

Reptile Presence / Absence Report

Land Adjacent to Nightingales, The Street, Bolney, West Sussex, RH17 5PJ

A report for B&G Estate Limited.

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Quality Assurance

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This report has been written to provide an objective assessment of the ecological constraints and opportunities that were considered to be present at the site at the time the survey/s were conducted and, should be used solely for the purpose for which it was designed. The copyright must be considered to rest with Bioregional Forestry Ltd, whilst use of the report is for the commissioning party and their client only, unless with the express and written consent of Bioregional Forestry Ltd. The surveys and assessment have been drafted to be in accordance with the British Standard for Biodiversity BS42020:2013, Biodiversity - Code for planning and development and the Code of Professional Conduct published by CIEEM (2025). N.B It must be noted that investigations of this sort provide only a snapshot in time of the ecological conditions of a site, are limited in extent and cannot capture the full picture of the biodiversity interests at the given location.

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1 Summary

- 1.1. Bioregional Forestry Limited (BFL) were commissioned by B&G Estate Limited to provide ecological advice and support regarding the application for the proposed development at Land Adjacent to Nightingales, The Street, Bolney, West Sussex, RH17 5PJ.
- 1.2. The development proposals are for the erection of a single dwelling with associated car parking and landscaping. To facilitate the development, approximately 0.108 ha of existing modified grassland habitat and the existing log pile (see target note 1 on Figure 1) will be removed.
- 1.3. The brief of the reptile presence / absence surveys was to determine the presence or likely absence of reptiles within the suitable habitats on site and identify the likely ecological constraints associated with the project, including the impacts on reptiles on site.
- 1.4. All six native reptile species receive protection under UK legislation and through local planning policy. Full details of the legal protections are provided in Appendix B.
- 1.5. Only three individuals from three reptile species were recorded on site across the seven survey visits: one adult common lizard, one juvenile grass snake, and one sub-adult slow worm.
- 1.6. Based on the survey findings, the population assessment for common lizards is assessed to be low. No adult grass snakes or slow worms were recorded during the seven survey visits. One juvenile grass snake and one sub-adult slow worm were recorded on site, which may form part of populations occurring within the wider landscape.
- 1.7. It is recommended that the log pile on site (see target note 1 on Figure 1) is dismantled by hand between April and September, during suitable weather conditions, when reptiles are most active.
- 1.8. It is also recommended that the grassland habitat on site is cut directionally over two phases between April and September, during suitable weather conditions, when reptiles are most active, under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. Any reptiles found should either be allowed to disperse naturally into habitats the wider landscape or carefully moved by hand into suitable habitat away from the works area. The grassland vegetation should also be kept mown short throughout the duration of the development works to prevent reptiles recolonising the site.

