

Ecology advice note 4: Badgers

Badgers are widespread across much of England. They and their setts are protected, and they are a popular species amongst the public. The presence of badgers can be an important issue for some developments and early consideration in project planning will help avoid potential delays to the programme.

Even if a badger family's main sett is outside the site, they may have secondary setts (used occasionally) within the boundary.

We can identify badger setts by the size and shape of the entrances, alongside the corresponding size and width of the associated spoil heap. Other signs might include footprints, hairs (snagged onto fences or buried within spoil heaps), bedding (usually deposited outside sett entrances), latrines, pathways, and snuffle holes.

Initial Appraisal

As part of an initial ecological appraisal of a site, our experienced ecologists will establish whether or not a badger activity survey is needed.

Basic Badger (Activity) Survey

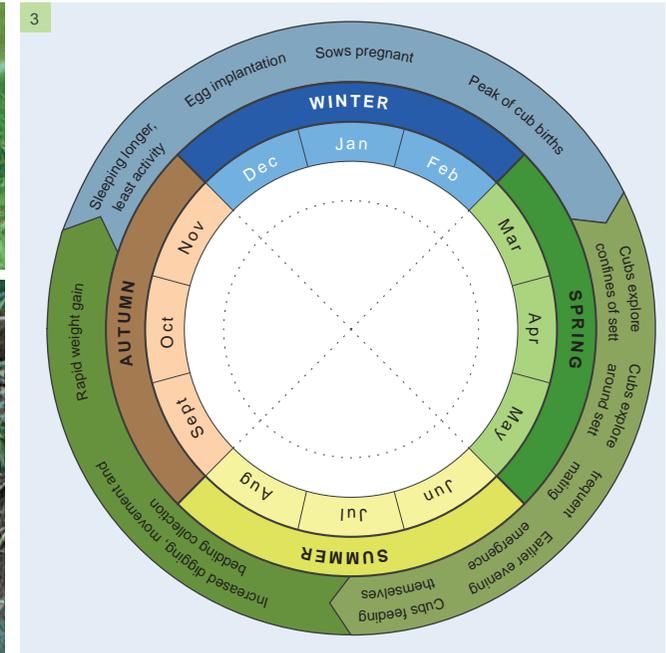
If a site is likely to support badger setts or suitable foraging areas, a basic badger survey (for presence or absence) may be required to inform a planning application.

Detailed Survey

Further survey will only be needed if badger activity is identified. This is to establish population size and activity, identify potential impacts and enable us to design proportionate mitigation.

Licensing

Any development, including mitigation, which affects a badger sett will need a licence from Natural England. We have a good track record of obtaining licences for a range of protected species.



1. Badger - *Meles Meles* 2. Badger - *Meles Meles* 3. Annual badger activity schedule 4. Badger sett entrance 5. Badger fur

Mitigation

Mitigation for the disturbance caused by a development may be required as part of a licence application. Proposals can include one or more of the following:

- Incorporation of badger setts into the development
- Exclusion of badgers from the site during the period of disturbance/construction
- Closing a badger sett (exclusion followed by destruction and relocation) as a last resort
- Establishment of new foraging habitat
- Creation of artificial setts

Project Planning

Badger survey can take place at any time of the year, but the licence may be applied for only after planning permission is given. This may mean there is an additional time period between planning consent and commencement of a development.

Disturbance or closure of a sett may only take place during the period 1st July to 30th November, to avoid the breeding season. The earlier in the development process that ecology advice is sought, the easier it is for delays to be avoided.

Badger-Related Consultancy Services

The Landscape Partnership is able to carry out a full range of badger-related consultancy services. We offer:

- Scoping studies presence/absence surveys and detailed population size assessments
- Bait-marking surveys and remote camera monitoring
- Mitigation/enhancement design and Method Statements
- Negotiation with environmental regulators
- Natural England licence applications
- Artificial sett design

Badger is protected under the 1992 Protection of Badgers Act as amended by the Hunting Act 2004 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Under this legislation it is, amongst other actions, an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger
- Interfere with a badger sett by obstructing, damaging part of, or destroying or a sett
- Disturbing a badger while occupying a sett



6. Badger - *Meles Meles*

Timing of ecological surveys – East Anglia

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Survey optimal											

■ Survey optimal ■ Survey sub-optimal ■ Survey not possible

Note that survey undertaken during sub-optimal periods may result in 'false negative' survey results.



7. Infra-red photography as part of badger activity survey

Image Copyright. Images 1, 2 & 6 are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic Licence.

© The Landscape Partnership

thelandscapepartnership.com

The Landscape Partnership Limited is a company registered in England and Wales (Company number 2709001) whose registered office is at Greenwood House, 15a St Cuthberts Street, Bedford, MK40 3JG

thelandscapepartnership