



**Stables at Sprigg Farm, Clevedon Road
Weston-in-Gordano BS20 8PR**

Ms. Emma Nicholas

Bat Survey – Emergence and Activity Surveys

15/09/2021

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Executive Summary

Quantock Ecology Ltd. undertook an emergence and activity survey at Stables at Sprigg Farm, Clevedon Road, Weston-in-Gordano BS20 8PR on the 16th August 2021. The aim of the assessment is to determine the presence or likely absence of bats and if present, characterise the roost including species, numbers and levels of activity, to identify entrance and egress points, and to gain an understanding of the activity of bats using the building in the local landscape.

The current proposals submitted to be submitted to North Somerset Council involve the conversion of the existing barn into a holiday lodge.

Table 1: Summary of results

Building reference	Presence/likely absence of roosting	Roost character	Recommendations for further survey and/or mitigation
B1 – Stable Block	Likely absence	No roost identified.	No bats were recorded roosting within the barn and as such, there are no anticipated impacts on roosting bats. No further surveys or mitigation is required. However, site enhancements are recommended.

1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Quantock Ecology were commissioned by Ms. Emma Nicholas to undertake a single emergence and activity survey at the Stables at Sprigg Farm. The assessment is informed by the Bat Conservation Trust publication: *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, J, (ed.), 2016).

The Preliminary Roost Assessment, undertaken in July 2021 by Quantock Ecology Ltd, suggested B1 has a low habitat value for roosting bats. This was due to two old droppings noted within the building, despite the lack of any suitable features for roosting bats noted in or on the building.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

This report provides a description of the bat activity observed and recorded during each survey, notably the egress and entrance points on the building; the numbers and species of bats using the roosts; and the type and levels of activity in and around the roost sites. The aim of the assessment was to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats and to gain an understanding of how bats (if present) use the building. The objectives of the survey was to gain an understanding of the species, numbers and access points, roosting locations, timing of use and type of roost.

Robust data has been collected, following good practice guidelines, to inform an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on bats, and inform any mitigation and enhancement measures. This report provides information on constraints to the proposals as a result of roosting bats, and summarises any mitigation required to achieve Planning or other statutory consent, and to comply with wildlife legislation.

1.3 Scope of the Report

Survey plans are presented in Appendix 1, showing the location of each surveyor and the bat activity observed and recorded during the survey; site plans showing the proposed development are in Appendix 2; and a summary of relevant legislation can be found in Appendix 3. This report should be read in conjunction with the Preliminary Roost Assessment, Quantock Ecology Ltd (August 2021).

1.4 Site Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference ST 448 744 and comprises an area of approximately 0.01ha. There is one building within the survey boundaries.

The site is situated on the northern boundary of the village of Weston in Gordano, Somerset. The local landscape is dominated by both arable and pastoral farmland bordered by a mixture of mature hedgerows and Rhynes. The Walton Brook lies ~460m south of the site. The busy M5 motorway runs across the search area ~1.5km south of the site reducing the connectivity to the woodland habitat that's situated south of the road. High density housing within the town of Portishead covers the northern portion of the search area, located ~640m to the north, while the Bristol Channel lies beyond the town, ~1.8km northwest of the site at its closest. A large swathe of woodland crosses the search area passing ~90m north of the site at its closest. Connectivity to and from the site into the wider landscape is present; mostly in the form of the mature hedgerows, Rhynes and woodland features.

1.5 Project Description

This report is prepared to accompany a planning application to be submitted to North Somerset Council. It is proposed that the existing stable block will be converted into a holiday lodge. The plan showing the proposed works, is included in Appendix 2. The programme for the scheme is yet to be confirmed.

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2.0 Methodology

2.1 Site Survey

2.1.1 Surveyors and weather conditions

The surveys were undertaken and overseen by Ella Colenso BSc (Hons). Ella is accredited under the Bat licence of Senior Ecologist Simon Pidgeon, BSc (Hons) MRSB. Simon is an ecologist with over 24 years' experience as a licenced bat worker. Licence number: 2016-24382-CLS-CLS. Also present was experienced bat surveyor Joe Chidzey.

Weather conditions for each survey are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 1: Weather conditions during surveys

Date of survey	Weather conditions at start of survey	Weather conditions at end of survey
16/08/2021 (Dusk)	Temperature: 16°C Humidity: 67% Cloud Cover: 30% Wind speed: 1/8 Precipitation: None	Temperature: 15°C Humidity: 71% Cloud Cover: 80% Wind speed: 3/8 Precipitation: None

The survey methods were informed by the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), which identified potential roosting and access points on the building. All buildings that were assessed as being suitable for roosting bats were subject to survey; two surveyors were used to provide sufficient coverage of all suitable structures on site. The location of each surveyor during each survey is shown in Appendix 1.

2.1.2 Timing

The dates and times of each survey are shown in the table below.

Table 2: Survey schedule, dates and times

Reference	Suitability	Survey date	Sunset/sunrise time	Survey start time	Survey end time
B1 – Stable Block	Low	16/08/2021	20:29	20:14	22:00

2.1.3 Equipment

Both surveyors utilised high powered torches, an echo meter touch (EMT2 Pro) connected to an apple iPad. Two-way radios were also used to communicate between surveyors across the site.

2.2 Limitations

This survey follows best practice guidance to confirm presence/absence of roosting bats and where present, characterise the roost. However, this information is collected at finite dates and times, and provides an indication of the conditions on site only. The use of the structures and trees, and site as a whole, by bats, at all times cannot be established based on this information.

No site-specific limitations were noted during the surveys, which were undertaken during the optimal survey season.

3.0 Results

3.1 Survey Results

3.1.1 Presence/absence and roost characterisation surveys

Building 1

No bats were recorded roosting within the barn B1 during the survey. Foraging and commuting activity was recorded across the site; notably around the courtyards and barns to the north and the south of the site.

This information is shown on the plans in Appendix 1 and in table 4.

Table 3: Summary of survey results, Survey Date: 16/08/2021

Surveyors: A: Ella Colenso B: Joe Chedzey			
Survey Date: 16/08/2021			
Building reference	Surveyor and Position	Start Time – End Time	Brief summary of passes and behaviour observed
B1 – Stable Block	Surveyor A, (located southeast of B1 observing the southern and eastern elevations)	20:14 – 22:00	Unseen common pipistrelles <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> passed frequently throughout the survey from 20:44 until 21:47. From 20:49 until 21:05 two common pipistrelles were recorded foraging around the courtyard to the south of B1 and within a Dutch barn located to the south of the site. Further common pipistrelles were recorded flying north and south along the eastern gable of B1 at 21:08 and 21:13. At 21:33 a common pipistrelle flew east along the southern elevation of B1. Noctules <i>Nyctalus noctule</i> passed unseen at 20:48 and 21:01. Between 21:06 and 21:10 a soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> was noted foraging around the eastern gable of B1. An unseen soprano pipistrelle passed at 21:41. Serotines <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i> passed unseen at 21:31 and 21:42 before unseen myotis species <i>Myotis</i> sp. were recorded at 21:38 and 21:42. The final pass was from a Leisler's bat <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i> passing unseen at 21:45.
B1 – Stable Block	Surveyor B, (located northwest of B1 observing the northern and western elevations)	As above	Common pipistrelles were recorded foraging within the barn to the north and around the courtyard to the northwest of B1 from 20:45 until the end of the survey. At 20:48 a soprano pipistrelle began foraging in the same locations until the end of the survey. Noctules passed unseen at 20:48, 21:01 and 21:23. At 21:22 an unidentified myotis <i>Myotis</i> sp. passed unseen. No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the survey.

4.0 Conclusions and Impact Assessment

4.1 Conclusions

The main conclusions of the PRA and emergence survey undertaken at this site are described below. One building was surveyed, following recommendations made in the PRA.

Although some commuting and foraging activity was recorded during the survey, no bats were recorded roosting within the barn B1. Activity across the site was focused around the barns to the north and south of the site.

4.2 Impact Assessment

No bats were recorded present roosting within the building and as such, there are no impacts anticipated on the species. Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and Conservation Regulations; see Appendix 3 for a summary of legislation protecting bats in the UK.

4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1 Mitigation

There is a likely absence of roosting bats within the existing barn B1. As such, no mitigation measures are required. However, if bats are found during any stage of the development, work should stop immediately and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted to seek further advice.

Careful consideration should be given to any future lighting across the site. Bats were observed using the barns and courtyards to the north and south of the site for foraging. As such, the lighting of these areas should be maintained as close to current conditions as possible. Any future lighting should be kept to a minimum, and in line with guidance produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals: <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>.

