

# Developer Guides

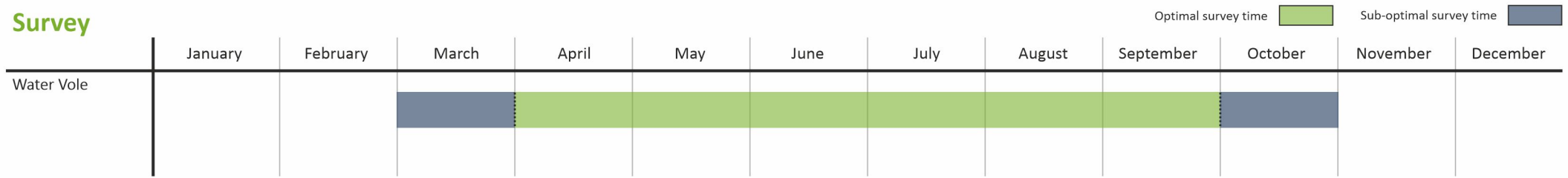
## Guide to Water Vole Surveys & Mitigation



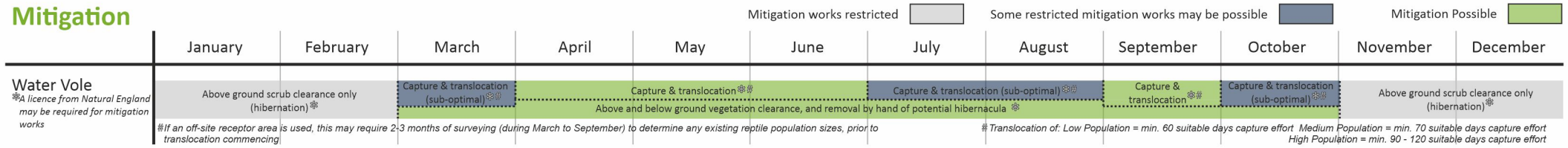
### Introduction & Legislation

- The Water Vole *Arvicola terrestris* is found throughout mainland Britain and is the largest British vole. It is territorial and its burrows comprise of multiple entrances with inter-connecting tunnels and various chambers.
- Water Vole has seen a decline in its numbers, which have plummeted by more than 90% in the UK over the last 25 years.
- As a result, Water Vole and its habitat is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and it is classed as a Priority species.

### Survey



### Mitigation



### Licensing & Implementation

- Often the most appropriate mitigation solution is to retain existing watercourses and leave approximately 2 metres of undeveloped land around the watercourse to act as a wildlife corridor and maintain the habitat for the species.
- However, where this is not possible, following the 2022 amendment of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by the Environment Act, licences can now be issued for development works affecting Water Voles if relevant mitigation measures are in place to safeguard the species.
- Such mitigation will often include the licensed displacement of Water Voles by using vegetation manipulation techniques.
- If this is not possible, exclusion from the development area or relocation of the Water Voles to other vacant habitats or creation of new habitat within existing territories may be an alternative. This will involve the licensed trapping and translocation of Water Voles. The duration of any programme normally depends on the population size and typically varies from 30 – 90 days.
- Implementation - seasonal restrictions apply - see above.