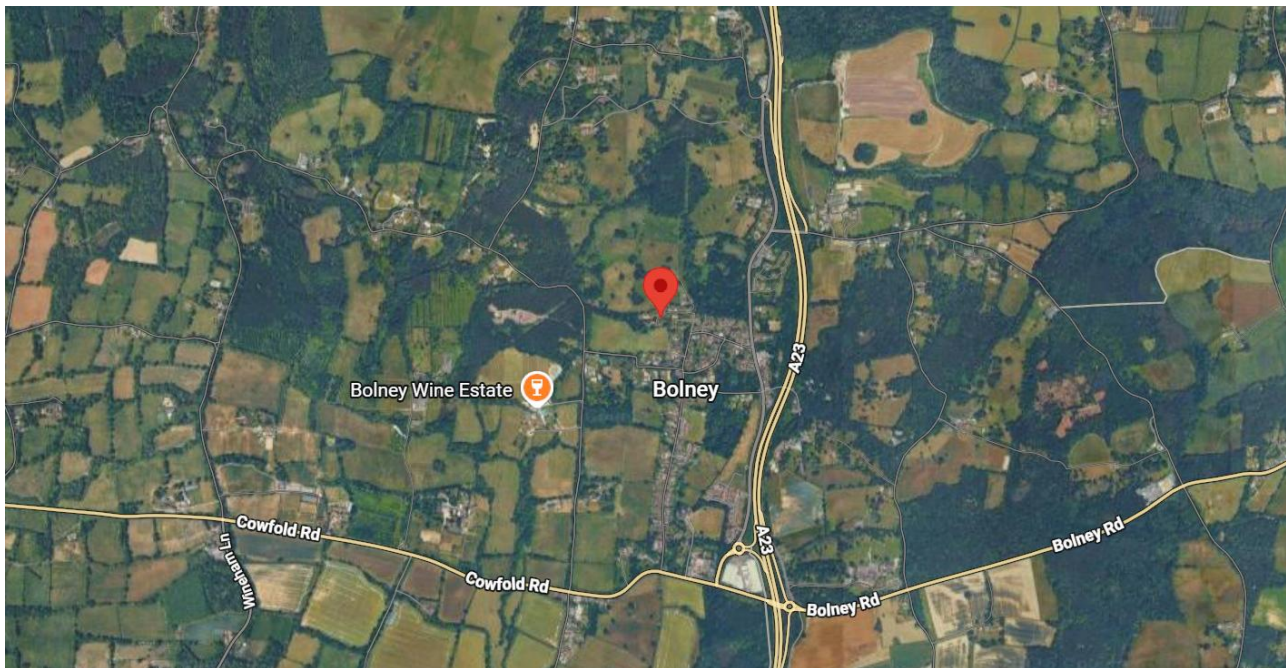
2 Background

Site Details

2.1 The site is located at the land adjacent to Nightingales, The Street, Bolney, West Sussex, RH17 5PJ. The central Grid Reference for the site is TQ 26053 23629. The site is located within the rural village of Bolney in West Sussex. The site is bordered by the High Weald National Landscape to the north, and residential buildings to the east, south, and west. The wider landscape comprises further residential buildings, agricultural fields, woodland parcels, and hedgerows. The A23 is located approximately 600 m to the east of the site. Burgess Hill town is located approximately 5 km to the south-east and Haywards Heath town is located approximately 6 km to the east of the site.

2.2 An aerial image of the site is provided below, see Plate 1.

Plate 1. Aerial image of the site (red pin) taken from Google Earth Pro, accessed 24th September 2026.



Development Proposals

2.3 The development proposals are for the erection of a single dwelling with associated car parking and landscaping. To facilitate the development, approximately 0.108 ha of existing modified grassland habitat and the existing log pile (see target note 1 on Figure 1) will be removed.

Brief

2.4 The brief of the reptile presence / absence surveys was to:

- Determine the presence or likely absence of reptiles within the suitable habitats on site;
- Assess the likely population size of each reptile species on site, if present;
- Assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on reptiles on site; and
- Provide recommendations for avoidance and mitigation measures for reptiles, where appropriate.

3 Legislation

- 3.1 All native reptile species receive protection under UK legislation and through local planning policy. Full details of the legal protections are provided in Appendix B.

4 Methodology

Desk Study

- 4.1 The purpose of the desk study was to gather existing ecological information relevant to reptiles and their habitats within the local area to provide contextual information on the potential presence of reptiles within the wider landscape. Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) mapping (Natural England, 2025) was consulted for information on designated sites and priority habitats within 2 km of the site. National Biodiversity Network (NBN) (NBN Atlas Partnership, 2026), was referred to for species records within 5 km of the site.
- 4.2 The desk study should not be taken as a definitive list of reptiles that occur within the wider landscape.

Reptile Presence / Absence Surveys

- 4.3 During the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) carried out by Arbtech Ltd, the modified grassland habitat on site was assessed as having potential to support reptiles. All of this habitat is proposed to be lost to facilitate the development, which could potentially impact reptiles and their habitat (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2026). A reptile presence / absence survey was therefore undertaken to determine whether widespread reptile species are present on site, in accordance with established reptile survey good practice (Froglife, 1999).
- 4.4 Artificial refugia comprising bitumen roofing felt measuring approximately 0.5m x 1m (0.5m²) were used to provide additional cover and thermally favourable microhabitats that could be utilised by reptiles for basking or shelter. On 14th August 2026, 45 artificial refugia were deployed in suitable locations within the site. This equated to a density of approximately 450 refugia per hectare, providing a high density of artificial refugia relative to the size of the site (0.108 ha). Refugia was positioned strategically in areas considered likely to provide favourable conditions for reptiles, including adjacent to scrub, hedgerows, long grass, and other vegetated habitat margins. The locations of the artificial refugia are shown in Figure 1.
- 4.5 The artificial refugia were left in situ for a minimum period of one week prior to surveys commencing, allowing them to become established within the surrounding habitat and allowing reptiles time to become accustomed to their presence.
- 4.6 Seven survey visits were undertaken during September 2026, within the optimal season for surveying reptiles and during suitable weather conditions (Froglife, 1999). The survey visits were undertaken over a two-and-a-half-week period under a range of suitable weather conditions to increase the likelihood of detecting reptiles.

