



Nottinghamshire

Wildlife Trust

Access Policy

1. Introduction

This document aims to set out Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's (NWT) policy for promoting and managing access and give guidance as to acceptable behaviour on our Nature Reserves. This policy sets out to deal with general issues. Specific site or species related issues will be considered within the management plans for each site, taking this and other policies into account in addition to the local situation.

NWT owns or manages a network of more than 70 nature reserves across the county, to help deliver its principal charitable objective – to promote and protect the wildlife of Nottinghamshire. The reserves cover a range of habitats from woodland and wetland to heathland and meadow, and support important and sometimes threatened or rare species.

Whilst the primary function of our nature reserves is the protection and enhancement of wildlife, they are also a valuable asset as a means of engaging with and inspiring people about the natural world. NWT therefore welcomes visitors to our nature reserves for the quiet enjoyment of wildlife and the countryside, and they are asked to respect wildlife and other site users, and to follow our simple Code of Conduct.

Whilst we generally operate an open access policy there are a few exceptions where we need to conserve particularly sensitive wildlife, or where access can only be gained through other land under private ownership. For details of such sites and to discuss activities which may have an impact on wildlife please call the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust on 0115 9588242.

2. Policy statements

- NWT believes that access to nature should be available to everyone and that close contact with the natural world can bring significant benefits to people
- NWT will maintain and enhance nature reserves across the county to enable everyone to have access to natural greenspace within 10 miles of their home to help meet the Natural England standards on accessible natural greenspace
- NWT will ensure that its nature reserves are open access, except in exceptional circumstances (eg for the protection of particularly sensitive species or where access is only available across other private land)

- NWT will maintain paths and signage / waymarkers on its sites to facilitate access
- NWT will ensure that selected sites provide additional facilities that enhance access, such as visitor centres, car parking, accessible pathways etc
- NWT will provide a range of materials, events and activities to increase the benefits to people from access to our sites

3. General Considerations

3.1 Legal Framework

NWT has a requirement to maintain access across its reserves in line with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and other legislation including the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as amended. Where the paths on a site are designated as Public Rights of Way, or the site is designated as Open Access land, this is identified within the Management Plan and dealt with accordingly. It is reasonable here to note that Public Footpaths give the right to pass with a dog under control. Bridleways offer the same access with the addition of access for horses and bicycles. Byways offer access to motorised vehicles. In keeping with its key aims and objectives NWT will seek to provide access beyond this legal requirement wherever it believes this is possible without degrading the wildlife value of a specific site. However while allowing access over a greater proportion of the site than Public Footpaths, the Trust will maintain the sites with a current Section 31 Notice under the Highways Act 1980 to prevent further Public Footpaths being designated and thus allowing these routes to be closed or moved if nature conservation or other factors demand it.

3.2 Management of Access Routes

In assessing the potential impact of access on the quality of habitat on any given nature reserve and the likely level of potential disturbance to wildlife a judgement will be made on the possible cumulative impact of successive visitors. For example, a pedestrian with a dog may put a nesting bird off a nest for a short period, but if several pedestrians follow over a short period of time the bird will stay off the nest, causing it to fail; it is impossible to determine which visit caused the nest to fail, but the cumulative impact resulted in the failure. Equally, if access is limited to a single route across the site then repeated visits are likely to result in nesting birds keeping clear of this route. Therefore NWT will consider restricting access to specific routes rather than allowing access across the whole site. This will need consideration of Open Countryside as defined by the CROW Act 2000.

Access routes are often created from long established desire lines. Where this is the case, access will generally be maintained as any disturbance issues will be pre-existing and to some extent, self regulating. Efforts to move or close these routes may result in a second route becoming established, creating more disturbance. However, where it can be shown that closing a particular route will bring considerable benefits to wildlife without significantly degrading enjoyment – for example on sites with multiple access routes - closure will be considered.

3.3 Accessibility to those with disability

NWT is keen that as many people as possible are able to be inspired by the natural environment through its nature reserves. However it also accepts that facilitating access for all, particularly those with limited mobility, will not be possible on all sites. A proportionate approach is therefore required.

Wherever possible main access routes, especially PROW will be kept clear of restrictive overhanging vegetation and barriers such as nettles and all entrances include gates and stiles will be kept in good order.

In addition, where resources allow, it will look to remove barriers to access to enable all user groups to gain access and understanding. This may include providing surfaced pathways or installing pushchair / wheelchair / mobility scooter accessible stiles.

NWT already maintains high quality access for wheelchairs and pushchairs at reserves such as Attenborough, the Idle Valley and Skylarks Nature Reserves. It considers visual impairment in the interpretation it produces, looks to use kissing gates rather than stiles if access beyond the fence is reasonable for less able people. It does not, and can not, make all areas accessible to all people.

