

**Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.**



SOUTH VIEW FARM, INGBIRCHWORTH.

OS REF: SE 22281 05703.

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL.

Ref No: 190841.

Date: 14th August 2019.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page Number
1. INTRODUCTION.	3
2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.	4
3. SURVEY RESULTS.	7
4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.	15
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.	17
6. REFERENCES.	19
Appendix I. GREAT CRESTED NEWT INFORMATION.	20
Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.	22
Appendix III. REPTILE INFORMATION.	23
Appendix IV. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA.	25
Appendix V. TARGET NOTES.	26
Appendix VI. DEVELOPMENT PLAN.	27
TOOLBOX TALK – REPTILES.	28
TOOLBOX TALK – GREAT CRESTED NEWTS.	29
TOOLBOX TALK – AMPHIBIANS.	30

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to construct a residential property on land at South View Farm in Ingbirchworth. Appendix VI of this report contains a proposed development plan.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. The site survey was carried out on 9th August 2019 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 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 survey was carried out by Jenny Whitcher Roebuck MCIEEM. Since 2001 Jenny has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out Ecology Surveys and Phase 1 Habitat surveys. Jenny holds Natural England Survey Licences in respect of bats, great crested newts, crayfish and barn owls, NRW and SNH Survey Licences in respect of bats and great crested newts. She has also successfully completed several courses run by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and the Field Studies Council (FSC) in the relative protected species, plant species and in carrying out Phase 1 Habitat Surveys. As a full member of CIEEM she is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership.

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

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. There are three records of otter at Ingbirchworth Reservoir located 670m to the west, recorded in 2003 and 2005.

3.1.3. There are numerous records of badger within 2km of the site but no records relevant to the survey area.

3.1.4. There are recent records of great crested newts within Royd Moor Reservoir which lies 1.1km to the south of the survey area.

3.1.5. There are records of bat, water vole, further otter records, white clawed crayfish and hedgehog within 2km of the site but all these records are in excess of 1km from the survey area.

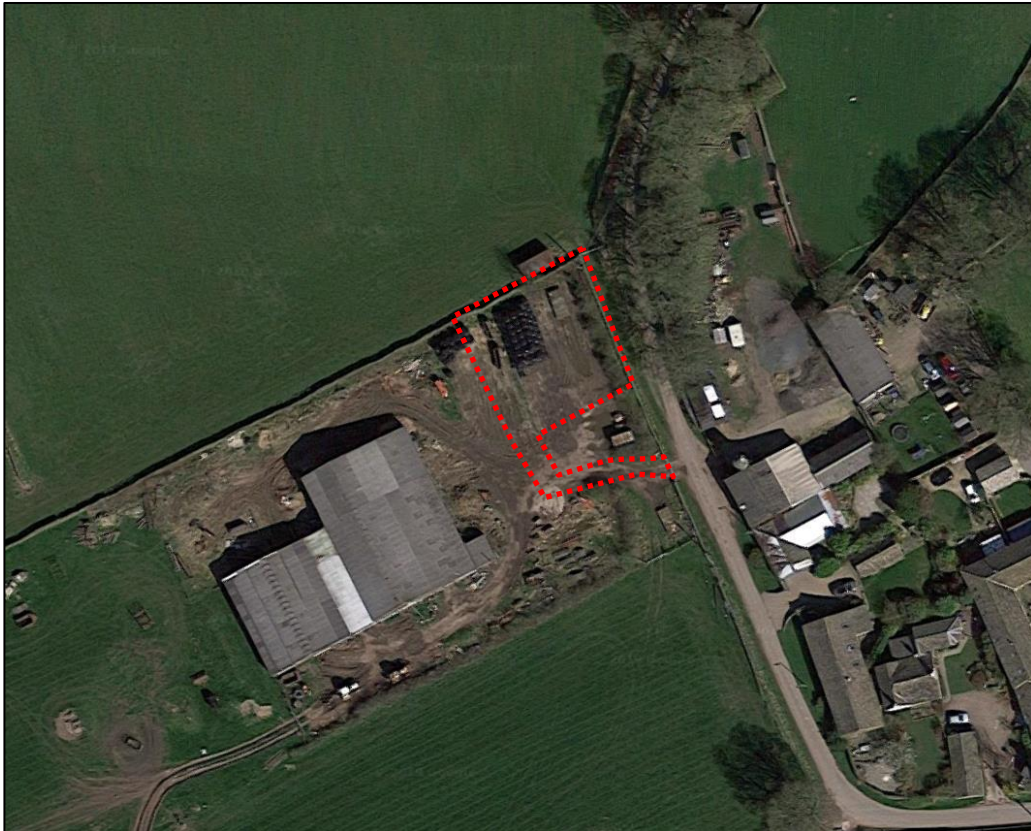
3.1.6. There are a number of local wildlife sites within 2km of the survey area, but all records are over 650m from the site. These sites include –

- Scout Dike Reservoir LWS
- Royd Moor Reservoir LWS
- Ingbirchworth Reservoir LWS
- Gunthwaite Dam and Clough Wood LWS

3.1.7. A desktop data search was requested from South Yorkshire Badger Group for records of badgers in the surrounding area. There are records of badgers in the area but there are no records relevant to this site.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The survey area is the corner of the yard at South View Farm in an area that has been used to store silage bales for many years. Google images show that up to last year this area was bare ground with bales stored. The aerial photograph below shows the survey area.



3.2.2. The aerial photograph below shows the survey area and the wider surrounding area.



3.2.3. The surrounding land is the small village of Ingbirchworth to the east and grazing and arable fields to the north, west and south.

3.3. Description of Habitats.

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

- Short Ephemeral
- Tall Ruderal
- Bare Ground
- Scattered Tree
- Hedge, Defunct, Species Poor
- Wall

3.3.2. Short Ephemeral

The majority of the site is short ephemeral habitat as the site has been bare ground and used to store silage bales up until last year. The site is now clear of bales and vegetation is beginning to grow. The main species in this area are pineapple weed (*Matricaria discoidea*) and knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*) with greater plantain (*Plantago major*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), broad-leaved willowherb (*Epilobium montanum*), great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), thistle (*Cirsium sp(p)*), white dead nettle (*Lamium album*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), dock (*Rumex sp.*), ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus Repens*), sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*) and some bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). There are some grass species growing including cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Timothy (*Phleum pratense*).



3.3.3. Tall Ruderal

At the northern end of the hedgerow, where it is more sparse, there are tall ruderal species growing in the gaps including nettle (*Urtica dioica*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and some bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).



3.3.4. Bare Ground

The access into the site is a bare earth and rubble track, which leads to the adjacent barns, which are outside the survey area.



3.3.5. Scattered Tree

At the northern corner of the site is one semi-mature multi-trunked sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) tree.



3.3.6. Hedge, Defunct, Species Poor

Along the eastern boundary there is a hedgerow growing on the site side of the boundary wall. This hedgerow contains mainly hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*) with some holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*). The hedge bottom has some nettle (*Urtica dioica*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and sapling blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) growing. At the northern end the hedgerow is more sparse and there are tall ruderal species growing in the gaps.



3.3.7. Wall

Along the northern and eastern site boundaries there is a dry-stone wall. This continues along these boundaries outside the survey area.



3.4. Description of Fauna.

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

3.4.2. No watercourses were identified within the survey area. Therefore, there is no habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish within the survey area.

3.4.3. Three ponds were identified within 500m of the survey area on an Ordnance Survey Map of the area. All three ponds lie to the east, 140m, 175m and 210m from the site and all three ponds lie within grazed land. All three ponds are large with a margin of reeds and a few small trees around the banks. All are on or adjacent to the

3.4.4. No structures or suitable trees that could provide bat roost potential were identified within the survey area. The sycamore on site is too small and has no suitable features present.

3.4.5. The survey area provides low potential for foraging and commuting bats due to the small size of the site and there are only two boundary lines to the site as it is part of a larger site. The hedgerow on the site does not provide connectivity between suitable foraging areas. The surrounding area provides potential for foraging and commuting bats along hedgerows and tree lines between the surrounding fields. However, a thorough assessment of bat activity could not be made during a daytime survey of the site.

3.4.6. The hedgerow along the eastern boundary provides opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to September each year. However, no active nests were identified during this survey and a thorough nesting bird survey was not carried out at this time. Small birds were seen foraging within the hedgerow and the surrounding area.

3.4.7. The survey area provides very little suitable habitat for reptiles as it has been used to store silage bales for many years until fairly recently. The site is also a used farmyard with large barns adjacent and there is regular disturbance from farm machinery. There are five old telegraph poles (T1) laid on the ground at the eastern side of the site, which could provide refuge if there are any reptiles in the area. No reptiles were identified during this survey.

3.4.8. No suitable dormouse habitat was identified during this survey. The survey area is also outside the natural range of this species.

3.4.9. No red squirrels or red squirrel field signs were identified during this survey and there is no suitable habitat within the survey area. The survey area is also outside the natural range of this species.

