

## Zur Reptilienfauna auf Heideflächen der Naturschutzgebiete Steimbker Kuhlen und Rodewalder Lichtenheide im Landkreis Nienburg, Niedersachsen

Moritz Wartlick & Thomas Brandt

Ökologische Schutzstation Steinhuder Meer (ÖSSM e. V.), Hagenburger Str. 16,  
D-31547 Rehburg-Loccum, wartlick@oessm.org

### On the reptile fauna of heathland in the nature reserves Steimbker Kuhlen and Rodewalder Lichtenheide in the district of Nienburg, Lower Saxony

The nature reserves Steimbker Kuhlen and Rodewalder Lichtenheide are located in the district of Nienburg, Lower Saxony. In 2017 the reptile fauna of 11 sample plots, in which several measures of heath management had been applied, was mapped. All six reptile species indigenous to Lower Saxony and currently reproducing in the wild were found: slow worm, sand lizard, viviparous lizard, smooth snake, grass snake and adder. Thus, the study area can be seen as a priority area for reptile protection in Lower Saxony. Reptiles were found in open and half-open habitats with well-structured or degenerated heathland as well as in marginal strips along areas with little vegetation, such as waysides and the fringes of plots in which machines have been used in the course of heath management. Heathland plots in which the vegetation was drastically reduced by mowing or completely removed by sod plugging (to establish open soil) were generally avoided by reptiles even years after accomplishment, but were populated in the marginal structures. Consequently, measures meant to conserve heathland and to support and establish reptile populations at the same time should be applied with spatial and temporal zoning in order to increase structural diversity and create suitable habitats. This means, that large plots should be split into several small plots and measures should be applied successively over the course of several years, always maintaining enough areas with older vegetation. Key habitats of reptiles as well as those of other threatened animal and plant species should be spared or treated manually.

**Key words:** Reptiles, heathland, nature conservation measures, Nienburg, Lower Saxony, Germany, Steimbker Kuhlen, Rodewalder Lichtenheide.

### Zusammenfassung

In den niedersächsischen Naturschutzgebieten Steimbker Kuhlen und Rodewalder Lichtenheide im Landkreis Nienburg wurden 2017 auf 11 Probeflächen, auf denen zwischen 2013 und 2016 unterschiedliche Maßnahmen der Heidepflege durchgeführt worden waren, die Reptilienbestände kartiert. Dabei konnten alle sechs in Niedersachsen natürlich vorkommenden und reproduzierenden Reptilienarten nachgewiesen werden: Blindschleiche, Zauneidechse, Waldeidechse, Schlingnatter, Ringelnatter und Kreuzotter. Das Gebiet zählt damit zu den wichtigsten Gebieten für den Reptilienschutz in Niedersachsen. Es zeigte sich, dass die Reptilien im Untersuchungsgebiet ausschließlich offene und halboffene Bereiche mit strukturreichen oder degenerierten