



Advice for land managers

Best practice guidance for working alongside European protected species

Following changes to the Habitats Regulations, introduced on 21 August 2007, anyone carrying out certain land management activities, including some required as part of an agri-environment agreement (Environmental Stewardship, Countryside Stewardship, ESA), will need to consider first the presence of certain protected species and, if any are present, ensure that their work does not disturb the species or damage their resting place or breeding site.

Natural England's view is that in most places most agri-environment work will not conflict with these European Protected Species (EPS). However, farmers, land managers and their contractors should still check before carrying out any work to reduce the risk of inadvertently breaching the revised Regulations.

The main species likely to be encountered in the agricultural setting are:

Bats	Roosts in buildings, trees
Dormouse	Nests in coppiced woods or thick bushy hedges
Otters	Associated with open fresh and salt water
Great Crested Newts	Ponds and their surrounds
Smooth Snake	Lowland heath, mainly in Dorset and Hampshire
Sand lizard	Lowland heath or coastal sand dunes, mainly in Dorset
Natterjack Toad	Sand dunes, saltmarsh and lowland heath, mostly in Suffolk, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Lancashire and Cumbria, with other isolated populations
Large Blue Butterfly	Known grassland areas in the south-west

The associated series of information leaflets [URL link] is designed to assist you with checking for the likely presence of any of these species on your farm before carrying out management work. They also offer good practice advice on how to avoid damaging the species and hence how to avoid breaching the revised Habitats Regulations. In many cases you will find that the prescriptions of your agri-environment agreement are already consistent with the advice. Where this is not the case you may find that you need to follow more defined restrictions, for instance on timing of operations.

If you have any concerns about your agri-environment agreement and its impact on European Protected Species please contact your local Natural England adviser. If you do not know your local adviser or for any other enquiries please contact the Natural England Helpline on 0845 600 3078 or email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk