



BARNSLEY ROAD, DARTON.

**PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY AND
PROTECTED FAUNA SURVEY.**

Ref No:- 101003.

Date:- 6th October 2010.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to carry out works on an area of land to the east of Barnsley Road in Darton. The site is a former council tip which has become overgrown.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a phase 1 habitat survey and a protected fauna survey of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. This survey was carried out on 5th October 2010 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

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

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

The survey area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs:-

- * 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.

All watercourses within the survey area were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) activity by looking for the following signs:-

- * 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.

All watercourses within the survey area were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs:-

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

All mature trees and derelict buildings were checked for potential bat roosting sites by looking for the following signs:-

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

The survey area was searched for the presence of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) breeding ponds within 500m of the site.

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway website was consulted for records of protected species within the survey area.

3.1.2. There are records of great crested newts, adders, grass snakes, common lizards, slow worms, otters and badgers within a 10km square around the survey area.

3.1.3. There are records of Pipistrelle and Daubentons bats within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.4. There are records of water voles within 1km of the survey area but no records in the watercourse on the site.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The survey area is a former council tip to the east of Barnsley Road in Darton. The site is overgrown with trees forming the boundary to the west with Barnsley Road and to the south with an adjacent field. The northern boundary is a fence line and the eastern boundary is a small watercourse.

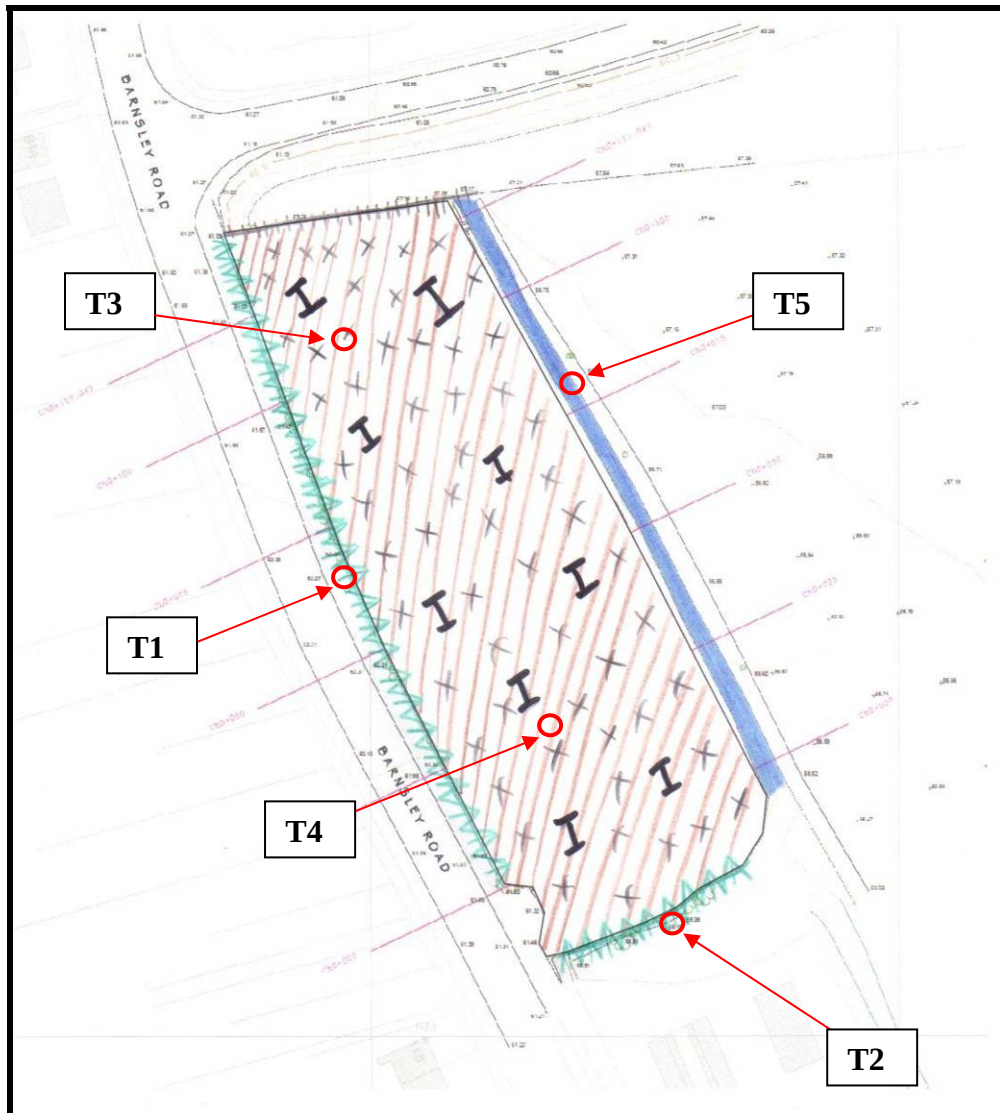
3.2.2. The aerial photograph below shows the surveyed area marked within the red line.



