

Breeding Bird Surveys

THE LEGISLATION:

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

- Take or destroy eggs of any wild bird
- Intentionally or recklessly kill/injure individuals
- Take any wild bird



FOR ALL WILD BIRDS IN THE UK



Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or in use

WCA 1981 (Schedule 1)

Bird species listed in Schedule 1 of the WCA receive special protection. This means that in addition to the offences above, it is also illegal to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bird listed on schedule 1 while nesting or to disturb any of its dependant young.

Bird Atlas (2025) Protected species Britain



SURVEY SEASON

- Optimal
- Survey not possible
- Sub-optimal - subject to conditions

The bird breeding season is from late February to early August inclusive, although the majority of breeding activity occurs between March and early July.

Some species (including migrant species) are known to breed earlier or later in the season, requiring surveys to be undertaken in February/September.



WHEN MIGHT YOU NEED A SURVEY?

Breeding bird surveys may be required when the habitat present within a Site is likely to support birds and will be affected by the Proposed Development.

SURVEY METHOD

An experienced ecologist will visit the site at least five times between April and June. Surveyors walk (transect route) around the site, which includes all previously identified habitats within the proposed development area. The Ecologist will map bird species and their behaviour and asses the significance of the species present and estimate the breeding status within the site. The resulting information is used to inform design works to avoid or reduce adverse impacts on breeding birds and to mitigate for any loss of habitat.

TIMINGS AND CONDITIONS

Surveys should start between half an hour before sunrise and half an hour after sunrise and should be concluded by mid-morning to coincide with activity levels to maximise detectability.

Features of the Site may also influence the survey timings. i.e. temporary pools might only be present early in the season or in wet years making it necessary to collect data across multiple breeding seasons.

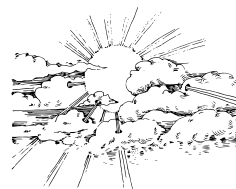


LATE MARCH

Survey timing may need to be tailored to suit certain species or varied between visits to increase the potential to detect a full range of breeding species.

Breeding bird survey visits should be spread evenly between late March and early July in order to ensure that the surveys cover resident breeders which start breeding early, as well as migrant breeders which arrive later.

Visits in February or early March may also be required if there is potential for early nesting species to be present at the site.



WETLAND/COASTAL SITES

For wetland/coastal sites, survey design should be built around peak counts of priority species and therefore wintering, or passage season surveys may be more appropriate than a breeding bird survey.



SEPTEMBER

MITIGATION/OUTCOMES

- Mitigation Possible
- Mitigation Constrained

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
	No vegetation clearance without assessment & supervision							Clearance			

THE REPORT

The results are written up in either a breeding bird survey report or incorporated into a wider ecological assessment report that sets out avoidance measures, mitigation strategies, compensation and enhancement advice.

SPEAK TO US ABOUT YOUR PROJECT TODAY!

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