



**ARG UK**

# Herpetofauna Workers' Meeting 2020

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2020

The Waterfront, Promenade, Southport PR9 0DZ

amphibian and reptile  
conservation



## Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February

09.30-10.00 Registration and coffee.

### Morning session:

10.00-10.10 Welcome address. **Dr. Tony Gent (C.E.O Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)**

10.10-10.30 Non-native herps in Ireland. **Rob Gandola (Herpetological Society of Ireland)**

10.30-10.50 Back to the future? Unravelling UK toad declines. **Remi Martin (University of Wolverhampton/ University of Salford/ Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)**

10.50-11.10 Pathogen risks to UK amphibians. **Prof. Andrew Cunningham (Zoological Society of London)**

11.10-11.40 Refreshment break.

### Session 2

11.40-13.10 **Workshop Sessions (A,B,C&D)**

13.10-14.10 Lunch and posters.

### Afternoon session:

14:10-14.30 Gems in the Dunes: managing in partnership for key species. **Andrew Hampson (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)**

14.30-14.50 Long-term natterjack toad monitoring on Sefton Coast. **Phil Smith (Independent ecologist)**

14.50-15.10 Welsh Coastal sand dune systems in changing times: herpetofauna, survey and management. **Pete Hill (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)**

15.10-15.30 Human - snake conflict: The repeated persecution of king cobras in Northeastern Thailand. **Alexandros Theodorou (Sakaerat Conservation and Snake Education Team, Thailand)**

15.30-16.00 Refreshment break.

16.00-17.30 ARG UK Annual General Meeting.

### 19.00 - Social evening

Gala Dinner to include; 'Have I Got Newts For You' Quiz & the ARG UK Raffle.



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## Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February

09.30-10.00 Registration & Coffee.

### Morning Session 1:

10:00-10:20 The Vanishing Viper: developing a partnership approach to conserving adders. **Dr Angela Julian (ARG UK)**

10:20-10:40 Wind farms – a neglected opportunity for adder conservation? **Jeanette Hall (Highland Biological Recording Group)**

10:40-11:00 Using photo identification of individual slow worms (*Anguis fragilis*) to investigate refugia fidelity. **Suzanne Collinson (Cumbria Amphibian & Reptile Group)**

11:00-11:30 Refreshment break.

### Morning Session 2

11:30-13:00 **Workshop Sessions (B,C,D&E)**

13:00-14:00 Lunch and posters.

### Afternoon Session 1:

14:00-14:20 Good for newts or good for nowt? A review of great crested newt site-by-site licensing. **Matt Gill (Natural England/ University of Leeds)**

14:20-14:40 Not just newts: the wider benefits of great crested newt conservation. **Dr Karen Haysom (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)**

14:40-15:00 Opportunities for improving biodiversity through Greener on the Outside of Prisons (GOOP) programme and impact on health of engaging offenders in the natural world. **Michelle Baybutt (University of Central Lancashire)**

15:00-15:30 Refreshment break

### Afternoon Session 2:

15:30-15:50 The history, conservation and monitoring of an urban grass snake population. **Rory Dimond (Heath Hands)**

15:50-16:10 Conservation of grass snakes in North East England. **John Grundy (North East Reptile & Amphibian Group)**

16:10-16:20 Closing remarks **Chris Monk (Chair of Amphibian & Reptile Groups of the UK)**

16:20 Depart.



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## Workshop abstracts

**Workshop A: Will the more strategic approach taken by District Level Licensing projects help to improve the conservation status of great crested newts? Leader: Paul Edgar (Natural England)**  
**Runs Saturday only.**

Although various District Level Licensing (DLL) projects have been set up in England in recent years, by Natural England and others, there has been no objective assessment as to whether this approach will actually benefit great crested newts. In particular, will DLL contribute to the continuing legal requirement to achieve and maintain “Favourable Conservation Status” for this species? Natural England specialists, who are not involved in the design or delivery of DLL projects, have now been commissioned to compile such an assessment. This will be done through a review of available scientific literature, combined with comprehensive consultation with external experts in great crested newt conservation. This workshop will therefore provide participants with the opportunity to contribute directly to this report and its recommendations.

**Workshop B: New user-friendly software for analysing and interpreting eDNA results.**  
**Leaders: Prof. Richard Griffiths (Durrell Institute of Conservation & Ecology, University of Kent) & Dr Eleni Matechou**

Environmental DNA (eDNA) methods are particularly well-developed for great crested newts and enable surveys to be conducted at spatial scales that may have been prohibitive using traditional methods. Although eDNA is highly sensitive at detecting newts, the possibility of obtaining both false positives and false negatives when analysing samples remains an issue. Here we will demonstrate a new web-based app that allows false positive and false negative rates to be estimated statistically when pond samples are analysed using replicated PCR runs. The app has an intuitive and user-friendly interface and runs through the freely available R-Shiny platform. Participants will have the opportunity to trial the app on their own laptops. The workshop will be appropriate for consultants and surveyors who carry out eDNA surveys or are involved with the interpretation of laboratory results.

**Workshop C: Managing habitats for conflicting species.**  
**Leaders: Jim Foster & Andrew Hampson (Amphibian and Reptile Conservation)**

Nature reserves offer a refuge for threatened species in our degraded and fragmented landscapes. But even when reserves are strictly protected, site managers may face difficult choices over how to manage reserves that are home to multiple species requiring different habitats. In the Back from the Brink programme, we have explored why and how these conflicts arise and how best to resolve them. This workshop will set out some practical steps to help managers address potential conflicts, using case studies and audience participation. This workshop would be of most value to site managers, as well as surveyors whose results feed into management planning and implementation.

**Workshop D: Online recording and data management for herpetofauna: ARC's new citizen science system.**  
**Leaders: Dr Rob Ward and Dr Karen Haysom (Amphibian and Reptile Conservation)**

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) has developed multiple monitoring initiatives to assess species status, including the recent launch of two projects awarded National Heritage Lottery Funding. We present recent work on a new system for ARC volunteers, stakeholders and staff to record, view and manage their survey data. This workshop will give an overview of the system and potential developments. Workshop participants will also have the opportunity to provide feedback and discuss needs, which will influence how future projects are developed with this data management system.



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**Workshop E: ARGWEB – Fully integrated solution for ARG management from membership to stakeholder reports.**

**Leader: Peter Gillatt (Hampshire & Isle of Wight Amphibian & Reptile Group)**

**Runs Sunday only.**

A template package that is designed to provide consistency in approach, flexibility in utilisation, levels of security & permissions and a wide range of herpetofauna related functions without the hassle, allowing volunteer organisations to manage & control their organisation with minimal resource & time overhead. In this workshop we will look at & demonstrate the wide range of functions the system offers above the standard data capture & reporting role. We'll talk about the ease of customisation to fit any ARG's activity level and discuss the user-friendly interface designed for use even by those with a rudimentary IT understanding. The target audience would likely be ARG committee members, membership officers, reptile & amphibian officers and anyone co-ordinating events & regular structured surveys from the various groups looking to find a way to streamline the amount of work they have to plough into running an ARG.