



Herpetofauna Workers' Meeting 2017

Saturday 11th to Sunday 12th February, 2017

The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nottingham, NG1 5RH

Please note: This programme is subject to change.

Saturday 11th February

09.30-10.00 Registration and coffee.

Morning session 1: Chair: Tony Gent – Amphibian & Reptile Conservation.

10.00-10.10 *Welcome address, Tony Gent (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)*

10.10-10.30 *What risk does B.sal pose to UK newts, Matthew Fisher (Imperial College London)*

10.30-10.50 *Restoring farmland ponds for amphibians and all: results of the Norfolk Ponds Project, Carl Sayer, (Pond Restoration Research Group, University College London)*

10.50-11.20 *Updates from the government agencies, Paul Edgar (Natural England), Matt Ellis (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales), John McKinnell (Scottish Natural Heritage - TBC)*

11.20-11.50 Refreshment break

Morning session 2:

11.50-12.10 *Outcomes from the Vanishing Viper meeting, Richard Griffiths (DICE, University of Kent) & Steve Langham, SARG*

12.10-12.30 *SUDS in the City, Bob Bray (Robert Bray Associates)*

12.30-13.00 *Widespread species monitoring and recording in the Netherlands, Jelger Herder (RAVON)*

13.00- 14.00 Lunch and posters.

Afternoon session:

14.00-15.30 **Workshop Session 1- see timetable.**

15.30-16.00 Refreshment break

16.00-16.20 *Integrated approaches to GCN monitoring and status, Matt Ellis (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales) & Mandy Cartwright, Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)*

16.20-16.40 *A recipe for Amphibians and Reptiles in Community Orchards, (Gareth Matthes, GM Ecology/SARG)*

16.40-17.40 ARG UK Annual General Meeting.

Social evening

19.00-21.00 Gala Dinner – Sponsored by Hampshire Ecological Services

21.00-22.00 Quiz & Raffle.

22.00-Late Bar, close & depart.



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Sunday 12th February

09.30-10.00 Registration & Coffee.

Morning Session 1: Chair: Chris Monk, ARG UK/Derbyshire ARG.

10.00-10.20 *What will Brexit, Woking and other policy changes mean for herp conservation?* **Jim Foster, (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)**

10.20-10.40 *Update on district level licensing and next steps in Natural England's reform work on European Protected Species Licensing,* **Rob Cameron (Natural England)**

10.40-11.00 *How people see amphibians: Using citizen science to inform invasive species management.* **Nicola Morris (Cornwall College/CARG)**

11.00-11.30 Refreshment break.

11.30-13.00 **Workshop Session 2 – See timetable.**

13.00-14.00 Lunch and posters.

Afternoon Session 1:

14.00-14.20 *Long-term monitoring of translocated slow worms and grass snakes at WWT London Wetland Centre,* **Mike Caiden (WWT, London)**

14.20-14.40 *Application of Novel reptile mitigation methods for the A338 project,* **Chris Gleed-Owen (CGO Ecology)**

14.40-15:00 *How can genetic techniques help us understand great crested newt population dynamics?* **David Orchard (ARGSL/University of Salford)**

15.00-15:20 *ARC in Scotland: challenges, opportunities and progress made from 2013 to 2016,* **Peter Minting (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)**

15.20-15:50 Refreshment break

Afternoon Session 2:

15:50-16:10 *Sand lizards in Surrey: A case study in reptile mitigation* **Liam Russell (Russell Ecology) & Jim Foster (Amphibian & Reptile Conservation)**

16.10-16:30 *Aesculapian snakes in the UK,* **Wolfgang Wuster (Bangor University)**

16.30-16.40 Closing remarks, **Chris Monk, ARG UK/Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group**

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Workshop abstracts

Workshop A: eDNA surveys for great crested newts: challenges and opportunities

Leaders: Andrew Buxton, DICE, University of Kent & Natural England

Environmental DNA has been being used commercially for great crested newt surveys for three seasons now. Thousands of samples have been collected by consultant ecologists and analyzed commercially with the data feeding into EPS license applications, and through into the planning system. However, there have been issues with the methodologies, and in some cases, a lack of confidence in the results. This workshop aims to provide an information gathering platform to hear more about the problems that practitioners have been finding. We also plan to have representation from Natural England, and a commercial laboratory, to discuss these issues and identify possible solutions, to make eDNA a more versatile tool in the ecologist's toolbox.

Workshop B: Making the most of the better regulation agenda ?

Leaders: Rob Cameron, Natural England

Government seeks better regulation, that is regulation which delivers win-win results. This workshop will allow us to explore how effectively recent reforms in GCN licensing (including new licensing policies and district level licensing) have streamlined process and improved benefits for GCN. We will also explore how reforms may affect the role of commercial consultants and volunteer groups.

Workshop C: Shaping the future of widespread species monitoring in UK - where next for NARRS?

Leaders: John Wilkinson (ARC) & Angie Julian (ARG UK)

This workshop will present an update of the results from the first 10 yrs of the National Amphibian and Reptile Recording Scheme (NARRS), and explore what worked and what didn't. We will then present some of the options for monitoring widespread species status going forward, and discuss how volunteers could be better involved. Workshop participants will have an opportunity to feed into the next phase of the scheme; to discuss what they think would work well, or less well; and through this process to help shape the future of the widespread species monitoring programme.

Workshop D: Restoring farmland ponds.

Leaders: Carl Sayer, Ewan Shilland, Helen Greaves (Pond Restoration Research Group, University College London) c.sayer@ucl.ac.uk, e.shilland@ucl.ac.uk, helen.greaves.11@ucl.ac.uk

Farmland ponds are very common in many parts of the UK, but recent research shows them to be in a generally poor state, ecologically speaking. Many ponds are heavily terrestrialised, which is linked to a general cessation of traditional pond management practices since the 1960s/70s. However, farmland ponds can be restored, and recent experiences of the Norfolk Ponds Project will help to illuminate best practice and what needs to be considered to make a restoration project successful. In this workshop we hope to pass on some of this knowledge to participants, whilst facilitating knowledge exchange on several issues, including pond selection, scrub and sediment removal techniques and prescriptions, pond headlands/buffering, project monitoring and post-restoration results. Participants will receive information (including photographs and descriptions) on theoretical farmland ponds, and will consider various questions in break out groups before sharing proposed restoration approaches with the wider group. Please come along to share your experience or just to learn from others.



Workshop E: Guided public reptile walks: developing best practice for volunteer groups
Leader: ARG UK

Integral to their outreach and education activities, Amphibian and Reptile Groups often wish to run guided reptile walks for other volunteers and the wider public. However, concerns have been raised about the impact of excessive disturbance at some reptile sites, particularly when they are on public land, or concern more sensitive species such as adders and the EPS. This has led to requests for additional guidance, perhaps in the form of a new ARG UK advice note. This workshop will discuss the issues relating to guided walks, and aim to identify some key recommendations for best practice, that can form the basis of such an advice note.

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