

Bat Scoping Survey: Ladysmith Farm

Bat Scoping Survey

Ladysmith Farm, Stoupe Brow.

October 2009



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BY MNPA
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Site: Ladysmith Farm, Stoupe Brow, Ravenscar.

Dates: surveyed on 8th Oct 2009

Client:

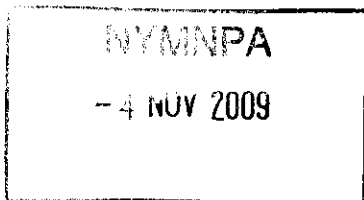
Agent: Alan Campbell, Architect, Cliff Bridge Studio, Cliff Bridge Terrace, Scarborough, YO11 2HA

Local Authority: Scarborough

Reference: n/a

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1. Summary

A thorough visual assessment of the farm buildings found no evidence of bats or bat roosts.

Abundant potential crevice roost habitat is present between sandstone blocks and under tiles. Such areas are not able to be fully assessed: small numbers of non-breeding bats may use such areas without leaving evidence. A precautionary method statement (involving a small amount of additional survey and inspection pre-development) has been put forward within the report which ensures that risk of harm to such bats is negligible / low.

Mitigation should be applied to ensure that appropriate amounts of crevice roost habitat is retained / reinstated post-development.

By following the method statement and mitigation herein, the proposed development will not have a significant impact on bats or their habitat.

No other protected species are present on the site.

Barn swallows are breeding in good numbers within the barns, and other birds such as tits, sparrows and wrens are also breeding in the fabric of the outbuildings. The method statement includes timing provisions to reduce impact on breeding birds. The mitigation proposals also includes measures to ensure that nesting habitat for breeding birds is replaced / retained.

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2. Introduction

MAB Environment & Ecology Ltd were commissioned to survey the outbuildings at Ladysmith Farm for bats, breeding birds, and barn owls, in order to provide a report to accompany an application for planning permission to convert the traditional outbuildings to holiday accommodation and demolish the agricultural tin sheds.

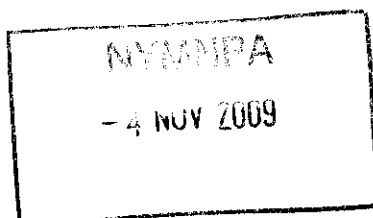
The report's objective is to provide an impact assessment on protected species and breeding birds, to provide any necessary mitigation proposals, as well as to assess the requirement for a Protected Species Licence.

3. Methodology

3.1 The property was surveyed by Giles Manners CEnv MIEEM, of MAB Environment & Ecology Ltd. Mr Manners has been trained by the Bat Conservation Trust in surveying properties for bats, and is licensed by Natural England to work with bats. He is also a zoologist of over 20 years' experience, a full member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and a Chartered Environmentalist.

3.2 The interior and exterior of the buildings were inspected during the day using halogen torches, ladders, and a flexible endoscope (a Pro Vision 636). All normal signs of bat use were looked for, including bats, bat droppings, feeding waste, entry and exit holes, dead bats, and the sounds / smells of bat roosts.

3.3 A bat records search of 2km square around the site was commissioned from the North Yorkshire Bat Group (NYBG) (Mr John Drewett).



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4. Constraints

No bat activity surveying was carried out as part of this survey.

