



HOOBER, GOLDTHORPE

OS REF: SE 45031 – 04276.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: 200874/1.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Planning permission is being applied for to develop an area of land that lies adjacent to Barnsley Road and the A635 at Goldthorpe, Barnsley.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there were any issues that may affect the proposed works. This survey was carried out on 30th September 2020.

1.3. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd have been commissioned to prepare an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) in line with the CIEEM guidance, to support the application for planning permission.

1.4. Appendices I and II of this report provide additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat surveys.

2.3. The survey area and immediate surrounding area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society: -

- * Badger setts.
- * Badger latrines or dung pits.
- * Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging.
- * Badger paths.
- * Badger prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Badger hairs caught on fencing.

2.4. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 100m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Dean M, Strachen R, Gow D and Andres R (2016). *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series)*. Eds Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The mammal Society, London: - (2011). *Water Vole Handbook: Third Edition*: -

- * Water vole burrows.
- * Water vole faeces and latrines.
- * Water vole feeding stations.
- * Water vole runs.
- * Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Water vole lawns.
- * Predator field signs.

2.5. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with the P Chanin (2003). *Monitoring the Otter and Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Monitoring Series No10 Guidelines*: -

- * Otter prints in soft mud.
- * Otter spraints.
- * Otter Holts.

2.6. The survey area was searched for watercourses and waterbodies. Where found, and where safe to enter the water, all were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish, for approximately 50m in each direction of the site, by searching under rocks and logs. Where stated, crayfish traps were also deployed into the watercourse. All survey work was carried out in accordance with the *Conserving Natural 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 1, Protocol for Monitoring the White Clawed Crayfish*.

2.7. The survey area was searched for trees and structures and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition)* by looking for the following signs: -

- * Holes, cracks or crevices.
- * Bat Droppings.

2.8. The land immediately adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting potential and bat foraging potential. Connective routes and flight lines were also assessed whilst on site and using maps of the area.

2.9. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible, all ponds identified were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.10. The survey area was assessed for the potential for reptiles and suitable reptile habitats. Where applicable the area was also searched for the presence of reptiles.

2.11. Where appropriate, the habitat within and surrounding the survey area was searched for species such as hazel, oak, honeysuckle, bramble and other species which may provide potential habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Field signs such as feeding remains and nests were also searched for where possible,

in line with P Bright, P Morris and T Mitchell-Jones *the Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition*.

2.12. Where appropriate, the area within and surrounding the survey area was assessed for its potential to house habitat for red squirrels. Field signs of red squirrels were searched for at least every 50m, looking for any dreys, feeding signs or sightings of red squirrels.

2.13. The survey area was searched for all alien invasive plant species as listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The location of all plants identified were recorded and listed within the survey report along with appropriate recommendations to avoid causing the plants to spread in the wild. All species were searched for, but the main species generally found under this category are Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, Cotoneaster, Rhododendron and Japanese Rose.

2.14. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.15. This document is prepared in line with The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on Planning Authorities to give material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance on “Natural Environment” also promote sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within the development.

2.16. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.17. This survey was carried out by Stevan Roebuck. Since 2011 Stevan has had experience carrying out great crested newt and bat surveys. Since 2013 Stevan has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out ecology surveys, badger, great crested newt and bat surveys. Stevan holds a Natural England Survey License for Great Crested Newts and Bats and is currently working towards gaining further Natural England, NRW and SNH survey licences. Stevan is also a Qualifying Member of CIEEM.

3. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A desktop data search was requested from Barnsley Biological Records Centre for records of protected species and designated sites within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. The nearest relevant species record is a Noctule bat in flight, recorded in 2012 located 585m to the northeast of the survey area.

