

APPENDIX 11.6:

REPTILE SURVEY PROTOCOL

Method

1. The method used will be that specified in the Herpetofauna Workers Manual JNCC 1998. This involves laying reptile refugia made of roofing felt on the site of the turbines, the hard-standings where the cranes will operate and the contractor's compound, tracks and concrete batching works. Up to four mats will be laid near each of the turbine locations. Once placed the mats will be inspected five times before the end of September during appropriate weather conditions, that is below 17⁰ C. The best potential habitat will be selected. The grid reference, date and description of any species found will be recorded. Result will be summarised in a report for inclusion in the ES chapter.
2. On other windfarm sites it has been agreed with CCW that the only reptiles likely to be on site are common Lizard, but a survey would be necessary to provide reassurance that this was the case. The methodology involved placing up to four mats per turbine base and crane working area, and also along the route of extended road network that would serve those turbines that lie outside the existing array. These would be inspected five times during the period in August to September during suitable weather (e.g. below 17⁰ C). Any reptiles present and location would be recorded

Further Details of Methodology

Refuges

3. Reptiles like to hide under debris exposed to the sun. Specially laid out pieces of debris known as refuges are a good way of observing the presence of all species of reptile, in particular slow-worms. Refuges can be particularly useful in poor weather conditions. Therefore on sites with no or low visitor pressure, refuges will be used. Several sheets (made of either light gauge corrugated iron or heavy gauge (38kg) roofing felt), each 0.5 square metre will be used per site, the aim will be for the 'tin' to be exposed to the sun but also hidden within the vegetation. The refuges will be removed when the surveys are completed. Refuges will not be used on sites where they are likely to be tampered with and where reptiles could be collected.

Health and Safety

4. One of the target species the Adder (*Vipera berus*) has poisonous venom. Adders are timid animals and even when threatened will flee rather than fight, surveyors will not be handling adders and therefore the chances of adder bites occurring are low. However if an adder feels unable to escape such as if it were accidentally trodden on it will probably bite.
5. Adder bites are generally not painful. For most people an adder bite will cause only mild discomfort and swelling. The swelling is characteristically blackened and subsides after a few days. However, people who are allergic to bee and wasp stings may be seriously affected by adder bites. Complete recovery takes about one to two weeks. To put this in perspective only around 10 people are known to have died from adder bites in the last 100 years (at least 5 of these as a result of a reaction to the anti-serum given). By comparison some 200 people have died from bee and wasp stings in the last 100 years and on average 2 people die each year from dog bites.
6. Any person who knows that they react badly to bee and wasp stings must not work as a reptile surveyor. Surveyors should wear full length Wellington boots when working on

site, this will protect them from most potential Adder bites. When checking refuges the corner should be lifted with a stick. All surveyors working on site will be in contact with a colleague either in the vicinity or by mobile phone. On sites with no mobile phone signal surveyors must work in the vicinity of a colleague. In the unlikely event that a surveyor is bitten by an adder the injured party will immediately contact their colleague who will take them to the nearest hospital. The patient should be reassured and should stay calm and quiet. They should keep movement to a minimum. Do not use a tourniquet or cut the bite open. Shock can be a major problem, and local swelling, with throbbing and discomfort can occur. In severe cases drowsiness or dizziness may be experienced. Symptoms usually peak within 6-48 hours.

Timing

7. Each site will need will need to be visited 5 times in suitable weather conditions from the end of August through to the end of September. The best weather conditions for observing basking spots are temperatures between 10 & 17 degrees C, intermittent or hazy sunshine and little or no wind, in lowland areas these conditions would most often occur between 0900 and 1100 hrs and 1600 and 1900 hrs.

Details Recorded

- Location of Refugia – grid Ref:
- Site details:
 - Site Name
 - Observers names
 - Date of survey
 - Start time of survey
 - Finish time of survey
 - Weather condition
 - General comments
- Species details:
 - Species seen
 - Time seen
 - GPS Co-ordinate of sittings.
 - Habitat-types where sittings made

References

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