



Luscinia
Ecology

3 Ways The Heatwave Changed Ecology This Summer.

(that you might not have considered)

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A dark-colored salamander, possibly a Hellbender (Cryptobranchus alleganiensis), is resting on a blue tarp. The salamander has a long, thick body, a long tail, and a few white spots on its back. It is positioned horizontally across the frame, with its head to the right and tail to the left. The background is a wrinkled blue tarp.

Back in May...

**At times it was too hot for
GCN bottle trapping.**

Exceptionally warm overnight temperatures meant bottle trapping had to be carefully assessed. Protecting animal welfare always comes first, so where conditions weren't suitable, surveys needed to be delayed or alternative approaches considered.

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In June...

Dormouse footprint tunnels were at risk for becoming ineffective.

High temperatures increased the risk of drying the charcoal powder mix used in hazel dormouse footprint tunnels, reducing the reliability of footprints which required us to rethink survey timing.

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In July

Reptile surveys started before dawn

With temperatures already reaching around 19°C by 6am, reptiles have been becoming active much earlier than expected or simply not using the refugia we use to survey for them. To collect robust survey data, our ecologists have been timing survey visits strategically and re-scheduling.

Conflicting and piecemeal guidelines around reptile surveys have made this process harder to navigate.

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Our priorities:

- ✓ Looking after the wellbeing of our team
- ✓ Protecting the welfare of wildlife
- ✓ Delivering reliable ecological data that clients and planning authorities can trust

What This Means

Sometimes this means adapting methodologies where appropriate, updating risk assessments, and occasionally advising clients that rescheduling is the right decision

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It's not always easy during the busiest survey season of the year, but it's part of delivering the standard of ecological advice our clients expect and robust surveys.

Adapting to Change

As our climate continues to change, conversations around how ecological fieldwork can adapt will become increasingly important not just for consultancies, but for clients, regulators, and the wider industry.

Tell us...

How have you or your team navigated the added challenge of the heatwaves this season and how have you avoided pitfalls?

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