

**An investigation into the presence of  
heath grasshopper (*Chorthippus vagans*),  
green lizard (*Lacerta bilineata*), and  
slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) within  
the Plémont Holiday Village site**



*Heath grasshopper, Plémont (19/08/2009)*



*Green lizard, Plémont (23/08/2009)*

**Report to Plémont Estates Ltd**

**Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust  
October 2009**



## **Executive Summary**

### **Scope**

Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust was commissioned by BDK Architects to carry out a basic survey over the Plémont Holiday Village site to investigate the presence and approximate distribution of three species of conservation concern – heath grasshopper (*Chorthippus vagans*), green lizard (*Lacerta bilineata*) and slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*). The purpose was to ascertain whether or not these species are present, and to provide basic distribution and abundance data that would assist the client in developing an appropriate mitigation plan as necessary.

### **Heath Grasshopper**

Small numbers of heath grasshopper, *Chorthippus vagans*, were found near the western edge of the Plémont Holiday Village site during August 2009. However, they accounted for only 2.5% of the total number of grasshoppers recorded during the survey. The suitability of the habitats presently within this site for the heath grasshopper, along with potential improvements is discussed.

### **Green Lizard**

A total of five green lizards (four adult, one juvenile) were found within the Plémont Holiday Village site during August and September 2009. The adult green lizards were all found around the edge of the site, while the juvenile was found within the built up area, but still relatively near the site edge. With so few sightings, it is impossible to draw any reliable conclusions on the abundance of these species, other than to confirm that the species is present in relatively small numbers on the site. However, some recommendations for further survey work, mitigation steps and habitat enhancement are discussed.

### **Slow Worm**

A single adult slow worm was found within the Plémont Holiday Village site during September 2009. It was encountered in rough grassland in the SW corner of the main field. Other than confirming the presence of this species on the site, little else can be concluded. However, some recommendations for further survey work, mitigation steps and habitat enhancement are discussed.

### **Key Personnel**

Survey co-ordinator	– Dr H. Glyn Young, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
Grasshopper surveyor	– Dr Tim Wright, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
Reptile surveyor	– Dr Gerardo Garcia, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust

## **Part 1 - Heath Grasshopper Survey, Plémont Holiday Village**

### **Summary**

Small numbers of heath grasshopper, *Chorthippus vagans*, were found near the western edge of the Plémont Holiday Village site during August 2009. However, they accounted for only 2.5% of the total number of grasshoppers recorded during the survey. The suitability of the habitats presently within this site for the heath grasshopper, along with potential improvements is discussed.

### **Background**

The scope of this survey was to ascertain whether the heath grasshopper, *Chorthippus vagans*, is present on the site of the former Plémont Holiday Village, and if so, to estimate its approximate distribution over the site.

The heath grasshopper is one of Jersey's five species of grasshopper and along with two other species of grasshopper, is the subject of a Biodiversity Action Plan, published by the States of Jersey Environment Division in July 2006. These plans review the status of, threats to, and suggested conservation actions for each species, and are based on the work of Murray (1998).

Field grasshopper	<i>Chorthippus brunneus</i>	
Heath grasshopper	<i>Chorthippus vagans</i>	Biodiversity Action Plan, 2006
Meadow grasshopper	<i>Chorthippus parallelus</i>	
Jersey grasshopper	<i>Euchorthippus elegantulus</i>	Biodiversity Action Plan, 2006
Blue-winged grasshopper	<i>Oedipoda caerulescens</i>	Biodiversity Action Plan, 2006

Table 1. Grasshoppers occurring in Jersey (Order Orthoptera, Family Acrididae)

Within the UK, it is restricted to fragments of heathland in parts of Dorset and Hampshire. In the UK, the heath grasshopper is classed as 'Rare' (=RDB3) in the British Red Data Book of Insects (Shirt, 1987). It is also included in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan 'Species of Conservation Concern' list published by the former UK Biodiversity Group ([www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk)).

The heath grasshopper is relatively widespread in Europe, although it is considered endangered over much of its distribution (Hochkirch *et al.*, 2008).

Within the UK, the heath grasshopper is restricted to dry heathland. It is able to live in grassless patches of heath, where few other grasshoppers are able to persist (Marshall and Haes, 1988). In Jersey, the heath grasshopper seems tolerant of a wider range of habitats, being also found in coastal dunes and grassland (Paul, 1994). It has been recorded along much of the north coast and the west coast, and south-west as far as Portelet, with an additional colony in Gorey (Figure 1; States of Jersey, 2006a).

All three species of *Chorthippus* (Figure 2) are known to occur in the north-west corner of Jersey, where the survey site is located. The other two species are thought to be restricted to St Ouen's Bay and around the south-west corner of Jersey.



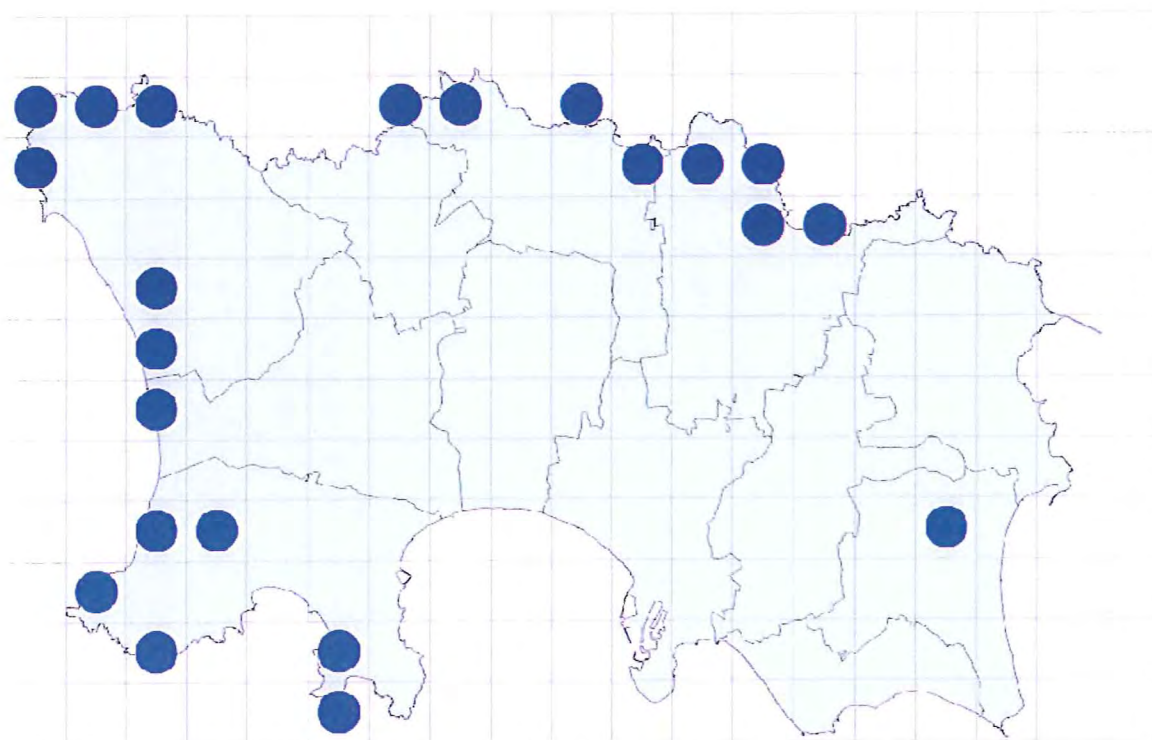


Figure 1. Heath grasshopper distribution in Jersey , as shown in the Species Action Plan (States of Jersey, 2006a).



Field Grasshopper



Heath Grasshopper



Meadow Grasshopper

Figure 2. The three species of grasshopper known to occur in the Plémont area. (All photographed at Les Landes, 05/08/2009.)

## **Methodology**

The survey area is shown in Figure 3. Given the objectives of the survey (presence and basic distribution rather than detailed population study), a line transect methodology (New, 1998) was selected. Eleven north-south transects were established, spaced 25 metres apart. These transects were walked at a slow and even pace, and any adult grasshoppers encountered were caught using a sweep net, identified, and then released. The location of identified grasshoppers was recorded on aerial photography. The transects were followed as closely as possible, obviously avoiding buildings and other impassable obstacles.

Each transect was walked a total of three times, over three non-consecutive days, and at varying times of day, to avoid any time-of-day effect:

Day 1	16/08/2009	mild, mostly overcast
Day 2	19/08/2009	warm, sunny
Day 3	23/08/2009	warm, sunny

## **Species Identification**

All three species of *Chorthippus* occur in the Plémont area. The field grasshopper, *C. brunneus*, is superficially similar to the heath grasshopper, *C. vagans*, but the two can be separated by a number of characteristics (Marshall and Haes, 1988; Evans and Edmondson, 2007). In *C. vagans*, the posterior section of the pronotum is equal to or shorter than the anterior section, the dark bands extend fully to the posterior margin of the pronotum, and the wings do not usually extend beyond the hind knees. The third species, the meadow grasshopper, *C. parallelus*, is quite distinct from the previous two. All three can also be identified by their stridulations.

In order to first check that heath grasshoppers were in their adult phase and were detectable at the time of the survey, a brief search was made at a nearby known site for heath grasshoppers (Les Landes) and adults were readily found there (05/08/2009).

The headland ('La Piece Michel') just to the north of the survey site was also briefly searched as part of the investigation (19/08/2009).



