



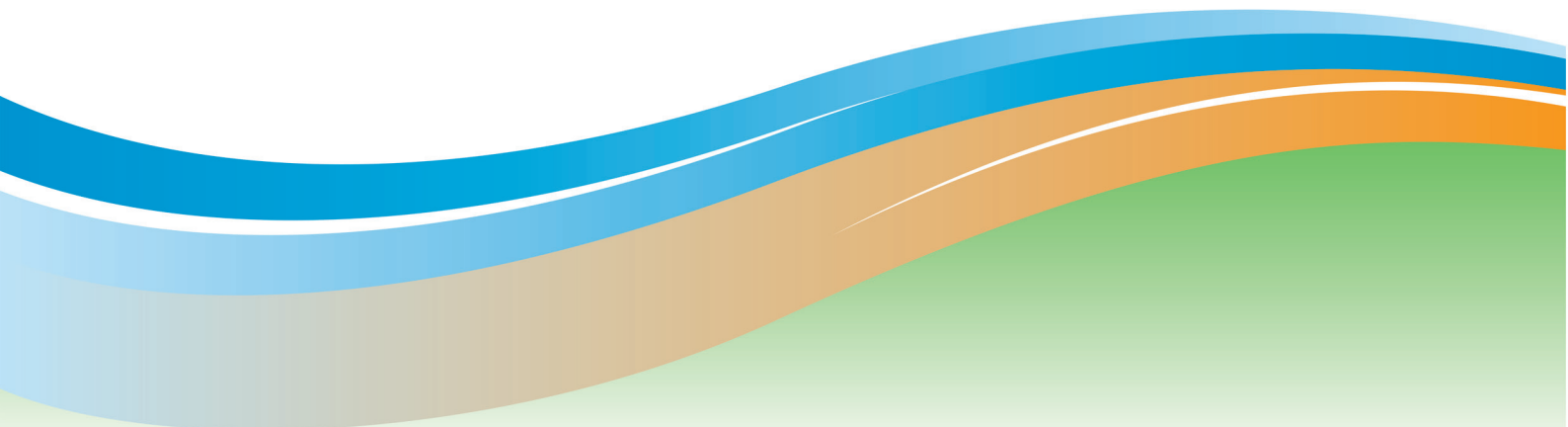
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Hampshire Amphibian & Reptile Group



Herpetofauna Report 2012



Hampshire Amphibian & Reptile Group (HARG)

Welcome to the annual HARG Herpetofauna Report!

I am delighted to say our recording effort is steadily increasing – this is great news but we still need your help! Remember, your record of a frog in your garden may fill an empty 1km square or update an old record.

One of the highlights in 2012 was that we hosted the annual ARG UK SE Regional Meeting at Marwell with the theme of 'Best Practice; legislation, survey & mitigation'. This was obviously a popular topic as it was attended by over 90 delegates from all aspects of herpetology. As development pressure increases, it is increasingly up to each of us to protect what we can despite living under "the greenest government ever". We live in uncertain times with regard to the economy and the environment and we hope the conference stirred some positive support for herptiles on a national level.

Continuing the positive note, field events were well-attended (by both people and herptiles) as well as our Species Groups social in Winchester [isn't there a saying about 'as drunk as a newt'? Eds]. Shatterford Bottom, in the heart of the New Forest, was a fantastic venue for a summer evening walk listening to the raucous Marsh Frog, churring Nightjars, drumming Snipe and other nocturnal wildlife. On our trip to Boscombe, all participants were rewarded with stunning views of both Green and Wall Lizards.

Remember HARG is always looking for members with even just a small amount of time to help run events, meetings and organise surveys. So if you'd like to get involved in some small way please get in touch. We look forward to hearing from you!

