

## Wildlife Questions & Answers:

- 1. How do I understand when to provide a wildlife survey when making a planning application?** To assist with finding out the answer to the wildlife survey requirement we have designed a simple wildlife checklist for you to complete. All planning applications must be accompanied by a completed checklist, which has been designed so it can be filled in by applicants or their agents. Hopefully once you have completed your checklist you should have a good idea of the answer to the issue of wildlife and how it may impact on your development. Please note that the checklist relates only to flora and fauna and does not address geology.
- 2. Do I need to submit a completed wildlife checklist?** Yes. All planning applications must be accompanied by a completed wildlife checklist. The checklist asks a series of simple questions about your proposal, with the aim of providing you with an informed answer to the wildlife question on the planning application form. The checklist is designed to be completed by the applicant or their agent, with no need for specialist advice at this stage.
- 3. When do I need to submit a wildlife survey?** If the checklist indicates that your application may have an impact on protected species and/or habitats you will also need to submit a wildlife survey (which should address both protected species and/or habitat issues) unless one of the exemptions apply (see question 4). A wildlife survey will need to be carried out by a suitably qualified specialist and details of the person who prepared it should also be submitted.
- 4. How will I know whether I am exempt from having to submit a wildlife survey?** If the responses provided in your completed checklist indicate that your proposals might have an impact on protected species and/or habitats then you will need to submit a wildlife survey unless one of the following exemptions apply:
  - a) Following consultation by the applicant or their agent at the pre-application stage, the Planning or Wildlife Officer has stated in writing that no wildlife survey is required.
  - b) If it is clear that no protected species are present, despite the guidance in the wildlife checklist indicating that it is possible that they are present, the applicant or their agent should provide evidence with the planning application to demonstrate that such species are absent. This might be in the form of a letter from a suitably qualified and experienced person stating that there are no protected species present. In these situations there is no need to submit a detailed wildlife survey report.
  - c) If it is clear that the development proposal will not affect any protected species present, because of the nature of the scheme proposed, then only limited information needs to be submitted. This information should, however, demonstrate that there will be no significant impact on any protected species present and include a statement acknowledging that the applicant is aware that it is a criminal offence to disturb or harm protected species should they subsequently be found or disturbed.
  - d) In some situations it may be appropriate for an applicant or their agent to provide a wildlife survey for only one or several of the species shown in the wildlife checklist e.g. those that are likely to be affected by a particular activity.

The wildlife survey should make clear which species are included and which are not, giving the reasons why certain species have been excluded.

5. **How do I get a wildlife survey carried out?** For a list of ecologists operating in this area please see the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management website (<http://www.ieem.net/ieemdirectory.asp>). Please note that you should not need to employ an ecologist in order to complete your wildlife checklist, which has been designed to be completed by the applicant or their agent, but that the wildlife survey should be carried out by a professional ecologist.
6. **When should I carry out my wildlife survey?** The survey season for different species varies throughout the year and your wildlife advisor will be able to explain these matters.
7. **What should I include in my wildlife survey?** Based on the answers you provided in your completed checklist you should have a good idea of the species or habitats your proposal could impact upon.

**Wildlife surveys** should be carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced person and should contain details of:

- Extent and location of protected species populations (including supporting habitats and features) that could be affected by the proposals
- Likely impacts to species populations
- How alternative designs and locations have been considered
- How adverse impacts will be avoided wherever possible
- How unavoidable impacts will be mitigated or reduced
- How impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated against will be compensated
- Any proposals for enhancements of wildlife/species populations

*Please note* that if you require a protected species licence for the work you are proposing you will need to know the above information in order to complete your licence application.