- 4.7 During each survey visit, the weather conditions at the time of the survey were recorded using data provided by the Met Office from the nearest available weather station (Met Office, 2026). The surface temperature of the ground and the surface temperature of the ground beneath the artificial refugia were recorded using a handheld infrared thermometer. Details of the survey dates, timings, and weather conditions are provided in Table 1.
- 4.8 During each survey visit, the artificial refugia were initially inspected visually for reptiles basking on the surface. The refugia were then carefully lifted to inspect the areas beneath for reptiles sheltering underneath, before being returned to their original positions. Visual searches were also undertaken throughout the site for reptile activity. All reptiles observed were recorded, including species, age, and sex, where practicable.
- 4.9 Reptile surveys provide a snapshot of activity at the time they are undertaken. As such, results are influenced by a range of factors including, but not limited to, weather conditions, seasonal variation, and reptile behaviour. Therefore, reptiles may be present at other times, and the survey findings should be considered representative of the survey period only and not as a definitive long-term assessment of reptile presence or absence and professional judgement must be used when making assessments.

Table 1. Survey Details for Reptile Presence / Absence Surveys

	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Visit 7
Date	2 nd September 2026	4 th September 2026	7 th September 2026	9 th September 2026	11 th September 2026	14 th September 2026	16 th September 2026
Air Temperature (°C)	17	17	20	14	16	18	16
Ground Temperature (°C)	18.6	19.8	19.4	12.9	18.2	19.3	15.2
Under Refugia Temperature (°C)	20.6	20.2	20.3	13.6	19.2	19.9	16
Cloud Cover (%)	90	100	100	0	10	50	0
Wind (mph)	7	13	6	8	7	6	6
Precipitation	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Start Time	09:00	08:45	09:00	08:30	09:00	08:45	09:00
Sunrise	06:15	06:18	06:23	06:26	06:29	06:34	06:37
Lead Surveyor*	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR

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Evaluation

- 4.10 Following the findings of the desk study and the reptile presence / absence surveys, an assessment was undertaken of the potential impacts of the proposed development on reptiles that may be present within the site.
- 4.11 An assessment of the likely reptile population size within the site was made using the peak count of adult individuals recorded during the survey visits, in accordance with established reptile survey good practice guidelines (Froglife, 1999). The highest number of adult reptiles of each species recorded during any single survey visit was used as an indication of the minimum adult population present within the site.

Limitations

- 4.12 A total of 45 artificial reptile refugia were deployed within the accessible areas of the site. Although the number of refugia was constrained by the relatively small size of the site (approximately 0.1ha), the refugia were distributed throughout the potentially suitable habitat and placed at a density to maximise the likelihood of detecting reptiles. The number and distribution of refugia, together with the survey effort undertaken, are considered proportionate to the survey objective and sufficient to inform an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on reptiles within the accessible areas of the site.

5 Results

Desk Study

Designated Sites

- 5.1 There are no European statutory designated sites located within 5 km of the site and there are no National or Local statutory designated sites located within 2 km of the site.
- 5.2 The site is not located within a National Landscape; however, the boundary of the High Weald National Landscape is located directly adjacent to the northern site boundary.

Habitats

- 5.3 Table 2 provides details on the priority habitats located within 2 km of the site.

Table 2. Priority Habitats located within 2 km of the Site

Habitat	Number of Parcels	Distance of Nearest Parcel from Site (m)
Deciduous woodland	123	165
Traditional orchard	12	524
Wood pasture and parkland	1	878

- 5.4 Table 3 provides details on the ancient woodland parcels located within 2 km of the site.

Table 3. Ancient Woodland parcels located within 2 km of the Site

Habitat	Number of Parcels	Distance of Nearest Parcel from Site (m)
Replanted ancient woodland	23	312
Semi-natural ancient woodland	59	394

Species

5.5 Table 4 provides details on the NBN reptile records within the last 10 years located within 5 km of the site.

Table 4. Reptile Records recorded on the NBN within 5 km of the site

Common Name	Species Name	Number of Records	Most Recent Record (Year)
Common lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	1	2019
Grass snake	<i>Natrix helvetica</i>	19	2025
Slow worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>	18	2025

Reptile Presence / Absence Surveys

5.6 Only three individuals from three reptile species were recorded on site across the seven survey visits: one adult common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, one juvenile grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, and one sub-adult slow worm *Anguis fragilis*.

5.7 The reptiles recorded on site were concentrated along the northern site boundary, adjacent to a line of trees. A common lizard was recorded under a refugia that was located directly adjacent to a log pile (see target note 1 on Figure 1 and Photograph 4).

