

## Volunteering for Freshwater Habitats Trust

**Volunteers are defined as people who, whilst not employed by Freshwater Habitats Trust, have been assigned specific tasks on a voluntary basis, whose name and contact details are held centrally by Freshwater Habitats Trust and towards whom the organisation owes a duty of care.**

To ensure volunteers are well briefed and able to confidently carry out the work they undertake, Freshwater Habitats Trust aims to make sure all volunteers are provided with:

- A task description, outlining suggested work.
- A volunteer agreement - which sets out what volunteers and the organisation can expect from each other.
- Health and safety and risk assessment information. Freshwater Habitats Trust is committed to following good practice and the latest advice from the Health & Safety Executive. This way we ensure employees and volunteers undertake their work in a safe and healthy manner.

Volunteers conducting survey work on behalf of Freshwater Habitats Trust should read and implement the guidance in the following documents in order to ensure they complete their work safely.

- **Volunteer Risk Assessment**
- **Volunteer Agreement**
- **Lone Working for Volunteers Code of Practice**
- **Biosecurity Information for PondNet volunteers**

A volunteer who is undertaking pond monitoring specifically on behalf of Freshwater Habitats Trust will be covered by Freshwater Habitats Trust's Liability Insurance (a copy of which is available on request).

### Contact

Project Administrator for People, Ponds and Water  
E: [peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)

PondNet is one of three projects within Freshwater Habitats Trust's People, Ponds and Water Project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

Visit the webpage for more information: [www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/pondnet](http://www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/pondnet)



This guidance note provides an outline of best practice in terms of health and safety when monitoring ponds.

### Volunteer responsibility

**Whilst carrying out work for Freshwater Habitats Trust each volunteer has the responsibility of ensuring they undertake their work considering their own health and safety and that of others around them.**

As a volunteer you should not put yourself in a position that could place yourself, or others, in danger. You are under no obligation to participate or continue with a survey. You are under no obligation to visit a particular site, even if the survey organisers have suggested it. You should never undertake any work if you have concerns about your own or others' health and safety. If you have any such concerns, you should stop the work and raise these with Freshwater Habitats Trust, either centrally or via your regional coordinator.

### Risk assessment

**Before undertaking any activities, every fieldworker should consider the particular health and safety hazards associated with their individual study sites and whether their individual circumstances and medical conditions expose them to particular hazards.**

A table outlining generic areas of risk likely in pond surveying is given below (Table 1). However, you should identify the potential risks specific to the fieldwork activities associated with your individual sites and should think about, and apply practical precautions to minimise the level of any risks. Fieldworkers should also pass on health and safety information provided to them by Freshwater Habitats Trust to any other people helping them with Freshwater Habitats Trust related activities.

### Health and safety reporting

**Please report any health and safety issues or concerns about the survey methods or the survey sites to Freshwater Habitats Trust.**

All accidents and incidents which could have led to harm must be reported to Freshwater Habitats Trust. Please record the details of any incident as soon as possible after the event.

### Access permission

**Permission to visit your field site will have been sought from relevant landowners/ managers in advance of your visit.**

In some cases landowners have asked to be contacted personally to know when you will be on site. If this is the case, that information will be shown on your site survey information pack. Please contact the landowners if this is required, or alert your regional coordinator who will make the arrangements for you. Do not continue fieldwork if access permission is revoked at any point and, if this is the case, please contact your regional coordinator who will update the map sheet. A letter confirming your participation in fieldwork can be provided on request. Ponds to which you do not have access to, and should not visit are marked by an X on your map. Please abide by The Countryside Code ([www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk))

### Parking

**When visiting a site take care to park cars sensibly, preferably off-road, and do not block entrances.** A notice in the car window can be useful to alert locals to your purpose and contact details (a car windscreen sign is included in your pack).

## About the Freshwater Habitats Trust

The Freshwater Habitats Trust is a national charity committed to protecting and increasing the biodiversity of freshwaters across the UK, through research, policy, outreach, and education.

[www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](http://www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

## General precautions

Take a map to new sites to avoid getting lost. Check weather reports before you go out and wear appropriate clothing e.g. wellington boots and long-sleeved clothes and trousers to prevent scratches and nettle stings. In hot weather use sun protection including a wide-brimmed hat and sun screen. Make sure you drink plenty of water and take food if out for long periods of time. Take regular breaks to prevent lapses in concentration. Avoid or abandon outdoor activities in bad weather.

## Working around ponds, including lone working

**Ponds can be dangerous places with deep water, steep and slippery banks and unsafe floating mats of vegetation.** They may also be surrounded by dense vegetation which can be a trip hazard, or cause abrasions to the body, face and eyes. For health and safety reasons volunteers must ensure they are accompanied by a companion in the following circumstances:

1. All visits undertaken at night (e.g. for newt torching).
2. All visits where they are likely to enter the water, for example aquatic invertebrate netting surveys and wetland plant surveys.

**In general please avoid working alone wherever possible.** We strongly recommend that you are accompanied on your first visit to your survey pond(s), and only work alone in future at sites where your risk assessment indicates there are minimal risks e.g. ponds that do not have steep or slippery banks etc.

If your risk assessment indicates that the survey pond is too dangerous to survey at all – especially if it has unstable banks or would require access across floating mats of vegetation, then retreat from the pond and choose another site. This should usually be the nearest pond for which you have permission. Please also inform your regional coordinator who will change the base map details and identify another 1 km square for you if the square is now unsuitable for survey.

If you find it necessary to work alone or you are accompanied, but working in a remote place, please ensure you have read and implemented the measures outlined in the Freshwater Habitats Trust lone-working document.

## Lone working Code of Practice

**Always leave a note of your whereabouts with a responsible person (buddy system).** This should include: date and time of departure, method of travel to and around the site, proposed itinerary, and expected time of leaving the site and return to base, and vehicle identification details. The person to whom these details are given should be told whom to contact if you do not return and at what time to raise the alarm. A lone working pro-form is included in your pack,

## Difficult terrain

**Take special care when carrying out fieldwork along watercourses,** cliff edges, or in areas that contain boggy ground, reed beds, loose rocks or areas with underground burrows (e.g. badger and rabbit holes) often found along field edges. Do not cross potentially hazardous sites, such as quarries, ravines and railway lines. Please heed warning signs and do not enter private (non access) land that has been deliberately obstructed by fencing or barbed wire.



Take sensible precautions whilst undertaking pond surveys – read the guidance, have fun, stay safe

## Livestock and agricultural machinery

**Take special care when entering areas with livestock**, especially cattle, rams and horses. If livestock are likely to be present on the site do not take a dog with you on fieldwork. Do not enter fields containing bulls and be especially cautious with farm dogs. Rutting deer can also be aggressive in the autumn. Avoid undertaking fieldwork in close proximity to working agricultural machinery or forestry operations.

## Human confrontation

**Consider your personal safety when conducting fieldwork within the vicinity of known or likely trouble spots.** Avoid confrontation with landowners, land workers or members of the public. You may wish to carry some form of identification to confirm the activities you are undertaking (e.g. Landowner permission letter (available on request)) or volunteer survey card (included in your pack). If you have any concerns about your personal safety, cease fieldwork immediately and contact your regional coordinator.

## Waterborne diseases

**Working in water is a potential source of disease** including leptospirosis or Weil's disease, hepatitis A and tetanus. In all cases the best preventative measures are:

- Be aware of where and how these diseases can be caught and take precautions based on this knowledge.
- Ensure tetanus jabs are up to date.
- Ensure that any cuts on hands are covered with waterproof plasters and carefully clean and cover any cuts or grazes that occur whilst working in water.
- Wear protective clothing such as gloves.
- Avoid ingestion of water.
- Ensure that hands are washed after contact with water especially before eating or smoking.
- If you have entered the water, wash thoroughly and as soon as possible.
- If feeling unwell after a site visit, seek medical attention and notify them of your area of work.

## Lyme disease

**Lyme disease is a bacterial disease transmitted by animal ticks associated with rank vegetation, which can lead to severe symptoms if left untreated.** A variety of animals act as hosts for the bacteria, including sheep, deer and pheasants. For more information, see: [www.badauk.org](http://www.badauk.org) or contact BADA-UK (PO Box 544, Wath upon Dearne, Rotherham, S63 3DW). Make regular checks of skin and hair. Remove ticks from the skin as soon as possible. Wear light coloured clothing so that ticks are visible, tuck trousers into socks so that ticks cannot attach or climb up the inside of clothing without being seen.

## Mobile phones

**It is advisable to carry a mobile phone, as they may be useful in case of an emergency.**

Please note that mobile phones may not work in some remote areas. In case of an emergency you can use either the European Emergency Number (112) or 999 (see [www.eena.org](http://www.eena.org) for more information). 112 can be dialled even if the keypad is locked.

## Contact

PondNet is one of three projects within Freshwater Habitats Trust's People, Ponds and Water Project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

Contact the Project Administrator

t: 01865 595502 e: [peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)

## Table 1. VOLUNTEER POND SURVEY RISK ASSESSMENT

This risk assessment identifies potential risks and precautions that a volunteer must be aware of and may encounter on a site visit to conduct habitat surveys. Volunteers must read this assessment before conducting any survey work on behalf of the PondNet project and Freshwater Habitats Trust

HAZARD	RISK	People at risk	Risk rating (low, medium, high)	Precautions / Controls	Risk after controls (low, medium, high)
<b>Livestock</b>	Physical injury, trampling	Site users including surveyors	Low	Be aware of livestock behaviour, if in doubt leave the site. Do not take dogs on site.	Low
<b>Dogs</b>	Bites, disease, lacerations	Site users including surveyors	Low	Be wary of dogs off leads. Disinfect any bites and seek medical attention.	Low
<b>Adders</b>	Poisoning, allergic reaction, paralysis, death	Site users including surveyors	Medium, High in Winter	Check the area you are visiting to see if this species is present. Take care to look at the ground when kneeling or placing your hands on the ground. Wear stout boots. Take extra care when lifting debris from the ground.	Medium
<b>Biological/ stings and bites</b>	Diseases, allergic reactions	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Wear long trousers and long sleeved tops to limit tick bites, but always check thoroughly after site visits and remove ticks correctly if found. If known to be allergic to stings, take medication on site. Make sure any open cuts/wounds are covered. If feeling unwell after a site visit, seek medical attention and notify them of your area of work.	Low

<b>Water borne diseases</b>	Bites/ stings/ infection	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Be aware of where and how these disease can be caught and take precautions based on this knowledge. Ensure that cuts on hands are covered with waterproof plasters and carefully clean and cover any new cuts or grazes. Wear protective clothing such as gloves. Avoid ingestion of water. Ensure that hands are washed after contact with water especially before eating or smoking. If feeling unwell after a site visit, seek medical attention and notify them of your area of work.	Low
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<b>HAZARD</b>	<b>RISK</b>	<b>People at risk</b>	<b>Risk rating (low, medium, high)</b>	<b>Precautions / Controls</b>	<b>Risk after controls (low, medium, high)</b>
<b>Sharp grasses and thorny bushes</b>	Eye injuries, lacerations, cuts, infection	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Do not bend down or kneel in areas of known sharp grasses/plants. Disinfect any lacerations or punctures.	Low
<b>Concealed holes/ ditches</b>	Physical injury, ankle injuries	Site users including surveyors	High	Take care when walking through areas of dense vegetation or areas where there is poor footing visibility – avoid these areas where possible.	Medium
<b>Adverse weather</b>	Physical injury, death	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Check the weather forecast before site visits. If you are on site and adverse weather starts (such as lightning strikes) retreat to your vehicle and wait it out. Stop work immediately if ill attired for weather conditions.	Low
<b>Exposure to sun</b>	Sun burn	Site users including surveyors	High	Apply sunscreen and avoid the midday sun if possible. Wear appropriate clothing: long sleeves/trousers/hat. Plan regular breaks and shade if working for duration in full sun.	Medium

<b>Cold</b>	Hypothermia	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Wear appropriate clothing. Thermals and waterproofs.	Low
<b>Heat</b>	Exhaustion, dehydration	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Walking difficult terrain will cause extra fatigue in hot weather. Do not rush and drink plenty of water.	Low
<b>Ponds/ deep water</b>	Drowning	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Take care when near any water bodies. Do not lone work near deep/unknown standing water bodies where possible. Wear a lifejacket when working in/near deep water.	Low
<b>Floating mats of vegetation</b>	Drowning	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Avoid all areas where floating mats of vegetation grow out over deeper water or mud.	Low
<b>HAZARD</b>	<b>RISK</b>	<b>People at risk</b>	<b>Risk rating (low, medium, high)</b>	<b>Precautions / Controls</b>	<b>Risk after controls (low, medium, high)</b>
<b>Steep slopes / unstable ground</b>	Physical injury, trips, ankle injuries	Site users including surveyors	High	Try to avoid climbing steep slopes. Take care with footing on unstable ground.	Medium
<b>Slips/trips</b>	Physical injury, death	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Do not move quickly when working in and around water. If you are unsure of depth check with a depth pole/net handle before proceeding. Use safe access points, avoiding steep banks and floating mats of vegetation.	Low
<b>Deep silt</b>	Sinking and getting stuck	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Always check your footing with a depth pole/handle of net before moving into water.	Low

