Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

ANCHOR FARM, DODWORTH.

OS REF: SE 30490 06265.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No: **250608 / 2.**

Date: **20th November 2025.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. An application is being prepared for the conversion of a barn into a residential property, at Anchor Farm, Dodworth.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was initially commissioned to carry out a preliminary bat roost assessment (PRA) survey of the barn to establish if the proposals could have any impact on bats or bat roosts. That assessment was carried out on 13th June 2025. In line with the recommendations of the PRA, a subsequent bat dusk emergence survey was carried out on 20th June 2025.

1.3. This report contains the findings of all surveys carried out and provides relevant recommendations for the development.

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

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The buildings were thoroughly checked internally and externally for potential bat roosting sites by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat droppings.
* Prey remains.
* Staining on external walls.

2.2. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings in the roof and ridge tiles, behind soffits and fascia's and in the walls of the structure for suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.3. All windowsills, 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. The Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition),* with an assessment of the buildings suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.5. The PRA was carried out by Ruth Georgiou BSc, MCIEEM. Since 2004 Ruth has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out a variety of surveys including ecology surveys, phase I habitat surveys, preliminary ecological appraisals and species-specific surveys. She also holds a degree in Environmental Science (BSc) and has successfully completed a number of courses run by CIEEM, BCT and FSC in the relative protected species and other aspects of ecology. Ruth is also experienced and trained in Biodiversity Net Gain and is accredited to undertake river condition assessments utilising the MoRPh methodology. Ruth holds Natural England survey licences in respect of bats, great crested newts and white clawed crayfish and has held her own or has been named ecologist on site specific mitigation licences for badgers, great crested newts and bats. As a full member of CIEEM Ruth is subject to peer review on an annual basis.

2.6. The subsequent dusk emergence survey was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition),* including the use of Night Vision Aids (NVAs).

2.7. The dusk emergence survey was led by Sam White BSc ACIEEM. Sam has had experience in a professional capacity as an Ecologist focusing primarily on survey work for protected species and Phase 1 Habitat surveys. Sam has a BSc in Environmental Conservation from Sheffield Hallam University and Graduated in 2015. Sam joined Whitcher Wildlife Ltd in May 2018 as an Ecological Consultant. Sam holds a survey licence for Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*, Barn Owl *Tyto alba* and a Level 2 Class Licence for Bats. Sam is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A desk top data search was carried out with the South Yorkshire Bat Group for any records of bats and bat roosts within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. The results show the closest records to be of a brown long eared maternity roost and common pipistrelle and natterers day roosts on a farm complex approximately 720m west of the survey area. A Leisler's bat was also recorded passing over that same farm complex. Those surveys / records are dated 2020 / 2021.

3.1.3. There are numerous additional records located further afield, although none are noted as being of any significant relevance to the site. Other bat species recorded within the 2km radius of the site include soprano pipistrelle, noctule, whiskered / Brandts and daubentons, but again, none of the records are of any direct relevance.

3.1.4. The survey area lies adjacent to Hugset Woods, which is designated as a non-statutory Local Wildlife Site. Hugset Woods is designated for it's woodland habitats and notable bird and invertebrate species.

3.1.4. The data search results can be provided to the client upon request, but should not be placed into the public domain.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The surveyed barn lies within the Anchor Farm complex, outlined in red in the aerial map below.

3.2.2. The surrounding habitat comprises extensive woodland and treelines and Silkstone Golf Course. These habitats provide high value habitat for foraging and commuting bats. The aerial map below shows the location of the survey area in relation to its surroundings.

3.2.4. The barn is a large single storey barn constructed from concrete backfilled, cut and dressed stone walls, with a single window and door on the south west elevation and a large roller shutter door and single door on the south east elevation.

3.2.5. The roof is pitched with a cement sheet covering lined with a breathable membrane. There are fascias with soffits along each side of the building and just fascias on each gable end.

3.2.6. The photographs below demonstrate the external of the building.

3.2.7. Internally, the building is completely open throughout and not used for anything other than some small storage items. The open roof structure comprises a modern complex queen post design. The photograph below demonstrates the internal of the barn.

3.3. Preliminary Roost Assessment.

3.3.1. The barn is generally in very good condition and well maintained with very few defects. However, some occasional features were identified that provide potential for individual roosting bats, although most of these features are not entirely ideal as they are unlikely to lead into any extensive roosting space.

