



01 April 2026

Dear Heads of Planning,

This letter is to inform you of the publication of the revised Section 7 list of species and habitats under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

A copy of the revised list can be found here: [Section 7 list: species and habitats of principal importance in Wales | GOV.WALES](#)

The Section 7 list is a statutory register of species and habitats of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in Wales.

The refresh of Section 7 was led by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in consultation with key technical stakeholders, on behalf of Welsh Government. The revised list represents a significant expansion, with 1,322 species and 69 habitats now listed.

In respect of bird species this includes breeds that have seen significant decline in populations across Wales, including Swifts, Starlings, Rooks, and House Martins.

Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales identifies that planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. In fulfilling this duty, planning authorities must also have regard to the list of habitats and species of principal importance for Wales, published under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Planning authorities must follow a step-wise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity (NBB). Enhancement must be secured by delivering a biodiversity benefit primarily on site or immediately adjacent to the site.

When considering opportunities for NBB in respect of the new bird species on the list it will be important to also secure suitable provision for nesting, which could include installation of measures such as swift bricks as part of the fabric of new buildings.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Hemington". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Neil Hemington
Prif Gynllunydd, Y Gyfarwyddiaeth Gynllunio
Chief Planner, Planning Directorate