



UNIVERSAL DESTINATIONS & EXPERIENCES UK PROJECT

Former Kempston Hardwick Brickworks
and adjoining land, Bedford

Appendix P – Reptile Method Statement

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. This Method Statement sets out the precautionary reptile measures relevant to the CEMP Works within areas of habitat that may support reptiles. It provides the detailed working methods to be followed where the ECoW determines that reptile precautions, direct supervision, translocation or destructive search measures are required.
- 1.1.2. The controlling requirement to implement reptile mitigation where relevant to the CEMP Works is set out in **Section O** of the CEMP Main Body. This Appendix provides the detailed method statement for that purpose.

2 TOOLBOX TALK

- 2.1.1. As part of the CEMP Works induction, all CEMP Staff will be briefed by the ECoW to provide them with a basic overview of the life history, habitat requirements, identification and legal protection granted to reptiles. The toolbox talk will also identify the habitats present on CEMP Land that have the potential to be used by these species, and outline the procedures and environmental measures to be followed in order to avoid breaches of legislation and/or adverse impacts on these species that could occur within or in the vicinity of the CEMP Land.
- 2.1.2. The ECoW will give a toolbox talk to the vegetation clearance contractors when following destructive search methods as outlined in paragraphs **4.1.4** to **4.1.9**; this will include:
- A brief introduction to the widespread reptile species which potentially may be discovered on the CEMP Land; and
 - Precautionary working methods, including those which may form a Precautionary Works Method Statement (PWMS) to be employed and permitted equipment types.

3 METHODS

3.1 PREPARATION OF WORKING AREA

- 3.1.1. Prior to the commencement of CEMP Works, the Contractor will agree with the ECoW where reptile precautions are required in regard to areas of CEMP Works, access routes and any areas of habitat where reptile precautions are required. The ECoW will confirm the risk level and the applicable measures in this Method Statement and will identify any areas requiring direct ecological supervision.
- 3.1.2. Where translocation is required, one or more receptor area(s) will be established within the CEMP Land in a location agreed by the ECoW and prepared in advance of the relevant aspect of CEMP Works.

3.2 WORKING METHOD (RISK BASED)

- 3.2.1. Where CEMP Works are proposed in habitats with potential to support reptiles, the following staged approach will be implemented as directed by the ECoW:
- Initial reduction of vegetation: Vegetation within the working area (and an agreed buffer) will be cut to a short sward to encourage reptiles to disperse into adjacent habitat;
 - Cooling-off period: A short interval will be allowed between the initial cut and ground-level clearance to allow reptiles time to disperse, as confirmed by the ECoW;
 - Ground-level clearance and removal of arisings: Vegetation will then be reduced to ground level, and arisings removed, to maintain the area in a condition that discourages re-entry during the CEMP Works;
 - Ground disturbance: Where ground disturbance is required within reptile risk areas, the ECoW will determine the need for direct supervision and will oversee a proportionate watching brief where required; and
 - Discovery of reptiles: If a reptile is encountered, CEMP Works will pause locally and the ECoW contacted immediately. Reptiles will be handled and relocated only by the ECoW (or an appropriately experienced person appointed by the ECoW) to a suitable receptor area or adjacent suitable habitat, as directed by the ECoW.
- 3.2.2. CEMP Works during periods of lower reptile activity:
- Where CEMP Works are proposed during periods when reptiles are likely to be inactive or hibernating, the ECoW will confirm whether the habitat suitability and proposed activities are such that the CEMP Works can proceed without increased risk. If the ECoW advises that the risk is not low/negligible, CEMP Works will be rescheduled or undertaken under direct ecological supervision and/or following additional measures as directed by the ECoW.

4 MITIGATION DETAILS

4.1 TRANSLOCATION RECEPTOR AREAS

- 4.1.1. Artificial refugia such as log piles will be created within the receptor site to provide shelter for translocated reptiles and suitable habitat for hibernation. The location of the receptor sites will be identified by the ECoW.

