



borough. However, as this group is generally under-recorded this does not mean that reptile species do not occur. Further advice should be sought from the Council's Ecologist.

Water Vole



Water Vole (see Appendix A for Acknowledgements)

7.41 As at 2007 water voles are afforded partial protection by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Their places of shelter or protection are protected but not the voles themselves.

7.42 It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Damage or destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles use for shelter or protection.
- Disturb water voles while they are using such a place.

7.43 The schedules of the Wildlife and Countryside Act are reviewed by government every five years. The latest review has proposed full protection for the water vole. This would make it illegal to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a water vole;
- Possess, alive or dead a water vole;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct a place used for shelter or protection or disturb an animal occupying such a place.

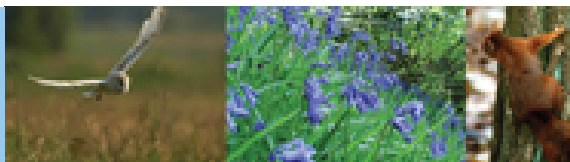
7.44 In 2007 there is no clear date for this change; however it should be borne in mind.

7.45 Water voles have been recorded on many watercourses and in many waterbodies across Wigan borough.

7.46 Water voles feed on the stems and leaves of waterside plants. Each vole uses a number of burrows along the bank. The majority of their activity occurs within 2 to 5 metres of the water's edge. The signs of water vole activity are faeces, latrines, feeding stations, burrows, lawns and footprints.

7.47 Surveys for water voles will need to be carried out where development may impact directly upon a watercourse or waterbody or on or within close proximity to the banks (within 10 metres) of a watercourse or waterbody.

7.48 The methodology for surveys for water voles is set out within the 'Water Vole Conservation Handbook'. The survey should be carried out from late April through to early October, the period when water voles are most active. Any signs of activity – faeces, latrines, feeding stations,

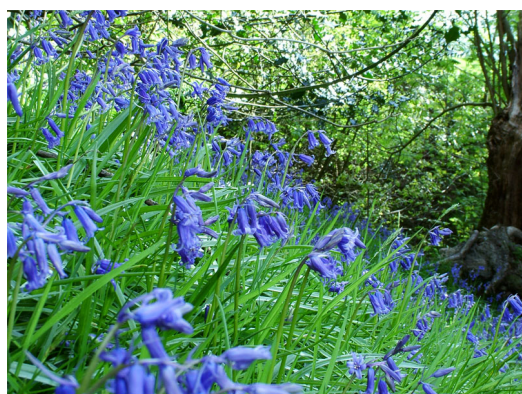


burrows, lawns, nests, footprints or runs within the vegetation need to be recorded. A water vole survey form is included in the Handbook and should be completed and included within the survey report.

7.49 For detailed guidance and further information:

- Water Vole Conservation Handbook Second Edition 2006 published by Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, University of Oxford
- Water vole Guidance for planners and developers English Nature 2001 www.naturalengland.org.uk (for full web address please see Appendix A 'Further information and advice')

Plants



Bluebells (see Appendix A for Acknowledgements)

7.50 It is an offence to intentionally uproot any plant without the permission of the landowner or occupier.

7.51 Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act lists those plant species

that receive special protection from picking, uprooting and sale. The only plant species on this list currently recorded in Wigan is the Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) which receives a partial protection making its collection from the wild for commercial purposes illegal.

7.52 For detailed guidance and further information:

- <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1377>
- <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1816>

Species of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England

7.53 There are 462 species listed under Section 74(2) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Planning Policy Statement 9 states that:

7.54 “Local authorities should take measures to protect the habitats of these species from further decline through policies in local development documents. Planning authorities should ensure that these species are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations. Planning authorities should refuse permission where harm to the species or their habitats would result unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh that harm.”