

**Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.**



FIELD HOUSE FARM BARN.

OS REF: SE 20935 01258

BAT SURVEY REPORT.

Ref No: 230606

Date: 7th June 2023.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to convert a barn at Field House Farm, Thurlstone.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd were therefore commissioned to carry out an initial Preliminary Roost Assessment to establish whether there is a bat roost present in the building.

1.3. The initial Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out on 6th June 2023. This report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendices I and II of this report provide background information with respect to protected species and the legal protection afforded to them.

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. The subsequent dusk emergence survey was also conducted in accordance with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition)*. It was conducted by a sufficient number of surveyors to cover all areas of roosting potential, in suitable weather conditions from fifteen minutes before sunset to at least an hour and half after.

2.5. All surveyors were equipped with Batbox Duet bat detectors, or similar. The use of static recording devices such as Anabat SD2's and video cameras with infrared lights were also utilised where appropriate.

2.6. The survey was carried out by a team led by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years' experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process

of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England, CCW and NRW survey licences for, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. An internet search of publicly available records was carried out for records of bats and bat roosts within 2km of the survey area.

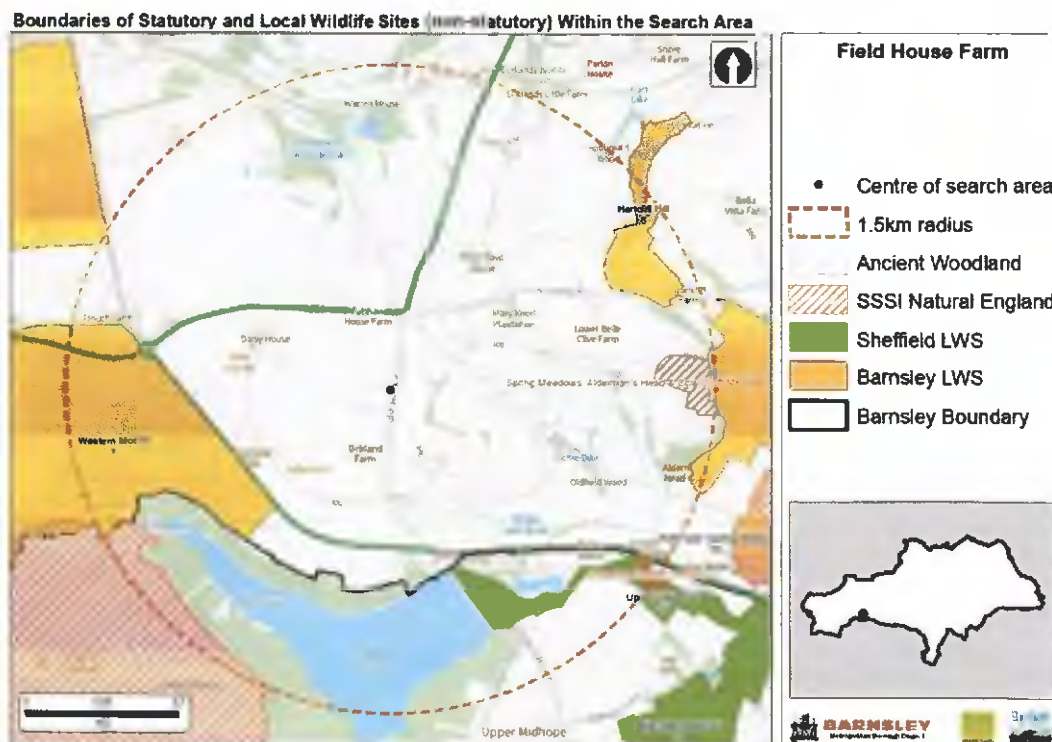
3.1.2. One record of a Natterer's bat was found, recorded in 1991 although this record is located 2km to the northwest of the survey area.

3.1.3. There are no records of designated sites within or adjacent to the survey area.

3.1.4. A data search request has been submitted to Barnsley Biodiversity Records Centre for existing records of bat roosts and locally designated sites in the area around the site.

3.1.4.1. There are no bat roost records in the area around the surveyed site.

3.1.4.2. The map below shows the designated sites within 2km of the survey area. None are close enough to be affected by this small development.



3.1.5. A data search request has been submitted to South Yorkshire Bat Group for existing records of bat roosts in the area around the site. There are no records close to the survey area.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. Field House Farm is located in an isolated and elevated location above Thurlstone, as shown by the yellow arrow below. The site is surrounded by open grazing land.



3.2.2. The survey area is a barn located on a bare site where the other buildings have already been demolished, as shown below.



3.3. Preliminary Roost Assessment.

3.3.1. The barn is concrete block built structure with a pitched roof covered with corrugated metal sheets. The following photographs show the barn.



3.3.2. The walls are single skin and contain no cracks or crevices suitable for roosting bats. The windows are broken and the doors are missing making it a completely open structure.

3.3.3. Inside there is a mezzanine floor at either end and the ground floor is covered with straw bedding as the building is currently used as a shelter for sheep. There are straw bales stored on the mezzanine floors.



3.3.4. No bat field signs were identified inside or outside of the structure.

3.3.5. The area around the barn is very open and exposed and is devoid of trees and hedgerows that may provide foraging areas for bats. The surrounding habitat is assessed to be low value foraging habitat.

3.3.6. The building was assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines.

3.3.7. A roosting pigeon was found inside the building but there was no evidence of nesting.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The house and buildings that used to surround the Field House Barn have all been demolished and the site left bare. The area around the barn is therefore assessed to be low value foraging habitat.

4.2. The barn is built with solid concrete block walls and has a pitched roof covered with corrugated metal sheets. The structure is assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines.

4.3. One pigeon was disturbed, roosting inside the barn but there was no evidence of nesting.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. The Preliminary Roost Assessment assessed the barn to have negligible bat roost potential and therefore no further surveys are recommended and there is no requirement for a Natural England licence in connection with the proposed works to the building.

5.2. One pigeon was disturbed in the building during the survey although there were no signs of nesting. It is recommended that works to the barn are undertaken outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September. Alternatively, it is recommended that a nesting bird survey is undertaken immediately prior to starting works. Any active nests found must be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

5.3. It is recommended that an integrated bat brick is installed in the outer wall of any replacement building constructed on the site in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

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Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou. BSc, MCIEEM.	Date: 8 th June 2023.

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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”.