NWT will keep accessibility to its reserves under review and will seek to remove barriers to access for pushchairs and people with restricted mobility (inc those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters where this can be achieved without increasing the possibility of unauthorised access by motorcycles and where resources allow. NWT is due to complete a review of accessibility for its reserves in 2013.

3.4 Signage and other information

To ensure that issues of wildlife conservation and access provision are carefully balanced, NWT will ensure that all sites are appropriately labelled as Nature Reserves or similar as designated and that interpretative tools such as information boards, leaflets and nature trails are utilised to help educate visitors about the wildlife value of sites and to limit impacts on wildlife.

3.5 Role of Wardens

Face to face contact through regular wardening and staff presence will play a key role in both providing visitors with information about our reserves and managing and mitigating problems. Any illegal activity identified by visitors should be reported to the Police as well as to the Reserves Officer, to keep NWT informed of the position.

4. Code of Conduct

4.1 Visitor code

Whilst NWT welcomes visitors to its nature reserves, visitors are reminded that these sites are not Country Parks and that the principal function is to provide a haven for wildlife. Visitors are therefore asked to follow the code below;

To conserve the wildlife of Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's nature reserves:

- Please do not remove any plants or animals from reserves.
- Please take care to avoid disturbing birds or other animals especially during the spring and early summer when they are breeding.

- Please keep to the paths wherever possible.
- Dogs can disturb wildlife. Please keep your dog under control at all times and preferably on a lead
- Sheep, cattle and other livestock are often used to graze nature reserves. Please avoid disturbing these animals.
- Please take litter and dog mess away with you
- Please leave all gates as you found them and avoid trespass, or disturbance to adjacent property.
- Please guard against fire. Heathlands in particular are highly inflammable.
- Please respect other site users and refrain from any activities that would spoil others' quiet enjoyment of nature.
- Please inform us of any interesting wildlife you discover whilst visiting our reserves
- Please report any problems you encounter on site or any obstacles to access.

This Code of Conduct will feature prominently on the Reserves section of the NWT website and where possible should be included in onsite interpretative materials

4.2 Dogs

As set out above, dogs are legally allowed to be walked "under control" on Public Footpaths. There is considerable discussion about dogs which are not under control, and the definition of this term. For NWT purposes, out of control means away from the leg of the person walking the dog, and this means they must be on a short lead in the bird breeding season. This is expanded upon in Dogs and Nature Conservation Policy, approved in April 2011.

4.3 Horses

Horses are often seen to be in tune with wildlife and cause limited disturbance. However, a few riders have taken the opportunity to use sites for gallops or for erecting jumps; neither of these is permitted on Public Bridleways, and both would be against any local permissions NWT would offer.

4.4 Bicycles

As with horses, there are routes on which bicycles are legally permitted, and NWT may permit further access if it is seen locally to be reasonable. However, cycling at speed will not be permitted, and the presumption will always be in favour of pedestrians.

4.5 Motor Vehicles

Motor vehicles are not permitted on NWT reserves unless for specific management or survey activity. Even then, the use of the vehicle must be controlled and for the purposes required only. Normally NWT staff would be present or have discussed routes and made access arrangements.

5. Other Specific Activities

5.1 Surveying and Monitoring

Many trainee and aspiring naturalists will want to use NWT nature reserves to hone their skills, and this is to be encouraged. Many of the details of survey can be intrusive, and while keen to understand the results NWT will also look to ensure that

repeated survey is itself not harmful to the populations present on the site. As such NWT requires all surveys to be carried out under permit, which will only be issued if reasonable methods are employed and results are submitted to NWT to aid management decision-making. Many of the rules to be followed are set out as an appendix to this document and as part of the Reserve Wardens Handbook.

5.2 Other Specific Activities

NWT will consider other activities on the basis of the disturbance they will cause to wildlife and will develop its response as appropriate. An example of this is geocaching which is an increasingly popular activity which has potential to cause disturbance. NWT will consider permitting geocaching at certain locations with due consideration of the location and housing of the cache.

5.3 Inappropriate Activities

Inappropriate activity covers a wide range, from loud music, through littering to activity such as off road motorbikes, fires and criminal damage. It is difficult to be completely specific about when a nuisance becomes a significant issue, and open discussion between staff and wardens and others will help determine if a local problem needs a firmer response. NWT will seek to use its wardens and staff to challenge inappropriate activity and will escalate its response from talking to individuals, through signage and press works to discussions with the Police and other authorities.

Dec 2012

APPENDIX

This appendix is also appendix 4 of the Reserve Wardens' Handbook.

1. RULES GOVERNING USE OF RESERVES FOR STUDY AND RESEARCH

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) is anxious to acquire as much information about wildlife in Nottinghamshire as possible. Such information contributes to a better understanding of which species and habitats may be under threat, and to how they can be conserved and protected. It is especially important that NWT has detailed information about the plants and animals on its reserves so that these can be managed for the benefit of the wildlife. To this end NWT wishes to encourage formal study and research on its reserves, as well as receiving observations made by members and others during visits to reserves. NWT also recognises that it has a responsibility to provide access for serious scientific investigation of wildlife, which may be of value to the conservation movement generally.

