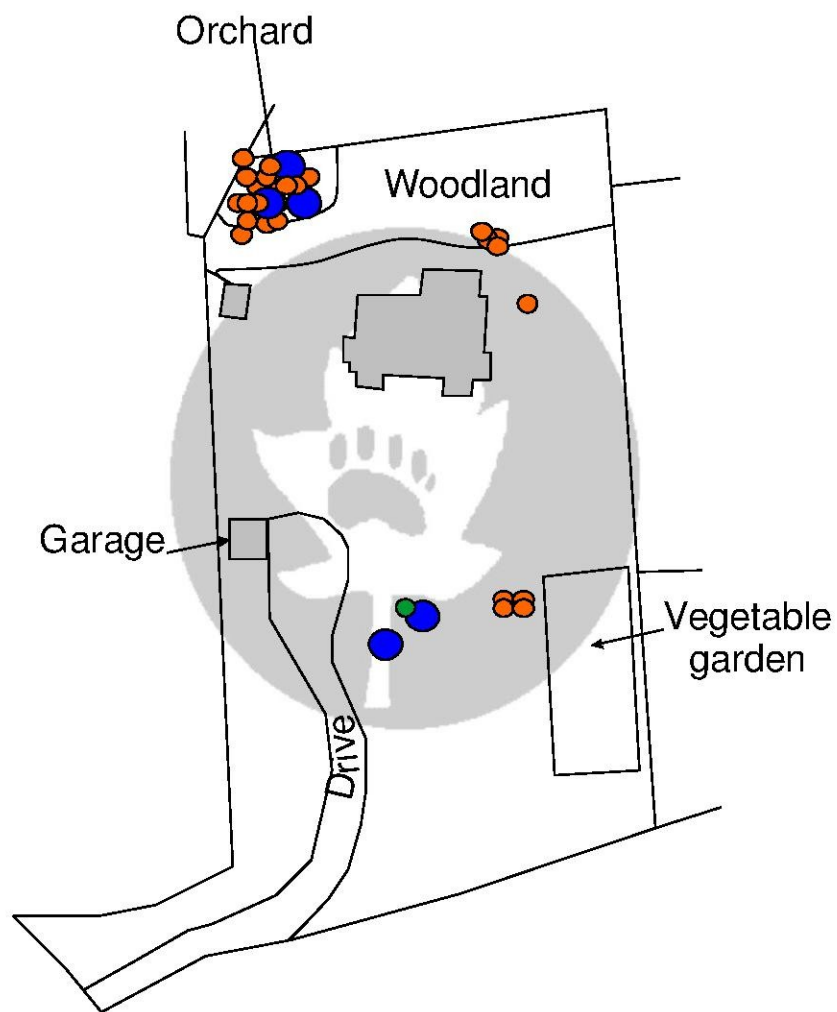


FIGURE 1: SKETCH MAP OF THE LOCATIONS OF ANIMALS ON THE SITE.
Adult slow worms are indicated by blue circles, whilst juvenile ones are shown by orange circles. The green circle shows the location of the juvenile grass snake.