

Reptile Survey Report

Birch Business Park
Reference: 82-299-R4
Date: August 25





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QUALITY ASSURANCE

Report reference	82-299-R4-1
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REV REF:	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR	CHECKED	AUTHORISED	DATE
R4-1	First issue	SK1	HM	CK	21/08/25

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Birch Business Park, Heywood, OL10 2SX
Grid Reference	E 384271, N 408684
Site Area	Approximately 3.9 ha
Current Site Use	The site was unused at the time of the survey and comprised a range of habitats such as woodland, mixed scrub, willow scrub, other neutral grassland, lowland fen, reedbeds, and individual trees. Boundary features comprised a hedgerow and line of trees. Birch Business Park is located adjacent to the site's western boundary. The wider area comprises agricultural land.
Proposed Development	Development proposals comprise the construction of an industrial unit with associated access roads and car parking.
Results	No reptiles were identified across the seven surveys. Four female great crested newts (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>) were identified across the seven surveys. A total of 19 common toads (<i>Bufo bufo</i>), 6 field vole (<i>Microtus agrestis</i>), 2 smooth newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>), 2 common frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>), 1 common shrew (<i>Sorex araneus</i>) and 1 field mouse (<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>) were identified across the seven surveys.
Conclusions and Recommendations	No further mitigation with regard to reptiles is deemed necessary for the proposed development to proceed. Due to the sites suitability to support common amphibians, and the 19 common toads, 2 smooth newts and 2 common frogs identified during the reptile surveys, it is confirmed that common amphibians are present on the site. It is recommended that during the clearance phase of works, any common amphibians encountered be moved carefully by hand, away from construction activities. A District Level Licence from Natural England will be obtained regards great crested newts.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P were commissioned by Yeargate Limited to undertake Reptile Surveys at Birch Business Park, hereafter referred to as “the site”.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out in February 2025 by E3P (report reference: 82-299-R1). The site was assessed as having suitability for common reptile species due to the habitat structure on-site. The site was found to offer foraging, shelter and basking potential for reptiles within the scrub, woodland, log and brash piles and grassland mosaic. It was therefore recommended that further reptile surveys be undertaken to confirm the absence or presence of the species. If present, the surveys would provide data on the species assemblage and numbers, which will inform the relevant mitigation procedures.

This report has been produced by Sam Kirkham BSc (Hons), MSc. Sam has experience undertaking protected species surveys and ecological mitigation for a wide variety of projects across the UK.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals comprise the construction of an industrial unit with associated access roads and car parking.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located adjacent to the east of Birch Business Park, approximately 2.2 km southwest of the centre of Heywood. Agricultural land borders the northern, eastern, and southern site boundaries. The M62 is located 850 m south of the site. An active railway line is located 1 km north of the site.

Please refer to **Figure 1** for the approximate site location.

Figure 1 **Approximate Site Location**





1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Reptile Surveys were to:

- ✦ Identify whether there is a presence of reptiles within the site.
- ✦ Assess the species present within the site.
- ✦ Recommend further survey requirements, if deemed appropriate, to obtain an estimate of the population size(s) for the species identified.
- ✦ Provide preliminary recommendations in light of the survey findings and the need for mitigation.

This report presents the findings of the surveys and whether there are any implications of developing the site with regard to reptiles.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), the local environmental Records Centre for Greater Manchester, were contacted in February 2025 to obtain any records of reptiles within 1 km of the site boundary.

2.2. REPTILE SURVEY

The site was subjected to a presence/absence survey using artificial refugia, or “tins”, in accordance with Froglife (1999) guidelines.

Artificial Cover Objects (ACOs) or refugia were constructed of 1 m × 0.5 m sheeting using roofing felt as recommended by Froglife (1999) for reptile surveys. A total of 50 ACOs were placed across the site, locally sited in the most appropriate position for use by basking/sheltering reptiles.

