



THE NATIONAL TRUST

INFORMATION SHEET

MANAGING RISK – European Protected Species Sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*

Status and distribution

UK	Native, formerly widespread in southern and north western England and Wales; populations remain in south Dorset, south west Surrey and the Merseyside sand dunes. Re-introduced to the New Forest, Weald, Cornwall and Wales. Introduced population on the Isle of Coll. Localised; declining. Priority Species in the UKBAP. Protected Species under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and CroW Act 2000.
EU	Annex IV Habitats & Species Directive, Appendix II (and recommendation 26) Bern Convention.

The sand lizard is under threat throughout most of its European range and beyond. Although once abundant and widespread, populations have disappeared over much of the species former range, including coastal dunes, the Wealden heaths, the New Forest and Wales. It is now largely confined to the dry heaths of south Dorset, south-west Surrey and the Merseyside sand dunes. Re-introduced populations exist in the New Forest, the Weald, south-west England and Wales. A long established, introduced population is present on the Isle of Coll, Scotland. The species is absent from Ireland.

Sand Lizards are restricted to lowland dry heath and coastal sand dunes. Within these habitats they are associated with older, more mature stands of heather and the deeper tangled marram grass, respectively. They require warm, sunny sandy exposures for successful incubation of their young.

Presence within NT properties

In the last decade sand lizards have been recorded from NT properties in West Sussex, Surrey, and Hampshire (Cirencester Recorder Database, 2002).

Threats and risks

Whilst there is limited chance of encountering these animals on Trust land, properties in the current range should be aware of this species. In particular, certain habitat management practices i.e. burning, are detrimental to sand lizards. As the habitat (i.e. breeding sites and resting places) of this species is protected, such practices could be viewed as breaking the law, if relevant safeguards have not been undertaken. In addition, many of the survey methods for finding and /or monitoring this species

necessitate disturbing the animals and thus are breaking the law unless you have been licensed to undertake such work. Not only must the Trust abide by the law, but as partner to the UKBAP, it should also ensure that it maintains all breeding populations occurring on its land. Maintenance of all breeding populations at known or presumed 1995 levels is a target within the UK Action Plan for the sand lizard.

Examples of works likely to affect sand lizards and their habitat and which may require safeguards such as licensing include:

- Burning.
- Turf stripping.
- Inappropriate placement of temporary buildings e.g. porta-cabins.

References and Further Information

Corbett (1994). *Pilot Study for Sand Lizard UK Recovery Programme*. English Nature Research Report No 102. English Nature, Peterborough.

DEFRA (2002). *European Protected Species Guidance Note. (WLF 11 (5/02))*. DEFRA, Bristol. www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulant/forms/cons_man/wlf11.htm

Gent, A.H. & Gibson, S.D. Eds. (1998). *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Action Plan for Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis*): www.ukbap.org.uk

A Sand Lizard



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12/2002**