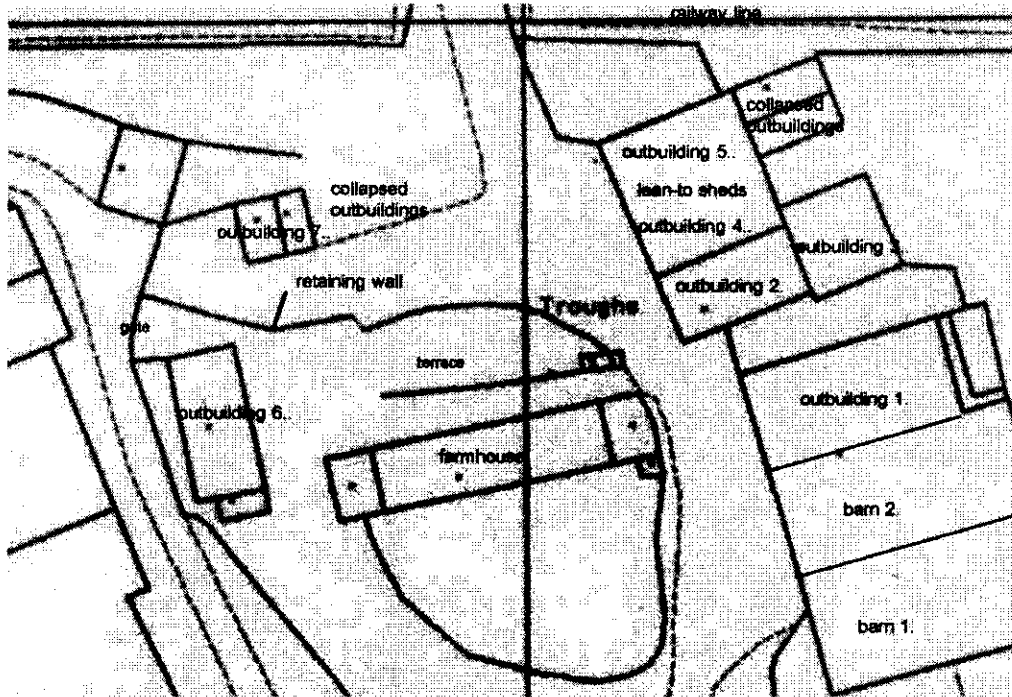
Visual assessment: no major constraints (all areas accessible, first floor and indoor areas generally dry and undisturbed). Some ground floor conditions were damp and organic and not suited to visual assessment.

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5. Site Description



Site Plan

The following buildings are traditional sandstone and pan-tile outbuildings: 2, 3, 6, & 7. These all have wooden latts under the roof tiles. They are currently unused other than for occasional storage; all of them have poor condition mortar and stone ridge tiles with loose mortar bedding.

Buildings 1, 4 5 and barn 2 are timber and tin sheds without roof linings or ceilings, all of which are scheduled for demolition.

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Figure 1 Aerial photograph of surrounding habitat



The farm is situated in the coastal landscape between the heather moorland and the sea. There is scrubby wasteland to the south, and mostly improved grassland to the north. There are scattered trees and the wooded old railway line passes at the bottom of the farm yard.

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6. Pre-existing information

Ladysmith Farm, Ravenscar: NZ 953 024

Species	Site	Grid ref.	Date	Comment
Unknown	Thorpe Hall, Fylingthorpe	NZ9304	28 Aug 2002	Bat in house
Unknown	Hillside Bungalow, Fylingthorpe	NZ936045	02 Mar 2009	Droppings found on rear windowledge below missing pointing
Soprano Pipistrelle	Hillside Bungalow, Fylingthorpe	NZ936045	24 Jun 2009	Flew north to south overhead
Common Pipistrelle	Hillside Bungalow, Fylingthorpe	NZ936045	24 Jun 2009	Large number of feeding bats. No evidence of a roost.
Unknown	Fylinghall School	NZ937043	04 Jul 2003	80 + bats in roost in Jnr Girls House. Baby bat found.
Unknown	Station House, Fylinghall, Fylingdales	NZ9402	08 Sep 1999	
Unknown	Fylingthorpe Church	NZ943049	1992	Roost
Whiskered Bat	Fylingthorpe Hall, Robin Hood's Bay	NZ944049	29 Apr 2004	Bat found in sink.