3.3.2. Firstly, the external of the stone walls are generally in excellent condition, except for one patch of stonework on the north-east elevation wall with poor pointing. There is just one point where this creates a hole that leads further into the wall, shown in the photograph below. Whilst this feature is suitable for roosting bats, it is located approximately 2m above ground level on the wall that forms the boundary of an adjacent busy yard, and it was noted that commercial vehicles were parked up against this wall and building materials are stored leant up against this wall, as can be seen on aerial imagery of the site and the photograph below, making it less desirable for bats to utilise that feature.

3.3.3. The internal walls are in very good condition although some occasional gaps in the stonework were noted at the top of one of the gable ends. Regardless, no access for bats inside the building was noted during the PRA therefore it is highly unlikely that these features will be used by bats.

3.3.4. The roof was again, in excellent condition, although one small section of the southwest elevation of the roof, there were some gaps visible where the cement sheets along the ridge were not fitted as tight to the sheets below. These are outlined in red in the photograph below. The breathable membrane lining the roof beneath the cement sheets is not ideal material for bats to utilise due to how smooth it is. Therefore, these features are likely to only be used by individual bats at the most.

3.3.5. The soffits are well sealed against the top of the walls, although upon first glance there appears to be gaps along the soffits. However, when inspected up close these were found to be sealed with just a small ledge left under the soffits. The photograph below shows this, albeit a slightly blurry image.

3.3.6. Just one small section of the soffit on the southwest elevation wall has some gaps behind the soffit. This provides some potential for roosting bats and is shown in the photograph below. This potential is limited to this short section of the soffit.

3.3.7. Gaps were noted at each end of the soffit leading directly into the soffit cavity. Whilst there is some potential that bats could utilise these features, they are not ideal as they are not wide enough for bats to fly directly into and are generally larger than crevice dwellers would typically access into, susceptible to use by birds.

3.3.8. Close inspection of the features around the walls and soffits did not identify any bats or bat field signs such as droppings, feeding remains or staining. The barn is generally a 'clean' building, and bat field signs should have been easy to identify.

3.3.9. The building is generally well sealed and there are a very limited number of potential bat roosting features that were identified during the PRA. There are also factors that contribute the unlikely use of most of these features by bats for roosting as

well as a lack of any field signs found. It was also noted during the subsequent dusk emergence survey that many of these features are well lit at night by security lighting on and around the barn and an adjacent building, which can be seen in some of the photographs provided in the next section in this report. However, the barn is located adjacent to high value foraging and commuting habitats in the form of extensive woodland and tree lines, and therefore, the potential for roosting bats in the building is maintained at **low potential** for summer roosting bats.

3.3.10. Due to the lack of access for bats into any features suitable for hibernation, the building is assessed as **negligible potential** for hibernating bats.

3.3.11. Evidence of nesting birds was identified on the north-eastern elevation wall of the building, with the provision of bird nest boxes attached to the wall and birds utilising the ledge on top of the walls.

3.3.12. Himalayan balsam was also noted growing against the northwest gable end wall of the barn, shown in the photograph below. This has spread from the adjacent woodland, where it is seen growing up the boundary fence of the property, as shown in the second photograph below. Himalayan balsam is an invasive non native plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).

3.4. Dusk Emergence Survey Results 20th June 2025.

3.4.1. As the building was assessed as having low potential for roosting bats, a dusk emergence survey was recommended and subsequently carried out on 20th May 2025.

3.4.2. The survey was led by Sam White, who holds a level two Natural England survey licence in respect of bats (2024-11988-CL18-BAT).

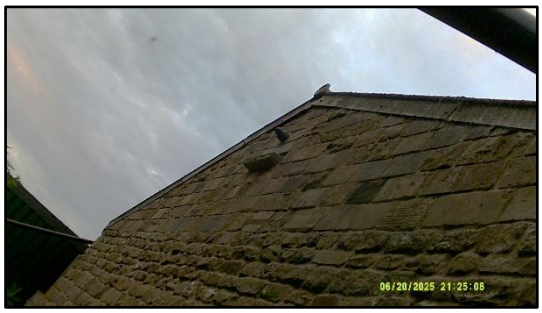
3.4.3. Surveyors were equipped with Batbox Duet detectors and two-way radios. Three Anabat Ranger static recorders were deployed around the site to record bat activity for subsequent computer analysis using Anabat Insight Software.

