
Walkover Surveys

Walkover surveys will be carried out during the remainder of 2008 to record plant communities, habitats, landscape features of ecological value, potential habitats for different ecological groups, and signs of any mammal or invertebrate activity along an assortment of possible routes for the road. Walkover surveys are generally carried out by one or more people on foot. Personnel entering onto lands will employ appropriate bio-security measures to prevent the spread of disease and will strive to minimise disturbance when carrying out the surveys. The information collected will, in concert with the results of a wide range of other surveys and assessments, assist Roads Service to select a preferred route for the new road.

Habitat Surveys

Habitat surveys are undertaken to identify the nature conservation value of the semi-natural features along an assortment of possible routes for the road. Surveys are undertaken on a field-by-field basis and all habitat features will be assessed for their conservation value. Broad habitat types will be mapped and any sites of potential conservation significance will be identified. The surveys will be undertaken during April to July, a period during which most herbaceous plants will be readily identifiable.

Otters

Otter surveys will be undertaken along watercourses. Banks and streams will be searched for traces of otters such as footprints, spraints, anal jelly, paths along river banks, flattened vegetation, holts and 'crouches' and feeding remains.

Badgers

All hedgerows, banks and scrub, wooded and planted areas will be searched for signs of badger use such as tracks, latrines, snuffle holes, hairs and trails as well as setts. The search area will extend around 500 metres either side of the assortment of possible routes for the road to take account of the potentially extensive nature of badger territories. Badger surveys are undertaken during the winter months when trails are most obvious.

Bats

Walkover surveys will identify potential bat roost sites and the potential use of habitats as flightlines and feeding areas. Potential roost sites can include mature trees, buildings and crevices in rock outcrops. Any large scale openings in rock outcrops and buildings will be assessed for their potential as hibernacula.

Newts

Ponds and other areas of standing water will be examined for their potential as breeding sites for smooth newts. Water bodies with suitable vegetation cover will be searched during April/early May for adult animals and eggs.

Breeding Birds

Breeding bird surveys will be undertaken during the period April to June using the Breeding Bird Survey methodology devised by the British Trust for Ornithology to monitor national bird populations. The methodology requires mapping of the presence of adult birds during the breeding season. This will generally be sightings or registrations of bird song. The surveys will be undertaken early in the day to increase the probability that birds will be in song. Surveys will be undertaken in fine weather, with good visibility and light winds. Two surveys are required, at least four weeks apart, in order to record both early-nesting birds (mainly resident species) and late nesting species (including summer visitors). Additional specialised surveys may be required to identify bird species of conservation concern such as waders, curlews, snipe, wintering swans and hen harriers

When are the surveys carried out?

- Habitats—April to July
 - Badgers and otters—winter months, before the end on March
 - Wintering birds—winter months, before the end of March
 - Smooth newts—April to early May
 - Breeding birds—April to June
 - Breeding curlews—late May to early June
 - Snipe—April to May
 - Bats—April to October
-