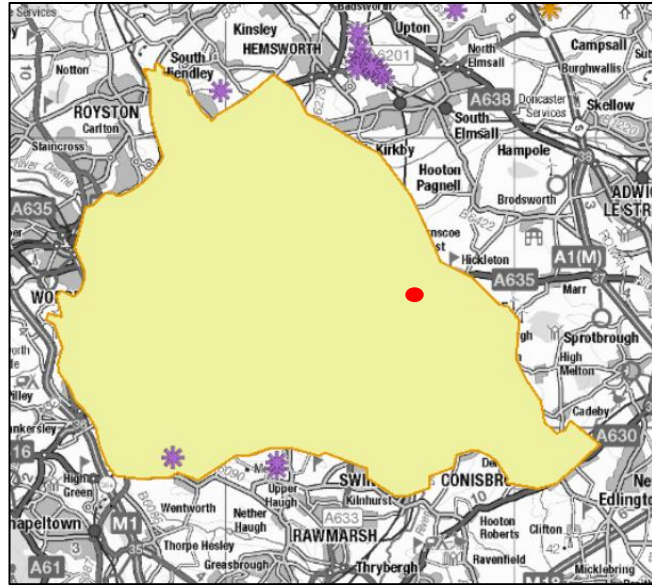
3.1.3. There are a few further records of bats, but all lie over 1km from the survey area.

3.1.4. There are records of great crested newts within 2km of the survey area, all recorded in 2011 and all lie over 1.6km to the southeast of the survey area on the opposite side of Goldthorpe.

3.1.5. There are two records of grass snake, both recorded in 2019 and both located over 1.6km to the west.

3.1.6. Five records of hedgehog were identified on the data search with the closest, a dead hedgehog 0.15km southwest of the surveyed area recorded in 2014 on Barnsley Road.

3.1.7. The data search shows that the nearest designated site is the Bolton upon Dearne Wetlands Local Wildlife Site, which lies 1.4km to the southeast of the survey area, on the opposite side of the village of Goldthorpe. However, the MAGIC website shows that the surveyed area lies within the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area. The map below shows the approximate location of the surveyed area as the red dot and the Nature Improvement Area.



3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The surveyed area was a piece of land off Barnsley Road, Goldthorpe. The aerial photograph below shows the surveyed area.



3.2.2. The area surrounding the surveyed piece of land consists of busy road infrastructure, retail units and residential dwellings. The aerial photograph below shows the surveyed area and the wider surrounding area.



3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix III of this report contains annotated maps marked up with the varying habitats that are cross referenced to target notes in Appendix IV of this report. The habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- Neutral Grassland
- Tall Ruderals
- Scattered Scrub
- Dense Scrub
- Defunct Hedge Species Poor
- Scattered Trees
- Fence

3.3.1.1. *Neutral Grassland*

The majority of the site consists of neutral grassland with areas of tall ruderal species and contains species such as false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*), sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), weld (*Reseda luteola*), common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), dock (*Rumex sp.*), black medick (*Medicago lupulina*), bugle (*Ajuga reptans*), cocks foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*). The photographs below show the neutral grassland and scattered tall ruderal species.



3.3.1.2. Tall Ruderal

Along all four of the site boundaries there are areas of tall ruderal species that consist of nettle (*Urtica dioica*), thistle (*Cirsium sp(p)*), dock (*Rumex sp.*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), teasel (*Dipsacus sylvestris*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) and ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*). There are scattered pockets of tall ruderals within the centre of the site that consist of the same species. The photographs below show two typical areas of tall ruderals.



3.3.1.3. Scattered Scrub

Along the site boundaries there are small pockets of scattered scrub that include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), immature sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) trees, bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), buddleia (*Buddleia davidii*), ivy (*Hedera helix*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*). The photographs below show some of the scattered scrub.



3.3.1.4. Dense Scrub

Along the eastern site boundary there is an area of dense scrub that consists of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). The photograph below shows the bramble scrub.



3.3.1.5. Defunct Hedge Species Poor

Along the northern and southern site boundaries outside the site boundary fences there are two unmanaged hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) hedges. The photographs below show sections of both hedges. These are outside the site boundaries but have been included in this report for completeness.



3.3.1.6. Scattered Trees

There are scattered cherry (*Prunus sp(p)*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) trees along the eastern site boundary with a single mature ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) tree along the northern site boundary that lies outside the site boundary fence. The photograph below shows the cherry trees and the ash tree.



