

Bird netting of hedges and trees: New advice from CIEEM and RSPB

There has been a rise in the number of developers utilising the netting of trees and hedges to prevent birds from nesting in vegetation which needs to be removed as part of a development during the bird nesting season.



Figure 1: Example of bird netting in use

CIEEM and RSPB advice posted on 2nd April 2019 suggests there are many concerns about the use of netting and advise against its use. Planning guidelines stipulate that where possible developers should retain hedges and trees within the design of their developments where possible. When this is not possible, vegetation should be removed outside of the bird nesting season (February to August as a guide). Where removal within the nesting period cannot be avoided, vegetation should be checked by a competent ecologist and only removed when nests are confirmed to be absent.

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it an offence to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst in use or being built.

If all other alternatives have been exhausted and netting is to be used CIEEM and RSPB recommend the following:

- Netting to be used only once planning permission has been granted
- It is installed with advice from a competent ecologist, ideally a member of CIEEM
- Netting is used in such a way that it will not catch and hold birds and other wildlife
- All reasonable precautions are taken to ensure that no wildlife is trapped inside the netting at the time of installation and;
- Netting is checked three times a day to ensure that it has not become defective, loose or damaged and that no wildlife has become entangled.

Maydencroft ecologists are able to offer advice on the removal of vegetation on development sites. Our ecologists can also carry out bird nesting surveys and checks where required, and can recommend suitable mitigation to avoid impacts and help prevent potential delays to development projects.