

The Nutshell

The seasonal newsletter of



Ecological Surveys Habitat Management
Winter/Spring 2018



Hello and welcome to our sixth edition of "The Nutshell". We hope you'll find the brief snippets contained within it of interest. This issue focusses on a few of the projects we've undertaken and our achievements since our last edition— which, as we've been so busy, was just over 1 year ago!

Trained in training

Training courses are an essential part of an ecologist's continuing professional development. During our careers we've both attended a wide range of courses on subjects as diverse as chainsaw maintenance, first aid and GIS, through to managing woodland for birds, bat call analysis and dormouse handling. There is always something new to learn!

With the desire to pass on his ecological knowledge, particularly in relation to badgers, and his vast experience of course attendance, Gareth decided he would like to develop his own skills in course delivery – so he booked a course of course! In March of last year he undertook CIEEM's "Train the Trainer" with Paul Losse (Salix Ecology). Since then Gareth has been developing and delivering a bespoke in-house course on badger survey and mitigation for Environment Agency staff wishing to use their Organisational Badger Licence (under which Gareth is an Appointed Person).

We'll be looking to offer a few courses of our own in the future and will be posting details of these when they become available.

Dam interesting!

In May we travelled up to Perthshire to attend a couple of fascinating CIEEM workshops on Eurasian beaver survey and mitigation.

Beavers fulfil an almost unique role in the landscape as ecosystem engineers; creating and modifying wetland habitats to extend their feeding areas and establish breeding lodges. Their coppicing of riverside woodland for building material and to access younger branch-wood for food, opens up the canopy and encourages woodland regeneration, often in areas which would otherwise receive no woodland management work at all.



The species is now well established across the Tay catchment and will soon receive protection in Scotland after being granted native species status. Based on experience of managing beaver-human conflicts in mainland Europe and North America there are various mitigation methods which can be employed, which don't involve lethal control, to manage the impact the species may have on both existing and proposed human activities.

With trial releases both proposed and underway in the south of England this is a species which ecologists across the UK may have to get to grips with sooner or later!

Bird Surveys – Going the distance

We were tasked with undertaking wintering and breeding bird surveys of a large flood alleviation scheme site in 2017. After devising the most efficient survey route possible, taking in all of the survey area required, a total distance of almost 140km was covered by the time all of the survey visits had been completed.

After we'd recovered from all that walking, our post survey analysis of the results gave our client the information they needed to progress with their assessment of the scheme.



Looking flash

Back in April we spent a day putting up bird boxes on and around the new two-storey hide at the Garganey Trust's Broomhill Flash nature reserve near Barnsley. A total of 30 nest boxes in all, including swift boxes, house martin cups and an assortment of other box types were installed.



Remote reptiles

We were asked by one of our consultancy clients to undertake a suite of reptile surveys on a remote site in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

The survey area consisted of a known common lizard site which was to be directly impacted as well as a nearby proposed receptor site for translocation use.

We were able to undertake all of the survey visits (15 in total) during optimal weather conditions throughout the season, providing the client with regular updates on the results they needed to progress with the design of the scheme.



Voluntary surveys

Once again in 2017 we repeated our voluntary eDNA survey for the Freshwater Habitat Trusts' Pond Net project. We also had fun out at dusk undertaking surveys as part of the BTO/GWCT Woodcock survey. The annual breeding season counts, which we have now repeated in three breeding seasons will contribute to a wider data set and be crucial for monitoring future changes to the breeding population. We never get tired of watching these birds performing!

Winter/Spring – What's occurring.....

Here are some of the things we'll be up to and could assist you with this Winter and coming Spring:

- Badger surveys – inc. bait marking, licences & training
- Wintering bird surveys
- GCN surveys, HSI and eDNA
- Bat habitat assessments
- Habitat management work

Who are Hazelwood Conservation?

We are Gareth and Maria Parkinson, professional ecologists with many years' experience in ecological consultancy. We have been involved in all stages of the development process, and with a wide range of protected species and habitats. Whilst we each have keen interests in particular habitats and species, we are both passionate field ecologists able to undertake almost any type of survey required – we're always expanding our knowledge and skills.

We've been in the position of processing other surveyors' data and understand that efficient, accurate and reliable surveyors are integral to successfully delivering ecologically complex projects. We founded Hazelwood Conservation in early 2012 so that we could provide our clients with the benefit of our knowledge and experience on their projects in the field. Since then we've helped clients on all kinds of projects identify and successfully negotiate ecological constraints on their sites.

Working as an expert survey team we provide our clients with the best service at affordable rates.