

Precautionary Working Method Statement – Great Crested Newts and Small Mammals

Terms of Reference:

PBA Applied Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Tilbury Douglas on behalf of Yorkshire Water Services to produce a great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* and small mammals precautionary working method statement. GCN are unlikely but may be present on site due to negative result for GCN eDNA in nearby waterbodies. The likelihood of planned works impacting GCN is sufficiently low.

Methods:

An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) should be appointed for the development. Before works commence, the grassland within the works area should be cut as low as possible to reduce the habitat suitability for GCN and small mammals on site, by conducting phased cutting.



The ECoW will complete a hand search/destructive search on the small areas of dense vegetation to be cleared for the development. The ECoW will work with the contractor to steadily remove the vegetation and ground litter, checking for GCN, other amphibians, and small mammals as this progresses. If any GCN are found, all works must stop and a GCN Mitigation Licence will be required to move GCN from the works area. If no GCN are found, the works may proceed. If any small mammals are found, works must stop, and the small mammal will be moved by a suitably qualified ecologist or allowed to disperse before works proceed.

GCN are unlikely to be present on site, however the measures stated below should be followed to reduce the risk of GCN and the risk to small mammals on site:

- Works will be restricted to the designated development area and the impact of works on adjacent habitats avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area,
- Do not make potential amphibian refuges,
- Stacked materials such as metal sheets, stone, boards, and wood will be utilised as refuges by amphibians. Keep these stacked tidy and stored off the ground i.e. on pallets,
- If soil is required to be stored on site, the surface should be smoothed to limit access to amphibians and other small mammals,
- All debris, rubble etc. collected during site clearance should be placed directly into skips or removed from the site immediately to avoid it becoming used as refugia by amphibians and reptiles.
- Amphibians will preferentially hide under refuges as discussed above. Site personnel must have awareness when moving materials. If any animals other than GCN are found, they should be removed carefully from site. If a GCN is found, works must stop, and advice sought from the ECoW.
- Backfill trenches and other excavations before nightfall or leave a ramp to allow newts or small mammals to easily exit.

Toolbox talk:

The site teams and contractors should be briefed on the potential presence of GCN and small mammals. This should include identification of amphibians, the working method, and the ecologist’s contact details.

Photograph	Notes
	GCN
	Smooth newt

References

ARG UK (2010). ARG UK Advice Note 5: Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index

Biggs J, Ewald N, Valentini A, Gaboriaud C, Griffiths RA, Foster J, Wilkinson J, Arnett A, Williams P and Dunn F. 2014. *Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt. Appendix 5. Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (Triturus cristatus) environmental DNA*. Freshwater Habitats Trust, Oxford.

Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). Herpetological Journal 10(4), 143-155.

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