

# REPTILE SURVEY DONKLEYWOOD

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SPECIES	RECORDER	DATE	LOCATION (4 FIG. NGR)	ABUNDANCE	COMMENT
Common lizard	E3 Ecology	25.09.20	NY7486	1	Adult common lizard

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## A. SUMMARY

E3 Ecology Ltd was commissioned by In Architecture on behalf of Graham Varty to undertake reptile surveys of land near Donkleywood in September 2020 in support of a planning application. The proposed development comprises 4 holiday chalets set alongside an existing track in the centre of the site. The footprints of the proposed chalets will be within small, defined areas of existing grassland.

Previous survey work at the site identified habitats on site as suitable for reptiles with areas of scrub edge habitat and areas of open ground. Consultation with NE identified 3 adder records within 2km with the nearest being 1.9km to the north in 1994.<sup>1</sup>

There are no designated sites supporting reptiles within 2km of the development boundary.

Survey work was undertaken in September 2020. The survey methodology comprised the placement of artificial refugia within suitable habitat areas such as south facing slopes and areas of open ground close to vegetation, which were subsequently checked for the presence of reptiles on 7 occasions, in conjunction with walked surveys of the entire site. In addition, a habitat assessment was also undertaken to identify areas suitable for reptile basking and foraging activity.

The site is situated in an area dominated by pasture fields with hedgerows, areas of woodland and scrub. Mosaic habitats on site comprise plantation broadleaved woodland, dense scrub and coarse semi-improved grassland. A mown track runs along the southern boundary and up the centre of the site with areas of shorter grassland and ephemeral vegetation adjacent to the track. No features suitable for hibernating reptiles, such as log or rubble piles were recorded. The site is well-connected to habitats in the surrounding area of good suitability for reptiles.

Overall, from the habitats present in the local area, the risk of reptiles being present within the site is considered to be moderate.

Over 7 survey visits to the site in September 2020, one adult common lizard was recorded. No other reptiles were recorded. Potential increased disturbance of the site is not considered to have a significant effect on reptiles due to the low population present and the low density of lodges.

Impacts in the absence of mitigation include:

- Loss of small areas of suitable habitat for reptiles through construction of the lodges.
- Low risk of harm to reptiles during development.

Mitigation will include the following:

- Vegetation that is to be cleared will first be strimmed to a height of 10cm and left overnight to allow any reptiles present to escape.
- Once any vegetation is removed and before any ground works are undertaken, the areas will be checked first for the presence of reptiles.
- If any reptiles are found during the clearance operations then works will halt in that area and the ecologist will be contacted, who will oversee the relocation of the animals to adjacent areas of suitable habitat that are not to be affected by development.

The following enhancement of the site for reptiles is recommended:

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<sup>1</sup> Donkleywood PEA. Aug 2020 Total Ecology

- The provision of log piles and turf-capped mound hibernacula within shrubby areas or tall grassland/woodland edge habitat to provide cover and hibernation opportunities. Hibernacula should be constructed should measure at least 2m x 2m x 1m tall. Pipes, logs and stones can be incorporated to create crevices inside the structure.
- The creation of compost piles/ piles of grass cuttings to provide warm areas for adult reptiles.

With the recommended mitigation detailed above, proposals can proceed with no significant adverse effect on reptiles. Proposals provide an opportunity for ecological benefit through enhancement of the site for reptiles through the creation of hibernacula, which are currently absent on the site.

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## B. INTRODUCTION

### B.1 BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENT

E3 Ecology Ltd was commissioned by In Architecture on behalf of Graham Varty to undertake reptile surveys of land near Donkleywood in September 2020 in support of a planning application.

The purpose of this report is:

- To detail the results of survey work that has been undertaken for reptiles.
- To provide recommendations to be incorporated into the design for the site.

The site is located at Donkleywood, Northumberland at an approximate central grid reference of NY 7486 8658. The site location is illustrated below in Figure 1.



FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION

### B.2 CURRENT DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

The proposed development comprises the construction of 4 holiday chalets. Proposals are shown in the figure below.



FIGURE 2: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



## C. PLANNING POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

### C.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The table below details the key paragraphs from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>2</sup> relating to the natural environment:

TABLE 1: NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK: CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	
Statement	Paragraph
Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate; d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.	170
Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework <sup>3</sup> ; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.	171
Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads <sup>4</sup> . The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development <sup>5</sup> other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of: a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy; b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.	172
Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 172), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.	173
To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should: a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological	174

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), Department for Communities and Local Government,

<sup>3</sup> Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

<sup>4</sup> English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 provides further guidance and information about their statutory purposes, management and other matters.

