

Badger and Reptile Mitigation

Dawlish, Devon

Redrow

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Large scale permanent

Project overview

Keystone Habitats was appointed by Redrow homes to provide badger and reptile mitigation for a large residential development in Dawlish, Devon.

It consisted of the construction and installation of an eight chamber, five-entrance artificial Badger sett. In addition to this there was approximately 700m of temporary reptile exclusion fencing installed during the process.

To go beyond the standard relocation of mitigation, two subterranean reptile hibernacula were constructed.

What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

The biodiversity conditions on site were limited however badgers and reptiles were known to occupy the area, thus the need for mitigation.

Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

Due to Redrow developing a large housing development in the area,



Photo: Sett under construction

there was a cause for mitigation measures to be taken into account.

Redrow seized the opportunity to undertake a mitigation scheme that will be permanent and provide a valuable, safe habitat for the badgers and reptiles.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

For the mitigation project, a pre-commencement walkover to discuss an appropriate location for the newly created sett with the appointed Ecologist was conducted.

From this the ecologist scoped out access arrangements for site plant

on a logistically challenging site and liaised with adjacent landowners to explain the importance of ecological mitigation works.

To make the construction process as smooth as possible a pre-fabricated artificial Badger sett was developed at Keystone Habitats to reduce installation time on Redrow development site.

This was followed by the relocation of existing spoil and bedding material from the old sett to the new sett to encourage badger sett exploration. Peanut trails between the existing and newly created sett were laid to encourage sett inhabitation.

The next step was installation of the fencing using a Ditch Witch XT850 tracked multi-tool carrier, the only one of its kind in the UK. Finally, all infill material for the hibernacula was sourced on site by thinning dead growth from surrounding trees and hedgerows.

How would you best describe the project?

Mitigation.

Further information

All works were completed in one working week, it was vital on such a mitigation programme that the timing was right for the wildlife.

The badger sett was installed in two days on a very logistically challenging site and 700m of reptile fencing was installed in under two days to allow for reptile translocation and sett closure that had no other option but to commence on time.

In total the contract was delivered on budget and was signed off by the Ecologist immediately upon completion.

It was confirmed the new habitats created were not only aesthetically pleasing for the area, but practical and sustainable for the wildlife it hosts.



Photo: Completed sett

TIP – When conducting mitigation strategies ensure to liaise with ecologists throughout the process, the safety of the habitat and wildlife is paramount.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

The sustainability of wildlife in the face of climate change and the impact of modern living has been increasingly brought to our attention, we want to help protect, enhance and create new habitats to support our wildlife wherever possible.