

Activity type: Pond Creation (unlined)

Activity specification:

Wildscapes are to create 2 ponds for the benefit of Great Crested Newts as part of the District Level Licensing Project, on behalf of Natural England. These ponds are constructed to the following specification:

- Surface area between 150m² and 500m²;
- Maximum central depth of 1m to 2.5m;
- Variable bank gradients of 1:10, or ideally 1:20;
- A range of depths across the pond;
- Occasional drying out is not a problem, however the pond must hold water throughout at least one summer in every three years;
- Substantial cover of submerged and marginal vegetation (about 66% submerged plant cover and 25% to 50% emergent/floating vegetation cover);
- Areas of open water to facilitate courtship behaviour;
- Located in areas of good quality terrestrial habitat;
- Terrestrial buffer zone of at least 3m around each pond (see below);
- Abundance of invertebrate prey;
- Ponds in clusters (within 250m generally), rather than in isolation;
- Absence of shading on the south side;
- Absence of fish;
- Absence or low density of waterfowl;
- Good water quality, with negligible run-off from agriculture and roads.

Each pond will be constructed with an 8 tonne 360 excavator, in line with the above mentioned specification and under the instruction and supervision of a Wildscapes staff member, who will be an active holder of the District Level Licensing Habitat Delivery Body License. The spoil generated from the work will remain on site and be utilised for landscaping and hibernacula construction. 2 hibernacula per pond are to be constructed from locally sourced brash, rocks and earth in line with Natural England's online guidelines.

Access/Egress

Access will be via established access routes. Any off road/track routes will be accessed by 4x4, dumper, tractor or excavator. Banksmen will be in place during all unloading and tracking operations to ensure safety of team, public, and materials.

Sequence of works:

The area of the pond plus a 5m perimeter buffer will be scanned using a CAT4 scanner. Topsoil will be removed from this area and cast next to the pond area. Subsoil and clay will then be removed from the pond in order to shape the pond to the spec mentioned above.

Storage of Plant and Equipment

Kit and vehicles will be safely stored, daily and for the duration of the project, at the load zone or another safe location identified on site and approved by the Site Supervisor and Landowner where

necessary. Tools should be locked away in tool bins/vehicles. Plant and equipment to be stored in a secure area, free from potential damage and access by others.

Completion of works:

Upon completion of the wetland construction works, the plant pick up arrangements will be made and carried out along the same route as delivery access.

Utilities

All utilities checks will be prepared and signed-off in advance of any works commencing. Staff must follow Safe Dig Techniques at all times. Once arriving at the work site, the supervisor will confirm a safe-to-dig area in conjunction with the works programme and mapping.

COSHH/Spills

A spill kit will be carried in each work vehicle. No refuelling will be undertaken near any watercourses. Any fuel/oil spills to be cleared and reported to the Site Supervisor. COSHH items will be stored securely in vehicles/lockers in appropriate containers with the correct labelling. Refer to COSHH assessments.

Waste Removal

Generated waste will be transported off site and disposed of accordingly. Waste materials will be disposed of in the skip either on site or removed off site back to the Wildscapes yard.

Protected Species

Potential protected species and ecological constraints will be brought to the attention of the site team and any approved site visitors during the site induction. In the event of finding protected species, work will be stopped and the Site Supervisor will be notified, who will determine the next steps.

Biosecurity

All works are carried out in line with Wildscapes biosecurity protocols.

INNS

A visual assessment should be carried out before any works begin to locate the presence of Schedule 9 Invasive Species. No invasive material will be intentionally spread around the area through the works method. All plant/tools arriving on site should be clean to avoid transferal of invasive species onto the site.

Injurious weeds and non-native invasive species

Operatives undertaking these works have been suitably trained and are aware of biosecurity measures, how to avoid the spread of a notifiable animal or plant disease and implement the control measures stated in Wildscapes' protocol documents.

Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

All staff are made aware of the risks of avian influence found around the UK, and will be given a toolbox talk ensuring their understanding of the threats. Works will be carried out in line with Wildscapes Avian Influence protocols.

Equipment, PPE and Emergency/First Aid protocols

PPE	• Sturdy ankle boots/wellington boots with steel toe cap (S3 rated) • Hi viz jacket or bib (Class 3) • Waterproofs • Safety helmet (EN 397) • Cut resistant work gloves Additional site specific PPE may be required, see Dynamic risk assessment for these.
Equipment	All equipment will be maintained and fit for use, including annual calibration if required: Laser Level Cat and Genny Spade Auger Fencing pliers
Staff competencies	Staff should only undertake tasks in which they are trained, experienced and qualified to do so. A log of all staff working on each project is included on the Residual Risk Assessment. Competencies are logged in the Wildscapes CIC training matrix.
Lone Working	Allowed for low-risk excavation and survey work only. Use of a "Buddy System" or SPOT Satellite Locator for remote (moorland/coastal) areas.
Working by water	One person acts as a "bank-side spotter" with a throw line while the other wears a life jacket if entering or working close to deep water. Please refer to SRWT policy for more detail.
Emergency plan	In case of immediate threat to survey, 'stop work' protocol will be initially applied. The following responses will then be undertaken: 1. Triage: Work is stopped and action is undertaken to reduce or eliminate threat. 2. Escalate: Principal Contractor and any other required personal is contacted 3. Consult: Assess if work can continue or if mitigation if required 4. Report: Report the threat via the official records. E.g Incident Form, or informing Natural England. Please refer to Wildscapes emergency plan for more details.
First Aid	All site supervisors hold an Outdoor First Aid and EFAW certificate. First Aid Kits will be in every vehicle and on site at all times.
Incident reporting	Any 'Near Miss' or 'Incidents' will be reported within 24 hours to the Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust and to the client, following the SRWT procedure.