4.3.2 Enhancements

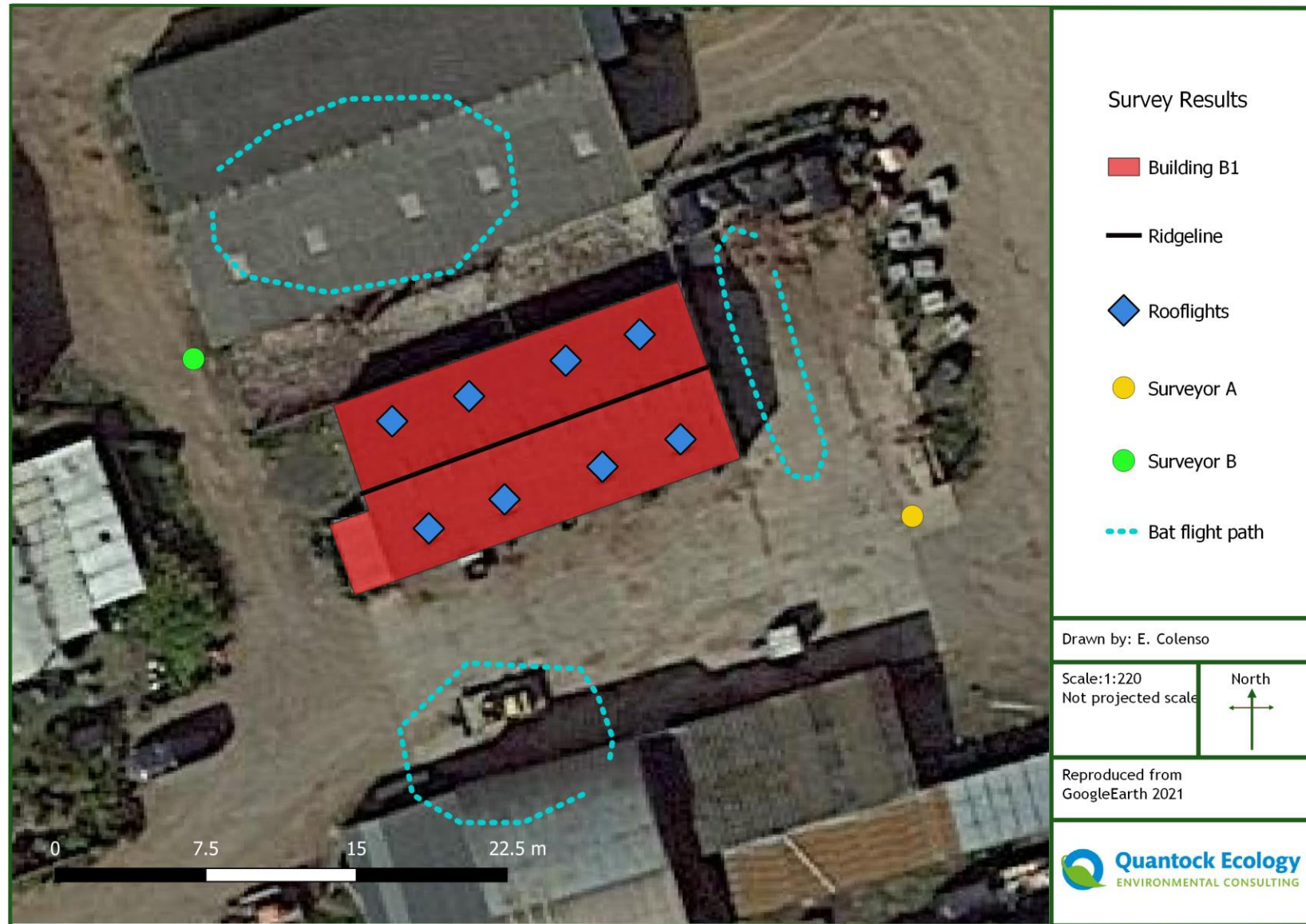
The installation of a single Schwegler 1FF or 2FN bat box could be considered; erected on the proposed development or any suitable trees on site. This should be installed facing a southerly direction, approximately 3-5m above ground level. Such bat boxes would provide additional roosting habitat for bats present within the local area.