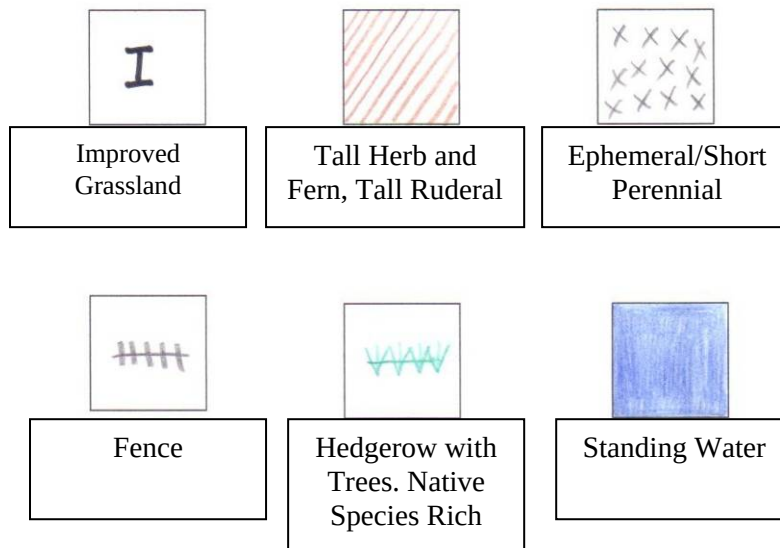
3.3. Phase 1 Habitat Survey Results.

3.3.1. Annotated Map of the Survey Area.

Below is an annotated map of the survey area showing all the habitats included within the survey area.



Key



3.3.2. Description of Habitats.

Below are the descriptions of the habitats shown on the Annotated Map of the Survey Area in 3.3.1.

- 3.3.2.1. *Improved Grassland*. The site is covered with long grass with a variety of weeds growing amongst the grass. There is an area towards the south of the site where there are less weeds growing in the grass. The area is marked as **T4**. The full list of species is shown in Appendix IV of this report.

Photograph looking southwest across the site.



- 3.3.2.2. *Tall Herb and Fern, Tall Ruderal*. The site is overgrown with a variety of weeds with some areas are more dense than others. The dominant species on the site are Rosebay Willowherb, Yarrow, Hairy Tare and Wormwood. There are also a number of small saplings growing on the site. There is a small clump of Japanese Knotweed growing towards the northwest of the site. There are only a few plants but these could very quickly spread. The full list of species is shown in Appendix IV of this report.

Photograph looking northeast across the site.



Photograph showing Japanese Knotweed on the site.



- 3.3.2.3. *Ephemeral/Short Perennial*. The site is overgrown with short weeds throughout the survey area. The full list of species is shown in Appendix IV of this report.

Photograph looking south across the site.



- 3.3.2.4. *Fence*. The northern site boundary is a fence along the access road into the adjacent factory.
- 3.3.2.5. *Hedgerow with Trees. Native Species Rich*. The western and southern site boundaries are hedgerows with trees. There are a number of species of tree growing with the dominant species being oak, silver birch and hawthorn. The full list of species is shown in Appendix IV of this report.

Photograph looking north along the western hedgerow.



- **3.3.2.6. *Standing Water.*** The eastern site boundary is a ditch running the length of the site. This ditch contains shallow standing water and is overgrown with bulrush, sedge, water mint and parrots feather. Parrots feather is listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1989. Species listed under Schedule 9 are prohibited from release into the wild. The full list of species is shown in Appendix IV of this report.

Photograph looking south along the ditch.



3.3.3. *Target Notes.*

Below is a list of the target notes referring to the Annotated Map of the Survey Area in 3.3.1.

- **T1** – This is the western hedgerow boundary with trees between the site and Barnsley Road.
- **T2** – This is the southern hedgerow boundary with trees between the site and adjacent field.
- **T3** – This is the Japanese Knotweed, which was identified growing on the site.
- **T4** – This area is less overgrown with tall ruderal herbs but is still overgrown with Ephemeral/Short Perennial.
- **T5** – This is the ditch which runs along the eastern site boundary.

3.4. Protected Fauna Survey Results.

3.4.1. No badger setts or badger field signs were identified within the survey area.

3.4.2. The ditch which runs along the eastern site boundary contains shallow static water with a deep layer of silt in the ditch. The water appeared to be polluted at the time of the survey. This ditch does not provide suitable habitat for water voles, otters or crayfish.

3.4.3. There are no ponds within 500m of the survey area therefore there is no habitat for great crested newts.

3.4.4. There are no existing buildings on the site to provide any bat roost potential. There are a number of trees growing along the western and southern site boundaries but none of these trees provide any bat roost potential. The survey area offers little or no foraging habitat for bats. The hedgerow boundary along the western edge may provide a potential bat flight path but this is along the side of a main road with street lights.

3.4.5. A small clump of Japanese Knotweed was identified on the site. This plant is listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1989. Species listed under Schedule 9 are prohibited from release into the wild.

3.4.6. Parrots Feather, a type of water weed, was identified growing throughout the ditch on the eastern site boundary. This plant is listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1989. Species listed under Schedule 9 are prohibited from release into the wild. This is a vigorous plant and it can choke ponds and waterways. This plant can reproduce from small fragment of the parent plants.

3.4.7. No other invasive non native species of plant was identified within the survey area.

3.4.8. The vegetation growing within the survey area provide opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year.

3.4.9. There is no potential habitat for reptiles within the survey area.

4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. There is Japanese Knotweed growing on the site and Parrots Feather growing in the ditch. Both of these plants are listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1989. Species listed under Schedule 9 are prohibited from release into the wild. This also includes spreading the plant further.

4.2. The vegetation growing within the survey area provide opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year.

4.3. There are no other protected species issues within the survey area.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. Japanese Knotweed and Parrots Feather were both identified growing within the survey area. Both of these plants are listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1989. Species listed under Schedule 9 are prohibited from release into the wild. This also includes spreading the plant further.

5.2. It is recommended that both of these plants are eradicated from the site.

5.3. Japanese Knotweed can be eradicated by excavation. An area of 7m around the clump must be excavated, treated as contaminated waste and disposed of in the correct manner.

5.4. The other option for the eradication of Japanese Knotweed is to spray with an approved herbicide.

5.5. One method of eradicating Parrots Feather is to spray with Reglone to control infestations in the short-term. Action can be taken to reduce nutrient inputs to the water for long-term eradication.

5.6. The vegetation growing within the survey area provides opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year.

5.7. It is recommended that any vegetation clearance is carried out outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year. If any vegetation clearance is to be carried out during the nesting bird season it must be immediately preceded by a thorough nesting bird survey carried out by a suitably experienced person. If any active nests are found they must be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

Jenny Whitcher.

Natural England Bat Survey Licence Number: - 20093324

Natural England Great Crested Newt Survey Licence Number: - 20102534

Natural England Crayfish Survey Licence Number: - 20093504

Natural England Barn Owl Survey Licence Number: - 20094026

06.10.2010.

Appendix I. JAPANESE KNOTWEED INFORMATION.

Japanese Knotweed, (*Fallopia Japonica*) {JKW} is a pernicious non-native species of plant. The plant is an extremely long-living perennial that does not spread by seeding. Instead it spreads by vegetative means. Any small section of the rhizome will grow into a new plant. It is extremely vigorous and very difficult to eradicate.

Under section 14 and Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence for it to be planted in the wild or otherwise caused to grow in the wild. Any area where JKW is found should be fenced off and warning signs erected. All staff should be warned both verbally and in writing that these areas should not be entered and should not be tracked over by machinery.

If land that is contaminated with JKW is required to be worked on or is in danger of being tracked over or affected by the construction works in any way it must be dealt with in a rigorous way. Failure to do so not only risks prosecution but very high costs to eradicate any new growth.

There does not appear to be any defined distance away from JKW that work should be carried out. Literature does state that the underground root system can spread up to seven metres and this is the suggested size of area to be excavated when eradicating by excavation. All excavated soil must be treated as controlled waste and dealt with according to strictly controlled procedures.

Alternatively Japanese Knotweed can be controlled by a prolonged treatment with approved herbicides.

It is not an offence to leave it growing, in situ, only to spread it to new areas.

Appendix II. INVASIVE SPECIES INFORMATION.

There are two specific invasive species generally encountered and dealt with here.

- Japanese Knotweed.
- Giant Hogweed.

Japanese Knotweed, (*Fallopia Japonica*) {JKW} is a pernicious non-native species of plant. The plant is an extremely long-living perennial that does not spread by seeding but instead it spreads by vegetative means. Any small section of the rhizome, crown and stem segments will grow into a new plant. It is extremely vigorous and very difficult to eradicate.

Giant Hogweed, (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) {GH} is not only an invasive alien species but is also an injurious weed as contact with skin causes increased sensitivity to ultra violet light, which can result in rashes, severe burns and painful blistering.

Under section 14 and Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence for either to be planted in the wild or otherwise caused to grow in the wild. Any area where either is found should be fenced off and warning signs erected. All staff should be warned both verbally and in writing that these areas should not be entered and should not be tracked over by machinery.

