

## British Ecological Society – EclA Guidelines Comments

Someone has done an incredible amount of work on this document, and they are to be congratulated; but it is not attractive to navigate and has too many words. This might be because it informs and educates as well as provides guidelines. If the intention is to provide guidelines for professionals (planners, ecologists, engineers etc), it might be better to boil down the main message to its essentials and then reference key statements to sectional checklists. It might also be useful to consider a nested structure, both for the electronic and the 'hard' versions (bit like a manual). This would cut repetition, make the document easier to use, give it an interactive feel. In the case of the hardcopy, this structure would also encourage a loose-leaf format that would be easy to update.

In making these comments, I am assuming that most ecologists working in this area simply need a hierarchy of authoritative prompts (with backup sources) that might be used as a guide and a measure of their actions.

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3.26 Ancient woodlands (greater than 2 ha) are identified on county inventories...

3.36 \* This paragraph appears under the species section, but actually applies to BAP habitats as well \* so should be in a more general place.

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Essentially the comments are about increase objectivity, rigour and transparency in the process, and decreasing reliance on 'expert judgement'.

1) 'The Scoping Process' - A documented, repeatable "systematic review" style search should be used to identify pertinent information regarding the impact of the intervention on the main subjects, e.g. how do Dartford Warblers respond to disturbance, or habitat fragmentation.

2) Levels of uncertainty in impact assessment could be quantified through meta-analysis if data and resources permit. In the absence of such analysis, qualitative levels of uncertainty should be used.

3) Mitigation should be linked explicitly to level of uncertainty. Where knowledge gaps are identified mitigation must include monitoring.

4) An accessible repository of EIA's should be established and included in future systematic searching so that their outcomes can inform future ones (Where past monitoring has been insufficient to determine the outcome, further data collection may be appropriate)

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