



REPTILES REQUIRED!



A study at the University of Worcester recently investigated whether pheasants on the Malvern Hills were having an impact on reptiles (adder, grass snake and slow worm). Dr. Duncan Westbury and his team looked for reptile DNA in pheasant droppings, but none was found. There are a number of explanations; including the fact that reptile DNA cannot survive the pheasant digestive system. The analytical technique has the potential to be a very powerful tool to investigate the impact of pheasants on reptiles, but Dr. Westbury needs to prove that DNA is detectable following consumption. He is therefore requesting that any reptiles (adders, grass snake, slow worm, and common lizard) **found dead** be sent to his lab at Worcester University. Please contact Dr. Westbury if you are able to help: d.westbury@worc.ac.uk

RECORDS REQUIRED!

Yes, I'm afraid it's autumn again and it seems to have been a mixed year for our amphibians and reptiles... The fluctuating spring temperatures certainly affected some amphibian breeding and, whilst the weather was good for reptile activity, they may have been less easy to spot! Nevertheless we need your NARRS (random and fixed) survey results in please: submit both POND/SQUARE and VISIT records at http://www.narrs.org.uk/submit_results.php or send them to us at the ARC main office (address at the end of this newsletter) **BY NOVEMBER 30th PLEASE.**

With the government agenda remaining focussed on "sustainable development", schemes such as NARRS will remain crucial in providing the evidence that ensures our widespread herpetofauna is considered and conserved for the future!

REMEMBER: please submit your records however many visits you made or if you found no amphibians/reptiles! And if you're signed up to NARRS and don't survey, please consider doing a square next year. Squares are assigned based on your registered postcode each February. Thanks to all who do take part!

NARRS Team Staff News: Andy Arnell, ARC's GIS and Data Officer since 2010, has moved on to a job at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge! We're sad to lose him but wish him well and welcome to David Fletcher, his replacement from September. Contact David and/or the NARRS Team on data.officer@arc-trust.org

NARRS SURVEYOR MOTIVATION: SURVEY RESULTS

Eighty-nine people responded to the questionnaire, sent with an earlier *NARRSNEWS*, about their motivation for taking part in amphibian surveys. This was part of the government-sponsored *PondNet* trial.

Most people (90%) said they take part in NARRS because of concern for the environment and many also wanted to increase personal knowledge and skills. Importantly, the biggest barrier to participation in NARRS was the need to seek permission from landowners (73% of responses). We recognise this is a problem, especially with the time of volunteers being limited, and we WILL try to do something about it for future years, subject to funding of course! Watch this space for details...

We also aim to provide better feedback to surveyors in future, and hope to obtain funding for a map-based database system where surveyors can see their records appear when submitted!

THANK YOU to everybody who responded to the survey – your responses will help us improve NARRS for the future. Once the complete *PondNet* survey report is available on-line, we'll include a link to it!

DIARY DATES...

Sunday 17th November 2013: West Midlands Regional ARG Meeting. Bromsberrow Village Hall, nr. Ledbury, Herefordshire. See <http://www.arguk.org/> for details.

Sunday 8th December 2013: ARC/BHS Scientific Meeting. Bournemouth Natural Science Society, Boscombe, Dorset.

and...

Saturday 1st February – Sunday 2nd February 2014: The Herpetofauna Workers' Meeting. This year being held at Bristol Zoo Gardens!

For details of both above events, see

<http://www.arc-trust.org/about-us/What-we-do/annual-conferences/>



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