

Birds

Protected Species
Guidance Note: 2014

Survey Season Calendar

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |
|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| | | | Breeding surveys | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Wintering surveys | | | | | | | | | |

■ Optimal
 ■ Sub-optimal
 ■ Inappropriate



Why Survey?

If you are planning to disturb or destroy any habitat used by birds during the breeding season (March to August, inclusive), then you will require a breeding bird survey. There are numerous approaches depending on the specific habitat, size and location of the site, and additional protection afforded to certain species (due to rarity or listing under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended).

SERVICES:

- Pre-vegetation clearance / building demolition nest searches
- Breeding bird surveys
- Wintering bird surveys
- Mitigation design strategies



Methodology

For a small site with localised habitat destruction (e.g. removal of a small section of hedgerow or scrub), it may be possible for an experienced ecologist to complete a hand-search of all vegetation to be removed. If no active bird nests are found, then clearance work can continue. However, if any nests are found, then work must wait until all young have fully fledged. For larger areas, a full breeding bird survey following either standard Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) or Common Bird Census (CBC) methodologies may be required. This usually involves between 3-10 visits by an experienced bird ecologist, who will record all bird activity and produce a territory map. This information can be used to assess the importance of the site and any valuable habitat features. Depending on the nature and location of the proposed development, it may be that a Wintering Bird Survey is needed. This method involves systematically walking across the entire site, recording all bird species present (seen and heard) and numbers flying directly over the site. Any birds noted immediately adjacent to the site boundary are also recorded. The data gathered provides an assessment of the importance of the site for overwintering birds.

Specific surveys and mitigation advice for birds listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), including barn owl, red kite and kingfisher, can be provided on a site by site basis.



Mitigation

Mitigation measures are numerous and largely dependent on the target species. Options include habitat enhancement (management) and creation, and nest box installation.