



Suffolk Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Provisional (2007)

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Introduction

The native amphibians and reptiles (herpetofauna) of Suffolk comprise nine of the thirteen species found nationally. Neither of Britain's two rare reptile species, the sand lizard and smooth snake, are found in the county, nor is the pool frog, which has only recently been confirmed as native and is confined to a single reintroduction site in neighbouring Norfolk. The palmate newt is probably also absent from the county. However, Suffolk is important for amphibians and reptiles. It supports a national rarity, the natterjack toad and is an important area for the European conservation priority species, the great crested newt. Further, the Brecks and the Sandlings contain large tracts of important reptile habitat, which is becoming increasingly scarce in lowland Britain.

Historically, amphibians and reptiles have not received a great deal of attention from naturalists and, worse, have been subject to negative attitudes from the wider human population. Hence, there is little documented information on the status of amphibians and reptiles in Suffolk prior to relatively recent times. The first published maps of the distribution of Suffolk's herpetofauna were produced in the 1980s, by Mark Jones, working as an assistant at Suffolk Biological Records Centre (SBRC). Jones collated records gleaned from earlier published accounts, collected by other naturalists and gathered by himself during a year of fieldwork for the Records Centre. The results of this work were published in the *Transactions of the Suffolk Natural History Society* (Jones, 1989).

At the time of his survey, Jones reported concerns about the status of amphibians and reptiles. In spite of the lack of systematic monitoring of these animals, there was a general view that changes in land use and resulting loss of habitat had caused declines nationally. Given an expanding human population, Jones was not optimistic about the prospects for amphibians and reptiles over the following two or three decades.

The Suffolk Amphibian and Reptile Atlas

Suffolk Amphibian and Reptile Group (SARG) and SBRC plan to produce an atlas of the county's herpetofauna, twenty years on from Mark Jones' survey. Similarly to the first study, the atlas will collate and map records of these species throughout the county. SARG was formed in 1997, roughly midway between the publication of Mark Jones's Survey and today. The main activity of SARG is herpetofauna recording, so a lot of information on amphibian and reptile distribution throughout the county has been recorded since the first survey and relayed to SBRC – which is the repository for records of all of Suffolk's wildlife. However, there will be many other observations of herpetofauna in Suffolk that have not ended up as records at SBRC. To encourage further records towards the atlas project, this provisional atlas has been produced. Additional information will be reviewed for incorporation into a full atlas during the winter of 2008-2009, aiming for publication in 2009.

Provisional Atlas

Records of all of Suffolk's herpetofauna are shown in this provisional atlas as a series of 'dot maps'. A dot indicates that a species has been recorded within a tetrad (a 2 x 2 km square). A dot does not provide information about abundance of the observed animals (a single dot may represent a single record, or many different records), but the distribution of dots over the county does give some idea of the species' ranges.

Within this provisional atlas the dots have been coded to show records collated up to the time of Jones' survey (small blue dots) and those that have been collected since then (larger red dots).

Maps have been provided for all nine native species:

- Great crested newt
- Smooth newt
- Common toad
- Natterjack toad
- Common frog
- Viviparous lizard
- Slow-worm
- Grass snake
- Adder

There is also a map for the green frog, which includes a group of non-native species. One of these, the marsh frog, appears to be firmly established in one locality and present, but of undetermined status, at a second.

How you can help

You can help the Suffolk Amphibian and Reptile Atlas project by adding your own records or observations. A biological record comprises four key bits of information:

- The species (digital photographs can be helpful to confirm identification).
- Where it was seen (ideally a map grid reference*, or a post code for an observation from a garden).
- When it was seen (ideally exact date, but the year or an approximate year, if not).
- The name of the person submitting the record (and contact details if willing to be contacted in the event of any potential follow-up enquiry).

* Guidance on using grid references is available from SBRC's website, www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~sbrc.

The atlas project will be pleased to receive observations made either recently or a long time ago, and especially regarding sites where species are no longer present. For example, memories from older residents of Suffolk, concerning where the now rare natterjack toad used to be found could be particularly valuable.

Observations of behaviour or accounts of local folklore relevant to amphibians and reptiles are also very welcome.

Please send your records or observations to the county Amphibian and Reptile Recorder (details below).

