

Land North of Melton Drive, Storrington,
West Sussex

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

Prepared in Respect of Condition 14 of
Application Reference DC/24/2006

June 2026

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Aspect Ecology has been appointed by Matthew Homes Ltd to prepare a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy in respect of Land North of Melton Drive, Storrington, West Sussex, centred at grid reference TQ 08821 15272, herein referred to as 'the site'. The site is the subject of outline planning permission for the demolition of a barn and erection of up to 62 dwellings (including affordable homes) with all matters reserved apart from access (Ref. DC/24/2006), from Horsham District Council, subject to conditions.

1.1.2 Condition 14 requires the preparation of a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy and states:

'As part of each reserved matters application and prior to development above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for Protected and Priority species shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;*
- b) Detailed designs to achieve stated objectives;*
- c) Locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans;*
- d) Persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures;*
- e) Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).*

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: *To enhance Protected and Priority Species/habitats and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species) in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).'*

1.1.3 This document should be read in conjunction with RSK's Ecological Impact Assessment, and Outline Mitigation Strategy, both dated December 2024, which accompanied the outline application. These previous reports recommended the following faunal enhancements:

- Installation of bat boxes on buildings and in woodland. One box per four new buildings (25% ratio);
- Installation of bird boxes on buildings and in woodland. One box per four new buildings (25% ratio);
- Installation of 25 Dormouse nest boxes in retained, enhanced, or created hedgerows and woodland;
- Provision of hibernacula and log piles for amphibians and reptiles.

1.1.4 Matthew Homes intends to submit a reserved matters application for the full 62 dwellings; accordingly, the following report and accompanying plans / appendices are intended to demonstrate how the above enhancements are to be incorporated within the development.

2 Faunal Enhancements

2.1 Purpose and Conservation Objectives for the Proposed Enhancement Measures

2.1.1 The proposed biodiversity enhancement measures have been designed to provide a measurable ecological benefit associated with the development, in accordance with national and local planning policy objectives for biodiversity conservation and enhancement. The measures specifically target protected and priority species known or considered likely to occur within the local landscape, with the aim of strengthening habitat availability, increasing opportunities for shelter, roosting and breeding, and improving the ecological functionality of the site over the long term.

2.1.2 The enhancement strategy will provide a positive contribution towards the conservation of Priority Habitats and Species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and accords with the objectives of Horsham District Council Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity¹, which seeks to protect, restore and enhance ecological networks and secure measurable biodiversity enhancements as part of new development.

2.1.3 The enhancement strategy seeks to achieve the following overarching conservation objectives:

- Enhance the site's ecological value through the provision of additional habitat features for protected and priority fauna;
- Increase the availability of suitable nesting, roosting, refuge and overwintering opportunities within the site;
- Support local populations of declining or legally protected species through the creation of durable and appropriately located habitat resources;
- Secure biodiversity enhancements that will remain functional throughout the operational lifetime of the development; and
- Contribute positively to the conservation status of Section 41 Priority Species and associated habitats within the local area.

Bat Boxes

2.1.4 Bat roost features will provide additional opportunities for day roosting, transitional roosting and sheltering for bat species likely to utilise the surrounding landscape for commuting and foraging. The boxes are intended to enhance the availability of small-scale roosting habitat within an area where suitable natural features may be limited or fragmented.

Bird Boxes

2.1.5 Bird nesting boxes will provide supplementary nesting opportunities for small cavity-nesting bird species, including species of conservation concern commonly associated with residential and semi-rural environments. The measures aim to support local breeding bird populations and increase nesting resource availability within the site.

¹ Local Plan Adopted November 2015 (Horsham District Planning Framework). Accessed March 2026.

Dormouse Boxes

- 2.1.6 Dormouse nesting boxes are proposed to provide additional resting and nesting opportunities for Hazel Dormice within retained and enhanced boundary vegetation. The measures are intended to support habitat utilisation, refuge availability and ecological connectivity for this species within the wider landscape.

Reptile Hibernacula

- 2.1.7 Constructed hibernacula will provide suitable overwintering and refuge habitat for common reptile species through the creation of stable microclimatic conditions and protected shelter spaces. These features will also offer incidental benefit to amphibians and invertebrates.

Log Piles and Deadwood Habitat

- 2.1.8 Log piles and retained deadwood features will increase habitat structural diversity and provide refugia, basking opportunities and foraging resources for reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and small mammals. Deadwood habitats are an important component of healthy ecosystems and will contribute to the long-term ecological resilience of the site.

2.2 Detailed Designs / Specifications and Aftercare / Maintenance

Bats

- 2.2.1 A total of 16 integrated bat boxes, utilising type Habibat box, or similar will be installed into a proportion of the new dwellings (see Plan 20134/BES1 for locations and specifications). The bat boxes will provide new roosting opportunities for bats in the area, such as Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, a national Priority Species. To maximise their potential use, the bat boxes will be installed no lower than 3m from ground level. The boxes will be sited in sheltered, wind-free areas that are exposed to sun for part of the day. Bat boxes will be located away from any lighting fixtures, doors and windows so as not to disrupt potential use of the boxes.
- 2.2.2 *Maintenance.* The bat boxes are constructed from durable, rot-proof and predator-proof materials, and are long lasting. The bat boxes are maintenance-free and self-cleaning. Should any repairs to bat boxes be required, a suitably qualified and licensed ecologist should be consulted to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation (see Appendix 20134/1), as bats may be present throughout the year and must not be disturbed.

Birds

- 2.2.3 A total of 16 bird boxes will be integrated within buildings to provide additional nesting opportunities for birds including the Priority Species House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* and Swift *Apus apus*. The bird boxes will comprise integrated Swift bricks, or equivalent, which are suitable for Swift and other cavity-nesting birds, e.g. House Sparrow, (see Plan 20134/BES1 for locations and specifications). To maximise their potential use, the bird boxes will be installed at a minimum height of 5m such that they are not vulnerable to predation by cats or liable to vandalism. The bird boxes will be sited in sheltered, wind-free areas, facing in a northerly or easterly direction. The bird boxes will not be located directly above any windows or doorways.
- 2.2.4 *Maintenance.* The bird boxes are constructed from durable, rot-proof and predator-proof materials, and are long lasting, with no maintenance required. Any works to repair or

replace bird boxes shall be undertaken in the autumn or winter months (i.e. outside March to August inclusive) when they are least likely to be in use.

Dormouse

2.2.5 A total of 25 Dormouse nest boxes will be erected within the retained woodland and hedgerows to provide additional nesting opportunities for Dormouse (see Plan 20134/BES1 for proposed locations and specifications). Dormouse boxes will be erected onto suitable trees / mature shrubs at a height of between 1.2m to 1.5m. The boxes are to be secured using adjustable wire, straps or nails suitable for arboricultural use, ensuring fixings do not cause unnecessary damage or constriction as vegetation grows. The entrance hole shall face towards the tree or shrub trunk to provide greater shelter and reduce predation risk.

2.2.6 *Maintenance.* The Dormouse nest boxes are constructed from durable, rot-proof and predator-proof materials, and are long lasting, with no maintenance required. Should any works to repair or replace Dormouse boxes be required, these should be undertaken in winter (November to March inclusive) when boxes are not expected to be in use, to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation (see Appendix 20134/1).

Reptiles

2.2.7 To provide additional habitat for reptiles, two hibernacula and three log piles will be created along the northern site boundary, near the enhanced grasslands, SUDs and newly planted woodland (see Plan 20134/BES1 for locations and specifications). The hibernacula will be created by digging a square trench, approximately 1m² and 40cm deep, and filling with rubble, bricks, wood and vegetation cuttings to a height of approx. 1m. The hibernacula piles will be capped with spoil from the excavation, which will be used to loosely fill and cover the hibernacula, and turfs laid over the top. The rapid establishment of vegetation cover is important to keep the structure together. If this cannot be achieved by use of turf, then seeding with a suitable seed mix may be required. Several entrance/exit points will be made into the central chamber to allow access to reptiles, for shelter and for usage during the winter months for hibernation.

2.2.8 Log piles will be created using a mixture of stacked logs, branches, brash and other woody arisings, arranged in a loose and stable formation to a height of approximately 1m. Larger logs will form the base of the structure, with smaller branches and vegetation cuttings layered throughout to create a network of sheltered voids and cavities. The piles may be partially covered with earth spoil and turfs to aid stability and moisture retention, while allowing natural vegetation to establish over time. Rapid colonisation by vegetation is desirable to help bind the structure together and provide additional shelter and foraging opportunities. If natural regeneration is limited, seeding with an appropriate native grassland seed mix may be required. Several access points and open gaps will be retained within the pile to allow use by reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and invertebrates for refuge, basking, foraging and overwintering.

2.2.9 *Maintenance.* Grassland over the reptile hibernacula shall be managed as tussocky rough grassland with varied sward structure, to provide suitable cover, humidity buffering and basking opportunities for reptiles. Management shall comprise a light-touch rotational cut regime, typically once annually or every 2–3 years during late autumn or winter, with arisings removed to prevent nutrient enrichment and sections of uncut vegetation retained to maintain habitat continuity and structural diversity. Scrub and invasive species shall be controlled periodically to prevent excessive shading or root penetration.

- 2.2.10 Log piles shall be managed as permanent deadwood habitat features to provide refugia, basking, sheltering and foraging opportunities for reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and small mammals. Management shall comprise periodic inspection to ensure the piles remain structurally intact, whilst retaining a range of timber sizes, decay stages and internal void spaces. Additional deadwood material shall be added as required to compensate for natural decomposition over time and maintain habitat functionality. Vegetation immediately surrounding the log piles shall be managed to retain a varied sward structure and avoid complete shading or excessive scrub encroachment.

Hedgehogs

- 2.2.11 To maintain connectivity throughout the site for Hedgehog and to allow access to suitable foraging habitat contained within residential gardens, small holes (~13cm x 13cm) will be created within garden fences or under gates (see Plan 20134/BES1 for locations and specifications).
- 2.2.12 *Maintenance.* Hedgehog access points require no specific maintenance. Information will be provided to new homeowners to highlight the presence of Hedgehog holes, their purpose and how their functionality can be maintained.

2.3 Timetable for Implementation

- 2.3.1 Dormouse nest boxes will be installed prior to the commencement of construction. Bat and bird boxes and Hedgehog gaps in fences will be provided during the construction of the dwellings / plots. Material used to create the log piles and fill the reptile hibernaculum will come from vegetation clearance and building materials on site and will therefore be installed during the construction period. All biodiversity enhancements will therefore be provided prior to the practical completion occupation of the development.

2.4 Persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures

- 2.4.1 The developer will be responsible for implementing the enhancement measures prior to practical completion of the development. On completion of the development, the appointed Management Company will undertake ongoing monitoring and remedial measures as required, as detailed above (such as checking the condition of the bat boxes).
- 2.4.2 The BES will be reviewed by the appointed Management Company annually in consultation with a suitably qualified ecologist, where appropriate, and updated if necessary to ensure management activities continue to deliver a benefit for biodiversity in the long term.

Plan 20134/BES1:

Biodiversity Enhancements Plan

Habibat Integrated Bat Box

This bat box has been designed to be incorporated into the fabric of buildings and to encourage the use by species such as Pipistrelles, Natterer's, Whiskered and Brandt's bats which are more commonly found roosting in buildings. They are larger in size than other similar boxes, and can accomodate more bats. The internal structure is not split into chambers and with the unique arrow head interval fixings allows bats the congregate in different different areas. The box is available in either Staffordshire Smooth Red, or Smooth Blue, but can also be manufactured to suit any other brick type.

Dimensions: 440mm x215mm x 102mm



Reptile Hibernaculum

The design mimics artificial and natural conditions in which reptiles have frquently been found over-wintering. Dimensions should not be less than 2m length x 1m width x 1m height. The illustrated deisgn would be suitable for locating on an impermeable substrate. On free-draining substrates the design is largely similar, but the bulk of the fill is sited in an excavated depression in the ground. Hibernacula should ideally be positioned in suitable terrestrial habitat for reptiles.



Dormouse Nest Box

A solidly built softwood box designed to support dormouse populations. Site boxes well away from public areas, near a potential routeway such as honeysuckle or leaning branches. Position approximately 1.5m above ground, on trees or other suitable support, with the hole facing inwards. Use wire loops rather than nails so the boxes can be easily removed.

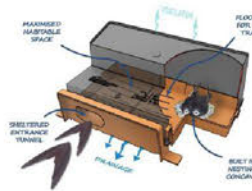
Dimensions: 200mm x 142mm x 188mm, Weight: 1.32kg



