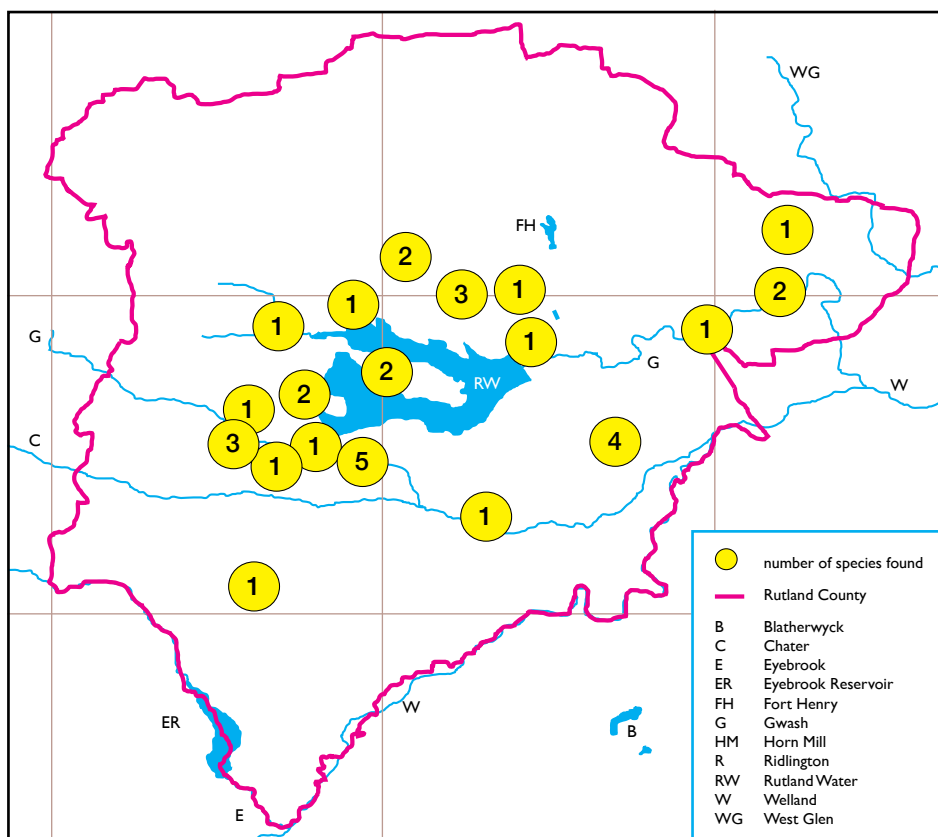


AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES 2016

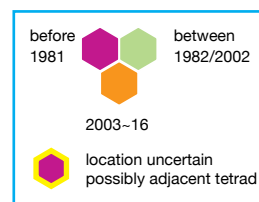
Dr CH Gallimore

The numbers of frogs and toads were not significantly different from recent years, but records of both newt species were down largely due to failure to carry out a survey of Rutland Water Nature Reserve. There were no Slow Worm records actually in Rutland, but one on the border in Edmondthorpe suggests that they may occur in Market Overton. The Grass Snake survey at Rutland Water Nature Reserve was disappointing compared with 2015, with only 6 snakes observed despite an extra 36 shelters being laid. This was mainly due to a combination of observer absence at a critical time, unfavourable weather and vegetation smothering the shelters.