Contacts

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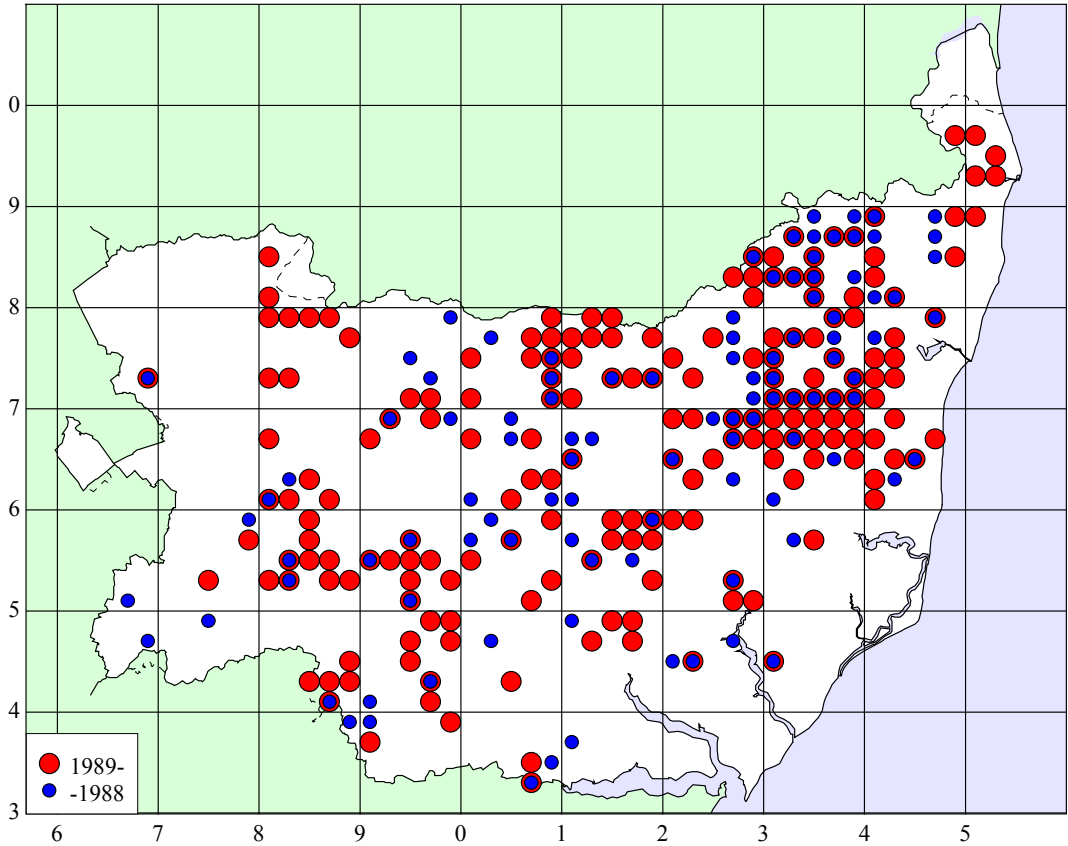
Suffolk Amphibian and Reptile Recorder, Rosie Norton, 3 Wood View, Sibton, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 2NH, rosie@brundish.demon.co.uk.

Suffolk Biological Records Centre, Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 3QH, 01473 433547 / 433571, sbrc@globalnet.co.uk

