

Appendix 8.5: Dormouse Survey

Land at Barkham Square

Land at Barkham
Square: Dormouse
Survey
FINAL
November 2025

Approval for issue

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Prepared by:

RPS

Prepared for:

Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd (Chiltern Division)

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
The Applicant	Crest Nicholson Operations Limited (Chiltern m Division)
The Project	Land at Barkham Square

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ES	Environmental Statement
S41	Species listed as being of principal importance for conservation in England under Section 41 of the Natural environment and rural communities act 2006.
TVERC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.
WCA5	Animal species protected from intentional killing injuring or taking under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Units

Unit	Description
cm	Centimetres
ha	Hectares
km	Kilometres

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This Appendix of the Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared by RPS on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Limited (Chiltern Division).
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this technical report is to present the methodology and results of the hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* surveys for the Project. The results of this report have been used to inform Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation of the ES.

1.2 Site Description

- 1.2.1 The site is located at Barkham Square, Arborfield south-east of Reading, Berkshire (the Site). It comprises approximately 61.3 ha of mainly grassland grazed by sheep. There are blocks of ancient woodland found on Site. There is a pond located to the south, adjacent to the Barkham Brook. The Barkham Brook runs through the centre of the Site in a north-south orientation.
- 1.2.2 The wider landscape is generally rural in nature with parcels of woodland, including ancient woodland. Arable fields are found to the east and north of the Site. Waterman's Lake is located approximately 30m south of the Site boundary.

1.3 Legislation

- 1.3.1 Hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* is fully protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Regulations prohibit:
- Intentionally, recklessly or deliberately kill, injure or take a dormouse;
 - The deliberate disturbance of this species in such a way as to be significantly likely to affect:
 - Their ability of to survive, hibernate, migrate, breed, or rear or nurture their young;
 - The local distribution or abundance of dormice;
 - Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (nest); and
 - The possession or transport of dormice or any other part of.
- 1.3.2 Dormice are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion in Schedule 5. Under the Act, they are protected from:
- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level);
 - Obstruction of access to any place of shelter, breeding or rest; and
 - Selling, bartering or exchange of these species, or parts of.
- 1.3.3 Dormice are also listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as a Species of Principal Importance; national objectives & targets include the maintenance of the geographical range and viability of existing dormice populations to ensure that it remains in favourable conservation status.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 Records of dormice from the last 10 years, within 2km of the site, were obtained by CSA as part of the ecology desk study. Records were requested from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC).
- 2.1.2 The desk study results are presented in Appendix 8.1: PEA of the ES. A summary of dormouse records is provided in this report.

2.2 Dormouse Field Survey

Dormouse Scoping

- 2.2.1 A walkover survey of the Project site was undertaken by CSA in February 2023 to identify habitats with the potential to support dormice. Dormouse nest tube surveys were targeted at suitable habitats within these areas.

Nest Tube Surveys

- 2.2.2 The nest tube survey was undertaken following a methodology based on published best practice guidelines (Bright, Morris & Mitchell Jones 2006; Chanin & Woods 2003).
- 2.2.3 The guidelines provide a method to determine survey effort and provide recommendations for what would constitute the minimum acceptable survey effort. Under best practice guidelines, the months April through November are each allotted an index of probability reflecting the likelihood of a survey detecting dormouse in that month. The values of the index of probability are given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Index of probability scores

Month	Index of Probability
April	1
May	4
June	2
July	2
August	5
September	7
October	2

2.3 Limitations

- 2.3.1 No limitations have been recognised within the survey methodology. The surveys were undertaken in optimal survey conditions and within the optimal survey period.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 The ecology desk study, as reported by CSA (2023), identified no records of dormouse within the search area. However, CSA note that this lack of records could be due to a low survey effort rather than a genuine absence in the area. It should be noted that dormouse surveys were undertaken at the adjacent Arborfield Green development in 2008 by AECOM and no evidence of dormice was found. However, AECOM stated that the habitat onsite was suboptimal.

3.2 Nest Tube Surveys

- 3.2.1 No signs of dormouse were found in any of the nest tubes placed throughout the survey period, while wood mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus* nests were found during five of the survey visits.
- 3.2.2 The results of the nest tube survey are summarised in Table 3.1. Weather conditions are provided in Annex B.

Table 3.1: Summary of nest tube survey.

Survey date	Findings
18/08/23	Nothing
06/09/23	Wood mouse nests
04/10/23	Wood mouse nests
15/09/23	Wood mouse nests
15/05/24	Wood mouse nests
05/06/24	Wood mouse nests

- 3.2.3 The above survey regime scores exactly 20 using the probability scores from Table 2.1. As such, the absence of dormice from the Site is considered to be a valid result.

4 SUMMARY

- 4.1.1 The ecology desk study, as reported by CSA (2023), identified no records of dormouse within the search area.
- 4.1.2 A nest tube survey to identify the presence/ likely absence of dormouse on the Site was undertaken between August and November 2023, with surveys continuing in May and June 2024.
- 4.1.3 During these surveys, no evidence of dormice was found. As such, dormice do not constitute a constraint to development.

5 REFERENCES

- 5.1.1 Bright, P. Morris, P. & Mitchell-Jones, T. (2006). The dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Ed. English Nature (Natural England)
- 5.1.2 Chanin, P. & Woods, M. (2003). Surveying Dormice using nest tubes. Results and experiences from the South West Dormouse Project. English Nature (Natural England) Research Report No. 524.
- 5.1.3 Morris, P (2004). Dormice. Whittet Books Ltd.

Annex A Dormouse Tube Locations and Survey Results Map



© 2025 RPS Group
101 Park Drive, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4RY
T: +44(0)1235 821 888 E: rps.ox@tetratech.com W: rpsgroup.com

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- LEGEND**
- Site Boundary
 - Dormouse Survey**
 - Dormouse tubes
 - Dormouse boxes

NB. No dormouse or signs of dormouse were recorded during the surveys undertaken.



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Project	Land at Barkham Square		
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Annex B Survey Dates and Weather Conditions

Anx Table 1 Nest Tube survey dates and weather conditions

Visit	Survey Date	Weather
1	18/08/23	20°C, 10% cloud, 1 wind, clear
2	06/09/23	19°C, 0% cloud, 0 wind, clear
3	04/10/23	16°C, 40% cloud, 2-3 wind, clear
4	15/09/23	13°C, 80% cloud, 3 wind, cloudy
5	15/05/24	18°C, 20% cloud, 0 wind, clear
6	05/06/24	12°C, 25% cloud, 1 wind, clear