



Penpont Ecology Services Ltd

Westway Farm, Cookbury, Devon, EX22 7YG [REDACTED]

BARNS AT GREENACRE WHITSTONE CORNWALL

Bat & Nesting Bird Survey

SEPTEMBER 2023

A REPORT TO:

Mr & Mrs Hannaford
Greenacre
Whitstone
Cornwall
EX22 6LB

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PES reference: PES/1691

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Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION..... 4

1.1 Bats 4

1.2 Nesting birds..... 4

2 SITE DESCRIPTION..... 5

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY 6

3.1 Desk Study 6

3.2 Nesting Birds 6

3.3 Bats 6

4 SURVEY RESULTS..... 7

4.1 Desk study 7

4.2 Site Survey 8

5 CONCLUSIONS..... 9

5.1 Bats 9

5.2 Nesting Birds 9

6 REFERENCES..... 9

Executive Summary

In April 2022 Penpont Ecology Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Bat and Nesting Bird Survey of a barn at Greenacre, Whitstone, Cornwall, EX22 6LB. This was carried out to support a planning application to convert the barn under Class Q permission. An adjacent barn was also inspected due to its proximity, and for completeness. For the purposes of this report the barns are labelled 1 and 2.

The survey was updated in September 2023.

The survey comprised a desk study and building inspection.

Bats

No evidence of bat presence was identified in either of the barns and suitable habitat to support roosting bats is not present.

Nesting Birds

Nesting passerines were identified in Barn 2. The following is recommended:

Any works to Barn 2 shall not commence during the bird nesting season which occurs between March and August.

Barns at Greenacre – Bat & Nesting Bird Survey

1 Introduction

Penpont Ecology Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Bat and Nesting Bird Survey of a barn at Greenacre, Whitstone, Cornwall, EX22 6LB. This was carried out to support a planning application to convert the barn under Class Q permission. An adjacent barn was also inspected due to its proximity, and for completeness. For the purposes of this report the barns are labelled 1 and 2. The Bat & Nesting Bird Survey was undertaken to determine presence/likely absence of bat and nesting bird species and to assess the impact the proposed works may have on any species found to be present.

1.1 Bats

In England and Wales all bat species are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amendment (EU Exit)) Regulations 2019, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats.
- deliberately disturb a bat in a way that would affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young (or hibernate or migrate in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or (significantly in England, Wales and Scotland) affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.
- recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts.
- damage or destroy a roost (this is an 'absolute' offence and need not be deliberate or intentional).
- possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat.

** In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action will most likely have.*

Some bat species (Barbastelle, Bechstein's, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Greater and Lesser Horseshoes) are included on the S41 list of UK Biodiversity Action Plan species. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, local authorities must consider the conservation of these species in planning decisions.

1.2 Nesting birds

All nesting birds are protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Barn Owls are specially protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, making it an offence to;

- intentionally kill, injure or take them
- take, damage or destroy their nest or eggs
- disturb them at the nest

2 Site Description

Greenacre is located 3.5km southwest of Whitstone village, and comprises a domestic dwelling with four large, modern barns. The surrounding countryside is in agricultural production of permanent pasture, grass leys and arable. Fields are bordered by typical Cornish hedgebanks providing good connectivity with the surrounding countryside (Fig 2).



Fig 1 – OS Map of location (1:25 000)

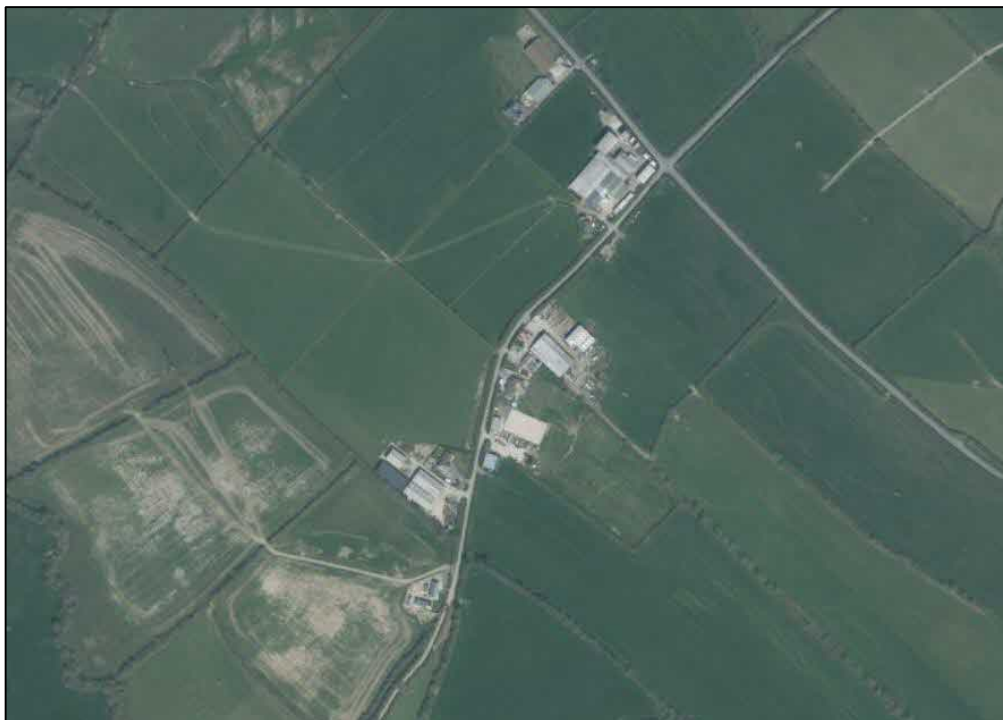


Fig 2 – Aerial photograph showing surrounding land-use.