Trust members and non-members may apply to the Trust for permits to use any reserve, owned or managed by the Trust, for the purpose of study or research. In this context study or research is defined as encompassing activities that are not permitted within the general rules governing access to, and use of, reserves that are laid out in the Trust's Access Policy

General Guidelines

Applications to undertake projects or research on any Trust reserve must be made in writing to the Trust office, stating the objectives and methodology of the work to be undertaken. The following general conditions must be adhered to (unless specifically varied in any permit that may be issued). In some cases other conditions may be imposed by the Sites Committee and its officers. In certain circumstances, the Trust may require further information on the methodology of the study.

1. Workers must observe the Country Code, and all relevant legislation (including especially the provisions of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, and subsequent amendments, and Health and Safety Legislation) when undertaking their work on the reserves and must be aware of other people's pursuits and pleasures. The lighting of fires or the use of equipment that poses a fire hazard is not permitted on reserves without specific authorisation.
2. Without specific written authority no one may take away any plants (or parts of plants such as flowers, seeds or leaves) or animals, nor ring or mark any animal ("animal" includes any mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish or invertebrate).
3. Disturbance to wildlife, to other users of the reserve, or to the general public, must be kept to the minimum, consistent with achieving the objectives of the study or research. In particular, care must be taken to avoid disturbance to breeding species. Unless specifically authorised, searches for birds' nests shall not be made.
4. Workers must comply with any proper request from a warden or other officer of the Trust.

5. No vehicle shall be taken onto a reserve without written permission, except into a recognised car park.
6. The granting of a permit to undertake study or research on a Trust reserve will carry with it the requirement to submit to Sites Committee a written report of the results of the study at least annually, and possibly more frequently.
7. All records, information and survey data shall be made freely available to the Trust on completion of the study or research.
8. The Trust shall be acknowledged in any publication produced as a result of any study or research undertaken on a Trust reserve, and a copy of such publication or publications shall be provided to the Trust within not more than one calendar month of the date of publication. In some circumstances the Trust may require that any proposed publication (whether formal or informal) shall be submitted in advance to the Trust for comment and approval.
9. Applicants for permits to undertake study or research on Trust reserves should be aware that certain activities undertaken on Sites of Special Scientific Interest will fall under the "Potentially Damaging Operations" criteria and a PDO form may need to be sent to Natural England for approval.
10. Permits will be withdrawn in the event of any non-compliance with the Trust's regulations or code of conduct or the specific terms under which a permit to undertake study or research has been made.
11. The Trust accepts no responsibility for any loss, injury or damage, howsoever caused, in the exercise of any permit to conduct work on its reserves. All researchers are advised to consider the adequacy of their own insurances against loss or damage to their equipment, Personal Accident, and Public Liability risks. In some cases, the Trust may require the completion of formal indemnity documents.
12. It is strongly recommended that a field first aid kit be carried at all times while carrying out approved projects on Trust Reserves.
13. For general safety it is recommended that at least two persons are present when field work is being carried out. This is mandatory when aquatic projects are being undertaken other than in small, shallow pools and streams. If working alone it is strongly recommended that someone is told where you are, and when you are due to return.

2. BIRDS

NWT will encourage the study of birds on its reserves. Areas of study that are appropriate include population monitoring, migration and population movement, general and breeding biology.

A major tool for the study of birds is ringing. On Trust reserves, ringing can only be permitted if it is undertaken in ways which ensure sensitive treatment of the vegetation and other interests, as well as the welfare of the birds themselves.

BIRD RINGING ON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST RESERVES

POLICY & GENERAL RULES

2.1 Background

NWT has long recognised the important role that bird ringing can play in contributing to species conservation. For many years, NWT has granted permission to ringers to work on reserves it owns or manages, and it believes that this is an effective method of survey, which can provide valuable data.

Several of NWT's founder members were ringers and a set of rules governing ringing was formulated early in NWT's history. In the early 1980s Dr Tony Kent, a long time ringer and Chairman of the Environmental Policy Committee of NWT, revised these rules with the help of the then Records & Information Officer..

Tony Kent and his students undertook many important studies at Attenborough Nature Reserve and their work has been continued there and elsewhere by the South Notts Ringing Group.

The Birklands and North Notts Ringing Groups, in their respective areas, have also been extremely active and are noted for their work on the Heronry at Besthorpe and on nightjars and woodlarks in forestry and heathland areas.

The constant effort scheme at Treswell Wood is the longest running such scheme in the country, and part of an integrated programme of census and ringing work. This started just before NWT purchased the site and has helped in the development of the British Trust for Ornithology's monitoring programmes.

