



**GOUROCK PUBLIC REALM  
GOUROCK  
INVERCLYDE**

**PHASE 1 HABITAT & EXPERT- EYE SURVEY**

**March 2011**

*For*

**HIRST LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

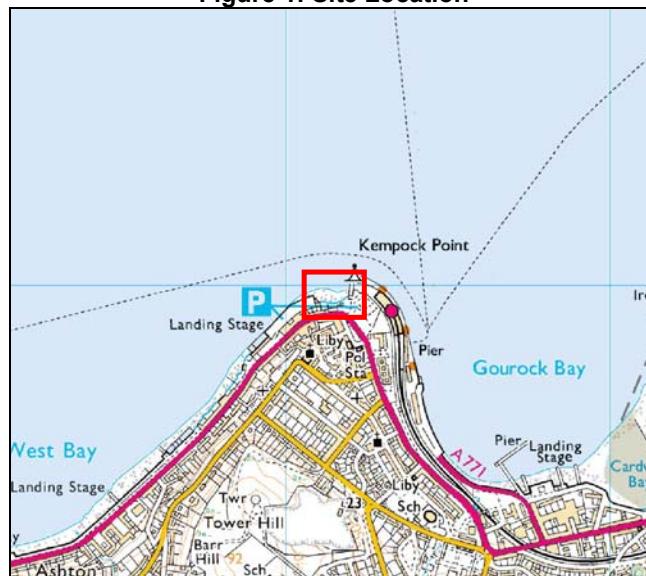
This report was commissioned by Hirst Landscape Architects and concerns a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Expert-eye walkover of land on the shoreline of the River Clyde (Inner Firth) north of Kempock street (A770) and west of Station Road (Gourock Rail Station), Gourock, Inverclyde.

The Phase 1 survey, carried out on 16 March 2011, was requested in order to provide Hirst Landscape Architects with an overview of the area as regards the presence or likely presence of protected or notable habitats and species. Particular attention was given to the potential for otter, bats and nesting bird activity (in particular the site was assessed for the potential for black guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) – a species known to breed in the Inner Clyde estuary).

## 2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site is located at Grid Reference NS 241 779. The area of land is situated to the north of Kempock Street (behind a series of buildings and small landscaped area) and to the west of Station Road. The River Clyde forms the northern boundary to the site, with a car park to the west.

**Figure 1: Site Location**



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The area is formed by a strip of land roughly rectangular in shape, lying between the car park to Gourock Rail Station to the east and a public car park to the west. The southern boundary edge is formed by the rear gardens to blocks of flats and commercial properties and a small amenity landscaped area. The River Clyde (Inner Estuary) forms the northern boundary – relative to the tidal range.



Photo 1.



Photo 2.



Photo 3.



Photo 4.

The land is made up of the 'shingle bank' – which consists of natural and man-made materials (washed up by the actions of tides and waves), coastal barriers, old walls and areas of scrubby vegetation, grasses and herbs

### 3.0 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken using standard Phase 1 methodology as outlined in the *JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey* (JNCC, 1990). All accessible parts of the site were walked and mapped, and target notes were taken where areas of habitat were too small to map, or to provide further information on features of note.

During Phase 1 Habitat Survey note was taken of the actual or likely presence of protected or notable faunal species.

Weather conditions were generally good during the period of the Phase 1 survey (16/03/11).

Following completion of the habitat survey, all habitats (and species) identified as being present within the site are checked against the following documents in order to determine their specific legislative status and ecological significance:

- EC Habitats Directive (Annex I, II, IV);
- EC Birds Directive (Annex I, II);
- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994;
- Berne Convention;
- Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (Schedules 1, 5, 8, 9);
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Biodiversity Plan
- National Biodiversity Action Plans
- Red Data Books
- RSPB Lists of Birds of Conservation Concern
- Scarce Plants in Britain (Stewart et al 1994)
- and other publications as relevant

### 4.0 RESULTS

#### 4.1 Habitat

There are six Phase 1 Habitat categories present:

- A2.1 Scattered scrub
- B2.1 Unimproved neutral grassland (poor quality)
- B2.2 Semi-improved neutral grassland
- H1.2 Intertidal shingle/cobbles
- H1.3 Intertidal boulders/rocks
- J3.4 Sea wall

The area is formed by a strip of land (including shoreline), roughly rectangular in shape lying between the raised car park by Gourock Rail Station to the east and a raised public car park to the west. The southern boundary edge is formed by the rear gardens to blocks of flats and commercial properties and a small amenity landscaped area. The River Clyde (Inner Estuary) forms the northern land boundary – relative to the tidal range.

