

# Reptile Survey Information

Reptiles can be found in both countryside and urban settings and it is important that an assessment for their presence/absence should be carried out on any suitable habitat. It is important that reptiles are considered early in a project as, due to the specific times when surveys can be carried out, the need for a survey may cause delays if it is left until the planning proposals are nearing submission.

## Survey Methodology

A survey is usually carried using a combination of direct observations and the deployment of artificial refuges. Refuges are comprised of sheets of corrugated tin and squares of roofing felt (approximately 0.75m x 0.75m) that are laid in suitable situations throughout the site. The artificial refugia warm up in the early morning or afternoon sun and reptiles are attracted to the ideal basking conditions (warm yet sheltered) underneath.



Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*)

Direct observations are undertaken by walking slowly across the site and scanning the habitats for reptiles, as well as listening for the sound of rustling vegetation.

The survey generally focuses on small areas of habitat that are considered most suitable to reptiles, although direct observations can be carried out across the entirety of a site. The artificial refuges are checked on **seven** occasions to determine presence or presumed absence. Should a population estimate be required, additional survey visits may be necessary.

## Survey Timings

The optimal time for undertaking reptile surveys is during **April and May or September** during suitable weather conditions. The weather at the time of the survey should be warm and sunny. Surveys can also be carried out during the summer months; however more survey visits are generally required.



Low Activity     
  Sub-optimal Survey Time  
 Optimal Survey Period     
  Habitat Assessments



Grass snake (*Natrix natrix*)

## Reptile Mitigation

Depending upon the development proposals and/or the number and species of reptiles found during the reptile survey, a variety of mitigation options are available. The preferred solution is the retention of habitat suitable for reptiles within the development and the provision of additional habitat or enhancements to this existing habitat. However, where this is not possible, it may be necessary to remove the animals from the site.



Reptile-proof fencing

This may be done by displacement, in which the habitat is manipulated to encourage the reptiles to move into suitable surrounding habitat of their own accord. If no additional suitable habitat occurs within the vicinity, it may be necessary to trap the animals and remove them, with fencing installed to prevent the animals re-entering the site (our Land Management Team can carry out the installation of reptile fencing). This process usually takes place over a minimum of 30 days, although this is site specific and can involve further surveys to determine a suitable receptor site.

Further information on mitigation methods is available on our websites at [www.emec-ecology.co.uk](http://www.emec-ecology.co.uk) and [www.emec-land-management.co.uk](http://www.emec-land-management.co.uk)



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