When the BTO Ringing Scheme celebrated its 100th Anniversary Nottinghamshire Ringers contributed to publicity through press, radio and television to make the public aware of the value and results of this work. Close acquaintance with birds "in the hand" is a powerful and stimulating experience as part of our educational work, hence the number of Ringing Demonstrations which we are pleased to host on our sites.

NWT believes that an introduction to ringing can help to engage people in wildlife and conservation activity. It is hoped that ringers will be willing to use their specialist skills, to provide demonstrations, talks and other events on NWT reserves and thus support the wider work of the Wildlife Trust.

2.2. Policy on permission to ring birds on reserves owned or managed by NWT

1. NWT encourages the study of birds on its reserves, including population monitoring, migration and population movement, and general and breeding biology. Ringing is a major tool for the study of birds and applications to work on our reserves will generally be welcomed. However, NWT also has a very high degree of responsibility for protecting the vegetation and other fauna on its reserves, so needs to balance the benefits of ringing against the potential for disturbance to other species and habitats

2. Ringing permits for NWT reserves will only be granted to holders of full "A" Permits issued by the BTO, who undertake that they will work within the rules and guidance issued by the BTO and NWT, but only for projects which meet one or more of the specific criteria below:

Monitoring projects to inform management of the site.

Systematic ringing to support national projects, monitoring species relevant to a specific reserve or habitat. (NB NWT is aware that the BTO subsidises the ringing of many species for a variety of reasons. The mere fact that a species is supported in this way will not automatically be accepted as justification for a request to ring that species on NWT reserves.)

For research as part of a set of trials supported by a University or other relevant body and approved by NWT.

3. Ringing of rare or vagrant species will only be permitted where the necessary specific consents have been obtained from both the BTO and NWT.

4. Ringing will only be permitted if it is undertaken in ways which ensure sensitive treatment of the vegetation and other natural features, as well as the welfare of the birds themselves. If permission is granted, ringers will be provided with a general set of rules governing behaviour, health and safety etc. They must also follow the standards set by the BTO for all ringers and any restrictions imposed by NWT in these rules or in the permits granted to them.

5.. Applications for permission will be assessed and granted by NWT's Sites Committee against the above criteria on a case by case basis.

6. All ringers must adhere to this policy and the general rules. NWT will take action against anyone transgressing these rules.

2.3 General rules concerning bird ringing on reserves owned or managed by NWT

1 The ringing of birds on NWT reserves will only be authorised for licensed ringers working under a BTO permit, and operating within the guidelines laid down by the BTO's Ringers' Manual (BTO 4th edition 2001) and such other directives as are issued by the BTO from time to time. In all cases ringers must obtain a permit to undertake their work from NWT's Sites Committee. Initial applications should be made to NWT in writing and addressed to the Living Landscapes Monitoring Officer. It may be helpful to discuss your proposals with the Living Landscapes Monitoring Officer and the Reserves Officer responsible for the site, before making a formal application.

2 If permission is to be granted, the following documentation will be required:

a copy of the senior ringer's ringing permit together with their contact details; map showing proposed catching sites; and where necessary a copy of the SSSI consent from Natural England.

Note: Many NWT reserves are designated by Natural England (NE) as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The designation documents for each site include a list of Potentially Damaging Operations. If this list includes a reference to bird ringing, NWT will be required to consult NE and a consent may be authorised, subject to whatever conditions are felt necessary. If there is no reference to ringing as a PDO, NWT will still consider whether it should discuss the application informally with NE, before granting consent if felt appropriate.

3 NWT assumes that trapping will normally be by the use of mist nets. Nets should not normally be erected across footpaths or well used desire lines; if nets are to be erected in areas open to the public and well used by them, particular care must be taken to ensure that appropriate warnings are posted, that the nets are very closely supervised, and that sufficient experienced ringers are available to explain the activity and avoid any "public relations" problems. A plan showing the proposed location of mist net rides and access paths must be submitted as part of the original permit application. Under no circumstances should these rides be cut or nets be erected until a permit has been issued. Once such locations are agreed, nets may not, under any circumstance, be placed elsewhere on the reserve except with specific written consent. If other methods of catching are proposed, these must be methods approved by the BTO and full details must be given in your application.

4 Ringing will normally only be permitted on NWT reserves between dawn and dusk. If the proposed study involves night ringing this must be specifically stated and justified in the permit application, mitigating the possible disturbance to or capture of non-target species such as bats. If permission is granted, ringers will be required to inform the Reserve Manager or volunteer warden, and to make the local police aware, in advance, of the date(s) of night visits. They should also consider notifying relevant neighbours. A full risk assessment may be required.

5 Ringers must not deliberately set out to trap Schedule 1, rare or vagrant species on NWT reserves unless any necessary consents have been obtained from both the BTO and NWT. It is recognised that such species (and bats) may be trapped inadvertently during normal ringing sessions in agreed net locations.

