

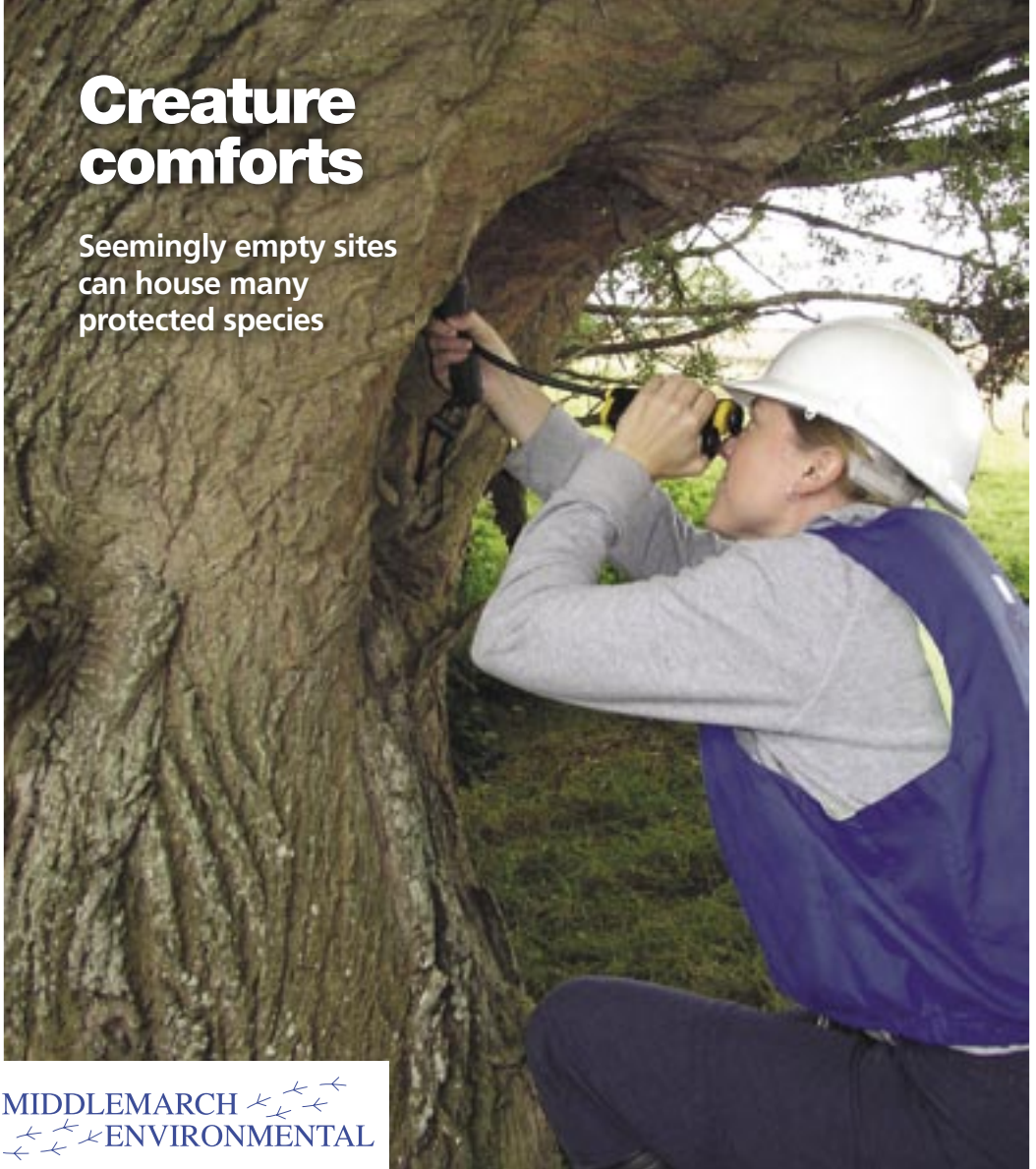
# echo

The Middlemarch Environmental Newsletter

Issue 23 2010

## Creature comforts

Seemingly empty sites can house many protected species



MIDDLEMARCH   
ENVIRONMENTAL 

Creative Ecological Solutions

[www.middlemarch-environmental.com](http://www.middlemarch-environmental.com)

## Dear Colleagues...

Because we are owned by a charity, we have always needed to be financially prudent. This has allowed us to develop a very strong balance sheet, which has made us, and will continue to make us, resilient in difficult times.

Our strategic development of a number of regional offices is allowing us to continue to improve our service to clients across the UK and is also having the benefit of reducing our carbon footprint.

Difficult economic conditions are continuing and, with an election due, we have engaged with our clients to ensure that we are turning the volatile market issues into productive schemes by delivering timely ecological surveys and reports. This allows sites to have due diligence, be developed or packaged up for development whilst complying with the ever more complex legislation. Indeed we have strengthened our arboricultural team to meet the significant increased demand required by the Local Planning Authorities.

Timely ecological surveys in early spring allow identification of issues surrounding protected species, thus allowing the necessary surveys to be completed in spring and summer when most animals are active.

I am sure that the rest of 'Echo' will demonstrate the 'seasonality' of our surveys and when we can resolve the eco issues for you.

We look forward to continuing to work together with our clients to provide a highly professional range of services that will ensure compliance and an efficient pathway through the minefield of ecological legislation.

Yours sincerely,

*Philip Fermor*

**Dr Philip Fermor MIEEM CEnv**  
Managing Director  
Middlemarch Environmental

## Hidden depths

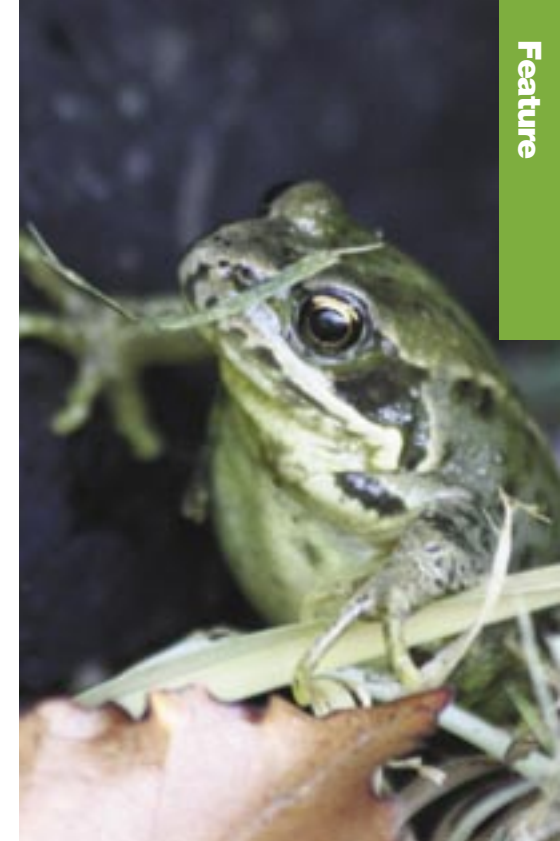
Old buildings awaiting demolition, green field and brown field sites and sites that on the surface of it may look fallow and uninhabited can all house any amount of wildlife, including protected species.

Therein lies the challenge for developers, for if they ignore their statutory duties towards the conservation of protected species, they are leaving themselves open to prosecution. What's more, the list of protected species goes a lot further than just the more 'high profile' species, such as bats and newts.

The clearing of invasive plants too requires considerable care, or you could end up with the consequences of actually spreading such species as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and other legislation, it is normally an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, take, possess or sell any protected species (whether live or dead), to disturb the animal, or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to its place of shelter or protection.

Developers also need to be careful not to damage or destroy habitats where a site contains suitable foraging, resting or breeding features for any protected species.