<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of paragraphs 172 and 173, whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

**TABLE 1: NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK: CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Statement	Paragraph
<p>networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity<sup>6</sup>; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation<sup>7</sup>; and</p> <p>b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.</p>	
<p>When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:</p> <p>a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;</p> <p>b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;</p> <p>c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons<sup>8</sup> and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and</p> <p>d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.</p>	175
<p>The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:</p> <p>a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;</p> <p>b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites<sup>9</sup>; and</p> <p>c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.</p>	176
<p>The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.</p>	177

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Planning Practice Guidance<sup>10</sup> states:

- Planning authorities need to consider the potential impacts of development on protected and priority species, and the scope to avoid or mitigate any impacts when considering site allocations or planning applications. (para. 016)
- Information on biodiversity and geodiversity impacts and opportunities needs to inform all stages of development (including site selection and design, pre-application

<sup>6</sup> Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

<sup>7</sup> Where areas that are part of the Nature Recovery Network are identified in plans, it may be appropriate to specify the types of development that may be suitable within them.

<sup>8</sup> For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.

<sup>9</sup> Potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation and proposed Ramsar sites are sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a Special Protection Area, candidate Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar site.

<sup>10</sup> Planning Practice Guidance: Natural Environment ([www.planningguidance.communities.gov](http://www.planningguidance.communities.gov)) Updated July 2019

consultation and the application itself). An ecological survey will be necessary in advance of a planning application if the type and location of development could have a significant impact on biodiversity and existing information is lacking or inadequate. (para. 018)

- Even where an Environmental Impact Assessment is not needed, it might still be appropriate to undertake an ecological survey, for example, where protected species may be present or where biodiverse habitats may be lost. (para. 018)
- As with other supporting information, local planning authorities should require ecological surveys only where clearly justified. Assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity. (para. 018)
- The National Planning Policy Framework encourages net gains for biodiversity to be sought through planning policies and decisions. Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures. (para. 022)

## C.2 PROTECTED SPECIES LEGISLATION

All British reptiles are afforded some degree of legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), largely as a consequence of a national decline in numbers associated with habitat loss.

The degree to which different species are protected varies. Smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* and sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* are considered 'fully protected'. Both of these species are restricted in their distribution however, and would not occur in this study area. The other, more common reptile species, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Lacerta vivipara*, adder *Vipera berus* and grass snake *Natrix natrix* are only protected under Part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5), making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take [Section 9(1)];
- Sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale or publish advertisements to buy or sell [Section 9(5)].

In all cases, the legislation applies to all life stages including eggs, juveniles and adults.

As defined in Planning Policy Statement 9, protected species are a material consideration in the planning process (ODPM, 2005).

All native reptile species are UK BAP Priority Species (2007).

The wildlife legislation applies before and after planning permission is given and throughout any subsequent development works, as well as during developments that do not require planning permission.

There is no licensing process for development works in habitats where the more common reptile species are present (above species excluding sand lizard and smooth snake). The developer must put in place a mitigation strategy to avoid harming reptiles and to ensure their survival at a favourable conservation status in the local area.

### C.2.1 STATUS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

Common lizard, adder, grass snake and slow worm occur within Northumberland, but as yet are not included within the Northumberland Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Common lizard occurs in scattered populations throughout the county including a coastal population. There are multiple records from areas to the west of Newcastle and south and southwest of Hexham. There are several records from within the Northumberland National Park to the northeast of the county.

Adder has a scattered distribution throughout the marginal upland areas to the west, and particularly northwest of the county from Hadrian's Wall to the Kyloe Hills and from a small area south of the Tyne Valley centre around Allendale and Devil's Water fells.

Grass snake is very uncommon within the county. Populations are known from Fontburn Reservoir and the Derwent Valley. The Northumberland Derwent Valley records are likely from a population based mainly on the Durham side of the river. A small number of individuals have been recorded since the 1980s to the west and southwest of Newcastle.

Slow worm occurs primarily within two areas, the northern distribution lies north of the Tyne encompassing Alnwick and Wooler, with historical records extending west to the Scottish border. The southern area lies south of the A69, primarily to the south, southeast and southwest of Hexham.