6 If a Schedule 1 species is caught during its breeding season, it is the ringer's responsibility to consider whether it is likely to be caught again, or deterred from approaching its nest or dependant young, in circumstances which could be regarded as "intentional disturbance". If the bird's breeding activity might be affected, the relevant net(s) must be taken down at once. Similar considerations may also apply to species which are not on Schedule 1.

7 In the case of an unexpected trapping or observation of a Schedule 1 species on a NWT reserve during its breeding season, the ringer(s) involved are required to contact NWT as soon as possible to report the presence of the bird, initially by telephone, followed by a letter or email addressed to NWT Head of Estate Management & Development / Living Landscape Monitoring Officer. (This would not be necessary if the species is normally present on the reserve or in its vicinity eg kingfisher or barn owl.)

8 Permission to ring pulli (young in the nest) will normally only be granted in respect of nest boxes. It is recognised, however, that there will be circumstances in which the ringing of pulli in other situations is appropriate. Applications to the Wildlife Trust for pulli ringing permits should clearly identify the species involved and set out a detailed justification for the need

for ringing. Ringing of pulli in a nest discovered during a planned task is permissible, but cold searching of vegetation for nests is not allowed.

9 NWT generally supports the erection of nesting boxes on its reserves but recognises that there may be circumstances where applications need to be refused, for example, if an applicant wishes to erect owl boxes on a reserve with a thriving water vole or reptile population. Applications to erect nest boxes, as part of a ringing project, should therefore detail the numbers and types of boxes to be used, and the approximate locations.

10 NWT does not encourage the use of baits on its reserves as they may introduce non-native plant species or encourage greater concentrations of vermin or predators. However the use of baits may be approved in certain circumstances, provided that a specific request is made in the application for a site permit, listing the reasons for their use and the proposed bait types.

11 NWT will not normally approve the use of pre-recorded songs or calls to lure birds. A specific application for approval must be made, with full details of the target species. Further clarification of the reason for using lures may be sought before permission is granted.

12. An annual written report containing the results of the ringing project, including details of all birds ringed, re-trapped and recovered together with any additional bird sightings, numbers, interesting movements, mammal records etc must be submitted to the Records & Information Officer before an application for the renewal of permits will be considered. This will be an important part of the overall monitoring of NWT's reserves and failure to provide such reports will result in NWT's refusal to grant future applications.

13 NWT reserves the right to use and share such reports and the information they contain as it sees fit; however NWT recognises that some information provided in these reports may require to be treated confidentially and will always be willing to consider requests that certain information provided should be so treated.

14 NWT requires a detailed record to be kept of the numbers of individual persons, the hours, dates and the activity undertaken on all our reserves; this information may be needed to secure 'match funding' or as part of a larger funding bid. This information will need to be submitted by the lead ringer to NWT's Records & Information Officer on a spreadsheet or in other agreed format annually or when requested.

15 Failure to adhere to the above NWT policy may mean the suspension of the permit to ring birds forthwith and may adversely affect future applications. In the most serious of cases the misdemeanor may be reported to the Head of the BTO Ringing Scheme.

The policy and general rules on ringing were approved 16 February 2010

2.4 General Studies on Birds

Permits for studies of birds that do not involve ringing, but require access to reserves beyond what is provided for in the general rules on Access to Reserves, will be issued upon application of a detailed description of the proposed study to the Sites Committee.

3. INVERTEBRATES

NWT will encourage the study of invertebrates on its reserves. Areas of study that are appropriate include the identification of species present, population monitoring, general and breeding biology.

Applicants for permits for study of invertebrates on reserves will be expected to conduct their studies within any guidelines that are published by appropriate learned or professional societies in the field of study.

Where it is necessary for a particular study, a reasonable number of specimens may be taken and removed from the site, but the likely scale of such removals should be clearly stated in the permit application. Samples of difficult species may be taken for microscopic examination; otherwise no specimens should be taken from the reserve.

3.1 Moth Trapping

1. Care must be exercised to set traps or lights in areas which do not contain rare or endangered plant species that could be damaged by trampling.
2. Fire is a high risk on most reserves and the use of petrol for generators should be managed with care.
3. Generators should be sited on level ground and the risks of fire considered when siting them.
4. Lights should be sited where they will not annoy neighbouring landowners.
5. The catch at a light trap should be carefully released on site in darkness in order to prevent predation by birds. Samples of difficult species may be taken for microscopic examination, but otherwise no specimens may be taken.
6. No pupae may be taken for rearing and subsequent release, and the release on a Trust reserve of any species of invertebrate brought in from another site is prohibited.
7. If a trap is found to be catching rare or local species unnecessarily it should be re-sited.
8. "Sugar" should not be applied so that it renders tree-trunks or fence posts unsightly.
9. An awareness of disturbance to other species, especially those protected by law should be exercised.
10. The Reserve Manager (or NWT office) and the local police should be made aware, in advance, of the date, start time, and expected duration of any light-trapping activities. Researchers should also consider notifying relevant neighbours.
11. The NWT office must be notified, not later than the next working day, in the event of any "incident" involving bats, dogs, members of the public, neighbouring owners, etc, which may possibly give rise to comment or concern. This will help the office to deal with any complaints or queries it may receive.