John Poland
HARG Chair



ARG UK SE Regional Meeting attendees enjoying a talk by Chris Gleed-Owen on "Guidance Interpretation"
Photo by Sarah Bignell

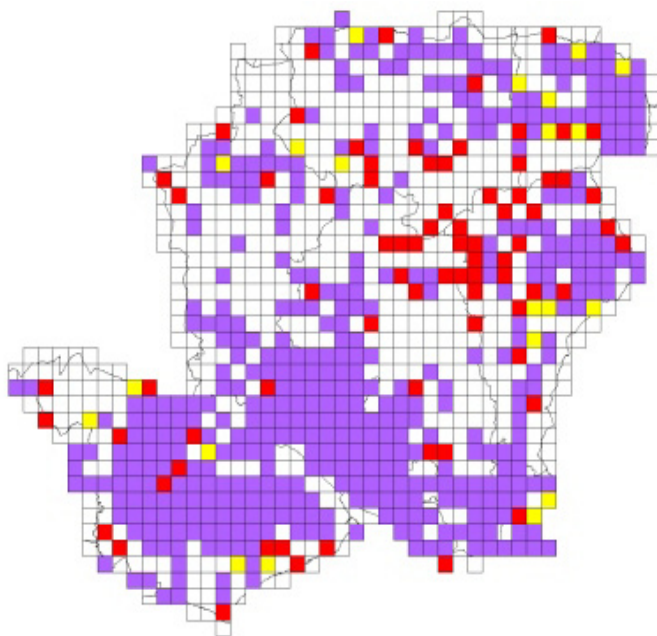
Amphibian and Reptile Records 2002 – 2012

This is a summary of records dated 2002 – 2012 submitted to the HARG county recorder. There are more records pre-dating this and we are still receiving records for within this time period, therefore this is by no means a definitive record but gives a good indication of distribution and recorder effort.

In total 9413 records were submitted between 2002 and 2012. The map indicates locations of records from new squares since the last report (in red), records which overlap with the last report (in purple) and squares where no records have been received since 2001 (in yellow).

Although it indicates that some squares (21 in total) have not had records submitted for over 10 years it does demonstrate that a lot of new squares have had records entered for them in the last 2 years.

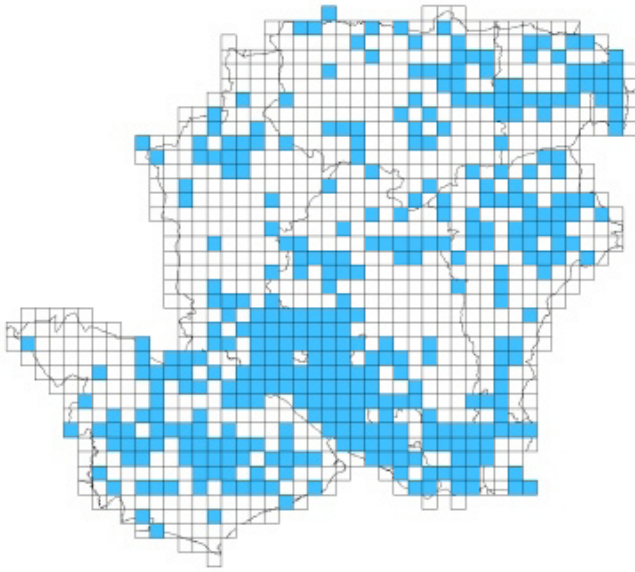
This information can be used to target areas for future survey to ensure representative coverage of the whole county. Records are mapped in 2km squares.



The following pages have maps of individual species records, where the species were recorded as present between 2002 and 2012.



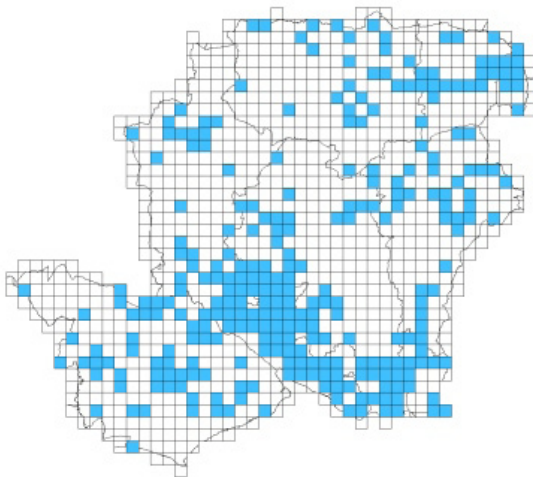
AMPHIBIANS



Distribution of positive records (3232) for all native amphibian species in Hampshire from 2002 to 2012.