3.3.1.7. Fence

The surveyed area is surrounded by solid timber fences along the east and western site boundaries and timber post and rail fences to the north and south boundaries. The photographs below show both types of fence.



3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. No badger setts or other badger field signs were identified within the surveyed area during this survey of the site.

3.4.2. No watercourses that may provide a suitable habitat for water voles, otters or freshwater white clawed crayfish were identified within the surveyed area.

3.4.3. No structures that may provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats were identified within the surveyed area.

3.4.4. No suitable trees that may provide any roosting opportunities for bats were identified within the surveyed area.

3.4.5. The hawthorn hedges and scattered trees along the site boundaries may provide low potential for foraging and commuting bats.

3.4.6. One pond with the potential to provide a suitable habitat for great crested newts was identified within 500m of the surveyed area by looking at maps of the surrounding area. The pond lies 275m west of the site and is separated from the site by the busy A635, which creates a barrier to movement of amphibians.

3.4.7. The vegetation within the surveyed area and the hedges and trees along the site boundary will provide a suitable habitat for nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends between March and September each year.

3.4.8. The surveyed area has been assessed as providing very low potential for reptiles as the site is surrounded by busy road infrastructure, built up residential areas and

retail units. The site is overgrown and there is very limited refugia and basking areas for reptiles.

3.4.9. The vegetation within and surrounding the surveyed area does not provide any suitable habitat for hazel dormice or red squirrels and the surveyed area lies outside the natural range of both species.

3.4.10. No alien invasive species of plant listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were identified within the surveyed area.

3.4.11. The surveyed area provides limited suitable habitat for hedgehogs as there are very few areas of refugia for the species such as log or brash piles. However, the dense bramble scrub along the eastern site boundary and the understory beneath the hawthorn hedges may provide temporary refugia for hedgehogs and hedgehogs may forage within the surveyed area. Five records of hedgehog were identified on the data search with the closest, a dead hedgehog 0.15km southwest of the surveyed area recorded in 2014 on Barnsley Road.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS.

4.1. Habitats.

4.1.1. Assessment.

4.1.1.1. The majority of the site consists of neutral grassland with areas of tall ruderal species and is left unmanaged. There are few species present in this habitat and it is assessed as **low** ecological value as it has some value to invertebrates and foraging birds.

4.1.1.2. Along all four of the site boundaries there are areas of tall ruderal species and small pockets of scattered scrub that are assessed as **low** ecological value.

4.1.1.3. All condition assessments have been determined in line with the Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Technical Supplement.

4.1.1.4. Biodiversity calculations were carried out using the DEFRA Metric 2.0. The baseline area habitats on the site were calculated at 10.58 Biodiversity Units as shown in the table below.

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity units
Other Neutral grassland	0.98	Medium	Moderate	10.03Bu
Bramble scrub	0.08	Medium	Fairly Poor	0.55Bu
Urban sealed surface	0.08	Very Low	N/A	0
Total	1.25			10.58Bu

4.1.1.5. Biodiversity calculations were carried out using the DEFRA Metric 2.0. The baseline linear habitats on the site were calculated at 0.04 Biodiversity Units as shown in the table below.

Habitat Type	Length (m)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity units
Line of trees	20	Low	Poor	0.04Bu
Total	20			0.04Bu

4.1.1.6. The hedgerows around the site have been exclude from these calculations because they are outside the site boundaries and will not be directly affected.

4.1.2. Mitigation.

4.1.2.1. The following table shows the post development area habitats on the site and their biodiversity value.

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity units
Urban developed land	0.71	V Low	N/A	0
Urban vegetated garden	0.43	Low	Poor	0.95
Mixed Scrub	0.07	Medium	Moderate	0.58
Lakes, ponds	0.04	Low	Moderate	0.11
Total	1.25			1.64Bu

4.1.2.2. The following table shows the post development linear habitats on the site and their biodiversity value.

Habitat Type	Length (m)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity units
Line of trees	289	Low	Poor	0.56Bu
Total	289			0.56Bu

4.1.2.2. A new pond will be created on site surrounded by an area of mixed scrub.

4.1.2.3. Sixty-four new native species trees will be planted around the site.

4.1.2.4. The existing hedgerows around the site are outside the site boundary but will remain unaffected by the works. They are therefore excluded from the BNG

calculations. The roof zone for these hedgerows will be protected by a fence barrier during the development.

4.1.2.5. The remainder of the site will comprise houses, roads, paths and gardens.

4.1.2.6. It must be noted that the site entrance is already in existence for the neighbouring supermarket. There will therefore be no net loss of hedgerow at the site entrance.

4.1.3. Residual Effects.

4.1.3.1. The Biodiversity calculations shown that there will be a reduction in area habitat Biodiversity from 10.58Bu before development to 1.64Bu post development. This represents a loss of 8.94 Bu or 84.5%.

4.1.3.2. The Biodiversity calculations shown that there will be an increase in linear habitat Biodiversity from 0.04Bu before development to 1.64Bu post development. This represents an increase of 1.60 Bu or 2,500%.

4.1.3.3. This represents an unacceptable loss of Biodiversity and means either more biodiversity needs to be provided on site or an agreement to offset the biodiversity off site needs to be arranged.

4.2. Species.

4.2.1. Bats.

4.2.1.1. Assessment.

4.2.1.1. There are no buildings or trees on the site to provide opportunities for roosting bats.

4.2.1.2. The survey area was assessed as providing low potential for foraging and commuting bats along the hawthorn hedges on the northern and southern site boundaries and in the scattered trees along the eastern site boundary.

4.2.1.2. Mitigation.

4.2.1.2.1. The hawthorn hedges are outside the site boundary and will not be affected by the proposed development.

4.2.1.2.2. The lighting strategy for the site and will include for lighting to avoid any impact on the site boundaries and will be down lighting to prevent disturbing bats commuting past the site. Nevertheless, there is already bright lighting on the new supermarket site so continuity of commuting routes reduces in importance accordingly.

4.2.1.3. Residual Effects.

There will be **No Negative Residual Impact** on roosting, foraging or commuting bats.

4.2.2. Birds.

4.2.2.1. Assessment.

The vegetation within the survey area provides opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to September, inclusive, each year. Vegetation clearance within the nesting bird season will have an impact on any birds nesting within the work site.

4.2.2.2. Mitigation.

4.2.2.2.1. Any vegetation clearance works will be carried out outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year.

4.2.2.2.2. If any vegetation clearance is to be carried out during the nesting bird season a thorough nesting bird survey will be carried out by a suitably experienced person immediately prior to works commencing. If any active nests are found during this survey, they will be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

4.2.2.3. Residual Effects.

By adopting the mitigation measures outlined above, there will be **No Negative Residual Impact** on nesting birds.

4.2.3. Hedgehogs.

4.2.3.1. Assessment.

4.2.3.1.1. The surveyed area provides limited suitable habitat for hedgehogs as there are very few areas of refugia for the species such as log or brash piles. However, the dense bramble scrub along the eastern site boundary could provide temporary refugia for hedgehogs and hedgehogs may forage within the surveyed area.

4.2.3.1.2. The potential presence of hedgehogs is reduced due to busy roads on two sides of the site, a supermarket car park on one side and a residential estate on the other.

4.2.3.2. Mitigation.

Gaps suitable for the passage of hedgehogs, 13cm x 13cm, will be created at 10m intervals in the bottom of the site boundary fences on the east and west of the site. Additionally, at least one gap suitable for the passage of hedgehogs, 15cm x 15cm, will be created in the bottom of each garden boundary fence to allow hedgehogs passage around the site and into the gardens.

