Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

WOOD NOOK FARM, STAINBOROUGH.

OS REF: SE 3174 0207.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No: **220207.**

Date: **7th February 2022.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans for the conversion of a barn into living accommodation at Wood Nook Farm in Stainborough.

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 3rd February 2022 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendix I of this report provides additional information on bats and 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. Unless otherwise stated, all lofts were accessed and inspected using a high-powered torch and where necessary an endoscope.

2.3. 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.

2.4. All window cills, 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.

2.5. 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 buildings suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.6. This survey was carried out by Jenny Whitcher Roebuck MCIEEM. Since 2001 Jenny has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out Ecology Surveys and Phase 1 Habitat surveys. Jenny holds Natural England Survey Licences in respect of bats, great crested newts, crayfish and barn owls, NRW and SNH Survey Licences in respect of bats and great crested newts. She has also successfully completed a number of courses run by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and the Field Studies Council (FSC) in the relative protected species, plant species and in carrying out Phase 1 Habitat Surveys. As a full member of CIEEM she is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A desktop data search was requested from South Yorkshire Bat Group for records of bats and bat roosts within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. There are no records specific to the survey area. The nearest records lie 300m to the southwest and 300m to the southeast and are of bats in flight. The nearest roost record lies 650m to the north and was recorded in 2007.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The survey area is the eastern end barn at Wood Nook Farm in Stainborough. The surveyed building is shown on the aerial map below.

3.2.2. The site is surrounded by farmland and pockets of woodland with occasional well-spaced residential properties and farms and the village of Hood Green to the north.

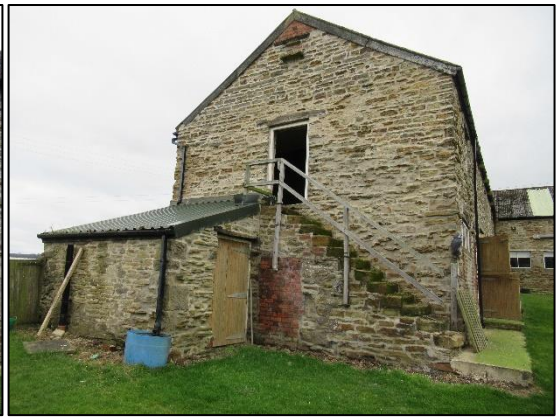
3.3. Daytime Survey Results.

3.3.1. The survey area is a barn joined to the end of an existing building. The surveyed building is shown below.

3.3.2. The barn is two storey and constructed with rubble filled brick walls with a few small areas of solid brick wall where doorways and gaps have been bricked up in the past. The building is joined to the adjacent building at the western end.

3.3.3. The roof is pitched and covered with corrugated cement sheets and ridge. There are timber fascias around the building. All doors and windows are in place and well-sealed.

3.3.4. There is a small single storey lean to extension on the eastern end of the building with stone walls and a sloping roof covered with corrugated metal sheets.



3.3.5. Externally the roof is generally in good condition with all roof sheets in place and the ridge well fitted. However, there is some sign of water damage in the first floor room.

3.3.6. Internally there are two rooms. The first floor room is partly open to the underside of the roof, which has no lining under the corrugated roof sheets with timber beams. The other half of the room has a small loft space, which is boarded with no access into this area.


3.3.7. Externally there are numerous holes in the stonework on the northern side of the building. On the southern side of the building there is one hole in the wall, which is approximately 150mm square and leads through the wall into the ground floor room. These holes provide opportunities for roosting bats.


3.3.8. The fascias are in place but due to the uneven nature of the stonework there are some gaps below the fascia boards which could provide potential for roosting bats.

3.3.9. No bats or bat field signs were identified around the interior or the exterior of the building. However, due to the holes in the stone walls and the gaps below the fascias, the building has been assessed as providing **low** potential for roosting bats.

3.3.10. In the ground floor room, seven old swallow nests were identified on beams. In the first floor room a large nest was seen on a beam.

3.3.11. Externally sparrows were seen in two of the holes in the northern wall and signs of a nest were identified in another of the holes.

3.3.12. However, as all doors and windows are in place there is no longer any access into the two rooms for swallows or other birds to enter to nest.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The building is generally in good condition and well-sealed. However, the holes in the stone walls and the gaps below the fascias of the building provide opportunities for roosting bats and the building has been assessed as providing low potential for roosting bats.

4.2. Therefore, works to the building will have a high impact on roosting bats if they are using the building to roost.

4.3. There is no longer access inside the building for birds to enter to nest so there are no longer opportunities for swallows to nest. Therefore, there will be no impact on swallows.

4.4. However, sparrows were seen in two of the external holes in the northern wall and a nest was seen in another of the holes showing that sparrow use these holes to nest. Therefore, works to the building will have a high impact on nesting birds if carried out during the nesting season, between March and September, but nesting can start earlier in the year if the weather is mild.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. As the building is assessed as providing **low** potential for roosing bats a further bat dusk emergence survey is required before any works are carried out to the building to determine whether bats are using any of the features in the building to roost.

5.2. If bats are found to be using the building to roost, further bat survey will be required. A mitigation strategy must then be prepared and submitted with the planning application. Once planning permission is granted, a Natural England EPS licence must be applied for and granted before works can be carried out.

5.3. As birds are using the holes in the northern wall to nest it is recommended that no works are carried out that could disturb nesting birds during nesting season, which extends from March to September.

5.4. It is recommended that sparrow terrace nest boxes are put up on the building or an adjacent building to provide additional nesting opportunities for sparrows.

5.5. It is also recommended that mitigation for roosting bats is included, although this will depend on the findings of the bat dusk emergence survey.

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Checked by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 7th February 2022.

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 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.

Toolbox Talk: Nesting Birds

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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 icubates 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.

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