<b>Difficult terrain</b>	Physical injury, trips, falls, exhaustion	Site users including surveyors	Medium	If working in mountains or moorlands wear footwear with good ankle support. Carry warm, waterproof clothing. Carry a map and compass and know how to use them. Carry a whistle, torch and where appropriate, a survival bag with extra high energy food supplies.	Low
<b>Sharp objects</b>	Cuts, lacerations, infection	Site users including surveyors	High	Take care when picking up any potentially sharp objects. Wear gloves if appropriate.	Medium
<b>Old and partially buried structures</b>	Tripping, ankle injuries	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Take care when footing is not clearly visible. Look for signs of nearby structures; e.g. partially collapsed fence.	Low
<b>Hazardous waste / fly tipping</b>	Cuts, lacerations, infection, chemical burns	Site users including surveyors	Low	Do not handle waste. Wear gloves if you have to handle waste. If unsure of contents of containers or if known to be hazardous contact emergency services.	Low

<b>HAZARD</b>	<b>RISK</b>	<b>People at risk</b>	<b>Risk rating (low, medium, high)</b>	<b>Precautions / Controls</b>	<b>Risk after controls (low, medium, high)</b>
<b>Motorcycles / horses being ridden recklessly</b>	Physical injury through collision	Site users including surveyors	Low	Always be alert when walking in areas of poor visibility that may be used by motorbikes or horses. Leave site if unsure. Wear high visibility clothing.	Low

<b>Assault</b>	Physical injury, (sexual) assault	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Try to defuse any potentially confrontational situations. If possible walk away. Contact police if unsure or you feel threatened. If you are working alone make sure someone close to you knows your location at all times and check in with them when you arrive and leave the site. Report any abusive landowners to the project team immediately.	Low
<b>Shooting</b>	Physical injury	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Do not approach any person suspected of carrying a weapon, contact police. If there is shooting allowed on site, establish where and when so you can avoid it, if possible, wear high visibility clothing in countryside areas where shooting is likely.	Low
<b>Military Ordnance</b>	Physical injury, loss of limbs	Site users including surveyors	High in Military areas	Do not pick up any unknown objects. Take care when walking off paths. Avoid getting too close to any fire ranges. Liaise with MOD if unsure.	Medium
<b>Firefighting and explosion</b>	Burning, smoke inhalation, death	Site users including surveyors	Low	Do not tackle fire unless you need to in order to escape and it is safe to do so, call emergency services.	Low
<b>Manual Handling</b>	Physical injuries, strains, sprains	Site users including surveyors	High	Do not underestimate an objects weight – remember wet/water filled objects are a lot heavier than the dry/empty counterparts. Plan each lift – load, route, location, and people. Always lift with your legs. Ask for assistance and use aids wherever possible.	Low
<b>Traffic</b>	Collision with vehicles	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Take care when crossing roads.	Low
<b>HAZARD</b>	<b>RISK</b>	<b>People at risk</b>	<b>Risk rating (low, medium, high)</b>	<b>Precautions / Controls</b>	<b>Risk after controls (low, medium, high)</b>

<b>Flooding</b>	Physical injury, death	Site users including surveyors	Low	Check for flood warnings with local news and national weather centres before visiting a site likely to flood, especially after a spell of heavy rain – do not conduct lone working at flooded sites, an onsite buddy and safety rope must be used.	Low
<b>Exposure to toxic water</b>	Medical reaction	Site users including surveyors	Medium	If toxic blooms or polluted water is suspected (dead animals or livestock, chemical odour etc) do not enter or touch the water and report it to the Environment Agency as soon as possible.	Low
<b>Lone Working</b>	Lack of assistance in case of an emergency	Site users including surveyors	Medium	Avoid lone working if possible. Carry a charged mobile phone, a map/GPS, a torch, a whistle and a watch whenever you are lone working outside. Make a local buddy aware of location and stay in touch with them on arrival and departure from sites. Avoid confrontation situations. Take precautions against risk situations.	Low

**Notes: By accepting to survey for PondNet and Freshwater Habitats Trust it is assumed that this risk assessment has been read, and that you will take all possible care to assess and avoid the hazards listed and perform the survey in a safe manner.**

**If any incidents, accidents or near-accidents occur during the course of your voluntary work for Freshwater Habitats Trust, please ensure you contact the project team as soon as possible.**

## Contact

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Contact the Project Administrator

t: 01865 595502 e: [peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)



**This Volunteer Agreement describes the relationship between the PondNet volunteer role and Freshwater Habitats Trust.**

Freshwater Habitats Trust very much appreciates volunteers help in providing data for the PondNet project on a voluntary basis and we aim to make this experience enjoyable and rewarding. Freshwater Habitats Trust (the organisation), is pleased to accept volunteer support to enable survey work to be completed for the PondNet project, as follows:

**Volunteer role:** Pond habitat and biological field surveyor  
**Volunteer period:** 1 January 2015 – December 2017  
**Freshwater Habitats Trust contacts:** Naomi Ewald, National Coordinator [newald@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:newald@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)  
Fran Dunn: Project Officer Southern England  
[fdunn@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:fdunn@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)  
Pete Case: Project Officer Central England  
[pcase@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:pcase@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)  
Anne Heathcote: Project Officer Northern England  
[aheathcote@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:aheathcote@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)  
Hannah Shaw - Project Officer Wales  
[hshaw@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:hshaw@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)  
Laura Quinlan – Project Administrator  
[peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)

**Insurance:** Work conducted by volunteers on behalf of Freshwater Habitats Trust is covered under our Public Liability Insurance Policy

**Requirements:** Before any work is conducted on behalf of Freshwater Habitats Trust, volunteers must read, and apply, the risk assessment procedure provided in the *Volunteer Risk Assessment* and *Lone Working Code of Practice* document

#### **Freshwater Habitats Trust agrees to the following:**

- To provide adequate information to volunteers so they are able to perform any tasks assigned.
- To respect the skills and needs of volunteers, and do our best to adjust to individual requirements.
- To provide feedback to the volunteer on the results gathered by the project.

#### **The volunteer agrees to the following:**

- I understand that I am not under any obligation to carry out voluntary work for PondNet, nor is Freshwater Habitats Trust under obligation to use me as a volunteer.
- I understand the work involves manual activities outdoors, and I am fit and healthy enough to carry out the voluntary work that I will be involved in. I will inform the Freshwater Habitats Trust of any special risks or requirements.
- I have received sufficient training and/or instructions to carry out the planned activities safely.
- I understand that I should not do anything that I do not feel able to do safely.
- I understand that I should not put others or myself in danger during the course of any voluntary activities.
- I have read and understood Freshwater Habitats Trust's *Volunteer Assessment* and *Lone Working Code of Practice* documents.
- I understand that the purpose of risk assessment is to remind me of potential risks, and I should use these to make my own risk assessment(s).
- I agree to read and implement the *Biosecurity Information for Volunteers* to protect the health of the ponds I am surveying.
- I consent to my personal details being held by Freshwater Habitats Trust, including in electronic form, for the duration of the project.
- I understand that the data I collect will be stored on WaterNet - Freshwater Habitat Trust's data management portal. Records stored here will automatically be sent to the National Biodiversity Network LINK, Local Record Centres and natural recording groups.).

**Freshwater Habitats Trust recognises the inherent dangers in lone working and aims to reduce lone working and the associated risks within all of its activities.**

The aim of this Code of Practice is to ensure that when lone working is absolutely necessary, there is always someone who knows where you are working and has emergency contact information for you. In order to achieve this Freshwater Habitats Trust recommends using the buddy system outlined in this document.

**Lone workers are those who work by themselves and without close or direct supervision.**

Examples of lone working can include:

- Visiting isolated locations alone where assistance is not readily available.
- Visiting a site where you feel vulnerable.
- Carrying out site visits or entering empty buildings outside normal office hours.
- When on site, working separately from and some distance away from colleagues.
- Working in an area where mobile telephone reception is poor or non-existent.
- Driving late at night, in hazardous road conditions, or driving long distances.
- Staying at over-night accommodation.

**Lone working should be avoided where ever possible** as it greatly increases the risks of incident and injury. However If lone working is unavoidable, always be aware of safe routes for withdrawing from a site or situation. Make sure you report any sites or incidents that either could have or did lead to an undesirable outcome, as soon as possible.

