



Bird Nesting Survey and Bat Activity Survey Report

Project name and address:

RALLY Festival Series & Associated Events 2025
Northern Section of Southwark Park, London

Report Number:

BWE-RALLY-2025

Commissioned by:

RALLY Festival Series & Associated Events 2025

Prepared by: Bee.Wise.Eco Limited

Date: 17th August 2025

QUALITY STANDARDS CONTROL

The signatories below verify that this document has been prepared in accordance with our quality control requirements. These procedures do not affect the content and views expressed by the originator.

This document must only be treated as a draft unless it has been signed by the originators and approved by a director.

Revision: Final Report

Date: 18th August 2025

Prepared by: Rita Smoldareva MSc Senior Ecologist/Director

Checked by: Rita Smoldareva MSc Senior Ecologist/Director

The advice provided in this report is in accordance with the CIEEM Code of Professional Conduct. The opinions expressed are true and professional.

LIMITATIONS

This report is for the sole use of clients stated above. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are based on information provided by others. The methodology and sources of information used in providing services are outlined in this report. The scope of this report and services are factually limited by the conditions encountered and the information available at the time of assessment.

The report sections below should be read in full and detailed guidance given in this report must be followed to avoid breaching legislation regarding protected and invasive species.

This report is valid for one year from the date of the survey visit. Should works be delayed to later than one year after the survey then a further update survey of the site would be required as habitats change over time, along with their potential to support protected species.

Executive Summary

Bee.Wise.Eco Ltd. was commissioned to undertake ecological surveys and provide supporting advice in relation to the proposed RALLY Festival 2025 within Southwark Park, London. The purpose of this work was to identify any ecological constraints and ensure compliance with relevant wildlife legislation and planning policy.

Key Surveys Undertaken

Nesting Bird Survey (August 2025): Conducted prior to the event set-up, confirming no active nests were present within the designated festival footprint. Awareness measures were implemented, including toolbox talks and posters, to ensure continued compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Bat Activity Transect Survey (10 August 2025): Recorded three species: Common Pipistrelle, Noctule and Leisler's bats. Activity was concentrated along the northern and eastern treelines and the central tree corridor above the historical bandstand. Recommendations focus on sensitive lighting design and adherence to the Noise Management Plan to minimise disturbance.

Other Ecological Considerations

Stag Beetles: Although not recorded during surveys, the species is known from south London and may occur in veteran tree zones and deadwood features within Southwark Park. Event teams are advised to avoid disturbance of stumps, logs, and bare ground around mature trees.

Urban Foxes and Other Mammals: The site supports generalist urban mammals such as foxes. Protection under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 requires that no activities cause harm or unnecessary suffering.

Impact Assessment

With implementation of lighting and noise controls, the temporary event is assessed as low risk to local bat populations.

Nesting bird risk is low, provided pre-event checks and awareness measures remain in place.

Stag beetle and mammal impacts are low, provided ground disturbance and deadwood removal are avoided.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Implement lighting controls to avoid excessive illumination
- ⇒ Maintain toolbox talks and ecological awareness posters for all contractors and staff.
- ⇒ Ensure all wildlife encounters are reported to the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW).
- ⇒ Retain and protect deadwood habitats and ground features that may support stag beetles.

Conclusion

Overall, the 2025 surveys demonstrate that the proposed RALLY Festival can proceed with no significant adverse ecological effects, provided recommended mitigation and awareness measures are adhered to.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

This ecological report has been prepared to support the RALLY Festival Series and associated events scheduled at Southwark Park, London, in August 2025.

The assessment was commissioned to ensure compliance with planning and licensing conditions issued by Southwark Council and in line with the Southwark Events Environmental Sustainability Guide and Outdoor Events Policy.

The scope of the survey included:

- A nesting bird assessment within the designated event footprint.
- A bat foraging and commuting activity survey, with emphasis on lighting and noise impacts.
- Recommendations for biodiversity protection measures during site build, event operation, and de-rig.

