

Appendix 9.3 Reptile Survey, September 2014



**Reptile Survey
Former Bierley Treatment Works
Oakenshaw**

Report reference: R-1623-03
May 2014

Report Title:	Reptile Survey Former Bierley Treatment Works Oakenshaw
Report Reference:	R-1623-03
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Summary Statement

Survey work is ongoing; at present 4 out of the required 7 survey visits have been undertaken. Reptiles have not been found at the site thus far.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological Ltd was commissioned to carry out reptile survey on the former Bierley Treatment Works, Oakenshaw, West Yorkshire. The site comprises areas of pasture fields, water course, woodland edge and rank grassland habitats developing on the abandoned water treatment works.
2. Survey was required to provide information on the likelihood of impacts on reptiles arising from outline proposals to re-develop the site.

Figure 1 Site boundary (red line) and reptile survey extent (red shading)



3. The requirement for reptile survey was highlighted by a walkover survey and records search carried out by Brooks Ecological in 2013 (R-1623-01). The extent of the potential reptile survey is highlighted in the above figure.
4. Grass snake populations are known in the wider landscape occupying similar habitat types.

Legislation and Guidance

5. The site lies in the natural range of four widespread species of reptile (common lizard, slow worm, adder and grass snake). These all receive limited protection under part of subsection 9(1) and all of subsection 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This affords protection against intentional and reckless killing or injuring and trade.
6. Destruction of known habitats whilst reptiles are present may therefore lead to an offence of killing or injury.
7. Destruction of known habitat without provision for the safe escape of animals into further suitable habitat able to support them can lead to offences under the Abandonment of Animals Act 1960 (as amended).
8. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 sets out the responsibility of public authorities to Biodiversity. This Act provides lists of habitats and species to which the LPA's consideration must be given when exercising their functions (e.g. considering planning permission). All reptile species are listed under section 41 of the Act making them and their habitat a consideration of planning.

Records

9. West Yorkshire Ecology was contacted and requested to supply records of all protected and notable species within 2km of the application site.
10. No records were returned for reptiles in the 2km search radius, however grass snake populations are known in the wider area where they inhabit woodland and river corridor habitats with stone walls, rubble piles and pylon bases providing shelter, refuge and potential hibernation sites.

Methodology

11. Reference was made to The Herpetofauna Worker's Manual (Gent and Gibson, 2003) for the survey methodology with seven official reptile survey visits being carried out.
12. In order to increase the chance of finding any reptiles present, artificial refuges were placed across the site in locations likely to support reptiles e.g. on the southern edge of vegetated areas and on banks with a southerly and westerly aspect. Approximately 91 refuges were laid within the surveyed area. This number of refuges equals / exceeds guidelines of using 5-10 refuges/ha set out in the Froglife Advice Sheet 10.

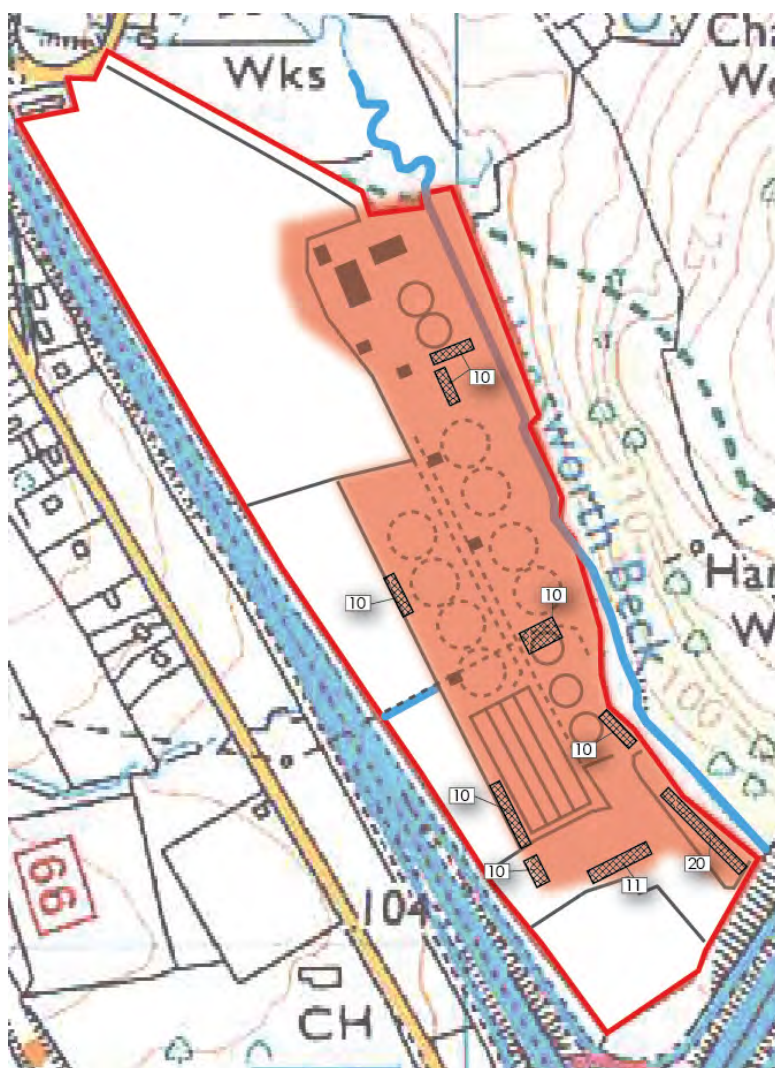


Figure 2

Approximate location of refuges.

13. An appraisal of the site by surveyors allowed an assessment of the location of target habitat features such as potential hibernaculae, refuges and foraging grounds. This allowed surveys of this large site to be targeted, depending on season and conditions - a strategy which will considerably increase the potential of surveyors encountering reptiles.

14. On each survey visit both the new and existing artificial refugia, such as scattered rubble, were approached quietly to observe any basking reptiles. These were then lifted to observe any reptiles that may be sheltering beneath. Additionally, the site was systematically walked (transect surveys) looking for reptiles that may be basking or foraging away from refugia.
15. These transect walks were carried out carefully with the surveyor walking slowly and looking well forward to attempt to spot reptiles at distance. This technique is necessary because reptiles have very good eyesight and generally are aware of surveyors at short distances, rapidly taking cover to avoid detection.
16. Reptiles can also leave evidence of their presence in the form of shed skin and holes in the ground (e.g. from lizard burrows or grass snake egg laying pits). This form of evidence was also searched for during the survey.
17. The surveys were carried out during suitable conditions as summarised below.

Results

18. Survey work is still ongoing at the site; the results thus far are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Summary of Survey Results

Survey	Date	Conditions	Results
1	27.03.14	Intermittent light showers and sunshine, slight breeze, 6°C	No reptiles
2	03.04.14	Sunshine, still, 12°C	No reptiles
3	16.04.14	Sunshine, still, 16°C	No reptiles
4	27.04.14	Intermittent cloud and sunshine, very little breeze, 10°C	No reptiles
5	-	-	-
6	-	-	-
7	-	-	-

Evaluation & Recommendation

19. No evidence of reptiles or reptile activity has been recorded anywhere within the site.
20. Assuming no reptiles are found during the remaining 3 survey visits, no further action in relation to reptiles will be required and the proposed development can proceed with very little risk of affecting this group.

References

Froglife (1999) *Reptile Survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation*. Froglife Advice Sheet 10. Froglife, Halesworth.

Gent T and Gibson S, 2003, *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual*, JNCC

Hill et al. 2005, *Handbook of Biodiversity Methods*. Cambridge.