

**Table 6.1** *Guidance on the optimal timing for carrying out specialist ecological surveys and mitigation*

This is not definitive and is intended to provide an indication only. The timing of surveys and animal activity will be dependent on factors such as weather conditions. Please consult the *species briefing sheets* for more detailed information, including species distribution.

	KEY
	Recommended survey time
	No surveys
	Mitigation conducted at these times
	Mitigation works restricted

\* Where survey techniques involve the capture, handling or disturbance of *protected species* then only licensed persons can undertake surveys; personal *survey and monitoring* licences are obtained from English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment and Heritage Service (NI) or Scottish Natural Heritage

\*\* Where mitigation involves the killing, capture, injury and/or disturbance of *protected species* and/or the damage, destruction or obstruction of their *habitats*, a *development licence* must be obtained from the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (England), Scottish Executive's Environment and Rural Affairs Department, Welsh Assembly (Countryside Division) or the Environment and Heritage Service Northern Ireland. Licences will be granted only to persons who have proven competence in dealing with the species concerned. Development licence applications

take approximately 30 days to be processed by government departments. Where mitigation works need to be conducted under licence *before* works begin, licence applications will need to be submitted considerably earlier.

		Licence required?	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Habitats / vegetation	Surveys	N	Mosses and lichens. No other detailed plant surveys – Phase 1 surveys only (least suitable time)			Detailed habitat assessment surveys Surveys for higher plants and ferns Mosses and lichens in April, May and September only						Mosses and lichens. No other detailed plant surveys – Phase 1 surveys only (least suitable time)		
	Mitigation	N	Planting and translocation		No mitigation for majority of species							Planting and translocation		
Birds	Surveys	N	Winter birds		Breeding birds / migrant species			Breeding birds		Breeding birds / migrant species			Winter birds	
	Mitigation	N	Clearance works may be conducted at this time, but must stop immediately if any nesting birds are found		No clearance or construction works Bird nesting season					Clearance works may be conducted at this time, but must stop immediately if any nesting birds are found				
Badgers	Surveys	*	All survey methods – best time is in spring and early autumn / winter											
	Mitigation	**	Building of artificial setts No disturbance of existing setts						Stopping up or destruction of existing setts					See Jan to June
Bats	Surveys	*	Inspection of hibernation, tree and building roosts			No surveys	Activity surveys and inspection of building roosts. Emergence counts.					No surveys	Inspection of hibernation, tree and building roosts	
	Mitigation	**	Works on maternity roosts		Works on maternity roosts until mid-May. Works on hibernation roosts from mid-March			Works on hibernation roosts only			Hibernation roosts until November. Maternity roosts from mid-September		Works on maternity roosts only	

<sup>1</sup> Applies in Northern Ireland only

**Table 6.1** *Guidance on the optimal timing for carrying out specialist ecological surveys and mitigation (continued)*

		Licence required?	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dormice	Surveys	*	Nut searches (sub-optimum time)		Nest searches (April sub-optimum time)		Cage traps and hair tube surveys to mid-October Nut searches from September (optimum time September to December) Nest searches (optimum time September to March)						Nut searches and nest searches (optimum time)	
	Mitigation	**	No clearance works				Clearance works (sub-optimum time)	No clearance works			Clearance works to early October (optimum time)		No clearance works	
Otters	Surveys	*	Surveys for otters can potentially be conducted all year round, though vegetation cover and weather conditions may limit the times at which surveys can be carried out											
	Mitigation	**	Mitigation can potentially be conducted in any month, but is likely to be restricted where otters are found to be breeding											
Pine martens	Surveys	*	Surveys may be conducted all year round weather permitting Optimum time is spring and summer. Surveys for breeding dens from March to May.											
	Mitigation	**	Works in areas of pine marten habitat and dens		Avoid all works in pine marten habitat								Works in areas of pine marten habitat and dens	
Red squirrels	Surveys	*	Surveys may be conducted all year round weather permitting Optimum time is spring and summer. Surveys for breeding females from December to September.											
	Mitigation	**	Avoid all works in red squirrel habitat									Works should preferably be conducted at this time		Avoid all works in red squirrel habitat
Water voles (n/a in NI)	Surveys	*	Reduced activity	Initial surveys possible	All survey methods can be used during this period, though vegetation cover and weather conditions may limit the times at which surveys can be carried out. (Optimum time: March to June)							Initial surveys possible	Reduced activity	
	Mitigation	N <sup>2</sup>	Avoid all works in water vole habitat			Works in water voles habitat possible	Avoid all works in water vole habitat			Works in water vole habitat possible		Avoid all works in water vole habitat		
Sand lizards, smooth snakes (n/a in NI) <sup>1</sup> and common lizards	Surveys	*	No surveys – reptiles in hibernation		Activity surveys from March to June and in September / October. Surveys are limited by high temperatures during July and August. Peak survey months are April, May and September.							No surveys – reptiles in hibernation		
	Mitigation	**	Scrub clearance		Capture and translocation programmes can only be conducted whilst reptiles are active (March to June and September / October). Trapping is limited by high temperatures during July / August. Scrub clearance							Scrub clearance		

<sup>2</sup> The extent of legal protection of the water vole is currently under review; it has been proposed to fully protect water voles, as well as their habitats.

**Table 6.1** *Guidance on the optimal timing for carrying out specialist ecological surveys and mitigation (continued)*

		Licence required?	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Other reptiles	Surveys	N	No surveys – reptiles in hibernation		Activity surveys from March to June and in September / October. Surveys are limited by high temperatures during July and August Peak survey months are April, May and September.								No surveys – reptiles in hibernation	
	Mitigation	N	Scrub clearance		Capture and translocation programmes can only be conducted whilst reptiles are active (March to June and September / October). Trapping is limited by high temperatures during July / August Scrub clearance								Scrub clearance	
Great crested newts (n/a in NI)	Surveys	*	No surveys – newts in hibernation		Pond surveys for adults: mid-March to mid-June. Surveys must include visits undertaken between mid-April and mid-May. Egg surveys April to mid-June. Larvae surveys from mid-May Terrestrial habitat surveys				Larvae surveys to mid-August Terrestrial habitat surveys		Terrestrial habitat surveys		No surveys – newts in hibernation	
	Mitigation	**	No trapping of newts Pond management only		Newt trapping programmes in ponds and on land				Newt trapping on land only				No trapping of newts Pond management only	
Natterjack toads	Surveys	*	No surveys - toads in hibernation			Surveys of breeding ponds for adults. Surveys for tadpoles from May onwards. Surveys for adults on land				Surveys for adults on land.		No surveys – toads in hibernation		
	Mitigation	**	Pond management works			Trapping of adults in ponds from April to July. Trapping of adults on land Trapping of tadpoles from May to early September						Pond management works		
White-clawed crayfish	Surveys	*	Reduced activity			Surveys can be undertaken	Avoid surveys (females are releasing young)		Optimum time for surveys				Reduced activity	
	Mitigation	***	Avoid capture programmes (low activity levels may lead to animals being easily missed)			Exclusion of crayfish from construction areas.	Avoid capture programmes		Exclusion of crayfish from construction areas				Avoid capture programmes (low activity levels may lead to animals being easily missed)	
Fish	Surveys	*	For coastal, river and stream-dwelling species, the timing of surveys will depend on the migration pattern of the species concerned Where surveys require information on breeding, the timing of surveys will need to coincide with the breeding period, which may be summer or winter months, depending on the species											
	Mitigation	**	Mitigation for the protection of watercourses is required at all times of year. Mitigation for particular fish species will need to be timed so as to avoid the breeding season. This varies from species to species.											

\*\*\* Where mitigation involves the capture of white-clawed crayfish, a mitigation licence must be obtained from English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment and Heritage Service (NI) or Scottish Natural Heritage. Licences will be granted only to persons who have proven competence in dealing with the species concerned.