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**WAINIE'S BROOK BARN
HIGHER CRACKINGTON
CORNWALL
EX23 0LD**

Bat & Nesting Bird Survey

March 2023

A REPORT TO:

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PES reference: PES/1604

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Executive Summary

Penpont Ecology Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Bat and Nesting Bird Survey of Wainie's Brook Barn, Higher Crackington, Cornwall, EX23 0LD.

Wainie's Brook Barn is a small, detached barn of modern construction.

No evidence of bats or nesting birds was identified, and it is considered there is little suitable habitat to support these species.

Due to records of bats within the locality, the following is recommended as a cautionary best practice measure:

- *Roof coverings shall be dismantled carefully by hand, by a construction team experienced in working on buildings with bats.*
- *In the unlikely event that bats are discovered, works shall cease immediately and the advice of a licensed bat ecologist or Natural England shall be sought.*

Biodiversity Net Gain can be achieved by creating suitable crevice-dwelling bat roosting habitat within the design of the barn conversion. This will be done by:

- *Leaving two small gaps of 15-20mm width x 70mm length under fascia boarding, soffits, timber cladding or similar, to each elevation.*

Wainie's Brook Barn – Bat & Nesting Bird Survey

1 Introduction

Penpont Ecology Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Bat and Nesting Bird Survey of Wainie's Brook Barn, Higher Crackington, Cornwall, EX23 0LD, to support a planning application to add an extension and convert the building to holiday use. The survey aimed to determine presence/likely absence of bat and nesting bird species, and to assess the impact the proposed works may have on any identified.

2 Legislation

2.1 Bats

Bats are a European Protected Species under the EC Habitats Directive. In England and Wales all bat species are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, 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.

2.2 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.

3 Site Description

Wainie's Brook Barn is located in Cornwall at OS Grid Reference: SX 1539 9550 (Fig 1). The building occupies a rural location with the north coast located 1.7km to the northwest. The wider surrounding countryside is in agricultural production of permanent pasture, grass leys and arable, with fields bordered by typical Cornish hedgebanks providing good connectivity with surrounding riparian habitats and woodlands of the Crackington Haven outlet (Fig 2).



Fig 1 – OS Map of location (1:25 000)

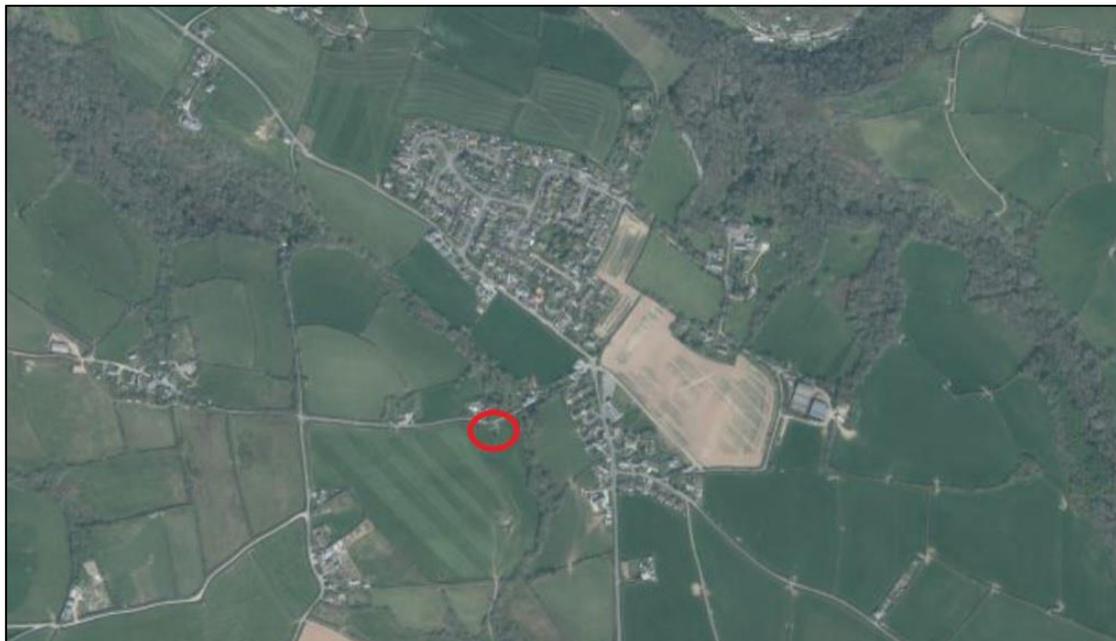


Fig 2 – Aerial photograph showing surrounding land-use.



Fig 3 – Wainie's Brook Barn.

Wainie's Brook Barn is of concrete block construction with a flat roof (Fig 3).

4 Survey Methodology

4.1 Desk Study

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

4.2 Barn Owls

Wainie's Brook Barn and its surrounding environs, were surveyed for Barn Owls using methodologies outlined by Natural England (2002) and the Barn Owl Trust (2010), and included looking for:

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

4.3 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.

5 Survey Results

5.1 Desk study

Barn Owls

Table 1: Records of Barn Owls within 10km

Location	Date	Distance	Recorder
Crackington	1991-2009	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, 2010).

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
Barbastelle (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>)	Crackington	2009	5km	*ERCCIS
Pipistrelle sp. (<i>Pipistrellus sp.</i>)	Crackington	2008	5km	*ERCCIS
Natterer's (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)	Crackington	2008	5km	*ERCCIS
Long-eared sp. (<i>Plecotus sp.</i>)	Crackington	2009	5km	*ERCCIS
Greater Horseshoe (<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinem</i>)	Crackington Haven	1996	5km	*ERCCIS

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

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

5.2 Site Survey

Wainie's Brook Barn is a small (5m x 6m), detached barn with a short lean-to section to the north (Fig 3). The building is of block construction with a rubber-covered flat roof (and a plastic roof to the lean-to). There are plastic and timber eaves and uPVC windows. Inside the ceiling is lined with foil-backed foam (Selotex-type). There is operational electric lighting fitted. The barn is clear of stored objects and was easily inspected (Fig 4). No evidence of nesting birds or roosting bats was identified, and it is considered there is very little suitable habitat present to support these species.



Fig 4 – Wainie's Brook Barn interior.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Bats

No evidence of roosting bats was identified, and it is concluded that bats are absent and shall not provide a constraint to the proposed works being undertaken. However, due to the highly mobile nature of bat species, and the wider surrounding countryside being suitable to support these, the following is recommended as best practice, cautionary measures:

- Roof tiles and wooden fascias shall be dismantled carefully by hand, by a construction team experienced in working on buildings with bats.
- In the unlikely event that bats are discovered, works shall cease immediately and the advice of a licensed bat ecologist or Natural England shall be sought.

6.2 Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was identified, and it is concluded that these species are absent and shall not pose an ecological constraint.

7 Biodiversity Net Gain

The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019) states that: "Planning Policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by... providing net gains for, biodiversity". Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) for the Natural Environment (July 2019) states that: "Net gain in planning describes an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand."

The proposed conversion provides an opportunity to create habitat for roosting crevice-dwelling bats. This will be achieved by:

- Leaving two small gaps of 15-20mm width x 70mm length under fascia boarding, soffits, timber cladding or similar, to each elevation.

8 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.

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.

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