

Derbyshire Amphibian & Reptile Newsletter

Issue No 30. August 2020

EVENTS FOR 2020

Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the government control measures our toad crossings and adder surveys were cancelled just as they were getting underway. We have had to cancel subsequent planned events, including the proposed GCN Training Course in May and the reptile survey in South Derbyshire. In addition all the outside public events and wildlife days that we had been invited to attend in the summer and early autumn were cancelled.



Thanks to those who did volunteer with the toad patrols before the lock-down

A few special surveys were undertaken by members following CIEEM guidance where the work was part of long-term studies or assessing recent conservation work



A dewpond in our annual monitoring scheme

**FOR FUTURE ON-LINE EVENTS
SEE THE NEXT PAGES**

DERBYSHIRE AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE GROUP

We are an affiliated member of



ARG UK

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK

Volunteers working for the
conservation of amphibians & reptiles

www.arguk.org

Registered charity
(number 1165504)

Derbyshire ARG

Chair - Kelvin Lawrence

Vice Chair - Christian Murray-Leslie

Secretary - Chris Monk

Treasurer - Jayne Thompson

Committee Members -

Richard Fenn Griffin, James Longley,
Emily Major, Sheila Stubbs & Trevor
Taylor

Contact details

General ARG e-mail

derbyshirearg@gmail.com

Toad crossings email

derbyshirearg.toads@gmail.com

Derbyshire ARG website

<http://groups.arguk.org/DARG/>

Follow us on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/DerbysARG>

Or on our Facebook page



facebook.com/DerbyshireARG/

NEW EVENTS FOR 2020 ARG UK FREE ON-LINE AUTUMN SEMINARS

Due to the lack of any regional ARG meetings this year and the cancellation of the planned regional adder land management workshops ARG UK has set up an autumn series of free on-line seminars. These are covering topics of interest and involving ARG members, national and international experts. These are detailed below and you are welcome to sign up to one or all of them.

Go to the ARG UK Events webpage at <https://www.arguk.org/get-involved/events>

and follow the links to the one(s) you are interested in. Register to view or participate through the Eventbrite link on each seminar page so that you can be sent the link for the event.

All seminars are free, open to everyone & are being run on Zoom. They consist of an ARG or ARG UK person chairing, with between 2 and 4 speakers presenting for an hour and then half an hour for questions / discussions from the audience on the topic. They will run on alternate Thursdays from 7.30pm to 9pm

Thursday 3rd September Dragons in the Hills



Find out about this new project in Northern Ireland to involve people in conserving the country's amphibians and reptiles.

Did you know that Northern Ireland only has frog, smooth newt and common lizards and that they are protected species there.

Thursday 17th September The Vanishing Viper

Continuing ARG UK's work addressing the continuing decline in adders in the UK.



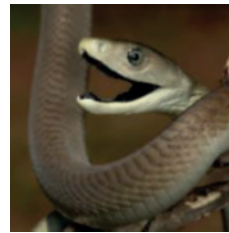
Hear from adder experts on challenges to conserve this species and ways habitat and landscape work could benefit them. Following on from the European aspect of the 2019 Vanishing Viper conference at Bangor University this seminar will

include French adder conservation expert Gaetan Rey from the Nord Pas de Calais.

ARG UK AUTUMN SEMINARS continued

Thursday 1st October

Conserving amphibians and reptiles in South Africa.



Hear about conservation initiatives in one of the world's hotspots for reptiles and amphibians with speakers on youth engagement to raise the plight of endangered wildlife; how to rescue & conserve one of the world's most dangerous snakes - the Black Mamba.

Thursday 15th October

Great crested newts and District Level Licensing



Hear from Kent Reptile & Amphibian Group and ecological consultants on their experiences in dealing with this new system introduced by Natural England on how to deal with GCN in the planning system. Will it achieve conservation benefits for the newts and does how it works in practice match the ideas behind it.

This is sure to now be a key topic with new proposals (after this seminar was set up) by housing developers & the government to tear up the current planning systems and build, build, build. What happens to protected species and biodiversity ?

Thursday 29th October

Engaging Community Champions



Find out how to involve communities and hard to reach groups with nature through projects on amphibians and reptiles. Hear about how this was done with ARG UK's Adders Are Amazing!

Project in rural Pembrokeshire, working with & training with prisoners & offenders in England and assessing other outreach projects from Queens University Belfast. Also looking into evaluation projects to see if changes in peoples attitudes or involvement do occur.

ARG UK AUTUMN SEMINARS **continued**

Thursday 12th November

Amphibian Diseases



A major threat to wildlife at present, especially for amphibians, is the global spread of diseases with chytrid fungal diseases & ranaviruses causing significant die-offs. Learn about research into and possible management measures against the spread of these diseases. There will be speakers from the leaders of this work at the Institute of Zoology in London, from RAVON in Holland & Ghent University in Belgium. Can we prevent the chytrid B.sal which is 100% fatal to GCN escaping into the wild from captive collections in the UK.

Thursday 26th November

Alien amphibians & reptiles in the UK



Several alien amphibian and reptile species have been released or accidentally escaped into the wild in the UK. What effect could they be having on our native amphibians and reptiles, such as competing with the native species, vectors for spreading disease or predation. What makes some species more invasive and able to spread whilst others remain in discrete areas.

You can register now to see or take part in any of the above seminars,

<https://www.arguk.org/get-involved/events>

registration means that you will be emailed the link to join the event nearer the date.

Thursday 10th December

ARG members seminar

This will be a series of short presentations from various ARGs across the country on some of their activities or projects they have been undertaking. Viewing is restricted to ARG members and further details will be available at a later date.

2021 Herpetofauna Recorders' Meeting

It has been decided by ARG UK & ARC that this will not take place as a physical meeting in early February 2021. However an on-line event or events of some kind are under consideration.

HOE GRANGE DEWPOND PROJECT

The report in the last newsletter showed the Hoe Grange dewpond during and after it had been completely desilted by our contractor. Luckily the wettest February ever resulted in the pond refilling by the end of the month.



The clearance of the dewpond at the adjacent Ballidonmoor Farm was organised by Sheffield Wildlife Trust's Wildscapes using funding from Natural England / Defra. Unfortunately their relining of the long dry, small dewpond on Hoe Grange land didn't happen but it may possibly happen in the autumn this year.



Ballidonmoor dewpond before & after desilting.

Due to the covid-19 restrictions we couldn't organise the planned Derbyshire ARG survey visits but a single torchlight survey in late May to both farm dewponds did find both great crested and smooth newts present plus frogs.