Both wild birds and all bat species are protected under UK and EU legislation, including the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)*.

1.2 Site description

The site is located at Southwark Park, London, SE16 2TX. It is approximately 26 hectares in area and centred at OS Grid Reference TQ35647994. The park comprises a mosaic of habitats, including areas of amenity grassland, scattered mature London plane (*Platanus × hispanica*) trees, ornamental planting, sports pitches, a large boating lake, and areas of boundary woodland and scrub. The designated event footprint is located in the northern portion of the park, which is regularly used for community and cultural events. The local planning authority is Southwark Council.

1.3 Planning Context

The proposed temporary events at Southwark Park are subject to regulation under Southwark Council's Outdoor Events Policy (2019, updated 2024), which sets conditions for the frequency, scale, and environmental management of events held in the borough's parks and open spaces.

Large-scale events such as the RALLY Festival Series are required to obtain both an Events Licence (granted by Southwark Council's Culture and Events team) and a Premises Licence under the *Licensing Act 2003*, which permits regulated entertainment. The Premises Licence for Southwark Park (ref. 883445) allows up to six large event days per year, with curfews of 22:00–22:30 depending on the day .

As part of the application and licensing process, the Council requires applicants to demonstrate that event operations will not cause unacceptable impacts on biodiversity, amenity, or the wider environment.

This includes submission of supporting ecological surveys, noise assessments, and lighting strategies. Relevant guidance includes:

- *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*
- *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(as amended)*

- *Southwark Council Events Environmental Sustainability Guide*
- *Bat Conservation Trust & ILP Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting*

The current ecological assessment has been prepared to assist compliance with these requirements and to support the sustainable delivery of cultural events within Southwark Park.

1.4 Supporting Documents List

The following documents have been reviewed in the preparation of this ecological report and are submitted in support of the application:

Event & Planning Documentation (Southwark Council, 2025):

RALLY 2025 – Outline Production Schedule (Assembled GALA Ltd)
Southwark Council Consultation Findings Report: Piano People, RALLY, Body Movements & Bermondsey Carnival 2025
RALLY Festival Series 2025 – Consultation Information Pack
RALLY 2024 – Post-Event Noise Report (F1 Acoustics)
Event Site Plan (Arena Layout, 2024/25)

Previous Ecological Reports (Bee.Wise.Eco Limited):

Bird Nesting Survey – Southwark Park (Bee.Wise.Eco, Rev A, August 2024)
Foraging Bat Activity Survey – Southwark Park (Bee.Wise.Eco, August 2024)

Additional Environmental & Licensing References:

Southwark Council Outdoor Events Policy (2019, updated 2024)
Southwark Council Events Environmental Sustainability Guide (2024)
Bat Conservation Trust & Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 08/23 – *Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK*

2 Methodology

2.1 Surveyor

Rita Smoldareva BSc (Hons), MSc, is an experienced ecologist with over 11 years' professional experience in terrestrial ecology, protected species assessment, habitat classification, and biodiversity planning. She holds a Class 1 Bat Survey Licence (since July 2022) and a Level 1 Great Crested Newt Licence (since 2019) and is a CAA-certified UAV (drone) pilot, supporting the integration of high-resolution aerial imagery into habitat mapping and condition assessment workflows. Rita is a Full Member of the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) and an Associate Member of both the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and the Landscape Institute (LI).

2.2 Nesting Bird Survey Methodology

A pre-event nesting bird survey was undertaken to assess the presence of active nests within the proposed event footprint and surrounding habitats of Southwark Park. The survey was carried out by a qualified ecologist (Bee.Wise.Eco Ltd.) in accordance with guidance under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and CIEEM (2023) survey standards.

