

Surveys for Bat, Otter and Water Vole

A82, Ba Bridge

September 2007

Produced for
Scotland TranServ

Prepared by
Toby Fisher
Senior Ecologist

93 Water Lane
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS11 5QN
UK

T 0113 203 5600
F 0113 203 5601

Document Control Sheet

Project Title	A82, Ba Bridge
Report Title	Surveys for Bat, Otter and Water Vole
Revision	0
Status	FINAL
Control Date	September 2007

Record of Issue

Issue	Status	Author	Date	Check	Date	Authorised	Date
1	ISSUED	T Fisher	Sep 07	C Parkinson	Sep 07	T Fisher	Sep 07

Contents

- 1 Introduction3**
- 2 Methodology.....4**
 - 2.0 Water vole4
 - 2.1 Otter4
 - 2.2 Bats4
- 3 Results5**
 - 3.0 Water vole5
 - 3.1 Otter5
 - 3.2 Bats5
- 4 Recommendations6**
 - 4.0 Otter6
 - 4.1 Water voles and bats6
- 5 References7**

1 Introduction

Mouchel Parkman Services Limited was commissioned by Scotland TranServ in July 2007 to undertake surveys for bats, otters and water voles at Ba Bridge on the A82. This report presents the results of these surveys and it is anticipated that this report will form an appendix to the Environmental Statement (ES) relating to improvements to this bridge.

Ba Bridge is located at National Grid Reference NN 309494 spanning River Ba as part of the A82 running broadly South-East to North-West between Tyndrum and Ballachulish.

Ba Bridge lies within Rannoch Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and immediately adjacent to both Rannoch Moor Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Rannoch Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA).

2 Methodology

2.0 Water vole

Specialist surveys for water vole *Arvicola terrestris* covered all potentially suitable habitat within ~100m of the bridge on 11th August 2007. The survey was based on the methodology described in Strachan and Moorhouse (2006) and involved detailed searches for field signs such as droppings, latrines, feeding stations, burrows, footprints and runs.

2.1 Otter

In conjunction with the surveys for water vole, the banks of the River Ba within 100m of the bridge were subject to detailed searches for signs of otter such as spraint, feeding remains and footprints, based on the methodology described in Chanin (2003), paying particular attention to likely sprainting sites such as around the bridge.

2.2 Bats

The bridge was subject to a daytime assessment in terms of its potential to support bats on 11th August 2007. The bridge was also searched for signs of bats such as droppings, staining and bat corpses using close focussing binoculars where appropriate.

A dusk emergence survey was undertaken on 11th August (see Table 1 below) which involved two bat surveyors positioned either side of the bridge, in accordance with the methodology outlined in The Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones 2004). The surveys were undertaken during suitable weather conditions using hand-held heterodyne / frequency-division bat detectors (model: Duet Bat-Box).

Table 1: Survey conditions during bat dusk emergence survey

Date	11 th August 2007
Sunset time	20:59
Survey time	20:40 – 22:10
Weather conditions	Dry; cloud 7/8; still; start temp ~15°C; end temp ~13°C

3 Results

3.0 *Water vole*

Despite a specific search, no signs of water voles were recorded. The river banks along this stretch appear to be largely unsuitable for water vole due to the rocky and stony substrate although some opportunities for burrowing appear to exist in some areas.

3.1 *Otter*

A fresh wet otter spraint was found on the grassy bank immediately south-west of Ba Bridge. Its location on a path which leads over the A82 suggests that otters may cross the live carriageway here. No potential holt sites were identified within 100m of the bridge.

3.2 *Bats*

The daytime inspection of the bridge revealed that superficially it is in generally good condition with very few cracks or crevices suitable for bat roosts.

The survey did not reveal any bat roosts within the bridge. The only bat recorded was a single common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* recorded at 21:32 foraging briefly around the bridge. The time of this record approximately 30 minutes after sunset suggests that it was roosting fairly nearby.

4 Recommendations

4.0 *Otter*

If practicable, an otter ledge should be installed on the underside of the bridge to encourage safe crossing of the A82 by otters. Further guidance and design options are available in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 10, Section 4, Part 4¹.

4.1 *Water voles and bats*

No further surveys or mitigation is considered necessary for water voles and bats.

¹ <http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/dmr/vol10/section4/ha8199.pdf>

5 References

Chanin, P. 2003. *Monitoring the Otter Lutra lutra. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No. 10.* English Nature: Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones A, J. 2004. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines.* English Nature, Peterborough.

Strachan, R. and Moorhouse, T. 2006. *Water Vole Conservation Handbook – Second Edition.* Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, Oxford University.