



OLD MILL LANE, THURGOLAND.

OS REF: SK 286-999.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No: 210125.

Date: 25th January 2021.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page Number
1. INTRODUCTION.	3
2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.	4
3. SURVEY RESULTS.	6
4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.	11
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.	12
6. REFERENCES.	15
Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.	16
Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.	18
TOOLBOX TALKS.	19

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. A planning application has been submitted for the conversion of an existing building into a bungalow. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council have requested a bat survey of the building to validate the planning application.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to carry out a bat survey of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. This survey was carried out on 18th January 2021 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendix I and II of this report provides additional information on bats and nesting birds and the protection afforded to them and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The structure was checked for potential bat roosting sites in line by looking for the following signs: -

- * Holes, cracks or crevices.
- * Bat droppings.
- * Prey remains.

2.2. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings of the structure which may provide suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.3. All walls and the ground around the structure were checked for signs of bat droppings or staining to indicate possible use by bats. Where necessary, ladders were utilised to gain access within the limits of health and safety. Any access constraints encountered are outlined within the following report.

2.4. All survey work was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition)*, with an assessment of the structures suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.4. A dusk emergence survey was not undertaken as the survey was carried outside the bat activity season.

2.5. This survey was carried out by James Campbell MCIEEM. Since 2003 James has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out Ecology Surveys and Phase 1 Habitat surveys and is a full member of CIEEM. James holds licences with several licensing bodies including: -

- Natural England Survey Licences in respect of bats, great crested newts, white clawed crayfish and barn owls.
- Scottish Natural Heritage Licences in respect of bats and great crested newts.
- Countryside Council for Wales Licences in respect of bats and great crested newts.

He has also successfully completed numerous courses run by CIEEM, BCT and FSC regarding protected species and in carrying out Phase 1 Habitat surveys. He is also confined spaces trained and qualified to NVQ Level 2 in tree climbing and aerial rescue.

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A desktop data search was carried out with Barnsley Biological Records Centre and South Yorkshire Bat Group for records of bats and bat roosts within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. Barnsley Biological Records Centre have numerous records of bats within 2km of the survey area. However, there were no records of bat roosts identified within the survey area or the immediate surrounding area.

3.1.3. South Yorkshire Bat Group also have a large number of bat records within 2km of the survey area. The records include bat roosts and bat activity. However, there were no records of bat roosts identified within the survey area or the immediate surrounding area.

3.1.4. The majority of the records were of foraging and commuting bats, many of the roost records were from around Romtickle Tunnel and the Transpennine Trail, approximately 1000m to the north west.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The surveyed building was a single storey stable, which was currently disused and in a poor state of repair.

3.2.2. The photograph below shows the southern elevation of the building.



3.2.3. The immediate surrounding area was woodland and the River Don to the south and grazing land and woodland to the north. There were also several residential properties and farm buildings.

3.2.4. The aerial photograph below shows the location of the surveyed building and the immediate surrounding area.



3.2.5. The building stands at the bottom of a steep embankment covered with scattered trees leading off Old Mill Lane. The building is constructed on an area of hard standing, surrounded by improved grassland, scrap cars, vans and accumulated debris.

3.3. Daytime Survey Results.

3.3.1. The surveyed building was a single storey stable, which was open to the roof and open along the southern elevation as there were no doors. The building had breeze block and brick walls with no cavity. The building had two gable ends with small some small gaps were the top of the wall and the roof covering join. The brickwork and the blockwork were generally in a good condition with few cracks or crevices suitable for roosting bats.

3.3.2. The photograph adjacent shows the western elevation of the building.



3.3.3. The photograph adjacent shows the northern elevation of the building.



3.3.4. The photograph adjacent shows the southern elevation of the building.



3.3.5. The photograph below shows the eastern elevation of the building.



3.3.6. The building was covered with corrugated metal sheets and metal sheet ridge coverings, which had no lining. The sheets were generally tight fitting. Internally the roof was supported by a timber 'A frame', which was generally in a good condition with no gaps or cracks suitable for roosting bats. However, at the eastern



end of the building the timber frame was damaged due to water ingress and the roof has started to collapse. The photograph adjacent shows a general view through the inside of the building.

3.3.7. No bat roosts or bat field signs were identified internally or externally during this survey.

3.3.8. Numerous nests were identified internally and externally during this survey. However, the nests were disused as the survey was carried out outside the nesting season. The photograph adjacent shows one of the nests.



