

# Environmental Standard Operating Procedure 13

## Breeding Bird Mitigation for Management Works

River corridors in the Broads support breeding birds including waterfowl, raptors and songbirds. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**. This includes nests that are in the process of construction. Rare (Schedule 1) species are afforded additional protection and cannot be intentionally or recklessly disturbed when nesting.

### Aim

During any works operation to avoid killing, injury or disturbance of wild birds and damage and destruction of nests while being built or in use, or eggs. Riverbanks, reedbeds and ronds, broads, soke and other dykes and watercourses, fens, grazing marshes, meadows, and scrub and woodlands, all provide nesting opportunities for various bird species.

### Environmental Risk

Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation
Damage or destruction of nests while being built, with eggs or chicks	High	Deter birds from nesting in works area
Disturbance to wild birds while nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young	High	Deter birds from nesting in works area



*Reed warbler*

### Nesting habitats

Riverbanks, reedbeds and ronds, broads, soke and other dykes and watercourses, fens, grazing marshes, meadows, and scrub and woodlands, all provide nesting opportunities for various bird species

### Delivery Method

- Initial habitat assessment of works area to be carried out by Environment Officer or Ranger Team in February.
- If area approved for works, vegetation to be cut back in proposed work area in early March by BA.
- Environment Officer or Ranger to monitor vegetation re-growth and advise repeat cutting if necessary.

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### Standard Procedure

- Avoid carrying out management works during the main period of breeding from April to June.
- **If work must be done in March** – Environment Officer (EO) to assess the works area to see if breeding has started, or if displacement mitigation is possible.
- **If work must be done during April to June standard procedure is:**
  - **February** – EO or Ranger carries out habitat assessment of works area and determine mitigation requirement
  - **Early March** – clear vegetation within the works area with hand-operated cutters, including all accessible reed and sedge at the water's edge. Rake off arisings and remove from works area.
  - **Mid-March to July** – commence river corridor works. EO to monitor vegetation re-growth and advise on repeat cutting if required. If nests found at any time, stop work and inform EO.
- **For works in July or August** – EO to assess the works area to see if works can start.
- Continually monitor bird activity that may indicate nest construction or bird nesting.
- If nests found at any time, stop work and inform Environment Officer.

### Consultation Required

- **External** – Natural England if works likely to damage a SSSI (or other designated area). Applies whether the operations are to take place within a SSSI boundary or within 100m.

### Further Information:

- RSPB: Wild birds and the law – guide to bird protection in England and Wales  
<http://therspbwebsiteatwww.rspb.org.uk/forprofessionals/policy/wildbirds/index.aspx>
- [www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas)