

# Ecology advice note 2: Reptiles

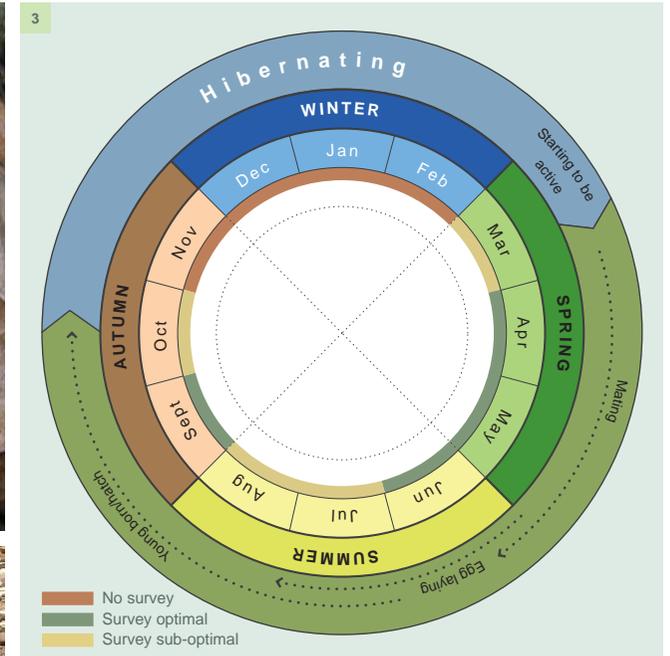
There are six native species of reptiles in England. Four of these species, slow-worm, viviparous lizard, grass snake and adder, are widespread, and relatively common in some areas, while sand lizards and smooth snakes are mainly confined to heathland sites in the south.

All common reptile species are protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). The 1981 Act is strengthened by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Taken together these Acts make it illegal to intentionally, deliberately or recklessly kill or injure reptiles. As a result, reptiles must be removed from areas of development and relocated into suitable release sites before any site works can commence.

Sand lizard and smooth snake have additional protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

The Landscape Partnership is able to undertake a wide range of reptile consultancy services, ranging from survey to mitigation design and translocation projects, including:

- **Legislation advice**
- **Presence/absence surveys and population size assessments**
- **Mitigation/enhancement design and Method Statements**
- **Negotiation with environmental regulators**
- **European Protected Species (EPS) licence applications**
- **Translocation and population monitoring**
- **Habitat enhancement and creation**



1. Slow worm 2. Grass snake 3. Annual Reptile Activity Schedule 4. Common lizards

Reptiles are found in a variety of habitats, including woodland, heath, marsh and grassland. They also occur in hedge bases and are often common on brownfield land.

Ecological surveys are subject to seasonal constraints, and the timing of survey work is sometimes restricted to a small window annually. Therefore it is best practice to plan ecology survey in as early as possible in the planning application process.

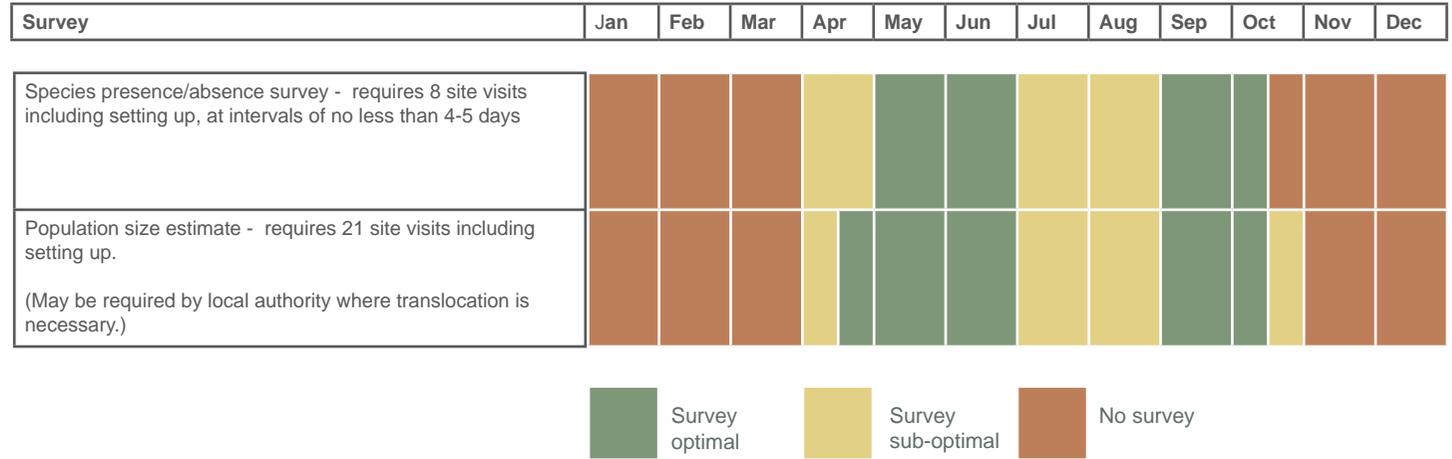
The programme opposite gives an indication of how survey timing constraints apply to the year calendar.

Reptile survey involves distributing reptile refugia in areas offering suitable habitat. The refugia consist of tin or sheets of roofing felt. The refugia warm faster than the surrounding environment and reptiles, being 'cold' blooded, habitually use them to warm their bodies. The refugia are then inspected at regular intervals during warm but not hot conditions to determine the presence of reptiles in the area concerned.

**Early identification of reptile presence can save money and prevent lengthy delays:**

If surveys are carried out sufficiently early, there should be time to plan for carrying out in the appropriate season any reptile exclusions or translocations that may be necessary, without delays to the project programme. Later identification may mean that on-site project delay is incurred while waiting for the necessary season when reptiles are active.

**Reptile survey timings**



5. Common lizard



6. Adder



7. Slow worm