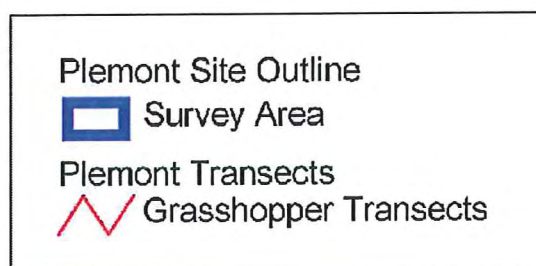
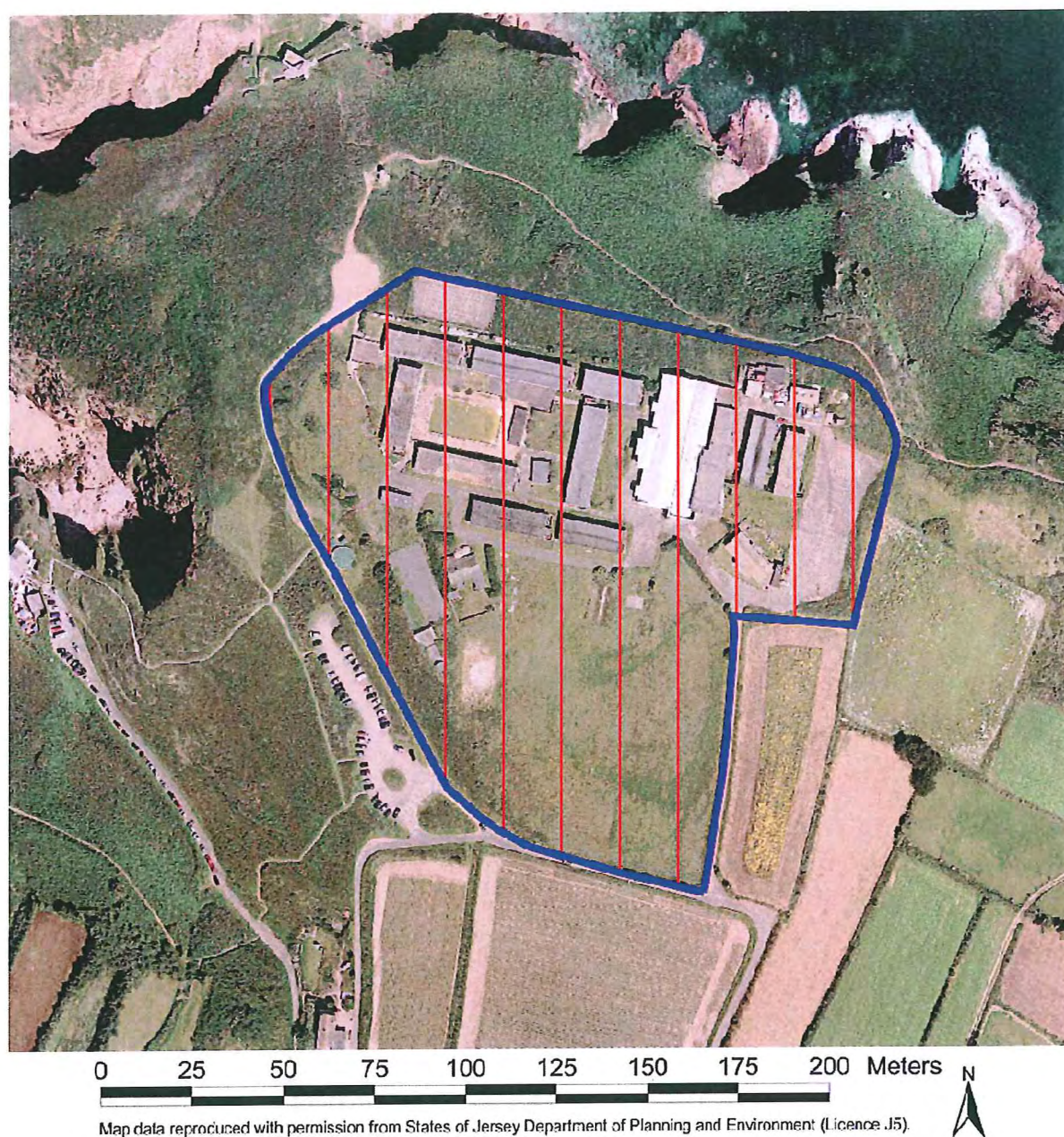


Figure 3. The survey area over the Plémont Holiday Village site, showing the grasshopper survey transects.

## **Results**

### **Species present**

The distribution of the three grasshopper species encountered is shown in Figure 4. The field grasshopper was by far the commonest species encountered, accounting for 68.1% of the total grasshopper catch. Meadow grasshoppers accounted for 29.4% of total catch. Finally, a total of four individuals of heath grasshopper were found, accounting for just 2.5% of the total grasshopper catch.

### **Primary habitats**

As would be expected, the areas of short grassland had the highest density of grasshoppers, particularly the large playing field occupying the southern half of the site. Meadow grasshoppers were particularly abundant here, accounting for 39.5% of the grasshoppers found in the playing field (compared to 29.4% over the site as a whole). The patches of longer grassland amongst the various buildings also supported grasshoppers. Areas of bramble and sparse bracken also supported some grasshoppers. However, despite thorough searching, no grasshoppers were found in the dense block of bracken running along the north of the site (east of the tennis court). The only orthopterans encountered here were speckled bush crickets (*Leptophyes punctatissima*).