Manthorpe Swift Nest Brick

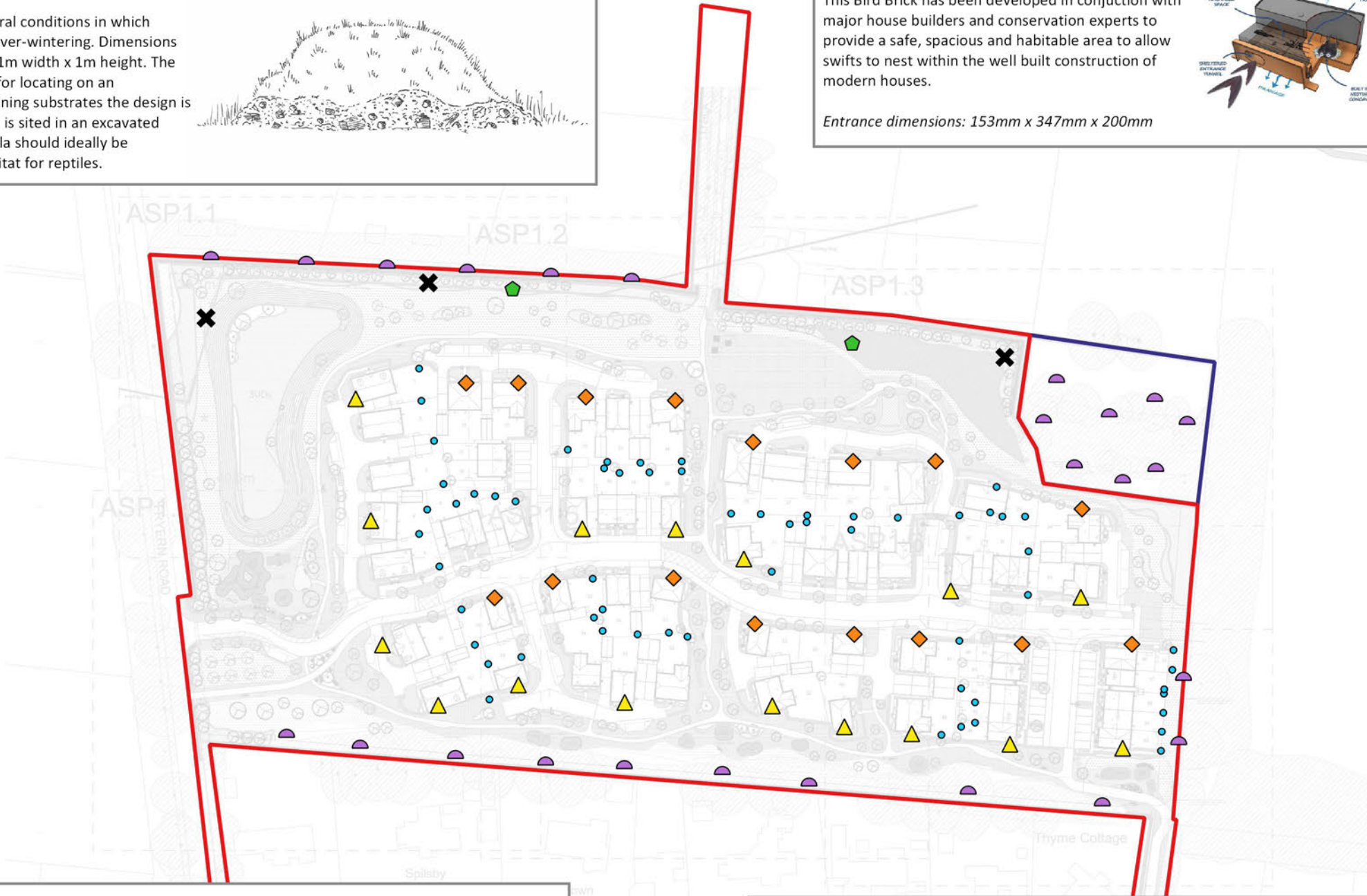
This Bird Brick has been developed in conjunction with major house builders and conservation experts to provide a safe, spacious and habitable area to allow swifts to nest within the well built construction of modern houses.

Entrance dimensions: 153mm x 347mm x 200mm



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Wider Survey Area
- Bird Box [16]
- Bat Box [16]
- Dormouse Nest Box [25]
- Hedgehog Cut-out [62]
- Log Pile [3]
- Reptile Hibernaculum [2]



Hedgehog Cut-out Installation

Positioned at the corner of the screen fence to connect neighbouring gardens. Generally, there should be 2 per garden, one each side to provide Hedgehog access and prevent entrapment.

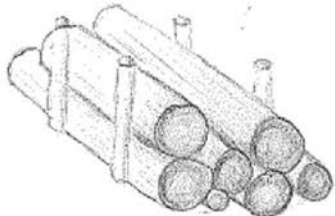
Cut a 130mm x 130mm square hole in the bottom of the garden fence or wall, with the Hedgehog Highway by Timloc (or similar) as a guide. Line up the Hedgehog Highway with the hole and secure in place with screws.



Log piles

Log piles constructed using cut brush and logs, preferably from oak, beech, or fruit tree, as these support the richest insect communities. These log piles also provide sheltering opportunities for reptiles, small mammals and invertebrates.

Dimensions: 2000mm x 2000mm x 500mm



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Land North of Melton Drive,
Storrington
Biodiversity Enhancements Plan

20134/BES1

C/LS

June 2026

CB/LS



Appendix 20134/1:

Legislation Summary

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

1. In England and Wales primary legislation is made by the UK Parliament, and in Scotland by the Scottish Parliament, in the form of Acts. The main piece of legislation relating to nature conservation in the UK is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
2. Acts of Parliament confer powers on Ministers to make more detailed orders, rules or regulations by means of secondary legislation in the form of statutory instruments. Statutory instruments are used to provide the necessary detail that would be too complex to include in an Act itself¹. The provisions of an Act of Parliament can also be enforced, amended or updated by secondary legislation.
3. In summary, the key pieces of legislation relating to nature conservation in the UK are:
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - [REDACTED]
 - Hedgerows Regulations 1997
 - Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act for England and Wales 2000
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
 - Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
4. A brief summary of the relevant legislation is provided below. The original Acts and instruments should be referred to for the full and most up to date text of the legislation.
5. **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)**. The WCA Act provides for the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) identified for their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features. The Act contains strict measures for the protection and management of SSSIs.
6. The Act also refers to the treatment of UK wildlife including protected species listed under Schedules 1 (birds), 5 (mammals, herpetofauna, fish, invertebrates) and 8 (plants).
7. Under Section 1(1) of the Act, all wild birds are protected such that it is an offence to intentionally:
 - Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst in use* or being built;
 - Take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

* The nests of birds that re-use their nests as listed under Schedule ZA1, e.g. Golden Eagle, are protected against taking, damage or destruction irrespective of whether they are in use or not.
8. Offences in respect of Schedule 1 birds are subject to special, i.e. higher, penalties. Schedule 1 birds also receive greater protection such that it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
 - Disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or while it is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young;
 - Disturb dependent young of such a bird.

¹ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/bills-and-legislation/secondary-legislation/statutory-instruments/>

9. Under Section 9(1) of the Act, it is an offence to:
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5.
10. In addition, under Section 9(4) it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
- Obstruct access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; or
 - Disturb any wild animal included in Schedule 5 while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
11. Under Section 13(1) it is an offence:
- To intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8; or
 - Unless the authorised person, to intentionally uproot any wild plant not included in Schedule 8.
12. The Act also contains measures (S.14) for preventing the establishment of non-native species that may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the introduction into the wild of animals (releases or allows to escape) and plants (plants or causes to grow) listed under Schedule 9.
13. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
14. Licences can be obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) for development activities that would otherwise be unlawful under the legislation, provided there is suitable justification. The SNCO for England is Natural England.
15. **Hedgerows Regulations 1997.** 'Important' hedgerows (as defined by the Regulations) are protected from removal (up-rooting or otherwise destroying). Various criteria specified in the Regulations are employed to identify 'important' hedgerows for wildlife, landscape or historical reasons.
16. **Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act for England and Wales 2000.** The CROW Act provides increased measures for the management and protection of SSSIs and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation. Schedule 12 of the Act amends the species provisions of the WCA 1981, strengthening the legal protection for threatened species. The Act also introduced a duty on Government to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity and maintain lists of species and habitats for which conservation steps should be taken or promoted, in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

17. **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.** Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as local planning authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when exercising their normal functions. 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance are included on the S41 list. These are all the habitats and species in England that were identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).
18. **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).** The Regulations enact the European Union's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in the UK. The Habitats Directive was designed to contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity within member states through the conservation of sites, known in the UK as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), containing habitats and species selected as being of EC importance (as listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive respectively). Member states are required to take measures to maintain or restore these natural and semi-natural habitats and wild species at a favourable conservation status.
19. The Regulations also require the compilation and maintenance of a register of European sites, to include SACs and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)² classified under Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive). These sites constitute the Natura 2000 network. The Regulations impose restrictions on planning decisions likely to significantly affect SPAs or SACs.
20. The Regulations also provide protection to European Protected Species of animals that largely overlaps with the WCA 1981, albeit the provisions are generally stricter. Under Regulation 43 it is an offence, *inter alia*, to:
 - Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species;
 - Deliberately disturb any wild animals of any such species, including in particular any disturbance likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or which is likely to affect significantly their local distribution or abundance;
 - Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal;
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.
21. Similar protection is afforded to European Protected Species of plants, as detailed under Regulation 47.
22. The Regulations do provide a licensing system that permits otherwise illegal activities in relation to European Protected Species, subject to certain tests being fulfilled.

² Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) (aka the Birds Directive), which came into force in April 1979. SPAs are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species.

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