The methodology included:

- Walkover survey of all accessible trees, shrubs, hedgerows, and built structures within and adjacent to the event site.
- Visual scanning using close-focusing binoculars to detect nests, nesting material, or signs of breeding activity (e.g., adult birds carrying food, alarm calls, agitated territorial behaviour, fledglings present).
- Listening observations for vocalisations indicative of territorial or nesting activity.
- Focus on habitats with the highest nesting potential such as dense shrubs, ivy-covered trees, hedgerows, and marginal scrub.

The survey was timed to coincide with the peak bird breeding season (March–August), with works undertaken during early morning when bird activity is highest.

2.3 Bat Activity (Transect) Survey Methodology

A bat activity transect survey was undertaken to assess levels of commuting and foraging activity within Southwark Park, with particular focus on the event grounds and adjacent habitats most likely to support bat use. The survey was undertaken in line with the methodology set out in the *Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition, 2023).

The survey approach included:

Transect design: A predetermined route was established to encompass representative habitats within the northern portion of Southwark Park, including the designated festival footprint.

Timing: The transect was carried out between sunset and two hours post-sunset, corresponding with peak bat emergence and early foraging behaviour.

Equipment: Bat activity was recorded using full-spectrum detectors (e.g. Echo Meter Touch), allowing for real-time monitoring alongside digital recordings for subsequent analysis.

Data collection: All detections were logged with associated time (and GPS where available). Call files were analysed using sonogram software and verified against BCT reference libraries to confirm species identification.

Supplementary field notes: Observers recorded visual evidence of bat behaviour, including flight paths, commuting routes, foraging activity, and habitat associations.

Acoustic data and field observations were combined to provide a comprehensive assessment of bat species present, relative activity levels, and patterns of habitat use across the survey area.

3 Nesting Bird Survey Results

A nesting bird survey was undertaken on 9th August 2024 by Rita Smoldareva MSc, Senior Ecologist (Bee.Wise.Eco Ltd.) to assess the presence of active nests within the proposed event footprint at Southwark Park.

Weather conditions during the survey were mild, dry, and still, with approximately 17°C at the time of survey. Conditions were suitable for detecting nesting bird activity.

The survey covered all accessible trees, shrubs, and built structures within and immediately adjacent to the event area. No evidence of active nests (e.g., constructed nests, fledglings, adult birds carrying food, or alarm calling behaviour) was recorded within the designated festival grounds. A range of common urban bird species were observed utilising the wider park habitats for foraging and territorial behaviour, but no direct nesting was identified within the event footprint.

Survey limitations: None. The timing, weather conditions, and site access were appropriate, and the survey effort was considered sufficient to reliably assess nesting bird presence within the area surveyed.

Common name	Latin name
Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Carion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Feral pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>

Table 1: Bird species recorded using the site

	
Magpie	Carrion Crow
	
Blackbird (juvenile/female)	Carrion crow and feral pigeon

Table 2: Photos of the birds

4 Bat Activity (Transect) Survey Results

A bat activity transect survey was undertaken on Sunday 10th August 2025 by Rita Smoldareva MSc, Senior Ecologist (Bee.Wise.Eco Ltd.), to assess levels of commuting and foraging activity within the proposed festival grounds at Southwark Park.

Weather conditions during the survey were suitable, with dry, mild, and calm conditions prevailing. Temperatures remained stable throughout the evening, providing optimal conditions for bat activity.

A total of four species were recorded acoustically during the survey:

- Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) – widespread activity across the site, with concentrations particularly along the northern boundary treelines.
- Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) – occasional high-level passes detected above open habitats.
- Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) – activity recorded above the historic bandstand in the central area of the park.

Survey limitations: None. Weather conditions and site access were suitable, and the methodology (transect walk combined with static detector recordings) provided sufficient coverage to assess bat activity within the area.

The map (Figure 1) illustrates the layout of bat survey recording points, each surveyed with approximately 5–6 minutes of observation (yellow numbered markers).

The orange shaded circles indicate activity hotspots, where higher concentrations of foraging activity were recorded. These correspond to habitats most frequently used by bats.



Figure 1: Bat Survey Recording Points and Activity Hotspots within Southwark Park (North Section)

5 Impact Assessment

5.1 Ecological Receptors (Surveyed)

Bats recorded (10 Aug 2025): Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Noctule *Nyctalus noctule* and Leisler's *Nyctalus leisleri*.

Birds: No active nests within the event footprint during the pre-show survey (9th Aug 2024).

5.2 Event Activities Relevant to Impacts

- Temporary stages, bars, welfare and plant within the northern event compound with tower lights during build, event and break.
- Music to licensed curfews (generally to 22:30) under the Premises Licence and managed through an approved Noise Management Plan (NMP).
- Build/break programme shows lighting and tower lights scheduled across the August window.

5.3 Pathways of Impact

- Artificial lighting: potential to displace bats from commuting/foraging along treelines.
- Music/noise & crowd presence: short-term behavioural disturbance possible during peak levels; high-flying Noctule/Leisler's are less susceptible; pipistrelles moderately tolerant.
- Physical habitat effects: trampling near tree roots/understorey if unmanaged; no vegetation clearance is proposed inside the footprint.

5.4 Likelihood and Significance (by species group)

- Common Pipistrelle: Likely continued use of boundary treelines; minor, temporary adverse without controls; negligible with lighting controls.
- Noctule / Leisler's: High, open-air flight; negligible impact with standard noise/lighting management.
- Birds: No active nests inside the compound; negligible risk provided no unapproved vegetation works occur.

5.5 Legislative Risk (WCA 1981; Habitats Regs 2017)

Bats: The 2025 transect survey recorded three species of bat—Common Pipistrelle, Noctule and Leisler's bats, utilising the park grounds for commuting and foraging. The purpose of the survey was not to locate potential roosts, but rather to document patterns of activity across the site. Bat activity was primarily associated with treelines and dense vegetation that provide commuting corridors and feeding opportunities. The presence of multiple species highlights the ecological value of the park for bats. The principal risk of disturbance arises from temporary artificial lighting and/or high level noise that could disrupt commuting routes and reduce habitat functionality.

Birds: With no active nests in the footprint recorded during the survey and no scheduled vegetation works, the risk of breaching WCA 1981 is low; risk increases if ad-hoc pruning/clearance occurs during breeding season.

5.6 Mitigation & Management (to avoid breach)

Lighting design recommendations (GN08/23 principles):

To minimise disturbance to foraging and commuting bats recorded within Southwark Park, event lighting should follow the principles set out in ILP/BCT Guidance Note 08/23 – Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK:

Vegetation and treelines: Keep dense vegetation edges, mature tree trunks, and canopies unlit. Aim for ≤ 1 lux vertical at 1 m from the habitat edge, with zero upward light spill.

Lighting specification: Use lamps of ≤ 3000 K colour temperature (preferably ~ 2700 K, warm-white), fitted with full shielding or cowls. Direct beams downwards and inwards only.

Buffering: Maintain at least a 10 m buffer between tower lights and trees. Any fixtures that risk spilling onto treelines or water margins should be repositioned or fitted with hoods.

Timing: Limit all non-essential lighting after 22:30, in alignment with the event curfew and Noise Management Plan.

Public safety consideration: For health and safety reasons, it is recognised that members of the public must be able to safely vacate the grounds after dark. Where required, festoon lighting may be used along designated exit routes. These should be installed and directed inwards towards pathways only, ensuring minimal spill into surrounding vegetation, so that bats can continue to forage and commute across the site during the dispersal period.

Baseline conditions: At present, Southwark Park does not contain any artificial lighting installations, with the exception of festoon lighting fixed to the roof of the historic bandstand. This absence of permanent lighting contributes to the park's ecological value for bats and should be maintained wherever possible.

Noise & operations:

Adhere to the NMP and curfews; keep off-site levels within agreed limits; orient stages and FOH away from sensitive boundaries as per site plan/NMP.

Protect dark corridors:

- Treat the northern boundary treeline and eastern edge as light-sensitive corridors (hotspots mapped); route pedestrian lighting away from these lines; use low-level, shielded wayfinding only.

Tree & ground protection:

- No works to trees or PRFs; protect RPAs; prohibit storage/plant within root zones; no vegetation clearance without ecologist approval.
- Ecologist oversight & contingencies:
- Dusk pre-opening check of lighting spill; on-site adjustment if lux exceeds target at edges.

- Stop-work and consult a licensed ecologist if any bat is found or a roost suspected that might be impacted; likewise if any nesting birds are discovered during late-season event.

Awareness:

- Toolbox talks and laminated ecology posters for crews (birds/bats/stag beetles), including emergency contacts.

5.7 Residual Effects

With the above measures implemented and compliance maintained with the Premises Licence/NMP and build schedule controls, residual effects are assessed as negligible to minor (not significant) and the likelihood of breaching wildlife legislation is low.

5.8 Stag Beetles (*Lucanus cervus*)

Stag beetles are a UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species and are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are known to occur within south London boroughs, and suitable habitats for their breeding (veteran trees, decomposing stumps, deadwood features, and undisturbed soils) are present in Southwark's large parkland habitats.

Although no individuals were recorded during the 2025 pre-event surveys at Southwark Park, the likelihood of stag beetle presence in the wider area is considered moderate, particularly during their flight season (May–August).

Potential impacts include:

- Accidental disturbance or removal of logs, stumps, or deadwood features during event set-up.
- Soil compaction or damage to subterranean larval habitats from heavy plant movement, equipment storage, or vehicle activity near mature trees and deadwood piles.

Risk of legislative breach: While the RALLY event footprint is primarily open grassland, inappropriate handling of deadwood or compaction of tree root protection areas could risk disturbance or harm to stag beetles or larvae, constituting an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Mitigation and awareness measures:

- No removal or disturbance of deadwood features (logs, stumps, piles) within or near the event footprint.
- Avoid vehicle movement and equipment storage over bare ground adjacent to mature trees.
- Toolbox talk and awareness posters (birds, bats, stag beetles) provided to event teams.
- Any suspected sightings of adults or larvae to be reported immediately to the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW).

With the above measures in place, the likelihood of adverse effects to stag beetles is considered negligible. This supports compliance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, as well as event sustainability goals for biodiversity protection.

Stag Beetle Awareness Note (for inclusion in Appendices / Toolbox Talks)

Stag beetles (*Lucanus cervus*) are a protected species in the UK and are listed as a Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. They are known to occur in south London boroughs and may be present within the veteran tree zones and decomposing wood habitats of Southwark's parks.

Although no individuals were recorded during the current pre-show surveys, the likelihood of stag beetles being present in the wider park is considered moderate, especially during their active flight period (May–August).

Event teams are advised:

Not to disturb or remove logs, stumps, or deadwood features.

To avoid driving or placing equipment over bare ground near mature trees or known deadwood piles.

To report any sightings of large beetles or larvae to the ECoW immediately.

An additional Stag Beetle Awareness Poster was created by Bee.Wise.Eco and circulated alongside the bird and bat toolbox talks to enhance awareness during the RALLY 2025 event.

This measure supports compliance with the NERC Act 2006 and event sustainability goals for biodiversity protection.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

The ecological surveys undertaken in 2025 provide an up-to-date understanding of wildlife within the proposed RALLY festival grounds at Southwark Park.

The nesting bird survey conducted on 9th August 2025 (AM) confirmed that no active nests were present within the footprint of the festival compound, reducing the risk of disturbance to nesting birds. This finding is consistent with the temporary and low-impact nature of the event area, which is largely open amenity grassland and mature trees.

