

Carbon Landscape Surveying Code of Conduct

The Citizen Science project is a collaboration between Carbon Landscape and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit designed to survey a series of target species - bittern, dragonflies, plants, water vole, willow tit, farmland birds and wetland birds – throughout Warrington, Wigan and Salford between 2017 - 2020. Everyone taking part in the Citizen Science project is playing an important role in collecting data for key species so we can better manage land and improve habitats for them.

While gaining accurate records is important, the interest of the species you are recording and the respect of other people – especially the owners of the land that you are accessing – comes first.



Follow the Countryside Code

- It is essential that we protect the environment that we are working in and special care needs to be taken not to destroy or remove features such as plants, as they are providing vital habitat/ food for wildlife.
- Whilst out surveying ensure that you take your litter home with you. Do not leave any litter behind on site.
- Use gates and styles provided to access areas that you need to survey. Do not climb over fences, walls or hedges as this could damage vital habitat but it can also damage structures that are designed to keep farm animals from escaping.
- If you access areas via a gate, please leave the gate as you found it. It may be closed to keep in livestock or it may be left open to allow animals to access larger areas for grazing or water.
- Leave any livestock that you may encounter during your survey alone and keep a safe distance at all times. If you are concerned for the welfare of an animal, try to contact the farmer.
- Do not enter private areas without permission from the landowner.
- If you are travelling to your survey site by car, ensure that you park in a sensible manner. Do not block paths and gates that may be needed to access fields or move livestock.



Surveying Species

- Ensure that you have attended a training session delivered by the GMEU and you understand the survey methodology before setting out to survey an area.
- Plan your route before starting a new survey, which can be done through the Map App on the GMEU website <https://gmwildlife.org.uk/mapapp/>. Visit the site to ensure that the route you have plotted is accessible and safe before starting your survey.
- If surveying alone, set up a buddy system so someone knows where you are. Alert them when you arrive on site and when you are ready to leave. Do not go out without telling someone where you are going and how long you expect to be.
- Stay on roads and paths that already exist and avoid damaging and disturbing habitat.
- Avoid going too close to birds that you are surveying. If the bird makes long and repeated alarm calls, you are too close. Nests that have been disturbed may be abandoned by adult birds and could result in the loss of eggs and chicks.
- Do not play the call of a bird to encourage a sighting.
- The playback method is being used to record the Willow Tit but not during the breeding season – only use this method to survey this species between 15th – 31st March for survey 1 and 1st – 15th April for survey 2.
- If you find a rare species, consider the impact of spreading the news of what you have surveyed and where – especially if it is on private land. Consider if the site can cope with an influx of visitors and the impact that lots of people would have on the species and the habitat. Please check with the GM Ecology Unit first before informing other people.
- Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) it is illegal to uproot a wild plant without the permission of the landowner.
- Do not pick any plant that is on a designated site such as National Nature Reserve (NNRs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- Submit your survey records to GMEU as soon as you can. Ensure that you keep a back-up copy of all of your records.

Accessing Land

- Try and stick to public rights of way as much as you can when conducting your surveys.
- If you need to gain access to private land, contact GMEU or Carbon Landscape team initially who will be able to advise whether access permission has already been granted and provide you with contact details for the landowner.
- Only access parts of the site that you have agreed with the landowner.
- Contact the landowner before you conduct each survey. Give them a week's notice of your intended visit and contact them again the day before as a reminder.
- Irresponsible behaviour may lead to the landowner denying access to the land in the future, which could impact on important survey work.



Any questions, contact GMEU or Carbon Landscape.

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