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MAES-Y-DROLL

REPTILE SURVEY REPORT

Prepared for: **Stephenson Halliday**

Date: **November 2025**

Report Reference: **JN00777/D02**

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DRAWINGS

JN00777 DW07a & 7b	Reptile Location Plan
JN00777 DW08	GCN Location Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 SK Environmental Solutions Ltd (SKE) was commissioned by Stephenson Halliday to undertake a suite of reptile surveys on Maes-Y-Droll Quarry, Graianrhyd, Denbighshire, to assess the usage of the site by reptiles.

Definition of Terms

- 1.2 The term 'site' is used in this report to refer to the land within the red line boundary shown on Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Site Location Plan

Site Description

- 1.3 The site is a currently inactive limestone quarry north of the village of Graianrhyd, Denbighshire, broadly comprising two parcels of land divided by a public bridgeway. The main quarry area forms the larger, southern parcel while the smaller northern parcel comprises an area of previously disturbed ground and includes several settling lagoons. The

habitats across both parcels are varied, with areas of bare ground, colonising vegetation, scrub (particularly gorse), bracken and woodland, along with ponds / lagoons.

- 1.4 The surrounding landscape is dominated by agricultural grazing pasture with occasional areas of scrub and woodland. The larger Graig Quarry is located approximately 1km west of the site.

Aims and Objectives

- 1.5 The primary aim of this report is to set out the methodology followed for undertaking reptile surveys at the site and to provide the results of the surveys in accordance with the relevant good practise survey guidance, planning policies and legislative framework. The key objective of the surveys are to:

- Determine the presence or likely absence of reptile species within the site;
- Identify status and distribution of reptiles within the survey area (if present); and.
- Identify any reptile field signs and distribution within the survey area (if present).

Development Proposal

- 1.6 Broad proposals are for the resumption of mineral extraction from the site.

2. LEGISLATION

2.1 The UK supports four species of “common” reptile which are found throughout a number of habitat types such as rough grassland, scrub, woodland edge and habitats associated with roadside verges. These species are:

- Common lizard,
- Slow worm *Angus fragilis*,
- Grass snake *Natrix Helvetica*; and
- Adder *Vipera berus*

2.2 The more threatened and rarer species, sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* and smooth snake *Coronella austriaca*, are fully protected in the UK under the combined measures of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitat Regulations) and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA). These species are highly restricted in the UK, and the Project is beyond their known range.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

2.3 All common reptile species receive partial legal protection in England and Wales, arising from Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill or injure these species.

Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act

2.4 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) covering 2011-2020 has been superseded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2012).

2.5 The framework identifies 65 Priority Habitats and 1,150 Priority Species that are in need of protection. This list has been used to define habitats and species of ‘Principal Importance’ in England (the Section 41 list) as required by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

2.6 All six reptile species are listed as Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) under the NERC Act (2006). All planning decisions must be made with regard for their conservation and any priority actions (Natural England, 2014) associated with them.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan

- 2.7 UK BAP priority species were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). All six reptile species are included within the UKBAP.

3. METHODOLOGY

Field Survey

- 3.1 Reptile surveys were undertaken by experienced SKE ecologists and were conducted in accordance with the methodologies described in *Evaluating local mitigation/ translocation programmes: Maintaining best practise and lawful standards* (HGBI, Halesworth, 1988), *Reptile survey; an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation* (Froglife Advice Sheet 10, Halesworth 1999) and *Surveying for reptiles, tips, techniques and skills to help you survey for reptiles* (Froglife, Peterborough, 1995).
- 3.2 Artificial cover objects (ACOs) were placed within the areas of suitable habitat across the site on the 27/04/2023. The ACOs comprised a mix of onduline and roofing felt cut to a minimum of 0.5m². 65 ACOs were placed across the survey areas in rough groups of five. The ACOs were numbered, and their locations recorded. Once placed, the ACOs were left *in situ*, undisturbed, for a period of 14 days to allow them to bed in. Figure 2 below shows the locations of the ACOs across the site.