The bat transect survey conducted on 10 August 2025 (PM) recorded activity from three species: Common Pipistrelle, Noctule and Leisler's bats. Bat activity was primarily concentrated along the northern and eastern treelines and within the central tree corridor above the historical band stand, which function as key commuting and foraging routes. The primary purpose of this single transect survey was to evaluate the potential influence of artificial lighting associated with the event. Although temporary lighting and noise have the potential to disrupt bat behaviour, the application of sensitive lighting design to ensure minimal light spill onto treelines together with compliance with the event Noise Management Plan, is expected to keep the risk of disturbance low and temporary.

In addition, the wider park provides suitable conditions for stag beetles, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species, associated with deadwood habitats and undisturbed soils near mature trees. Although no stag beetles were recorded during the 2025 surveys, the species remains a moderate likelihood within the park during its active flight period (May–August). Event teams should therefore continue to avoid disturbing deadwood features or compacting soils near mature trees.

Finally, urban foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) are frequently recorded in Southwark Park and may traverse the site during night-time hours. While the species is not legally protected under the Habitats Regulations, it is covered by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, which prohibits deliberate cruelty or unnecessary harm. Risks to foxes from the festival footprint are low, provided that food waste is appropriately managed and no entrapment hazards (e.g. fencing gaps, uncovered trenches) are left overnight.

In conclusion, the 2025 bird and bat surveys confirm no significant ecological constraints to the RALLY event proceeding at Southwark Park. With the application of sensitive lighting design, adherence to noise limits, protection of stag beetle habitats, and consideration of urban mammals, the event is unlikely to give rise to significant ecological impacts or breach wildlife legislation.

7 Recommendations

Lighting

- ⇒ Follow ILP/BCT Guidance Note 08/23 on bats and artificial lighting.
- ⇒ Avoid lighting treelines.
- ⇒ Use warm-white, downward-facing lighting (<2700K) with shields to prevent spill.
- ⇒ Switch off non-essential lighting after dark; restrict testing to daylight where possible.

Noise

- ⇒ Comply fully with the approved Noise Management Plan.
- ⇒ Minimise use of generators and unnecessary sound checks after dusk.

Birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

If an active nest is found:

- ⇒ STOP work immediately in the area.
- ⇒ DO NOT disturb the nest.
- ⇒ Contact the ECoW for assessment before resuming.
- ⇒ Be aware that birds may nest in temporary structures, machinery, or fencing.

Bats

Bats are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

- ⇒ Avoid illuminating treelines, dense vegetation along the eastern section of the park.
- ⇒ Avoid high-noise activities in sensitive areas after dusk.

If a bat is found grounded, injured, or if a roost is discovered:

- ⇒ Stop work immediately.
- ⇒ Do not touch or move the bat.
- ⇒ Notify the ECoW for instructions.

Stag Beetles

- ⇒ Do not disturb or remove logs, stumps, or decomposing wood.
- ⇒ Avoid driving or placing equipment over bare soil near mature trees.
- ⇒ Report any stag beetle or larvae sightings to the ECoW immediately.

Urban Mammals (e.g., foxes)

- ⇒ Store food and waste securely to avoid attracting foxes.
- ⇒ Prevent entrapment hazards (fencing, trenches, equipment).
- ⇒ Comply with the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 by avoiding unnecessary harm.

Site Protection

Protect tree root zones from compaction by vehicles and structures.
Maintain vegetation buffers along sensitive habitats.

Awareness & Training

Toolbox talks on birds, bats, and stag beetles must be delivered to all contractors prior to event build.

Laminated awareness posters to be displayed at:

- ⇒ Site entrances
- ⇒ Welfare / crew areas
- ⇒ Sensitive ecological zones (e.g., hotspot areas as shown in Figure 1)

8 References

Bat Conservation Trust (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. 4th Edition. London: BCT.

Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) & Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) (2023) *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK*. London: ILP.

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