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7. Results

7.1 Daylight inspection

Building 6: a stable and cart shed on the first floor with granary above. The interior was dry and extremely dusty with lots of cobwebs. Some of the roof has an additional plywood lining. Water is leaking through the roof in parts. The floor of the granary has no bat droppings present; the walls inside the building are also devoid of any bat droppings. There are no signs of bats on the ridge beams or other exposed timbers. There are plenty of swallow nests both on the ground floor and the first floor.

Photo 1 Building 6

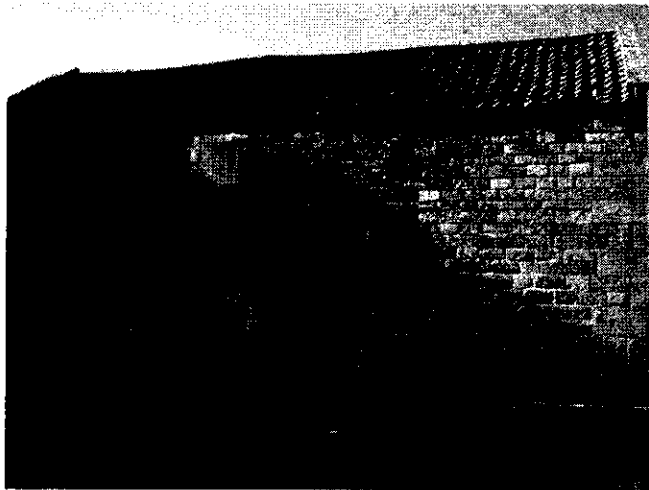


Photo 2 Inside first floor of building 6



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Photo 3 Ground floor conditions of building 6.



The exterior walls are largely without pointing, so there are crevices available for wildlife on all sides. These were inspected to the eaves and no bat droppings were found in any, but lots of signs of bird nests were seen. No feeding debris was visible in any location. All lintels were checked for evidence of bats, with none found.

Photo 4 Typical sandstone walls with little mortar between blocks.



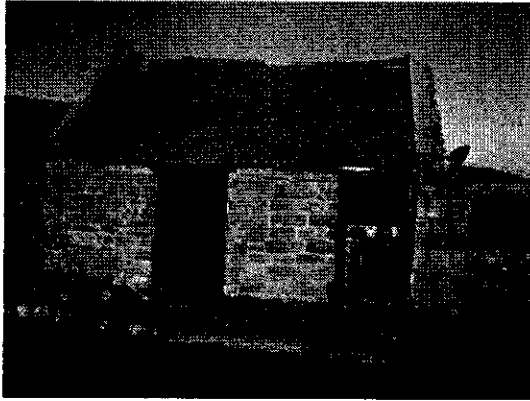
Building 7: a very small stable unit in a state of collapse. Masonry crevices throughout inspected and no bat droppings found. Ground conditions not suitable for looking for bat droppings (damp).



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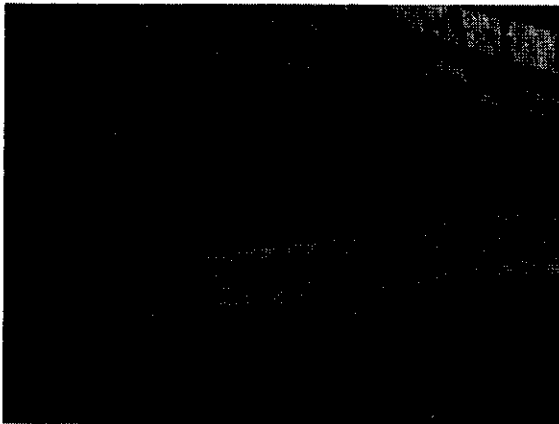
Photo 5 Building 7



Outbuildings 2 and 3: these buildings are adjoining. The ridge beam throughout is densely covered in cobwebs. The buildings have been used for storage, and there are abundant dry and dusty surfaces which are good for inspection for evidence of bats. No bat droppings or feeding remains were found. The interior walls are also covered in dry accumulated cobwebs which were inspected. All lintels were examined for signs of bat roosts.

