

# Approaches to surveying & methods of working at small sites



# Overview



- The wrong end of the nest tube?
- The legislation: spirit and end game
- Pragmatism and proportionality
- Some case studies
- The way forward

Photo credit: Di Clark @ Koru Ecology Associates



# The wrong end of the nest tube



- What are we trying to achieve?
- Process vs outcomes
- Most time/effort/money spent on surveys and reporting
- Least spent on on-site delivery, enforcement and monitoring
- Do we have SUCCESS?

Photo credit: Sian Musgrave @ Amber Environmental Consultancy

# What are we trying to achieve?



- The offences under the Habitats Regulations 2017
- Aim is to prevent all these things
- Licensing is a defense
- BUT must maintain favourable conservation status

Photo credit: Di Clark @ Koru Ecology Associates



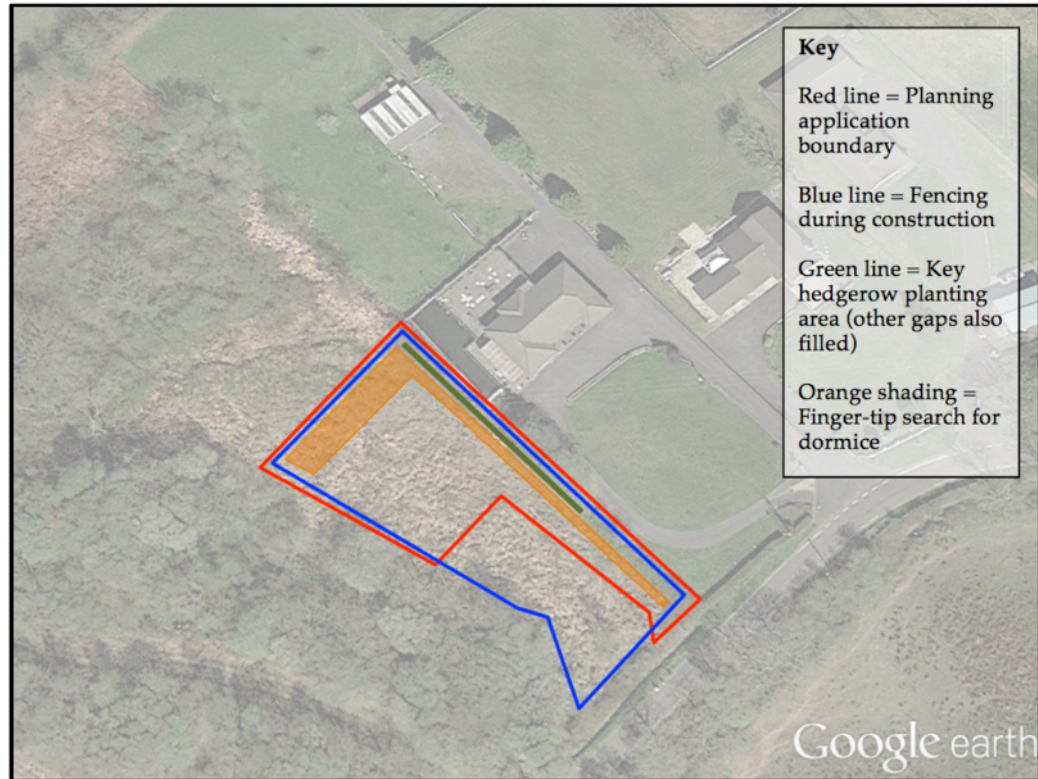
# Case study: Mr Jones



- Wants to build house in small field
- PEA recommended dormouse survey
- Cost was upwards of £3K
- Time implications
- More money for a licence, if needed
- Mr Jones was unhappy
- What could he do instead?

Photo credit: Di Clark @ Koru Ecology Associates

# Site Meeting



- 9 people on site for a meeting
- Finger-tip search replaced ‘traditional’ survey
- Two-stage cutting of grass and young birch/bramble scrub
- Retention of all boundary features, fencing during construction
- Gap-filling hedges

Figure credit: Baker Consultants

# What did we achieve?



- **No killing/injury/disturbance to dormice occurred**
- Retention/strengthening of existing boundary habitat
- Mr Jones parted with less money and discharged his planning conditions v quickly
- He also still likes dormice and doesn't hate all ecologists

Photo credit: Sian Musgrave @ Amber Environmental Consultancy

# Case study: ECoW works under MS



- Project near Bridgend
- Small area of low-quality habitat to be removed for pipeline works
- Likelihood of dormice was low
- Full surveys considered to be over-onerous and cause time delays
- On-site supervision by ECoW, checking all suitable habitat before before removal

Photo credit: Sian Musgrave @ Amber Environmental Consultancy



# What did we achieve?



Photo credit: Di Clark @ Koru Ecology Associates

- **No killing/injury/disturbance to dormice occurred**
- Several days on site, as opposed to surveys for most of a year
- Pipeline company could get on with the job with minimal time delay and financial implications
- Pipeline company also still likes dormice and doesn't hate all ecologists



# The end game: Article 2

1. The aim of this Directive shall be to contribute towards ensuring bio-diversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the Treaty applies.
2. Measures taken pursuant to this Directive shall be designed to maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest.
3. Measures taken pursuant to this Directive shall take account of economic, social and cultural requirements and regional and local characteristics.

- (a) the species or subspecies of animal or plant to which the licence relates;
- (b) the maximum number of specimens which may be taken or be in the possession or control of the person authorised by the licence, or which particular specimens may be taken or be in the possession or control of that person; and
- (c) the conditions subject to which the action authorised by the licence may be taken and in particular—
  - (i) the methods, means or arrangements by which specimens may be taken or be in the possession or control of the person authorised by the licence;
  - (ii) when or over what period the action authorised by the licence may be taken; and
  - (iii) where the licence authorises any person to take specimens, the area from which they may be taken.

(9) The relevant licensing body must not grant a licence under this regulation unless it is satisfied—

- (a) that there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- (b) that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

# Is there another way?



Photo credit: Di Clark @ Koru Ecology Associates

- Less onerous methods of survey for small sites, i.e. finger tip searches
- The use of method statements where risk is likely to be low
- Simpler licensing system, with emphasis on The End Game?
- Long-term change of perceptions amongst developers – ecology not a frustration or a barrier

# Diolch yn fawr iawn am wrando!

## Thanks very much for listening!

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