4.2.3.3. Residual Effects.

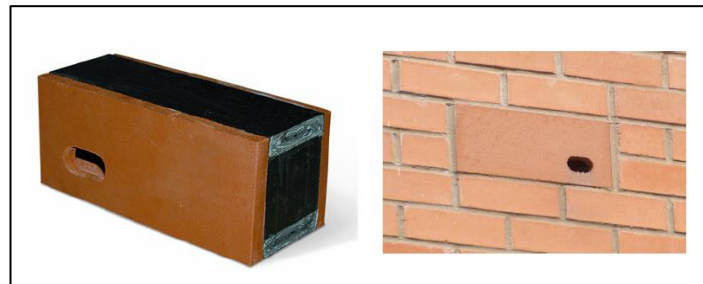
The above mitigation measures will ensure there is **No Negative Residual Impact** on hedgehogs.

5. COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES.

5.1. Bat bricks, of a suitable incorporated design similar to the one shown adjacent, will be included in 10% of the buildings on the development in suitable locations, with the bricks being installed high in the buildings away from any doors or windows. These will be installed on the gable ends of houses close to the site boundaries with direct flight routes to the surrounding habitats. The locations of five bat bricks are shown on the plan below as red circles.



5.2. Swift boxes will be erected on at least 10% of the buildings on the development to provide additional nesting opportunities. These will be installed on houses with direct flight routes to the surrounding habitats. These will include the following, or equivalent. The locations of five swift boxes are shown on the site plan below as blue circles.





5.3. Native plant species will be planted in the gardens of the new development, including fruit and berry bearing species. A wildlife corridor will remain along the northern and western edges of the site that include the existing hawthorn hedges. This will provide a food source and shelter for a variety of bird species.

5.4. Although there is no potential for great crested newts on the site, a pond will be created towards the northwest corner of the site that will enhance the site for wildlife.

Prepared by:	
Stevan Roebuck	Date: 12 th September 2021.

Checked by:	
Derek Whitcher. BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 12 th September 2021.

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Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man-made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1.-(5) of the Act states that:- If any person intentionally:- disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Appendix II. REPTILE INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are five main species of reptile that reside in the UK; Common or Viviparous Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*); Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis*); Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*); Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) and Adder (*Vipera berus*). The Adder is the only native species that is venomous although this is rarely harmful to humans.

Reptiles occupy a wide range of habitats including woodland, marshes, heathland, moors, sand dunes, hedgerows and bogs. Sand Lizards are confined to moorland and coastal sand dunes where they lay their eggs in the warm sand. The range of the Sand Lizard in the UK is therefore very limited. Slow Worms can be found in a wide variety of habitats throughout Britain and is the most likely reptile to be found in urban and suburban environments.

Maintaining the right body temperature is vital to reptiles' survival. In the morning, they find a warm basking site to heat up their bodies, then later they may move back into the shade because they do not sweat and have to be careful not to overheat. During hot summers, Adders will try to move to damper, cooler sites.

Over winter reptiles will hibernate in burrows or under logs where they are protected from the cold and predators, emerging from February onwards as the weather warms up.

Reptiles generally begin to mate April to May with young born in late July to September. The Common Lizard gives birth to live young, hence the term viviparous, meaning live bearing.

Surveys

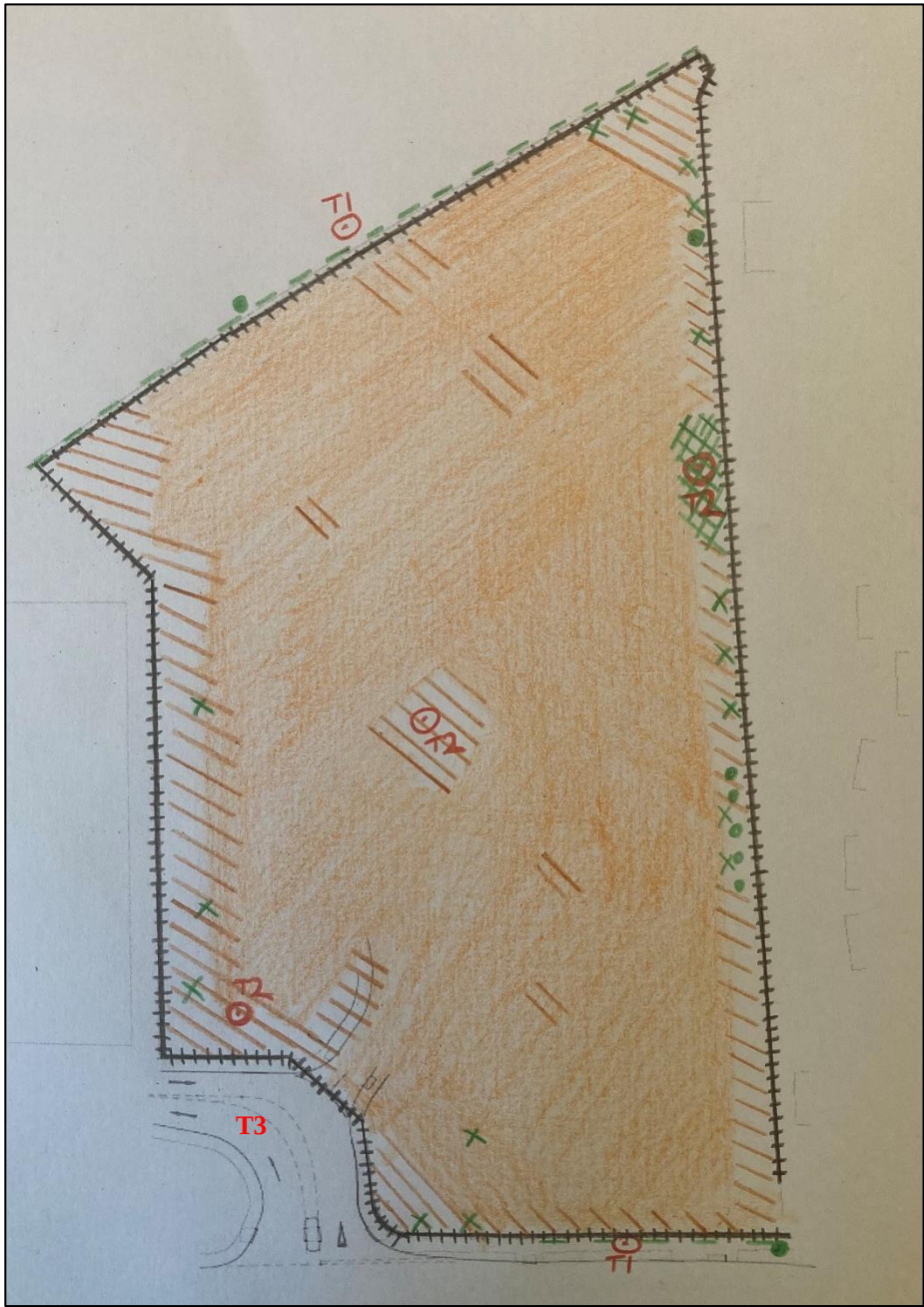
Reptile surveys involve the searching of refuge such as logs and stones for any animal sheltering below. Artificial refuge may be laid out on site for the purpose of reptile surveys.

Legislation

Reptiles are protected under Appendix II (sand lizards) and Appendix III (common lizard, slow worms, smooth snake, grass snake and adders) of the BERN Convention (1982), partially protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive and are all listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Communities Act (2006) making them a species of principal importance.

This makes it an offence to disturb any reptile while it is occupying a structure or place it uses for shelter or protection or to obstruct access to such a place.

Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA.



Neutral Grassland	
Tall Ruderal	
Scattered Scrub	
Dense Scrub	
Hedgerow, Defunct, Species Poor	
Scattered Trees	
Fence	
Target Note	

Appendix IV. TARGET NOTES.

Target Note 1 are the hedgerows listed on the NERC Act 2006.

Target Note 2 is the general vegetation on site suitable for nesting birds.

Target Note 3 is the existing access to the site.

Appendix V. DEVELOPMENT PLAN.



Toolbox Talk: Nesting Birds

The bird nesting season varies according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September.

A bird's nest is the place in which a bird lays and incubates its eggs. Some species build a nest structure while other species lay their eggs directly onto the ground or on a rocky ledge. Nests can be constructed from a variety of materials and are usually lined with feathers or fur.

Identification.

Some birds construct nests in an area where it can be seen while others construct nests that are hidden from view and are more difficult to identify.

The photograph to the right shows a Moorhen nest which can easily be seen.



Nests can also be identified from field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself. The presence of a nest can be identified by seeing the adult birds leaving and returning to the nest regularly with food to feed the chicks.

The photograph to the left shows a Wren's nest in overhanging tree roots, which is almost impossible to see.



Care should be taken at any time during the nesting season particularly when regular bird activity is seen, or birds can be heard calling.



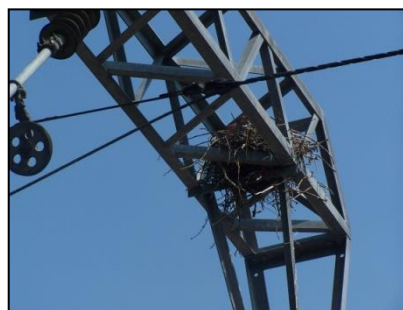
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Habitat.

Birds regularly nest in a variety of places with some species nesting in buildings or vegetation and others nesting on the ground or on water. However, birds may nest in any habitat or situation if they identify a suitable nest site.



Legislation.

Part 1. -(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 states that:

If any person intentionally or recklessly:

- Kills, injures or takes any wild bird.
- Takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built, or
- Takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird.

He shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that:

If any person intentionally or recklessly:

- Disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young, or
- Disturbs young of such a bird.

He shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

If a nest or potential nesting activity is identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk

Toolbox Talk: Reptiles

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Identification: Grass Snakes.

The grass snake can be up to 120cm long. It is generally dark green in colour but may occasionally appear grey with vertical black bars and spots that run along its sides. There is usually a yellow marking around the neck.



Other Reptiles.

In addition to the reptiles outlined on this document, there are also two other reptile species in Great Britain, the smooth snakes and the sand lizard. These reptiles are a lot less common than the four species covered with the smooth snake being predominantly found on heathland in southern England and the sand lizard found throughout Great Britain in coastal dune areas.

These species are also afforded a higher level of protection because they are European Protected Species.

Identification: Adders.

The adder is the only native species that is venomous, but it is rarely harmful to humans. Adult adders are generally up to 66cm long. Back ground colouration is a light shade of grey or brown with a black zigzag marking along the length of the back. As with all reptiles, colouration varies and becomes duller as sloughing (skin shedding) approaches.



Habitat.

Maintaining the right body temperature is vital to reptiles' survival. In the morning they find a warm basking site to heat up their bodies and then later they may move back into the shade so as not to overheat. Hence, reptiles require a habitat that provides a range of suitable refugia for shelter such as dense vegetation, rubble or log piles, or crevices and open areas for basking such as bare ground, rocks or railway ballast shoulders. During hot summers reptiles may be found in damper, cooler sites. Reptiles hibernate, spending the winter in burrows or under logs protected from the cold and predators.

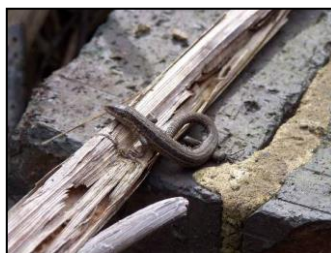
Identification: Slow Worms.

Slow worms grow to around 45cm in length. The males and females display a marked difference in colour when fully grown. In general, the species displays colouring that varies from light brown, dark brown, grey, bronze or brick red with the females often displaying a dark vertebral stripe and both males and females displaying occasional markings on the flanks.



Identification: Common Lizards.

Common lizards grow to around 16cm. They are grey brown to dark brown, often with a darker streak that may run the entire length of the spine. A continuous dark band bordered by light yellow or white spots is often seen on either side of the body. The underside of the males is egg yolk yellow to orange spotted with black. Females are yellowish grey.



When disturbed in their natural habitat reptiles will usually move away quickly.

Legislation.

Reptiles are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They received greater protection following reviews of the schedules published in 1988 and 1991. This means they are protected against intentional or recklessly killing and injuring and against sale or transporting for sale.

If reptiles are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk