



Unit 4, Langham Stables, Langham Lane, Lodsworth, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 9BU

Tel: 01798 861 800 - E-Mail: info@ecologyco-op.co.uk - www.ecologyco-op.co.uk

Badger Survey Report

Land north east of 15 Billet Avenue, Waterloooville

Author: Briony Hill BSc, GradCIEEM

Reviewed by: Sam Lunn MSc, ACIEEM

6th June 2017

Project No: 2310

The Ecology Co-operation Ltd
Registered Office: Greens Court, West Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9NQ
Company number: 8905527



Report Summary

1. This report gives details of 7 badger surveys carried out between 6th April and the 11th May 2017 on land north east of 15 Billet Avenue, Waterloooville, to establish the use of the site by badgers where there is a proposal to build four residential properties. This was completed further to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal carried out by The Ecology Co-op in September 2016, which identified two push throughs and some digging activity by larger mammals.
2. These surveys were undertaken by Briony Hill, a Graduate member of CIEEM.
3. A sand trap was set at the push throughs on the 23rd March. Hair traps were set out on the 6th May. These were left in place for the period of the survey.
4. The push throughs were identified as being used by foxes on a regular basis with fox footprints, fox hairs and fox faeces identified as well as fox sightings during the surveys undertaken between the 6th April and the 11th May 2017.
5. There is no evidence to suggest that badgers are active across the site. Due to this no mitigation with respect to badgers is recommended.
6. Importantly, if any new digging by a large mammal is identified at the site at any time during the clearance and construction process an ecologist should be contacted immediately for advice.

This report has been prepared by The Ecology Co-operation Ltd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. This report only becomes the property of the client once payment for it has been received in full.

We disclaim responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk



CONTENTS PAGE

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1	Purpose of the Report	4
1.2	Background	4
1.3	Site Description	4
2	LEGAL PROTECTION.....	7
3	METHODOLOGY.....	7
4	RESULTS	7
4.1	6 th April 2017	7
4.2	10 th April 2017	8
4.3	13 th April 2017.....	8
4.4	21 st April 2017	8
4.5	28 th April 2017.....	9
4.6	4 th May 2017	9
4.7	11th May 2017.....	9
4.8	Constraints/Limitations	9
5	DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	9
6	APPENDIX 1 – LEGISLATION AND POLICY	10



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report summarises the findings of seven badger surveys carried out by Briony Hill, a Graduate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) on land northeast of 15 Billett Avenue, Waterloooville. The grid reference for this site is SU688099.

The objective of the survey was to identify the use of push throughs on land north east of 15 Billett Avenue and identify the wider use of the site by foraging large mammals to provide mitigation advice should it be necessary.

This survey and report was carried out and produced at the request of Peter Ernest Homes Ltd.

1.2 Background

The Ecology Co-operation was commissioned to undertake a badger survey on land northeast of 15 Billett Avenue, Waterloooville after two push throughs, one along the west boundary and the other into dense bramble into a small area in the northwest corner and some digging activity by larger mammals was identified across the site during a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal conducted by The Ecology Co-op in September 2016.

The assessment was carried out further to a proposal to construct four residential properties on the land northeast of Billett Avenue, Waterloooville.

1.3 Site Description

The site is situated in the urban setting of Waterloooville surrounded by residential streets with the A3 about 1 km to the east and a large parcel of ancient woodland approximately 195m to the north. A culvert runs underneath the site running from north to south (see Figure 1).

The site is situated in the urban setting of Waterloooville surrounded by residential streets with the A3 about 1 km to the east and a large parcel of ancient woodland approximately 195m to the north. A culvert runs underneath the site running from north to south.

The centre of the site is composed of species-poor semi-improved grassland which has become overgrown. Thin strips of woodland are located along the east and south boundaries which link up to dense scrub habitat along the north boundary. The south boundary woodland strip is mostly bare underfoot with patches of nettles (*Urtica dioica*) or brambles (*Rubus fruticosus*) in places. Along the east boundary, the woodland has several rubbish piles with patches of ivy, nettle and bramble. A thin species rich hedgerow runs along the west boundary.

In the southeast corner, a small strip of land extends out to the southeast which is the existing footpath that leads to the site which is bordered by hedgerow on both sides.

The immediate surrounding habitat is suboptimal for badgers with the landscape comprising mostly



Land northeast of 15 Billett Avenue – Badger Survey

residential dwellings.



Figure 1. An aerial image showing the location of the site. The approximate site boundary is outlined in red.



Figure 2. Long, rough grass throughout the centre of the site.



Figure 3. A push through that leads into the neighbouring garden along the south boundary.



2 LEGAL PROTECTION

This section briefly describes the legal protection afforded to badgers. It is for information only and is not intended to be comprehensive or to replace specialised legal advice. It is not intended to replace the text of the legislation, but summarises the salient points. Further details of legislation and legal protection afforded to badgers are given in Appendix 1.

Badgers are protected in Britain under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The legislation affords protection to badgers and badger setts, and makes it a criminal offence to:

- wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so;
- interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it;
- to obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett; or
- to disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.

3 METHODOLOGY

On the 23rd March sand traps were set at a total of four push throughs, two of which were created since the PEA. Sand trapping allows recent use of the tracks to easily be observed as long as there has not been recent heavy rainfall with any potential mammal footprints distinguished between badger, feral cat and fox. The sand was smoothed and cleared of any debris at each visit so that if any animal entered or exited the push through it would allow for any new footprints to leave as clear an imprint as possible which can be identified by a suitably qualified ecologist. Hair traps were set at these push throughs on the 6th April. When mammals pass these hair gets stuck to the traps and can be identified by an ecologist.

The survey also consisted of walking the site looking for any other evidence of badger activity. Such evidence includes new burrows, feeding holes or snuffle marks, scrapings, footprints, latrines, runs and /or entrances under fences, hairs caught on wire or bramble and fresh digging.

The sand at the burrows entrance and hair traps were checked seven times after being set up, with the first check undertaken 14 days after setting the sand traps on the 23rd March 2017 with the final check completed on the 11th of May. During each check the sand at the entrance to the burrow was checked for any footprints and the hair traps for any hairs and photographs were taken as evidence.

4 RESULTS

4.1 6th April 2017

There was evidence indicating that the push throughs had been used by foxes. Fox footprints were identified on three of the sand trapped push throughs (see figure 4). Fox hair was identified on brambles at two of the push throughs. Faeces concluded as foxes due to its location in an open area, unlike badgers which create a pit, and the presence of fur, feathers and insect exo-skeletons was identified. Further to this the push throughs were noted to have an obvious fox smell by the surveyor.



Figure 4. A fox foot print identified during the check undertaken on the 6th April 2017.

4.2 10th April 2017

As with the first visit, fox prints were identified and fox hair was present on the hair traps. In addition, a fox was sighted at the site during the survey.

A day bed was also identified within the grass. The species using this could not be concluded. A hair trap was set at the entrance.

4.3 13th April 2017

Heavy rain fell before the survey on the 13th April. Due to this heavy recent rain the sand at the push throughs were imprinted with rain drops which would have potentially obscured any possible footprints. However, fox hair was found on the hair traps of three of the push throughs indicating their use during this time. Fox hair was present upon the hair trap at the day bed.

4.4 21st April 2017

A new fox faeces was present close to one of the push throughs and fox prints were found at the sand traps of two of the push throughs. Additionally, a fox was seen upon the site during the survey visit. Fox hair was also present upon the hair trap at the day bed.



Land northeast of 15 Billett Avenue – Badger Survey

4.5 28th April 2017

There was an absence of hair on the hair traps indicating that the push throughs had potentially not been used. A fox was observed during the site visit.

4.6 4th May 2017

Fox hair and fox foot prints were present at one of the push throughs. Additionally, a fox was seen upon the site during the survey visit.

4.7 11th May 2017

No footprints or hair were identified at any of the push throughs indicating that they had not been used by any mammals between the 4th and the 11th. Furthermore, the push throughs had become over grown with vegetation indicating their recent inactive state.

Finally, a walkover of the site did not identify any recent digging by mammals and no signs of badger activity such as snuffle holes, digging or new setts.

4.8 Constraints/Limitations

Heavy rain fell before the survey on the 13th April. This imprinted the sand at the push throughs with rain drops which had the potential to obscure any possible footprints. However, the absence of hair from the hair trap and information gathered from the six other visits result in this limitation being deemed not to have impacted upon the survey conclusions.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This assessment of badger activity on land northeast of 15 Billet Avenue has concluded that there is no evidence to suggest that badgers are active across the site. The push throughs were identified as being used by foxes on a regular basis with fox footprints, fox hairs and fox faeces identified as well as fox sightings during the surveys undertaken between the 6th April and the 11th May 2017.

As a result, no further surveys or mitigation is recommended for badgers at this site.

Importantly, if any new digging by a large mammal is identified at the site at any time during the clearance and construction process an ecologist should be contacted immediately for advice.

Should you need any further advice on the information provided above, please do not hesitate to contact The Ecology Co-op.



6 APPENDIX 1 – LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

Guidance Note for Unlicensable Operations Close to Badger Setts

This note is intended to advise those who need to carry out work on, or near, badger setts where the purpose of the work does not fall within the scope of the Act. Licences are provided only for certain specified activities such as development of land. Other work may only be carried out if it is incidental to an otherwise lawful operation and in these cases the following should be considered:

1. The work may only be carried out if necessary and unavoidable.
2. The local badger group should be consulted if badgers may be disturbed within a sett to ensure that any risk of disturbance or injury is kept to a minimum. If such a risk exists a suitably experienced person should be on hand to advise.
3. All digging within 10 metres of the nearest sett entrance should be done by hand.
4. Noisy machinery near setts should be used before mid-day, if possible, to allow badgers to settle down afterwards so their normal foraging activity is not disrupted any more than necessary.
5. Operations involving use of machines near setts should be undertaken only by those suitably trained or competent in the use of the equipment.
6. Work near active badger setts should be carried out between the months of July and November, thus avoiding the badger breeding season (December to June) and avoiding the bird-breeding season when scrub clearance is undertaken.
7. No chemicals should be used in the immediate area of a sett unless absolutely necessary and in these circumstances, only those known to be safe for animals should be used. Chemicals should be stored safely away from the sett area.
8. Where badgers may be forced to move from the sett or place of shelter because the structure is being dismantled, the work should be carried out as late in the day as possible to avoid badgers being bolted above ground in broad daylight.
9. Scrub clearance should be avoided over the tops of setts and close to sett entrances.
10. Trees and shrubs should be felled away from the obvious direction of a sett and should not be uprooted but cut to ground level where necessary.
11. All trenches left open overnight should include a means of escape for any animals that may fall in.
12. Buildings and structures, such as sheds, may have to be dismantled, but in such cases the floor should be left in place, if possible, if it forms the top of the sett.
13. Fires should be lit at the furthest distance possible from the sett.
14. Obvious badger pathways should be left clear of obstruction.
15. No dogs should be taken onto the site by any of the workforce.
16. Reinstatement of sett damage should be under the guidance of an experienced badger worker.
17. Entrances may be protected against materials falling in accidentally. Any methods used should not restrict airflow and must be removed before leaving the site at the end of the day.
18. If the sett area is to be marked off to avoid interference, this should be done with rope, fencing or wire. Plastic tape can be very disturbing to badgers in windy weather and should be avoided.
19. Where it is necessary to walk over the top of a sett, planking should be provided to spread the load if the soil is very light, or there is a chance of sett collapse.
20. All work should be carried out as quickly and quietly as possible.