



Pennant Walters Ltd

Mynydd Glyn Wind Farm

CEMP

Appendix C Reptile Method Statement



This report was prepared by WSP Environment & Infrastructure Solutions UK Limited (formerly known as Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions UK Limited), company registration number 02190074, which is carrying out these services as a subcontractor and/or agent to Wood Group UK Limited

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CEMP Appendix C: Reptile Method Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1.1 The four widespread¹ species of reptile that are native to Britain, namely common or viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), adder (*Vipera berus*) and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded limited protection under Section 9 of this Act. This makes it an offence, inter alia, to:
- Intentionally kill or injure any of these species.
- 1.1.2 In order to comply with legislation, this Method Statement has been developed with reference to best practice guidelines², to describe precautionary practices that must be put in place during works within habitat that has the potential to support reptile or is considered sub-optimal or sufficiently restricted in extent, that direct ecological supervision is not required for all activities.
- 1.1.3 When the measures described below are taken into account, the cumulative risks and impacts on the local reptile population(s) are considered to be negligible. The Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), will oversee and quality-control the implementation of the ecological tasks undertaken, and determine when and where it is appropriate to apply the measures described in this Method Statement. The purpose of this Method Statement is to define the risks to reptiles as a result of the Proposed Development, and to set out a mitigation strategy that will negate or minimise the risk of any potential impacts on these species and contravention of the relevant legislation.
- 1.1.4 ***Any operative who does not follow this Method Statement may be contravening legislation and therefore risks facing prosecution.***

¹ The other native species of British reptile (sand lizard and smooth snake) receive a higher level of protection in England and Wales under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* and the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). However, the distribution of these species is restricted to only a very few sites and none are within the RCP. All marine turtles (*Cheloniidae* and *Dermodochelyidae*) are also protected.

² Herpetofauna Groups of Britain and Ireland (1998). *Evaluating local mitigation/translocation programmes: maintaining best practice and lawful standards*. HGBI advisory notes for Amphibian and Reptile Groups (ARGs). HGBI, c/o Froglife, Halesworth.

2. Toolbox talk

- 2.1.1 As part of the project induction, all site operatives will be briefed by the ECoW to provide them with a basic overview of the life history, habitat requirements, identification and legal protection granted to reptiles. The toolbox talk will also identify the habitats present on site that have the potential to be used by these species, and outline the procedures and environmental measures to be followed in order to avoid breaches of legislation and/or adverse impacts on these species that could occur within or in the vicinity of the working area.

3. Methods

3.1 Preparation of working area

- 3.1.1 Prior to works commencing on-site, the ECoW will liaise with the delivery contractor to clearly demarcate the required working areas to which this method statement applies, including those required for vehicular access. Based on the condition of habitats (with regard to reptile suitability) during working area preparation the ECoW will outline whether mitigation measures will be conducted unsupervised (**Section 3.2**) or supervised (**Section 3.3**).

3.2 Unsupervised (Mid-March to October inclusive)

- 3.2.1 In the majority of areas identified as supporting reptile habitat, site clearance and preparation will be required **through mid-March to October**, and must be undertaken when day time temperatures are above 9°C to ensure that reptiles are active and able to move out of harm's way. These activities will not require direct supervision by the ECoW.
- vegetation within the footprint of the working area, plus a 1m buffer, will be strimmed/ cut down to a height of approximately (no less than) 15cm using hand tools (which may include power tools such as a strimmer or chainsaw), in order to encourage reptiles to move out of the area. Any debris including branches and trunks should be lifted (not dragged) off site immediately;
 - at least one, but no more than five days later, (allowing time for affected animals to move out of the area of reduced vegetation, but no more than five days later as animals may recolonise the undisturbed habitat), the vegetation will be taken down to ground level using hand tools;
 - unless agreed otherwise with the ECoW, no materials should be stored within the delineated area as they could be used for refuge any piles of debris/ rubble/ wood chippings will be dismantled by hand and removed from the area. Such materials will be lifted (not dragged) out of the working area;
 - the vegetation must be maintained at ground level height during the works or until the roots etc. can be removed. This will make the habitat less attractive to reptiles; and
 - the operatives carrying out these works will remain vigilant so that any reptiles disturbed are either able to move out of the working area, or are caught and safely relocated out of harm's way. Any reptiles observed on-site will be reported to the ECoW.

