

Land at Sunningdale, The Street, Sedlescombe

Reptile Survey and Mitigation Strategy

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Client: Bloomfields



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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Scheme

Following a 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' which identified the risk of reptiles being present, KB Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a reptile survey with regards to a proposed development at Land at Sunningdale, The Street, Sedlescombe, Battle, TN33 0QB in support of a planning application for the erection of new dwellings.

1.2 Survey Objectives

The purpose of the survey was to assess the likely impact of the scheme on reptiles, and to assist in demonstrating compliance with wildlife legislation and planning policy objectives.

The key objectives of this survey were to:

- Confirm the presence / likely absence of reptile species within suitable terrestrial habitat.
- Provide recommendations for necessary mitigation work.

1.3 Limitations

This report records the potential for flora and fauna evident on the day of the site visit. It does not record any flora or fauna that may appear at other times of the year and, as such, were not evident at the time of visit.

The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of a qualified ecologist and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited in this document.

2 Methodology

Detailed reptile surveys were undertaken using artificial refuges, in accordance with best practice guidelines (Froglife, 1999). A total of 11 artificial cover objects were installed 1st June 2019. They were then checked on seven separate occasions in June and July 2019. Numbers of each reptile species were recorded, as well as the air temperature. Naturally occurring refuges were also checked for reptiles, and any additional incidental sightings were also recorded.

Surveys were only undertaken during suitable weather, they were not carried out during wind or rain. They were undertaken by Megan Austin, who has over seven years' experience in reptile survey and mitigation work.

Location of artificial cover objects



3 Results

The survey recorded slow worms *Anguis fragilis* and grass snakes *Natrix natrix*. Table 1 below gives the details of the survey.

Table 1: Results and weather conditions for each survey visit

Reptile survey, Sunningdale, The Street, Sedlescombe, Battle												
Refuges installed on 01/06/2019												
Survey	Date	Time	Average Air Temp. deg C:	Wind	Cloud cover, %	Slow worms			Grass snakes			Other notes
						adults		Sub-adult	juveniles	adults	Sub-adult	
						Male	Female					
1	21.06.2019	16:00	18	light	40							289
2	24.06.2019	13:45	18	none	100		1					289, 283
3	05.07.2019	19:30	17	v.light	0		1					283
4	09.07.2019	9:20	15	v.light	100		1	1				282, 289
5	13.07.2019	9:30	17	v.light	0		1	1				284, 283
6	18.07.2019	18:00	17	light	100	1			1			285, 284
7	22.07.2019	7:30	17	v.light	50			1				282

4 Legislation

All British native reptiles are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA). This legislation prohibits to:

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- Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill or injure a common reptile species (which includes slow worms).
- Sell, barter, exchange, transport or offer for sale reptiles or any part of them.

The Abandonment of Animals Act 1960 (as amended) may also apply when translocation of reptiles are proposed as part of a mitigation strategy. As such, care must be taken to ensure that any receptor sites are suitable for the species in terms of habitat and carrying capacity in order that minimal stress and suffering is imposed upon the reptiles concerned.

5 Recommendations

The proposal will entail the loss of a small amount of reptile habitat. The details of the proposed development were not known at the time of writing this report but it is expected that the development will not cover the whole land and that it should be possible to retain the population on site, by enhancing the areas of land outside the works footprint. Should this not be the case, a suitable receptor site would need to be sought.

Prior to any ground works starting, a translocation exercise should take place, entailing the erection of reptile-proof fence around all area of the site where ground works will take place, following some vegetation management (outside of the bird nesting season as birds are expected to be nesting in the bramble scrub and trees), the installation of refuges and the trapping of animals for a number of sessions¹ between March and October, during suitable weather conditions (i.e. cool weather with no heavy rain but sunny intervals between showers, and ambient air temperatures between 10-20°C).

¹ trapping ceasing after five clear days with no trapping during suitable weather conditions