Common frog (*Rana temporaria*)

Our most well-known and familiar amphibian, the common frog is found in a wide range of habitats and breeds in ponds, lakes, ditches and even puddles. Gardens and garden ponds are extremely important habitats for common frogs and populations in suburban areas often depend on them. Common frogs are particularly susceptible to ranavirus and therefore frogspawn shouldn't be transferred between ponds by well-intentioned people for fear of spreading this poorly studied disease.



Common frogs are widespread throughout Britain and Ireland but in Hampshire, like most of our other amphibians, appear to be absent from large areas of chalk and arable land, presumably where the density of ponds is much lower.

A total of 1139 records of common frog were submitted for 2002 – 2012.

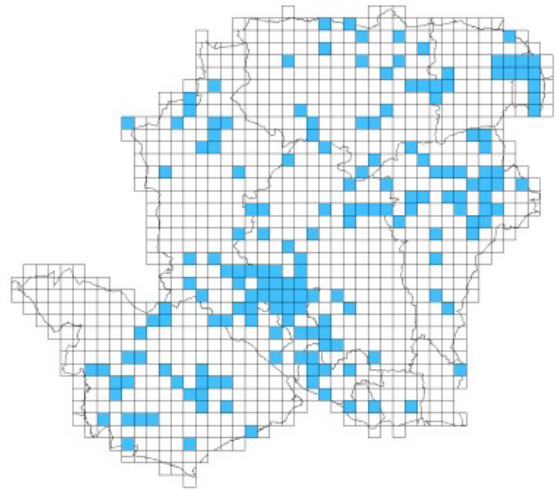
Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*)



The common toad is found throughout the UK but they are uncommon in north Scotland and absent from Ireland. Common toads prefer deeper water bodies for breeding, including farm ponds, reservoirs, fish ponds or even village duck ponds. Like many amphibians, optimal terrestrial habitats include woodland, scrub and rough grassland.

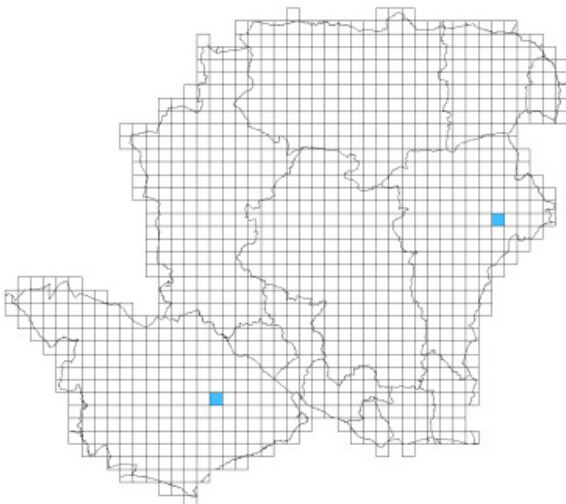
There is anecdotal evidence to suggest toad breeding ponds have declined dramatically or disappeared within the last ten years in Hampshire. Without continued recording effort, we cannot investigate the many complex causes of the perceived decline.

A total 597 records for common toad were received between 2002 – 2012.



Natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*)

The natterjack used to be widespread on Hampshire's heaths but now Woolmer Pond, in north-east Hampshire, is the only site (indeed, it is the only native site in southern England). Elsewhere in the UK, it has a very restricted distribution and is almost exclusively confined to sand dunes, coastal grazing marshes and sandy heaths. The natterjack has been re-introduced to much of its native range as part of a co-ordinated conservation programme.



Natterjacks are smaller than the common toad and have a distinct yellow stripe down their backs, visible even in tiny toadlets. 'Natterjack' refers to the loud churring call made by the males during the spring breeding season.

Found in one locality – Woolmer Pond. The New Forest record is erroneous. Nine records have been submitted over 10 years.

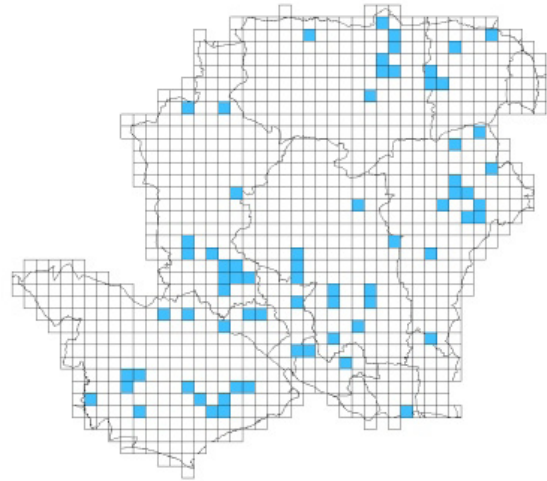
Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*)



The great crested newt (also known as the 'warty newt', as a result of its skin) has a wide but generally uncommon distribution in the UK. Thanks to a concerted HARG survey programme, the number of sites for great crested newts has increased in recent years, however sites are still being lost at an alarming rate.

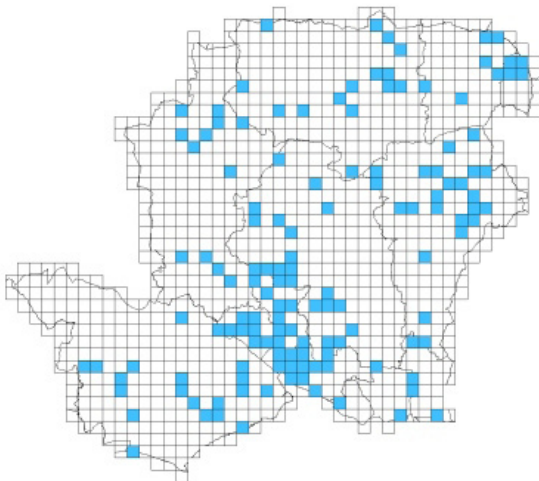
Preferring water bodies without fish for breeding, great crested newts also need suitable surrounding terrestrial habitat to provide shelter during the 6-9 months spent on land. Such habitats include rough grassland, scrub and 'brownfield' sites. Consequently, it is a species heavily adversely affected by development.

A total of 560 records for great crested newt were submitted for 2002 – 2012.



Smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*)

The smooth newt is the UK's most widespread species of newt (and is the only newt found in Ireland) and found in a variety of water bodies. Often breeding in garden ponds, it is often mistaken for the great crested newt but is much smaller, has a black spotted throat, and lacks that species distinctive warty skin.



A total of 484 records for smooth newts were received between 2002 – 2012.

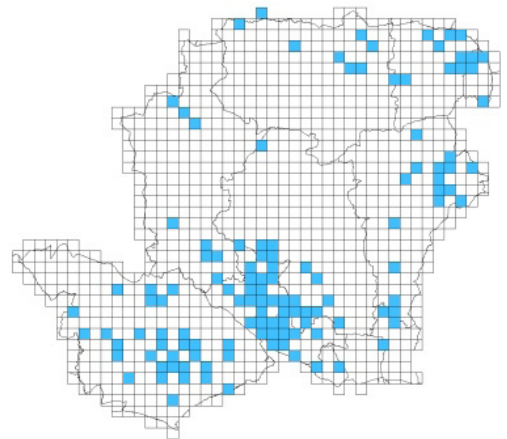
Palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*)