3.3 Supervised (Mid-March to October inclusive)

- a walkover (to include hand searching if required) by the ECoW will be carried out prior to works commencing to identify any visible reptiles;
- vegetation within the footprint of the working area, plus a 1m buffer, will be strimmed/ cut down to a height of approximately (no less than) 15cm using hand tools (which may include power tools such as a strimmer or chainsaw), in order to encourage reptiles to move out of the area. Any debris including branches and trunks should be lifted (not dragged) off site immediately. This activity will not be directly supervised by an ECoW, due to the low risk of reptiles being injured by such works. In order to

ensure this remains the case, it is crucial that no ground disturbance occurs as a result of this activity. Reducing vegetation encourages fauna to move out of the working area into adjoining habitats, without risk of injury;

- at least one, but no more than five days later, (allowing time for affected animals to move out of the area of reduced vegetation, but no more than five days later as animals may recolonise the undisturbed habitat), the ECoW will repeat the walkover search. The ECoW will then directly supervise while vegetation is taken down to ground level using hand tools and arisings removed off site;
- unless agreed otherwise with the ECoW, no materials should be stored within the delineated area as they could be used for refuge. Any piles of debris/ rubble/ wood chippings will be dismantled by hand and removed from the area. Such materials will be lifted (not dragged) out of the working area;
- the vegetation must be maintained at ground level height during the works or until the roots etc. can be removed. This will make the habitat less attractive to reptiles. An excavator with a toothed bucket will be used to slowly and gradually strip upper vegetation and topsoil. Deeper excavations will then be made, to remove any remaining tree stumps and buried rubble; and
- any protected species found during these activities will be safely caught by the ECoW and relocated out of harm's way, released in suitable habitat beyond the working area.

3.4 November to mid-March inclusive

3.4.1

Works within reptile habitat may be permitted within the period November to mid-March only where small areas of sub-optimal habitat are affected, and the ECoW has confirmed that the habitat has sufficiently low-negligible potential for hibernating reptiles. These activities will not be directly supervised by the ECoW.

- vegetation within the footprint of the working area, plus a 1m buffer, will be trimmed/cut down to ground level using hand tools. This will aim to make the area unsuitable for reptiles, so that they do not move into it on emergence from hibernation;
- the operatives carrying out these works will remain vigilant so that, in the unlikely event that any reptiles are present, these can be caught and safely relocated out of harm's way. The ECoW should be contacted immediately if any reptiles are found. Particular care must be taken, as in cool weather reptiles will likely be unable to move out of the way themselves. Such animals may appear lifeless on discovery; and
- if any reptile is discovered during November to mid-March clearance works, the site works must cease while the ECoW is contacted and further advice obtained. This is because reptiles often hibernate in communal locations, and there is a chance that if one has been found, continuing with works may result in the disturbance (any potential injury) of more animals.

3.5 General working practices

- vehicles will not be driven over, nor machinery stored or placed on reptile habitat that has not been declared 'clear' by the ECoW;
- the working area will be delineated to prevent activities encroaching onto habitat or features that have not been cleared in line with this, or any other appropriate Method Statement;

- no rubbish/materials should be discarded or dumped within the development site boundary, as reptiles may use these materials for temporary shelter. It is imperative that during all site works due care and attention is paid to any materials accidentally left lying around in case reptiles are sheltering under or within them. All such materials should be examined for the presence of reptiles before they are moved/discarded/destroyed, which must be conducted off-site;
- all cleared vegetation will be removed from the working area at the end of each day and destroyed, or stored in a pre-agreed designated location to prevent birds attempting to nest amongst such material, unless an alternative arrangement is agreed with the ECoW;
- following implementation of this Method Statement, the area will be maintained as bare soil until completion of works to prevent any animals moving back in. If animals are allowed to return to the area, it is likely that the process will need to be repeated to ensure that no offence is committed;
- once the site has been prepared in line with this Method Statement, the working areas will be deemed free of reptiles, and the proposed works can proceed without further supervision. In order to ensure that the area remains free of reptiles, it will be necessary to maintain the working area and the buffer as bare soil until construction works are complete to discourage any animals from moving back in; and
- contact details for the ECoW will be displayed on-site. All operatives will remain vigilant throughout the works, and report any sightings of reptiles on-site, dead or alive, to the ECoW.

