



Reptile Rummage

Final Report

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Reptile Rummage: final report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Reptile Rummage.....	3
Outlined objectives	3
Objectives reached	4
Objective 1: Events and awareness raising	5
Objective 2: Best practice messages and advice.....	7
Objective 3: Record seeking and mapping.....	8
Techniques for record gathering.....	8
Google-mapping of records & allotment boundaries.....	8
Suggestions and comments to guide future allotment projects.....	9
Acknowledgements.....	10

Froglife would like to thank Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (www.cpbrc.org.uk).



About Reptile Rummage

Reptile Rummage was a Froglife project that aimed to gather records of widespread reptiles on Peterborough and Cambridgeshire's network of allotments. The project also sought to raise awareness of the value of allotments for widespread reptile species, and encourage 'best-practice' from allotment holders, encouraging them to contribute to wider reptile conservation initiatives.

This report reviews the Reptile Rummage project, outlining the objectives reached, and outputs created as part of the project. The report also identifies opportunities for growth and 'follow-up' projects.

Reptile Rummage was made possible by a grant from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership Fund.

OUTLINED OBJECTIVES

This project tackled three important actions outlined in Species Action Plans aimed at reptiles and allotments, locally and nationally. These were:

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Encourage the celebration of allotments as crucial urban lifelines for slowworms and other reptiles, working with specific 'environmentally excluded groups'. ([local Allotment Habitat Action Plan 7.2](#)). ([Widespread Reptile SAP Objective 4.2 vi and vii](#)).
- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Create advice materials encouraging allotment-owners to undertake practices beneficial to slow-worms, common lizards and grass snakes. ([local Allotment Habitat Action Plan 6.1, 6.3](#)). ([Widespread Reptile SAP Objective 4.1 ii](#)).
- **OBJECTIVE 3:** To seek baseline information on reptile populations at allotments in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, through site visits and web questionnaires. ([local Allotment Habitat Action Plan, targets 1 & 2](#)). ([Widespread Reptile SAP - Objective 5.1 iii. and 5.1 viii](#)).



OBJECTIVES REACHED

This report outlines how Froglife has met each of the objectives listed, through the *Reptile Rummage* project. Some outlined statistics through this project are as follows:

- Records generated: 53
- Allotments mapped: 56
- Allotments visited: 13
- Allotment holders interviewed: 78
- Online record submissions: 19
- Wider public reached: 300+



Objective 1: Events and awareness raising

During the life of the project Froglife held a number of 'celebration' events based in Peterborough to encourage local adults and children to visit, and discover more about, the wildlife value of local allotments.

Five such events were held on allotments in Wesleyan Road.

The *Reptile Rummage* 'open sessions' drew in young people from a number of local schools including: Thomas Deacon Academy, Parnwell Primary School and Glead Boys School (making reptile mosaics (photo 1 pg6)), St Georges (making a 10x life-size grass snake model (photo 3 pg6)), and youth groups from Cross Keys Homes and YMCA (who matched reptile key-cards to suitable reptile habitats on each allotment).

Young people from NACRO and the Youth Offending Service also joined in on a reptile survey to learn first-hand about reptiles from a conservation professional.

Media coverage raising awareness of the value of allotments for reptiles was encouraging. Coverage included pieces in the Peterborough Evening Telegraph, on BBC's The One Show and three times on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire. Reptile Rummage was also a theme covered by Froglife's stand at BBC Gardeners World Live 2010 (July).





Have you seen any of these creatures in the last 5 yrs?

Please let Froglife know about the reptiles you have (or haven't) seen on your allotment.

www.froglife.org/reptilerummage or 01733 558960.



Froglife is a national wildlife charity (registered no. 1053372) dedicated to the conservation of frogs, toads, newts, snakes and lizards and the habitats they depend on. Reptilerummage is funded by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership.

reptile rummage wanted:



COMMON LIZARD



GRASS SNAKE



SLOW-WORM



1. Peterborough school children making reptile mosaics. 2. Poster displayed at allotments. 3. Grass snake model made by pupils from St Georges School. 4. Grass snake *Matrix matrix*. 5. Reptile identification training. 6. Image of online Google map (found at www.froglife.org/reptilerummage) 7. Common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* © Matt Wilson. 8. Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*.



