



Date: 15th February 2024
Reference: 6939/Badger L01

Tom Wilson
Technical Coordinator
Lovell North East
Alexander House,
1 Mandarin Road,
Houghton Le Spring, DH4 5RA.

Dear Tom,

BADGER CHECKING SURVEY OF: WHITBURN LODGE

Further to a site visit completed on the 14th February 2024 to survey for badger field signs and to confirm the absence of badger setts at the site, please find below the details of the survey.

Under the Badger Act 1992, it is an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger
- Attempts to kill, injure or take a badger.
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger,
- Dig for badgers
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy a badger sett or obstruct access to it
- Cause a dog to enter a sett,
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett

The survey was undertaken by a surveyor with extensive experience of badger surveys including sett identification and classification, as well as tracking and licencing.

TABLE 1: LEAD SURVEYORS			
Name	Position	Professional Qualifications	Natural England Survey Licence Numbers
Richard Thompson	Ecologist/ Ornithologist	BSc MSc Field Identification Skills Certificate Level 4 (certified) Level II British Mammals Track & Sign	2023-11254-CL17-BAT (Bats)

The site is largely covered in dense bramble thickets which prevented full survey of the site, though this was anticipated and the assessment was designed to reduce this constraint. Close inspection of scrub edges was undertaken to search for mammal paths entering/exiting these habitats. Assessment of areas of the site that were surveyable found no badger field signs. The site represents little value to badger due to limited foraging opportunities. Although the scrub areas and adjacent woodland could provide suitable cover, these are very dense and would be difficult for badgers to commute through. No obvious mammal paths were recorded within or entering these areas that would indicate badger use or sett presence. The survey was undertaken on a day with lots of fresh mud, especially in the horse fields around the scrub tickets. Careful inspection of these areas recorded no badger prints in the fresh mud (which would be expected if badgers were entering the scrub). The landowner of the field associated with the site reported that no badgers have ever been recorded or suspected on the site.

Other mammal field signs, aside from the abundant horse signs, included one small rabbit hole (appeared disused) with a small mammal path (did not appear to be actively used) which possibly led to this hole. One possible rat hole was recorded near the horse stables as well as a fox footprint and some fox scent marking.

The areas surveyed are considered free from badger setts and site clearance (with the implementation of the Ecological Method Statement) may continue without constraint in relation to badger. A second check for badger will be undertaken prior to the works commencing.

Yours Sincerely,

Sam Gate BSc (Hons), ACIEEM
Ecologist
E³ Ecology Ltd.