As with the other outbuilding, all of the exterior masonry is largely free of mortar – as much as possible of this was inspected and no bat droppings were found; however, some areas were not able to be inspected due to lean-to sheds.

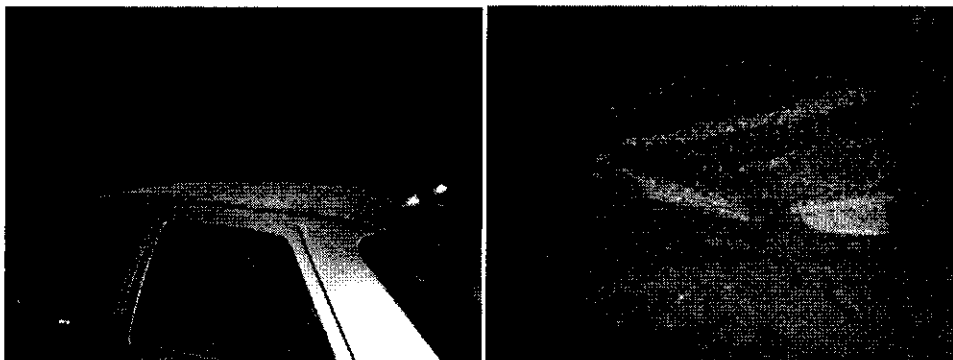
Photo 6 Inside building 2/3



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Photo 7 Example of dry dusty surfaces



The tin roofed outbuildings also have accumulated storage items that have been undisturbed, giving good conditions for finding bat droppings. None were found. The timbers of the sheds did not appear to provide suitable crevice habitat.

7.2 Dawn / dusk surveys

n/a



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8. Discussion and analysis

It is possible to state with some certainty that bats have not been flying within any of the buildings: there are so many dry and dusty surfaces that at least a few droppings would have been noted even from one bat. Droppings also normally become caught on interior sandstone walls when they are cobwebby. Our inability to find a single bat dropping is unusual and conclusive.

The total absence of feeding debris, which normally finds itself caught in cobwebs, also indicates that brown long-eared bats and Natterer's bats are absent. The complete lack of a single area of cobweb-free roof timbers also shows that bats do not roost on the timbers.

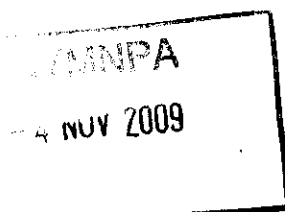
Another part of such buildings often used bats are interior crevices such as gaps between lintels; again, these were all fully inspected and we are confident that no bat roosts are present in such locations.

The external masonry crevices are extremely extensive, and it is not possible to state that the survey was comprehensive in this respect. Some crevices are above lean-to buildings where they cannot be accessed from ladders, and some areas are so deep that they were out of reach of endoscopes. However, when pipistrelle bats use masonry crevices in any numbers, they move from one to another on an almost nightly basis, and therefore we would normally expect to find at least a few bat droppings within the masonry. Therefore the absence of droppings, while no conclusive, is highly significant and indicates that if bats are using crevices, they are probably doing so in very low numbers. We have proposed a method statement to account for the inconclusive results regarding masonry crevices.

The deep and thick stone walls do provide potential hibernation sites for bats. This is not a form of usage that is often detected by surveyors, but is dealt with by a precautionary method statement.

Due to the lack of signs of bats, we are prepared to recommend that the proposed development can proceed with minimal or negligible impact on protected species providing that the precautionary method statement and mitigation within the report is followed.

There are no signs of barn owls throughout the buildings.



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9. Conclusions

There are no signs of bat use.

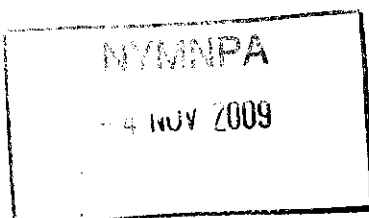
The survey is not comprehensive in regards to crevice roosting in external masonry.

