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Reptile Survey Report

Hart Plain Avenue, Waterloooville

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Report Summary:

- 1. A presence / absence survey was undertaken between the 27th August and 02nd October by Briony Hill to ascertain what, if any, reptile species were present on the site.**
- 2. The ecological features of notable value for reptiles include an area of rough grassland and ruderal habitat upon a former allotment patch. The garden forms part of a residential garden network, which are commonly known to support reptiles.**
- 3. The survey was carried out by placing 5 artificial refugia around the site. A total of seven surveys were undertaken and the highest count of reptiles from these visits used to estimate the population of each reptile species on the site as low, good or exceptional.**
- 4. No reptiles were found during the surveys, which suggest that no reptiles are present at the site. However, whilst it is possible to prove presence, it is almost impossible to prove absence.**
- 5. This reptile survey has demonstrated the likely absence of reptiles and no further survey effort or mitigation for reptile species is recommended in this instance.**

This report has been prepared by The Ecology Co-operation, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client.

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.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report gives details of a presence / absence reptile survey carried out by Briony Hill, BSc, GradCIEEM on a plot of land at No48 Hart Plain Avenue, Waterlooville. The grid reference for this site is SU 686108. It is proposed that an area of land in the rear garden of the No 48 property will be developed and a single new property will be established (Fig. 1).

This survey and report was carried out and produced at the request of Landmark Estates.



Figure 1. Left; Google Earth screen grab showing the wider landscape of the proposed development site, with a red line indicating the proposed construction zone within the rear garden to the No 48 Hart Plain Avenue property.

1.2 Background

The site is within a residential area in a central part of Waterlooville, with residential properties bordering all parts of the proposed construction zone and Hart Plain Avenue running to the south of the site.

The Ecology Co-operation was asked to undertake a Reptile survey after habitat that was potentially suitable for reptiles was identified during a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal survey undertaken in September 2014.



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

1.3 Site Description

The proposed construction zone encompasses a garage, a small pond, a vegetable patch and the northern half of the No 48 Hart Plain Avenue property rear garden space (see figure 1). The west and east boundaries are bordered by a wooden panel fence and the northern boundary comprises of a mixture of wooden panels and wire fencing. The southern boundary is the Hart Plain Avenue main road with a community school on the other side. The site is predominantly amenity grassland, cut tightly, but has a small disused vegetable patch, 6 apple/pear trees and a small pond.

Whilst the majority of the proposed construction zone is formed by tightly mown lawn space, the disused vegetable patch represents a suitable habitat for foraging reptiles. Slow worms (*Anguis fragilis*) are commonly associated with residential gardens and allotments, where they thrive on garden pests such as slugs and make use of compost heaps as hibernacula. For this reason, it was recommended that a reptile survey was conducted at this area of suitable habitat, to establish if any reptiles are present foraging upon the site.



Figure 2:Part of the disused vegetable patch and adjacent orchard area



1.4 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 then 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.

2. METHODOLOGY

The survey was carried out by placing artificial refugia around the site, which heat up in the sun and provide cover. Five roofing felt sheets were used across the site and reptiles are attracted to these refugia to warm up in the mornings and late afternoon to regulate their temperature. A suitably qualified surveyor is then able to count the number and in some cases the sex of each species present.

A total of seven surveys were 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, good or exceptional.

The survey refugia were placed across the site, focusing on the periphery of the rough grassland areas, rudral scrub and the marginal areas of the pond, where they would warm up in the morning or afternoon sun. The coverage of the survey sheets was spaced evenly across the site where possible avoiding areas that would be constantly shaded by trees.

3. RESULTS

A total of 5 survey sheets were placed across the site on the 27th August 2015 and left for a minimum of ten days to 'bed in' before the first of the seven reptile surveys were carried out.

Survey sheets were placed in positions where they would best receive sunlight in suitable areas of habitat where possible.



Date	Time	Cloud Cover (%)	Windspeed	Air temp	Refugia temp	Reptiles recorded	Notes
27/08/15	Mats set out (5)						
15/09/15	15:00	60	Medium breeze	16	18.5	None	
17/09/15	15:20	60	Light breeze	15.5	17.5	None	
21/09/15	10:25	100	Light breeze	12.5	13.5	None	
23/09/15	09:50	0	Light breeze	11	14	None	Ground wet underfoot
25/09/15	10:10	0	Still	13	16.5	None	1 x common frog
30/09/15	11:00	0	Medium breeze	14.5	19	None	2 x common frog
02/10/15	10:00	0	Light breeze	14.5	16.5	None	

4. CONSTRAINTS

All surveys were completed within the allocated temperature range (9-18°C) and without the influence of rain. All surveys were therefore deemed to be suitable.

5. CONCLUSIONS

During the seven surveys no reptile species were recorded, this suggests that no reptiles are present on the site. However, whilst it is possible to prove presence, it is almost impossible to prove absence. Common frogs were identified during the survey and it remains possible that this species could breed within the pond at the site. It is recommended therefore that where possible, a replacement pond should be created within the new development to provide replacement breeding habitat for this species.

The reptile survey on this site has demonstrated the likely absence of reptiles and no further survey effort or mitigation for reptile species is recommended in this instance. However, if during clearance work any reptiles are found the clearance of vegetation should stop immediately and advice should be sought from a qualified ecologist.