

## LAND AT CHICHELE ROAD, OXTED: REPTILES

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The potential presence of reptiles on site was assessed considering the habitats present (availability of refugia and basking areas) and suitability of surrounding environment. The assessment of habitats was informed by the Herpetofauna Workers Manual (Gent and Gibson, 2003). Where possible, attempts to confirm reptile presence on site were made following Froglife Advice Sheet 10 – Surveying for Reptiles through direct observation in reptile “hotspots” and checking of any existing refugia.
- 1.2 Seven presence / absence surveys were targeted to areas most likely to contain reptile habitats and to those areas that may be disturbed as part of the scheme. Searches were undertaken when the air temperature was between 9°C and 18 °C with intermittent or hazy sunshine, little or no wind, and no rainfall.

### 2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1.1 Artificial refuges of bitumen roofing felt were deployed in suitable habitat on 22nd May 2024; the grassland margins along the woodland and hedgerow boundaries. Thirty refuges were deployed across the site in accordance with best practice, as shown in Figure 3. The refugia were left to ‘bed in’, following which they were checked for the presence of reptiles on seven separate occasions from 6<sup>th</sup> June to 16<sup>th</sup> July (see Table 1 below).
- 2.1.2 Where reptiles were observed, the species, number of individuals and location were recorded by the surveyor. The sex and maturity of the reptiles were also recorded where feasible. Peak counts of each species were used to assess populations as either ‘low’, ‘good’ or ‘exceptional’ according to Froglife criteria (Froglife, 1999).
- 2.1.3 During the latter part of the survey period, a number of refugia (approximately 10) appeared to have been removed, however, this only affected the final survey and is not considered to be a significant limitation.



Figure 1 Locations of deployed reptile refugia

## 2.2 Results

2.2.1 The environmental variables for the surveys are detailed in Table 1 and the findings of the targeted reptile surveys are shown in Table 2.

Table 1 Environmental variables recorded during surveys

Visit	Date/ Time	Temperature (°C)	Wind Speed (m/s)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (octas)
1	06/06/2024 (13:50)	16	5	55	3
2	24/06/2024 (20:20)	18	2.2	62	6
3	25/06/2024 (07:45)	17.5	1	57	2
4	04/07/2024 (18:15)	18	7	49	5
5	09/07/2024 (07:20)	17.5	4	69	4
6	17/07/2024 (07:30)	17	4	69	4
7	07/08/2024 (07:00)	16.5	1.9	48	1

Table 2 Reptile survey results

Survey Number	Date	Findings	Locations of Reptiles
1	06/06/2024	None found.	N/A
2	24/06/2024	None found.	N/A
3	25/06/2024	None found.	N/A
4	04/07/2024	None found.	N/A
5	16/07/2024	None found.	N/A
6	17/07/2024	None found.	N/A
7	07/08/2024	None found.	N/A

## 2.3 Summary

- 2.3.1 There were no observations of reptiles on any of the seven visits undertaken between June to August.
- 2.3.2 The site was found to support a negligible population of reptiles, as on no occasion were reptiles discovered using refuges.