

# **SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (HERPTILES) IN YORKSHIRE:**

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## **The background**

Over the years the network of local Natural History Societies, Conservation, Wildlife, and Biodiversity Groups in the Yorkshire region have undertaken numerous reptile and amphibian surveys. The results of some have actually made it into the accessible literature but the majority tend to be rather buried in a variety of local society or nature reserve reports and many remain as unpublished file copies.

In the past, annual sightings and species counts (no matter how many or few) were collated by keen individuals or officials of local natural history societies and forwarded to the succession of YNU (County) Herptile recorders to be edited into Yorkshire-wide annual reviews. From the 1930s to the present this function has been undertaken by such leading figures as Ellen Hazelwood, J. R. Govett, Mike Clegg, Colin Simms and Dr Mike Thompson (see bibliography) and is currently in the hands of the indefatigable Richard Sunter (see YNU membership card or website for details).

Periodically, local and regional Records Centres have reviewed the available data though this is rare and very unevenly spread around the Yorkshire region. Some examples are - Rotherham (Ely 1991), Doncaster (Howes 1973), Sheffield (Whiteley 1997), Wakefield (Smith & Sunter 2000) and West Yorkshire (Riley 1989).

However, in our dynamic landscape where sites are created on the one hand by mineral workings or garden ponds or destroyed by landfill, drainage and the removal of heathlands, the existing literature is in constant need of updating. There is therefore an urgency for up to date and verifiable data on the location and status of herptile populations and sites throughout our region.

To form a background to this new generation of studies we have compiled the following bibliography of some of the existing Yorkshire and Humber region herptile data sources. Please let us know of any additions.

## **Current work**

Although school and local community groups frequently undertake laudable wildlife conservation activities involving observing and creating habitats for amphibians and reptiles, these projects are seldom adequately written up and the records are almost never passed on to regional recording organisations.

Because of statutory protection, conservation policies and Biodiversity listings, there is a constant demand by official bodies and almost anyone involved in development or development control, for up to date information on the status and distribution of herptiles and their habitats.

Ironically, the vast majority of current site-based herptile studies in the Yorkshire region are undertaken on behalf of developers or statutory undertakers in the context of environmental impact assessments in advance of proposed developments. They are generally carried out by professional

consultancies who prepare high quality reports for their clients. Being produced under private contract, the full reports are seldom placed in the public domain though précis or executive summaries can appear in documents accompanying planning applications. It's a tragedy that at present virtually all of this work is effectively lost to the biological records world. RS would be pleased to receive copies of any such reports, which would substantially assist in updating the regional data base of biological records.

### **The future**

New local survey work by students, local Natural History Societies, School groups, Community Green-space or Nature Reserve support groups would be particularly welcome, the inspirational work of the Sorby, and Wakefield Natural History Societies has really shown the way in this respect but much (in fact most) of the Yorkshire recording region still remains entirely un-worked.

For anyone interested in undertaking new local surveys, background records and information may be available in the following regionally-organised chronological bibliography.

### **Yorkshire All regions: Vice Counties 61, 62, 63, 64 & 65**

**East Yorkshire: VC61**

**North Yorkshire: VC 62**

**North Yorkshire: VC 64**

**West Yorkshire: VC63 & 64**

**West Yorkshire: VC63**

**South Yorkshire: VC 63**

**Adjacent areas: Cumbria**

**Adjacent areas: Derbyshire**

**Adjacent areas: Durham and Tyne & Wear**

**Adjacent areas: Greater Manchester**

For assistance with species identification, survey methodologies and procedures, the bibliography also includes titles under such headings as:-

**Identification Guides**

**Survey Methods**

**Distribution and Status**

**Conservation**

**Habitat Creation**

**Population Monitoring**

**Population Management**

**General reading**

## **CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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