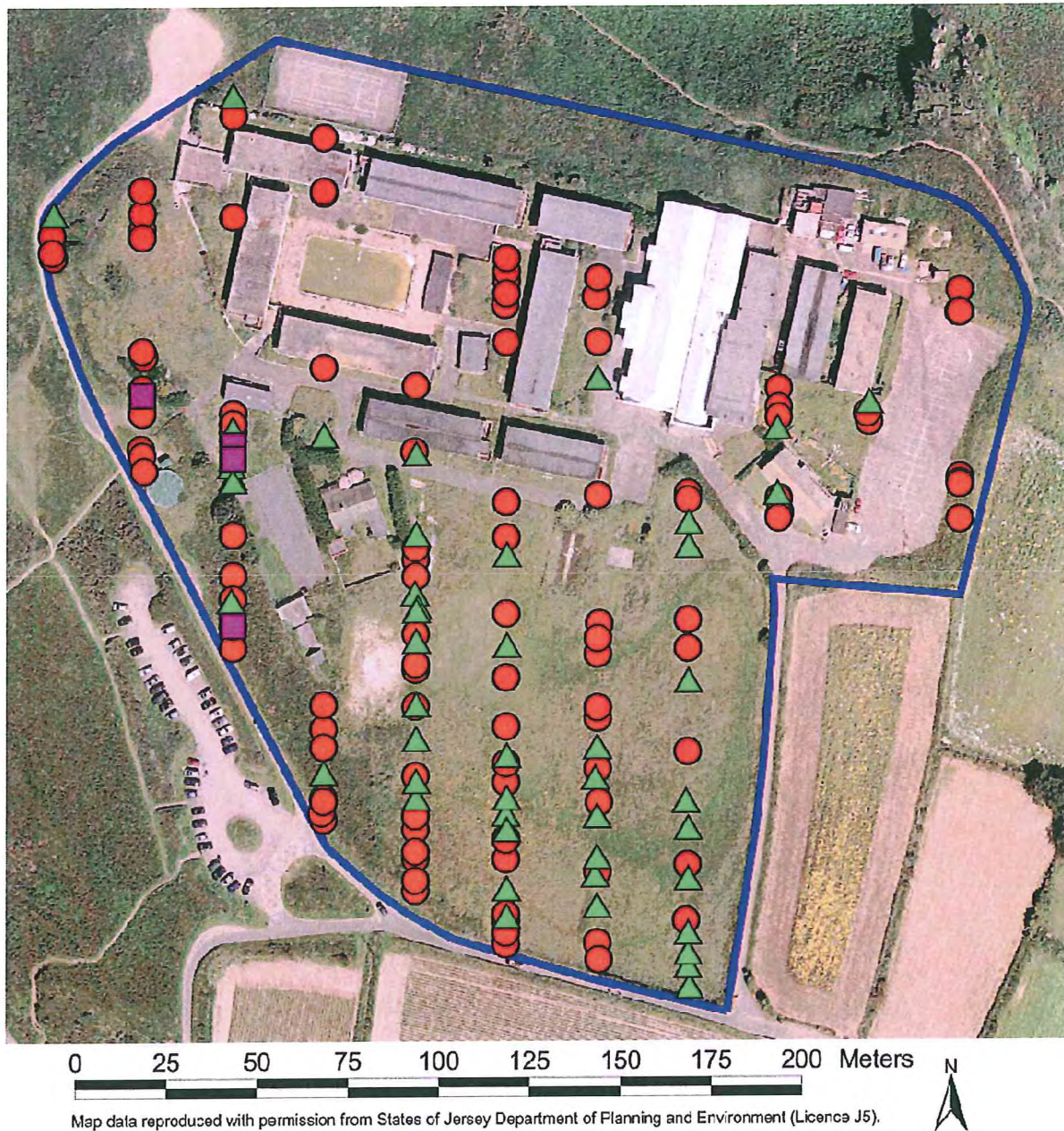
### **Heath grasshopper distribution**

One heath grasshopper was found in the short grassland just north of the pumping station, relatively close to the road (La Rue de Petit Plémont). One further individual was found just south of this, on the sunny grassy bank adjacent to the same road. A further two heath grasshoppers were found in a gravel-rich area dominated by short bramble (Figure 5a), just south of the old shop.

Although present in small numbers on the survey site, heath grasshoppers were noticeably easier to find on the headland ('La Piece Michel') just north of the site. There appears to be a good population of heath grasshoppers here, in the short grass around the old Napoleonic fort and the short grass/heath just to the north (Figure 5b).

A very brief search was made along the section of coastal cliff path running just to the north of the site, but no heath grasshoppers were found.





- Heath grasshopper
- ▲ Meadow grasshopper
- Field grasshopper

Figure 4. Location of grasshoppers found during the survey. Although not the target of the survey, the location of the two common species, field and meadow grasshoppers, are included for comparison with the target species, heath grasshopper.





a) bramble-dominated waste area within survey site



b) typical habitat at La Piece Michel, Plémont Headland



c) typical habitat in Grosnez area of Les Landes

Figure 5. Heath grasshopper habitats encountered during this survey.

## **Conclusion**

Neither of the two areas within the Holiday Village site supporting heath grasshoppers can be considered ideal heath grasshopper habitat. Unlike areas of coastal heath and short grassland where this species is often the dominant grasshopper, heath grasshoppers were far outnumbered by other species over this site. Although the species is present on the site, it is difficult to conclude that there is a significant population present, particularly when compared to the population present on the headland to the north.

However, habitat restoration and improvement could increase the suitability of the site for heath grasshoppers, as well as other biodiversity (Samways, 1994). If small patches of managed open heathland were to be incorporated into the redevelopment of this site, then it is quite possible that a larger population of heath grasshopper would develop. Should mitigations steps to protect the population during development work be deemed necessary, then standard mitigation techniques such as ring-fencing the site, and trapping and translocating individuals could be considered.