If land that is contaminated with either Japanese Knotweed or Giant Hogweed is required to be worked on or is in danger of being tracked over or affected by the construction works in any way it must be dealt with in a rigorous way. Failure to do so not only risks prosecution but very high costs to eradicate any new growth.

There does not appear to be any defined distance away from Japanese Knotweed that work should be carried out. Literature does state that the underground root system can spread up to seven metres and this is the suggested size of area to be excavated when eradicating by excavation. All excavated soil must be treated as controlled waste and dealt with according to strictly controlled procedures.

DEFRA guidance suggests that all soil within 4m radius of a Giant Hogweed plant is potentially contaminated with seeds and must therefore be dealt with as contaminated waste and according to strictly controlled procedures.

All excavated materials must be transported in sealed vehicles to a waste disposal site that is licensed to deal with waste contaminated with invasive species. On leaving areas of the site known to contain Japanese Knotweed or Giant Hogweed, any tracked machinery that has been used should be thoroughly cleaned within a designated area.

Alternatively Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed can be controlled by a prolonged treatment with approved herbicides.

It is not an offence to leave either growing, in situ, only to spread them to new areas.

Further information is available on the DEFRA website at www.defra.gov.uk

Appendix III. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

It is necessary to understand a little about the legal protection offered to nesting birds in order to evaluate the findings of this report.

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

If any person intentionally:-

- (a) kills, injures or takes any wild bird;
 - (b) takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
 - (c) 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:-

- (a) 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
- (b) disturbs dependant 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”.

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.

The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Appendix IV. SPECIES LIST.

Improved Grassland.

- Hairy Oat Grass – *Avenula pubescens*
- Perennial Rye Grass – *Lolium perenne*
- Crested Dog Tail – *Cynosurus cristatus*
- Meadow Grass – *Poa sp(p)*
- Cocks Foot – *Dactylis glomerata*

Tall Herb and Fern, Tall Ruderal.

- Wormwood – *Artemisia absinthium*
- Japanese Knotweed – *Reynoutria japonica*
- Rosebay Willowherb – *Chamerion angustifolium*
- Gorse – *Ulex eruopaeus*
- Dog Rose – *Rosa canina*
- Burdock – *Arctium lappa*
- Nettle – *Urtica dioica*
- Hogweed – *Heracleum sphondylium*
- Dock - *Rumex acetosella*
- Teasel – *Dipsacus fullonum*
- Ragwort – *Senecio jacobaea*
- Ox Eye Daisy – *Leucanthemum vulgare*
- Coltsfoot – *Tussilago farfara*
- Bramble – *Rubus fruticosus*
- Thistle – *Cirsium sp(p)*
- Mullein – *Verbascum thapsus*
- Yarrow – *Achillea millefolium*
- Common Knapweed – *Centaurea nigra*
- Willowherb – *Chamaenerion sp(p)*
- Tall Melilot – *Melilotus altissimus*
- Broom – *Cytisus scoparius*
- Goat Willow (sapling) – *Salix caprea*
- White Willow (sapling) – *Salix alba*
- Oak (sapling) – *Quercus sp(p)*
- Hawthorn (sapling) – *Crataegus monogyna*
- Sycamore (sapling) - *Acer pseudoplatanus*
- Elder (sapling) - *Sambucus nigra*
- Silver Birch (sapling) - *Betula pendula*

Ephemeral/Short Perennial.

- Clover – *Trifolium repens*
- Common Plantain – *Plantago major*
- Dandelion – *Taraxacum officinale*
- Stonecrop – *Hylotelephium maximum*
- Butterbur – *Petasites hybridus*
- Hairy Tare – *Vicia hirsuta*
- Yarrow - *Achillea millefolium*
- Vetch – *Vicia sativa*
- Mugwort – *Artemisia vulgaris*
- Leafy Hawkweed – *Hieracium albiflorum*

Fence.

- No species present.

Hedgerow with Trees. Native Species Rich.

- Oak - *Quercus sp(p)*
- Silver Birch – *Betula pendula*
- Elder – *Sambucus nigra*
- Hawthorn - *Crataegus monogyna*
- Ash – *Fraxinus excelsior*
- Sycamore – *Acer pseudoplatanus*
- Beech – *Fagus sylvatica*
- Sweet Chestnut – *Castanea sativa*
- Apple – *Malus domestica*
- Dog Rose – *Rosa canina*

Standing Water.

- Water mint – *Mentha aquatic*
- Bulrush – *Typha latifolia*
- Tussock Grass – *Deschamsia cespitosa*
- Sedge – *Carex sp(p)*
- Parrots Feather – *Myriophyllum aquaticum*