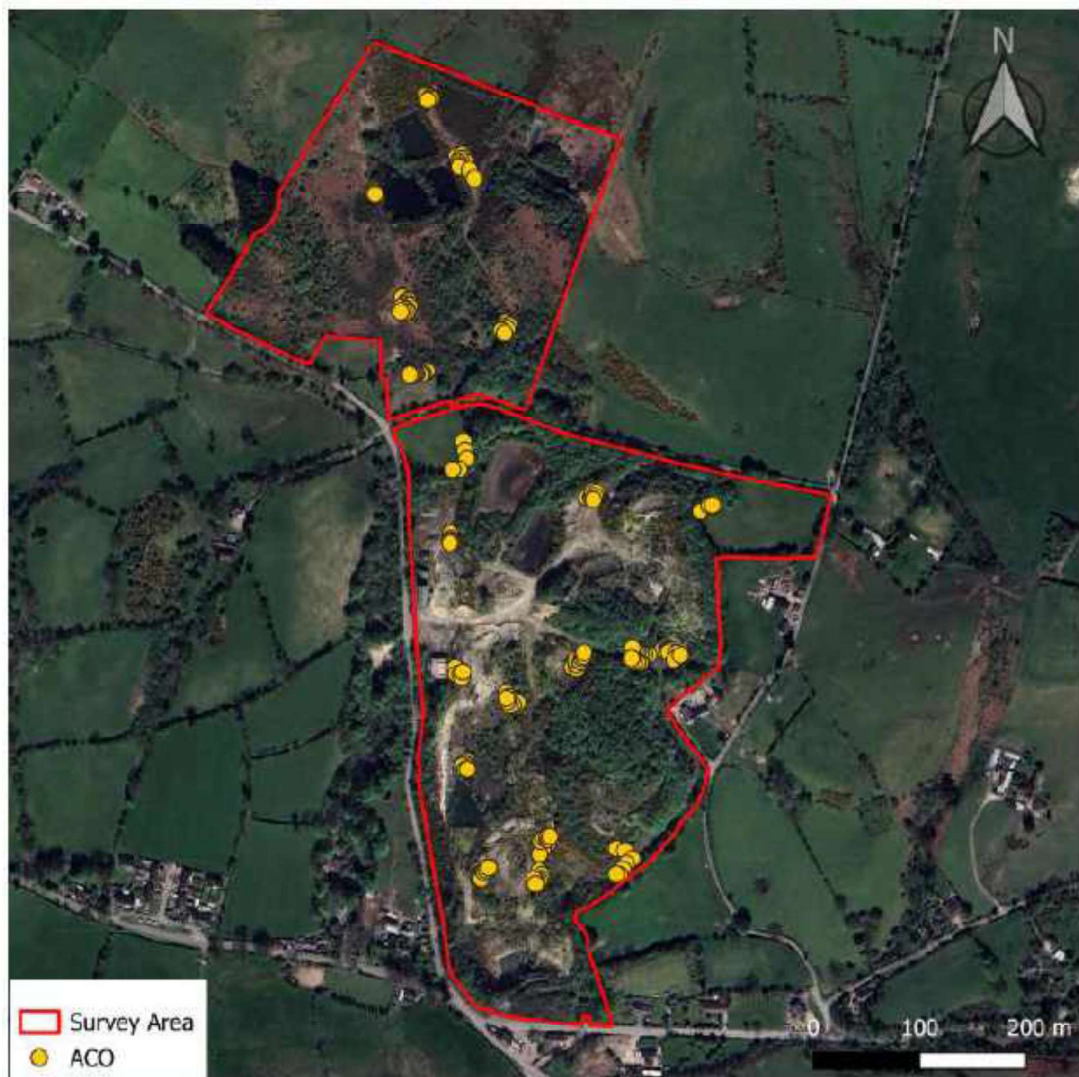


Figure 2. ACO locations

- 3.3 Each survey area was checked for reptiles on seven occasions, with binoculars used to check for reptiles on and between refugia, as well as careful checks being undertaken by the surveyor by lifting each refugia up and carefully assessing the underside. Survey dates and conditions are provided in Table 1, below.

Table 1 – Survey dates and conditions

Date	Weather	Temperature °C
12/09/25	Scattered showers, 60% cloud cover, light breeze	13
16/09/25	Scattered showers, 70% cloud cover, light breeze	14
19/09/25	Dry, 40% cloud cover, moderate breeze	18
24/09/25	Dry, 40% cloud cover, calm	13
25/09/25	Dry, 30% cloud cover, moderate breeze	15
26/09/25	Dry, 20% cloud cover, light air	11
1/10/25	Dry, 70% cloud cover, fresh breeze	16

- 3.4 During each check the surveyor recorded the details of all reptiles encountered species, life stage (adult, sub-adult, juvenile) and where possible, sex.

