

Slow-worms at the Met Office

Slow-worm



A long-term resident at the Met Office, the Slow-worm is a native species to Eurasia and they are inhabitants of grasslands, scrub, woodlands and gardens. They can be found basking (warming up) under the reptile refugia that have been placed around the Met Office HQ site. The reptile mats provide a safe refuge for Slow-worms to bask along with providing shelter for amphibians and small mammals.

The north part of the site is ideal Slow-worm habitat being a mosaic of habitats including hedgerows, coppice, scrub and perhaps most importantly long grass on south-facing slopes. In the past, we have received Slow-worms moved from local development sites.



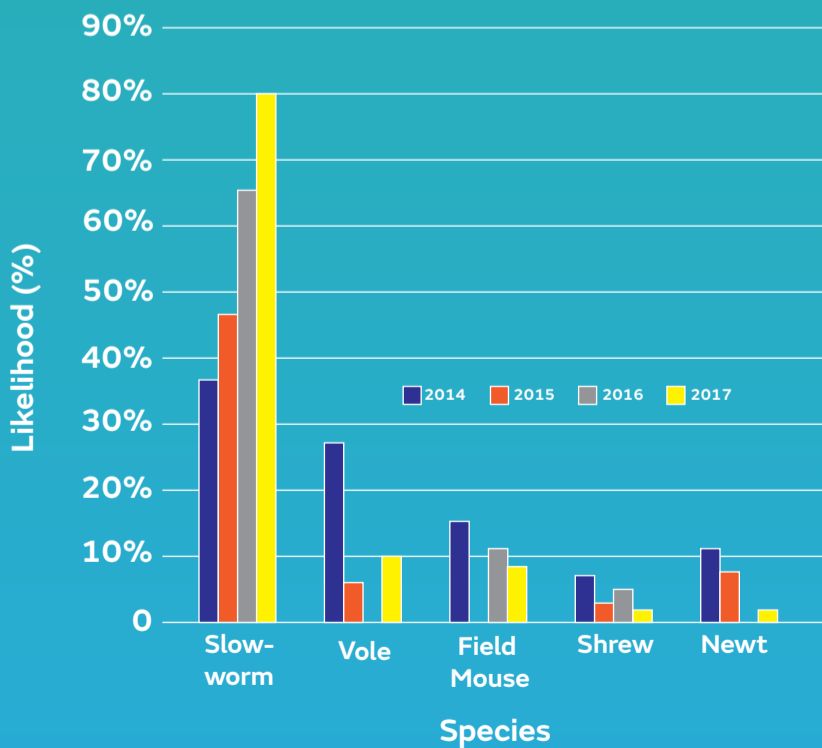
- Slow-worm
- Vole
- Newt
- Shrew
- Mouse
- Toad



Common Toads (a Biodiversity Action Plan species) have been observed in this area as the ponds and dense vegetation offer an ideal habitat for them alongside other amphibians. This habitat is less suitable for Slow-worms and they are generally not found here in our surveys.

Staff volunteers taking part in a reptile survey

Likelihood of observing the following species between 2014-2017



Our staff play a vital role in surveying and measuring biodiversity across our site and this includes our Reptile Check Group that conducts regular surveys. Slow-worm numbers have increased on site since 2014, along with the chance of observing one during a survey, as the graph above shows.



Working with our groundsman, we are always looking for ways to enhance biodiversity, including improving the habitat for Slow-worms. The grounds are managed to give coppiced woodland, hedgerows and long grass on south-facing slopes, creating a mosaic of interlinked habitats suitable for reptiles. In addition, basking and hibernation areas have been created for reptiles using rock piles, grass heaps and log piles like the one pictured above.