12. ANY breach of the above rules or of any terms laid out in the permit will lead to its immediate cancellation

3.2 Aquatic Invertebrates

1. Equipment used should comprise: a sturdy pole net at least broom shank length with solid metal frame, net of mesh 1-2 mm, eg GB Nets, 45 Burnley Road, Todmorden, Lancs, OL14 7BU; a good sampling net; useful safety support; rubber gloves should be used to reduce water contact; and a 5-10 metre length of rope and appropriate buoyancy aids should be available for safety back-up. Permission for set nets and traps will not be given unless they are designed and proved to exclude aquatic mammals and birds.
2. There must be minimum disturbance to vegetation and to the bed of the habitat. Samples should be the minimum necessary for qualitative or quantitative assessment and, wherever possible, should be subject to a preliminary assessment on site so that rare and/or protected species (eg freshwater crayfish, large bodied dragonflies, nymphs etc) can be returned to the water (white sorting trays are useful for this purpose). Wherever possible, samples should be removed live, with an appropriate volume of water in cooler bag/box system, with freezer blocks for transfer to the laboratory for identification etc, and returned live after examination. Any fish taken accidentally must be returned immediately. Exceptionally, and by agreement, samples may be preserved in alcohol on site and removed from the site, where extended study is necessary.
3. Where boats are to be used, handling experience must be proved and buoyancy aids/life jackets must be worn at all times when afloat. Propulsion by oars/paddles/electric outboards will be the norm but permission may be agreed for petrol mix engine units, provided great care is taken to avoid fuel spillage. Refilling of engine tanks must be done on the bank well away from the water's edge.
4. Any other throw or tow net, or gas powered sampling system, must be of an approved design.
5. Only exceptionally will pond drags be allowed, as they can be very damaging to the system. Where approval is given, the drag system must be pulled onto a strong plastic sheet on the bankside to facilitate sorting for invertebrates on site, and all of the residue returned to the system, by sluicing if necessary.
6. For canal/river navigations to be sampled, British Waterways Board must be contacted and agreements presented, as must licensing and insurance documentation.
7. All nets, traps, sampling systems, boats and other equipment must be thoroughly cleaned to avoid cross contamination of sites, and particular care must be taken to avoid introducing alien species.
8. Aquatic invertebrate studies will only be allowed during the breeding season of birds and mammals if the purpose of the study makes this essential.

3.3 Invertebrate Trapping - General

1. The positioning of pitfall traps should be carefully considered so as to minimise potential damage to the flora of the trap site. Appropriate steps should be taken to minimise the possibility of non-target species (such as amphibians or small mammals) falling into the traps, and these steps should be specified in the application for a permit.
2. When beating for invertebrates, it is unnecessary to thrash trees or bushes so that foliage and twigs are removed. A sharp jarring of branches is both less damaging and more effective.
3. If bark is removed from dead timber, this should be replaced to the best of your ability; not all the dead timber in a locality should be worked.
4. Overturned stones and logs should be replaced in their original position with care.
5. Twigs and leaves that are required because they are galled should be removed with secateurs just above a node, and not broken off; the minimum number required for study should be removed. In no case should the whole colony be removed.
6. Sweeping should be carried out gently and selectively – it is neither desirable nor necessary to flatten large areas of vegetation in order to obtain a sample.
7. ANY breach of the above rules or of any terms laid out in the permit will lead to its immediate cancellation

4. MAMMALS

NWT will encourage the study of mammals on its reserves. Areas of study that are appropriate include the identification of species present, population monitoring, general and breeding biology.

Applicants for permits for study of mammals on reserves will be expected to conduct their studies within any guidelines that are published by appropriate learned or professional societies in the field of study.

No specimens shall be taken from the Reserves

4.1 Mammal Trapping

1. The use of any trap must be specified in the application for a permit, and only traps specifically authorised in the permit may be used.
2. Traps must not be sited where they can be seen, as they may be investigated by members of the public and harm may be caused to any small mammals in the trap; generally the siting of such traps must be agreed in advance.

3. Applicants must show that they are experienced in the handling of both target and non-target mammals.
4. Certain mammals, including all British bats, are protected by law and a licence is required from Natural England before any work can be carried out on them. Possession of such a licence will not, in itself, guarantee that NWT will grant a permit for the proposed work.
5. Requests for work on protected species must be made first to NWT. Any such requests involving bats will normally be referred to the local Bat Group, and those involving badgers to the local Badger Group, who may impose additional specific restrictions.
6. ANY breach of the above rules or of any terms laid out in the permit will lead to its immediate cancellation.

