



**Merthyr Tydfil Skatepark,
Merthyr Tydfil**

Survey for Nesting Birds

May 2025

1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Acer Ecology Ltd acting on the instruction of Bendcrete Leisure Ltd. It sets out the results of a survey of a small area of five trees and two small areas of shrubs (see Plan 1) at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village in the Merthyr Tydfil county borough of South Wales, which have been identified as requiring removal to facilitate the construction of a skatepark.

Survey prior to clearance was requested in order to ensure that no nesting birds are present, in compliance with current legislation. Nearly all species of bird are protected under the amended Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, and this extends both to individuals and to their nests, eggs and young. Nesting birds may not be disturbed or harmed at any point whilst nesting, although in the majority of cases the protection of the nesting place *per se* ceases once nesting has been completed and the nest abandoned. A number of especially rare species are subject to enhanced protection under UK law, however, which may also extend to customary nesting places whether occupied or not.

2.0 Approach and Methods

The five trees and two areas of shrubs were inspected on the 6th of May 2025 by an experienced bird surveyor in good weather conditions.

The trees and shrubs were searched at close range from ground level for signs of use by nesting birds, as well as at a distance using binoculars. Searches were carried out for actual nests, as well as any signs which might indicate nesting, such as singing birds, birds with food items, calling chicks etc. In addition, the surveyor also sat at a distance and observed the trees and shrubs over a period of 20 minutes in order to watch for any birds attending nests in the canopy or shrubs. This was repeated in a total of three locations to ensure that all areas of vegetation were observed (see Plan 2).

3.0 Constraints

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the above surveys, it should be noted that surveys in dense or high vegetation are by their nature constrained and therefore subject to accidental observer-error.

4.0 Survey Results

No signs of nests or bird activity were observed within the five trees to be felled or the shrubs to be cleared on the north-eastern pathway within the site. One robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) was observed briefly foraging beneath the shrubs to be cleared in the north-western area of the site. However, the robin did not display any signs which might indicate it was nesting within or nearby the shrubs to be cleared.

Seven small burrows, likely part of a rabbit warren, were observed approximately 2m from the shrubs to be cleared in the north-western area of the site (see Plan 1).

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Photo 1: Trees to be Felled (Circled)



Photo 2: Shrubs to be Cleared on North-Eastern Pathway (Circled)



Photo 3: Shrubs to be Cleared in North-Western Area (Circled)



Photo 4: Burrows Observed On-Site (Circled)



5.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to avoid or minimise adverse impacts to nesting birds and other wildlife within the site:

- It was recommended on-site to the site manager that clearance of all vegetation required to be removed should begin as soon as possible and it was confirmed by the site manager that clearance would begin within 24 hours of the survey;
- Should any of the proposed works not be carried out in the immediate future (i.e. within three days of receipt of this report) then the surveys for nesting birds should be repeated, since occupation of nesting habitats by birds can occur at very short notice;
- Contractors should be vigilant for any nests and burrows which might have escaped detection by the survey. In the event that nesting birds are discovered immediately prior to or during works, all works within at least 5m of the nest should cease and the birds allowed to complete their nesting cycle undisturbed;

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- The contactors have the contact details of an appropriately-qualified ecologist to hand to respond promptly in the event of any hitherto undetected nests or burrows being found.
- Consideration should be given to the installation of bird nesting boxes in suitable locations throughout the developed site;
- Specialist advice should be sought in the positioning and location of any nest boxes which may be installed; and
- Vegetation clearance should be kept to the minimum required to facilitate the construction of the skatepark and temporary fencing (e.g. Heras fencing) should be use to separate the shrubs to be cleared from the shrubs covering the small burrows.

Plan 1: Site Plan



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Plan 2: Surveyor Position Plan

