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**BAT AND BARN OWL SURVEY
OF THE DOWNS, TRENOWETH,
ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY**

January 2019



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**BAT AND BARN OWL SURVEY OF THE DOWNS,
TRENOWETH, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY**

O.S. Grid Ref: SV 9180 1243

Survey date: 16th January 2019

Surveyor: Simon Barnard BSc (Hons) MSc CEcol MCIEEM
Class Survey Licence Reg. Nos. 2017-32208-CLS-CLS
(Level 3) & 2015-13541-CLS-CLS (Level 4)

Time spent on site: ¾ hour

Taxonomic groups: Bats
Barn Owls

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Report for: Mr Nathan Dean, Duchy of Cornwall

Report No: 18-30T/DofC/The Down, Trenoweth, St Mary's_BBO

Document approved by: Adrian Spalding PhD Director

Signature: 

Date: 7th February 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

Spalding Associates (Environmental) Ltd were instructed by Mr Nathan Dean of the Duchy of Cornwall to carry out a Bat and Barn Owl survey on a property known as The Downs, Trenoweth, St Marys, Isles of Scilly. The property is in need of re-roofing.

2. DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING

The property subject to this survey is a detached two storey stone house which is divided into two dwellings, there is a small flat on the ground floor and a larger dwelling occupying the remainder of the ground and all of the 1st floor. The house is L-shaped with a hipped slate covered roof, clay ridge tiles and deep soffits with cavities and gaps giving access to the roof void, see photos 1 and 2. At the rear of the building is a single storey lean-to containing the kitchen with another small lean-to on the end of the return on the rear of the building.



Photo 1. Showing the front of the house



Photo 2. Showing the rear of the house

The roof void is a single open L-shaped space with the roof being supported on timber trusses. The underside of the roof is unlined with the roof being covered with wet laid scantle slate but has started leaking, see photo 3. In an attempt to prevent water ingress into the property from leaks in the roof the tenants have started tacking modern roofing membrane to the underside of the rafters, see photo 4. This is not ideal as if bats are using the roof space this could obstruct access to roosting sites and bring bats into contact with the modern roofing membrane which is known to cause bat fatalities through bats becoming entangled with the microfibrils which coat such membranes. The floor is covered with fibreglass insulation and the tenants have now started boarding out the floor.



Photo 3. Showing roof void in return arm



Photo 4. Showing roof void over main part of the house where works have been done

Externally the stone work is well sealed but there appear to be gaps around the soffits, chimney flashings and under some of the ridge tiles, all of which could be used for roosting by bats or allow access into the roof void.

The Downs is located within a small collection of stone buildings in the hamlet of Trenoweth on the northern end of the island of St Mary's. The land around this building is used for growing flowers and is divided by hedges into small fields. St Mary's is covered with small fields laid to pasture and used to grow crops, which are bounded by hedges and hedge banks with small areas of moorland and areas of plantation woodland along with small groups of stone houses and barns. The habitats surrounding the property represent good bat foraging habitat and a number of Common Pipistrelle roosts are known to be present on the island.

3. METHODS

3.1. Bats

With the aid of a pair of high power torches and set of ladders the building was carefully searched internally and externally, where access allowed, for bats or any signs of bat presence, past or present. This included searching for droppings, feeding remains and individuals as well as searching for potential entry points, polishing or scratching of woodwork (indicating use by bats) and for cavities capable of providing roosting space for bats.

All surfaces were examined where accessible, internally and externally, as well as ledges, hanging tiles and other protruding features for bat droppings and feeding evidence. Any cavities present and open areas were searched with a torch, for roosting bats, as were any cavities present along the wall tops, between the roof timbers and walls and around any openings.

As bats can leave little evidence of their occupation, this survey included an assessment of the potential of the building and features of the building to support roosting bats.

The survey was carried out at in the early afternoon and weather was sunny, dry and still with 60% cloud cover and the temperature was 12°C.

3.2. Barn Owls

With the aid of a torch any access points which could admit Barn Owls into the building were searched for and any ledges present within the buildings which were thought to have the potential to be used by nesting or roosting Barn Owls were searched for owl pellets, feathers and nest debris, as were the floors and beneath crossing timbers.

3.3. Swallows and other birds

Suitable ledges and spaces which could provide nesting space for Swallows and other birds were inspected for evidence of previous or current nest building attempts.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Bats

Within the roof void over the house an accumulation of scattered bat droppings belonging to Common Pipistrelles on top of the insulation (approximately 40 to 60 droppings) was found on the floor below the ridge close to the junction where the two arms of the roof meet, see photo 5. In addition directly above this there were droppings caught in cobwebs below the ridge beam which is where it is near certain the bats roost, see photo 6.



Photo 5. Showing a scattering of Common Pipistrelle droppings on the insulation



Photo 6. Showing ridge beam where it is near certain the bats roost and droppings in cobwebs

4.2. Barn Owls

No evidence of the use or occupation of this building by Barn Owls was found and there are no suitable access points which would allow Barn Owls to gain entry to the interior of the building.

4.3. Swallows and other bird species

No evidence of the use or occupation of this building by nesting birds was found

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Bats

During this survey evidence was found which indicates that this building is used for regular day roosting by Common Pipistrelles. As a result further survey work should be undertaken.

This further survey work will aim to establish the number of bats using the building, the status of the roost, and the number of individuals of each species present, confirm if any other species are present and identify the roosting sites and access points.

The further survey should take the form of a pair of emergence surveys, using two surveyors. This further survey work can only be carried out during the active bat season, between May and September.

Once the results of the further survey work have been completed further recommendations can be made.

5.2. Barn Owls

No recommendations necessary.

5.3. Swallows and other bird species

No recommendations necessary.

6. MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENTS

6.1. Bats

The full details of any mitigation needed can only be determined after the further survey work has been completed and full details will be provided in the report of this further survey work.

6.2. Barn Owls

No evidence of the use of this building by Barn Owls was found and so no mitigation is required.

6.3. Swallows and other bird species

No evidence of the use of this building by nesting birds was found and so no mitigation is required.

7. LEGISLATION

7.1. Bats

Bats in England have been protected under a number of regulations and amendments but the most up-to-date and relevant are:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Section 9)

The result of Regulations and Acts is that all species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are protected under law. It is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Deliberately disturb a bat in a way that would affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat at a roost
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost whether bats are present or not
- Damage or destroy a roost whether bats are present or not
- Possess, control, transport, sell exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat

Through the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (this has been updated and consolidated with subsequent amendments by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 mentioned above) bats were designated a European protected species as part of Europe wide effort to conserve certain plant and animal species.

Any development which is likely to result in the disturbance of a European protected species, or damage to its habitat usually requires a European protected species licence from Natural England. 'Development' is interpreted broadly to include projects involving demolition of buildings, rebuilding, structural alterations and additions to buildings.

7.2. Birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to intentionally:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012 require public bodies to help "*preserve, maintain and re-establish habitat for wild birds.*"

Barn Owls and other birds listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are given a further level of protection against disturbance whilst breeding.