Number of species reported in locality 2016

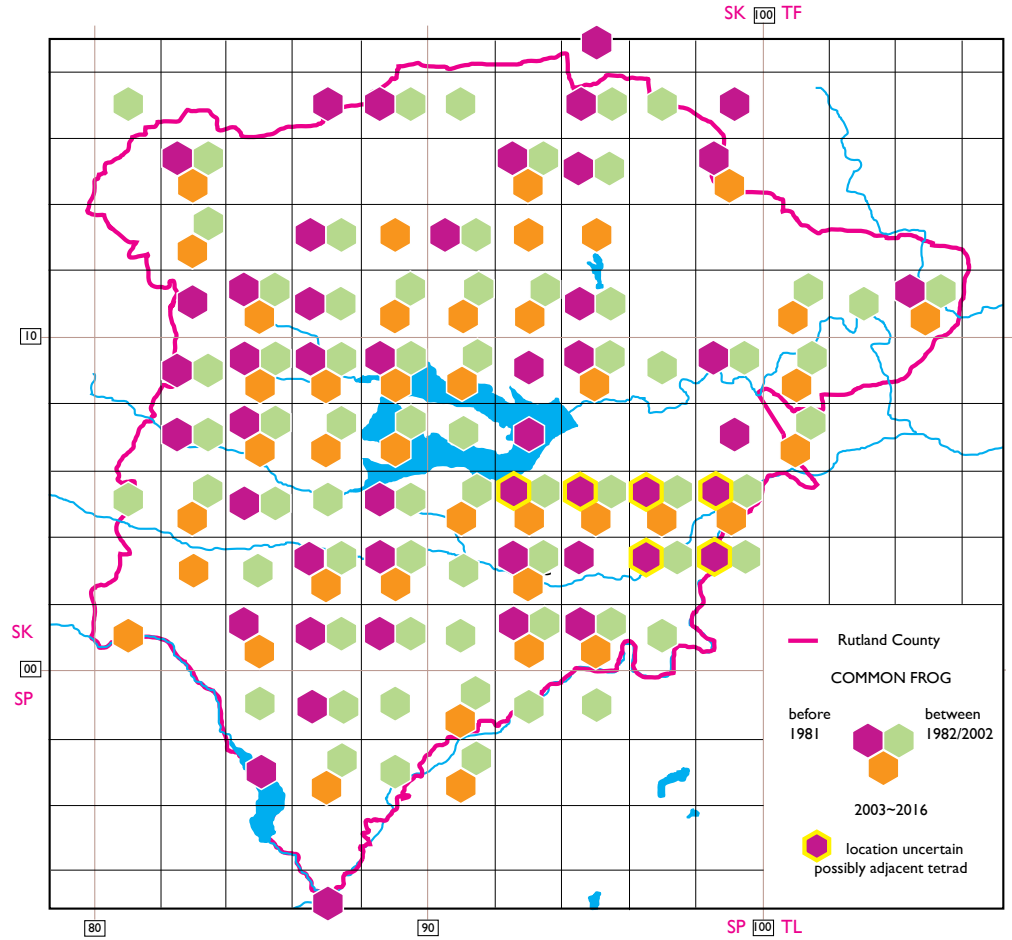


The following maps show the distribution of the eight indigenous species in the county in three time periods. Up until 1981 was before my time as recorder when grid references were not widely used. Records from this time with an uncertain location are separately coded. Later records were accompanied by grid references and by 2003 I was sufficiently machine-literate to have all new records computerised.



- 2 Common Frog
- 3 Toad
- 4 Smooth Newt
- 5 Great Crested Newt
- 6 Viviparous Lizard
- 7 Slow Worm
- 8 Grass Snake
- 9 Adder

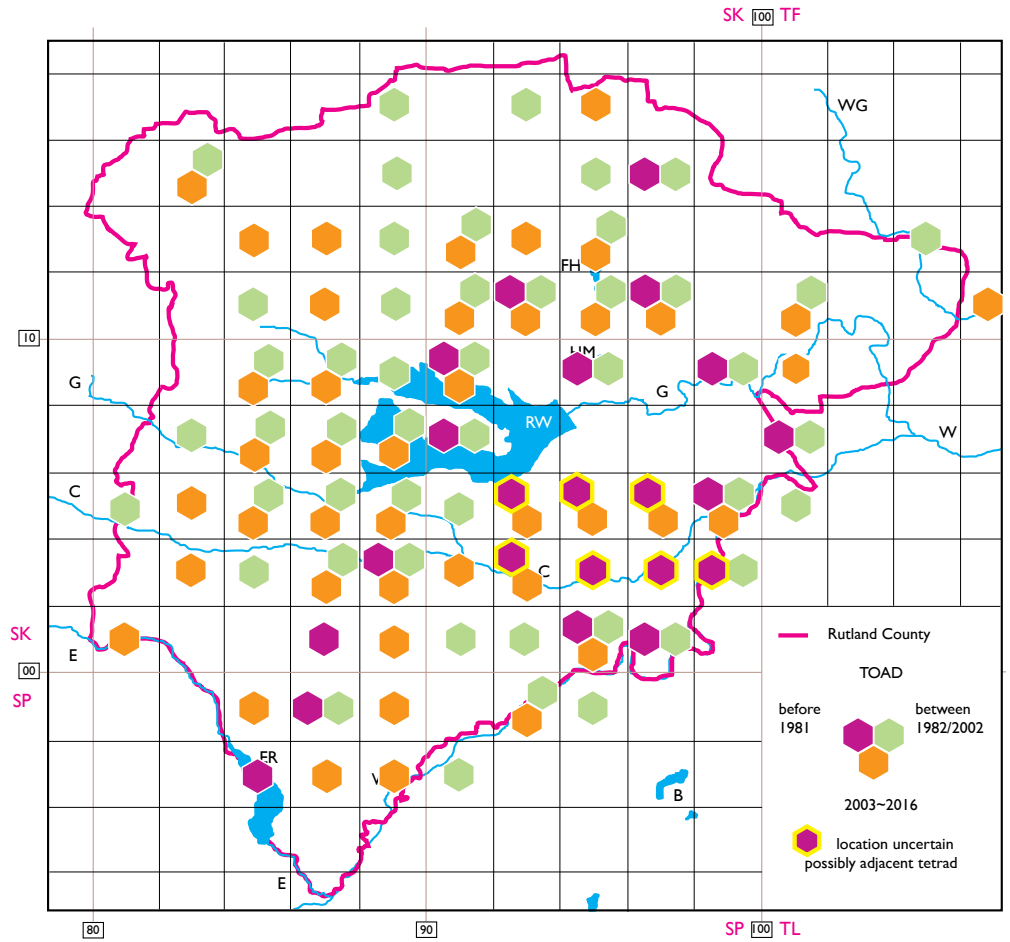
Common Frog *Rana temporaria*



Frogs were recorded from 14 sites in 10 parishes (Barrowden, Egleton, Essendine, Exton, Greetham, Leighfield, Little Casterton, Oakham, Uppingham and Wing). Evidence of breeding was recorded at 10 sites in 9 parishes (all except Leighfield). The first spawning was in Barrowden on 1 March and the last fresh spawn was on 3 April in Wing. The first frogs of the year were recorded in Barrowden on 25 January and the last record was also in Barrowden on 26 October.

