

Staying Safe in the Field – a guide for volunteer surveyors



Staying safe whilst out surveying is generally a matter of using common sense and being prepared in advance. These guidelines are intended as checklist for those going out to record species in the field whether on a casual basis or as part of our survey programme. They are not intended to replace a full risk assessment so please ensure that you refer to a copy of the risk assessment for your particular activity, and refer to the Essex Wildlife Trust Codes of Good Practice for more information.

Guidance for surveyors:

- Always work in pairs if possible, and carry a mobile phone.
- Wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather conditions, and sunscreen if necessary.
- Carry a map and / or GPS unit at all times and ask for permission before surveying
- Be aware of flora and fauna that may be harmful - look before you leap and avoid brambles, nettles, blackthorn and other harmful plants. Be aware of giant hogweed – do not touch!
- If working near roads or on farmland, be aware of traffic, livestock, electric fencing and farm vehicles. Wear high visibility clothing if needed and avoid surveying on busy roads. Keep to the countryside code at all times.
- Be aware of ticks and Lyme disease, and of Weils disease (Leptospirosis):

Weils disease is a bacterial infection caused by coming into close contact with contaminated, particularly stagnant, water. Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking, cover cuts and contact your doctor if you develop flu like symptoms.

Lyme disease is carried by ticks infected with the *Borrelia* bacterium. If working in high risk areas check for and remove ticks on arrival home and wear long sleeves/trousers. Be aware of the symptoms which can be flu-like or include a spreading rash following a tick bite.

More information can be found at <http://www.nhs.uk/>.

Survey checklist

Please make sure you have the following before setting out on a survey:

- Charged mobile phone
- Risk assessment
- High visibility vest (if working near roads)
- First aid kit
- Sturdy footwear and appropriate clothing
- Landowner contact details/permission forms (if required)
- Survey forms & equipment
- GPS unit / Map
- Sunscreen / waterproofs as needed
- Food and a drink
- EWT contact details
- Spare batteries

Have you obtained permission from the landowner?

Does someone else know where you are going and when you are due back?