The ACOs were left for approximately one week to bed in. They were dispersed across the site on 25th April 2025 by Graduate Ecologist Sam Kirkham. A total of seven non-consecutive survey visits were carried out to assess the presence/absence of reptile species on site. During each visit, the ACOs were checked visually from a distance to determine whether reptiles were basking on their surface.

The ACOs were checked under the recommended ideal temperatures for a reptile survey, between 9°C and 18°C (Froglife, 1999) and were carefully approached and lifted to check for reptiles sheltering beneath them. Please refer to **Table 1** for details of the surveys, and **Appendix I** for the full survey forms.

Table 1 **Survey Details**

SURVEY	DATE	SURVEY START TIME	WEATHER CONDITIONS	SURVEYOR
1	17/06/2025	08:15	Dry, 15°C, 10% cloud cover, 7 mph wind	Mia Forte
2	03/07/2025	09:20	Dry, 15°C, 45% cloud cover, 9 mph wind	Sam Kirkham
3	07/07/2025	11:40	Dry, 17°C, 50% cloud cover, 7 mph wind	Daniel Syddall
4	10/07/2025	08:10	Dry, 16°C, 0% cloud cover, 2 mph wind	Phoebe Parry
5	18/07/2025	08:50	Dry, 17°C, 40% cloud cover, 8 mph wind	Sam Kirkham
6	31/07/2025	09:15	Dry, 17°C, 80% cloud cover, 10 mph wind	Sam Kirkham
7	06/08/2025	09:20	Dry, 16°C, 75% cloud cover, 5 mph wind	Sam Kirkham

2.3. LIMITATIONS

Generally, reptiles are reclusive animals and are often difficult to locate by virtue of their behaviour, cryptic colouration and habitat selection. It is therefore often difficult to prove absence (Froglife, 1999). Binoculars were used in combination with the artificial refugia to search for basking animals in these areas to increase confidence in the survey.



3. RESULTS

3.1. DESK STUDY

During consultation with GMEU, no records of reptiles were located within the 1 km search area. However, a lack of records does not necessarily mean a lack of the species, as some areas have simply been under-surveyed. Equally, reptiles are highly mobile animals and may therefore colonise new sites.

3.2. SURVEY RESULTS

No reptiles were identified during the seven surveys.

In total, 19 common toads (*Bufo bufo*), six field voles (*Microtus agrestis*), two smooth newts (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), two common frogs (*Rana temporaria*), one common shrew (*Sorex araneus*) and one field mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) were identified across the seven surveys.

Notably, four female great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) were identified across the seven surveys.

Please refer to **Appendix I** for the full survey forms.

3.3. INTERPRETATION

The scrub, woodland, log and brash piles and grassland mosaic provided the potential to support foraging, sheltering and basking potential for reptiles. However, due to the negative survey results, it can be concluded that no reptiles are currently present on the site.



4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

No evidence of reptiles was identified during the surveys. Therefore, no further surveys or reptile mitigation is deemed necessary for the development to proceed.

Due to the sites suitability to support common amphibians, and the 19 common toads, two smooth newts and two common frogs identified during the reptile surveys, it is confirmed that common amphibians are present on site. As such, it is recommended that during the clearance phase of works, any common amphibians encountered be moved carefully by hand, away from construction activities.

A District Level Licence from Natural England will be obtained regards great crested newts.



5. REFERENCES

- ✿ E3P (2025) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Birch Business Park (Report Reference: 82-299-R1).
- ✿ E3P (2025) Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey Birch Business Park (Report Reference: 82-299-L1).
- ✿ Froglife (1999) Reptile Survey: An introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife Advice Sheet 10. Froglife, Halesworth.

END OF REPORT

APPENDIX I

SURVEY RESULTS





SURVEY FORMS

SURVEY 1

Surveyor: Mia Forte

Date: 17/06/2025

Start time: 08:15

Weather conditions: Dry, 15°C, 10% cloud cover, 7 mph wind.