5.8 Table 5 and Figures 2 and 3 provide the results of reptile presence / absence surveys.

Table 5. Results of Reptile Presence / Absence Surveys

Visit Number	Date	Species	Number of Adults			Number of Sub-Adults	Number of Juveniles
			Male	Female	Unknown		
Visit 1	2 nd September 2026	Grass snake	0	0	0	0	1
		Slow worm	0	0	0	1	0
Visit 2	4 th September 2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Visit 3	7 th September 2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Visit 4	9 th September 2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Visit 5	11 th September 2026	Common lizard	1	0	0	0	0
Visit 6	14 th September 2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Visit 7	16 th September 2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6 Impacts and Opportunities

- 6.1 There are numerous parcels of potential reptile habitat located within 2 km of the site including deciduous woodland, ancient woodland, traditional orchard, and wood pasture and parkland, which are directly connected to the habitats on site via a network of hedgerows in the wider landscape. The High Weald National Landscape is located offsite directly adjacent to the northern site boundary, which contains habitats that could potentially support reptiles including grassland, hedgerows, and woodland.
- 6.2 Based on the survey findings, the population assessment for common lizards is assessed to be low, based on a peak count of one adult recorded during Visit 5. No adult grass snakes or slow worms were recorded during the seven survey visits. Therefore, based on the peak count of adults, the site is assessed to support, at most, low populations of these species. However, one juvenile grass snake and one sub-adult slow worm were recorded during Visit 1, confirming that both species occur within the site. These individuals may form part of populations occurring within the wider landscape, although the extent of any such populations cannot be determined from the surveys undertaken.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 The development proposals include the removal of a log pile (see target note 1 on Figure 1) and the loss of the modified grassland habitat on site to facilitate the development. In the absence of mitigation, the construction phases of the proposed development will result in the loss of known reptile habitat and potentially the unlawful killing and/or injury of low populations of common lizards, grass snakes, and slow worms.
- 7.2 The log pile and grassland habitat should not be removed during the time of year when reptiles are most vulnerable, namely the overwintering period from November to February, when their ability to disperse from disturbance is reduced. Instead, it is recommended that the works are carried out between April and September, during suitable weather conditions, when reptiles are most active.
- 7.3 Prior to removal, a suitably qualified ecologist should visually inspect the log pile for reptiles. The log pile should then be dismantled by hand under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. Any reptiles found should either be allowed to disperse naturally into habitats in the wider landscape or be carefully moved by hand into suitable habitat away from the works area.
- 7.4 Prior to the start of the grassland vegetation clearance, a suitably qualified ecologist should visually inspect the grassland for reptiles. It is then recommended the grassland vegetation is cleared in two stages to reduce the habitat suitability for reptiles and thereby reduce the risk of potentially killing or injuring any reptiles, if present.
- 7.5 The initial cut should reduce the height of the grassland vegetation to approximately 150 mm above ground level with the arisings removed and composted, where appropriate, under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. The grassland habitat should then be left for a minimum of 24 hours before the second cut is carried out to allow reptiles the opportunity to disperse into suitable habitat away from the works area.
- 7.6 The grassland vegetation should then be cut to ground-level, under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist, to make the grassland habitat unsuitable for reptiles, and the arisings should be removed and composted, where appropriate.
- 7.7 The vegetation should be cut directionally, starting on the southern aspect of the site and working northward towards the habitats associated with the offsite High Weald National Landscape to encourage any reptiles, if present, to disperse towards the offsite favourable habitat and away from the works area on site.

- 7.8 Once the grassland vegetation has been reduced to ground-level, the works associated with the construction of the proposed dwelling can begin. It is recommended the grassland vegetation is frequently mown and kept short throughout the duration of the works to avoid reptiles from potentially recolonising the grassland habitat.
- 7.9 The above measures are assessed as being appropriate and proportionate to the low reptile populations identified during the surveys on site.
- 7.10 Under the current proposals, the existing log pile on site is proposed to be dismantled and removed. Therefore, it is recommended the loss of this log pile is compensated for by installing a replacement log pile, suitable for reptiles, in a sunny and sheltered location.
- 7.11 It is recommended the proposed landscaping should incorporate ecological enhancements for reptiles, where practicable. This could include creating suitable sheltering and basking locations for reptiles in the form of an area of longer/tussocky grassland habitat and an area of shorter grassland vegetation.

