

## Ecological Survey Guidance

March 2023

To discuss your ecological requirements please contact our ecology team on 01869 340342 / [ecology@nicholsonsgb.com](mailto:ecology@nicholsonsgb.com).

Species surveys	What to consider	Survey timings
Habitat Appraisal	What habitat assemblage do you have within your site? Are any of the habitats protected or considered priority habitats?	Can occur at any time of the year. However, best timings are from April to October when floral assemblage is more diverse.
Botanical Survey	If the habitat appraisal occurs outside the optimal botanical season, then additional botanical surveys may be required.	Timings for surveys are between April to October, with the best months being May, June and July.
Great crested newt (GCN)	If you have any ponds or waterbodies within 500m of your site, or suitable terrestrial habitat such as grassland or hedgerows within your site, then additional surveys for GCN may be required.	Presence/absence surveys can occur between mid-March and early June. Multiple survey visits would be required (between four and six) with at least half occurring between mid-April and mid-May.  Alternatively, eDNA surveys can occur between mid-April and mid-June. If GCN DNA is confirmed to be present, then additional GCN surveys may be required.
Bats	Bats can roost in many different habitats and features, including trees and buildings. Trees, buildings and general habitats can be scoped out to determine their suitability for roosting, foraging and commuting bats.	Scoping for bat potential can occur at any time of the year and would determine the need and timings of any additional bat surveys.  Activity surveys require multiple site visits and can occur from April to October. Summer roost surveys can occur from May to mid-September (optimal time from May to August). Hibernation surveys can occur from December to March (optimal time between January and February).
Birds	Birds can use a variety of habitats for nesting, foraging or commuting opportunities, including woodland, farmland, hedgerows and sometimes buildings. If your site has similar habitats then additional breeding, wintering or nesting bird surveys may be required.	Bird nesting can occur from March to August. Any sensitive works to nesting habitat should occur outside of this timeframe.  Breeding birds surveys can occur between April and July. Wintering bird surveys can occur between November and February. Multiple site visits would be required for both of these surveys.
Reptiles	Additional surveys for reptiles may be required if suitable sheltering or foraging habitat is found within the site. Suitable habitat for reptiles can include grassland, moorland, waterbodies, woodland, brownfield and hedgerows.	Surveys can occur between April, May and September within multiple site visits required.
Badgers	Badgers are a highly mobile species. They typically live in groups and can range several kilometres from their main setts. If your site has any evidence of badger activity or setts then additional surveys may be required.	Scoping and surveying for badgers can occur at any time of the year. Surveying is typically conducted over a period of 21 days.
Invertebrates	Woodland, grassland meadows, orchards, mosaic habitats and brownfield sites can be highly diverse for terrestrial insect/invertebrate assemblages. Invertebrate surveys may be required if there will be any risk to a high diversity habitat.	Invertebrate surveys require multiple site visits between May and July with potential for surveys to occur in September and October as well.
Otter	If your site has or is in close proximity to running water or a lake, then additional surveying for otter may be required.	Scoping and surveying for otters can occur at any time of the year. A minimum of two surveys would be required.
Water vole	If your site has or is in close proximity to running water, then additional surveying for water voles may be required.	Surveying for water voles can occur between April and October with a minimum of two site visits required.
Dormouse	Dormouse require very specific woodland and hedgerow species variety. Additional surveys for dormouse may be required if conditions for dormouse are deemed to be suitable.	Surveying for dormouse can occur between April and November with multiple site visits required.
White-clawed Crayfish	This species requires running water habitat of good quality. If your site has running water then scoping for this species should be considered.	Scoping for this species can occur at any time of the year. Targeted surveying can occur between mid-July and October.