5 PLANTS

NWT will encourage the study of plants on its reserves. Areas of study that are appropriate include the identification of species present, population monitoring, and general biology.

Applicants for permits for study of plants on its reserves will be expected to conduct their studies within any guidelines that are published by appropriate learned or professional societies in the field of study.

Where it is necessary for a particular study, a reasonable number of specimens may be taken and removed from the site, but the likely scale of such removals should be clearly stated in the permit application. Samples of difficult species may be taken for microscopic examination; otherwise no specimens should be taken from the reserve.

5.1 Botanical Surveying

1. The removal of any part of any plant, including uprooting, will not be permitted except by specific authorisation in the permit. Applicants for permits must state whether it is necessary for the study for this to be done, and why.
2. It is unlikely that excursions from reserve footpaths will be necessary and surveyors are asked to ensure that trampling of any vegetation is kept to a minimum. Footpaths leading to survey sites may often attract unwanted attention to the site of a rare or locally rare species.
3. Specific permission to photograph any plant or group of plants must be sought; "gardening", beyond the careful and temporary tying back of twigs etc, is not permitted.
4. If you are unable to identify a specimen "on site", the smallest adequate section may be taken for identification purposes only.
5. Twigs and leaves required for any purpose should be carefully removed with secateurs just above a node, and not broken off.

6. Seed may not be taken from any plant on Trust reserves without first having obtained permission.
7. ANY breach of the above rules or of any terms laid out in the permit will lead to its immediate cancellation

6 AMPHIBIANS and REPTILES

NWT will encourage the study of amphibians and reptiles on its reserves. Areas of study include the identification of species present, population monitoring and general and breeding biology.

Applicants for permits for the study of amphibians and reptiles on reserves will be expected to conduct their studies within any guidelines that are published by appropriate learned or professional societies in the field of study.

1. Applicants for permits are reminded that all species of amphibian and reptile are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, and subsequent amendments. Of the Nottinghamshire herpetiles, the great crested newt receives special protection in all stages of its life cycle, and a licence is required from Natural England before it can be disturbed, handled or caught.
2. No amphibian or reptile may be removed from, or introduced to, a reserve, without specific written authority from NWT.
3. In all cases, applications for permits to work on amphibians or reptiles should be made to the Trust office in writing, stating in detail the objectives of the study, and the identities and qualifications of those intending to carry out the work. Copies of any appropriate licences from Natural England should be included with the application.
4. Any trapping methods to be employed should be specified in the application, together with a plan showing the proposed locations of any traps. Only trapping methods approved by NWT may be used, and traps may only be set during the period specified on the permit. Trapped animals should be released unharmed on the site immediately after examination.
5. If the handling of amphibians or reptiles is needed as part of a proposed study it should only be done by experienced workers – and special care should be taken to avoid tail loss in slow worms and lizards. The death of an animal occurring as a direct result of any study should be reported to NWT as soon as possible, normally within 24 hours.
6. Care must be taken to minimise disturbance to non-target species around wetland sites – especially nesting birds, and marginal, emergent and submerged aquatic plants. Any non-target aquatic animals netted during a study should be returned to the water quickly and carefully.
7. Strict precautions must be taken against the accidental introduction of alien aquatic plant and animal species to wetland sites.

8. If survey work is to include “torching” after dusk, this should be stated in the application for permit. The Reserve Manager (or Trust office) and the local police should be made aware, in advance, of the date, start time, and expected duration of any “torching” activities. Researchers should also consider notifying relevant neighbours.
9. Any stones or logs overturned in searching for amphibians or reptiles should be replaced with care in their original position.
10. Research will not normally be permitted during the hibernation period, since disturbance at this time can prove fatal.
11. A written report of any study will be required to be submitted to Sites Committee at least once a year (and possibly more frequently) and NWT will have the right to use such reports as it sees fit. NWT recognises that some information provided in such reports may need to be treated confidentially, and will always be willing to receive requests that certain information be so treated. Conversely, NWT may wish that certain information about its reserves should remain confidential and may require that it should not be revealed except by specific written authority of NWT.
12. ANY breach of the above rules or of any terms laid out in the permit will lead to its immediate cancellation.

7. FISH

1. If there is an approved fishery functioning on the pond, lake, canal or river, considerable data can be obtained from anglers by card return systems, or more successfully by catch inspection – known as creel census – with best results obtained by site inspection.
2. All other sampling systems by rod and line, fixed net or seine netting systems, and electro-fishing, must be initially organised with and approved by the Regional Fisheries Officer of the Environment Agency.
3. Set D and Fyke nets/fixed traps will not normally be permitted on reserves, as aquatic mammals and birds are at risk.
4. Workers must be aware of the Freshwater Salmon and Fisheries Act and operate within its terms.
5. ANY breach of the above rules or of any terms laid out in the permit will lead to its immediate cancellation.