**Before any task is undertaken please consider:**

- Are you capable of undertaking the task without assistance?
- Are you fully aware of the hazards involved and the risks to which they are exposed?
- Do you know what to do in an emergency, unforeseen or difficult situation?
- Have you informed another person of your whereabouts, your planned time of return, and the action to be taken if you fail to return through the Freshwater Habitats Trust buddy system?
- Some types of work should never be undertaken alone, such as working at night or use of chainsaws or other hazardous equipment.

**Employees and volunteers who are working alone should:**

- Always carry a fully charged mobile phone and make sure that you can get a signal.
- Identify yourself and the capacity in which you represent Freshwater Habitats Trust to land owners if you are working on private land.
- Avoid inflaming situations, especially when you are outnumbered, use your judgment and apply common sense.
- In the case of serious criminal damage or other serious offences call for assistance from the police or your assigned buddy before confronting the offender(s). When calling the police dial 999 explain the situation, tell them that you are going to confront an offender and that there could be a breach of the peace. This is likely to evoke a fast response.
- Try to avoid direct involvement until backup arrives. Observe the situation from a safe distance taking notes, photographs etc. When direct action is necessary, where possible ensure that an impartial witness to events is present. This is likely to reduce the risk of assault and will provide you with a stronger case if allegations are subsequently filed against you.
- Do not provoke violence through obstruction or attempting to confiscate bikes / horses etc.
- Never confront people with firearms. Always call the Police.
- Record all events accurately together with the names and addresses of witnesses.

Note: Staff members should not go, or ask volunteers to visit people with previous history of aggressive problems.

**Make sure you have received appropriate training for the task to be carried out** on site and that you fully understand the nature of the work you are to carry out, the hazards that may arise and the precautions to be taken.

Depending on the site and the nature of work it may be appropriate to carry the following personal protective equipment:

- Suitable outdoor clothing, map and compass/ GPS, whistle, fully charged mobile phone, watch, torch with spare batteries, first aid kit, food and fresh water.
- Know your limitations and do not take unnecessary risks. If you do not feel fit to carry out the task allocated, do not do it.

## **The lone working reporting system - the 'buddy' system**

- Before leaving the office/home, make sure you have all the information you will need about the site you are visiting or the person you are visiting. Designate a 'buddy' and inform him/ her of your intentions and leave her/ him with contact numbers, name and address or location information.
- When you arrive at a site where you will be working alone, first make sure you have a working mobile phone and check whether you are working in a poor signal reception area. If the signal is weak, find a nearby phone box to call in your whereabouts giving as much information as you can, and how long you intend to spend there. Give the number and location of the phone box if using one.
- If a situation arises where you feel you are in any doubt about your safety as a lone worker you should withdraw from the site and if necessary call the police for assistance. No job or task is so important that you need to put yourself at risk. Avoid confrontation, walk away and head towards a more public place where you can raise an alarm if necessary.
- Once the task is completed, call your 'buddy' on leaving the site. If your 'buddy' is unavailable for any reason, leave a message with a second contact with strict instructions to pass it on.

## **Emergency procedure for buddies if lone worker fails to report in:**

- 30 minutes after the lone worker was due to report in, call on the given number every 5 - 10 minutes (using mobile, office, and home contact numbers). For lone workers known to be travelling, attempts should be made to contact the destination to check for news of traffic delays. Continue to attempt contacting the lone worker.
- After a further 30 minutes have elapsed the 'buddy' must plan a search, plus continue to attempt contacting the lone worker.
- After one hour a physical search must commence. If contact cannot be established within two hours of the elapsed report time the police must be contacted.

### **PondNet Contact**

**Project Administrator for People, Ponds and Water**

**E: [peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)**

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**LOTTERY FUNDED**

One of these forms should be completed by the volunteer on each survey visit, to help your 'Buddy' in the event of needing to implement the Emergency Procedures, or if information needs to be given to the emergency services. You may have more than one buddy depending on the type of work you are undertaking, in which case please complete one form per buddy.

Your buddy will ideally be a colleague, or a family member, or a friend that you regularly have contact with and who is aware of your area of work. Please ensure that your Buddy is familiar with the procedures. You may also find it useful to keep a copy for yourself.

