

Land South of Coate Road, Devizes, Wiltshire

Bat Survey Report

May 2026

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Executive Summary

- i) **Introduction.** Aspect Ecology was commissioned by Robert Hitchins Ltd in February 2026 to undertake a bat survey and assessment in respect of the proposed demolition of building B2 at Land South of Coate Road, Devizes, Wiltshire.
- ii) **Proposals.** The proposals are for the demolition of the existing buildings to facilitate the construction of a new residential development.
- iii) **Survey.** Buildings within the site were subject to a preliminary roost inspection in March 2025 in order to identify any evidence of use, or potential opportunities for use, by roosting bats. Survey work comprised detailed visual internal and external inspections of the buildings. A subsequent dusk emergence survey was carried in May 2026 out on building B2, which was assessed to be of low potential suitability to support roosting bats during the preliminary roost inspection. The other existing buildings were assessed to be of negligible suitability to support roosting bats and accordingly no further survey was advised in respect of the remaining buildings.
- iv) **Assessment of Proposals.** No evidence to indicate the presence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey work completed at the site. It is therefore concluded that bats are likely to be absent and no specific mitigation or licensing is required to facilitate the demolition of the buildings. Should >18 months elapse since the survey work completed in May 2026 and the commencement of demolition works, it is advised that a further visual inspection survey be completed to confirm the continued absence, or otherwise, of roosting bats.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Aspect Ecology was commissioned by Robert Hitchins Ltd in February 2026 to undertake a bat survey and assessment in respect of the existing building B2 at Land South of Coate Road, Devizes, Wiltshire, centred at grid reference SU 02124 62105 (herein referred to as ‘the site’).

1.2 Site Overview & Proposed Works

- 1.2.1 The site is located in Devizes, Wiltshire within an urban-edge context. The site is bound to the north by Coate Road, Windsor Drive to the west and arable land to the south, beyond which lies the town of Devizes. Agricultural land bounds the site to the east, with further arable land beyond.
- 1.2.2 The site itself comprises two arable fields with hedgerows, patches of modified grassland, ruderal vegetation, bramble scrub, mixed scrub, individual trees, buildings and hardstanding. Two additional buildings, a dilapidated block and panel barn and an open sided frame and roof “Dutch” barn, were recorded but appraised as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. Detailed description of the site and its habitats can be found in the associated Ecological Appraisal report¹.
- 1.2.3 The proposals are for the demolition of the existing building to facilitate the construction of a new residential development.

1.3 Purpose of the Report

- 1.3.1 This report documents the methods and findings of the specific survey work carried out at the site in order to establish the likely presence / absence of roosting bats, and subsequently provides an appraisal of the potential effects of the proposals on bats. In addition, proportionate recommendations and mitigation measures are set out in order to ensure that any bat species present are fully safeguarded under the proposals, where appropriate.

¹ Aspect Ecology (February 2026) Ecological Appraisal - Land South of Coate Road, Devizes. 6968 EcoAp vf1 CK/MM

2 Legislation and Ecology

2.1 Legislation²

2.1.1 All British bats are classed as European Protected Species and therefore receive protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), making it an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture bats;
- Deliberately disturb bats, including in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to reproduce or to rear or nurture their young, or their ability to hibernate or migrate, or which is likely to affect significantly their local distribution or abundance;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

2.1.2 In addition, all British bats are also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Damage or destroy, or obstruct access to, any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb bats while occupying a structure or place used for that purpose.

2.1.3 If proposed development work is likely to destroy or disturb bats or their roosts a licence may need to be obtained from Natural England which would be subject to appropriate measures to safeguard bats.

2.1.4 A number of bat species are also considered S41 Priority Species under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

2.2 Ecology

2.2.1 There are at least 17 breeding bat species in Britain. Many of them are considered threatened due to a variety of factors including habitat loss and disturbance / damage to roosts. Of these species, a number regularly use buildings as roost sites.

2.2.2 Bats are highly mobile flying mammals, which, in Britain, feed entirely on insects. They are able to fly and feed in the dark by using a system of echolocation that gives them a 'sound picture' of their surroundings.

2.2.3 In winter when prey is scarce, British bats hibernate in humid parts of buildings, caves or hollow trees where temperatures are typically stable. They may wake occasionally but only become fully active again in the spring.

2.2.4 Female bats gather together in maternity roosts in summer to give birth and rear their single offspring. Like other mammals, bats have fur and give birth to live young. Infant bats suckle on their mother's milk for several weeks until they can fly and hunt insects for themselves. Bats are long-lived mammals and some British species are known to live to over twenty-five years of age.

² See Appendix 7024/1 for detailed provisions

3 Methodology

3.1 Visual Inspection Surveys³

- 3.1.1 The buildings within the site were subject to specific external and internal visual inspection surveys using ladders, torches and binoculars in March 2025. Building inspection surveys were carried out by Natural England CL17 (bat survey level 1) licence holder (Registration number: 2021-54497-CLS-CLS).
- 3.1.2 During the external inspections, particular attention was given to potential roost features or access points, such as broken or lifted roof tiles, lifted lead flashing, soffit boxes, weatherboarding, hanging tiles, and similar, and for any indications of use by bats such as accumulations of bat droppings or staining. Binoculars were used to inspect inaccessible areas more closely.
- 3.1.3 During the internal inspections, searches were made for evidence of the presence of bats with particular attention paid to any loft voids and locations such as ridge boards, rafters, purlins, gable walls, and mortise joints that may provide potential roost features. Specific searches were made for bat droppings that can indicate present or past use and the extent of use. Other signs searched for included the presence of stained areas, feeding remains and corpses.

3.2 Emergence Survey

- 3.2.1 Following the visual inspection surveys set out above, a single dusk emergence survey was undertaken on building B2. This survey set out to find evidence of whether bats were making use of the building identified as having low potential to support roosting bats.
- 3.2.2 Based on the visual inspections, survey positions were identified so that all potential roosting features and entry/exit points (typically covering all building elevations) were able to be observed. Survey positions are shown on Plan 6968/BAT1. Infrared (IR) camera set-ups, comprising a 1080p IR sensitive camera and two Evolve T38 IR lights, were deployed at each survey position, along with one Anabat Scout bat detector paired with each IR camera to aid identification of any bats observed.
- 3.2.3 Use of IR cameras allows identification of precise roosting locations and enables the number of emerging bats to be determined. Surveyors were stationed at each survey position or covered a number of IR cameras (two or three) to monitor during the survey and to respond to any bat activity observed.
- 3.2.4 Surveyors and IR cameras were in position 15 minutes prior to sunset and remained in place for 2 hours after sunset. Emergence surveys were carried out during suitable weather conditions, as described in Table 3.1 overleaf.

³ Surveys based on: Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023) UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. CIEEM; and Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn).

Table 3.1. Dusk survey details.

Date	Start & end times & time of sunset	Structure reference / location	Equipment used	Weather
11/05/2026	Start time: 20.30 End time: 22.46 Sunset: 20.46	B2	3x 1080p IR sensitive camera, 6x Evolva T38 IR lights, 3x Anabat Scout.	Dry, 60% cloud, BF3, 9°C
Comments: The survey was undertaken by 2 surveyors.				

BF0 = calm, BF12 = hurricane force

3.3 Survey Constraints / Limitations

- 3.3.1 No constraints or limitations were encountered during the survey work completed at the site.

4 Survey Results and Evaluation

4.1 Building Inspection Results

- 4.1.1 All the buildings within the site were subject to detailed inspection, the findings of which are summarised below. Details can be found in the Ecological Appraisal Report.
- 4.1.2 Building B1 was a two-storey building of metal frame and breezeblock construction. The building had a pitched corrugated concrete composite panel roof with damaged roof panels. The building has been abandoned for an extended period of time and has fallen into disrepair with dense ivy and bramble coverage on the southern elevation. The building was noted to have been heavily vandalised with a doorway at the western end of the building broken in. Windows missing windowpanes were also noted to be present on the northern and southern elevations. The building is open to the elements and is assessed as providing negligible suitability to support roosting bats. No evidence of roosting bats was recorded.
- 4.1.3 Building B2 is of similar construction to B1, also consisting of metal frame and breezeblock construction. The building also has a pitched corrugated cement composite roof with ridge tiles. The building was noted to have doors along the northern and western elevations that were closed and windows missing glass. The building is assessed as providing low suitability to support roosting bats due to its structure. However, no evidence of roosting bats was recorded. Building B2 was assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats due to being more weather-tight and having ridge tiles.
- 4.1.4 Building B3 is a steel framed Dutch barn which is open on all sides with a tent inside. The building is open to the elements and is therefore assessed as providing negligible suitability to support roosting bats and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded.