Limitations

- 3.5 The survey period spanned both optimal (September) and suboptimal (October) months, as the per set out within the guidelines. However, the daytime temperatures throughout the survey work remained in double figures and as such this is not considered to have posed a constraint to the results. No other limitations to the survey were recorded.

Personnel and Equipment

- 3.6 All survey work was carried out by experienced SK surveyors.

4. RESULTS

- 4.1 In total thirty records of common lizard were identified during the surveys. Table 2 (below) lists all records of reptiles found during the surveys.
- 4.2 Full survey results tables can be provided upon request.

Table 2. Field survey results				
Date	Species	Adult	Sub-adult	Juvenile
12/09/25	Common lizard	12	-	-
16/09/25	Common lizard	3	-	-
19/09/25	Common lizard	5	-	-
24/09/25	Common lizard	3	-	-
25/09/25	Common lizard	4	-	-
26/09/25	-	-	-	-
1/10/25	Common lizard	3	-	-

5. DISCUSSION & RECOMENDATIONS

Potential Impacts on Reptiles

- 5.1 At present it is unclear what the proposals for the Maes y Droll site are, however, it is considered that the resumption of minerals operations at the site have the potential to have a deleterious impact upon reptile species through the loss of habitat and the potential killing of reptiles as a result of the works.
- 5.2 Thirty records of adult common lizard have been recorded during the seven surveys undertaken on the site, the locations of which can be seen on Drawings JN00777 7a and 7b. The peak count of which was twelve which was recorded on the 12th September 2025.
- 5.3 The habitat surrounding the wider site is considered to be suitable for supporting other reptile species such as slow worm and grass snake, even though these were not recorded during the September / October surveys.

Further Observations

- 5.4 It should be noted that during the reptile surveys, numerous observations of great crested newts occurred both in the form of adults and juveniles across the site. GCN were recorded on each of the seven survey visits under 27 different ACO's (eight in the northern area and nineteen in the main site). Drawing Number JN00777 D08 GCN Location Plan illustrates the area where GCN were recorded during the reptile surveys in the both the northern area and the main site.

Recommendations

- 5.5 The current plans for the site are the anticipated resumption of mineral extraction; however, SKE are not aware of any firm plans for the site at this stage.
- 5.6 As such no definitive recommendations can be given until the proposals for the resumption of works are known. However, given the level of reptile activity recorded throughout the site and the fact the GCN are also known to be present, it is likely that a GCN licence and / or a precautionary method of working for the reptiles will be required as part of any planning conditions that may be imposed on this site during the application process.

6. REFERENCES

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Department for Transport (2014) National Policy Statement for National Networks, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework

Edgar, P., Foster, J. and Baker, J. (2010) Reptile Habitat Management Handbook. Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth: 276

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

Froglife, (2015) Surveying for reptiles; tips, techniques and skills to help you survey for reptiles. Froglife, Peterborough

Herpetofauna Groups of Great Britain and Ireland (1998) Evaluating local mitigation/translocation programmes: Maintaining best practice and lawful standards. HGBI, Halesworth

JNCC and Defra (on behalf of the Four Countries' Biodiversity Group) (2012) UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

NARRS (2007) Reptile Habitat Guide. National Amphibian and Reptile Recording Scheme

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Priority Actions for S41 Species

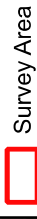
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

DRAWINGS



DRAWING TITLE: Reptile Survey Plan
(Main Site)

KEY:



Survey Area

Reptiles



ACO

N.B. No reptiles were recorded within
the main site

SITE: Maes-Y-Droll
CLIENT: Stephenson Halliday
JOB NUMBER: JN00777
DRAWING NUMBER: JN00777_DW07a
DATE: November 2025
DRAWN/CHECKED: BH/MK
SCALE: NTS



DRAWING TITLE: Reptile Survey Plan
(Northern Area)

KEY:

Survey Area

Reptiles

ACO

Common Lizard



SITE: Maes-Y-Droll
CLIENT: Stephenson Halliday
JOB NUMBER: JN00777
DRAWING NUMBER: JN00777_DW07b
DATE: November 2025
DRAWN/CHECKED: BH/MK
SCALE: NTS



DRAWING TITLE: GCN Location Plan

KEY:



Survey Area



ACOs with GCN recorded

SITE: Maes-Y-Droll

CLIENT: Stephenson Halliday

JOB NUMBER: JN00777

DRAWING NUMBER: JN00777_DW08

DATE: November 2025

DRAWN/CHECKED: JW / MK

SCALE: NTS



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