## **Part 2 – Green Lizard and Slow Worm Survey, Plémont Holiday Village**

### **Summary**

A total of five green lizards (four adult, one juvenile) and one adult slow-worm were found within the Plémont Holiday Village site during August and September 2009, thus confirming the presence of both species on site. The adult green lizards were all found around the edge of the site, while the juvenile was found within the built up area, but still relatively near the site edge. A single adult slow worm was found in rough grassland in the SW corner of the large field. With so few sightings, it is impossible to draw any reliable conclusions on the abundance of these species, other than to confirm their presence on site. However, some recommendations for further survey work and mitigation steps are discussed below.

### **Background**

The scope of this survey was to ascertain whether the green lizard, *Lacerta bilineata*, and the slow worm, *Anguis fragilis*, are present on the site of the former Plémont Holiday Village, and if so, to estimate their approximate distribution over the site.

Both the green lizard and the slow worm are classified as 'protected wild animals' under the Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000. In addition, the green lizard is the subject of a Biodiversity Action Plan, published by the States of Jersey Environment Division in July 2006 (States of Jersey, 2006b).

### **Methodology**

Reptiles are difficult animals to survey, and specific methodologies are required. An efficient method of detecting many species is to lay out artificial refuges, such as corrugated iron sheets or carpet tiles, which the animals hide below or bask on top of. This method works well for slow worms and snakes, but is not so effective for green lizards.

For the purpose of this survey, a combination of artificial refugia and visual searching along transects was used. Artificial refugia were chosen primarily for detecting slow worms, and green lizards to a lesser extent, while visual searching was chosen as the primary method for detecting green lizards.

An initial site assessment visit was made to identify areas deemed the most likely reptile habitat, based on the surveyor's knowledge and field experience. 52 heavy rubber-backed carpet tiles (50cm x 50cm) were laid in these areas, and left for at least two weeks prior to commencing the survey work. The location of these refugia is shown in Figure 6. These particular carpet tiles have been proven to be very effective at attracting slow worms elsewhere in Jersey (Tim Wright, pers. comm.).

The refugia were checked for any reptiles or evidence of reptiles on seven non-consecutive days. At the same time, visual searching was performed along transects covering the areas deemed most likely habitat. Surveys for both species were carried out simultaneously and during the optimal periods for reptile observations, i.e. early sunny mornings and late afternoons, when the species emerge to bask, or stay under the refugia for thermoregulation.