4.2 Dusk Emergence Survey Results

- 4.2.1 As Building B2 was assessed to be of low suitability to support roosting bats a single dusk emergence survey was completed in accordance with best practice guidelines⁴. No bats were recorded emerging from/re-entering the building during the survey, as summarised in Table 4.1. overleaf.

Table 4.1. Building emergence survey results.

Building	Date	Sunset time	Roosting activity	Summary of other activity
B2	11/05/2026	20:46	None	No bat activity recorded.

4.3 Evaluation

- 4.3.1 No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the specific survey work undertaken at the site, as such no specific mitigation measures or licensing are required to facilitate the demolition works of the buildings. Nonetheless, it is advised that a number of industry standard precautionary safeguards be implemented as detailed at Chapter 5 below.

⁴ Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn).

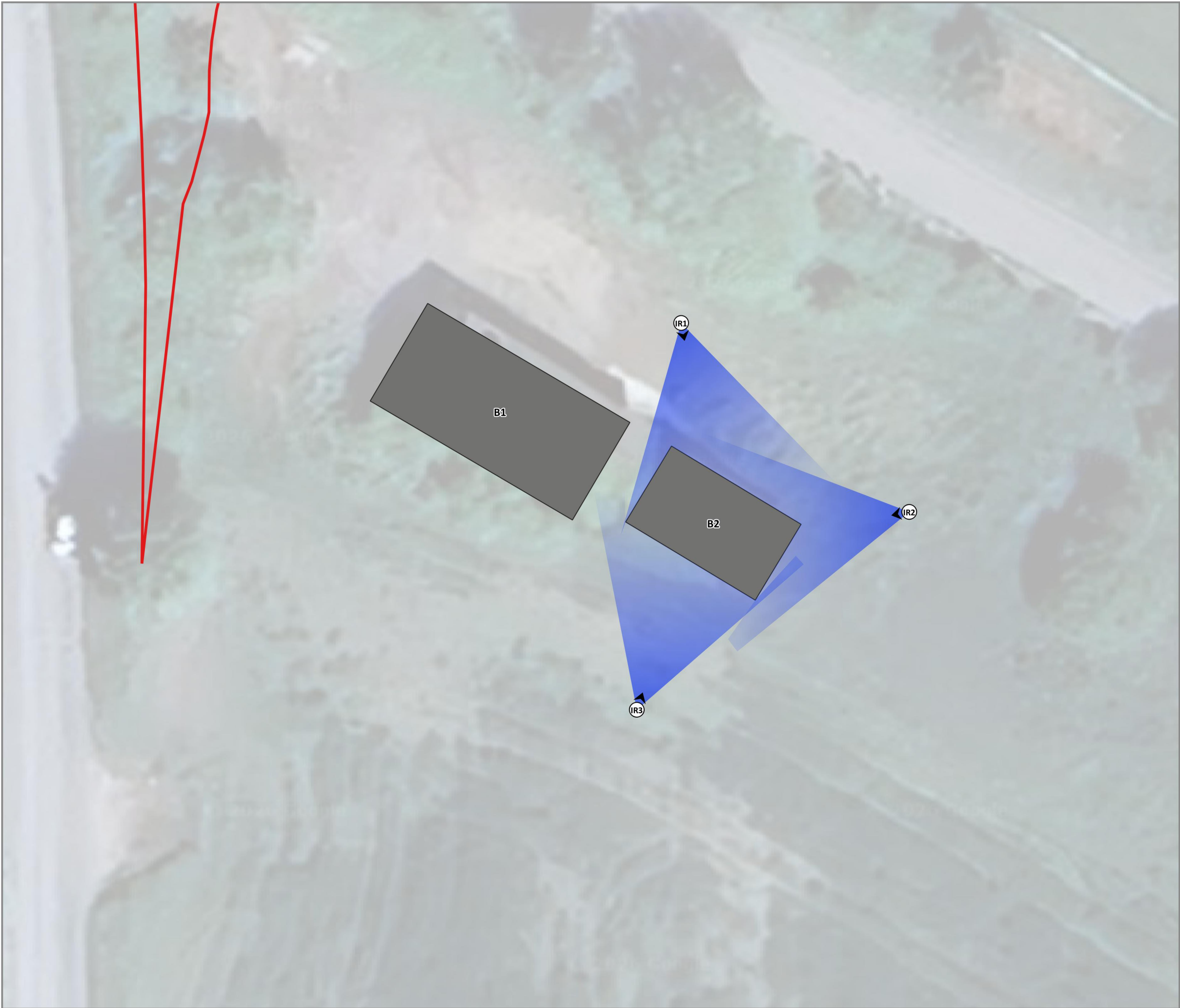
5 Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Recommended Precautionary Safeguards

- 5.1.1 Natural England guidance in respect of European Protected Species such as bats advises that, even where proposals are reasonably unlikely to result in any offence, such that licensing is not required, reasonable precautions should be taken to minimise the risk to protected species in the unlikely event that they should be found during the course of the activity. As such, it is proposed that the following precautionary safeguarding measures are implemented at the site.
- 5.1.2 **Update Survey.** Should >18 months elapse between the survey work detailed above and the demolition of the buildings, a further visual inspection survey should be undertaken prior to commencement of works to confirm the continued absence of bats, or otherwise.
- 5.1.1 **Precautionary Approach to Demolition Works.** It is proposed that a precautionary approach to demolition works be adopted to minimise the risk of harm to bats (should they be present in the future), which will involve:
- Removal of any features with potential to support or conceal roosting bats, *e.g.* ridge tiles, shall be undertaken using a precautionary approach (*i.e.* by hand or using hand tools) with care during favourable weather conditions (*e.g.* not during heavy rain, high winds or unseasonably low temperatures) under a watching brief maintained by the contractor; and
 - Should any bats be encountered during demolition, works will cease immediately and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted so that a mitigation strategy can be agreed prior to works re-commencing. This may involve discussions with Natural England and acquisition of a mitigation licence for works to resume lawfully.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 Aspect Ecology carried out a specific bat survey and assessment of the existing buildings at Land South of Coate Road, Devizes, Wiltshire, in May 2026, which are to be demolished to facilitate the construction of a new residential development.
- 6.1.2 No evidence to indicate the presence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey work undertaken, and as such no specific mitigation measures or licencing are considered necessary. Precautionary measures have been set out in the unlikely event bats are present at the time of the future demolition works.



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Building
- IR Camera Location
- Filed of View



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Land off Coate Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire
Emergence Survey Locations

PROJECT

TITLE

6968/BAT1

DRAWING
NO.

A/AM

REV

May 2026

DATE

CK/AM

QC



LEGISLATION SUMMARY

1. In England and Wales primary legislation is made by the UK Parliament, and in Scotland by the Scottish Parliament, in the form of Acts. The main piece of legislation relating to nature conservation in the UK is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
2. Acts of Parliament confer powers on Ministers to make more detailed orders, rules or regulations by means of secondary legislation in the form of statutory instruments. Statutory instruments are used to provide the necessary detail that would be too complex to include in an Act itself¹. The provisions of an Act of Parliament can also be enforced, amended or updated by secondary legislation.
3. In summary, the key pieces of legislation relating to nature conservation in the UK are:
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - Protection of Badgers Act 1992
 - Hedgerows Regulations 1997
 - Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act for England and Wales 2000
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
 - Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
4. A brief summary of the relevant legislation is provided below. The original Acts and instruments should be referred to for the full and most up to date text of the legislation.
5. **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)**. The WCA Act provides for the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) identified for their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features. The Act contains strict measures for the protection and management of SSSIs.
6. The Act also refers to the treatment of UK wildlife including protected species listed under Schedules 1 (birds), 5 (mammals, herpetofauna, fish, invertebrates) and 8 (plants).
7. Under Section 1(1) of the Act, all wild birds are protected such that it is an offence to intentionally:
 - Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst in use* or being built;
 - Take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

* The nests of birds that re-use their nests as listed under Schedule ZA1, e.g. Golden Eagle, are protected against taking, damage or destruction irrespective of whether they are in use or not.
8. Offences in respect of Schedule 1 birds are subject to special, i.e. higher, penalties. Schedule 1 birds also receive greater protection such that it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
 - Disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or while it is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young;
 - Disturb dependent young of such a bird.

¹ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/bills-and-legislation/secondary-legislation/statutory-instruments/>

9. Under Section 9(1) of the Act, it is an offence to:
 - Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5.
10. In addition, under Section 9(4) it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
 - Obstruct access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; or
 - Disturb any wild animal included in Schedule 5 while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
11. Under Section 13(1) it is an offence:
 - To intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8; or
 - Unless the authorised person, to intentionally uproot any wild plant not included in Schedule 8.
12. The Act also contains measures (S.14) for preventing the establishment of non-native species that may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the introduction into the wild of animals (releases or allows to escape) and plants (plants or causes to grow) listed under Schedule 9.
13. **Protection of Badgers Act 1992.** The Act aims to protect the species from persecution, rather than being a response to an unfavourable conservation status, as the species is in fact common over most of Britain. It should be noted that the legislation is not intended to prevent properly authorised development. Under the Act it is an offence to:
 - Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat* a Badger, or attempt to do so;
 - To intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett# (this includes disturbing Badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it).

* the intentional elimination of sufficient foraging area to support a known social group of Badgers may, in certain circumstances, be construed as an offence

A sett is defined as “any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a Badger”. Natural England advice (June 2009) is that a sett is protected so long as such signs remain present, which in practice could potentially be for some time after the last actual occupation by Badger. Interference with a sett includes blocking tunnels or damaging the sett in any way
14. Licences can be obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) for development activities that would otherwise be unlawful under the legislation, provided there is suitable justification. The SNCO for England is Natural England.
15. **Hedgerows Regulations 1997.** ‘Important’ hedgerows (as defined by the Regulations) are protected from removal (up-rooting or otherwise destroying). Various criteria specified in the Regulations are employed to identify ‘important’ hedgerows for wildlife, landscape or historical reasons.
16. **Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act for England and Wales 2000.** The CROW Act provides increased measures for the management and protection of SSSIs and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation. Schedule 12 of the Act amends the species provisions of the WCA 1981, strengthening the legal protection for threatened species. The Act also introduced a duty on Government to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity and maintain lists of species and habitats for which conservation steps should be taken or promoted, in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

17. **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.** Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as local planning authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when exercising their normal functions. 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance are included on the S41 list. These are all the habitats and species in England that were identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).
18. **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).** The Regulations enact the European Union's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in the UK. The Habitats Directive was designed to contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity within member states through the conservation of sites, known in the UK as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), containing habitats and species selected as being of EC importance (as listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive respectively). Member states are required to take measures to maintain or restore these natural and semi-natural habitats and wild species at a favourable conservation status.
19. The Regulations also require the compilation and maintenance of a register of European sites, to include SACs and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)² classified under Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive). These sites constitute the Natura 2000 network. The Regulations impose restrictions on planning decisions likely to significantly affect SPAs or SACs.
20. The Regulations also provide protection to European Protected Species of animals that largely overlaps with the WCA 1981, albeit the provisions are generally stricter. Under Regulation 43 it is an offence, *inter alia*, to:
 - Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species;
 - Deliberately disturb any wild animals of any such species, including in particular any disturbance likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or which is likely to affect significantly their local distribution or abundance;
 - Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal;
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.
21. Similar protection is afforded to European Protected Species of plants, as detailed under Regulation 47.
22. The Regulations do provide a licensing system that permits otherwise illegal activities in relation to European Protected Species, subject to certain tests being fulfilled.

² Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) (aka the Birds Directive), which came into force in April 1979. SPAs are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species.