



Ymddiriedolaeth
Natur
Gwent
Wildlife Trust

Adder

Vipera berus

Species Action Plan



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The adder is Britain's only venomous reptile, a mechanism they use to immobilize their prey of lizards, small mammals and nestlings. They are highly secretive and well camouflaged, making them particularly difficult to survey for. They are found in open habitats, such as heathland, moorland and coastal areas. They are highly susceptible to local extinction in a changing landscape and rarely re-colonise suitable areas, without intervention. Adders mate in spring, incubate their eggs internally, and give birth to 6-20 live young in August or September. They hibernate during the colder months, from October to February, and re-emerge on the first warm days of March. An Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK (ARG) survey in 2019 found the species could be extinct by 2032.

Status

- ❖ Schedule 5 Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) as amended
- ❖ Species of Principal Importance - Section 7 - Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- ❖ Priority Species - UK Biodiversity Action Plan (2007)

Threats

- ❖ Persecution
- ❖ Loss and mis-management of habitats
- ❖ Small populations lead to inbreeding and loss of genetic diversity, which increases the risk of local extinctions
- ❖ Disturbance
- ❖ Climate change
- ❖ Predation by gamebirds, with pheasants highlighted as a particular impact

Current Action

- ❖ Natur am Byth (2023-2027)
- ❖ Connecting the Dragons project (ARC)
- ❖ Dragonscapes project (ARC)
- ❖ Survey and management of adder sites (ARC)
- ❖ Mapping of hibernation areas (ARC)
- ❖ Landowner advice on management (ARC)
- ❖ Recording schemes – National Amphibian and Reptile Monitoring Programme; Make the Adder Count

	Objectives	Action
A	No net loss of occupied area for existing populations	1-4, 6
B	Populations increasing in occupied area, abundance and viability	1-4, 6
C	Adder habitats increased in size, quality, resilience and connectivity	2,3,4,6
D	Knowledge and understanding of the species increased, leading to appreciation, sense of responsibility and action	1,2,3,4,5

	Key Actions	Target
1	Signpost volunteers to existing national survey schemes and local groups, to expand monitoring of extant colonies.	2024
2	Identify key sites for annual surveys. Work with ARC/ARG to facilitate/deliver training programme.	2025
3	Produce/distribute advice booklet. Work with key stakeholders to ensure appropriate habitat management	2025 2030
4	Undertake survey and mapping to identify populations, habitats, key areas and opportunities to build connectivity	2027
5	Increase awareness and improve public perception through media and publishing, talks, events, training	2030
6	Respond to potentially damaging developments through the planning process; campaign for better site protections	2030

Lead: Gwent Wildlife Trust

Key partners: TBC