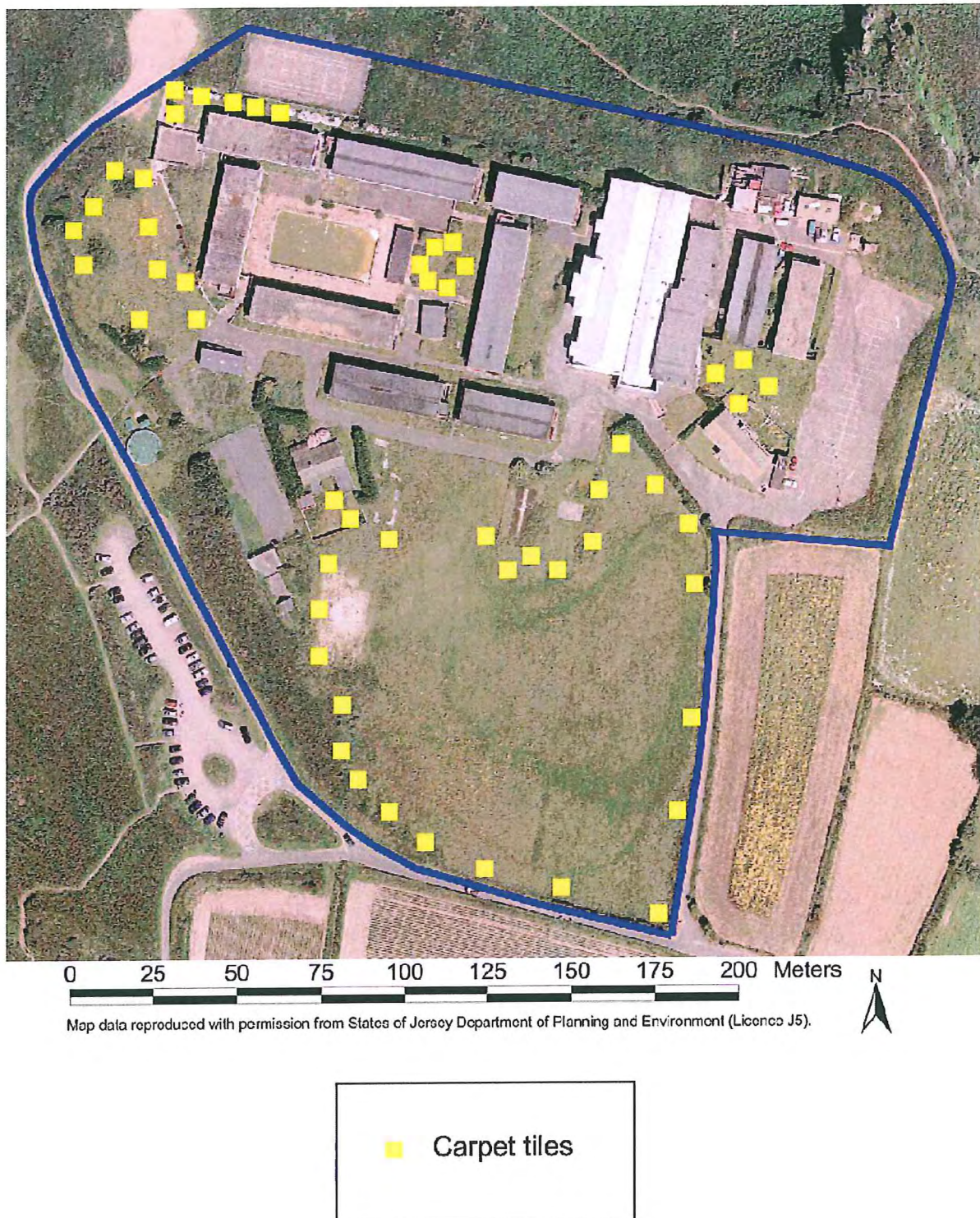


Figure 6. The survey area over the Plémont Holiday Village site, showing the placement of carpet tiles as reptile refugia.



The survey work was carried out on the following days:

Day 1	07/09/2009	starting 09:00	sunny, wind
Day 2	11/09/2009	starting 15:00	sunny
Day 3	17/09/2009	starting 15:00	sunny, wind
Day 4	19/09/2009	starting 14:20	sunny
Day 5	22/09/2009	starting 10:10	sunny
Day 6	25/09/2009	starting 13:00	sunny
Day 7	02/10/2009	starting 15:00	sunny, some cloud

In addition, all reptiles seen during the grasshopper survey work were also recorded and are reported below.

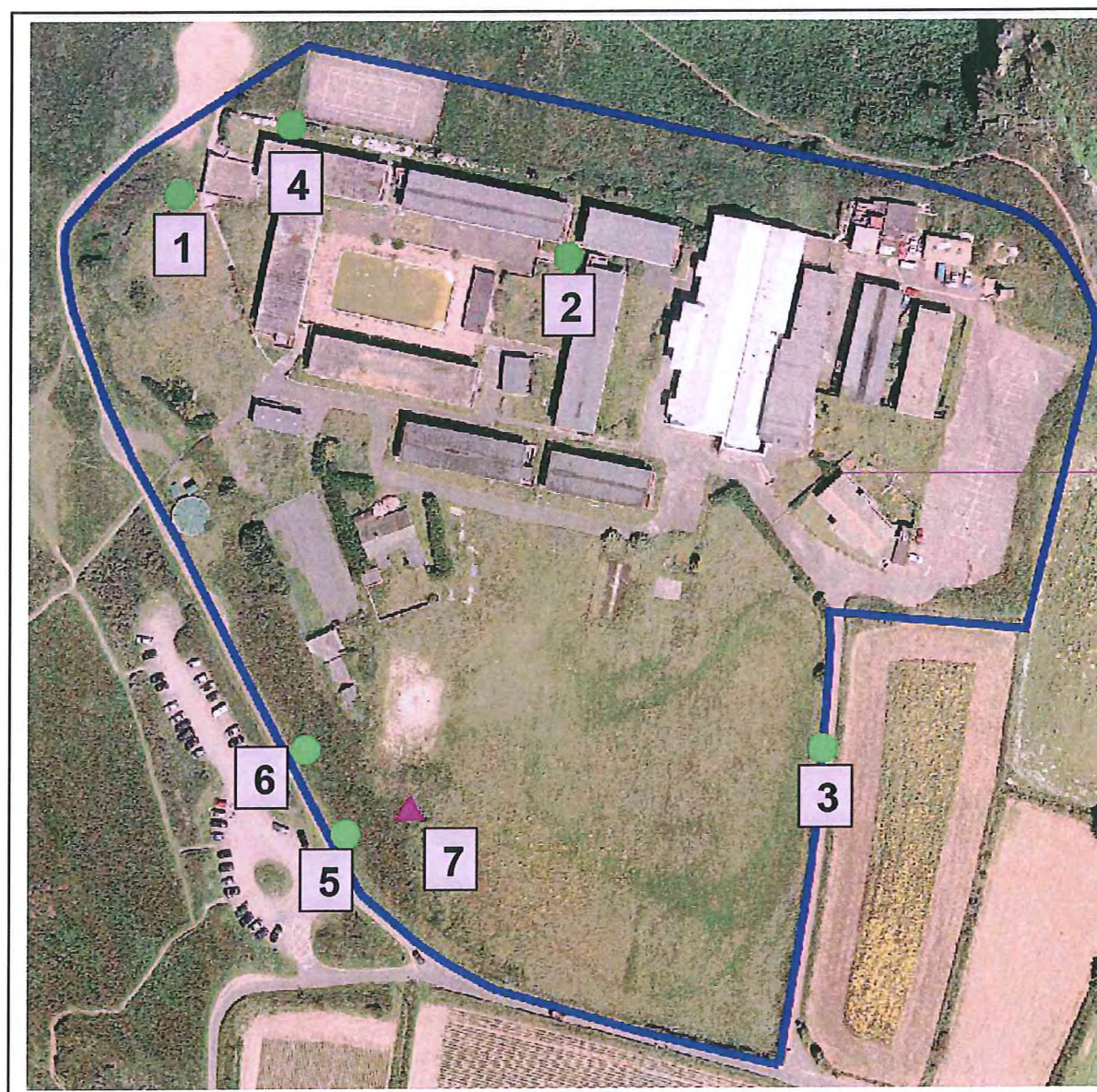
Numerous 'reptile-like' rustling sounds were heard during the survey. However, only confirmed visual sightings of animals are included in the results.

