



Barton Farm, Winchester

Reptile Survey, 2008

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15th October 2008

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Notice to Interested Parties

To achieve the study objectives stated in this report, we were required to base our conclusions on the best information available during the period of the investigation and within the limits prescribed by our client in the agreement.

No investigative method can completely eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise or incomplete information. Thus, we cannot guarantee that the investigations completely defined the degree or extent of e.g. species abundances or habitat management efficacy described in the report.

Document Information

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0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 0.1 RPS was commissioned by Cala Homes Ltd to survey areas of habitat suitable for reptiles at Barton Farm, Winchester, to determine whether they supported reptiles.
- 0.2 The site primarily comprises a number of large arable fields, with some areas of rough grassland, primarily along field boundaries. It is located on the northern side of Winchester. A railway line runs through the centre of the site.
- 0.3 The survey was carried out in September/October 2008. A total of 90 reptile refugia were set out in 12 groups, and checked for the presence of reptiles on seven separate occasions.
- 0.4 Maximum counts of reptile species recorded during the survey were 12 Slow Worms *Anguis fragilis* and one Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara*. The reptile habitat is widely distributed around the site with reptiles recorded at six different refugia groups. The majority were found along the rough grass at the southern edge of the pony paddocks in the north of the site, along the edge of railway line and along tracks through the site.
- 0.5 The two reptile species recorded on site (Slow Worm and Common Lizard) are partially protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5) applying. As such it is an offence to:
- intentionally kill or injure any individual; and
 - sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale or publish advertisements to buy or sell individual reptiles.
- 0.6 The legislation requires that measures be taken to avoid intentionally killing or injuring any individual reptile. Consequently areas found to support reptiles should either (a) be retained as existing rough grassland habitat within the proposed development layout (usually the preferred option) or alternative habitat created on- or off-site (but in the vicinity) and the reptiles relocated to the newly created habitat. If sufficient suitable habitat is retained adjacent to works areas supporting reptiles, the reptiles can be displaced into the retained habitat through habitat modification (usually strimming of vegetation to make the existing habitat unsuitable, encouraging them to move to the retained habitat outside the works area).

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 RPS was commissioned by Cala Homes Ltd to survey areas of habitat suitable for reptiles at Barton Farm, Winchester, to determine whether they supported reptiles.
- 1.2 The site primarily comprises a number of large arable fields and is located on the northern side of Winchester. The site is bordered by existing housing to the west and south, farmland to the north and existing housing to the east. A railway line runs through the centre of the site. The survey was carried out in September/October 2008.
- 1.3 The aim of the survey was to determine whether reptiles were present on the site and assess the species composition and abundance of the reptile population (if present).
- 1.4 The four common UK reptile species (Adder, Grass Snake, Slow Worm and Common Lizard) are all partially protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5) applying. As such it is an offence to:
- intentionally kill or injure any individual; and
 - sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale or publish advertisements to buy or sell individual reptiles.
- 1.5 A general habitat requirement of reptile species is sunny, undisturbed glades and/or slopes, usually in the vicinity of some thick cover. Further details of species-specific habitat preferences are given below for the three most widely distributed species, which may potentially occur at Barton Farm.

Common Lizard

- This species occupies a large range of habitat types. Their home range is usually quite small.
- Open patches to bask in, especially piles of rubble and wood in sunny areas.
- Ground cover of Ivy is especially good for lizards for feeding and to avoid predators.
- Dense but short vegetation, open to the sun.

Slow Worm

- Also occupies a large range of habitat types.
- Thick ground vegetation – they bask less often than other British reptiles.

- Regularly frequent habitats influenced by man, such as railway cuttings and gardens.

Grass Snake

- This species has a large home range.
- Grass snakes are highly aquatic and are strongly associated with riparian habitat.
- Compost heaps or dung piles are good egg laying habitat for Grass Snakes.

