

Ecology Survey

Seasons Guide



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Badgers (Including bait marking)												
Bats (Preliminary bat roost appraisal - structures)												
Bats (Ground level tree inspections - trees)												
Bat Activity (Tansects and static monitoring - summer)												
Bats Roosting (Emergence and re-entry surveys - summer)												
Bats Roosting (Emergence and re-entry surveys - maternity)												
Bats (Potential roost feature inspection - trees)												
Bat Roosting (Transitional roosts)												
Bat Roosting (Hibernation)												
Bat Roosting (Swarming/mating roosts)												
Birds (Wintering)												
Birds (Breeding)												
Birds (Passage/migrant)												
Botanical Surveys												
Dormice (Presence/absence - nest tubes)												
Dormice (Population monitoring - boxes)												
Dormice (Presence/absence - footprint surveys)												
Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey												
Great Crested Newt (Habitat suitability)												
Great Crested Newt (Presence and population assessments)												
Great Crested Newt (eDNA)												
Hedgerow Surveys												
Invertebrates (Aquatic)												
Invertebrates (Terrestrial)												
Otters												
Reptiles												
Water Voles												
White Clawed Crayfish												

Timings are provided as a guideline and can vary based on locations, seasonal variations and specific species.

Optimal survey time

Sub-optimal survey time

Surveys should not be undertaken

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Important Information & Legislation

Types of Assessment

Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA)

- The PEA will include an Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey and desktop study of existing ecological information relevant to the site.
- Results are presented in a PEA report, which will detail the survey methodologies, results and further surveys/mitigation, where required.
- A PEA does not include a detailed assessment of a finalised scheme, but rather a indicative assessment of likely impacts and guide for the project owner with regards to further surveys and mitigation that will be required, as well as enhancement opportunities.

Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)

- An EcIA can form the ecological aspect of an EIA, or be a standalone report.
- An EcIA is a more detailed report than a PEA and is usually only completed when requested by the relevant planning authority, or required by law as part of an EIA or Habitats Regulations Assessment. For very straightforward projects, where no further ecological surveys are needed, an EcIA Report can be produced following completion of the PEA.

Breeding Birds

- All nesting birds are protected by law in the UK
- Some species (Schedule 1) are afforded additional protection from disturbance.
- For breeding bird surveys, 4 survey visits are recommended between March and June. For some species it may be necessary to start surveys in February.
- Wintering bird surveys should be completed between November and March.

** European Protected Species (EPS surveys are to be undertaken by suitably qualified ecologist with the appropriate survey licences.)*

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Great Crested Newts* (GCN)

- GCN are a European Protected species, and to harm, disturb or capture a GCN or damage its breeding/resting habitat is an offence.
- A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) survey can be undertaken anytime of year to assess whether a habitat has potential to support GCN.
- eDNA season runs from 15th April to 30th June.
- For presence/absence surveys four survey visits are required, and where a population assessment is required another two survey visits are required (six in total). These surveys can commence in mid March and need to be completed by mid June.
- Methods for presence/absence surveys and population assessments include torch surveys and bottle trapping in ponds.
- Some developments can qualify to join district level licensing schemes in some areas where Natural England or NatureSpace operate. This allows some developments to pay a fee and removes the need to complete newt surveys by funding mitigation elsewhere.

Badgers

- Badgers are protected by UK law, and it is an offence to kill, injure or take a badger or interfere with a sett.
- Badger surveys can be completed at any time of year but early spring and late autumn when badgers are most active and vegetation is minimal is ideal.
- Surveys include visual surveys looking for setts, latrines, tracks and paths, or bait marking surveys.

Hedgerow Surveys

- A hedgerow survey will help determine whether a hedgerow is 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations, and is therefore usually required to support an application for a hedgerow removal notice.
- The hedgerow surveys optimal period is during June and July. Other months between April and October are sub optimal.

Otter*

- Otter are a European Protected Species and to harm, disturb or capture an otter or to damage its breeding or resting habitat, is a criminal offence.
- Surveys should not be undertaken after periods of heavy rainfall.

White Clawed Crayfish

- White clawed crayfish are protected by UK law.
- Surveys can be undertaken in April, and July to October.
- Surveys methods can involve searches of suitable habitat, and trapping.
- Permits are required for any trapping.

Reptiles

- Adder, grass snake, common lizards and slow worms are protected by UK law.
- Surveys can include visual searches for basking reptiles, checking of refuges and the use of artificial refuges.

Water Voles

- Water voles and their habitat are protected by UK law.
- In most cases, at least 2 surveys are required; the first between mid April and the end of June, and the second between July and September.

Dormice*

- Dormice are a European Protected species, and to harm, disturb or capture a dormouse or damage its breeding/resting habitat, is an offence.
- If small amounts are lost – visual surveys for nests and checking hazelnuts for marks may be enough.
- If larger areas of habitat such as hedgerows are to be lost then nest boxes or tubes may be needed as well as visual checks.
- Footprint tunnel surveys are a new technique, which is very effective in detecting dormouse presence.
- If dormice are found it should be assumed they are present in a suitable connecting habitat on site and adjacent.

Bats*

- Bats are a European Protected Species, and to harm, disturb or capture a bat or damage a bat roost, is an offence.
- Trees, structures and buildings can be used by bats to roost. Bat roost surveys, which will comprise either daytime inspections and or nocturnal surveys, in addition to climbing surveys will need to be undertaken at the time when bats are most likely to be using the site for example summer (non breeding) roost surveys should be undertaken between May and August.
- Activity surveys are optimal between April and October, depending on weather conditions.
- Hibernation roost surveys can take place between November and the end of February.
- Maternity roost surveys are optimum between May and the end of July.

Invertebrates

- Different types of invertebrates such as beetles, moths and butterflies require different survey methods and have different ideal seasons for surveying.

DM are happy to provide assistance with protected species surveys or advise on the need for hedgerow surveys etc.

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