4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The building was assessed for the suitability for roosting bats. The brickwork and the blockwork were generally in a good condition with few cracks or crevices suitable for roosting bats. The roof was generally tight fitting with no gaps for roosting bats although the metal sheets are unsuitable habitat for roosting bats. No bat roosts or bat field signs were identified during the survey. Therefore, the building was assessed as having negligible potential and the proposed works will have **no impact** on roosting bats.

4.2. The building provides a suitable habitat for a variety of nesting birds and numerous nests were identified internally and externally during this survey. Therefore, if the works were carried out during the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September, there would be a **high impact** on nesting birds. However, if the works were carried out outside the nesting bird season there would be **no direct impact** on nesting birds.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. It is highly unlikely that bats will be present within the surveyed building and the building has been assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats. Therefore, no further surveys are recommended and there is no requirement for a mitigation strategy or for a Natural England licence.

5.2. Nevertheless, individual bats can seek temporary shelter almost anywhere and therefore it is recommended that the works are carried out with due care and in the very unlikely event a bat is found, the bat should be covered and protected, work should cease at that location and the undersigned contacted for further advice.

5.3. It is recommended that the works are carried out outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September. However, if the works are carried out during the nesting bird season the works should be preceded by a thorough nesting bird survey carried out by a suitably experienced person. If an active nest is identified during this survey the nest should be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

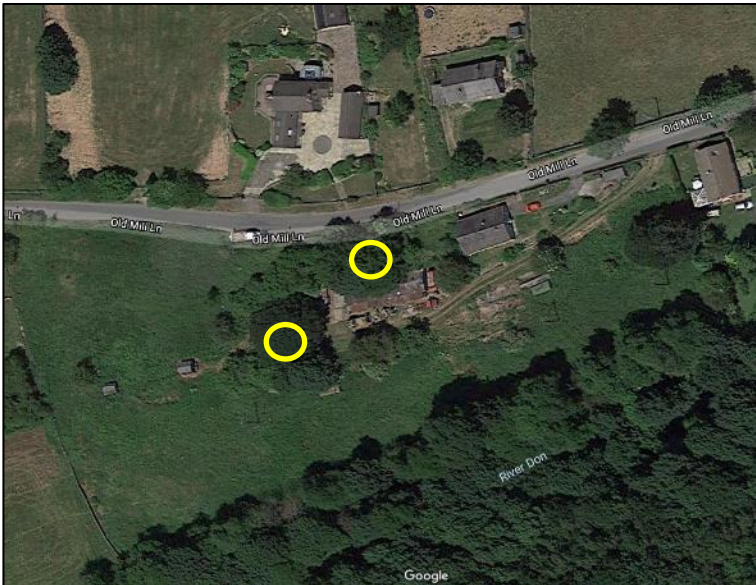
5.4. As habitat will be lost biodiversity enhancements need to be provided in the proposed development. These should include an integrated bat brick and two bird nesting boxes. Examples of these are shown below.



5.5. The development plan below shows the proposed location of the integrated bat brick.



5.6. The aerial photograph below shows the proposed locations of the bird nesting boxes.



Prepared by:	
James Campbell MCIEEM.	Date: 25 th January 2021.

Checked by:	
Jenny Whitcher Roebuck MCIEEM.	Date: 28 th January 2021.

6. REFERENCES.

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. 2017. ***Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition***. CIEEM, Hampshire.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. 2017. ***Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition***. CIEEM, Hampshire.
1981. ***Wildlife and Countryside Act***. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69> (accessed 18/02/16)
2000. ***Countryside and Rights of Way Act***.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>.
2017. ***The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations***.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made>.
2012. ***National Planning Policy Statement***.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Anon. 1995. ***Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group report. Vol 2: Action Plans***. HMSO, London.
- Collins J. (ed.) 2016. ***Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologist: Good Practice Guidelines***. 3rd ed. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- English Nature. 2004. ***Bat Mitigation Guidelines***. English Nature, Peterborough, UK.
- BTHK 2018. ***Bat Roosts in Trees – A Guide to Identification and Assessment for Tree-Care and Ecology Professionals***. Exeter: Pelagic Publishing.

Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATs agreement. Numerous species are

also listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number of bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man-made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Toolbox Talk: Bats

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants

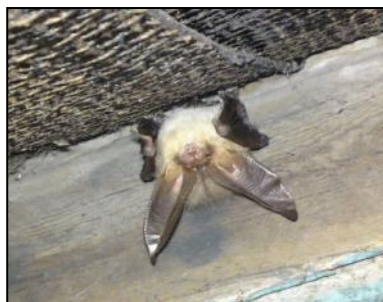


18 species of bat have been recorded in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here.

Identification.

Some species can be extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Species such as the Brown Long Eared bat pictured above can be more easily identified in the hand. Whereas, the Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle are more difficult to identify.



Bats are more easily identified by field signs such as droppings or feeding remains.



Habitat.

Bats are highly specialised creatures and require a relatively narrow range of suitable conditions in order to sustain a viable population. Bats require an abundant supply of flying insect food in places where they can easily be caught and they need safe and reliable roosting sites, particularly during breeding and hibernation.

Bats are heavily dependent on buildings and trees for their roost sites and therefore extremely susceptible to disturbance from human activities. Development schemes can also isolate bat populations and sever roost sites from favoured feeding areas by removing hedgerows or other features used as commuting routes.

Bats are susceptible to disturbance and have been known to abandon roost sites after instances of disturbance. The effects of disturbance are more pronounced at different times of year. Serious disturbance during breeding can result in the breeding females being killed or the abandonment and subsequent starvation of dependant young. Repeated disturbance during winter hibernation can result in the death of adult animals from starvation.

The level of protection afforded to bats in the UK and European legislation reflects the fact that it is now generally accepted that bats have declined substantially, maybe by as much as 60%, over recent years. Most species are declining and vulnerable with all species being protected.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and occasionally the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly Pipistrelle, can quickly adapt to manmade structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Legislation.

Bats and their roosts are fully protected at all times (whether the bats are currently present or not). This protection comes from the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (updated by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) and the Habitats Regulations 1994. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.

Under the Habitats Regulations, where bats may be affected by development proposals, a licence is required from Natural England. Natural England's published guidelines on the licence procedure indicate that if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence then a licence is required. If, on the other hand the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence, then a licence is not required.

If bats or bat field signs are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk

Toolbox Talk: Nesting Birds

The bird nesting season varies according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September.

A bird's nest is the place in which a bird lays and incubates its eggs. Some species build a nest structure while other species lay their eggs directly onto the ground or on a rocky ledge. Nests can be constructed from a variety of materials and are usually lined with feathers or fur.

Identification.

Some birds construct nests in an area where it can be seen while others construct nests that are hidden from view and are more difficult to identify.

The photograph to the right shows a Moorhen nest which can easily be seen.



Nests can also be identified from field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself. The presence of a nest can be identified by seeing the adult birds leaving and returning to the nest regularly with food to feed the chicks.

The photograph to the left shows a Wren's nest in overhanging tree roots, which is almost impossible to see.



Care should be taken at any time during the nesting season particularly when regular bird activity is seen, or birds can be heard calling.



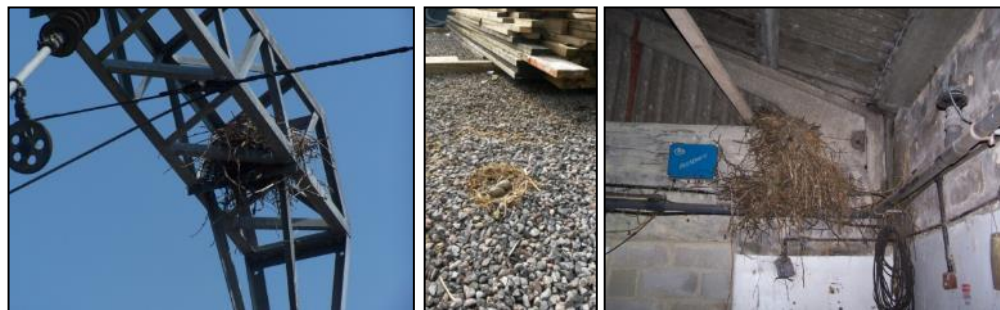
Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants



Habitat.

Birds regularly nest in a variety of places with some species nesting in buildings or vegetation and others nesting on the ground or on water. However, birds may nest in any habitat or situation if they identify a suitable nest site.



Legislation.

Part 1. -(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 states that:

If any person intentionally or recklessly:

- Kills, injures or takes any wild bird.
- Takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built, or
- Takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird.

He shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that:

If any person intentionally or recklessly:

- Disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young, or
- Disturbs young of such a bird.

He shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

If a nest or potential nesting activity is identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk