

Protected Species Survey Seasons

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bats – Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bats – dusk emergence / dawn re-entry	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bats – activity survey	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bats – ground level tree assessment	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Badgers – setts and field signs	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Badgers – bait marking	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Birds – breeding	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Birds – migrating	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Birds – overwintering	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dormouse – nest tube survey	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dormouse – hazel nut search	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Great crested newt – pond survey	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Great crested newt – eDNA survey	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Otter	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Reptiles	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Water vole	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

! For number of site visits and how these need to be scheduled, please see next page

Optimal Sub-optimal Unreliable

Useful to know...

Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA) can be done at any time of year. Although spring and summer is an optimal time to identify botanical species, from a project planning perspective, autumn and winter is a good time as it means any further surveys required can be scheduled for the start of the main survey season in spring. Just one site visit is normally required.

Preliminary Roost Assessments (PRA) for bats also require one site visit and can be carried out at any time of year. However, they should be scheduled to allow sufficient time for any phase 2 bat surveys if required, which are seasonally constrained. A PRA will assess the roosting suitability of a structure or tree as negligible, low, medium or high.

Bat presence/absence surveys (also known as dusk emergence / dawn re-entry surveys) can be carried out from May to Sept. For low-suitability buildings, just one site visit is normally required (during May-Aug). For medium-suitability buildings or trees, 2 visits are needed (of which at least one is during May-Aug) and for high suitability, 3 visits are required (at least 2 of which are during May-Aug). Winter hibernation surveys can be carried out Dec-Feb, sometimes earlier/later depending on the weather.

Bat activity surveys look at foraging and commuting behaviour, normally for larger sites and require 3-7+ visits, usually monthly, during Apr-Oct.

Badger surveys (setts and field signs) can be carried out all year round, although spring and autumn are preferable. Natural England recommends monitoring sett entrances for a period at least 4 weeks. **Bait marking** establishes the size and boundaries of a clan's territory and can be carried out year-round, although again spring and autumn are preferable.

Bird surveys vary depending on the site context, but usually consist of a **breeding bird survey** to inform a planning application (3-4+ visits), or a site check for **active nests** prior to construction (1-2+ visits). These surveys are carried out between March and August. **Overwintering bird surveys** are sometimes needed, especially for sites close to the coast, and usually required 3 to 4 visits between October and March.

For **nest tube surveys** for **dormice**, the number of survey visits required can vary depending on time of year and number of nest tubes deployed, but general advice is to start by late March if possible to ensure adequate levels of detection probability. Where hazel is present, **nut searches** can be used towards the end of the year.

Great crested newt (pond surveys) need to be carried out strictly mid-March to mid-June during the breeding season when GCN can be found in water, as they are difficult to survey on land cost-effectively. Four visits are required to establish presence/absence, with a further 2 visits to establish population size. At least 50% of the site visits need to be within the peak survey season of mid-April to mid-May.

Great crested newt (eDNA survey) – eDNA analysis can be carried out slightly later (mid April until end of June) and requires just one visit to each pond but this method can only show presence/absence. This is useful if the result is negative. However if positive, a population survey is often still required, consisting of 6 visits using conventional pond survey methods during mid-March to mid-June.

Otter surveys can be carried out at any time of year but spring is best. The number of visits is variable depending on site size and context.

Reptile surveys can be carried out during the active season and during suitable weather, normally between April and September. High temperatures make surveying methods less effective, so July and August are sub-optimal. Seven visits are required to establish presence/absence and if a population estimate is required, 20+ site visits are needed.

Water vole surveys can be carried out between mid-April and September and normally require one or two site visits, ideally at either end of the season.

NB Most surveys can be subject to rescheduling if the weather is unsuitable. These notes are for general reference only. For free, tailored advice on your specific project, please [Contact Us](#)



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