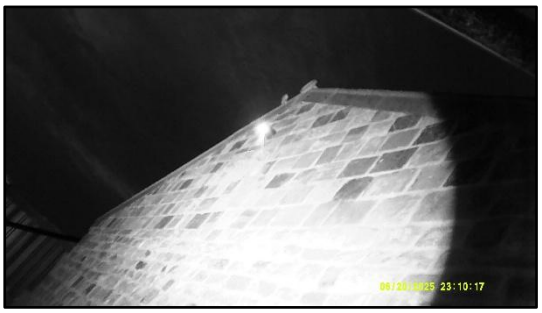
3.4.4. Six infra-red cameras and infra-red torches were also set up around the barn, ensuring that all suitable features were covered.

3.4.5. This survey was carried out by two surveyors. The evening was cloudy but dry, with a temperature of 24°C at the start of the survey. There was a very slight occasional breeze measuring 1 on the Beaufort scale. Sunset was at 21:39 and the survey lasted from 21:24 until 23:09.

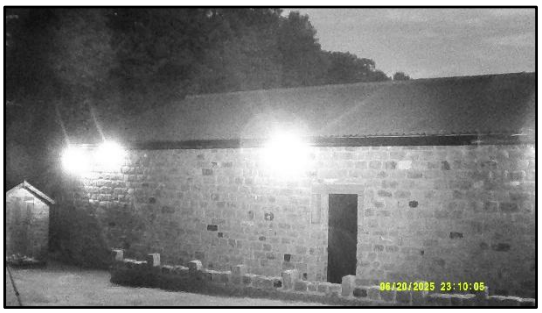
3.4.6. Shown below are photographs which show the view of each camera at both the start and end of the survey.

Camera 1:



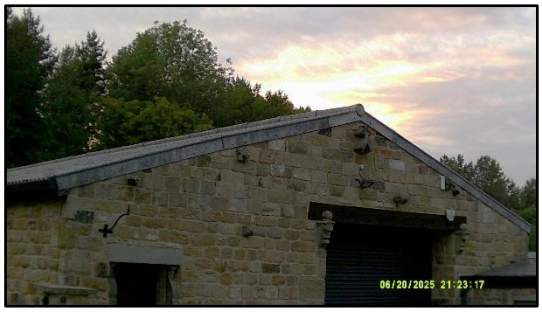


Camera 2:



Camera 3:

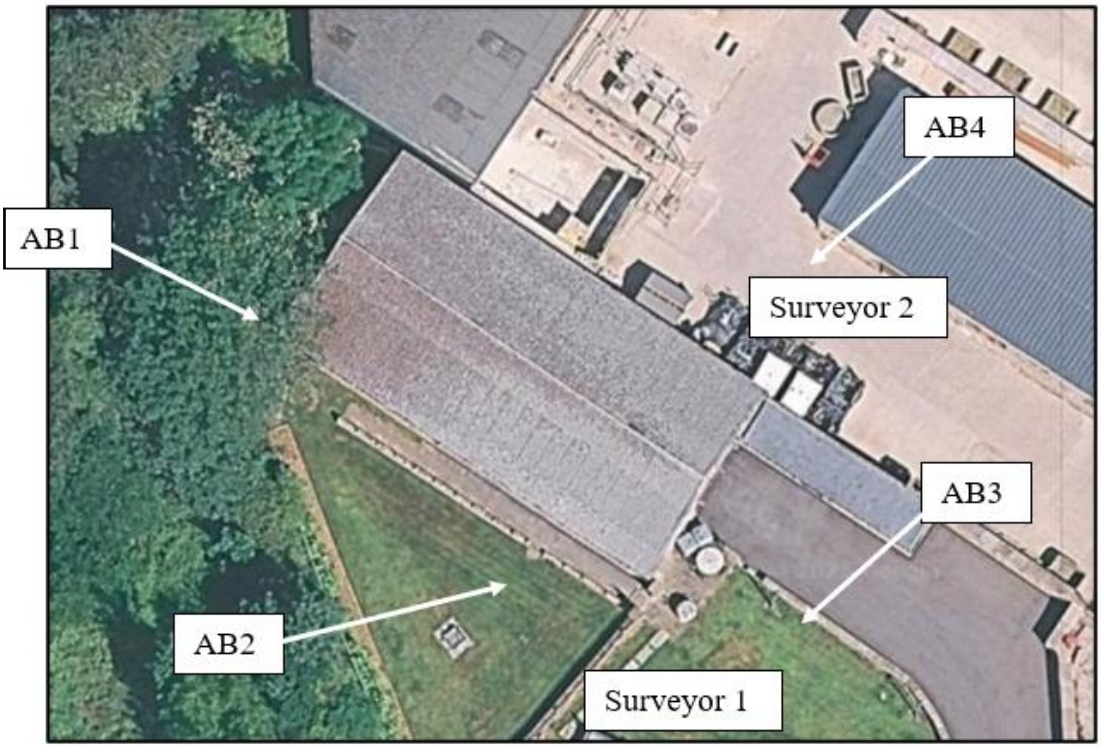
Camera 4:



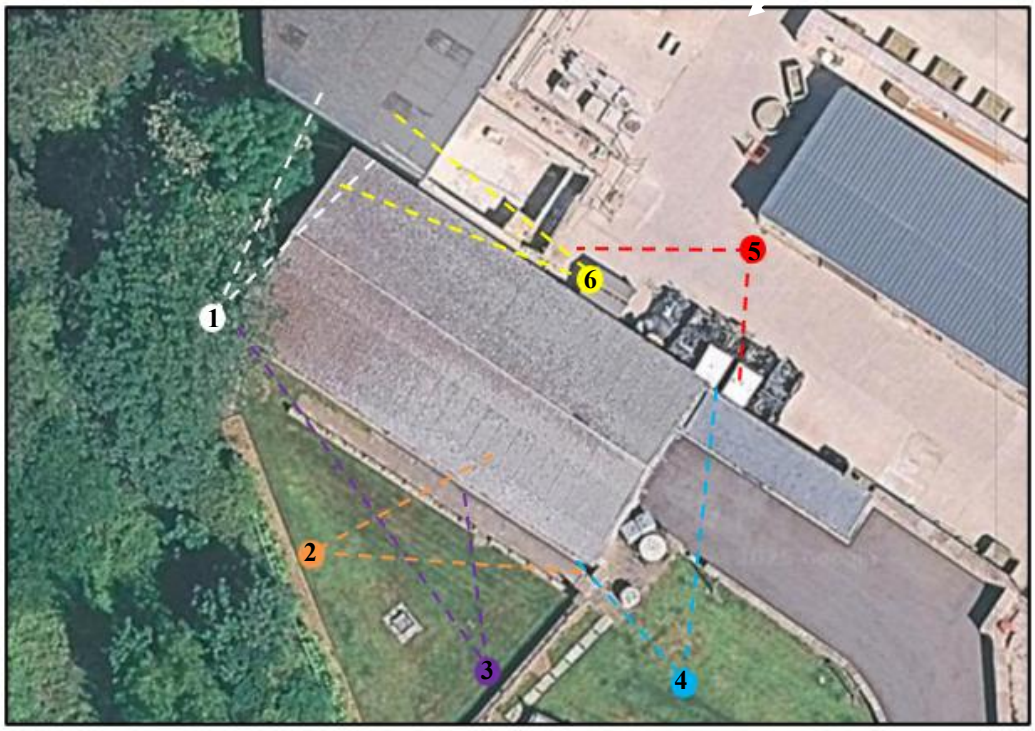
Camera 5:

Camera 6:

3.4.7. The aerial photograph below shows where the Surveyors (S) and Anabats (AB) were located throughout the survey.



3.4.8. The aerial photograph below shows where the six cameras were positioned along with their approximate field of view.



3.4.9. Very little bat activity was observed or recorded during the survey, with Surveyor 2 not hearing or observing any bat activity at all throughout the survey. Surveyor 1

observed some occasional bat foraging along the woodland edge, with the first bat recorded approximately 45 minutes after sunset.

3.4.10. Neither of the surveyors observed any bats emerge from the building, and subsequent analysis of the video camera footage confirmed this to be the case.

3.4.11. The Anabats recorded very little bat activity. The first bat recorded was a noctule at 22:36 recorded on all Anabats except AB1, which was located closest to the woodland edge. AB1 recorded five common pipistrelle bat calls from 22:44 onwards, and AB2 recorded one common pipistrelle bat call at 22:55. These bats were confirmed to be foraging along the woodland edge and showed no interest in the survey area.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The barn was assessed as low potential for roosting bats and no bat roosts or evidence of roosting bats was found during either the PRA or subsequent dusk emergence survey. Therefore, the works are highly unlikely to impact on bats or their roosts during the active months of the year.

4.2. The barn is assessed as negligible potential for hibernating bats and therefore the proposed works will have no impact on any hibernation bat roosts.

4.3. The development of the barn will not have any impact on bat foraging or commuting habitats as it will not result in any loss or fragmentation and there are already relatively high levels of artificial lighting around the barn.

4.4. Although the building is adjacent to Hugset Woods Local Wildlife Site, the proposed development is limited to the conversion of an existing building, and no habitat fragmentation will occur as a result of the development. The site is already separated from the woodland by permanent fencing. Therefore, no accidental damage to the woodland habitats is considered likely during the construction phase. Furthermore, long-standing external lighting is already present on the building, and therefore no increase in artificial lighting is anticipated either permanently or temporarily during the construction phase. However, the implementation of a sensitive lighting scheme will ensure that this is the case.

4.4. The building provided potential for nesting birds with evidence of bird nesting along the top of the north eastern elevation wall, which also had two bird boxes fixed to the wall. Should the works be carried out within the nesting bird season, which extends from March to August each year, then the works could potentially have a negative impact on nesting birds.

4.5. There is also Himalayan balsam growing up against the north west gable end wall of the barn, which appears to have spread from the adjacent woodland. This is an invasive non native plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), and it is an offence to cause or allow the plant to spread into the wild. Himalayan balsam spreads via seeds that are ejected from the seed pods on the plant and can land on the ground anywhere up to 7m from the plant. Even though the plants die back over the winter months, the seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to two

years. Therefore, any works or access within 7m of the plant could potentially cause the plant to spread.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. No bat roosts have been found in the barn and therefore there is no requirement for any further surveys, a licence or mitigation in regard to bats.

5.2. However, individual bats can seek shelter on a temporary basis at any time, and therefore it is recommended that the works are carried out with care and in the unlikely event that a bat is found, it should be kept safe and protected and professional advice should be sought immediately. A toolbox talk document has been attached to the end of this report, which can be used to brief all staff prior to the works commencing.

5.3. It is recommended that any new artificial lighting associated with the conversion is downward directional and directed away from the adjacent woodland or any other boundary vegetation features.

5.4. It is recommended that the works are carried out outside of the nesting bird season. If it is necessary to undertake the works within the nesting bird season, it is recommended that the works are immediately preceded by a nesting bird survey and any active nests that are found should be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

5.5. It is recommended that a 7m buffer is demarcated around the Himalayan balsam plants. A toolbox talk document has been attached to the end of this report to aid in the identification of the plant and provide additional information. This should be briefed to all staff working on site prior to works commencing. If there is a requirement to access or undertake any works within the buffer zone at any time of year, a method of working should be in place to ensure that the works do not cause the plant to spread. This should include, but should not be exclusive to, the following:

- The plants growing up immediately against the barn wall should be pulled during the early summer months, or any time before they start to seed at the end of the summer.
- A wash station will need to be set up upon exit of the buffer zone to wash all footwear, machinery or equipment that comes into contact with the ground. All washed arisings should be caught in a membrane, which will then need to be disposed of as controlled waste.
- Any soil that are excavated from that zone, should be left in situ or should be disposed of as controlled waste.

5.6. For the purpose of a planning application, this report is valid for up to 18 months maximum.

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Revision 1 prepared by:	
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Checked by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 2nd July 2025

6. REFERENCES.

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Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which 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”.

Appendix III. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES INFORMATION.

Ecology

The Government has acknowledged the problems that can be caused by non-native invasive species. In 2008 the Government launched "The Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain". The strategy provides a framework for a more co-ordinated approach to invasive species management. It seeks to create a stronger sense of shared responsibility across government, key organisations, land managers and the public.

The Non-Native Species Secretariat has been established to oversee the implementation of the strategy. Details of the secretariat including risk assessments and action plans for some species are available at www.nonnativespecies.org.

In general, there are four basic methods of controlling weeds; mechanical, chemical, natural and environmental.

- ***Mechanical control*** *includes cultivation, hoeing, pulling, cutting, raking, dredging or other methods to uproot or cut weeds.*
  Where this method is used all plant material must be considered "controlled waste" and must be disposed of properly.
- ***Chemical control*** *uses approved herbicides.*
- ***Natural control*** *uses pests and diseases of the target weed to weaken it and prevent it from becoming a nuisance.*
- ***Environmental control*** *works by altering the environment to make it less suitable for weed growth, for example by increasing or decreasing water velocity.*

Surveys

A site will be searched for invasive plant species growing on site, from mature plants to new shoots. A site will also be searched for dead stems indicating that plants that may have seasonally died back are present.

Legislation

Invasive species listed under Schedule 9 are prohibited from release into the wild. Schedule 9, Section 14(2) prohibits 'planting' or 'causing to grow' in the wild of any plant listed in Part 2 of Schedule 9.

The following is a list of all the species of plant listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Common Name	**Scientific Name**	**England & Wales**	**Scotland**
Alexanders, Perfoliate	*Smyrnium perfoliatum*	✓	
Algae, Red	*Grateloupia luxurians*	✓	
Archangel, Variegated Yellow	*Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. Argentatum*	✓	
Azalea, Yellow	*Rhododendron luteum*	✓	
Balsam, Himalayan	*Impatiens glandulifera*	✓	
Carolina Water-shield	*Cabomba caroliniana*	✓	✓
Cotoneaster	*Cotoneaster horizontalis*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Entire Leaved	*Cotoneaster integrifolius*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Himalayan	*Cotoneaster simonsii*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Hollyberry	*Cotoneaster bullatus*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Small Leaved	*Cotoneaster microphyllus*	✓	
Creeper, False Virginia	*Parthenocissus inserta*	✓	
Creeper, Virginia	*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*	✓	
Dewplant, Purple	*Disphyma crassifolium*	✓	
False-acacia	*Robinia pseudoacacia*		✓
Fern, Water	*Azolla filiculoides*	✓	✓
Fig, Hottentot	*Carpobrotus edulis*	✓	✓
Garlic, Few-flowered	*Allium paradoxum*	✓	✓
Garlic, Three-Cornered	*Allium triquetrum*	✓	
Hogweed, Giant	*Heracleum mantegazzianum*	✓	✓
Hyacinth, water	*Eichhornia crassipes*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis angustifolia*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis integrifolia*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis laevis*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis pyrifera*	✓	✓
Kelp, Japanese	*Laminaria japonica*	✓	✓
Knotweed, Giant	*Reynoutria sachalinensis*	✓	

Knotweed, Hybrid	*Reynoutria japonica x Reynoutria sachalinensis*	✓	
Knotweed, Japanese	*Reynoutria japonica*	✓	
Knotweed, Japanese	*Polygonum cuspidatum*		✓
Lettuce, water	*Pistia stratiotes*	✓	✓
Montbretia	*Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora*	✓	
Parrot's-feather	*Myriophyllum aquaticum*	✓	
Pennywort, Floating	*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*	✓	
Pigmyweed, New Zealand	*Crassula helmsii*	✓	✓
Potato, Duck	*Sagittaria latifolia*	✓	
Primrose-willow, Floating	*Ludwigia peploides*	✓	
Primrose, Water	*Ludwigia grandiflora*	✓	
Rhododendron	*Rhododendron ponticum*	✓	
Rhubarb, Giant	*Gunnera tinctoria*	✓	
Rose, Japanese	*Rosa rugosa*	✓	
Salvinia, Giant	*Salvinia molesta*	✓	✓
Seafingers, Green	*Codium fragile*	✓	
Seafingers, Green	*Codium fragile tomentosoides*		✓
Seaweed, Californian Red	*Pikea californica*	✓	✓
Seaweed, Hooked Asparagus	*Asparagopsis armata*	✓	✓
Seaweed, Japanese	*Sargassum muticum*	✓	✓
Seaweeds, Laver (except native species)	*Porphyra sp. except -* *P. amethystea* *P. leucosticta* *P. linearis* *P. miniata* *P. purpurea* *P. umbilicalis*	✓	✓
Shallon	*Gaultheria shallon*		✓
Wakame	*Undaria pinnatifida*	✓	✓
Waterweed, Curly	*Lagarosiphon major*	✓	✓
Waterweeds	*All species of the genus Elodea*	✓	

Toolbox Talk: Bats

18 species of bats are regularly recorded in the UK, 17 of which are known to breed here. Bats utilise trees and woodland as well as buildings and structures in varying ways. Most bat species have declined substantially in recent years mainly due to habitat loss and fragmentation.

Habitat:

Bats require safe and reliable roosting sites, particularly during breeding and hibernation. They are heavily dependent on buildings and trees for their roost sites and therefore extremely susceptible to disturbance from human activities and developments.

Bats have been known to abandon roost sites after instances of disturbance and can result in 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. Bats hibernate during the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and occasionally the roofs of buildings.

The Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines include the following in relation to roost potential:

- Low potential – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year.
- Moderate potential – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support maternity or hibernation roost types.
- High potential – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use my large numbers of bats on a more regular basis and longer periods of time. These structures have the potential to support maternity or hibernation roosts.

General precautions to avoid impact on bats where works are deemed to be low risk:

(Always refer to site-specific reports for additional recommendations)

- If bats or roosts may be impacted during works, it is highly likely that surveys and / or licencing will be required.
- Lighting levels should be kept to a minimum, with all works downlit and only ongoing works illuminated. Flood lighting should be avoided at all costs.
- Noise levels should be kept to a minimum with vehicles, tools and machinery turned off when not in use.

Legislation:

Bats and their roosts are fully protected at all times (whether the bats are currently present or not), under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (updated by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) and the Habitats Regulations 2017. This means that it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture or disturb bats. It is also an offence 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.

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Identification:

Some bat species, such as the Brown Long Eared, are easily identified by physical characteristics. However, some species can be extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Bats are more easily identified by field signs such as droppings or feeding remains. The species can often be determined by doing eDNA testing of droppings. As shown below, feeding remains are often made up of insect wings.

If bats or bat field signs are identified at any point, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk or 07947828137.

Toolbox Talk: Himalayan Balsam

Himalayan Balsam was introduced to the UK as an ornamental plant in the 1800s. The plant is now well established and grows in a variety of habitats, especially along watercourses and any other areas with damp soils. It grows in dense stands which can cause watercourses to flood and leaves the banks exposed to erosion in winter. It also outcompetes other native plants, reducing biodiversity.

General precautions to avoid spread of Himalayan balsam where works are deemed to be low risk:

(Always refer to site-specific reports for additional recommendations)

- Where possible, works should be carried out when seed pods are not present. They are usually present throughout Summer and Autumn.
- The plant should be marked up and all on site personnel briefed on how to identify it.
- A wash station should be set up in situ to facilitate cleaning and drying of PPE and equipment that encroaches within 7m of the plant.
- The washed arisings along with any soils or materials from the site should be disposed of as controlled waste.

Spreading:

Himalayan balsam spreads solely by seeds which are small and easily carried by wind or water. The seed pods are approximately 2.5cm long and explode upon touch when ripe and seeds can be thrown up to 7m from the plant.

There can also be seeds present on the ground and in the soils in summer and autumn when pods have exploded. These can be transported on PPE and equipment. The best way to control the plant from spreading is to cut it back or pull it before seed pods appear. Shallow roots make the plant relatively easy to pull from the ground.

Legislation:

Himalayan balsam is listed under Section 14 and Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as an invasive, non-native species. This means that it is an offence to allow or cause it to spread further into the wild.

This includes spreading via carrying seeds on equipment and clothing as well as spreading via transporting polluted ground material to another area.

Identification:

Himalayan balsam can grow up to 2m and has a hollow, brittle stem. Early on in the year, the plant stem varies from green to red and in the summer, it turns pink or red.

The leaves are up to 5cm long with finely serrated edges and may have a pink mid-rib. The flowers are trumpet shaped and range from dark to light pink. Seed pods are green, with lighter vertical stripes and have reddish pink stems.

If Himalayan balsam is identified, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk or 07947828137.