TRANSLOCATION

- 4.1.2. Where required by the ECoW, a trapping and translocation exercise will be undertaken in advance of CEMP Works to reduce the risk of harm to reptiles. The ECoW will confirm the trapping area(s), trapping duration and the conditions under which trapping and any associated habitat manipulation will proceed, having regard to reptile activity and the suitability of weather/ground conditions for reptile dispersal.
- 4.1.3. The perimeter of the trapping area will be secured using reptile exclusion fencing to minimise re-entry from adjacent habitat. Trapping will be undertaken using an appropriate density of artificial refugia, checked at a frequency agreed by the ECoW. Following completion of trapping, the ECoW will confirm when the CEMP Land can progress to the next stage of habitat removal/ground disturbance, and the exclusion fencing will be maintained as required to minimise the risk of reptiles re-entering the CEMP Land.
- 4.1.4. The trapping will include the deployment of a high density of artificial refugia (i.e. 100 or more per hectare) which are then checked regularly by a surveyor, under suitable weather conditions. It is possible that habitat alteration methods could be used in combination with trapping and translocation to enable reptiles to be excluded from the works area earlier within the trapping period. Such methods could involve the removal of vegetation using 'destructive search methods' as described below. The extent and scope of these measures will depend on the locations where works are required in any given year.
- 4.1.5. Once five suitable days have passed in which no reptiles have been captured, sensitive vegetation clearance and a destructive search will be completed to confirm the absence of reptiles. Both throughout the trapping period and following completion the exclusion fencing would be maintained to minimise the risk of any reptiles from habitat adjacent to the works area re-entering the exclusion area. Reptile exclusion fencing would be checked on a regular basis during the main reptile active season and repaired as necessary.

DESTRUCTIVE SEARCH METHODS

- 4.1.6. Destructive search methods will be used only where directed by the ECoW and where the ECoW has confirmed that the risk of encountering reptiles can be managed to an acceptably low level. This may include, for example, following completion of trapping and translocation and ECoW confirmation that the CEMP Works can progress, where only small extents of suitable habitat are affected, or where site-specific survey evidence confirms a low likelihood of reptiles being present such that trapping is not warranted. Where the ECoW advises that conditions are not suitable to manage this risk (e.g. reptiles are unlikely to disperse), destructive search will not proceed and alternative precautions and/or direct supervision will be implemented as directed by the ECoW. Clearance will commence on extents of similar habitat e.g. areas of continuous grassland. Clearance would then move towards retained habitat on or adjacent to the CEMP Land (where not all habitat is due to be removed and connecting habitat is available). The steps listed below must be completed:

- Targeted hand search by ecologist for reptiles within vegetation to be cleared;
- Clearance of vegetation to 200mm above ground level;
- Re-inspection of vegetation by ECoW; and
- Clearance to ground level (or as close as is practicable).

- 4.1.7. Any active reptiles found will be captured by an ECoW or those persons appointed as appropriate experienced by the ECoW and placed into a soft cloth bag before being moved to the receptor site or adjacent suitable habitat lying outside the working area. To reduce the chances of predation, any captured animals would be placed under suitable natural or artificial refugia.
- 4.1.8. Once the vegetation has been reduced to ground level (or as close as is practicable), any remaining features with suitability for sheltering reptiles would be dismantled/soil-stripped under a targeted ecological watching brief. The topsoil and any debris would be spread on to the ground to allow the ecologist to search for any remaining reptiles, in the unlikely event that animals are present.
- 4.1.9. Should the removal of any rubble, brash, log piles or other materials suitable for reptile hibernation be required as part of the Authorised Development this will be undertaken with oversight from the ECoW.

4.2 GENERAL WORKING PRACTICES

- Vehicles will not be driven over, nor machinery stored or placed on reptile habitat that has not been declared 'clear' by the ECoW;
- The working area will be delineated to prevent activities encroaching onto habitat or features that have not been cleared in line with this, or any other appropriate Method Statement;
- No rubbish/materials should be discarded or dumped within the CEMP Land, as reptiles may use these materials for temporary shelter. It is imperative that during all CEMP Works due care and attention is paid to any materials accidentally left lying around in case reptiles are sheltering under or within them. All such materials should be examined for the presence of reptiles before they are moved/discarded/destroyed, which must be not be conducted on CEMP Land;
- All cleared vegetation will be removed from the CEMP Land at the end of each day and destroyed, or stored in a pre-agreed designated location to prevent birds attempting to nest amongst such material, unless an alternative arrangement is agreed with the ECoW;
- Following implementation of this Method Statement, the area will be maintained as bare soil until completion of CEMP Works to prevent any animals moving back in. If animals are allowed to return to the area, it is likely that the process will need to be repeated to ensure that no offence is committed;
- Once an area has been prepared and confirmed by the ECoW in accordance with this Method Statement, it will be maintained in the required condition for the duration of the relevant CEMP Works to minimise the risk of reptiles re-entering the working area; and
- Contact details for the ECoW will be displayed on the CEMP Land. All CEMP Staff will remain vigilant throughout the CEMP Works and report any sightings of reptiles on CEMP Land, dead or alive, to the ECoW.