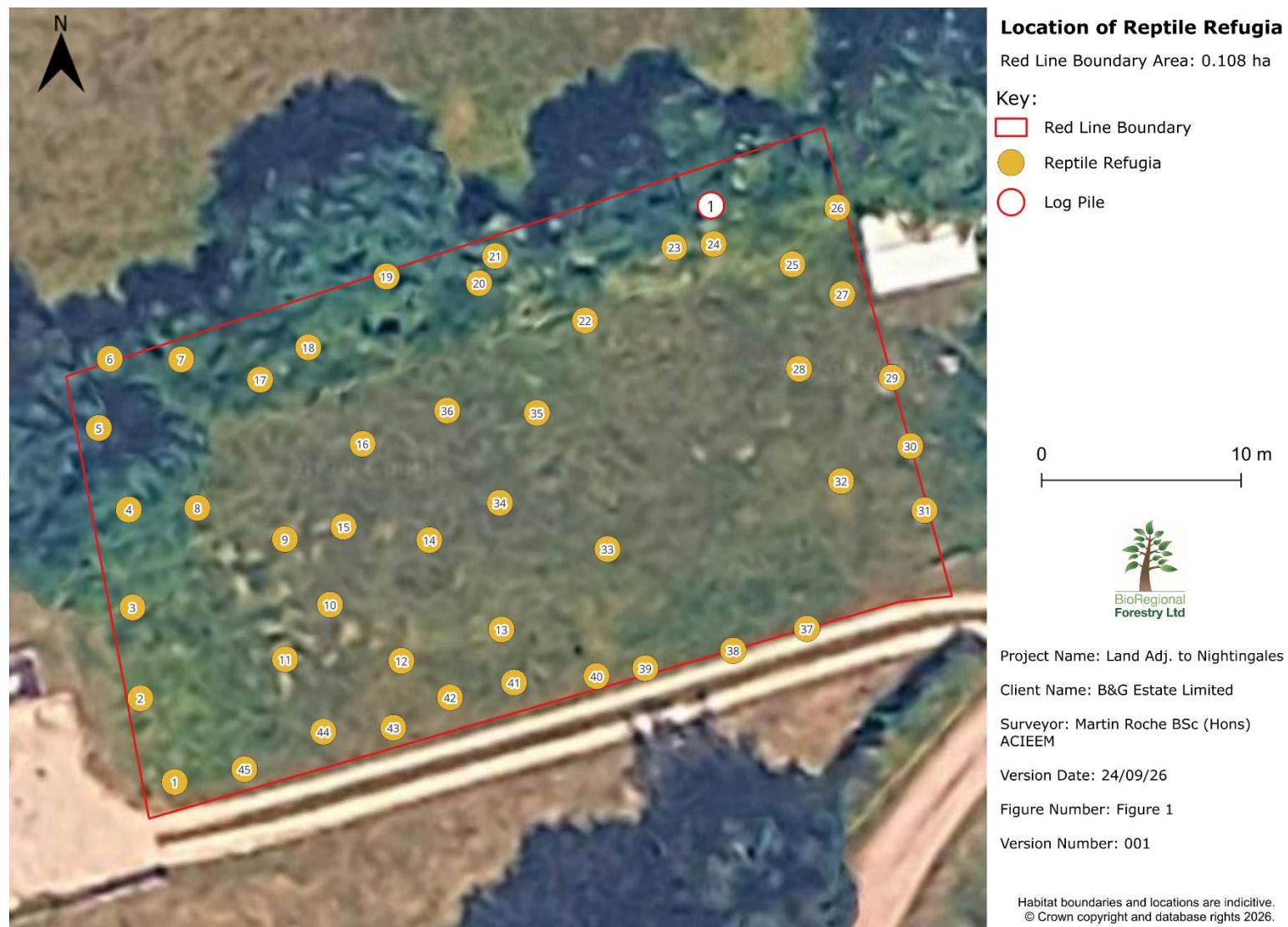
8 Conclusion

- 8.1 This report highlights the reptile-related ecological constraints associated with the proposed works at the Land Adjacent to Nightingales.
- 8.2 Only three individuals from three reptile species were recorded on site across the seven survey visits carried out in September 2026: one adult common lizard, one juvenile grass snake, and one sub-adult slow worm.
- 8.3 Based on the survey findings, the population assessment for common lizards is assessed to be low.
- 8.4 No adult grass snakes or slow worms were recorded during the seven survey visits. One juvenile grass snake and one sub-adult slow worm were recorded on site, which may form part of populations occurring within the wider landscape.
- 8.5 Recommendations have been provided in Section 7 for how the works can proceed lawfully and without breaching wildlife legislation relating to reptiles.
- 8.6 The contents of this report are valid for 18 months. Should this date pass, updated surveys may need to be required by a suitably qualified ecologist.