Fig 3 – Barns at Greenacre (photo: 05/09/23).

3 Survey Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

A search of local records was made to identify any previous records of bats and Barn owls in the area.

3.2 Nesting Birds

Greenacre and its surrounding environs, were surveyed for Barn Owls, and nesting birds, using methodologies outlined by Natural England (2002) and the Barn Owl Trust (2012), and included looking for:

- Individuals, corpses, feathers, droppings and pellets
- Nests & potential nesting sites

3.3 Bats

The bat survey was conducted in accordance with guidelines given by Natural England and the Bat Conservation Trust in *'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines'* (Collins, 2016) and *'Bat Worker's Manual'* (Mitchell-Jones, 1999).

The bat survey was carried out to determine presence/likely absence of bat species, and comprised a building inspection including:

an inspection (with a high powered torch where necessary) of the eaves, ridge beams and hips, and any other likely building habitat for bats; for signs of bats and individuals

examination of walls and floors for droppings, dead individuals and skeletons
a search for signs of bats including oily stains at entrance/exit holes, feeding remains, lack of cobwebs, characteristic smells and sounds

an inspection of the surrounding area for suitable habitats.

4 Survey Results

4.1 Desk study

Barn Owls

Table 1: Records of Barn Owls within 10km

Location	Date	Distance	Recorder
Whitstone	1968-1991	Within 10km	BTO* & BOT*

* British Trust for Ornithology

* Barn Owl Trust

Barn Owls (and other owl species) require mixed farmland with rough grazing, and habitat suitable for their food source, ie. small mammals. Barn Owls commonly nest in tall, mature trees and in the eaves of larger, older agricultural buildings (BOT, 2012).

A search of local records identified Barn Owls within 10km of the site, made by the British Trust for Ornithology and the Barn Owl Trust.

It is considered likely that the surrounding countryside provides suitable habitat for nesting and foraging Barn Owls.

Bats

The desk study identified the following records of Bats:

Table 2: Records of bats within 5km

Species	Location	Date	Distance	Recorder
Daubenton's. (<i>Myotis Daubentonii</i>)	Bude	2010	5km	*ERCCIS
Pipistrelle sp. (<i>Pipistrellus sp.</i>)	Bude	2015	5km	*ERCCIS
Lesser Horseshoe (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>)	Bude	1999	5km	*ERCCIS

*Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS)

The Desk Study has identified three species of bat recorded within 5km of the site. It is considered likely that the wider surrounding countryside provides suitable habitat for foraging and roosting bats.

4.2 Site Survey

Greenacre comprises a domestic dwelling and four large modern barns. Barn 1 is earmarked for conversion.

Barn 1 is a detached building of modern construction with half block walls and half-cement fibre sheets and timber slats (Fig 3). The roof is of corrugated box profile metal with light panels. Netting has been fastened over the open apertures to the sides to prevent bird ingress. There is a concrete floor. The barn is clear of stored items and was easily inspected throughout (Fig 4). No evidence of nesting birds or roosting bats was identified, and it is considered unlikely that suitable habitat to support these species is present.



Fig 4 – Interior Barn 1.

Due to its proximity, and for completeness, Barn 2 which lies immediately adjacent to Barn 1, was inspected for evidence of roosting bats and nesting birds.

Barn 2 comprises corrugated box profile metal with a cement fibre roof with light panels. There is a steel frame and timber rafters. There is a metal roller shutter door, a concrete floor, and electric lighting is fitted and operational. No evidence of roosting bats was identified, and it is considered unlikely suitable habitat to support these is present.

Passerine sp. (likely House Sparrow) is nesting within the corrugated boxing to one corner.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Bats

No evidence of bat presence was identified within either of the barns, and it is considered that these species are likely absent and shall not provide a constraint to the proposed works being undertaken.

5.2 Nesting Birds

It is concluded that nesting birds are absent from Barn 1 but are present at Barn 2. Should any works be undertaken to Barn 2 the following is recommended:

Any works to Barn 2 shall not commence during the bird nesting season which occurs between March and August.

6 References

Barn Owl Trust (2012). *Barn Owl Conservation Handbook*, Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.

Collins, J. (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition.

Mitchell-Jones, A J (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

This report has been produced in good faith, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence based on the information provided and accessible at the time of its preparation and within the scope of the work agreed with the client.

We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

This report is provided for the sole use of the named client and is confidential to them and their professional advisors.