

Published July 2012

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for anyone thinking of altering or extending a building or erecting a new building/structure or doing engineering works that may affect plants, animals and water which make up our biodiversity.

Biodiversity and Your Development

Biodiversity information needs to be included with your planning application in the form of an assessment or survey of the habitat or species. Surveys would include details of the potential impact of the proposal on the species and habitats found and the mitigation of the possible impacts.

Types of Development and what to look out for

Existing Buildings

- Bats
- Swifts
- Barn Owls

New Development Plots

- Habitat Features
- Badgers & other protected species
- Trees for bats and barn owls
- Invasive (plant) Species

Development near to Burns, Rivers and Lochs (i.e. Hydro-electric schemes)

- Otters
- Water Vole
- Great Crested Newts and amphibians
- Fish
- Fresh pearl mussels
- Lichens

What more could you do?

Most new developments provide opportunities for biodiversity such as new planting, roosting or nesting sites and measures to encourage natural regeneration.

Where retention, creation and enhancement of a habitat are required to mitigate the effects of a proposal then we would secure this via a condition or legal agreement. You may be asked to prepare a **management plan** as part of a legal agreement.

Tips

- Always use a **suitably qualified person** to undertake the survey.
- Give yourself **plenty of time** (sometimes species hibernate or plants are not detectable in winter)
- **Be prepared** to accommodate species into your proposals.

If you want information on what habitats are a priority for the National Park then contact the National Park Ecologist or have a look at www.biodiversityplanningtoolkit.com.

About protected species and habitats

For individual species the levels of protection varies but for most species it is illegal to **kill, injure, disturb or take such species** from the wild. The planning authority must determine if protected species would be affected by the development before issuing a decision. If you fail to submit protected species survey information then this may delay your planning application.



Bats

Bats are found in old and derelict buildings and mature and veteran trees. You should survey in May to September for summer roost detection survey (Maternity) **and** in October – April for winter roost detection survey (Hibernation). If bats or a roost is are found you will require a licence from the Scottish Government before carrying out any works.

Further information can be found at:

- [Bats and People, SNH](#)
- [A Review of the success of Bat Boxes in Houses, Bat Conservation Trust, Commissioned by SNH](#)

Barn Owls

Barn Owls are found in derelict buildings and veteran trees. Barn Owls are very faithful to their roost/nest sites and if forced to abandon their homes due to disturbance or site loss (even temporarily) they are less likely to survive. The aim should always be to keep the birds on-site during development works. Surveys for nesting owls should be done between March and August. Note: it is illegal to disturb nesting birds so great care must be taken.

Further information can be found at:

- [Barn Owls on site – A guidance for Developers and Planners, The Barn Owl Trust](#)

Swifts

Swifts are now on the 'Amber List' which means they are birds of Conservation Concern. The breeding season is May to August during which they are protected.

Red Squirrels

Red squirrels live in dreys and each may use several dreys. Squirrels have a typical home range of 3 – 7 three to seven hectares. They do not hibernate, but are less active in cold conditions. Surveys should be done at least 4 times over a 2 week period.

Further information can be found at:

- [Red Squirrels, SNH](#)

Badgers

Badgers and badger setts are protected. Surveys should be done in autumn and spring. Further information can be found at:

- [Badgers and Development, SNH](#)

Otters

Otters can be found in burns, rivers and in the sea. Development can affect otters through loss of habitat, destruction of shelters or disturbance. Surveys can be done at any time of the year. Further information can be found at:

- [Otters and Development, SNH](#)

Water voles

The water vole was once our most familiar and abundant riverside mammals but is now under threat. The best time to survey water voles is in the spring to autumn. Further information can be found at:

- [Conserving Scotland's Water Vole, SNH](#)

Great Crested Newts and amphibians

The great crested newt is the biggest and rarest newt found in Scotland. It lives in ponds and the best time to survey is spring to autumn. Further information can be found at:

- [Great Crested Newt Handbook, Froglife](#)

Fish

Fish surveys are important for hydro-electric schemes particularly where Atlantic Salmon is present or downstream. Many of the rivers in the National Park are protected due to the presence of Atlantic Salmon. Surveys can be undertaken at any time of the year usually by electro fishing methods.

Fresh Pearl Mussels

Surveys should be done outwith October to March to avoid periods of low water flow. Further information can be found at:

- [SNH Publication on How to Survey Freshwater Pearl Mussels](#)

About Habitats

Surveys of plants and flowers are best undertaken in the summer months.

More information can be found at:

- [Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Surveying, JNCC](#)