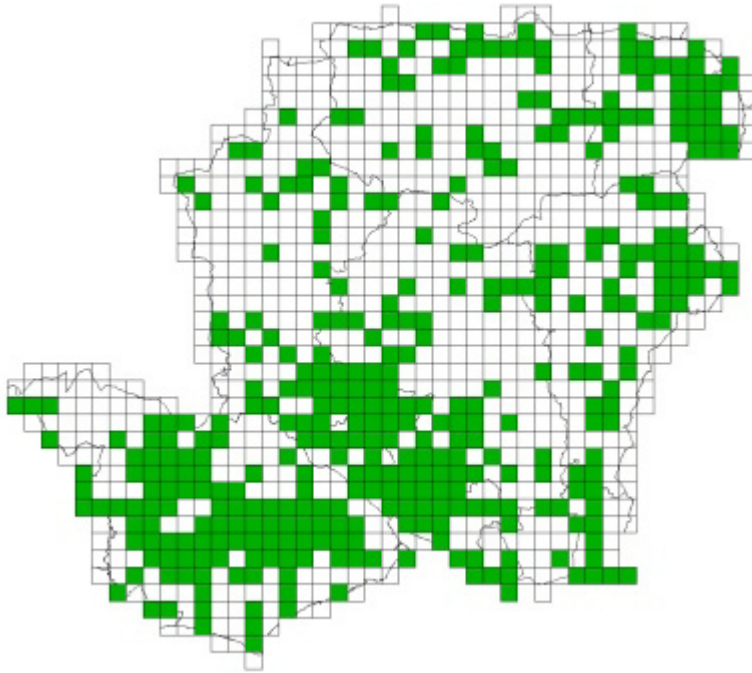
The palmate newt is also widespread but has a more patchy distribution in the UK. Often found in ponds, puddles and even running water in woods and on heaths, it has a preference for water bodies on acid soils.

Breeding males have a filament at the tip of the tail and the name 'palmate' refers to the black webbing on the hind feet present in males whilst in the pond. Females are notoriously similar to female smooth newts but the throat of the smooth newt is spotted, whilst those of palmate newts are unspotted and usually pinkish.

A total of 443 records for palmate newt were submitted during 2002 – 2012.



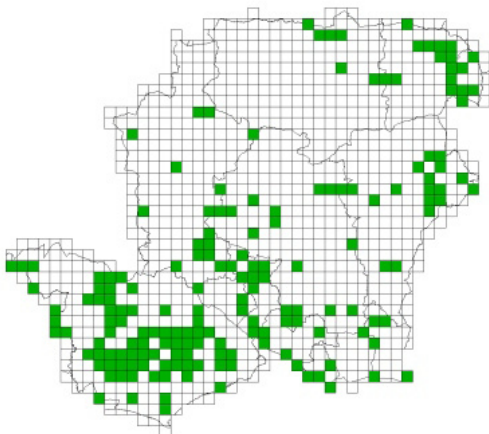
REPTILES



Distribution of positive records (6176) for all native reptile species in Hampshire from 2002 to 2012.

Common/Viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*)

The common (or viviparous) lizard is found throughout the UK and is the only species of reptile native to Ireland. Found in a variety of habitats including heaths, commons, dry-stone walls and embankments. Railway (and road) embankments may provide a useful habitat corridor in today's fragmented landscape.



Common lizards are usually brown with various patterns of spots or stripes but different colour forms do occur – green ones are often mistaken for the much rarer (and larger) sand lizard. Common lizards give birth to live young, hence the alternative name of viviparous lizard. They are often heavily predated in urban areas by cats and rats.

A total 1102 records were submitted for Common Lizard in 2002 – 2012.

