

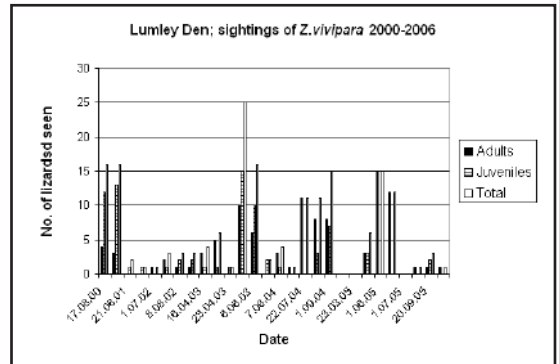
Numbers of *Zootoca vivipara* observed at Lumley Den, a road cutting through the Sidlaw Hills, from 8th August 2000 to 29th March 2006

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LUMLEY Den is a cutting through the Sidlaw Hills, approximately 6 miles north of Dundee City Centre, which allows the A 926 to cross them in a north-westerly direction. The south-west facing escarpment, roughly 75 meters long, has heather moor rising to 400m behind it and vegetation and rubble at its foot. Noting that there were lizard sightings recorded there in 1970, I visited the site on 8th August 2000, and saw 4 adults and 12 juveniles, basking on stones and flattened fence posts. I have since visited the sight for the next six years, making 28 visits all told, the last being 29th March 2006. As demonstrated in the bar-chart (right), there have been considerable fluctuations in the population. 2001, with its polar spring, was a particularly bad year, with only one juvenile noted, on only two occasions, the first being midsummer's day! The largest number of animals noted was 25, 10 adults and 15 juveniles, seen on 30th May 2003. However the greatest number of adults, 15 were seen on 1st June, 2005. While most of the lizards seen demonstrate normal colouring and pattern (below), we saw a truly green male on 18th April 2003.

Howard Inns, of the Herpetological Conservation Trust, writing in the April edition of *British Wildlife*, states that there was growing



evidence that Common toads, Adders and Common lizards were declining. This certainly would seem to be the case with lizards in southern England. Over the past few years we have visited sites in Buckinghamshire, Somerset, and the Isle of Wight which were excellent Common lizard sites in the 1940s, but now showed nothing despite there being no visual evidence that environmental degradation had taken place. It is therefore gratifying to find a good lizard site in the Scottish lowlands so near the heart of a large industrial city like Dundee.

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