



**MONK BRETTON
PHASE I HABITAT AND PROTECTED
FAUNA SURVEY.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page Number
1. INTRODUCTION.	3
2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.	4
3. SURVEY RESULTS.	5
4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.	9
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.	10
Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.	11
Appendix II. DATA SEARCH RESULTS.	12
Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA.	13
Appendix IV. TARGET NOTES.	14

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Acanthus WSM Architects have requested information detailing the condition of biodiversity a site in Monk Bretton, which is to be included within a planning application.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Phase I Habitat and Protected Fauna Survey of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. The site survey was carried out on 14th June 2011 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendices I to V of this report provide additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader to understand the contents of this report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat surveys.

2.3. The survey area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs:-

- * Badger setts.
- * Badger latrines or dung pits.
- * Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging.
- * Badger paths.
- * Badger prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Badger hairs caught on fencing.

2.4. All watercourses within the survey area were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) activity by looking for the following signs:-

- * Water vole burrows.
- * Water vole faeces and latrines.
- * Water vole feeding stations.
- * Water vole runs.
- * Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Water vole lawns.
- * Predator field signs.

2.5. All watercourses within the survey area were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs:-

- * Otter prints in soft mud.
- * Otter spraints.
- * Otter Holts.

2.6. All mature trees and derelict buildings were checked for potential bat roosting sites by looking for the following signs:-

- * Holes, cracks or crevices.
- * Bat Droppings.

2.7. The land adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting and foraging potential including connective routes and flight lines.

2.8. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible the ponds were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.9. All watercourses and waterbodies within the survey area were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish where safe to enter the water.

2.10. The survey area was thoroughly searched for the presence of reptiles or suitable reptile habitats.

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

See appendix II.

3.2. Site Location

The survey area covered the land adjacent to Burton Road, Monk Brenton, as shown on the aerial photograph below:



3.3. Phase 1 Habitat Survey Results

3.3.1. *Description of Habitats.*

3.3.1.1. Appendix III of this report contains a map of the site, annotated to show the habitats present. The habitats recorded on-site were:

- Scattered Deciduous Trees – A3.1

- Improved Grassland – B4
- Tall Ruderal – C3.1

3.3.1.2. Scattered deciduous trees: Scattered trees line the northern, eastern and southern site boundaries and are also present within the field.

3.3.1.3. Improved grassland: The majority of the site has been colonised by improved grassland species

3.3.1.4. Tall ruderal: Tall ruderals have started to colonise the field margins to the north, south-east and south-west.

3.3.2. Site Description

3.3.2.1. The survey area covered a grassland grazing field located in the residential area of Monk Bretton, Barnsley. There is a small range of species present and the habitats are indicative of the high nutrient soil created by the presence of horse manure.

3.3.2.2. Scattered trees are present on the north-western, eastern and southern boundaries of the site. There is also a small area of scattered trees present towards the south-eastern corner of the site. Tree species include Sycamore, Elder, Hawthorn, Wych Elm, Sweet Chestnut, Horse Chestnut and Alder. The majority of these trees are mature, some are semi-mature.

3.3.2.3. The majority of the site has been colonised by improved grassland. The sward height of which has been kept very short by the two horses grazing in this field. The grasses present have the lush green colouring which is indicative of improved grassland. A small number of wild flowers were present within the grassland. At target note 1 was an area of Common Mouse-ear and at target note 2, along the north-western boundary fence, was a line of Green Alkanet.

3.3.2.3. The field margins of this site have not been grazed by the horses and the vegetation has been allowed to grow longer than elsewhere. This is most evident in the northern, south-western and south-eastern corners of the site. There are a high proportion of grasses here, but species such as Stinging Nettle, Broad-leaved Dock and Sheep's Sorrel have begun to colonise. If left un-managed these areas are likely to

become dominated by tall ruderal species. The species currently present are indicative of high nutrient levels in the soil.

3.3.2.4. No Japanese Knotweed or other alien invasive plant species were identified during the survey.

3.3.3. Protected Species Issues.

3.3.3.1. No badger setts or field signs were identified on the site.

3.3.3.2. No watercourses which would provide water vole, crayfish or otter habitat were identified on or around the site.

3.3.3.3. No water-bodies which would provide great-crested newt habitat were identified on or around the site.

3.3.3.4. No buildings which would provide bat roosting habitat were present at the site.

3.3.3.5. A number of mature trees were present at the site. These may provide bat roosting habitat.

3.3.3.6. A fairly high level of bird activity was recorded during the survey. This was concentrated within the trees along the eastern site boundary, but also within the trees towards the south-east corner of the site. No nests were identified during the survey.

4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The grassland present at the site has low species diversity and no biodiversity action plan species were identified. It has been assessed that loss of this habitat would not have a detrimental effect upon local biodiversity.

4.2. The trees present at the site are a positive biodiversity feature; as several of these are mature, a large quantity of invertebrates will be present, providing food for local birds and bats.

4.3. Some of these mature trees might be utilised as bat roosts.

4.4. A fairly high level of bird activity was recorded during the survey; however no bird's nests were positively identified.

4.5. No other protected species issues were identified at the site.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. It is recommended that all tree clearance, if planned, is carried out outside of the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September. Although no bird's nests were identified during the survey, it is likely that there will be nesting birds on the site during this time of year, and it important that they are not disturbed.

5.2. If tree clearance has to be carried out within this period then it should be immediately preceded by a full nesting bird survey in order to assess the presence or absence nests.