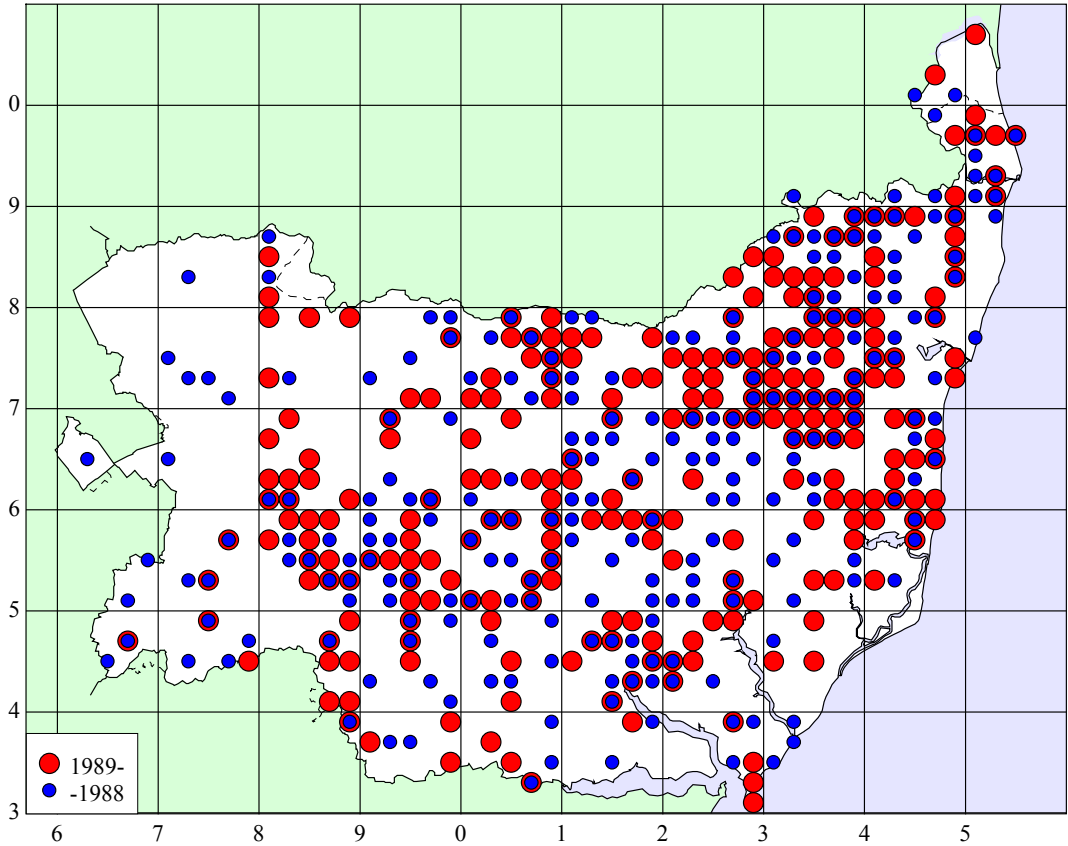
Reference

Jones, M.L. (1989). A survey of the reptilia and amphibia of Suffolk. *Trans. Suffolk Nat. Soc.* 24 9-24.

