

**David Leach Ecology Ltd
Ecological Consultants**

**Townsend Lane
Martin
Hampshire**

Preliminary Ecological Assessment v1.

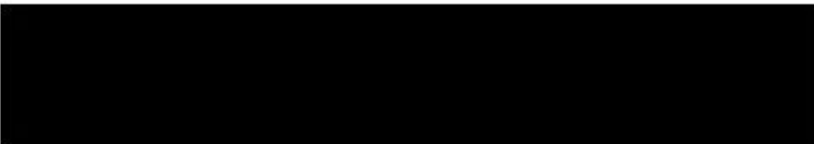
October 2023

Report compiled by D. V. Leach. M.C.I.E.E.M.

Mobile:



E-mail:



Copyright David Leach Ecology Ltd.

Contents	Page number
1.0 Executive summary.....	2
2.0 Introduction.....	3
2.1 Aims of Survey.....	3
2.1 Site Description.....	3
3.0 Methodology.....	4
3.1 Desk Study.....	4
3.2 Site Survey.....	4
4.0 Results.....	7
4.1 Desk Study.....	7
4.2 Site Survey.....	7
5.0 Conclusion.....	9
5.1 Site Assessment.....	9
5.2 Limitations.....	9
5.3 Mitigation.....	9
5.4 Enhancements.....	10
Appendices.....	11
1 References.....	11
2 Photographs.....	12
3 Site Plan.....	16
4 Enhancement features.....	17

1.0 Executive Summary

- A preliminary ecological survey was commissioned to check for protected species and habitats to accompany a planning application to create a 100m ungraded track using hardcore.
- The site is not situated adjacent to, or within 500m, of any site of statutory conservation designation that will be significantly impacted by the proposed works.
- The habitat on site is long term paddock of semi-improved species poor grassland.
- The paddock has not been grazed or cut for some time and is dominated by tall grasses with a few forbs and some taller ruderals.
- No rare or uncommon plants were found during the survey.
- No signs of protected species were found.
- No trees or hedges will be affected by the proposed works
- **If signs of protected species are found during construction, work must stop and David Leach or Natural England contacted who will advise on how to proceed.**
- **The report should be considered valid for 18 months from the date of the survey.**
- Bat and bird boxes will be put up on buildings or trees nearby, and fruit trees planted as biodiversity net gain (BNG).

2.0 Introduction.

2.1 Background

Client: c/o Symonds & Sampson

Property Surveyed: Townsend Lane,
Martin,
Hampshire
SP6 3LN

Grid reference: SU 06423 19868

Date of Survey: 14th September 2023

Lead Surveyor: David Leach BSc. (Hon), CBiol., M.R.S.B., M.C.I.E.E.M.
(Natural England WML CL18 registered bat worker).

2.2 Aims of the Survey.

- A preliminary ecological survey was commissioned to check for protected species and habitats to accompany a planning application to create an ungraded track using hardcore.

2.3 Site Description.

- The site is found on the south west side of Martin, a small village 10km north west of Fordingbridge .
- The site comprises a former paddock which had been heavily grazed by horses and occasionally cut for hay.
- The surrounding area is rural, mainly pasture and cultivated fields with small areas of trees.
- There are a number of farm buildings and a few dwellings in the area.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

- The Magic.gov web site and the Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning web sites were accessed to determine whether there were any nature reserves or protected areas local to the site that would be affected by the proposed works.

3.2 Site Survey

- This consisted of a walkover survey of the application site and land within 50m of the application site boundaries where possible.
- Any habitats identified as having potentially high botanical value will be subject to further botanical surveys, if deemed necessary. The site was inspected for non-native invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).
- The survey methodology included an assessment of the potential for habitats on or immediately adjacent to the site to support legally protected or conservation-notable species. The location and nature of any signs of the presence of protected species (such as droppings, footprints, burrows, etc.) were documented and mapped accordingly.
- Indicative methods for protected species are outlined below following recognised guidelines: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC), Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

Bats.

The external and internal areas of any building or structure on site were inspected following guidelines set out in the BCT Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 3rd edn. Collins. J (2016) and the JNCC Bat Workers' Manual (Mitchell-Jones A. J). The presence of bats or signs of bats and possible entry points into buildings was looked for.