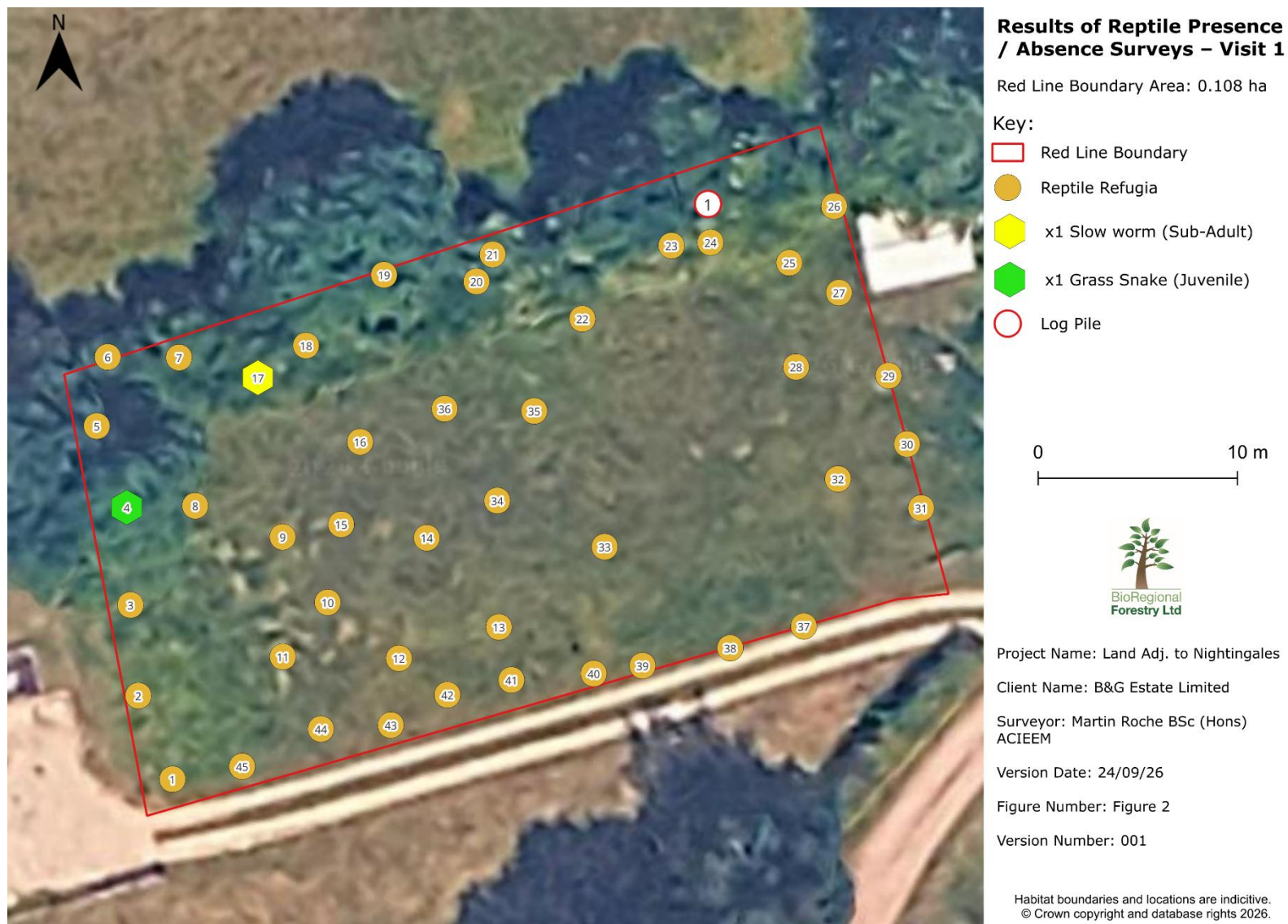
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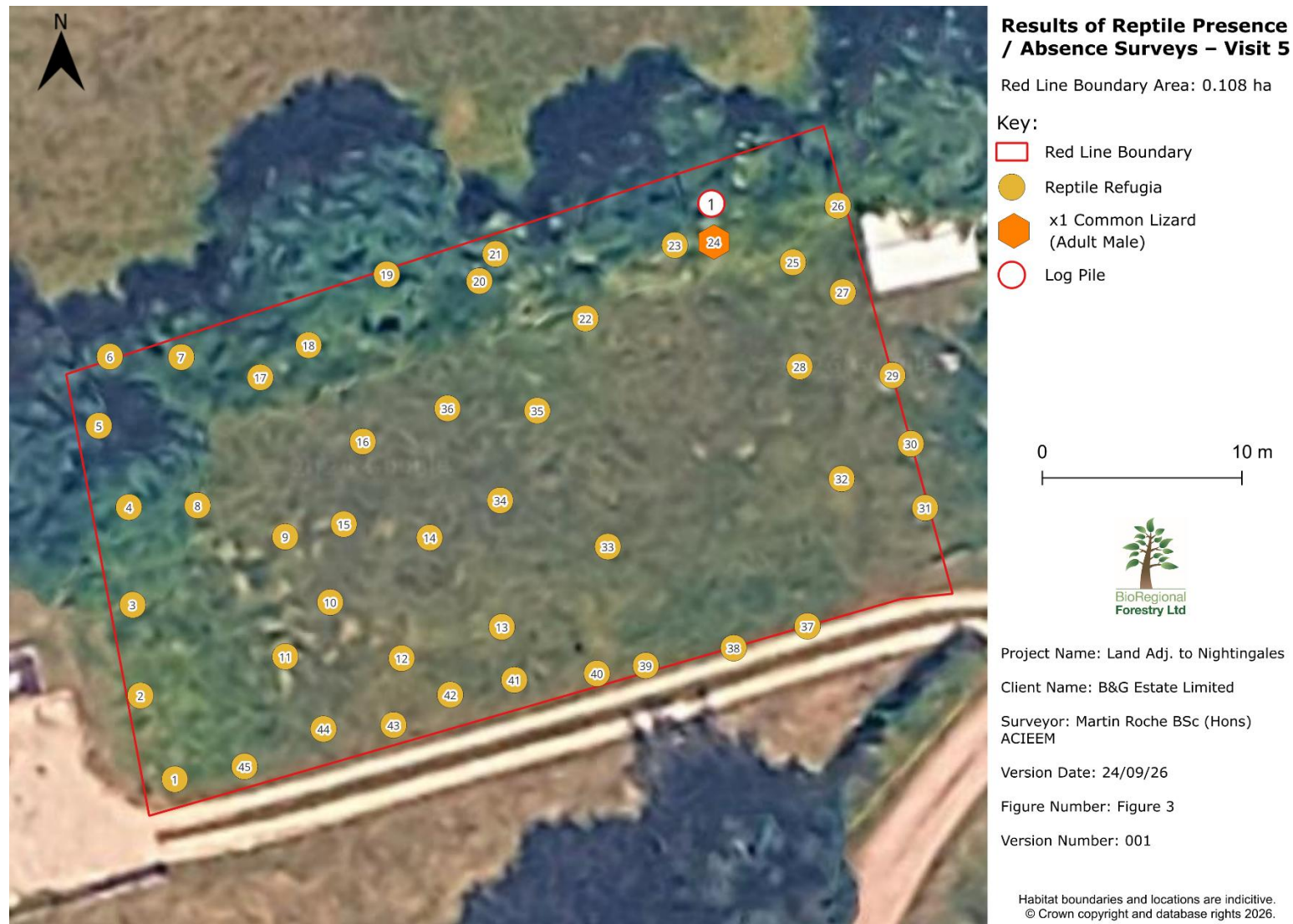
10 Figure 1: Location of Reptile Refugia