**In the event of failure to report in by the specified times, follow the procedures on the preceding sheet.**

<b>Name of Lone Worker</b>		
<b>Contact address</b>		
<b>Contact phone numbers</b>	<b>Work:</b> <b>Other:</b>	<b>Home: Mobile:</b>

<b>Name of buddy</b>		
<b>Contact address</b>		
<b>Contact phone numbers</b>	<b>Work:</b> <b>Other:</b>	<b>Home: Mobile:</b>

<b>Date(s) of Lone Working:</b>
<b>Area(s) of lone working (details and grid references if possible):</b>
<b>Travel / vehicle details (including car registration, make and colour):</b>
<b>Known risks to inform the emergency services if emergency procedures are implemented:</b>
<b>Reporting-in time(s):</b>

**For more information contact:**  
**Project Administrator for People, Ponds and Water**  
**E: [peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:peoplepondswater@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)**



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There are a couple of practices that all pond surveyors need to follow to ensure we protect, rather than damage, the ponds we study.

Please familiarise yourself and rigorously apply the two protocols below so we can all rest easy.

## **DON'T TRANSFER ORGANISMS BETWEEN PONDS - IN MUD OR WATER**

### **STOP** the spread of **PLANTS** and **ANIMALS**

Prevent the spread of non-native species between ponds. Invasive species can threaten and kill our native plants and animals by competing for resources and spreading disease.

Examples: plant fragments and/ or seeds of species like New Zealand Pigmyweed, Parrot's Feather, Floating Pennywort, Creeping Water Primrose and Water Fern and eggs or individuals of animals like Killer Shrimp and non-native Crayfish.

#### **Be aware:**

- Look at PondNet's invasive plants and animals advice sheet to help recognise species that pose particular risk [www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/PondNet](http://www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/PondNet)
- Check your survey site map notes to see if invasive non-native species are known in the area you have been allocated for survey.
- If you see these species at your survey ponds or know they're around, please:
  - a) Take extra special care, and follow the **check, clean, dry** protocol between every pond.
  - b) If it's a new sighting, report this to your PondNet officer so we can update the survey map.

### **STOP** the spread of **DISEASE**

#### **About the Freshwater Habitats Trust**

The Freshwater Habitats Trust is a national charity committed to protecting and increasing the biodiversity of freshwaters across the UK, through research, policy, outreach, and education.

[www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](http://www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk)



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

Protect amphibians from infections caused by fungi like Chytrid, and other pathogens that harm or kill them. Prevent spread of other diseases such as crayfish plague, and those we won't know about until it's too late! The potential for new diseases to arrive and spread in the UK is high if we don't take care. Tiny numbers of pathogens present on materials like damp equipment can often be enough to spread these diseases, so vigilance is necessary.

## Be aware:

**HIGH RISK:** If there is a known source of infection in the vicinity either don't undertake the survey (best option), or carry out the **check-clean-dry** protocol below rigorously at every pond. PondNet will alert you where high risk issues are known.

**MODERATE RISK:** If there are no known local issues with infection, the main aim is to prevent disease spread. Many of the PondNet survey options ask you not to enter the water and therefore your contact with waterborne pathogens will be minimised. If you are surveying multiple 1km squares, follow the **check-clean-dry** protocol each time you move to a different area.

## CHECK – CLEAN – DRY and stop the spread

- **CHECK** your equipment and clothing for live organisms, plant fragments or seeds, even the difficult to see spots.
- **SCRAPE** wet/dry mud off all footwear and equipment with a stiff brush (a screwdriver may be useful to clean shoe treads).
- **CLEAN** and wash all clothing, equipment and footwear thoroughly.
- **DISINFECT** equipment (nets and footwear) in bleach solution, 1 part bleach (from a supermarket bottle containing 5% bleach – check the bottle label) to 16 parts water (e.g. for 5 litres of solution; add 300 ml of bleach to just under 5 litres of water).
- **DRY** all clothing and equipment, as some species can survive for days in damp environments. UV from sunlight can help to kill organisms, leave equipment to air dry completely in a sunny location before using at the next site.

## For more information go to:

- GB Non-native Species Secretariat:
- Check-clean-dry: [www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry)
- Non-native species factsheets: [www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=47](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=47)
- Amphibian disease: [www.arc-trust.org/advice/amphibian-disease](http://www.arc-trust.org/advice/amphibian-disease)

## Contact

PondNet is one of three projects within Freshwater Habitats Trust's People, Ponds and Water Project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

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