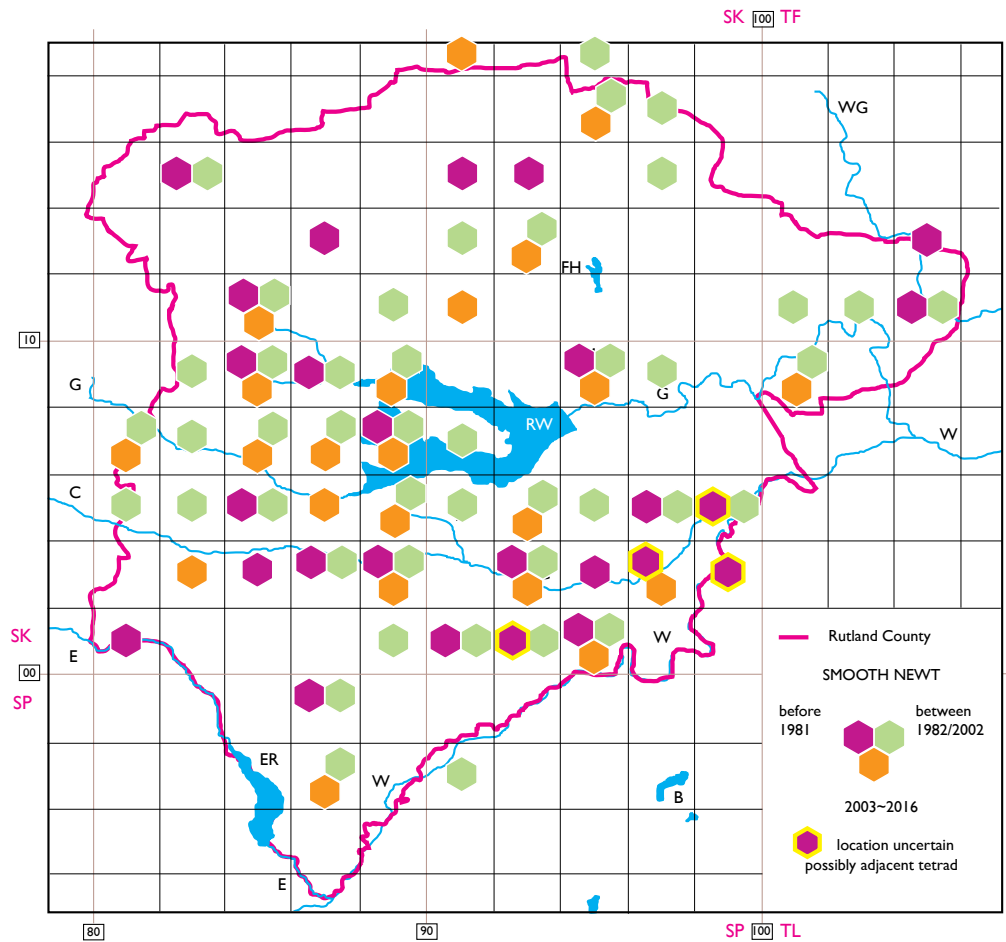
There was a slight increase in records and sites from last year, but it was very much an average year, although the Essendine record was a first for that parish.

Common Toad *Bufo bufo*



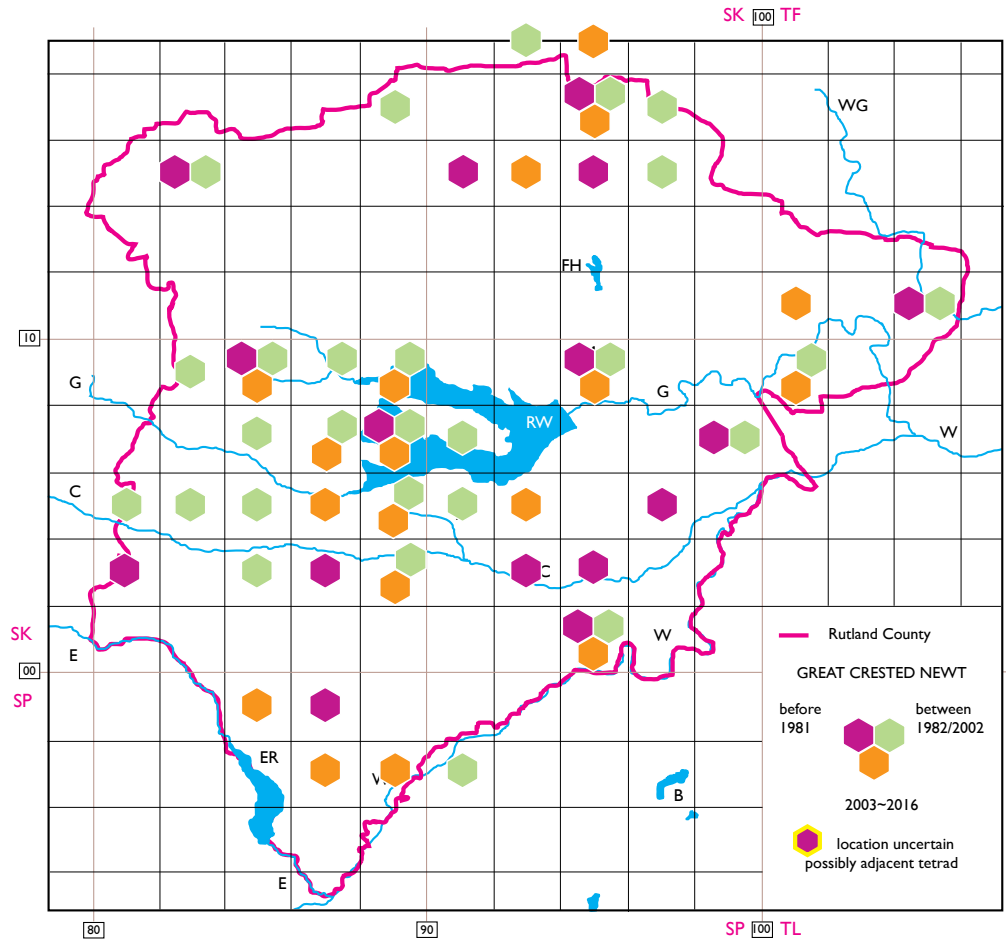
Toads were recorded from 12 sites in 9 parishes (Braunston, Exton, Great Casterton, Hambleton, Ketton, Leighfield, Little Casterton, Preston and Wing), although evidence of breeding was only found at two sites in one parish (Exton) and possibly 2 others (Leighfield and Wing). The first record of the year was from Wing on 18 January, although this was of a torpid individual disturbed under a stone, and the first voluntarily active individual was on 20 January in a pond in Little Casterton. The last live record was on 7 October when eight were seen near Braunston, although a freshly dead road casualty was found on 11 December in Preston.

