

Statement of Intent

This is the Health and Safety Policy for Stroud Wildlife Survey Group.

Recording and monitoring flora and fauna is an important, worthwhile and enjoyable activity. All activities carry an element of risk, and it is important to consider these carefully before taking part.

Our Health and Safety Policy is to:

- Prevent accidents,
- Manage health and safety risks during our surveys and activities,
- Provide safety equipment,
- Review this policy at least once per year.

Responsibilities for Health and Safety

Stroud Wildlife Survey Admin Team. Please discuss any health and safety concerns with the group leader on the day or email admin-group@stroudwildlifesurvey.org.uk

During surveys and activities.

Members should:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others; and
- Report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed above) or the activity leader
- Avoid attending surveys and activities if unwell,
- Provide emergency contact details and any relevant medical information to the group leader at the beginning of a survey,
- Take note of hazards detailed in risk assessments and take appropriate action to mitigate risk,
- Survey in groups of no less than two people,
- Tell someone where they are and when they expect to return – known as ‘the buddy system’,
- Ensure they have sunscreen, insect repellent, antihistamine, hand sanitizer and tick remover available for their own use during surveys and activities,
- Carry and be responsible for their own emergency medication, e.g. epipen for sting allergies,
- Wear clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather and terrain,
- Carry a drink/ refreshments,
- Take care around parked cars and look carefully when crossing roads,
- Wear a high viz jacket if surveying on or near roads or at night,
- Bring a fully charged mobile phone,
- Take care around farm animals, especially those with young. Never come between a mother and young.
- Avoid taking dogs near farm animals,
- Be aware of the possibility of bites and stings. Consider insect repellent and carry anti histamine cream.
- Be aware of local environmental changes, especially the weather,
- Carry out their own risk assessment if carrying out a non-organised survey,
- Only take part in activities they feel are within their capabilities and stop surveying if they feel it is unsafe to continue.

The above list is not exhaustive. Some surveys and activities have particular hazards where additional precautions are needed. Members should always check specific risk assessments.

Reporting of Accidents.

SWSG Admin Team keeps a record of incidents and accidents occurring during surveys. An Accident Form is available from the group leader of the survey or training. The form is completed and signed at the time of the incident by the member concerned unless this is not possible due to the nature of the incident.

Completed Accident Forms are kept in a secure locked cupboard by the Accident Reporting Officer as designated by the Admin Team. If required, the member concerned can request a photocopy of the form.

Bacteria and Viruses Advice

Bacteria and viruses are part of the natural environment. Members should always wash hands with soap on returning home and use hand sanitizer before eating if hand washing facilities are not available. Some particular diseases to note are:

- Avian influenza (bird flu) can be transmitted to humans. Do not handle sick or dead birds if you come across them. Wash hands with appropriate soaps/disinfectants after handling animals or coming into contact with droppings, soil, sand or water that may be contaminated. Learn more about the symptoms of avian influenza here. <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/diseases> . If you find any dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds such as gulls or birds of prey you should report them to Defra.
- Weil's disease (leptospirosis) is caused by a bacterial organism carried in the kidneys of rodents which is passed into water by their urine. The main routes of infections are through cuts and grazes, and the nose, eyes and mouth. It can be fatal if not treated. Learn more about the symptoms and treatment of Weil's disease here <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/leptospirosis> .
- Tetanus may result from the infection of even minor wounds and scratches with *Clostridium tetani*, a common micro-organism in soil. Always ensure immunisation against Tetanus is up to date.
- Lyme disease is a bacterial disease transmitted by animal ticks which leads to severe symptoms if left untreated. Rough grassland, scrub, woodland and rank vegetation are hotspots for ticks. Remove ticks from the skin as soon as possible and wear light-coloured clothing so that ticks are visible, tuck trouser bottoms into socks so that ticks cannot attach or climb up the leg and make regular checks of skin. Using insect repellent is also useful. See <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/lyme-disease> for more information including symptoms and tick removal.
- Salmonellosis is a bacterial infection common in rats and mice. This can result in food poisoning if ingested, for example as a result of preparing or eating food with contaminated hands. Wash hands after handling animal droppings or wear disposable/washable gloves and before eating/drinking.

Arrangements for health and safety

We will:

- Complete a site specific risk assessment for our organised surveys with the nearest available landline and grid reference/What3Words location noted in case of emergency.
- Carry a fully charged mobile phone - although the signal may be poor in steep sided valleys.

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- Carry a first aid kit,
- Provide general risk assessments for Members to adapt for their own surveys.

Stroud Wildlife Survey Admin June 2023