### **Results**

In total, one juvenile and four adult green lizards were encountered, and a single adult slow worm. In addition, green lizards faeces were found in one location. The following is a summary of the lizard sightings; see Figure 7 for precise locations:

- 16/08/2009<sup>†</sup> - one adult green lizard seen in rough grassland/brambles in NW corner of site (map ref #1)
- 23/08/2009<sup>†</sup> - one juvenile green lizard seen in rough grassland/brambles at the SW corner of the 'Gorey' accommodation block (map ref #2; see also Figure 8)
- 07/09/2009 - one adult green lizard seen on the rough grass/rough wall bank on the W side of the private road into the site (map ref #3)
- 11/09/2009 - green lizard faeces found under carpet tile just S of tennis courts in NE corner of site (map ref #4)
- 11/09/2009 - two separate adult green lizards seen in rough grass verge slope between road and SE corner of main field (map refs #5 and #6)
- 19/09/2009 - one adult slow worm found under carpet tile in SW corner of main field (map ref #7)

<sup>†</sup> indicates observation made during grasshopper surveying



0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200 Meters

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Reptile sightings  
 ● Green lizard  
 ▲ Slow worm

Figure 7. Location of green lizards and slow worms found during the survey.





Figure 8. Photograph of a juvenile green lizard encountered on 23/08/2009 in a small patch of rough grassland/brambles at the SW corner of the 'Gorey' accommodation block (approximately 30m ENE of the swimming pool).

### **Conclusion**

Due to the low numbers of animals encountered it is impossible to develop a population estimate or a reliable habitat suitability analysis. However, some recommendations for further survey work and mitigations are discussed below.

#### **Further reptile surveys**

If it is considered critical to develop a reliable population estimate, then a further population study survey would be necessary. The best times for such a survey would be March-June and Sept-Oct.

#### **Primary habitats**

The periphery of the site currently offers the best reptile habitat, particularly the grassland margins and the roadside banks. It would be sensible to maintain these areas, and ideally improve them by creating additional refuges. The area along the north of the site is currently completely overgrown with dense bracken, but offers potential for suitable habitat if it were to be managed properly. The interior of the site is marginal in terms of habitat quality (despite the observation of one juvenile green lizard) and would be unlikely to support a sustainable reptile population were it to be inhabited by people.

### **Planning for development and mitigation**

Planning must incorporate two aims where reptiles are present (English Nature, 2004):

- 1) to protect reptiles from any harm that might arise during the development work;
- 2) to ensure that sufficient quality, quantity and connectivity of habitat is provided to accommodate the reptile population, either on-site or at an alternative site, with no net loss of local reptile conservation status. See, for example, CSa Environmental Planning (2008).

If the mitigation goes ahead from the interior developed area (and maintain the best vegetated area of the edges) reptiles will be added to an existing population so long as some improvements are made to the habitat. Work to prepare release sites can include managing scrub, re-profiling of land, grass/shrub planting, creating egg laying sites, and building hibernacula and refuges. The site should be made capable of supporting reptiles before they are relocated. There is a vast amount of literature and guidance on reptile mitigation. See, for example, HGBI (1998) and English Nature (2004) for further basic guidance on reptile mitigation and translocation.



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## **Acknowledgements**

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**From:** Paul Harding <paul.harding@bdkarchitects.com>  
**Subject:** Plemont - Durrell Grasshopper & Reptile Survey, Oct 09 - Mitigation



**Date:** 7 November 2009 11:11:30 GMT

**To:** j.pinel@gov.je

**Cc:** Glyn Young <glyn.young@durrell.org>, Hemmings Patrick <phemmings@lyntonhouse.com>, Riding Mike <mridding@lyntonhouse.com>, Michel Hughes <mrh@mhaconsult.co.uk>, Felton Michael <michaelfelton@mfl.co.je>, Leithgoe Architects <leithgoe@btconnect.com>



1 Attachment, 8.2 KB

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Slideshow

Dear John,

Thanks for your time yesterday and further to our meeting with Glyn Young regarding the above I am pleased to confirm the matters discussed and agreed.

I have set this out in the form of Meeting Minutes which, following your agreement to them as an accurate record, I will append to the Durrell report recording the mitigation actions agreed between us.

**Meeting Subject - To review Durrell Grasshopper & Reptile Survey, Oct 09, and to agree Mitigation Strategy**

**Venue & Date - SoJ Environment Department, Howard Davis Farm, St John. Held on Friday 6th November 2009 at 11.00am**

**Attendees -**

John Pinel, SoJ Environment Department - Head of Countryside Management (JP)  
Glyn Young, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust - Survey Co-ordinator (GY)  
Paul Harding, BDK Architects - Project Architects (PH)