Smooth Newt *Triturus/Lissotriton vulgaris*



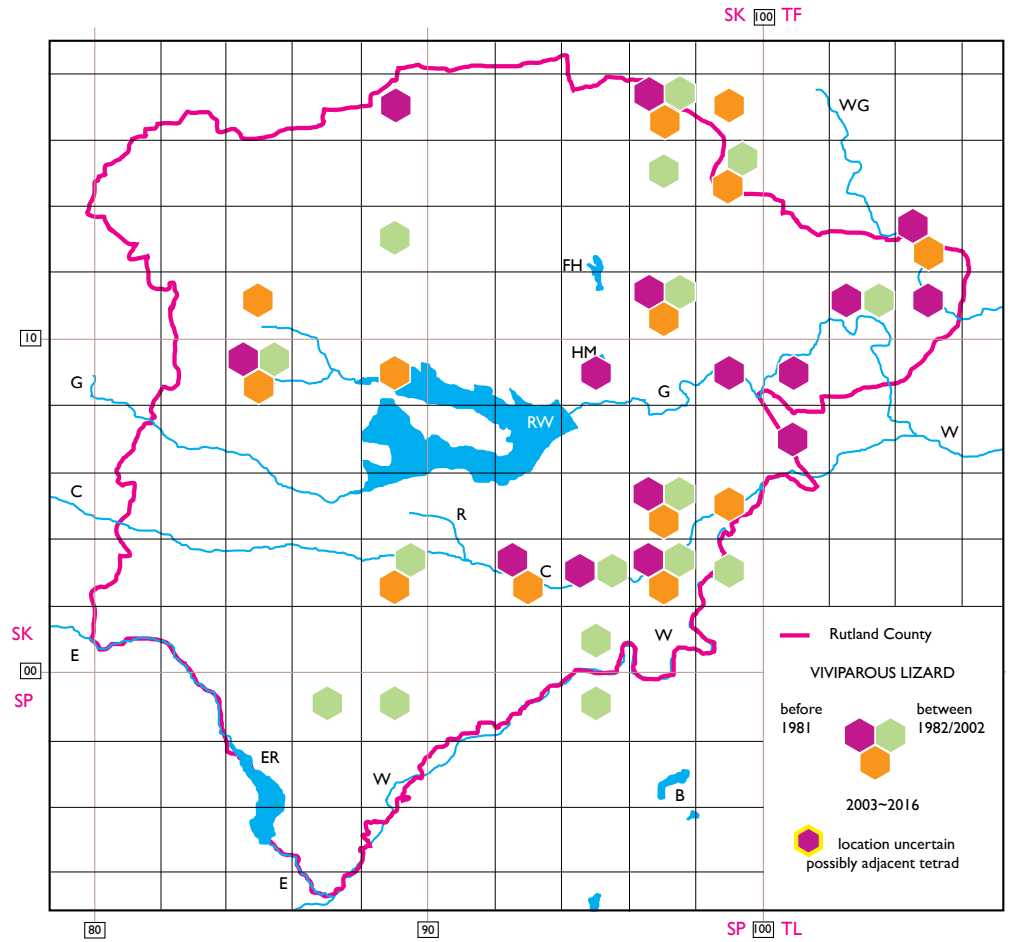
Smooth Newts were only recorded from two sites in 2 parishes (Egleton and Wing). This is significantly less than in any year since 1991, but explicable by the fact that no survey of the Rutland Water lagoons was carried out. The first sighting was of one in a Wing pond in on 11 January. The last pond record was on 3 March, although quite an active female was found in a Wing vegetable garden on 7 December.

Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*

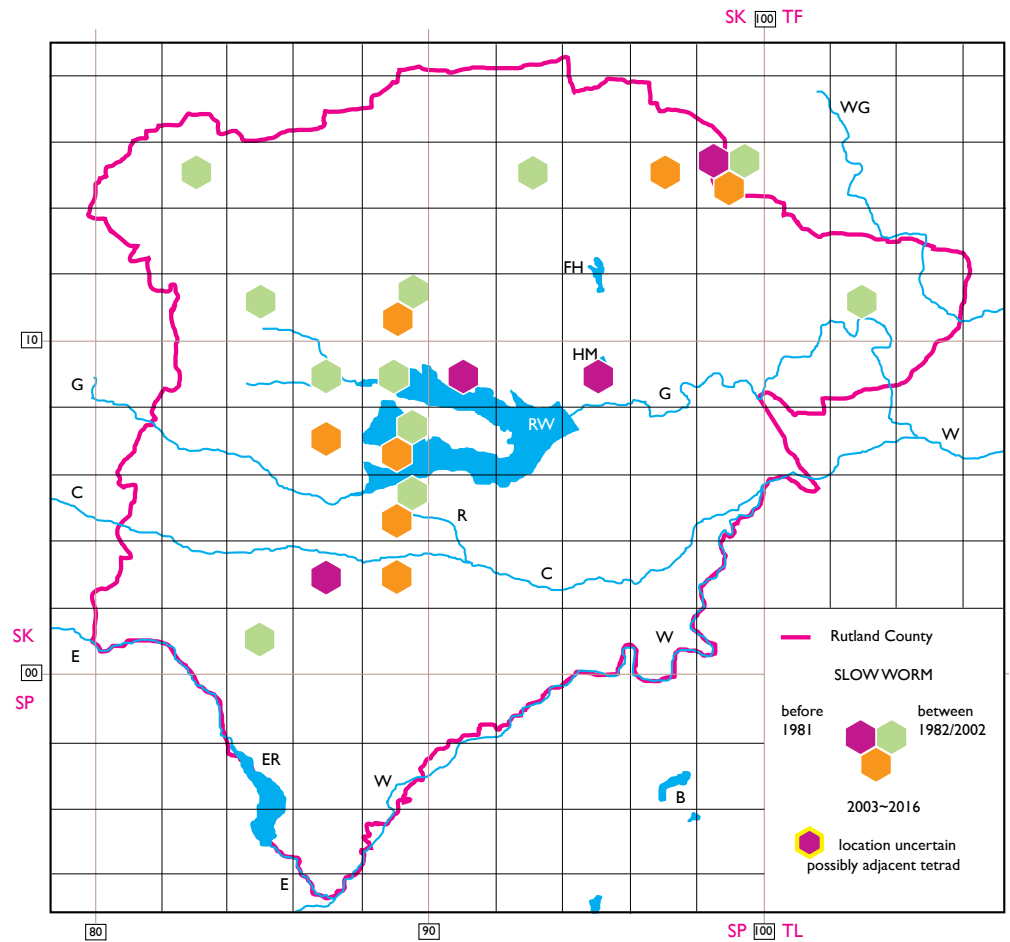


Great Crested Newts were only recorded from two sites in 2 parishes (Empingham and Wing). The first record was on 11 January in a Wing pond and the last pond sighting was in a different pond on 3 August, although one was in a Wing cellar on 20 October. The drop in records is for the same reason as for Smooth Newts.