## D. METHODOLOGY

### D.1 SCOPE OF STUDY

The survey methodology was based on guidelines for reptile surveying provided by Froglife<sup>1</sup> and the Herpetofauna Workers' Manual<sup>11</sup>.

Suitable locations for reptiles included areas with habitats such as grassland, scrub, bracken and woodland edges, especially areas with combinations of these habitats, or transitions between them. The site has a south facing slope in the north, therefore additional mats were placed within this area.

83 artificial refugia were individually numbered for reference and distributed within suitable habitats to create basking and refuge sites. These included heavy-duty mineral roofing felt (felts) of approximately 0.5m x 0.5m square.

Refugia were placed within suitable areas of:

- Dry, species-rich, undisturbed open habitat with a mix of sparse and dense vegetation.
- Sunny south-facing slopes.

The artificial refugia were left in situ for one week prior to checking to allow time for the refugia to 'bed-in', and to allow time for reptiles to locate them. The location of the refugia is illustrated in Figure 3.



**FIGURE 3: REPTILE MAT LOCATIONS**  
(Reproduced under licence from Google Earth Pro.)

<sup>11</sup> Gent, T & Gibson, S. 2003. Herpetofauna Workers' Manual. Joint Nature Conservation Committee Peterborough. 2nd Edition.



7 site visits were made in September to check the site for signs of reptile presence. Surveys were undertaken either early in the morning or late afternoon during appropriate weather conditions. The majority of the surveys took place in optimal conditions, between 09:00 and 11:30 hours or 16:00 to 17:00 hours<sup>12</sup> during days when air temperatures were between 10°C and 17°C, with intermittent or hazy sunshine and light cloud. Surveys avoided days with strong winds or rainfall.

Survey techniques included:

- Walking slowly, paying particular attention to the sunny side of vegetation, edges between vegetation types, sheltered spots that act as suntraps and changes in vegetation height.
- Assessing species basking on top of and sheltering under the refugia. Refugia were lifted and replaced carefully, taking care not to squash retreating animals.
- Searching under other refuge sites within the area such as old sheeting, rock piles etc. Slowworms in particular will shelter under discarded items such as rubber car mats, plastic sheeting, and carpet.
- Searching potential basking sites such as south facing slopes, with binoculars whilst slowing moving through the site with minimum disturbance. Care was taken to avoid disturbance prior to visual sightings.

The species, sex (where possible), age (where possible) and location of any reptiles observed was recorded, together with a description of the surrounding vegetation structure and connectivity, aspect and topography. Incidental signs of reptiles such as potential burrows, sloughed skins etc., and incidental records of other species such as amphibians were also recorded.

#### D.1.1 C7.2 TIMING

Initial site inspection was undertaken on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 when 83 artificial refugia were placed in suitable locations and habitats throughout the site. A total of 7 walkover surveys including refugia inspection (artificial and naturally occurring) were subsequently conducted on the following dates.

TABLE 2: SURVEY DATES AND TIMES		
Date	Start Time	End Time
14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	09:00	11:00
16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	09:00	11:00
18 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	09:00	11:00
21 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	09:00	11:00
23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2020	09:00	11:00
25 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	09:00	11:00
28 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	09:00	11:00

This level of survey is considered sufficient to determine the presence or likely absence of native reptile species.

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<sup>12</sup> Froglife 1998. Evaluating local mitigation/translocation programmes: maintaining best practice and lawful standards.



D.1.2 C7.3 WEATHER CONDITIONS

**TABLE 3: ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Start Temp. (°C)</b>	<b>End Temp. (°C)</b>	<b>Cloud Cover</b>	<b>Precipitation</b>	<b>Wind Conditions</b>
14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	15	16	100	None	F2
16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	12	14	100	None	F2
18 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	14	16	20	None	F3
21 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	11	12	25	None	F1
23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2020	10	10	25	Light drizzle	F2
25 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	10	10	40	None	F1
28 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	10	11	50	None	F1

## D.2 PERSONNEL

The table below details the personnel who undertook the survey work.

TABLE 4: PERSONNEL			
Name	Position	Professional Qualifications	Natural England Survey Licence Numbers
Gemma Cone	Ecologist	BSc MSc ACIEEM	2016-21884-CLS-CLS (GCN*), 2016-22634-CLS-CLS (Bats)
Declan Ghee	Senior Ecologist	BSc ACIEEM	2016 26454 CLS CLS (GCN) 2018-38363 CLS CLS (Bats)
Zoe Dunnett	Graduate Ecologist	BSc	-

Further details of experience and qualifications are available at [www.e3ecology.co.uk](http://www.e3ecology.co.uk).