**Introduction**

- 1) PH noted the Durrell Grasshopper & Reptile Survey (Species Report) had been commissioned pursuant to the EIA Scoping Consultation response in a letter from JP dated 16th April 2009 to Kelly Johnson when JP reported sighting of two green lizards *Lacerta bilineata* to north of the existing staff bungalow. JP had requested an adequate site survey was carried out and mitigation agreed with Environment Department before any activity takes place on the site. The EIA Scoping Opinion issued on 1st May 2009 therefore required a new ecological baseline survey for species protected under the Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000 including green lizards, slow worms and heath grasshoppers to be undertaken.
- 2) Following issue of the EIA Scoping Opinion PH had arranged for Durrell to be commissioned for undertaking this survey and preparing a baseline report.
- 3) Durrell had agreed the survey methodology and Durrell's personnel undertaking the survey with JP of SoJ Environment Department prior to commencing the survey.
- 4) Durrell had issued their Species Report to JP by e-mail on 3rd November 2009. Prior to this meeting JP had read and reviewed the Species Report.
- 5) PH suggested the 30 House scheme was the best solution all round. Reverting 67% of the site to nature would provide substantial environmental benefits at no cost to the Island. The scheme also realised a 43% reduction in built floor area and significant improvement in



the Visual and Landscape quality of the site and surrounding area. PH advised the 30 House scheme was being submitted as a formal planning application Tuesday next week. PH noted the Durrell Species Report concluded the very low number of green lizards, slow worms and heath grasshoppers actually present on the site were mainly found around the site perimeter. PH noted the habitats extant within the site were unsuitable for these species and suggested the individuals found were likely to have originated from across other side of La Route de Petit Plemont.

6) PH noted the 30 house scheme would create 12.96 verges of natural landscape across the northern and western part of the site, totalling 48% of total site area, creating habitat of value to these species.

## **Discussion**

7) JP agreed that:-

7.1 - It is evident these species are resident within the site.

7.2 - The existing habitat within the site is not suitable for these species.

7.3 - The very low numbers of these species found are not of importance.

7.4 - However we must have regard to the protected status of the green lizards and slow worms.

7.5 - The really positive aspect of the 30 House scheme is extent of land being returned to nature.

7.6 - The result of this would produce a substantial beneficial environmental improvement. It was agreed the Durrell Species report would be relevant to all future uses of this site.

8) The timing of undertaking mitigation was discussed. This would have to be undertaken when the species were active during hot weather, during months of July / August. PH advised it was unlikely the 30 House Planning Application would be determined before February 2010 and there was a range of enabling works that had to be undertaken prior to any demolition works commencing. In particular a rat eradication programme had to be implemented, archaeological site investigations (probably by trenching) were required and asbestos had to be removed. Further no demolition works can be undertaken between April - August to prevent any disturbance during the Puffin and Seabird breeding season. Assuming a Planning Permit is received by late February 2010 there would be insufficient time to complete enabling works prior to April 2010, so it would not be possible for demolition to commence prior to early September 2010. It was agreed this timetable gave the perfect period for mitigation during July / August 2010.

9) The mitigation method/s were discussed. JP advised it would be inappropriate to translocate these species to a receptor site on La Tete de Plemont because green lizards (particularly males) are very territorial and removing donor site population to there runs risk of two colonies fighting each other. JP recommended an area should be found within the donor site for creating a receptor reservation. PH suggested the most appropriate area was on west side of site, to north of T&TS foul drainage pumping station and to west of the western chalet block. This land of tussocky grass was concentric between where the species individuals had been found. JP pointed out male lizards require larger territory than females (Durrell Species report did not identify males / females found) and he would prefer to arrange site visit to agree receptor site location, which could be in area PH suggested or to north of existing buildings in an area of bramble / bracken that could be cleared. PH to arrange with JP date for site visit w/c 1st December.

10) GY queried if moving the species to a receptor location would pose risk of cat predation from an identifiable concentration of the reptiles in one area. PH pointed out there was an existing likelihood of cat predating these species but they are co-existing with such threats. It was clarified and agreed that containment of the receptor reservation (enclosing with suitable cat-proof fencing) would only be undertaken on the interface with remainder of the site where demolition / construction will take place, with the side/s facing towards existing natural landscape on the cliffs left open so the species were not fully contained and could move into adjacent suitable areas.

### **Agreed Mitigation Strategy**

11) The mitigation preparation, programme and methods were agreed by all as follows:-

11.1 - JP & PH to arrange site visit to identify and agree receptor reservation area w/c 1st December.

11.2 - The receptor site would be prepared prior to translocation. In case of tussocky grassland community this would comprise discreet mowing during Spring / early Summer 2010. In case of bramble / bracken community this would comprise flailing over winter period followed by discreet mowing during Spring / early Summer 2010.

11.3 - Suitable containment fencing would be erected between receptor site and remainder of the site where demolition / construction will occur, details to be agreed at later date, before July 2010.

11.4 - During hot weather over July / August 2010 the protected species would be translocated to the receptor site. In case of green lizards JP advised a couple of days noosing around heads (not tails) would suffice for transporting them to receptor site. For catching slow worms Durrell would relay their rubber tiles across the site for a two week period then remove the species to receptor site.

11.5 - Regarding the heath grasshopper JP concluded the numbers were so low that translocation was unnecessary, but noted the substantial area of natural landscape across the northern and western part of the site being created would provide them with significantly increased habitat opportunity.

### **AOB**

12) JP advised PH he will attend the presentation next Monday 9th November at 10.30am.

I would appreciate receiving your confirmation these Minutes of our meeting are an accurate record, or any corrections you would like to make.

Best Regards,  
For and on Behalf of  
BDK Architects

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