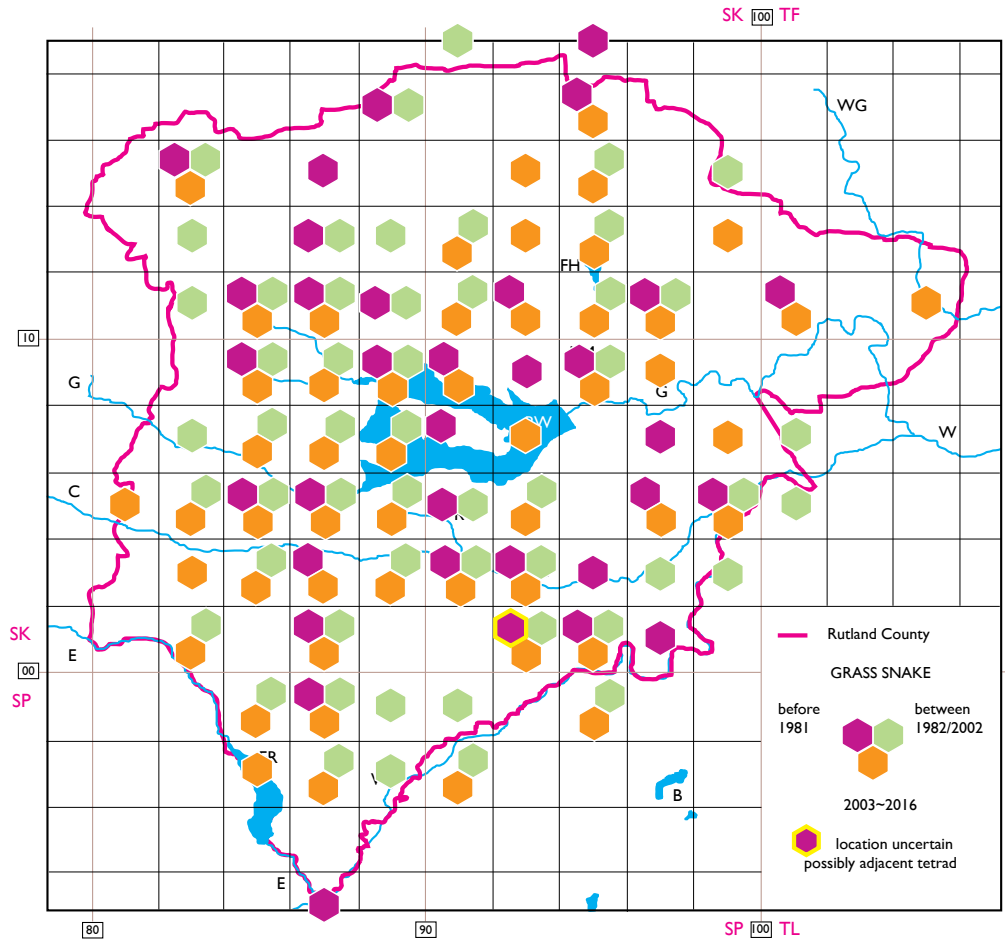
Viviparous Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*



Lizards were only recorded three times from Ketton Quarry on 3 and 5 May and 6 August, although from different parts of the quarry.

