

Hedgerow Netting Information Sheet

Ideally vegetation clearance, such as hedgerow removal, should be timed to avoid the bird breeding season, which runs from March to September (inclusive). This is to prevent adverse impacts to any active bird nests present and therefore ensure wildlife legislation is not breached.

In some circumstances a hedgerow may have been identified as requiring removal (possibly to permit an anticipated development or the hedgerow occurs along a proposed pipeline route), however it cannot be removed prior to the bird breeding season as the relevant permissions or land access consents have not been granted. In these circumstances it may be deemed appropriate to try and prevent birds from nesting within a hedgerow, and one method to stop birds from nesting is to cover the hedgerow in netting. Therefore should consent to remove the hedgerow be granted during the bird breeding season, the hedgerow can be removed without affecting active birds nest.

EMEC Ecology has the capability to net hedgerows and has carried out recent projects in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The netting process isolates the hedgerow (or hedgerow section) that is required to be removed and approximately 3m either side (this will ensure no birds nest close to the section to be removed). The netting used is similar to debris netting used on building sites (used to cover scaffolding) and is secured on both sides of the hedgerow and at the edges by pegs and cable ties. It is important to ensure that no gaps, raised sections or tears occur in the netting itself, or where the netting meets the ground. Any such gaps could allow access for birds to enter the netted hedgerow and build nests.



Although no method can guarantee birds will not be able to nest within a hedgerow (gaps and tears can occur in the netting), this process has been used on many occasions to successfully allow hedgerows to be removed during the bird breeding season, and therefore avoid major delays.



Hedgerow netting can be carried out between October and February (i.e. outside the bird breeding season). However February is considered the most suitable time to net hedgerows, as the longer the netting is in place it is more likely to become subject to vandalism, gaps and tears or damaged by livestock. Hedgerow netting can however be carried out during the bird breeding season if an experienced ecologist can confirm that there are no active nests present prior to the netting being installed.

Prior to being netted the hedgerow should ideally be flailed (outside the bird breeding season), as this make the netting process more straight forward and therefore quicker to complete. Also, where a section of hedgerow is to be removed, it is normally necessary to cut a thin strip through the hedgerow to allow the ends to be sealed effectively. Where this flailing and cutting cannot be undertaken the process takes longer and is therefore becomes more costly.

If you are considering asking EMEC Ecology to provide you with a quotation to complete hedgerow netting at your site, please provide us with the precise measurements of hedgerow that will be required to be netted (including maximum height, width and length) and we will be happy to provide you with a quotation. In some cases we may need to make a site visit prior to providing a confirmed quotation.



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