5.0 Bibliography

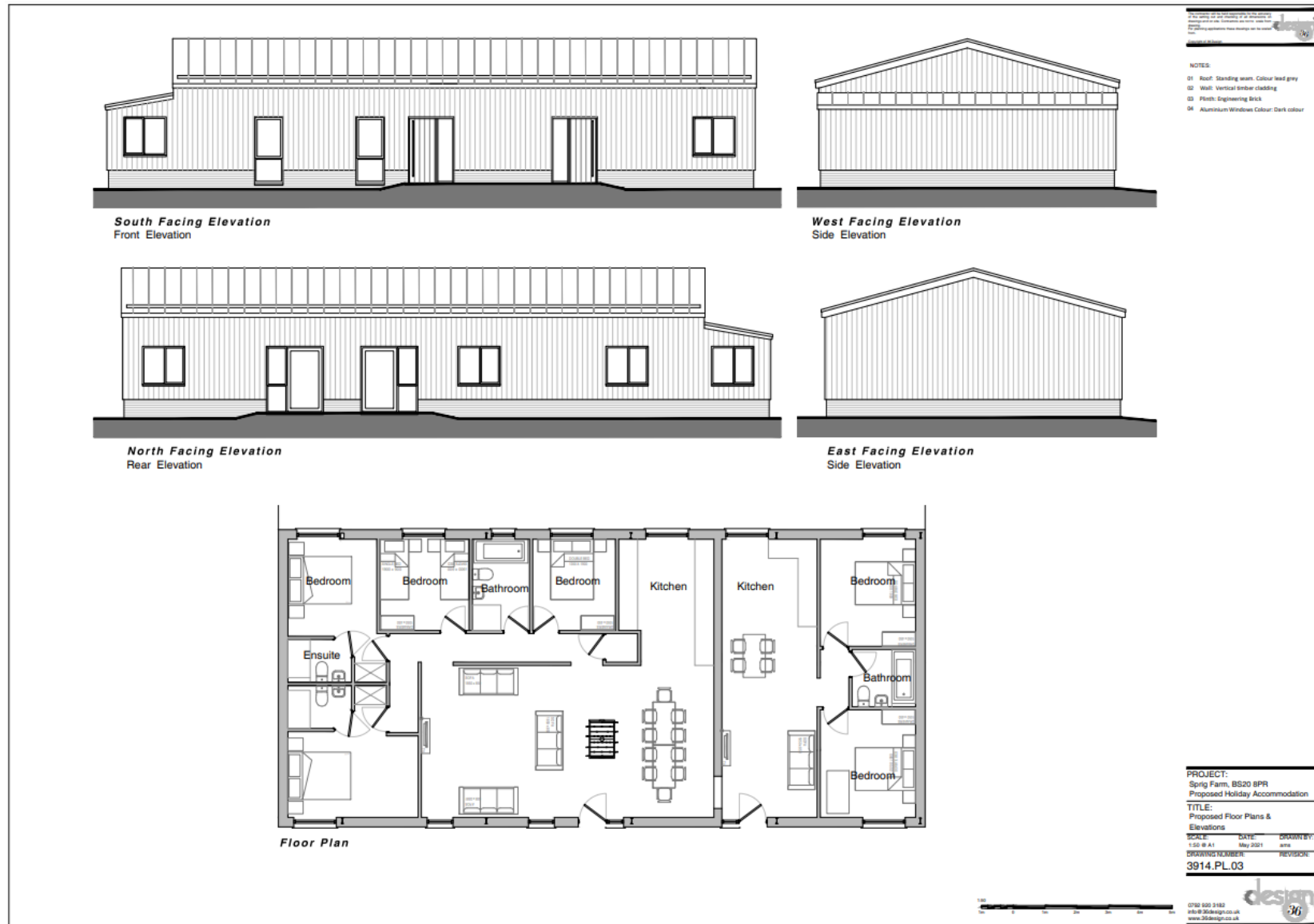
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- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Garland & Markham (2008) Is important bat foraging and commuting habitat legally protected?
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Plan



Appendix 2: Proposed Site Plan



Appendix 3: Legislation and Planning Policy related to bats

LEGAL PROTECTION

All species of bat are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (e.g. all bats)
- Deliberate disturbance of bat species as:
 - a) to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate
 - b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

Effect on development works:

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by the relevant statutory authority (e.g. Natural England) will be required for works likely to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficiency/success to be monitored.

The legislation may also be interpreted such that, in certain circumstances, important foraging areas and/or commuting routes can be regarded as being afforded *de facto* protection, for example, where it can be proven that the continued usage of such areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity and long-term viability of a bat roost (Garland & Markham, 2008)

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and The Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act (Section 42 in Wales) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.' This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

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