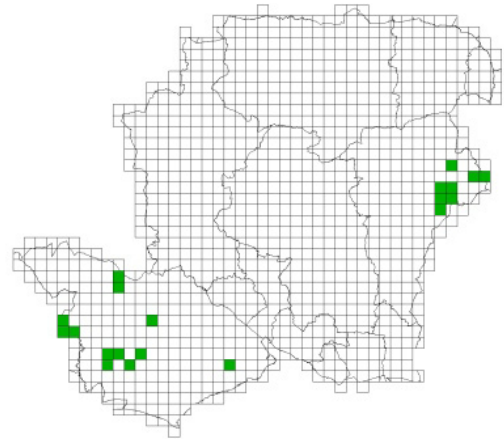
Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis*)



As a result of massive habitat destruction, the sand lizard became restricted to heaths within Hampshire, Dorset and Surrey (although a population survived on coastal sand dunes in Merseyside). The Hampshire population became extinct but was subsequently re-introduced to the New Forest. Sand lizards have now also been re-introduced to North Wales, Devon, Cornwall and West Sussex.

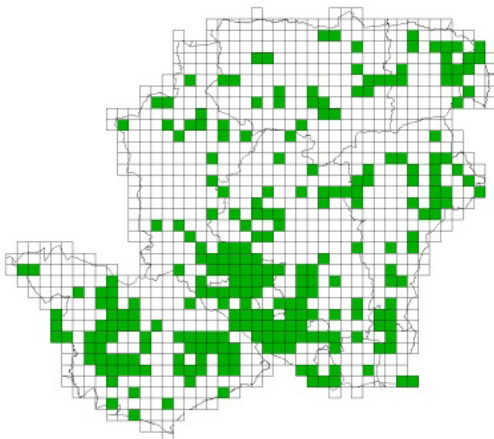
Sand lizards, unlike common lizards, lay eggs and require unshaded sand patches in which to bury eggs for sunlight incubation. Males have striking bright green flanks, particularly during the breeding season in late April/ May.

A total 149 records for Sand Lizard were received between 2002 – 2012.



Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*)

The slow-worm is a legless lizard most commonly found in the south and east of England but is surprisingly rare in parts of the UK (and was introduced to south-west Ireland). Often found in gardens (particularly in compost heaps or under debris) and brownfield sites, it is another species badly affected by increased development.



Slow-worms, like common lizards, give birth to live young. However, unlike lizards and other British reptiles, slow-worms rarely bask in the open and feed on slow-moving prey, especially small slugs, so they are highly beneficial to gardeners.

Slow-worms were the most frequently reported species from 2002 to 2012 with 3126 records.

Adder (*Vipera berus*)

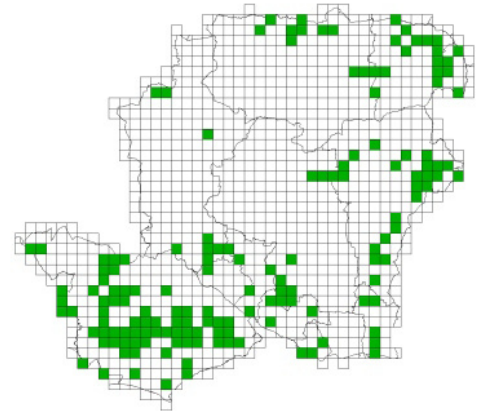


Adders are found throughout Britain right up to the north of Scotland, although there are wide gaps in the distribution, particularly in the midlands.

In Hampshire they are occasionally found in habitats such as heathland and woodland with glades and sunny banks with surrounding cover.

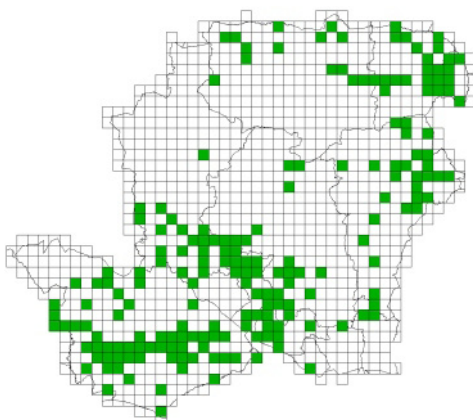
Instantly recognisable by a dark zig-zag down its back, the adder is the UK's only venomous snake and often receives bad publicity. Adders are shy and secretive animals and it should be remembered that most bites occur when the snake has been deliberately antagonised!

