

Introduction

Part of what makes Dorset a special place to live, work and play is the high level of biodiversity in the County, made up of plants and wildlife, and the links between them. Dorset Council have a legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and several species and habitats found in Dorset are protected by law.

Some projects do not require planning permission however the wildlife legislation still applies, and you could be acting illegally if you do not take biodiversity into account. Having protected species or habitats on a site or in a property does not mean that a project cannot go ahead but rather that you need to take steps to comply with the relevant wildlife legislation. If you know or think you have protected species or habitats on your site, you should contact an ecologist to discuss your project as they can advise what steps are likely to be needed. In most cases this will involve ecological survey.

Types of ecological survey

In most cases a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is the first step to identify any direct evidence of protected species and any habitat suitable to support protected species on site, and whether any further specific protected species surveys or vegetation surveys are required.

Many ecological surveys are subject to survey season timing constraints, see the table on page 2 for more information on survey timing.

Natural England published Standing Advice for protected species can be found here;
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-species-how-to-review-planning-applications>

Survey name	Description
Preliminary Roost Appraisal (PRA)	Check for evidence of bats or potential roost locations.
Breeding Bird Survey	Check for evidence of breeding birds.
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)	Initial survey of the potential of the site to support protected species and important habitats (this will often lead to an EclA being required, depending on what's found in the initial survey).
Phase 2 survey	More detailed survey looking at a specific species.
Botanical survey	Detailed survey of the vegetation onsite.
Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)	Assessment of the proposal and its likely impacts on the identified biodiversity features of the site.

Ecological Consultants

Unfortunately, as a local authority we are unable to recommend anyone specific, however a list of environmental consultants is available from one of the published directories of environmental consultants such as [Environmental Consultants Directory](#) , or the [CIEEM - Member's Directory](#).

It is advisable to ask for a licence number and references before employing a consultant for licensable work and to get a few quotes from different consultants for comparison as prices do vary.

Indicative Ecological Survey Season Guide		Key: Optimal period Extending period											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Badger													
Bat	roost check												
	Phase 2 (emergence & re-entry)												
	activity (foraging & commuting)												
	hibernation												
Bird	breeding												
	wintering												
Dormouse	nut search and nest search												
	nest tube												
Great Crested Newt	aquatic												
	terrestrial												
	Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment												
Invertebrates	aquatic												
	terrestrial												
Natterjack Toad													
Otter													
Reptiles													
Water Vole													
White-clawed Crayfish													
Habitat/botanic													