



Northumberland County Council

Ecology Checklist and Guidance Note

An ecology report is an opportunity to identify any protected species on or using your site. This means your design or layout can allow for these before you apply. You can avoid any obstacles later and prevent breaches of legislation. These reports will help you identify what protections you'll need from the start. They will explain how to reduce the impact of your development on these species (mitigation). Rather than having to make changes to your plans during your project. Which will delay your application.

This document explains:

- How to check if your proposal needs an ecology report.
- The types of ecology reports.
- Where to get a report.

How to check if your proposal needs an ecology report

Consider how the following features could be affected by any aspect of the proposal. Both when it is in use and during construction. Including from construction vehicles accessing the site or materials storage.

Bat and barn owl habitats

Are any of the following features within your site affected. Or within the specified distance? If they are, you will need to submit a **Bat Survey report**. Or for farm buildings a **Bat and Barn Owl Survey report**.

- Permanent agricultural buildings (excluding all-metal construction).
- A building in a rural area where the proposed works will affect roofs, roof spaces or wall tops.

- A pre-1960 building in an urban area that is adjacent to a woodland, river, stream, lake or other aquatic habitat and where the proposed works will affect roofs, roof spaces or wall tops.
- A pre-1914 building in an urban area that is within 200m of woodland, river, stream, lake or other aquatic habitat and where the proposed works will affect roofs, roof spaces or wall tops.
- A building or structure known to support roosting bats where the proposed works will affect roofs, roof spaces or wall tops.
- A tunnel, mine, kiln, icehouse, adit (entrance or a passage leading to a mine), military fortification, air raid shelter, cellar, or similar underground structure.
- A bridge (excluding those of all-metal construction).
- Proposed floodlighting within 50 metres of woodland, water, or hedgerows/lines of trees with an obvious connection to woodland or water.
- Trees with a diameter greater than 1 metre at chest height, trees with evidence of decay (holes, rot, fungi or cavities/obvious cracks). Or those with significant amounts of dead wood/limbs (larger than 20cm in diameter) in the crown/fallen.

Other habitats

Are any of the following habitats within your site affected. Or within the specified distance? If they are, **you will need to submit an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)**.

- Woodland, scrub or hedgerows/lines of trees with an obvious connection to woodland or water.
- Major application within 200 metres of a river, stream, pond (including garden ponds), lake or other aquatic habitat.
- Minor application adjacent to a river, stream, pond (including garden ponds), lake or other aquatic habitat.

Designated sites

Will your proposal affect any of these designated sites. If it will, **you need to submit an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)**.

You can [check these sites on our Planning Constraints Map \(link opens a new window\)](#).

- Special Protection Area (SPA),
- Ramsar Site or Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- Local Wildlife or Geological Sites (LWGS).
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).
- Proposals (excluding householder) within 100m of Ancient Woodland.

Types of ecology reports

Bat Survey

This provides information on the species of bat, type of bat roost and the features used by roosting bats. It has 2 stages:

1. Daytime Bat Walkover. An ecologist will visit the building to see if bats could be present. And how they could be affected by the proposals. This can be done at any time of year.
2. Emergence Survey. If the daytime risk assessment determines that bats are reasonably likely to be present then emergence surveys will be required. You will need to submit these with your application. These can only be done between May and September. With June and July being the best time.

The presence of bats does not usually prevent development. Provided adequate measures are taken to avoid disturbance and loss of habitat.

For householder planning applications further advice can be found on the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental management (CIEEM) website:

- [A Householders' Guide to Engaging an Ecologist from CIEEM.](#)
- [What to Expect from a Bat Survey A Guide for UK Homeowners from CIEEM.](#)

Barn Owl Survey

The purpose of the survey is to:

- Record the distribution, abundance and breeding status of barn owls in the area;
- Assess the extent to which barn owls are likely be affected by a proposed development.
- Enable an appropriate mitigation strategy to be designed and implemented if barn owls are present.

The presence of barn owls does not usually prevent development. Provided adequate measures are taken to avoid disturbance and loss of roosting opportunities.

Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

This helps us evaluate the potential effect of works of any scale on habitats, species and ecosystems.

The level of detail required should be proportionate to the scale of the development.

Further advice can be found on the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental management (CIEEM) website:

- [Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment from CIEEM.](#)
- [Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing from CIEEM.](#)

The survey must be informed by ecological data from the [Environmental Records Information Centre North East \(ERIC NE\)](#). ERIC NE holds over 4.7 million species records for the North East of England.

We can only accept Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Reports in place of EclAs where:

1. ecological impacts are likely to be very limited, and
2. no further survey work is required.

In all other instances you must submit an EclA.

Where to get a report

The report must be produced by a suitably qualified ecologist. They should produce the correct report to current standards.

[Find a registered ecological consultant on the CIEEM website.](#)

Contact details

Environment and Design Team, Development Management, Place and Regeneration, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF.

Visit our [Northumberland County Council website](#). Email planning@northumberland.gov.uk