Objective 2: Best practice messages and advice

A key aspect of the Reptile Rummage project was to provide good advice to allotment-holders about ways to conserve reptiles on their own plots. To do this Froglife produced an advice leaflet called 'How to find reptiles on your allotment patch'.

Initial research by Froglife suggested that allotment holders had relatively little knowledge of reptile identification. Few allotment holders questioned had ever seen a reptile before.

The advice booklet therefore covered identification and where allotment holders can expect to see reptiles on allotments. The final section of the booklet informed allotment holders of survey information, and tips to make their allotments more reptile-friendly.

The booklet was sent out to allotment societies and is available to download on the Froglife website. Printed versions of the booklet (for use at allotment events) are available on request – please call Froglife on 01733 558844 or email info@froglife.org.

In June Froglife held a free reptile survey training day which was fully booked. Allotment holders were informed of the day, which included an indoor identification session and outdoor survey circuit at Stillwells Nature Reserve in Peterborough.



Objective 3: Record seeking and mapping

TECHNIQUES FOR RECORD GATHERING

Three techniques were used to gather reptile records from allotment holders in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. These were:

Face-to-face interviews with allotment holders

In all 28 allotment holders were interviewed about local sightings of amphibians and reptiles on allotments. These took place in Peterborough, spread over 13 allotments. Records generated: 11

Phone interviews with allotment societies

By researching contact details for allotment societies and groups, Froglife was able to conduct phone interviews with allotment holders. In all 37 allotment holders were interviewed. Records generated: 22

Online submission of records

In all, 13 online forms were submitted to the Froglife 'Reptile Rummage' page. Records generated: 19.

Overall these techniques gathered 53 amphibian and reptile records, of which 10 were reptile records.

GOOGLE-MAPPING OF RECORDS & ALLOTMENT BOUNDARIES

Reptile records and allotments boundaries were mapped through Google Maps (viewable as a .kml file in Google Earth).

This format was used to allow the public to easily view the results (to view visit www.froglife.org/reptilerummage) as well as being of value to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre.

The map of Peterborough and Cambridgeshire's allotments contains boundaries of 56 allotments where records were sought.

Froglife is happy for this online map to be edited, duplicated and used, by other local societies keen to map, edit and share wildlife records on their allotments. For details please contact Froglife on 01733 558844 or email info@froglife.org



Suggestions and comments to guide future allotment projects

Allotment holders have proved a challenging audience to acquire records from since they may be largely 'offline', and because they are based off-site away from a fixed address. Our most successful route for acquiring records has been through face-to-face interviews with allotment holders and phone interviews with allotment society contacts. We would advise that future projects aim largely at "face-to-face" correspondence (inc. phone) and do not invest too heavily in online.

From the reptile records generated we would now encourage professional or amateur reptile surveys to be undertaken at the following sites to assess potential for local populations of slow-worms and common lizards:

- Stourbridge Road (Cambridgeshire)
- Fletton Rec (Peterborough)
- Eastfield Road (Peterborough)
- Fulbridge Road (Peterborough)



Acknowledgements

Froglife would like to thank the following organisations for help and advice:

Cambridge Allotments Network

Cambridge City Council

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Amphibian and Reptile Group

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)

Cambridgeshire County Council

Fenland District Council

Greater Dogsthorpe

Huntingdonshire District Council

East Cambridgeshire District Council

Ely Allotments Association

Environmental Forum

Peterborough City Council (Mark Swift)

Peterborough Horticultural Society

South Cambridgeshire District Council

St Neots Town Council

Trumpington Allotment Society

The Wildlife Trust BCNP



Reptile Rummage was made possible by a grant from
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership Fund.