A precautionary method statement must be followed in order to ensure that there is no impact on bats.

The proposed development should proceed under the condition of the Method Statement and mitigation plans that form part of this report, which will ensure that the risk of harm to bats is minimised and that the provision of bat habitat is maintained post-development.

The bat usage is below the level of significance that would require the development to be carried out under a European Protected Species Licence. The potential impact on bats is negligible.

If for any reason the method statement and mitigation cannot be adhered to, then the proposed development may not proceed without the risk of impact on protected species. In this event, the buildings must be surveyed during the summer months (May to August) by a suitable number of qualified bat surveyors to cover all potential emergence points; several nightly visits may be required. Recommendations will then be revised in accordance with the results.



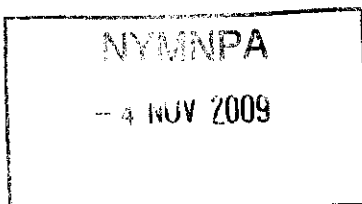
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10. Recommendations

- **Additional survey effort**
 - Providing the method statement and mitigation plan can be adhered to, we do not recommend that further surveying is required at the application stage; an element of further survey work is included in the method statement.

- **Mitigation summary**
 - Because it has not been possible to fully inspect the crevices, it is necessary to undertake precautionary mitigation against the possibility of bats in crevices. This will take the form of a method statement (specifying timing of works, pre-works inspections, retention of crevices, procedures and safeguards) and compensation for loss of habitat (bat boxes). Procedures for protecting nesting birds including barn swallows are also included.

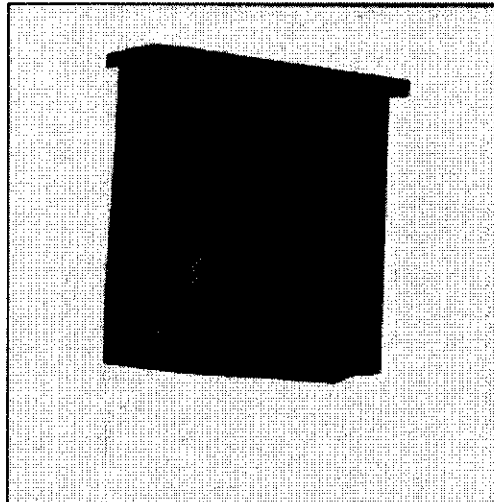
- **Method Statement**
 - **Timing of works:** works will commence during a period of the year when bats are least vulnerable: mid-March to mid-May and mid-August to end-September bats are active (so they can relocate) but not breeding. This will also prevent harm to breeding birds.
 - **Retention of habitat:** where possible, some external crevices in masonry walls will be retained. These do not need to penetrate to the interior of the building, and should be placed high up on the walls so they do not become used by rats or mice.
 - **Inspection:** once scaffolding has been erected, prior to dismantling of the traditional building roofs, the environmental consultant will visit and conduct a further thorough inspection of all crevices, and will, under licence, fit exclusion devices as necessary to ensure that bats are not present.
 - If this method statement and compensation plan cannot be adhered to for whatever reason, the impact upon bats may then require that a licence is obtained in order to permit the development under UK and EU wildlife legislation, therefore the environmental consultant must be contacted in order to re-assess impact and revise the recommendations.



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- In the event that any bats are found, work must cease around that area while the Environmental Consultant is contacted for advice on: 07769 665232. Alternatively, advice may be sought from the Bat Conservation Trust's helpline on 0845 1300 228.
 - If works do not commence during 2010, the building should be re-assessed for bat usage, and the recommendations renewed.
- **Compensation**
- Re-creation of bat habitat: crevice roost habitat will be replaced by the installation of 3 lead and oak (or other suitable multi-purpose) bat boxes.
 - Re-creation of bird nesting habitat: four multi-purpose bird boxes will be erected on the converted traditional buildings.
 - The developer will ensure that open-fronted buildings with exposed roof timbers will be maintained on site in sufficient quantity for at least 15 swallow nests. This would equate to one 10m long building. Such habitat may take the form of garaging, in which case a ceiling may be used to prevent droppings falling onto vehicles, but the space above the ceiling must remain open fronted to allow swallows to fly freely in and out.