SPECIES	SLOW WORM	COMMON LIZARD	GRASS SNAKE	ADDER	OTHER SPECIES
Male	–	–	–	–	–
Female	–	–	–	–	–
Adult (Sex Unknown)	–	–	–	–	–
Sub	–	–	–	–	–
Juvenile	–	–	–	–	3 x common toad
Total	–	–	–	–	3

SURVEY 2

Surveyor: Sam Kirkham

Date: 03/07/2025

Start time: 09:20

Weather conditions: Dry, 15°C, 45% cloud cover, 9 mph wind.

SPECIES	SLOW WORM	COMMON LIZARD	GRASS SNAKE	ADDER	OTHER SPECIES
Male	–	–	–	–	–
Female	–	–	–	–	–
Adult (Sex Unknown)	–	–	–	–	1 x common frog
Sub	–	–	–	–	–
Juvenile	–	–	–	–	2 x common toad
Total	–	–	–	–	3



SURVEY 3

Surveyor: Daniel Syddall

Date: 07/07/2025

Start time: 11:40

Weather conditions: Dry, 17°C, 50% cloud cover, 7 mph wind.

SPECIES	SLOW WORM	COMMON LIZARD	GRASS SNAKE	ADDER	OTHER SPECIES
Male	–	–	–	–	–
Female	–	–	–	–	–
Adult (Sex Unknown)	–	–	–	–	1 x common shrew
Sub	–	–	–	–	–
Juvenile	–	–	–	–	3 x common toad
Total	–	–	–	–	4

SURVEY 4

Surveyor: Phoebe Parry

Date: 10/07/2025

Start time: 08:10

Weather conditions: Dry, 16°C, 0% cloud cover, 2 mph wind.

SPECIES	SLOW WORM	COMMON LIZARD	GRASS SNAKE	ADDER	OTHER SPECIES
Male	–	–	–	–	–
Female	–	–	–	–	1 x great crested newt
Adult (Sex Unknown)	–	–	–	–	–
Sub	–	–	–	–	–
Juvenile	–	–	–	–	–
Total	–	–	–	–	1



SURVEY 5

Surveyor: Sam Kirkham

Date: 18/07/2025

Start time: 08:50

Weather conditions: Dry, 17°C, 40% cloud cover, 8 mph wind

SPECIES	SLOW WORM	COMMON LIZARD	GRASS SNAKE	ADDER	OTHER SPECIES
Male	–	–	–	–	–
Female	–	–	–	–	1 x great crested newt
Adult (Sex Unknown)	–	–	–	–	1 x common toad 1 x field mouse
Sub	–	–	–	–	3 x common toad
Juvenile	–	–	–	–	1 x common toad
Total	–	–	–	–	7

SURVEY 6

Surveyor: Sam Kirkham

Date: 31/07/2025

Start time: 09:15

Weather conditions: Dry, 17°C, 80% cloud cover, 10 mph wind

SPECIES	SLOW WORM	COMMON LIZARD	GRASS SNAKE	ADDER	OTHER SPECIES
Male	–	–	–	–	–
Female	–	–	–	–	2 x great crested newt 2 x smooth newt
Adult (Sex Unknown)	–	–	–	–	1 x field vole
Sub	–	–	–	–	1 x common toad
Juvenile	–	–	–	–	4 x field vole 2 x common toad
Total	–	–	–	–	12



SURVEY 7

Surveyor: Sam Kirkham

Date: 06/08/2025

Start time: 09:20

Weather conditions: Dry, 16°C, 75% cloud cover, 5 mph wind.

SPECIES	SLOW WORM	COMMON LIZARD	GRASS SNAKE	ADDER	OTHER SPECIES
Male	–	–	–	–	–
Female	–	–	–	–	–
Adult (Sex Unknown)	–	–	–	–	1 x common toad 1 x field vole
Sub	–	–	–	–	1 x common toad 1 x common frog
Juvenile	–	–	–	–	1 x common toad
Total	–	–	–	–	5