Extant trees were inspected for potential roosting areas that could support bats. Particular attention was paid to the following:

- Mature trees with ivy covering and/or crevices and peeling bark.

Evidence searched for to indicate usage of bats included:

- Droppings

- Urine staining
- Worn entrances or claw marks around potential access points
- Insect feeding remains
- Oil staining left from bat fur
- Live/dead bats

Birds.

Any habitat features, for example, scrub, trees and hedgerows which could potentially be used by nesting birds, were surveyed and any nesting activity was noted. The habitat was also assessed regarding its potential for bird activity.

Great Crested Newts.

Ponds within the vicinity of the site were noted and the potential of the land to act as a commuting route, shelter or foraging resource for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) was assessed.

Reptiles.

Habitat features that could be suitable as hibernacula, foraging or basking areas were noted. Extant refugia were lifted and examined for evidence of reptiles, including sloughs (shed skins).

Badgers.

Any area that could be used for foraging or could potentially contain a Badger sett was surveyed and any signs noted including:

- Evidence of active or disused setts
- Evidence of potential badger diggings
- Latrines / dung pits
- Evidence of badger foraging ('snuffle holes')
- Footprints
- Badger hairs

Otters and Water Voles.

Any riparian habitat present on-site or immediately adjacent to the site was searched for signs of otters (*Lutra lutra*) and water voles (*Arvicola amphibious*). Signs included:

- Otter spraints or sign heaps
- Water vole latrines and feeding stations
- Evidence of potential holts or burrows
- Footprints

Dormice.

The suitability of the habitat was assessed for dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Any small mammal feeding signs were checked and assessed, including:

- Examination of hazel nuts
- Evidence of nest building

The survey was conducted by David Leach, an experienced ecological surveyor who is a Natural England WML CL18 registered bat worker, a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and a Chartered Biologist.

David Leach is a Registered Consultant under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence - WML- CL21 annexes B, C & D and also holds a Natural Resources Wales bat survey licence

4.0 Results.

4.1 Desk Study

- A desk study found the following:
 - There are no existing ecological networks on or adjacent to the site or within 350m.
 - There are no designated sites on or adjacent to the site.
- A data request has not been requested from Hampshire Environmental Records Centre due to the nature of the site and the works proposed.

4.2 Site Survey.

Weather for initial survey:

Sunny at time of survey 10:30

The external temperature was 6.0°C.

- The 100m track will be constructed at the north perimeter of a paddock alongside a post and wire fence and between two existing gateways. For most of its length the north perimeter borders gardens. A number of sacks of fertilizer were placed along the edge of the field in preparation for spreading over the field.
- The habitat is semi-improved, species poor pasture.
- The paddock has not been grazed or cut for some time and is dominated by tall grasses with a few forbs and some taller ruderals.
- Vegetation noted along the length of the proposed track included cocks-foot, false oat grass, red fescue, nettles, groundsel, cow parsley, hogweed, ribwort plantain, broad-leaved plantain, ragwort, field bindweed, spear thistle, yarrow, broad leaved dock and a single dark mullein plant,.
- No rare or uncommon plants were found.

4.2.2 Protected species.

Bats

- There are no structures or trees with potential roosting features on site.

Birds

- There are no trees or hedging on the site.

Reptiles

- The habitat has generally been heavily grazed or managed and would have provided sub

optimal habitat for reptiles. However the field has become overgrown and could provide suitable habitat for common reptiles such as slow worms

Great crested newts

- There are no ponds on site or nearby that would provide suitable breeding habitat for great crest newts. It is very unlikely that great crested newts are on or near the site.

Water voles and otters

- There was no habitat on site or nearby suitable for water voles or otters.

Badgers

- There were no badger setts on site or within 50m of the site.
- There were no signs of foraging or badger latrines on site.

Dormice

- There was no habitat on site suitable for dormice.

5.0 Conclusion.

5.1 Site assessment.

- The proposed works will not significantly affect any designated sites in the area.
- The habitat on site is long term paddock of semi-improved species poor grassland.
- The paddock has not been grazed or cut for some time and is dominated by tall grasses with a few forbs and some taller ruderals.
- No rare or uncommon plants were found during the survey.
- No signs of protected species were found.
- There are no structures, hedges or trees within the construction area.
- There is potential reptile habitat on site and mitigation measures have been proposed and will be followed.
- It is unlikely the proposed works will adversely impact any protected species or habitats.

5.2 Limitations of the survey.

- A survey of this type only provides a snapshot of what was found at the time of the survey. The absence of protected species on the day does not mean there may not be protected species on the site in the future.
- September falls outside the recommended window for reliable botanical identification and plant surveys. Many plants have died back and are not apparent at this time of year. Furthermore, for those plants that still persist many do not display features necessary for reliable identification, such as inflorescences. However as the work will be undertaken in a long-term paddock field this is not considered to be a major limitation of the survey.
- **If signs of protected species are found during construction, work must stop and David Leach or Natural England contacted who will advise on how to proceed.**
- **The report should be considered valid for 18 months from the date of the survey.**

5.3 Mitigation.

5.3.1 Reptiles

- Reptiles are all protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from intentional killing, injury and selling. Actions which could predictably kill or injure reptiles may result in an offence.
- The measures below are designed to avoid harm to any reptiles which may be present nearby.
 - Vegetation on site must be maintained below 50mm to render it sub-optimal habitat

- for reptiles throughout the duration of works.
- All construction and building materials must be stored on areas of hard standing or on raised pallets or sealed-based containers at least 5m away from suitable reptile habitat to prevent reptile colonisation during works.
 - Any footings or holes must be excavated and back-filled overnight; if this isn't possible then earth ramps must be left in the trench to allow reptiles and other wildlife to easily climb out.
 - The site manager must check the footings at the start of each day to look for reptiles (and other wildlife) which could not get out of the footings.

5.4 Enhancements

5.4.1 Birds.

- Two woodcrete bird boxes, one open fronted and one with a 32mm hole will be fixed to the north-east aspect of a tree or building on land within the clients ownership.

5.4.2 Bats

- Two woodcrete bat boxes will be fixed to the south or west aspect of a tree or building on land within the clients ownership.

5.4.3 Trees

- Six fruit trees will be planted in one corner of the paddock.

Appendices.**Appendix 1. References**

- **Bat Conservation Trust (London) & Institution of Lighting Professionals (Rugby) (2018)** Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK Bats and the built environment series.
- **Collins, J. (Ed.) 2016. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines: 3rd edition.** Bat Conservation Trust, London, United Kingdom.
- **English Nature 2004.** *Bat Mitigation Guidelines.*
- **IEEM 2006.** Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom (version 7 July 2006), Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management [online]. Available: <http://www.ieem.org.uk/ecia/index.html> [accessed February 2011].
- **Institute of Lighting Professionals (2012)** Guidance for the reduction of obtrusive light.
- **JNCC 2004.** *Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Mammals.* Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- **Mitchell-Jones A. J. & McLeish, 2004.** *Bat Workers' Manual.* Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- **Natural England and Countryside Council for Wales, 2007.** *Disturbance and protected species: understanding and applying the law in England and Wales. – A view from Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales.* United Kingdom
- **Stebbing R.E., 1986.** *Which bat is it?* The Mammal Society and the Vincent Wildlife Trust, London.

Appendix 2) Photographs



Plate 1. View of the gateway at the west of the site.



Plate 2. View from the gateway at the west of the site looking along the north perimeter to the east gate.



Plate 3. One of the bags of fertilizer ready to be spread on the field.



Plate 4. View of the habitat looking to the east gate.



Plate 5. The area between the two gates looking back to the west gate.



Plate 6. A general view of the long grass in the rest of the paddock.



Plate 7. View of the gateway at the west of the site looking along the north perimeter to the east gate with bags of fertilizer visible along the site of the proposed track.

Appendix 3) Site plan.



Promap
LANDMARK INFORMATION

Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2023. All Rights Reserved.
Licence number 100022432
Plotted Scale - 1:1250. Paper Size - A4

Appendix 4. Enhancement features.

BAT BOXES



Double cavity bat box

<https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/shop>



Triple cavity bat box

<https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/shop>



Vincent Pro Bat Box.