## D.3 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The relative value of the ecological receptors (habitats, species and designated sites) was assessed using a geographical frame of reference. For designated sites this is generally a straightforward process with the assigned designation generally being indicative of a particular value, e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest are designated under national legislation and are therefore generally considered to be receptors of national value. The assignment of value to non-designated receptors is less straightforward and as recognised by the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management<sup>13</sup>, is a complex and subjective process and requires the application of professional judgement.

When assessing the value of species and habitats, relevant documents and legislation are considered including the lists of species and habitat of principal importance annexed to the NERC Act (2006) and those provided within relevant local Biodiversity Action Plans. Data provided through consultation is also considered. These data sources can provide context at a local, regional and national scale.

The table below provides examples of receptors of value at different geographical scales.

TABLE 5: ECOLOGICAL RECEPTOR VALUATION	
Level of Value	Examples
<b>International</b>	An internationally designated site or candidate site.
	A site meeting criteria for international designation.
	A substantial* area of a habitat listed on Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive or smaller areas of such habitat, which are considered likely to be essential to maintain the functionality of a larger whole.
	The site is of functional importance** to a species population with internationally important numbers (i.e. >1% of the biogeographic population)
<b>National</b>	A nationally designated site.
	A substantial* area of a habitat listed as a Habitat of Principal Importance within Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) or smaller areas of such habitat, which are considered likely to be essential to maintain the functionality of a larger whole.
	The site is of functional importance** to a species population with nationally important numbers (i.e. >1% of the national population)
<b>Regional</b>	An area of habitat that falls slightly below the criteria necessary for designation as a SSSI but is considered of greater than county value.
	The site is of functional importance** to a species population with regionally important numbers (i.e. >1% of the regional population)
<b>County</b>	A Local Wildlife Site (LWS) or equivalent, designated at a County level

<sup>13</sup> Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (2016) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland - Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal

**TABLE 5: ECOLOGICAL RECEPTOR VALUATION**

Level of Value	Examples
	A substantial* area of a habitat listed within the relevant County Biodiversity Action plan or smaller areas of such habitat, which are considered likely to be essential to maintain the functionality of a larger whole. The site is of functional importance** to a species population of county value (i.e. >1% of the county population)
<b>District</b>	A Local Wildlife Site (LWS) or equivalent, designated at a District level A substantial* area of a habitat listed within the relevant District Biodiversity Action plan or smaller areas of such habitat, which are considered likely to be essential to maintain the functionality of a larger whole. The site is of functional importance** to a species population of district value (i.e. >1% of the district population)
<b>Parish</b>	Area of habitat or species population considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource within the context of the parish. Local Nature Reserves
<b>Local</b>	Habitats and species that contribute to local biodiversity but are not exceptional in the context of the parish.
<b>Low</b>	Habitats that are unexceptional and common to the local area.
<p><i>*Substantial defined as 'of considerable size or value within that area based on professional judgement, rather than a small, inconsequential area'</i></p> <p><i>** Functional importance defined as 'a feature which, based on professional judgement, is of importance to the day to day functioning of the population, the loss of which would have a detectable adverse effect on that population'</i></p>	

## **E. RESULTS**

### **E.1 DESKTOP STUDY**

#### **E.1.1 PRE-EXISTING INFORMATION**

##### **LOCAL KNOWLEDGE**

The site owner has not reported any sightings of reptiles.

#### **E.1.2 HABITATS**

The site is situated in an area dominated by pasture fields with hedgerows, areas of woodland and scrub. Mosaic habitats on site comprise young plantation broadleaved woodland, dense scrub and coarse semi-improved grassland. A mown track runs along the southern boundary and up the centre of the site with areas of shorter grassland and ephemeral vegetation adjacent to the track (pictured LHS below).

No features suitable for hibernating reptiles, such as log or rubble piles were recorded. The site is well-connected to habitats in the surrounding area of good suitability for reptiles.



The site is occasionally used for game bird and deer stalking.

A single common lizard was recorded basking on a tile along the northern boundary on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Other species recorded during the surveys include common toad and field vole.