The land rises up relatively sharply from the water line (the survey was undertaken approximately two hours before low tide) and is composed of boulders, cobbles (stones), pebbles, gravel and sand/shell. The natural material is mixed with man-made materials including brick, concrete and cut stone.

Although a systematic search of the full tidal zones was not undertaken a search of the shoreline exposed by the receding of the tide resulted in the following species being recorded:- serrated wrack (*Fucus serratus*), bladder wrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*), channelled wrack (*Pelvetia canaliculata*), along with both red and green algae; acorn barnacles (*Semibalanus balanoides*), true limpets (*Patella vulgata*), blue mussels (*Mytilus edulis*), common periwinkle (*Littorina littorea*), shore-crab (*Carcinus maenas*), a single starfish (*Asterias rubens*) and sand-hoppers (*Talitrus saltator*). Shells of the razor shell (*Ensis arcuatus*) were also washed up along the shoreline.

At the top of the slopes are small areas of unimproved and semi-improved grassland and scattered scrub. These are described in the target notes below.

The following target notes (TN) have been provided on Figure 1. Figure 1 does not use Phase 1 Habitat coding as the areas are too small to do this effectively. The description above and in the target notes should be sufficient.

#### Target Note 1

Otter spraints (3/4) were recorded (NS 24091 77954) on the large boulders brought in to act as sea defences. The spraints were very fresh and were likely deposited during the early hours of the morning. They were food packed and it would appear that an otter has climbed out of the water on to the boulders (which would have been just above the high tide mark), possibly to feed on its catch or to take a break before re-entering the water to feed.

#### Target Note 2

Two vegetated areas to the rear of the gardens and tenement properties that lie along Kemprock Road (See photograph P4). The areas lie within a walled-off section that appears to lead down to shore – old slipway (?) and a further small patch close to the car park. A number of species were recorded including cock's-foot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), bent grass (*Agrostis* sp(p)), fescues (*Festuca* sp(p)), rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg), broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), curled dock (*Rumex crispus*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), common ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*) and springy turf-moss (*Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*).

Several shrubs/small trees were recorded including willow (*Salix* sp(p)), elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), with garden privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* sp.) and ivy (*Hedera helix*) closer to the rear of the gardens.

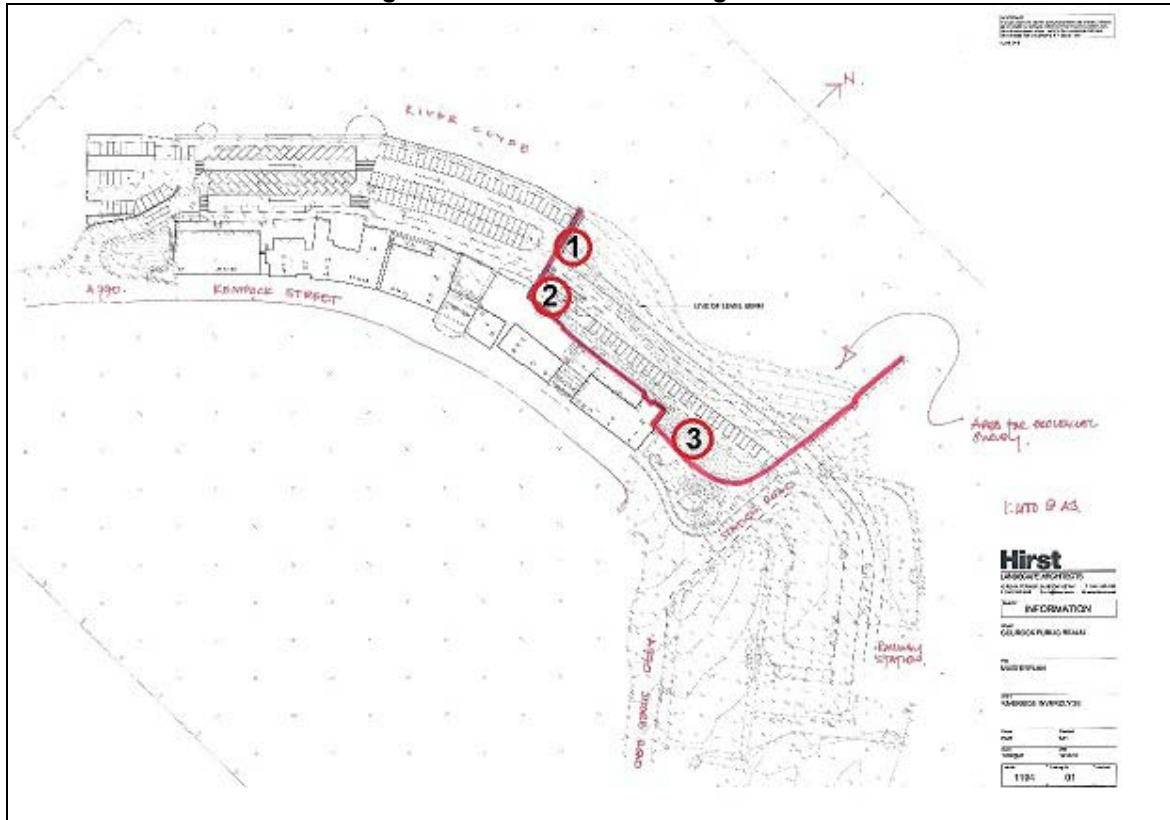
Male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), maidenhair spleenwort fern (*Asplenium trichomanes*) and hart's-tongue fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) were also recorded – the last two growing on the walls.