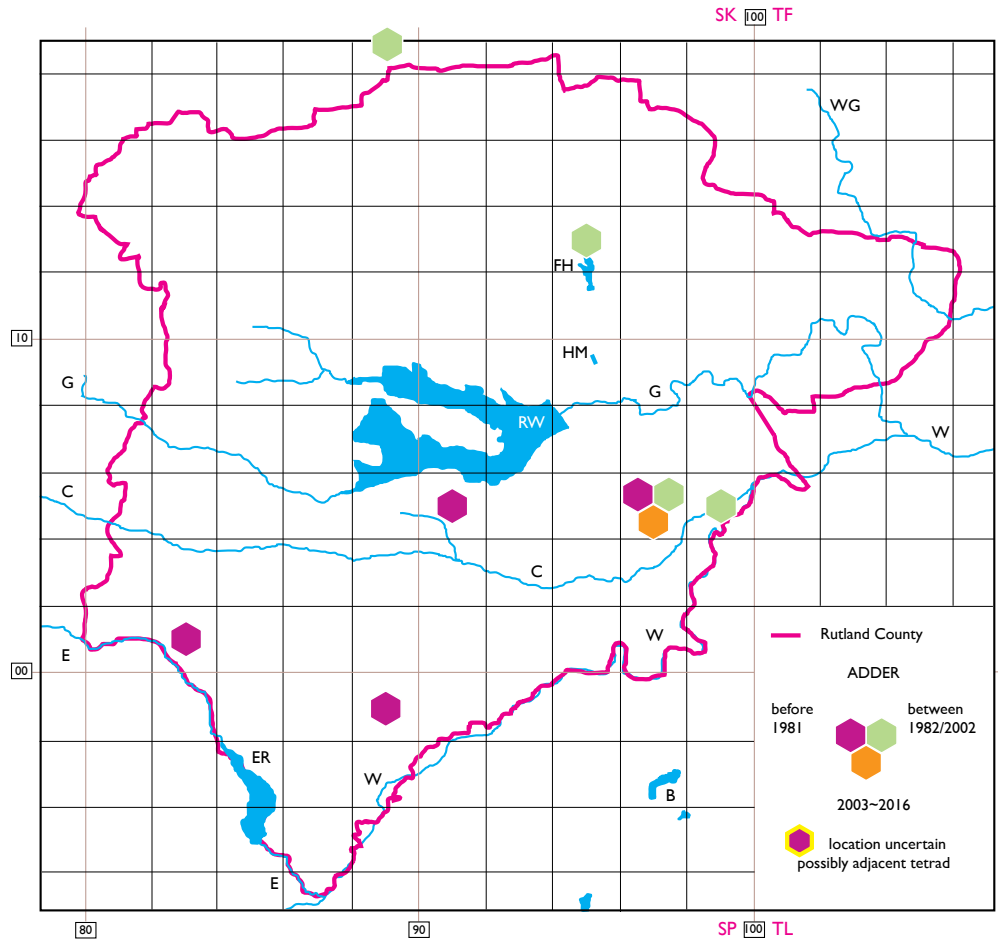


There were no records this year, although one from Edmondthorpe in March was almost in Rutland.



Grass Snakes were recorded from 23 sites in 9 parishes (Burley, Exton, Greetham, Hambleton, Horn, Ketton, Leighfield, Manton, and Wing). The first record was on 30 March in Ketton and the last was on 23 September in Hambleton. There were three records of dead snakes – two were road casualties and one was a mummified young snake. A knot of 4 copulating snakes was observed at Greetham on 16 May.

The Reptile Survey at Rutland Water Nature Reserve was repeated and a further 36 shelters were put down in 6 broad areas. Only 6 Grass Snakes were seen and no other reptiles, but snakes were found in 2 of the new areas. Inspections were made between 21 March and 4 October, but Grass Snakes were only found between 11 May and 4 July. Shelters were examined less often than in 2015, due to weather, difficulties with covering a much greater area and real difficulties in finding them when under rampant vegetation. However all shelters were examined at least 8 times and most 12 times, although 5 were abandoned as the Brambles and Hawthorn became impenetrable.



Adders were recorded on five occasions at Ketton Quarry between 13 March and 8 June. On two occasions 3 adders were seen together. Mating was observed on 17 April.

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