



Why do we need to complete ecology surveys?

Ecology surveys are a vital step in the development of major infrastructure projects like the Grand Union Canal Transfer (GUCT) scheme. They ensure that our land and environmental teams are adhering to environmental procedures, minimising disruption for local landowners and communities, and optimising the design of the scheme. These surveys help us mitigate risk through the scheme's evolution, helping our teams to avoid unknowingly displacing an endangered species, or damaging a historic site.

From protecting rare wildlife, such as water voles or great crested newts, to preserving historic archaeological treasures like ancient canal locks or heritage bridges, these surveys form the foundation of our teams' activities. By completing these surveys, we can ensure that the development of the Grand Union Canal Transfer (GUCT) is efficient, compliant and of the highest quality. They are an important part of our commitment to responsible development.

What do these surveys entail?

Each survey is different, and we have to investigate specific subjects and areas for each one. Many of these are seasonal and must be completed during a certain window throughout the year. For instance, surveys of certain bird species must be conducted during nesting periods, while assessments for amphibians like newts are limited to breeding seasons.

As a collective, the surveys require in-depth desk research, utilising public records, maps and records of the subject area, before conducting a walkover survey of the area to examine the land. Equipped with tools like GIS mapping and sometimes drones, existing habitats, protected species and heritage sites can be identified. For example, we might locate a badger sett hidden in dense undergrowth, or uncover remnants of a historic canal-side structure. These findings are then documented and analysed to inform the next steps of the project.



The impacts of the surveys

Ecology surveys are not just a best practice, they are a legal obligation. They help us avoid costly delays, build trust with local communities and demonstrate that the scheme is committed to sustainable and responsible development.

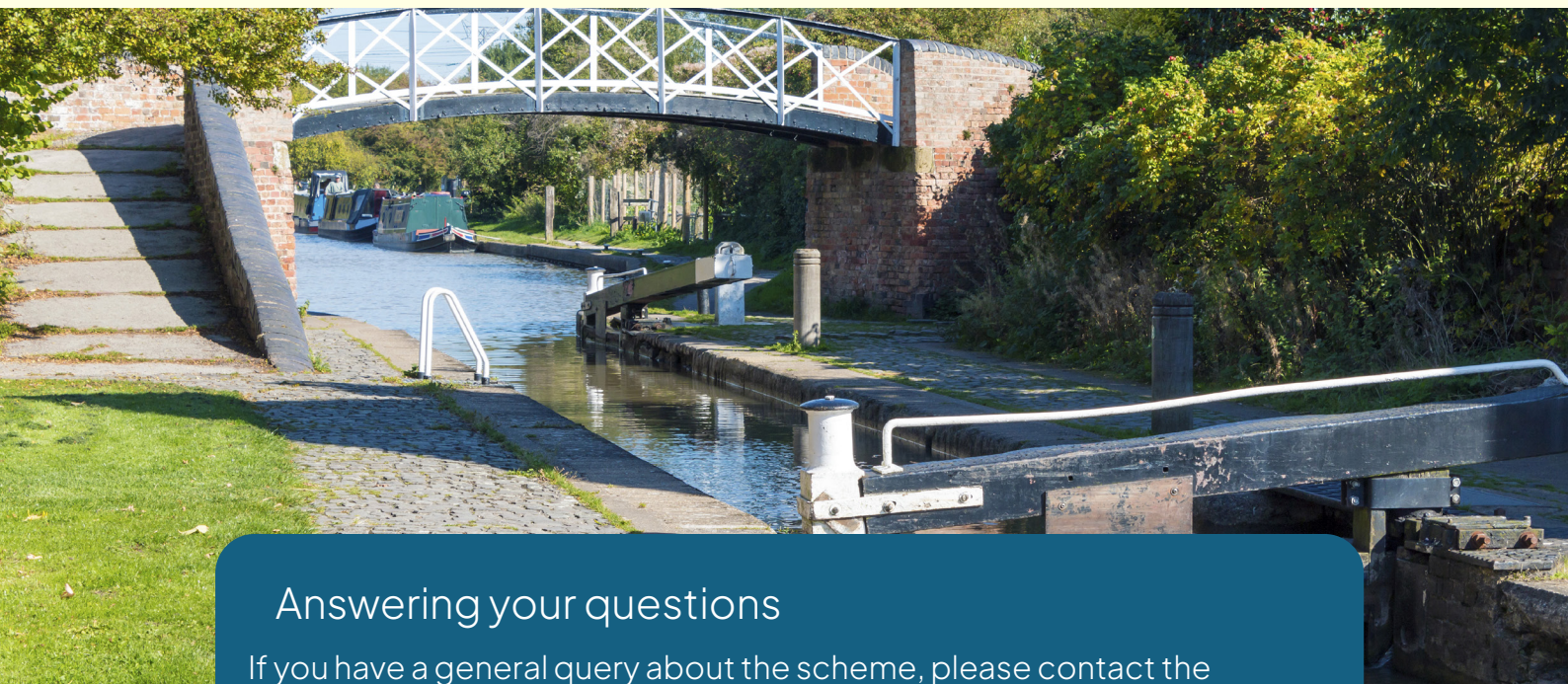
For a scheme of this scale, securing a Development Consent Order (DCO) is essential, and clear evidence of completed surveys is a fundamental requirement.

Without these surveys, we can't continue to develop the scheme. The information that they provide is fundamental to the scheme's design, helping to inform where we can and can't build, and ensuring that the project aligns with environmental and legal requirements.

You can read more about the planning requirements for the GUCT scheme [here](#).

Surveys completed by the team so far:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Badger surveys
- Hedgerow surveys
- Bat Transect surveys
- Phase 1 Habitat survey
- Detailed botanical surveys
- Bat roost potential
- Breeding birds
- Winter and passage birds
- Reptiles
- Amphibians (Newts)
- Water vole
- Hazel dormouse
- Otter
- Fish
- Landscape
- Heritage
- Geo-physical
- Engineering (non-intrusive)
- Public Right of Way (PRoW) access and recreation volumetric counts



Answering your questions

If you have a general query about the scheme, please contact the team via email: contact@guctransfer.co.uk