#### Target Note 3

Steep bank up to a small park/amenity landscaped area. The bank is built up with large pieces of rock and grassed over to the rail between the two areas.

A few small willow and cotoneaster shrubs are scattered over the area and the upper edge is filled with daffodils (*Narcissus* sp(p)). The grassed area has been cut and appears to have been sprayed (?). Debris/rubbish litters the wider area.

**Figure 1: Phase 1 Habitat Target Notes**



**4.2 European Protected Species**

**4.2.1 Otter (*Lutra lutra*)**

Otters are present. Otter spraints were recorded on large (cut/blasted) rocks to the shore edge (high tide zone) – See TN 1. No holts or lying up places were recorded.



Photo 5. Otter spraints were recorded on the large boulders close to the support wall.



Photo 6. Otter spraint on top of boulder – filled with fish remains

#### 4.2.2 Bats

There are opportunities within the sea walls for roosting. However, given the opportunities in nearby properties, and the exposure of the sea walls roosting in the sea walls is thought to be highly unlikely.

The trees/shrubs are all small in stature/size and lack opportunities (holes, cracks, crevices) suitable to provide roosting places.

#### 4.3 Water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*)

No evidence of water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) activity or presence recorded within or close to the boundaries of the site and no habitat opportunities exist.

#### 4.4 Badger (*Meles meles*)

No evidence of badger activity or presence was recorded within or close to the boundaries of the site and no habitat opportunities exist.

#### 4.5 Amphibians

No opportunities exist within the site or close to the site for amphibians to breed.

#### 4.6 Nesting Birds

Oystercatchers (*Haematopus ostralegus*) were recorded on the shoreline before being disturbed, and a male common eider-duck (*Somateria mollissima*) was seen in the water off the shore.

The seawalls were checked (as far as was possible from the land side) for any signs or opportunities for black guillemots nesting, and although there were some gaps in the upper part of the seawall to the east, they appeared to be open to predation (from birds and mammals) and were not regarded to be suitable as potential nest sites. The gaps were also on part of the wall (below the station car park) where it bends away from the site.

There are opportunities within the sea walls for nesting. However, as previously stated for black guillemots it is unlikely that they would be taken up due to the potential for predation. The shoreline is unlikely to be used by waders, ducks, etc. The area is likely to attract people down to the water's edge and disturbance is likely to be a limiting factor in any take-up by nesting/breeding birds.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The site is largely an area of disturbed and previously developed land, the majority of which is covered by sea-defence reinforcements, old walled structures and slipway, and dumped materials.

Ecologically the site area is relatively poor. However, this reflects primarily on the land zone and not the intertidal zone.

