

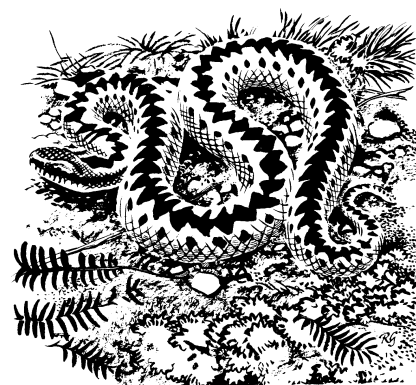


## ADDER

### *Vipera berus*

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The adder has a wide distribution in Britain and its sparse distribution in the Midlands may be because of high human population densities together with a lack of suitable habitats. The adder is rare in the sub-region and only occurs at a few known sites in Warwickshire; the species accounts for only 5% of the total reptile records for Warwickshire. Habitats favoured include rough commons, heathland, railway embankments, woodland rides and borders. The adder's main requirement appears to be undisturbed sunny glades or slopes in the vicinity of some thick cover. It is rarely found in urban/suburban areas unless these are next to suitable adder habitat. Adders feed largely on voles and other small mammals and common lizards. Predators include raptors, magpies, crows and possibly hedgehogs and foxes. In Victorian times the adder was described as not abundant in the county, being absent from alluvial areas and mainly found in sandy or stony places.



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#### 2. OUR OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

	Target
A. Determine the current distribution and status of adders in the sub-region.	by 2007
B. Maintain the range, distribution and size of existing adder populations.	2004-2015
C. Monitor the management of these sites offering advice to landowners on best practice.	by 2008
D. Increase the range by introducing viable adder populations to two suitable sites.	2010

#### ASSOCIATED HABITAT PLANS

- Lowland Acid Grassland
- Lowland Heathland
- Woodlands
- Disused Industrial & Railway Land

#### ASSOCIATED SPECIES PLANS

### 3. NATIONAL BAP OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

Now on the UK List of Priority Species 2007.

### 4. CURRENT STATUS

The adder has been recorded at only 3 sites in Warwickshire in the last 5 years but current survey may confirm one other, giving a total of 4 out of the original 18 since 1960. It is therefore considered to be of rare occurrence in the county although this may be due, in part, to a limited survey. Local unofficial sightings are commonplace but given that most turn out to be grass snakes (*Natrix natrix*), it is essential that these are validated and the correct identification carried out. A review of the status of adders at known adder sites is long overdue and anecdotal evidence would suggest a continued decline. A recent study for EN has indicated that the adder's national status is declining too.

#### 4.1 Legal and Policy Status

Some protection under the Berne Convention as to their exploitation. Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5 (as amended in 1991). from trade, injury and killing.

#### 4.2 Current Factors Affecting The Species

- **Loss and fragmentation of suitable habitat**, especially heathland, by roads and agriculture
- **Unsympathetic habitat management**
- **Damage and disturbance to habitats and persecution** by people

### 5. CURRENT LOCAL ACTION

- All known reports stored electronically in the WART database
- New records are validated
- WART survey since 2003
- Sympathetic management is occurring at some known sites

## 6. PROPOSED LOCAL ACTIONS (some dates amended - Core Steering Group - Feb 2008)

ACTION	Lead	Partners	By	Meets objective
<b>Policy &amp; Legislation</b>				
<b>PL1.</b> Ensure that all relevant species policy is included in Local Planning Documents (see ODPM Planning Policy Statement PPS9).	LBAPSG	WWT NE WDC WM WART	2004- 2015	B
<b>PL2.</b> Ensure that all known adder sites are considered for designation as SSSIs or SINCs.	WBRC	WWT NE WM WSP WART	2010	B
<b>Site / Species Safeguard &amp; Management</b>				
<b>SM1.</b> Maintain and update information on all known sites in the county and inform LAs of the conservation status, legal protection, management requirements and consequences of development proposals on adder sites.	WART	WWT WDC WM NE	2007 - 2015	A, B
<b>SM2.</b> Encourage favourable management of suitable areas near to known adder sites to encourage colonisation.	WART	WWT WSP LOs	2008	C
<b>SM3.</b> Review all sites where post-1960 records exist to identify potential sites for restoration.	WART	WWT NE WM	2008	D
<b>SM4.</b> Plan at least two population restoration projects.	WART	WWT NE WM	2010	D
<b>Advisory</b>				
<b>A1.</b> Provide site-based advice to landowners on management for adders and on avoiding conflict with people, pets and livestock.	WART	WWT WM	2008	C
<b>Research &amp; Monitoring</b>				
<b>RM1.</b> Undertake a countywide survey to determine population size and distribution. Ensure information gets into National Amphibian & Reptile Recording Scheme (NARRS).	WART	WWT WM	2007	A

<b>RM2.</b> Monitor all existing sites to determine population trends and conduct long term research to identify reasons and appropriate measures to prevent future losses.	WART		2010	B
<b>RM3.</b> Establish and maintain an accurate database on the county's adder sites to be transferred to GIS when available.	WART	HBA WM	2007	A
<b>Communication &amp; Publicity</b>				
<b>CP1.</b> Promote and raise the profile of adders and their conservation through appropriate local publicity.	WART	WWT WM	2004- 2015	B

**Abbreviations:** BHS – British Herpetological Society, GIS – Geographical Information Systems, HBA – Habitat Biodiversity Audit, LBAPSG- Local Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group, NE – Natural England, WART – Warwickshire Amphibian & Reptile Team, WDC – Warwick District Council, WSP - Wildlife Sites Project, WM – Warwickshire Museum, WWT – Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

## 7. REFERENCES (see LBAP bibliography web page)

## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION (see separate Links web page for links to web sites)

Natural England  
 Joint Nature Conservation Council  
 UK Biodiversity Action Plan  
 Warwickshire Reptile & Amphibian Team  
 Herpetological Conservation Trust

'*Making the Adder Count*' – a springtime monitoring programme for experienced field workers to establish a better picture of the status of the species – log onto [www.adder.org.uk](http://www.adder.org.uk)

'*Add an Adder*' is a web-based initiative calling for all records of adders, past and present, from the general public to build up details of past distribution against which current data can be compared. Log onto [www.adder.org.uk](http://www.adder.org.uk)

## 9. CONTACT

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