Photo 8 Standard oak and lead bat box available from www.yorkshirebatbox.co.uk



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11. Legislation relating to bats

11.1 All bat species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &C) Regulations 1994 as amended in 2007.

Under the WCA it is an offence for any person to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat; to intentionally disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection; to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection; to be in possession or control of any live or dead wild bat, or any part of, or anything derived from a wild bat; or to sell, offer or expose for sale, or possess or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild bat, or any part of, or anything derived from a wild bat.

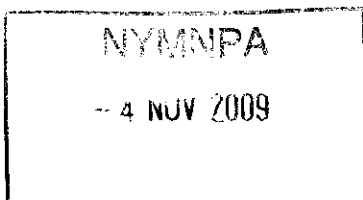
Under the Habitats Regulations it is an offence to deliberately disturb animals of a European protected species (EPS) where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of any significant group of animals of that species to survive, breed or rear or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species. Natural England 2007.

11.2 Prosecution could result in imprisonment, fines of £5,000 per animal affected and confiscation of vehicles and equipment used. In order to minimise the risk of breaking the law it is essential to work with care to avoid harming bats, to be aware of the procedures to be followed if bats are found during works, and to commission surveys and expert advice as required to minimise the risk of reckless harm to bats.

11.3 Where it is proposed to carry out works which will affect a bat roost, a licence must first be obtained from the Natural England even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.

11.4 The application for a license normally requires a full knowledge of the use of a site by bats, including species, numbers, and timings. Gathering this information usually involves surveying throughout the bat active season. The licence may require ongoing monitoring of the site following completion of the works.

11.5 When considering an application, the Environmental Consultant must consult with the local planning authority. This process may also take a



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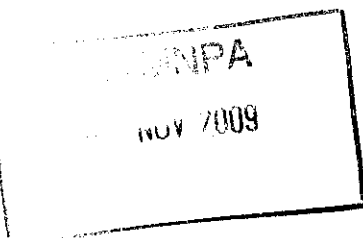
considerable length of time. Applications can only be made once planning permission has been granted (where appropriate), and consultation responses have been received.

11.6 Licences can only be issued if Natural England are satisfied that there is no satisfactory alternative to the development and that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

11.7 PPS9: Planning Policy Statement on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation is the relevant national planning guidance in relation to ecological issues. It provides guidance on how the Government's policies on nature conservation should be implemented through the land use planning system. PPS9 states that biodiversity may be material to decisions on individual planning applications. It also talks about conserving and enhancing biodiversity and ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity.

The accompanying ODPM Circular 06/2005 is prescriptive in how planning officers should deal with protected species, see paragraphs 98 and 99:

- The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when considering a proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat (see ODPM/Defra Circular, para 98)
- LPAs should consider attaching planning conditions/entering into planning obligations to enable protection of species. They should also advise developers that they must comply with any statutory species protection issues affecting the site (ODPM/Defra Circular, para 98)
- The presence and extent to which protected species will be affected must be established before planning permission is granted. If not, a decision will have been made without all the facts (ODPM/Defra Circular, para 99)
- Any measures necessary to protect the species should be conditioned/planning obligations used, before the permission is granted. Conditions can also be placed on a permission in order to prevent development proceeding without a Habitats Regulations Licence (ODPM/Defra Circular, para 99).
- The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances.'



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11.8 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) which states that *'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'*. Section 40(3) also states that *'conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'*.

- A full copy of the legislation can be downloaded at:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/pdf/ukpga_20060016_en.pdf

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