11 Figure 2: Results of Reptile Presence / Absence Surveys – Visit 1



12 Figure 3: Results of Reptile Presence / Absence Surveys – Visit 5



13 Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Absence / Likely Absence	A survey conclusion where no reptiles have been recorded during the survey period, and the survey effort, methods, and conditions are considered sufficient to provide reasonable confidence that reptiles are unlikely to be present within the site
Adult	A fully mature individual that has reached sexual maturity and exhibits the typical physical characteristics of the species' adult life stage. Depending on the species, adults may be identifiable by body size, morphology, colouration, or secondary sexual characteristics
Avoidance	Measures implemented to prevent impacts on ecological features, often through design changes or timing of works to ensure that effects do not occur
Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)	The professional body representing ecologists and environmental managers in the UK and Ireland, which provides guidance, standards, and training for ecological practice
Compensation	Measures implemented to offset residual adverse impacts that cannot be avoided or fully mitigated, typically involving the provision of replacement habitats or shelter opportunities
Desk study	A review of existing ecological data and records for a site and its surroundings
Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)	A process for identifying, quantifying, and evaluating the potential ecological impacts of a proposed development on ecological variables, and for identifying appropriate avoidance, mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures
Enhancement	Measures that provide a net benefit to biodiversity, improving habitat quality or increasing opportunities for wildlife beyond baseline conditions
Habitat	The natural environment in which a species or group of species lives, including the physical, chemical, and biological factors that support it
Impact	A change to an ecological feature or resource resulting from a proposed development or activity. Impacts may be positive or negative, direct or indirect
Juvenile	A young individual that has not yet reached sexual maturity and is generally distinguishable from adults by its smaller size, body proportions and/or characteristic juvenile colouration or markings