### **E.2 CONSTRAINTS / LIMITATIONS TO SURVEY**

Due to the timing of commission, refugia were allowed to 'bed in' for 1 week rather than the optimum 2 weeks. When the refugia was placed, some grassland was pulled out to allow the mats closer contact with the ground so they were not sitting on top of dense vegetation. Based on the number of visits conducted and the single positive result, it is not considered to have affected the outcome of the surveys.

Reptiles were not handled during the surveys, so as to avoid causing any unnecessary disturbance to the animals. It was not therefore possible to precisely determine the age class of individuals recorded.

The number and season of the surveys undertaken considered sufficient to allow an accurate assessment of use of the site by native reptiles. Assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on reptile populations throughout the year is based on professional judgement. The design of mitigation and enhancement measures in relation to the proposed works is based on field survey data and on professional expertise.

It should be noted that this report reflects the findings at the time of survey and if no development happens within twelve months of the date of this report, then checking surveys to update the information, ideally during April, May or September, will be required.

## **F. SITE ASSESSMENT**

### **F.1 ASSESSMENT OF SURVEY FINDINGS**

The site is considered to be of parish value for reptiles with a low population of common lizard present. Potential increased disturbance of the site is not considered to have a significant effect on reptiles due to the low population present and the low density of lodges.

## **G. IMPACTS**

Impacts in the absence of mitigation include:

- Loss of small areas of suitable habitat for reptiles through construction of the lodges.
- Low risk of harm to reptiles during development.

## **H. MITIGATION**

Mitigation will include the following:

- Vegetation that is to be cleared will first be strimmed to a height of 10cm, ideally during warm weather when reptiles are active, and left overnight to allow any reptiles present to escape.
- Once any vegetation is removed and before any ground works are undertaken, the areas will be checked first for the presence of reptiles.
- If any reptiles are found during the clearance operations then works will halt in that area and the ecologist will be contacted, who will oversee the relocation of the animals to adjacent areas of suitable habitat that are not to be affected by development.

## **I. ENHANCEMENT**

The following enhancement of the site for reptiles is recommended:

- The provision of log piles and turf-capped mound hibernacula within shrubby areas or tall grassland/woodland edge habitat to provide cover and hibernation opportunities. Two hibernacula should be constructed should measure at least 2m x 2m x 1m tall. Pipes logs and stones can be incorporated to create crevices inside the structure.
- The creation of compost piles/piles of grass cuttings to provide warm areas for adult reptiles.

## **J. CONCLUSION**

With the recommended mitigation detailed above, proposals can proceed with no significant adverse effect on reptiles. Proposals provide an opportunity for ecological benefit through enhancement of the site for reptiles through the creation of two hibernacula, which are currently absent on the site.

## **APPENDIX 1. STATUTORILY AND NON- STATUTORILY DESIGNATED SITES**

### **STATUTORILY DESIGNATED SITES**

#### **RAMSAR SITE**

Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, agreed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. The Convention recognizes wetlands as important ecosystems and includes a range of wetland types from marsh to both fresh and salt water habitats. The wetlands can also include additional areas adjacent to the main water-bodies such as river banks or coastal areas where appropriate.

#### **SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION**

SACs are designated under the EC Habitats Directive and are areas which have been identified as best representing the range and variety of habitats and (non-bird) species listed on Annexes I and II to the Directive. SACs are designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 unless they are offshore.

#### **SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**

SSSIs are designated as sites which are examples of important flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features. They are notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with improved provisions introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. They are often components of larger SACs or SPAs.

#### **NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE (NNR)**

NNRs are designated by Natural England under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and support important ecosystems which are managed for conservation. They may also provide important opportunities for recreation and scientific study.

#### **COUNTRY PARKS**

Country Parks are statutorily designated and managed by local authorities in England and Wales under the Countryside Act 1968. They do not necessarily have any nature conservation importance, but provide opportunities for recreation and leisure near urban areas.

#### **LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR)**

LNRs are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by local authorities in consultation with Natural England. They are managed for nature conservation and used as a recreational and educational resource.

### **NON-STATUTORILY DESIGNATED SITES**

#### **NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION PROPERTY**

These are sites of biodiversity importance which are managed as reserves by a range of NGOs. Examples include sites owned by the RSPB, the Woodland Trust and the Wildlife Trusts

#### **LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE (LWS)**

These are sites defined within the local plans under the Town and Country Planning system and are material considerations of any planning application determination. They are designated by the local authority although criteria can vary between authorities.