A total of 808 records for Adder were submitted in 2002 – 2012.



Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*)

The Grass Snake is the largest native species of reptile in the UK and our only egg-laying snake. It is strongly associated with aquatic habitats such as ponds, streams and ditches but can be found in other places such as rough grassland, woodland and gardens.



Occasionally mistaken for adders, they lack the dark zig-zag and usually have a yellow and black collar around the neck.

Females lay eggs in rotting vegetation, especially compost heaps, of which the heat produced incubates the eggs.

A total of 671 Grass Snake records were received for 2002 – 2012.

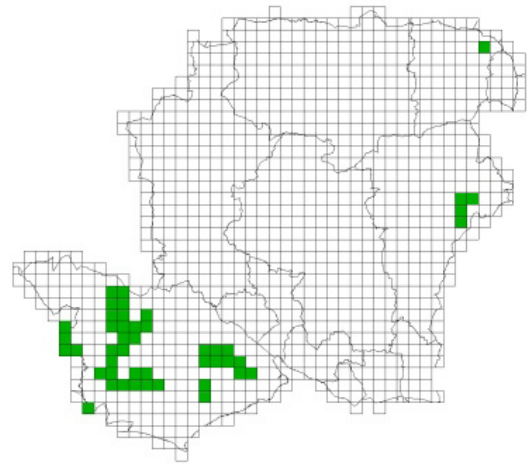
Smooth Snake (*Coronella austriaca*)



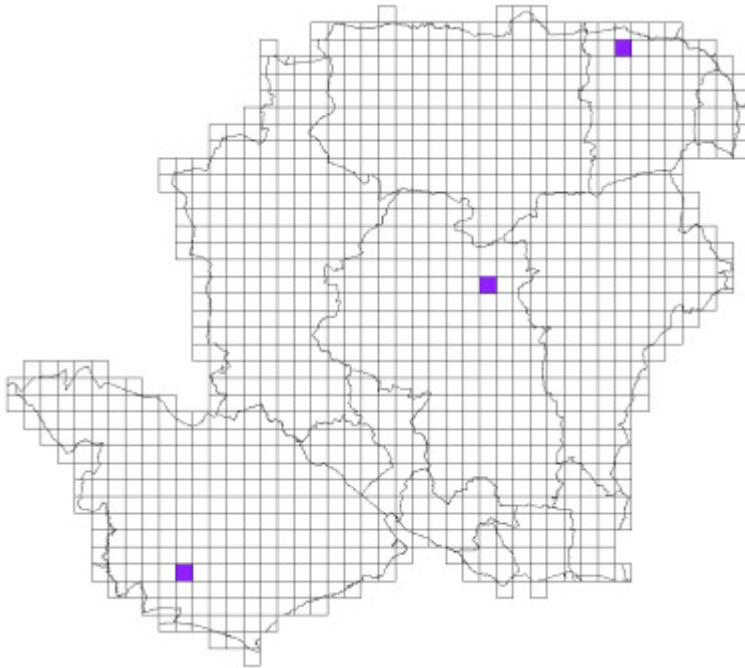
The smooth snake is extremely rare in the UK. It is found only on heathland in Hampshire, Dorset, Surrey and West Sussex. In Hampshire it is largely confined to the New Forest, although there are records from close to the Surrey border.

Smooth snakes feed by constriction and prey mostly on common lizards, slow-worms and small mammals.

A total of 320 records Smooth Snake sightings were recorded from 2002 to 2012.



ALIEN SPECIES



Alien (non-native) species are often under-recorded. During 2002 to 2012 only 5 records for non-native species were received.