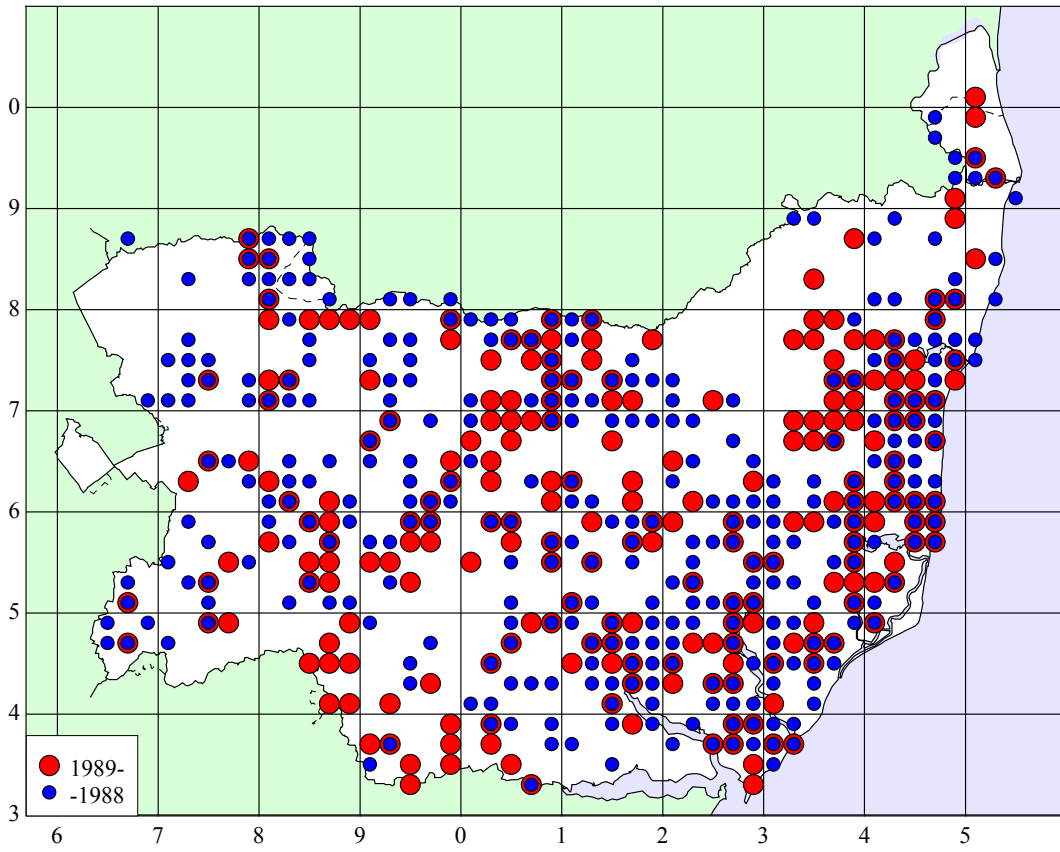
Great Crested Newt



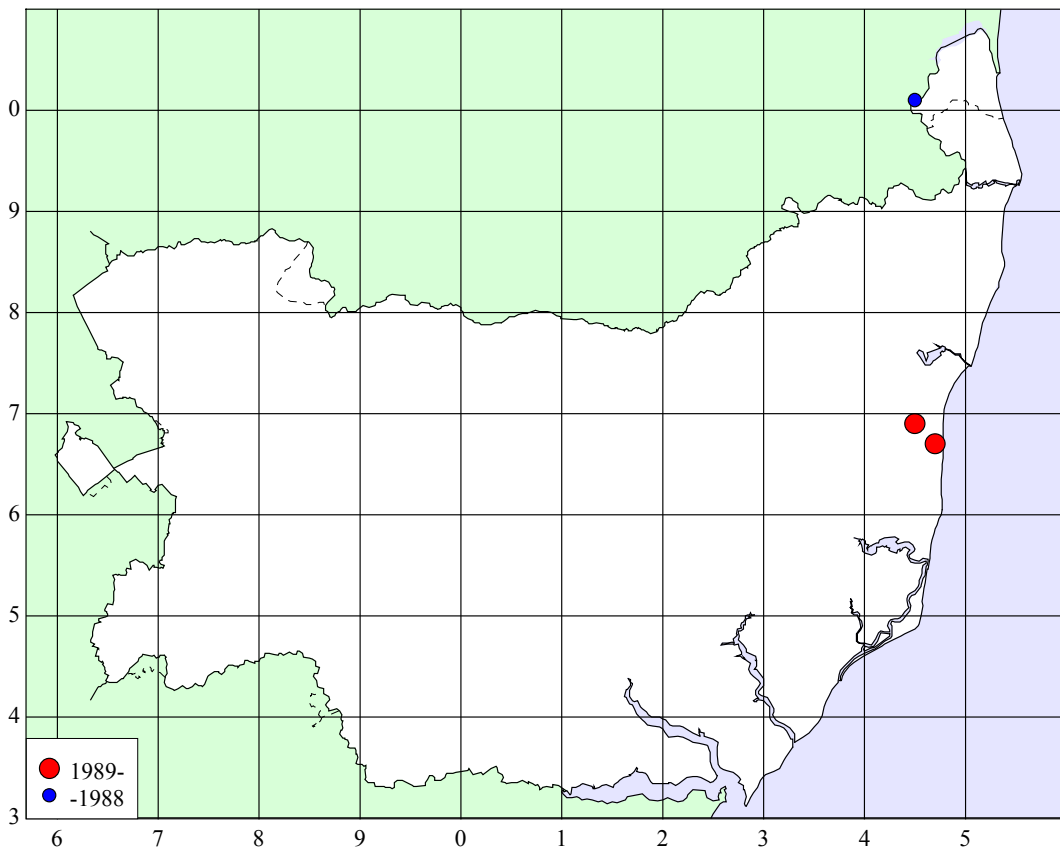