The record of otter sprainting on the large rocks used as sea-defences is not seen to be highly significant in relation to the otter's territorial range. From the evidence recorded it would appear that an otter(s) left the water for a short period in time. All the recorded spraints were fresh, with no evidence of sustained use of the area (signs of old spraints, food remains). Although the large rocks have some openings they do not appear to provide any good opportunities for holts or resting-up places. Again with the proximity of the road and path networks; people moving back and forth, and the potential for dogs being allowed down to the shoreline, it is unlikely that any otters would use the site on a regular basis – apart from overnight when they would be feeding in the vicinity.

Although opportunities for roosting bats and nesting birds are very limited, the potential for a single bat or nesting bird cannot be fully discounted. This is particularly true given the timing of the survey (March 2011), which is early in the season for both bats and birds.

Depending on the timing of any works it may be appropriate to have a pre-start check. If they are carried out during the winter season this may not be necessary.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Use a Bat Method Statement throughout demolition of old walls, etc. A sample is attached. If a bat or bats are found during demolition, all work must stop until advice is sought.
2. Complete site clearance works by the end February in any year to avoid the bird nesting season.
3. If site clearance work cannot be completed by end February, nest checks will be needed from March to September in advance of any construction works. If a nest is found, or a bird building a nest is located, then this area will need to be avoided until the nest or nests are no longer active.
4. If there is any potential within the proposed project, provide opportunities for black guillemots to nest within any newly constructed seawall.

**Ends**



# BAT & NESTING BIRD METHOD STATEMENT

## PART ONE – BAT METHOD STATEMENT

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Site Description

This Bat Method Statement has been compiled to guide any works for a site/project known as Gourock Public Realm, Gourock, Inverclyde.

#### 1.2 Use of the Site by Bats

**Table 1: Bat Evidence**

Roost Location/Other Evidence	Status of roost	Survey Method	Species and number
No known roosts	N/A	External inspection of stone walls and sea-defence walls	None
Foraging Activity		Not undertaken	

### 2.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Notwithstanding any other Health & Safety issues associated with a construction site, there are Health & Safety issues with regard to bats.

*The following information is taken from advice notes produced by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), and from the on-site experience of JDC Ecology personnel. JDC Ecology accepts no liability for any incident that occurs as a result of site personnel coming into contact with bats.*

Notwithstanding any other parameters an experienced bat worker will be on call to attend should a bat or bat be found during any operation.

Bats can carry European Bat Lyssavirus, a virus related to classical rabies. The cases of bats being found to carry these viruses are rare, and to date only Daubenton's bats have been found carrying the virus in the UK. However sensible precautions should be taken. Scottish Natural Heritage advises in their leaflet "Bats and Human Health" that the virus can only be spread by contact with a bat, not by being near a bat. **Site staff should be made aware that no-one should handle a bat unless wearing bite-proof gloves as advised in the SNH leaflet (not kitchen or stretch gloves).**

Still wearing gloves, the bat can be moved by placing a small box over it and sliding a piece of card beneath the box, or using a small cloth, and carrying the bat outside to a sheltered high place such as a tree branch or windowsill.

Alternatively the bat can be kept in the box until a bat contractor arrives. The box should allow the bat to breathe but needs to be shut. A few holes punched in the site would suffice. A bat can escape through a hole smaller than the end of a small matchbox. **Do not** place the box on top of heat sources such as radiators or in direct sunlight. A cool, dry room or shed is the best option in most cases.

A bat found from December to March is likely to be hibernating and requires to be kept in a cool place until advice is sought. Causing the bat to come out of hibernation by inadvertently warming it in hands or in a warm room may ultimately threaten the bat's winter survival. It should be kept in a box in a cool room until a Scottish Natural Heritage area officer or bat contractor arrives.

**It is illegal to disturb a bat or its roost without an appropriate licence. Bats should therefore only be handled by licensed bat contractors. Persons other than licensed bat contractors may handle bats for reasons of the bat's welfare or to remove them from the living space of a building.**

The leaflet "**Bats and Human Health**" can be obtained from Scottish Natural Heritage Publications Dept, Battleby, Redgorton, Perth, PH1 3EW, Tel: 01738 444177 or on their website <http://www.snh.org.uk>

### 3.0 LEGISLATION

Bats are European Protected Species as listed in The Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC: Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna). Both bats and their roosts are protected by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, which transposes the Habitats Directive into UK law and by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is an offence, except as permitted under the Regulations, to:

- deliberately capture or kill a wild animal of a European Protected Species;
- deliberately disturb any such animal in a way that is likely to significantly affect:
  - i) the ability of any significant groups of animals of that species to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young
  - ii) the local distribution of abundance of that species
- deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal;
- deliberately damage, or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal..