Vincent Pro Bat Box

The box features three vertical chambers of different sizes, providing ideal roosting space for a variety of species. Beneath the crevice entrances is a ladder which provides a rough surface for bats to land. Limited cleaning is required for these boxes as the droppings will fall out of the bottom of the chambers. Manufactured from FSC timber with a recycled plastic top. The front and top of the box are black which helps the box to absorb heat. Proven with seven UK species: Barbastelle, Leisler's, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, Natterer's and whiskered bat.

- * Height: 720mm
- * Width: 180mm
- * Depth: 235mm
- * Weight: 4.1kg

Bird Boxes



3S Schwegler Starling Nest Box

Starlings are often seen as a problem at certain times of the year and in particular regions. They are highly adaptable, feed in flocks and can soon use up readily available sources of food. However, we should not forget the ecological benefits that they provide as an important and natural form of pest control. For example, they limit the numbers of crane flies, green oak leaf rollers and gypsy moths.

The Schwegler 3S Starling nest box has become established as the standard design both in the UK and Europe. Not only will the 3S nest box attract starlings, it is just as likely to provide overnight shelter for great spotted, middle spotted and lesser spotted woodpeckers. When there are fewer starlings, other species such as pied flycatchers and nuthatches may breed in these boxes. Because of the relatively large entrance hole (45mm diameter), the interior is well lit which encourages occupation. The large diameter nesting chamber (140mm) also helps to encourage occupation.



These attractive nestboxes are manufactured from WoodStone which is a mix of concrete and FSC certified wood fibres. Unlike a traditional wooden nest box, these boxes will not rot away or deteriorate and are guaranteed for 10 years. This robust material safeguards against attacks from predators such as woodpeckers, cats and squirrels, whilst also providing a well insulated interior with a more consistent internal temperature than an ordinary wooden box. This is especially important during the breeding season and ensures that young birds have a greater chance of survival. Nesting sites have become rare for cavity nesting birds due to changes in woodland management practices, so you can provide much-needed space for rearing chicks and birds that are roosting overwinter with these durable, long-lasting nest boxes.

These 28mm hole nest boxes are suitable for blue tits, tree sparrows, great tits, crested tits, coal tits and pied flycatchers and they are available in brown, green or grey to complement both natural woodland and garden settings.

The best height for your nest box is between 1.5m and 3m high, and it should be sited higher if your area has a particularly high cat population.

These nest boxes have a removable front panel for easy cleaning. Although birds will clean their own nest boxes before each breeding season, cleaning the boxes out at the end of each breeding season may encourage them to be used again in future years, as it reduces parasites. The nesting time of birds varies from species to species so we suggest you wait until October when the last of the birds will have left before cleaning. The nest may come out easily but if there are any deposits scrape them out. We recommend using hot water rather than chemicals to remove any parasites that remain. Take care when opening your nest box as other species such as bats, wasps and bumblebees may have started to use the nest.

Vivara Pro Seville 32mm and 28mm WoodStone Nest Box

David Leach BSc (Hons) CBiol. MSB MCIEEM. David is a professional ecologist with over forty years' research and fieldwork experience in many aspects of ecology and for the past 12 years in environmental consultancy work.

David is an experienced bat surveyor with competency in activity surveys, bat roost assessments, daytime surveys for bat field signs, assessments of trees as potential bat roosts and the production of reports providing advice on best practice, mitigation and compensation works relating to bats as may be required.

He holds a Natural England licence to disturb bats for the purposes of science and education or conservation and is also a **Registered Consultant** for the Bat Low Impact Class Licence. Registered Consultants are now able to apply to register individual sites to undertake licensable activities under this licence.

David has been involved in obtaining over 160 Protected Species Licenses to permit development works affecting bats and badgers.

David also has experience in surveying for birds, reptiles, great crested newts, barn owls and badgers and conducts extended Phase 1 habitat surveys, BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes assessments.


David Leach BSc. (Hons), C.Biol., M.R.S.B., M.C.I.E.E.M.

Disclaimer.

All reasonable effort has been made to provide accurate information at the time of the survey. However weather conditions and the timing of surveys can affect the results. Some species or signs of that species will only be visible at certain times of the year e.g. the nesting season for birds is usually between March and September. The absence of certain species or signs of use at the time of a survey does not mean that they are not present at other times of the year and does not imply that a species might not use the site at some time in the future.

Mobile: 

E-mail: 