

MARKSTAKES COMMON

Results of Reptile Survey 2010

Encounters with Grass snakes, Adders and Slow worms has been a regular occurrence during task days, and survey work and in 2010 a formal reptile survey was initiated.

An initial survey to identify likely locations was undertaken in March when snakes were coming out of hibernation and twenty mats made of roofing felt were placed in sites that were felt to be favourable. The preferred locations were south facing with adjacent cover close by and not adjacent to paths. During the season three of the mats were taken or destroyed.

We found reptiles at some point during the season under 15 of the 20 mats and the total number of observations are detailed in the table below.

Date	Adders	Grass Snake	Slow Worm	Common Lizard
18/03/2010	5	4	1	0
08/04/2010	1	7	1	0
16/04/2010	2	4	2	0
15/05/2010	0	5	0	0
07/06/2010	2	3	3	0
22/07/2010	0	1	6	0
16/09/2010	1	4	7	2
17/10/2010	0	2	0	1
Total sightings	11	30	20	3

The survey approach is inherently an imprecise measure of reptile numbers but it has confirmed that the Common has a healthy population of reptiles and established the presence of Common Lizards which have been seen once before on the Common but several years ago. The results include juveniles of both slow worms and grass snakes which would imply that successful breeding is taking place.

This year, the number of shelters will be doubled, and Lewes District Council has funded further survey work by a Reptile specialist.

Adders are a Bio-diversity action plan priority species and it is important not to damage their habitat. We have ensured that when clearing glades and the Mire we have retained edges of rough litter to provide shelter.