

## 12.5 REPTILES

### **Application**

These guidelines are aimed at identifying and selecting important reptile sites excluding domestic gardens.

The designation of sites should attempt to include the habitats of importance for the reptile species identified. Hibernacula used by reptiles, where it is possible to identify them, must be included in the site as communal hibernation is a noted feature of this group of animals. In addition breeding areas, or in the case of grass snakes egg laying areas, should be included in the site. Common Lizard and Slow Worm are relatively site faithful and the identification of site boundaries should take account of the area of habitat used by the species throughout the year. The snakes, especially the Grass Snake, can move considerable distances during the summer for foraging, therefore site designation sites needs to concentrate on their hibernation and breeding sites, with as much adjacent foraging habitat as can be identified.

### **Justification**

Derbyshire has records of four native reptiles in the county, the Adder, the Common Lizard, the Slow Worm and the Grass Snake but as a group reptiles these are under-recorded and their status is uncertain in many areas. There is national concern at the recent decline of the adder which is particularly marked in the East Midlands.

Adder populations are rare in Lowland Derbyshire with only occasional reports. Common lizard is widely distributed but less common in the south and the east of the county. The Slow Worm is sparsely distributed in the county but there is concentration of records around Little Eaton, Ambergate and Matlock. Grass Snakes are found in the east and south often associated with river and canal corridors, but also with waterbodies that support abundant amphibians upon which to prey.

All of these four species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 ( as amended). Under Section 9 and Schedule 5 it is illegal to kill or injure them or sell any live or dead reptile or anything derived from it such as the skin. However, this does not protect the habitat that the reptiles live in and use for foraging. All four species are also UK BAP priority species.

## Reptile Selection Guidelines

Sites that meet the following guideline will be eligible for designation as a Local Wildlife Site.

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**Rep1** Any site that supports an established and viable population of one or more of the following reptile species:

Grass Snake  
Common Lizard  
Slow Worm  
Adder

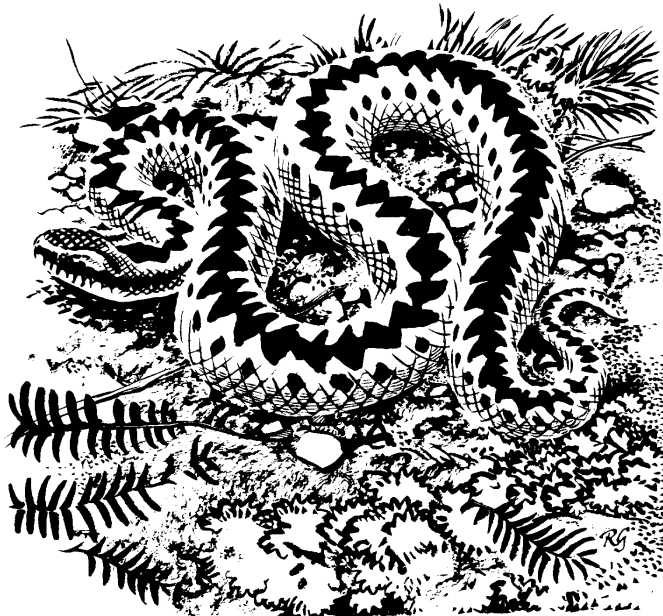
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### Application

Site boundaries should take account of habitat area utilised by these species at all times of year where they contribute to the essential requirement of the species e.g. hibernating habitats. For a population to be considered as established and viable there should be recent records for 2 out of the last 5 years or evidence of successful breeding (i.e. the recording of new born reptiles or snake eggs).

### Justification

All of these reptiles are considered to have declined in Derbyshire and are now relatively rare in Lowland Derbyshire. It is important that established populations are protected in order to maintain current distributions.



Adder