Edible frog (*Pelophylax kl. esculentus*)

One of the 'green frogs' and native to mainland Europe. Extremely unusual in the animal kingdom, the edible frog is a naturally occurring hybrid between the marsh frog and the pool frog and must breed with either parent species in order to reproduce. Consequently, there is much variation with individuals being similar to one or other of the parents. The legs are longer than the pool frog. However, the calls are perhaps the best character by which to identify them since they are notoriously difficult to observe, let alone catch!

Just 1 record was received between 2002 – 2012.

Pool frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*)

Another of the so-called 'green frogs'. Originally native to the UK, pool frogs died out in the late 1990's. Although it has been officially re-introduced to a site within its former range in East Anglia, all other populations in the UK (including those in Hampshire) are from deliberately released, or escaped, animals.

Only 3 records of pool frog were received between 2002 – 2012. As with the Edible frog, the identity of the species needs re-investigating following advances in call identification techniques for separating the 'green frogs'.



European pond terrapin (*Emys orbicularis*)

Once native to the UK, European pond terrapins become extinct following the last Ice Age. Like the red-eared terrapin, they are sold in the pet trade (at least formerly) and occasionally escape or are released.

Just a single record was submitted in the period 2002 – 2012.

RECORDERS

Thank you to all the recorders and contributors below (plus any I've missed off the list), without whose assistance our understanding of the amphibians and reptiles of Hampshire would be considerably poorer.

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References

Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Trust www.arc-trust.org
Arkive www.arkive.org.uk

If you have an amphibian or reptile record you would like to submit, please

e-mail it to: **HARGRecorder@hwt.org.uk**;

Or post it to: HARG Recorder c/o Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Beechcroft House,
Vicarage Lane, Curdridge, Southampton, Hampshire SO32 2DP

If you have lots of records to enter, why not use Living Record www.livingrecord.net

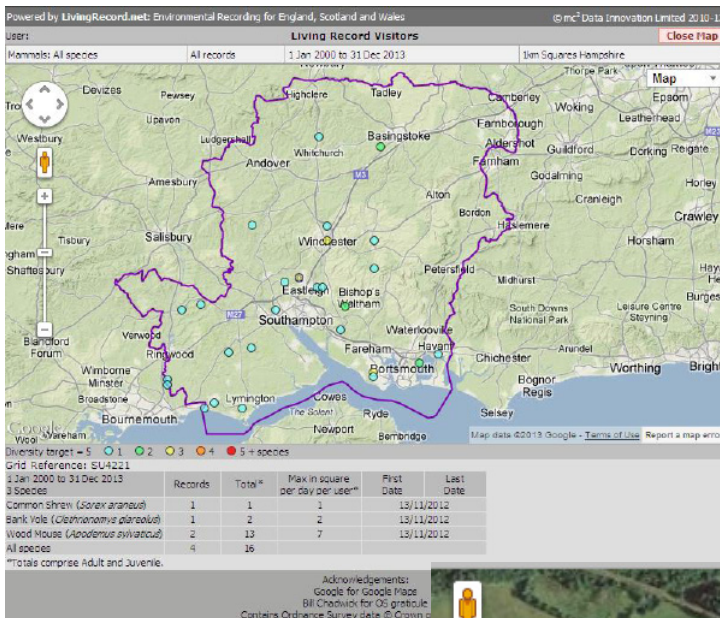
Report produced by Sarah Bignell of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Text by John Poland,
Chair of Hampshire Amphibian & Reptile Group.

Living Record

www.livingrecord.net

A new online recording system for regular recorders

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) are promoting a new online system for regular recorders. The online system means that you can add all your species records in one place instead of filling in separate excel spreadsheets for each group, hopefully saving you time and allowing you to see your records easily on a map. You can view your own records as well as shared distribution maps and downloaded your records as an excel spreadsheet. The Trust reserves are also mapped so you can record sightings on our reserves. All records will still be verified by the county recorder before being sent to HBIC.



To join Living Record visit www.livingrecord.net and set-up an account with your name, e-mail address & post code.