2 METHODS

- 2.1 Sheets of roofing felt (refugia) were placed in areas deemed suitable for reptiles at the receptor site (Figure 2.1). A total of 90 sheets were set out in 12 groups (Figure 2.1) and these were checked on seven occasions for reptiles, which may use them for basking upon and sheltering underneath. The surveys were carried out by Danial Winchester, Paul Beatson and Clare FitzGibbon.
- 2.2 The ideal months for reptile surveys are considered to be March, April and September (Gent & Gibson, 1998). The survey was carried out in September/early October 2008, with the reptile refugia put out on the 22nd August 2008.
- 2.3 Refugia were made of heavy duty roofing felt and measured approximately 1m². They were placed in likely basking spots, areas of rough grass and set-aside habitat.
- 2.4 Where possible, surveys were undertaken when weather conditions were most suitable for reptile surveying, which excludes heavy rain, strong wind and temperatures below 10°C and above 26°C. The most suitable conditions are intermittent or hazy sunshine, and little or no wind. The weather during each survey visit was recorded.

3 RESULTS

- 3.1 Table 3.1 gives the weather conditions recorded for every survey visit. The results of the reptile survey are given in Table 3.2. In addition to the reptiles, a number of Common Toads *Bufo bufo* were recorded under the reptile refugia.

Table 3.1: Date, time and weather conditions for the reptile sheet checks

Date	Temp °C	Weather
08/09/08	14	Overcast with some sun

10/09/08	15	Overcast with some sun and light rain
19/09/08	14	Mild and sunny
22/09/08	15	Mild, hazy sun
25/09/08	16	Mild, mix of cloud and sun
08/10/08	16	Mild and sunny
10/10/08	16	Mild and sunny

Table 3.2: Reptile survey results: number of reptiles recorded at each group of refugia

Date	Common Lizard	Slow Worm
08/09/08	Gp 3: 1 x Ad	Gp 2: 4 x Ad, 1 x Sub-A Gp 3: 3 x Ad Gp 6: 1 x Juv Gp 9: 1 x Ad Gp 10: 2 x Ad Total number: 12
10/09/08	Gp 3: 1 x Ad	Gp 2: 7 x Ad, 1 x Sub-Ad Gp 3: 1 x Ad Gp 9: 1 x Ad Gp 10: 2 x Ad Total number: 12
19/09/08		Gp 2: 3 x Ad Total number: 3
22/09/08		Gp 2: 2 x Ad, 1 x Sub Ad, 1 x Juv Gp 3: 2 x Ad Gp 10: 1 x sub Ad Total number: 7
25/09/08		Gp 2: 1 x Ad, 1 x Sub Ad Gp 6: 1 x Ad Gp 10: 1 x Ad Gp 11: 1 x Juv Total number: 5
08/10/08		Gp 2: 2 x Ad Gp 10: 1 x Ad Total number: 3
10/10/08		Gp 7: 1 x Ad Gp 9: 1 x Juv Total number: 2

