

ADVISORY INFORMATION – LITTLE RINGED PLOVER



The little ringed plover receives special protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They often nest on nature reserves, and also at gravel pits, on industrial sites and on the shingle banks of rivers. They normally nest on gravel or sand.

Little ringed plovers arrive on the breeding areas from late March until early May and generally leave in August, returning to their wintering grounds in Africa. They tend to be early colonists of sand and gravel quarries, nesting on exposed gravels, on the floor of pumped workings or on islands, on silt lagoons and even in vehicle parks and stock-piling areas. The eggs are laid on bare, gravelly ground and are very well camouflaged. The plovers require shallow water edges for feeding.

Wherever possible areas of suitable habitat should be left undisturbed during the breeding season; this can encourage these birds to nest in non-operational areas. In this way, they can be encouraged to nest where they will not conflict with quarry operations.

Key Points

- It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb Little Ringed Plovers at, on or near an 'active' nest. When birds are present from April onwards, breeding should be assumed and care taken to avoid disturbance.
- If possible, changes in water levels should be avoided during April to mid- August to avoid inundation of eggs.
- If favoured breeding areas are known, inform site workers and, if appropriate, mark temporary exclusion areas, eg signs saying 'bird nesting areas'. Do not search for nests.

Remember, all wild birds are protected by legislation making it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, its eggs or nests whilst in use or being built. These principles do apply to any species of wild bird at any quarry site.

The RSPB is the UK charity working to secure a healthy environment for birds and all wildlife, helping to create a better world for everyone (www.rspb.org.uk).