And under the Act to intentionally or recklessly,

- kill, injure or take a bat
- possess or control any live or dead animal, or part of or anything derived from the animal,
- intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection,
- disturb a bat, or disturb a bat occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection,
- sell, offer for sale, have possession or, or transport for the purposes of sale, an live or dead animal or part or anything derived from the animal.

Persons must consult Scottish Natural Heritage before undertaking any activity that might affect a bat or a bat roost. The licensing authority with regard to bats is the Scottish Government (SGov.). Licences to disturb bats or their roost sites are issued at the discretion of the SGov., after consultation with SNH as regards disturbance to European Protected Species.

### 4.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Even if total access were possible, roosts could still exist in **wall cavities**, under roof tiles or slates, in soffit boxes, or in other diverse locations that are not accessible without dismantling the building.

All site personnel should be aware that as bats move throughout the year and can use a building/built-structure or a suitable tree for as little as one night before moving on. In other words a bat or bats could be found at any time during demolition/refurbishment or any tree felling.

### 5.0 PROCEDURES FOR WORKING

#### 5.1 BUILDINGS/BUILT-STRUCTURES

##### 5.1.1 *Timing*

The table below sets out a calendar for when operations on buildings or built-structures can be undertaken provided that survey has identified no roosts.

If a detailed method statement for demolition/refurbishment is required for work at the site, then with regard to bats it should be assumed that issues that relate to them are never complete as bats could be

present on site at any time of the year and the apparent absence of bats at one time of year does not mean they will not be present at any other time.

**Table 2: Timing of Work in Relation to Bats – No Roosts Identified on Site**

Month	Development Activity	Details
December to February	Optimum time for work on buildings/built-structures.  However, bats are in hibernation and may be found at any time.	Pre-start meeting may be required between Ecologist and Contractor to confirm <b>method statement</b> to be used. If necessary the ecologist can be present as necessary to give tool box talks and on call at all times.
Month	Development Activity	Details
March to May	Survey of buildings/built-structures required before any works start. Proceed with caution. Bats in transitional and mating roosts and highly mobile. Can arrive at the site at any time.	As above.
May to August	<b>Survey of buildings/built-structures a priority. Proceed with caution. Maternity roosts may be present and bats can arrive at the site at any time.</b>	As above
September to November	Survey of buildings/built-structures required before any works start. Proceed with caution. Bats in transitional and mating roosts and highly mobile. Can arrive at the site at any time.	As above.

### 5.1.3 Demolition/Demolition/refurbishment

- 1 If necessary demolition/refurbishment should take place after consultation between the main contractor and the ecologist to determine the best method for demolition taking into account the potential for a bat or bats to be present. Bats are commonly found in the following locations:
  - Under roof tiles
  - Within stone walls
  - Soffit boxes
  - Facia boards
  - Window frames
  - Cavity walls
  - All roof areas
- 2 Depending on the start date, survey of buildings/built-structures may be needed prior to works commencing.
- 3 If bats are found during survey then SNH will be advised immediately. No work will take place on any building/built-structure found to contain a bat until SNH advice has been informed and their advice sought.
- 4 A watching brief is placed on the main contractor, if bats are not found during any necessary survey, as bats can arrive at the site at any time. The Contractor will be made aware of the potential presence of bats, their legislative status, and that personnel must be aware at all times of the potential for a bat or bats to be present.
- 5 Demolition/refurbishment works should remove roof slates/tiles, stone walls, cladding, facia boards, or roof sections with all reasonable care so that bats present can be detected.

- 6 If personnel find any bats in the course of operations then work must stop, the site made secure and the Ecologist notified immediately.
- 7 If the site cannot be made safe and the bats must be removed immediately, the bat contractor will remove the bat or bats, and place them in a bat box. The bat box will be removed to a suitable location on site. Where the contractor cannot allow access to the bats for health & safety reasons, contractor personnel will remove the bats to the boxes, and will undertake this exercise under supervision of the Ecologist. Any bat or bats removed to a bat box should be kept in conditions as close as possible to those in which they were found. (i.e. do not put bats found in winter in minus 3 degrees, into a warm room, or near a radiator)
- 8 If the site can be made safe, SNH, the SGov., and the Ecologist will be contacted immediately for their advice on permitted action.
- 9 A contingency plan will be in place in the event of any hurt to bats. Any bats requiring medical attention will be taken immediately to a suitable wildlife rehabilitation centre under the supervision of the ecologist.

## 6.0 FINDING BATS

### 6.1 Buildings and General

- 1 If bats are found at any point then the Ecologist will be advised immediately. No work will take place at the location of the bat until the Ecologist has been contacted and any appropriate licence obtained. Should the ecologist not be available then SNH should be contacted on 0141 951 4488.
- 2 No further work will take place until SNH advice has been obtained and the Scottish Government contacted as necessary.
- 3 If the bat or bats are found in a situation that presents immediate threat to the bat's welfare, then the animal will be removed to a bat box provided by the ecologist and on site at all times in the first instance and SNH advised.

## PART 2 - BIRD METHOD STATEMENT

### 1.0 Legislation

All wild birds, their nests, and eggs are protected by the *Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*.

**There is no provision under the legislation to licence disturbance for the purposes of development.**

### 2.0 Bird Calendar

Month	Bird Activity	Development Activity	Advice Required
January	Winter roosting and foraging	All development activities	n/a
February	As above	As above	n/a
March	Birds begin to exhibit territorial behaviour. Possible early nests	As above	SNH advice if nests are located.
April	Nesting and breeding behaviour underway	Nesting checks required of trees and buildings prior to felling or building works	As above
May	As above	As above	As above
June	As above	As above	As above

Month	Bird Activity	Development Activity	Advice Required
July	As above. Most young will have fledged or are fledging. Second broods possible .	As above	As above
August	As above	As above	As above
September	Second broods fledged	Last nest checks possibly required	As above
October	Birds moving for winter roosting and foraging sites	All development activities	n/a
November	Winter foraging and roosting	All development activities	n/a
December	As above	As above	n/a

### 3.0 Procedures for Working

#### 3.1 General Procedures

*Birds can begin nesting from March. Some birds will begin nesting later if they do not acquire mates or find empty territories immediately. For that reason absence of nests in March or April does not mean that nests will not occur later in the season.*

- 1 Any building works, tree felling or scrub/ground clearance between the months of March and July inclusive must take place only after inspection of the trees for active nests or nests in the process of being built. Some birds can nest to September (eg swallows), and it is prudent to undertake nest checking until the end of this month.

**If a site, or a part of a site could reasonably be expected to contain nesting birds, and nest checks are not carried out, then if an active nest or a bird building a nest is subsequently disturbed an offence may have been committed.**

- 2 Ivy cover should be carefully inspected as this can obscure nests of small birds.
- 3 Removing the weight of a branch where a crack is held open by the weight may cause the crack to close on a small nest. Cracks must be checked before removing the limb.
- 4 Removing soffit boxes, stone walls, roof slates/tiles, fascia boards, and areas such as eaves can uncover a nest and reasonable care should be taken.

#### 3.2 Finding A Nest

- 1 If a nest is found during nest checks and is active, i.e. is in the process of being built or contains eggs or young, then it must be avoided. There is no licence available to permit disturbance to nests for the purposes of development. Therefore an appropriate protection zone will be erected around the discovered nest (distance dependant on the nest location) until the nest has fledged, in order to avoid disturbance and consequent contravention of the Act.
- 2 The nest will be monitored (observation from a distance) until it is no longer in use, after which development operations can proceed in this area. Monitoring is not necessary if the protection zone can be avoided until the nesting season is over.
- 3 If a nest is found after nest checks are undertaken (possible in areas that are difficult to fully inspect, or if a late nest occurs), then the nest must again be left in situ, the site being made safe, and (2) applies).
- 4 If the nest has been found in an area that cannot be made safe without further work that would constitute disturbance then advice will be needed from the ecologist in the first instance, SNH, and possibly the SGov., to obtain a licence.

In most cases, provided that all reasonable care has been taken prior to operations commencing in order to find and avoid impacting nests, then a disturbed nest could be moved. However each case needs to be assessed on its individual circumstance and it is not recommended that further disturbance occurs without first obtaining advice from the licensing authority (SGov).

**Ends**