

Passive acoustic monitoring of scarce and challenging woodland birds

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Passive detection of ultrasound has long been used as a tool for bat survey and monitoring but in recent years ornithologists have come to appreciate that the recording of audible calls can be a useful addition to the repertoire of avian survey techniques. In collaboration with the BTO we are developing Passive Acoustic Monitoring as a tool for surveying Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers. In 2024 we collected recordings in eight Lesser Spotted Woodpecker territories in the New Forest over a three-month period. The recordings have been used to 'train' the BTO Acoustic Pipeline to recognise woodpecker calls and drums automatically. The results have been so positive that more recorders are being deployed to survey Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers in Hampshire and Kent in 2025 and we are considering whether the methods can be rolled out for other challenging woodland species.