



Research information note

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Costed plans and options for herpetofauna surveillance and monitoring

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Introduction

English Nature needs herpetofauna surveillance and monitoring data for various purposes: with regard to interest features on designated sites, status of BAP and other nationally important species, assessment of national trends in widespread species, European legal obligations for Species of Community Interest, information for miscellaneous casework tasks, and data on non-native species. At present much of the data is lacking, patchily distributed across many organisations, and collected to different standards. There is also no assessment of the precise needs of English Nature and how the available data might meet those needs; in addition an assessment of the desired future data collection and management is required.

What was done

This report explores information needs, methodologies, sampling strategies, delivery mechanisms, personnel, voluntary involvement, popularity, logistics, coordination, data issues, and resource implications. It then sets out indicative costed options for a national recording scheme.

Results and conclusions

Systems of data collation, management and dissemination are addressed, and a survey of local record centre data holdings is presented. Various structural and logistical issues are explored, including the feasibility of developing and sustaining a large national volunteer network. Examples of sampling regimes and survey structures are proposed, and the cost implications are examined. Fully costed options are given for delivering each of the four main objectives for which English Nature needs information (widespread species, BAP/nationally important species, very rare species, Common Standards Monitoring of SSSI

interest features). The costs of each are interdependent, and it would be most efficient and synergistic to run all four elements concurrently. The total cost may be several hundred thousand pounds per year.

English Nature's viewpoint

This report provides an extremely useful and detailed assessment of the current state of herpetofauna status data. The proposed options for future data collection, management, interpretation and dissemination will prove very useful in the coming years as English Nature (and its successor organisation, Natural England) work with partners to progress the issue. The suggestions provide a sound platform on which to develop survey projects, and already some examples of single-species projects, such as "Make the Adder Count", are being trialled.

Selected references

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Further information

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