

ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST

POLICY FOR SPECIES RECORDING ON ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST NATURE RESERVES

Approved by Board of Trustees on 29th April 2014

Review date: October 2015



Introduction

All of our nature reserves are open to our members and the public. The Trust actively encourages people to visit and appreciate the wildlife of Essex and we often put in infrastructure such as car parks, hides and boardwalks to give greater access to view wildlife. However there has to be a balance between allowing public access and preventing disturbance to wildlife and so the Trust limits public access to public rights of way and permissive paths.

The health and safety of visitors on our nature reserves is very important and the Trust will endeavour to ensure that our paths are safe from hazards. However, away from permissive paths there could be hazards, either natural or man-made.

Because Essex Wildlife Trust manages some of the best wildlife sites in Essex, our nature reserves are home to many rare and protected species and the Trust has a duty, sometimes legal, to ensure they are safeguarded.

Having good species records on our reserves is important. Good records can help make good informed management decisions, build up a pattern of species success across Essex and can influence local plans if wildlife is built into the plan.

The intention of the policy is not to restrict or stop recording on our nature reserves but to ensure that we are looking after people who wish to undertake recording, looking after the interests of the wildlife and ensuring that the Trust receives good species records.

Recording from a public right of way or permissive path

A public right of access through a nature reserve does not automatically constitute a right to survey, and permission should ordinarily be requested to record on our reserves. This can be assumed to be granted on reserves where facilities exist for reporting records, for example if sightings boards or recording forms are available. No permit is required if people wish to walk around our reserves on public rights of way and the permissive paths enjoying and recording their visit. The Trust encourages anyone recording on our reserves to submit their records to us wherever possible.

Recording away from a public right of way or permissive path

If people wish to undertake recording by means of leaving the recognised public rights of way and permissive paths to gain access to parts of the reserve not normally open to the public, then a permit from the Reserves Manager needs to be obtained. The permit can be issued to an individual or to a recognised group. The main intention of issuing the

permit is to ensure the safety of the recorder by informing them of any hazards and to also inform the local volunteer warden so they know what is going on at the reserve. There may be circumstances where access is not permitted or special conditions imposed e.g. during breeding bird season or to sensitive areas containing rare species.

The permit will be for a period up to a maximum of a year and the individual or group will need to reapply after the set period. This permit does not allow the picking or collecting of living things. It is required that any biological records obtained from surveys requiring a permit will be submitted to the Trust.

Recording of protected species, collecting or trapping of living animals, destructive survey techniques

Many people wish to take their work further and this may involve:

- **Collecting / trapping** any plants or animals for identification or breeding,
- Survey of **protected species** as identified in the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended).
- **Destructive survey techniques**, for example for pitfall trapping, stripping bark, moving deadwood, or otherwise **changing the habitat**.

The main intention of this permit is to look after wildlife. Here the work could involve, trapping of animals and the Trust would wish to know how the trapping would be done, what the target species are etc. If the work involves looking at protected species the Trust would be concerned that the work is properly licensed and is not harming the species or the habitat. We need to know what is going on in order to prevent illegal activities like collecting, trapping or killing.

To obtain a permit for this type of activity a written proposal of the work needs to be submitted to the Conservation Manager for approval before a permit can be issued; the volunteer or staff wardens will normally be asked to comment on the proposed work. Normally a permit would be issued annually but in the case of research work that is longer than a year the permit can be extended to the limited length of the research work. It is required that any biological records obtained from surveys requiring a permit will be submitted to the Trust.

Submitting records

Essex Wildlife Trust can accept records in most formats, but digitised records are preferred. These can be in the form of a Mapmate Sync file (copies of Mapmate and training can be provided to Trust volunteers); a formatted Excel spreadsheet (templates are available); or by submitting records via the Essex Wildlife Trust records website: www.essexwtrecords.org.uk. Guidance on recording and template recording forms can be downloaded from the Trust website or obtained from the Biological Records Officer.

Completed recording forms and Mapmate sync files should be sent to the Biological Records Officer or to records@essexwt.org.uk.

Data sharing and use

Essex Wildlife Trust collates and manages data collected by its staff, volunteers and members, with a view to enabling evidence based conservation and land management to optimise biodiversity across Essex. The Trust also aims to work with external

organisations that wish to share their data in order that information on species and habitats in Essex is available as widely as possible to those who require them. To this end, the Trust is working to set up a local records centre (LRC), and work with interested partner organisations to promote data sharing for the benefit of conservation in Essex.

It is anticipated that any records collected on Trust reserves, whether collected with or without a permit, should be supplied without charge to the Trust, no later than the end of the calendar year in which they are collected. There should be no restrictions placed on the use of this data, unless the records are of a sensitive nature, in which case any restrictions on use should be agreed with Essex Wildlife Trust before data collection commences. Any data collected remains the property of the person who created it, or the organisation they represent, unless otherwise specified.

For Essex Wildlife Trust to hold and use computerised records we need consent from the original recorder to store the data under the Data Protection Act. Recorder names are added to our database to assist with following up and verifying records, but the Trust does not usually pass recorder details on to third parties. By submitting records to the Trust, recorders are consenting to their details being stored and used in this way.

Requests to obtain data from Essex Wildlife Trust (whether from Trust reserves or from other sites in Essex) should be passed to the Biological Records Officer or EECOS (commercial enquiries), or the Essex Wildlife Trust biological records centre. This is to ensure that sensitive records and recorder details are not passed on, and to enable metadata to be provided to the end user to assist data interpretation.

Conservation Managers Permit



To visit:Nature Reserve

Valid from:..... To:.....

Name of Recorder	
Address of recorder	
Tel Number	
Mobile Number	
Email address	
Contact details of reserve warden	
Purpose of visit	
Time of Visit eg date or period	
Methodology of recording	
Other people who need to be informed eg grazier, landlord	
Other Special conditions	
<p>Included with this permit are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety site audit & site information form • Risk assessment of the recording activity 	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> I agree to pass all records gathered under this permit to Essex Wildlife Trust, and consent to my data being stored on the Trust database and shared with other organisations as detailed above.</p>	
<p>Signed Permit holder</p>	
<p>Name (print)..... Date:.....</p>	
<p>Signed Conservation/Reserves Manager</p>	

A copy of this permit will be given to the Reserves Officer / Warden