Smooth Newt



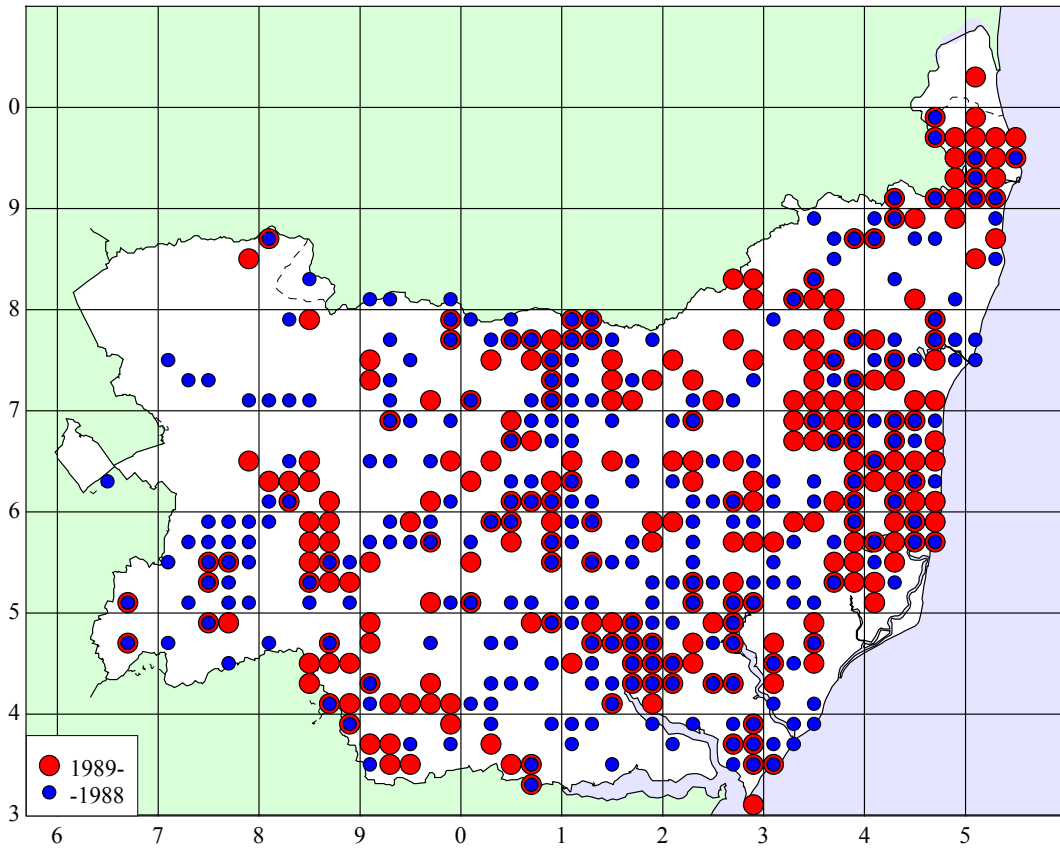
Common Toad



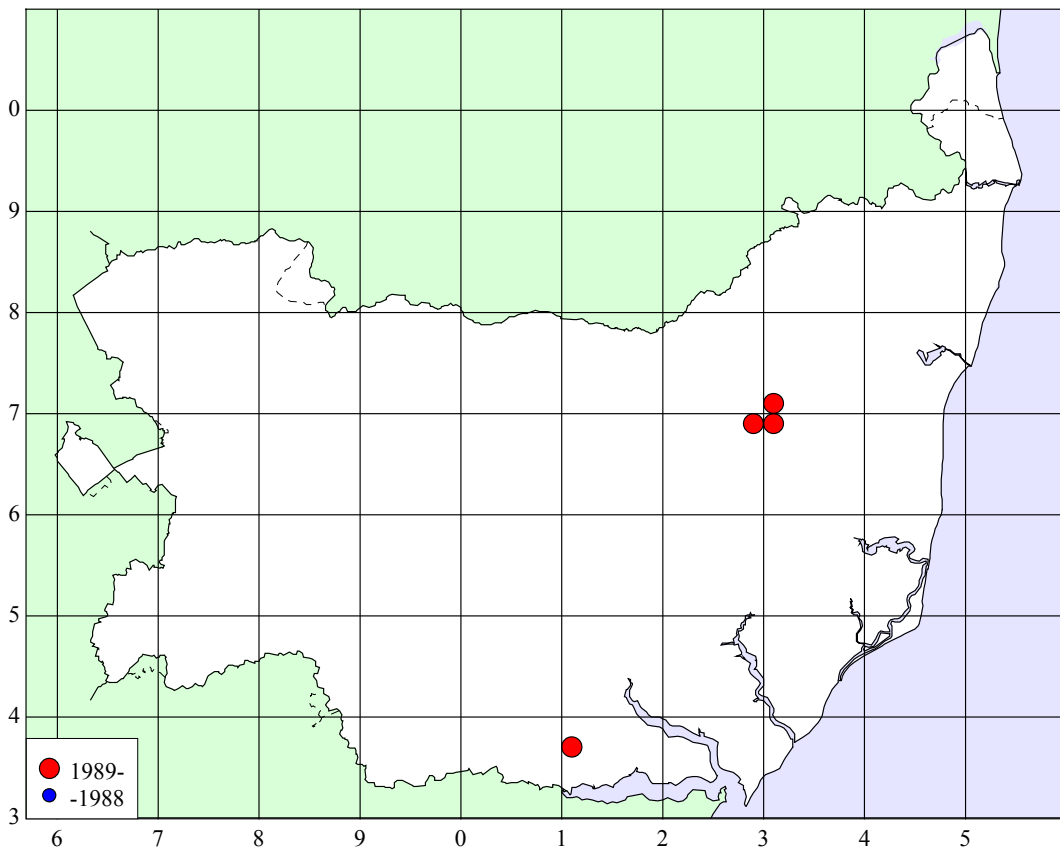
Natterjack Toad



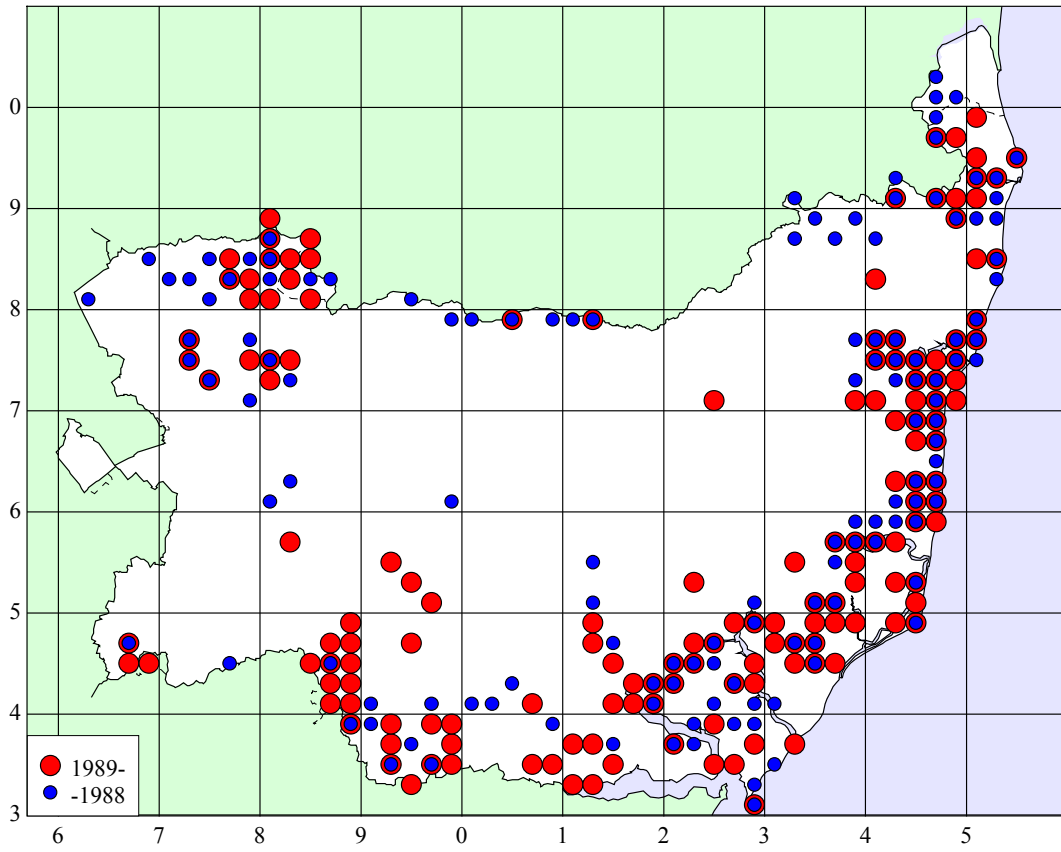
Common Frog



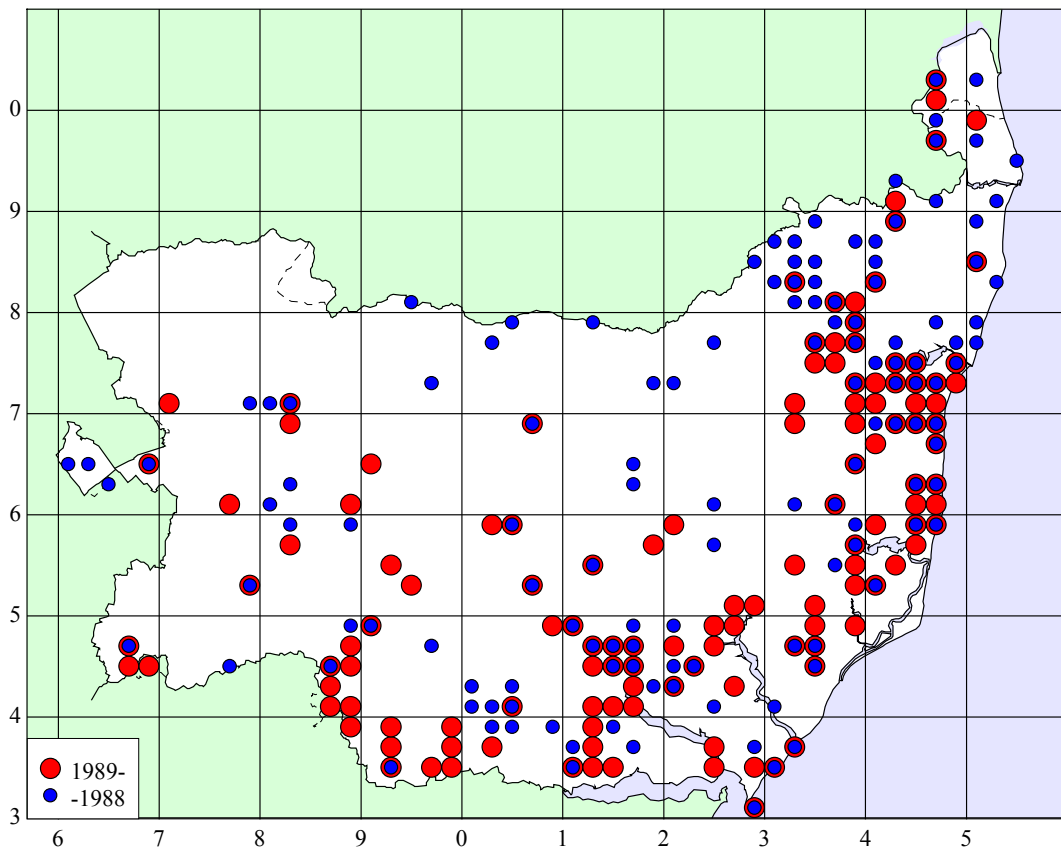