8. **When don't I need to submit a wildlife survey?** If the responses provided in your completed wildlife checklist indicate that your proposal does not involve the type of feature or area that will trigger a survey, and you have answered No to all the questions then you only need to sign the form and return it with the other application papers. If your responses indicate that there could be an impact on protected species or habitats you will need to submit a wildlife survey unless one of the exemptions applies (see question 4 for details).
9. **What should I do if I want further advice on wildlife and my planning application?** We hope that the answers to these frequently asked questions will provide you with all the information you need to guide you through the process. If however you would like some further advice on wildlife and your planning application please contact your planning case officer or a member of the wildlife team (Ali Hawkins or Bea Davis) on 01398 323665.

## EXMOOR WILDLIFE CHECKLIST

Exmoor is a host to numerous wildlife species and one of the statutory duties of the National Park Authority is to conserve this natural heritage for future generation to enjoy. This Wildlife Checklist will both speed up the planning process for applicants by allowing any issues to be considered at the outset and assist in wildlife conservation. **Please complete both Sections 1 and 2.**

**SECTION 1: PROTECTED SPECIES.** Please mark '✓' in column B or in column C next to ALL the questions in column A. For each question marked ✓, column D indicates (black dots) the species survey that may be required.

A Proposals for development that will trigger a protected species survey	B Yes '✓'	C No 'X'	D Species protected by law that may potentially be affected – further surveys may be required							
			Bats	Barn owl	Dormouse	Breeding birds	Otter	Badger	Reptiles	
<p>Will the proposed works affect existing buildings/structures with ANY of the following features?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works to roof spaces including extensions, loft conversions or re-roofing;</li> <li>• Works to walls with hanging tiles, wooden cladding or climbing plants;</li> <li>• Underground structures such as cellars, ice-houses, tunnels, mines, kilns, adits;</li> <li>• Bridge structures;</li> <li>• Demolition, renovation or conversion of buildings including barns.</li> </ul>			•			•				
<p>Will the proposals affect any areas of mature deciduous woodland, field hedgerows (over 1m tall and over 0.5m thick) or scrub well-connected to woodland or hedgerows on or adjacent to the site?</p>			•		•	•		•		
<p>Will the proposal affect any of the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old and veteran trees;</li> <li>• Trees with obvious holes, cracks, cavities or heavy vegetation (where such trees are next to watercourses they should be checked for signs of otters);</li> <li>• Trees with a girth greater than 1m at chest height;</li> </ul>			•			•				
<p>Will the proposal affect mature/overgrown gardens over 0.25ha, any rough grassland or derelict land, allotments on or adjacent to the site?</p>						•		•		•

**SECTION 2: PROTECTED AND IMPORTANT HABITATS THAT MAY SUPPORT PROTECTED SPECIES**  
Please put a '✓' in any of the boxes that apply to your proposal.

Will the proposal be located:	Yes, Within	Yes, Adjacent to and within 400m	More than 400m
• Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*			
• Special Area of Conservation (SAC)*			
• County Wildlife Site (CWS)**			

\* Please see the Local Plan Proposals Map on the ENPA web site to identify these areas

Does the application site include any?	Yes within	Yes adjacent to	None within or adjacent to the site
• Hedgerows			
• Woodland/trees			
• Unimproved grassland (i.e. old flower-rich meadows)			
• Heathland			
• Rivers/streams/ponds			

**If 'yes' to any of the above in Section 1 or 2, please include with your planning application a wildlife survey including details of the species and/or habitat concerned, location, significance, any anticipated impact on the species or habitat, and recommendations for mitigation. Please note that this survey must be undertaken by a trained ecologist. For details of where exemptions may apply, please refer to Question 4 of this guidance.**

Have you seen any evidence of protected species using the application site, including bat droppings or roosts, birds' nests or sightings of species such as bats, badgers, dormice, adders, slow worms and nesting birds?

Yes  No  If yes, please attach details.

**Please note that in all circumstances legislation pertaining to protected species still applies and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that protected species are not impacted as a result of this development. If protected species are found during the course of the development work must be halted and advice sought from Natural England.**

*I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the above information is correct and accurate.*

Signed..... (applicant/agent)

Date.....