Family of snakes saved and released into the wild after being sucked up by giant Vac Ex

Thursday 20 August, 2020

During the nightshift last night at 1am on a motorway job near Royal Portbury Docks in the Bristol channel a large snake and its family, possibly a Black Adder or Python reportably showing its fangs and hissing loudly had been sucked up the by the Vac UK, Vac Ex hose.

As important as it is to meet the deadlines for digging the trail holes for the new motorway roundabout improvement works, the safety of the local wildlife takes priority. Vac UK's vac ex's dig at a suction speed of 375KW with an airflow of 42.000m3 per hour so everyone was guessing the poor snakes days may be numbered.

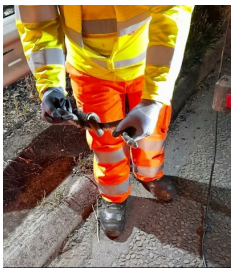
In collaboration with the clients Environmental Advisor's we stopped the works for 12 hours to try to save the snakes. This involved climbing into the container to spot the snakes before gently tipping the spoil container to remove the snakes and return them to their natural habitat. Before the snakes were seen the stories through the night of how large they were and how big their fangs were had been getting more and more exaggerated. It turned out they were grass snakes, sometimes called the ringed or water snake a non-venomous snake often found near water and feeds almost exclusively on amphibians and not thankfully motorway workers.

Looking at the pictures of the snakes in the hole though they would have scared most people including the hardy motorway workers. The snakes when they are threatened let off a urine smell which in the end was more scary than the snakes themselves. Thankfully the snakes were all saved and it was lucky that a vacuum excavator was being used rather than a traditional excavator as otherwise the snakes would probably have been cut in two. It was quite amazing that the snakes did survive given the power of the vacuum. It shows that the Vacuum Excavator is both a safer and more environmentally friendly way to excavate both for the workers and also for the local wildlife.

The vacuum excavator can suck up the earth around electric cables and other utility pipes and is used on infrastructure works to avoid hitting cables whilst carrying out infrastructure improvement works. In the end the work was stopped by Vac UK for 12 hours to help save the snakes but it was worth it as all the motorway workers were delighted to see that the snakes had survived.

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