Green Frog



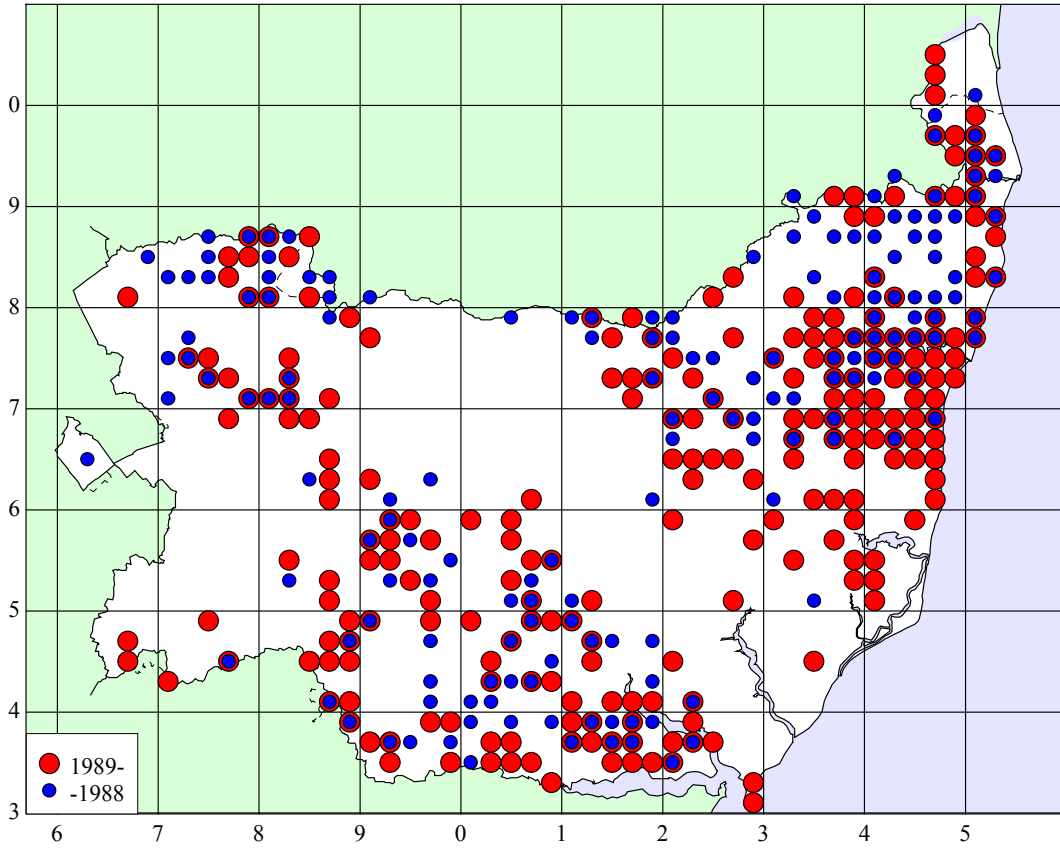
Common Lizard



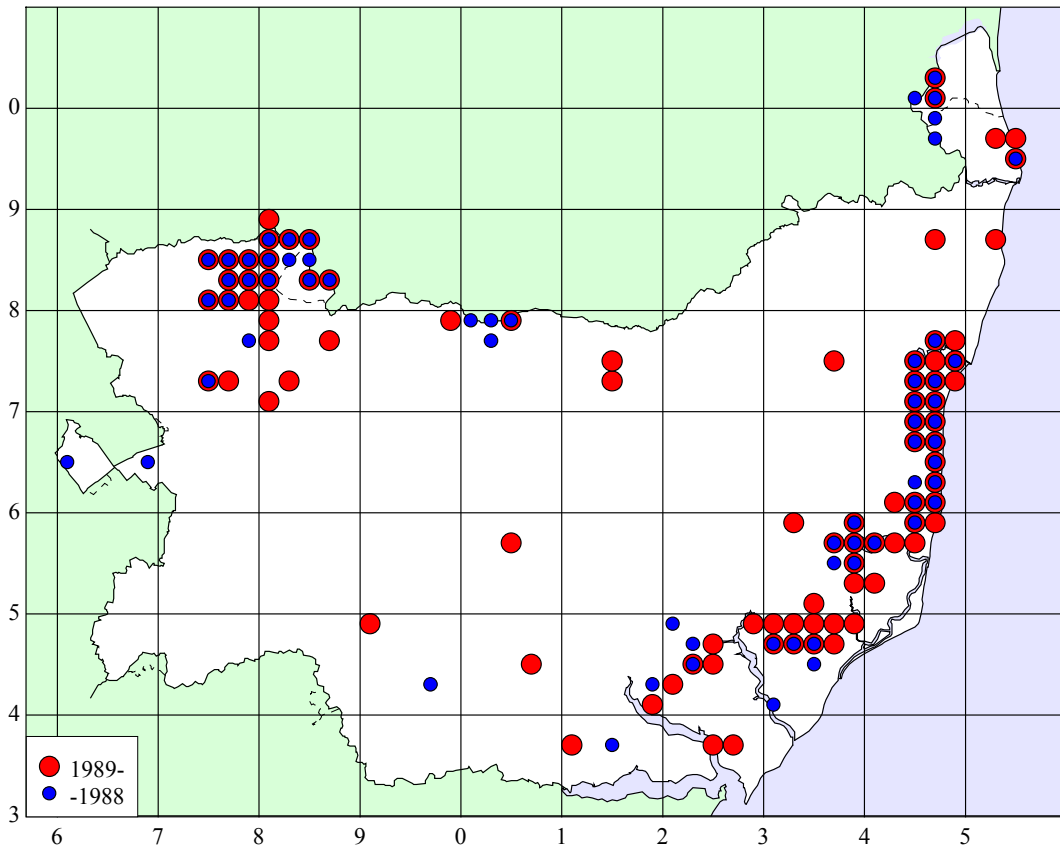
Slow-worm



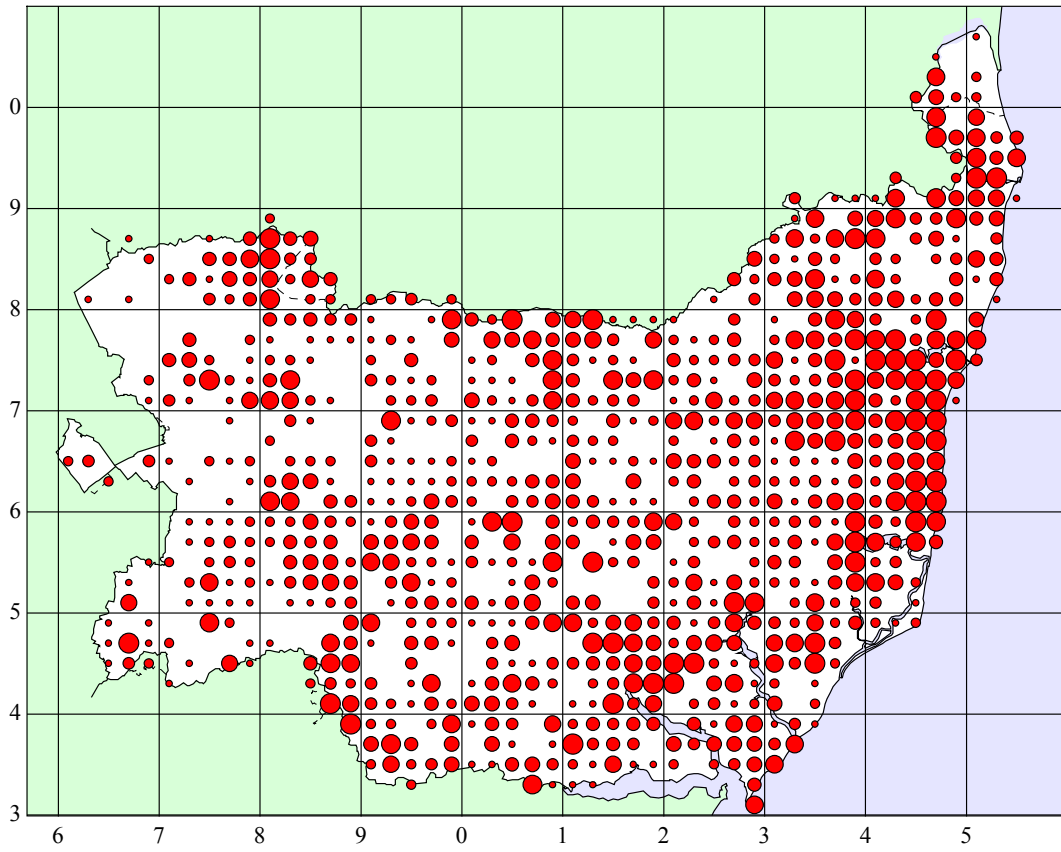
Grass Snake



Adder



All Species



December 2007