Mitigation	Measures designed to reduce or minimise adverse impacts on ecological features where impacts cannot be entirely avoided
Natural England	The statutory nature conservation body for England, responsible for protecting and managing the natural environment, including issuing licences for works affecting protected species
Peak Count	The highest number of adult individuals of a species recorded during any single survey visit, used as an indication of the minimum number of individuals present within the site
Presence	The confirmed occurrence of a species within the site, based on a direct observation or other reliable field evidence recorded during the survey(s)
Priority Habitat	Habitats identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
Refugia	Artificial or natural materials or features that provide reptiles with shelter and/or thermally suitable conditions. During reptile surveys, artificial refugia commonly comprise materials such as bitumen roofing felt, corrugated sheeting, or carpet tiles, which may be used by reptiles for basking, shelter, or thermoregulation
Significance	A measure of the importance of an ecological impact, based on magnitude and the value of the affected feature
Statutory Designated Site	A site legally protected for its nature conservation value under national or international legislation, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
Sub-Adult	An individual that is more developed than a juvenile but has not yet reached full adult size or maturity, or does not yet exhibit sufficiently clear adult characteristics. The distinction between sub-adults and adults may not always be possible from field observations alone
Sunrise	The time at which the upper edge of the sun's disc appears above the horizon at a particular location. In survey reporting, sunrise is location- and date-specific and should be distinguished from first light or civil twilight
Zone of Influence (ZoI)	The area over which a proposed development may have ecological impacts

14 Appendix B: Legislation

Reptiles

- 14.1 All native reptile species, including adders *Vipera berus*, common lizards *Zootoca vivipara*, grass snakes *Natrix helvetica*, sand lizards *Lacerta agilis*, slow worms *Anguis fragilis*, and smooth snakes *Coronella austriaca*, receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HM Government, 1981), as strengthened by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (HM Government, 2000).
- 14.2 Sand lizards and smooth snakes are European Protected Species listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (HM Government, 2017). The Regulations provide additional protection for these species, including protection from deliberately or recklessly capturing, injuring, or killing individuals, and from deliberately or recklessly disturbing them or damaging or destroying their breeding sites or resting places. Activities that may otherwise constitute an offence may require an appropriate European Protected Species licence.
- 14.3 All native reptiles are also listed as Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (HM Government, 2006). Public authorities, including local planning authorities, must have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity when exercising their functions.
- 14.4 National planning policy also recognises the importance of conserving biodiversity and the habitats that support protected and priority species, including reptiles. Policy N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2026 (HM Government, 2026) requires planning policies and decisions to protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological networks and to avoid, minimise, and mitigate impacts on biodiversity. The potential impacts of development on protected and priority species, including reptiles, should therefore be considered as part of the planning process.

Local Planning Policy

Mid-Sussex District Council 2014 – 2031, Adopted March 2018

- 14.5 Policy DP38 – Biodiversity of the Mid-Sussex District Council 2014 – 2031, Adopted March 2018 (Mid-Sussex District Council, 2018) states, '*Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:*
- *Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage, and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments;*

- *Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances);*
- *Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience;*
- *Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and*
- *Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas.*

14.6 Designated sites will be given protection and appropriate weight according to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.

14.7 Valued soils will be protected and enhanced, including the best and most versatile agricultural land, and development should not contribute to unacceptable levels of soil pollution.

14.8 Geodiversity will be protected by ensuring development prevents harm to geological conservation interests, and where possible, enhances such interests. Geological conservation interests include 'Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites'.

15 Appendix C: Photographs

Label	Photograph
Photo 1 Long, tussocky grassland habitat present throughout the site	
Photo 2 Patches of scattered scrub present throughout the modified grassland habitat	

Photo 3

Log pile located adjacent to the northern site boundary (see target note 1 on Figure 1)



Photo 4

Adult common lizard recorded under refugia 24 during Visit 5