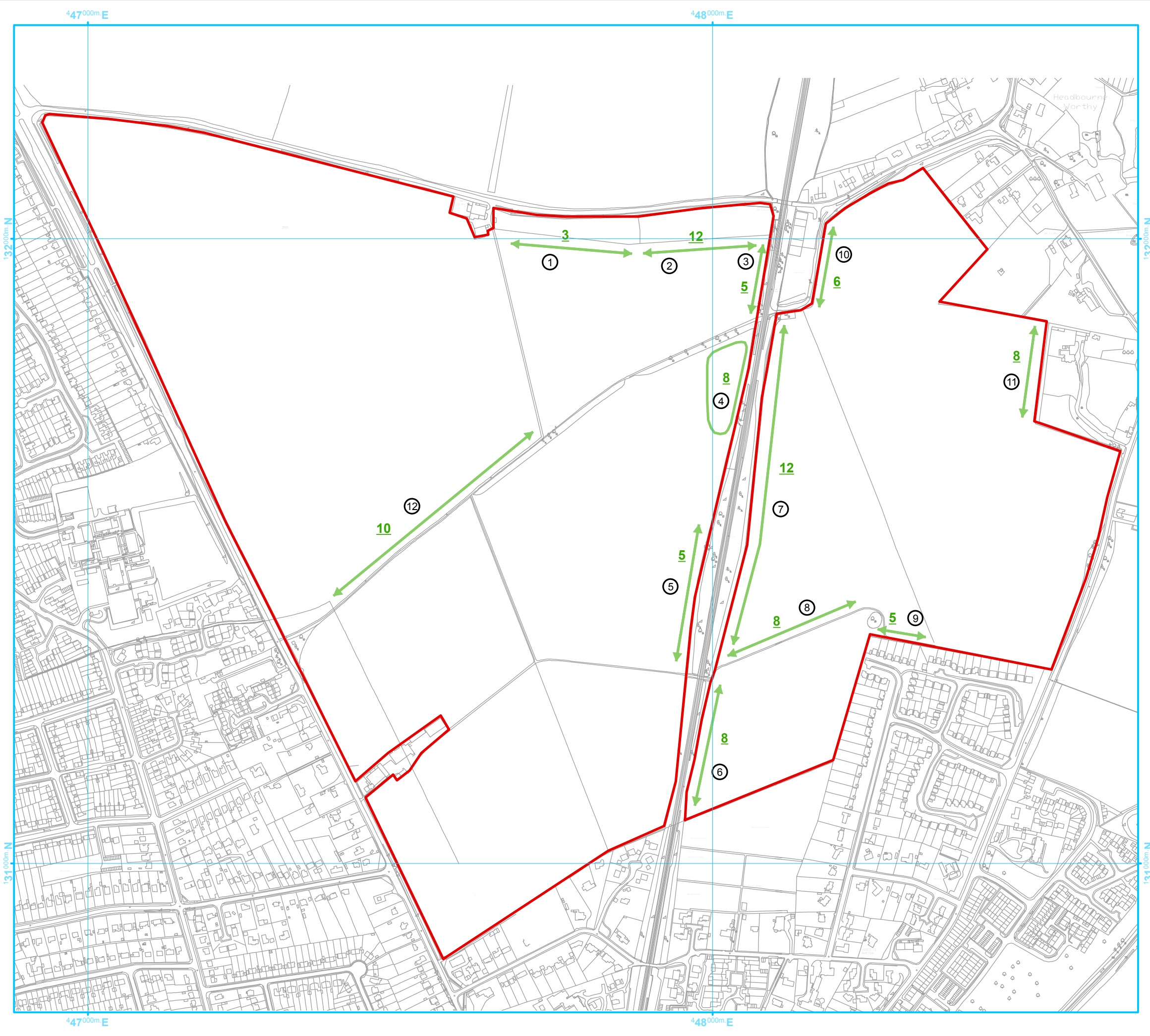
4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Maximum counts of each reptile species recorded during the survey were 12 Slow Worms and one Common Lizard. The reptile habitat is widely distributed around the site with reptiles recorded at six different refugia groups. The majority were found along the rough grass at the southern edge of the pony paddocks in the north of the site, along the edge of railway line and along tracks through the site. Very few were recorded in the set-aside areas.
- 4.2 The legislation requires that measures be taken to avoid intentionally killing or injuring any individual reptile. Consequently areas found to support reptiles should either (a) be retained as existing rough grassland habitat within the proposed development layout (usually the preferred option) or alternative habitat created on- or off-site (but in the vicinity) and the reptiles relocated to the newly created habitat. If sufficient suitable habitat is retained adjacent to works areas supporting reptiles, the reptiles can be displaced into the retained habitat through habitat modification (usually strimming of vegetation to make the existing habitat unsuitable, encouraging them to move to the retained habitat outside the works area).

5 REFERENCES

- Gent, T. & Gibson, S. (1998). *Herpetofauna Workers Manual*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Figure 2.1. Location of reptile refugia, Barton Farm 2008



Legend

- Site boundary
- ↔ Reptile refugia
- 1 Group number
- 3 Number in group

Rev:	Date:	Amendment:	Name:	Checked:
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■ Data Source: RPS 2008

Status: **FINAL**

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■ Client: **Cala Homes (South) Ltd**
 Project: Barton Farm

Title: **Location of reptile refugia,
 Barton Farm 2008**

Scale: 1:6,000 @A3

Date: 30/09/2008 Datum: OSGB36 Projection: BNG
 Drawn: KM Checked: CF Job Ref: JPP1977

■ Figure No: **2.1** Revision: **A**