8. FUNGI

NWT will encourage the study of fungi on its reserves. Areas of study that are appropriate include the identification of species present, population monitoring, and general biology.

Applicants for permits for the study of fungi on reserves will be expected to conduct their studies within any guidelines that are published by appropriate learned or professional societies in the field of study such as the British Mycological Society (BMS). All records should be deposited with the local fungi group (who will send copies to BMS) as well as NWT.

1. Where it is necessary for a particular study, a reasonable number of specimens may be taken and removed from the site, but the likely scale of such removals should be clearly stated in the permit application. Samples of difficult species may be taken for microscopic examination.
2. The collection of fungi from those reserves classified as SSSI is limited to that required for scientific study, and written consent may be required from Natural England.
3. The collection of limited quantities of common species for personal consumption will be tolerated on reserves which do not have SSSI status.
4. Many fungi are very poisonous and others may make you unwell if ingested. Make sure you can identify the target species and its look-a-likes. The Trust cannot take responsibility for fungi which are consumed with adverse consequences; individuals must take responsibility for identification of the fungi that are removed from the reserve.
5. Foray groups are generally encouraged; however permission must be granted by the Trust and numbers of fungus forays in the autumn may be controlled.
6. Follow the Country Code (see Appendix 6).
7. Try to minimise damage to vegetation, leaf litter, soil, dead wood and other features.
8. Avoid removing dead wood unless this is necessary to identify a fungus; if possible only remove a small proportion of the fruiting bodies of a species for identification, and leave the remainder where you found them.
9. Take a reputable field guide with you and try to identify as many fungi as you can *in situ*.
10. Ancient woodlands usually contain a rich variety of different types of fungi and may include some rare species. Particular care should be taken when collecting from these sites.
11. ANY breach of the above rules or of any terms laid out in the permit will lead to its immediate cancellation

9. SEED COLLECTION

1. Seed will only be collected and removed from site by authorised persons.

2. Care will be exercised during collection to ensure that a minimum amount of disturbance is caused to any wildlife present.
3. Seed and fruits will be removed carefully, leaving no broken branches or trampled vegetation.
4. Care will be exercised during collection to ensure that seed is not spilt or spread to other parts of the reserve.
5. The permit will be shown on demand to any member of Trust staff or member acting as a warden of its reserves.

ANY breach of the above rules or of any terms laid out in the permit will lead to its immediate cancellation

10. PHOTOGRAPHY

1. All photographers must provide a good reason to undertake anything other than "general" photography and must identify the species that they wish to photograph.
2. The erection of any construction or specialised lighting equipment other than small portable hides, as an aid to the taking of photographs, must be approved by the Trust.
3. Bird's Nest photography will not be allowed unless a valid reason is provided and the necessary licences are held.
4. NWT will not normally sanction the photography of species on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, even if the photographer has the necessary licences.
5. "Gardening", beyond the careful and temporary tying back of twigs etc, is not permitted.
6. ANY breach of the above rules or of any terms laid out in the permit will lead to its immediate cancellation.

11. ADMINISTRATION OF PERMITS FOR STUDY OR RESEARCH

1. The Chairman of Sites Committee will allocate the duty of permit issue to a member of NWT staff (currently the Records & Information Officer).
2. All applications for access to NWT reserves where there is any restriction on access, or for the purpose of study or research, shall be made to the NWT office and marked for the attention of the Records & Information Officer (RIO).
3. All applications for study or research shall be reviewed by the Records & Information Officer. They may be approved without further reference if, in his/her view, there are no complicating or unusual factors involved in the application.

4. If there are complicating or unusual factors, the RIO will seek the views of the Sites Committee Chairman and of the Head of Estate Management & Development. In many cases it will be possible for them to agree on the issue of a permit (including any specific terms). If the view is for its rejection or there are unusual policy issues involved, the Chairman (or Deputy Chairman) will forward the application to the full Sites Committee for review. In the event that the Sites Committee rejects the application, or imposes terms that are unacceptable, the applicant may appeal to the Chairman of the Trust for a final decision.
5. The RIO should make all those who are likely to wish to use reserves for study or research (eg the local Universities and Technical Colleges, all local Natural History societies, ringers based in Nottinghamshire, etc) aware of these rules and seek their active co-operation in applying them. The importance to NWT of the reporting of research will be stressed, particularly in the case of University and College students who often “move on” soon after their work is completed.
6. Apart from the day-to-day management of the issue of permits, the RIO will be responsible for ensuring that permit holders are operating within the terms of their permits, and for ensuring that results of studies or research are reported to the Trust in due time and agreed format. The RIO will also be responsible for keeping under review the use of reserves for study and research and recommending to the Sites Committee additions, deletions and amendments to the policy as appropriate.