5.3. A bat survey of the mature trees should be conducted if they are to be removed.

5.4. In line with Planning Policy Statement 9, it is recommended that features which are beneficial for local wildlife are incorporated into the development. Examples of which are:

5.4.1. Retention of trees, which would benefit bird, bat and invertebrate populations.

5.4.2. Retention of site boundaries, which would benefit reptile, bird and invertebrate populations.

5.4.3. Development of wild flower and long grassland areas, which would benefit small mammal and invertebrate populations.

5.4.4. Development of scrubby vegetation between scattered trees to help improve wildlife corridor.

Michael Sims.

14.06.2011.

Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

It is necessary to understand a little about the legal protection offered to nesting birds in order to evaluate the findings of this report.

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

If any person intentionally:-

- (a) kills, injures or takes any wild bird;
 - (b) takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
 - (c) 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:-

- (a) 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
- (b) disturbs dependant 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”.

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.

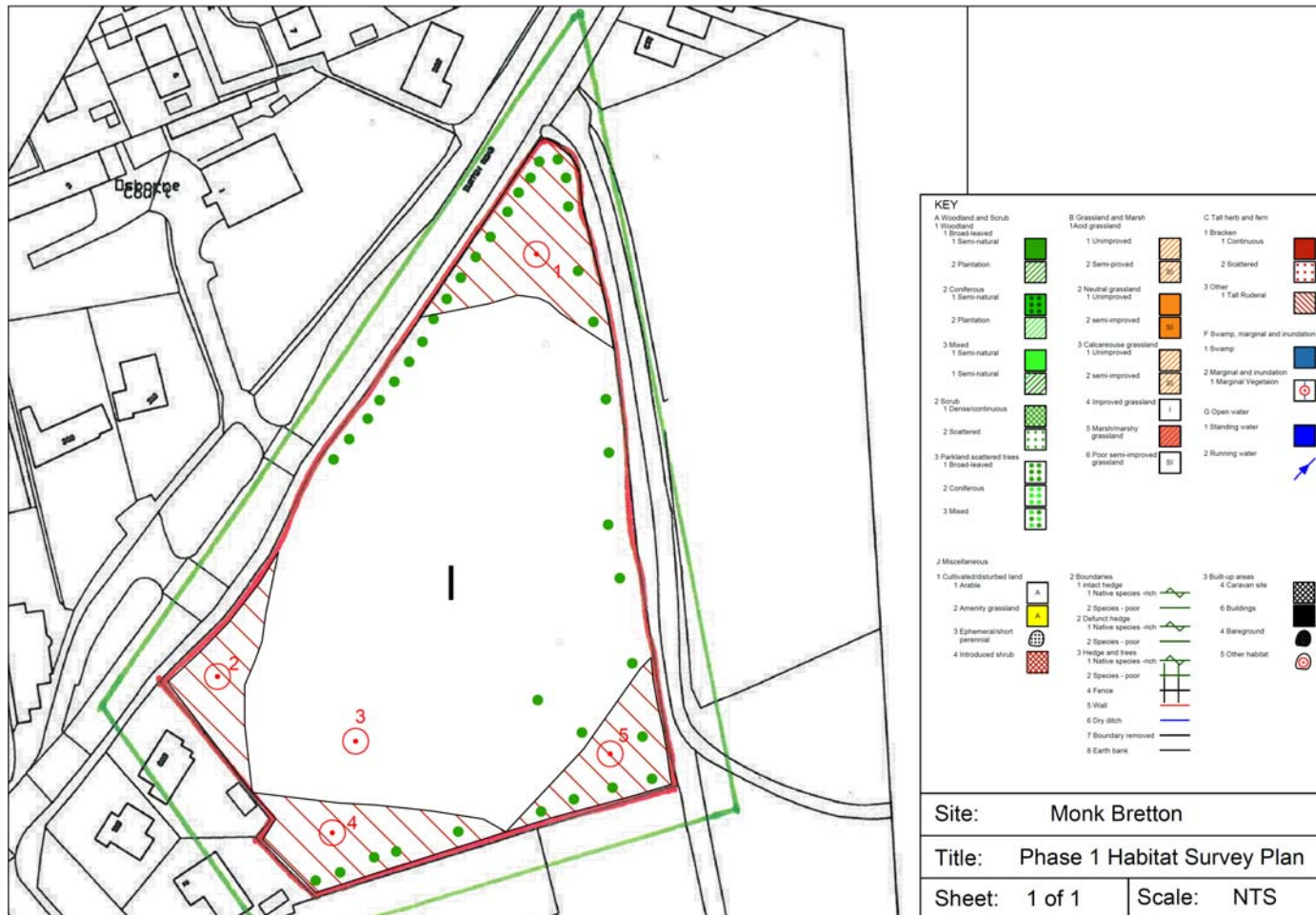
The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Appendix II. DATA SEARCH RESULTS.

The NBN gateway website was searched for species records relating to the survey area. The following results have been produced. There are no specific locations for these results.

Species list for: SE30		
Species Name	Common Name	Species Group
<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	European Water Vole	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Lutra lutra</i>	European Otter	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Meles meles</i>	Eurasian Badger	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Daubenton's Bat	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	Whiskered Bat	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Natterer's Bat	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Lesser Noctule	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Noctule Bat	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato</i>	Pipistrelle	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Soprano Pipistrelle	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Brown Long-eared Bat	Terrestrial mammal
<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Great Crested Newt	Amphibian

Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA.



Appendix IV. TARGET NOTES.

1. Area of un-grazed vegetation.
2. Area of un-grazed vegetation.
3. Area of un-grazed vegetation.
4. Area of un-grazed vegetation.
5. Area of un-grazed vegetation.