However, arranging an ecological survey of your site to identify the presence of any protected species and then putting mitigation procedures in place is straightforward and inexpensive. It also allows developers the opportunity to enhance their development by taking advantage of the expertise of the ecological team.

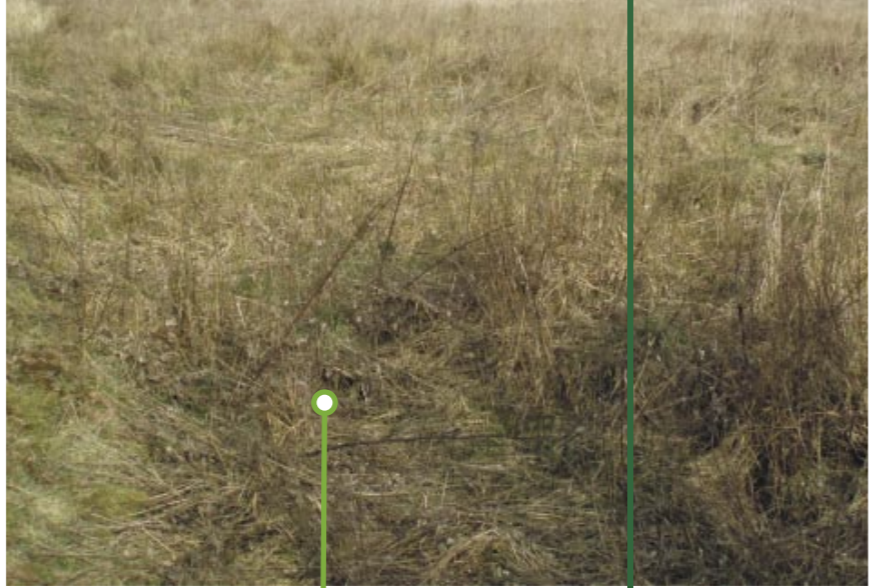
What is most important is to involve ecological experts throughout the life of the project to ensure the right procedures are followed and to keep the right side of the law.

The spread inside demonstrates where demolition or development sites can contain wildlife and habitats.

Reptiles, amphibians and birdlife are happy to live close to causeways. As water is present, otters and water voles too may be found. The presence of invasive plants can be a threat as passing traffic can disturb seeds and cause their spread. Great care must be taken to avoid disturbance of habitats during any work on causeways, whilst the removal of invasive plants requires expert help and advice.



Barren scrubland creates nesting sites for a variety of birdlife and several species of ground living wildlife, from badgers to snakes, to amphibians and reptiles. Great crested newts leave the water after breeding and are often found in scrubland.



Rubble piles and sparse vegetation are ideal habitats for invertebrates. Although not protected by European Law, they are protected by National BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) or Local BAP and should be considered. Developers often forget or disregard this, which can cause problems later.



Woodland provides habitats for a wide variety of insect and bird life as well as roosts for bats. The nocturnal dormouse has extensive territories where hedges and tree canopies are unbroken. In addition, woodland also retains soil and its removal can affect soil stability.



Canals and watercourses house a great many species. Care must be taken to avoid disturbance of habitat and to ensure habitats are recreated for the wildlife living on or close to the water. Otters and water voles make their homes in dense waterside vegetation. Many reptiles and amphibians use watercourses to breed and there is a rich diversity of birdlife that use watercourses for nesting and feeding. Invasive plants' seeds can be spread very quickly downstream, for which you can be liable.



# Creature comforts

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**TREES** Arboricultural issues need to be considered on any site where trees are evident, as root and canopy spread can be far reaching and may require protection or mitigation.  
**INVASIVE PLANTS** Great care must be taken if invasive plants are present, such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed. These must be very carefully removed to prevent spreading and the destruction of native species and habitats.

Middlemarch ecologists provide the full range of surveys for developers and landowners. This helps you ensure your development meets all United Kingdom and European legislation and protects wildlife and habitats as well as you and your clients.

Contact us: 01676 525880 [www.middlemarch-environmental.com](http://www.middlemarch-environmental.com)