3.4.10. No non-native invasive species of plant listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were identified within the survey area.

4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. There are no designated sites within the survey area. Therefore, there will be no impact on designated sites. The nearest local wildlife site lies 650m to the southeast and will remain totally unaffected.

4.2. No badger setts or badger field signs were identified within the survey area. Therefore, there will be no impact on badgers during the proposed works.

4.3. No watercourses were identified within the survey area. Therefore, there will be no impact on water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish during the proposed works.

4.4. Three ponds were identified within 500m of the site on an Ordnance Survey Map of the area. All three ponds lie to the east, 140m, 175m and 210m from the site and all are on or adjacent to the stream flowing from Ingbirchworth Reservoir to Scout Dyke Reservoir. There are no records of great crested newts within these ponds. The survey area is low value terrestrial habitat for great crested newts.

4.4.1. Therefore, it is assessed that the proposed works will have no impact on great crested newts or other amphibians.

4.5. No structures or suitable trees that could provide bat roost potential were identified within the survey area. Therefore, there will be no impact on roosting bats during the proposed works.

4.6. The survey area provides low foraging potential for bats. The proposed works will impact a small area of vegetation and will not fragment any foraging habitat and will therefore have no impact on foraging or commuting bats.

4.7. The hedgerow along the eastern boundary 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 hedge.

4.8. The survey area provides very little suitable habitat for reptiles as it has been used to store silage bales for many years until last year and has been bare ground. The site is also a used farmyard with large barns adjacent and there is regular disturbance from farm machinery. There are five old telegraph poles (T1) laid on the ground at the

eastern side of the site which could provide refuge if there are any reptiles in the area. However, the works on this small site will have no impact on any reptiles within the area.

4.9. No suitable dormouse habitat was identified during this survey. The survey area is also outside the natural range of this species. Therefore, there will be no impact on dormice during the proposed works.

4.10. No red squirrels or red squirrel field signs were identified during this survey and there is no suitable habitat within the survey area. The survey area is also outside the natural range of this species. Therefore, there will be no impact on red squirrels during the proposed works.

4.11. No non-native invasive species of plant listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were identified within the survey area. Therefore, there will be no impact on the proposed works.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. There are plans to potentially remove the hedgerow along the eastern boundary of the site as the hedgerow is unmanaged and scruffy. Hedgerows are a Habitat of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006. Therefore, before the hedgerow is to be removed the local authority must be consulted first.

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

5.3. If any vegetation clearance is to be carried out during the nesting bird season a thorough nesting bird survey must be carried out by a suitably experienced person immediately prior to works commencing. If any active nests are found during this survey, they must be left undisturbed until the young have fledged. This could put a considerable delay on proposed works.

5.4. As a precaution, it is recommended that all personnel are briefed on the potential presence of reptiles and amphibians. Toolbox talks have been included at the end of this report to assist with this briefing.

5.5. It is recommended that the telegraph poles are removed during the summer when amphibians are active and not in hibernation. The poles should be carefully lifted, not dragged, and any reptiles, amphibians or other animals present underneath must be allowed to move away of their own accord.

5.6. Any materials stored on the site during the works must be lifted off the ground on pallets to prevent reptiles and amphibians seeking shelter below.

5.7. In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is found during the works all work must stop and Whitcher Wildlife Ltd contacted immediately for further advice.

5.8. If and reptiles are found during the works they must be left to safely move away of their own accord. If large numbers of reptiles (5+) are found works must stop and Whitcher Wildlife Ltd contacted for further advice.

5.9. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, it is recommended that biodiversity enhancements are provided on the site.

5.10. If the hedgerow is to be removed it will be replaced. The replacement hedge should include native hedge species, including fruit and berry bearing species, to provide habitat and a food source for various bird species.

5.11. One bat box should be integrated into the new building to be constructed on the site. This should be the Habibat bat box which can be custom faced to match the walls of the building. The box should be built into the gable end but away from any doors, windows or lighting.



Prepared by:	
Jenny Whitcher Roebuck MCIEEM.	Date: 14 th August 2019.

Checked by:	
Derek Whitcher. BSc, MCIEEM, MCMi	Date: 16 th August 2019.

6. REFERENCES.

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. 2017. *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition*. CIEEM, Hampshire.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. 2017. *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition*. CIEEM, Hampshire.
1981. *Wildlife and Countryside Act*. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69> (accessed 18/02/16)
2000. *Countryside and Rights of Way Act*.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>.
2017. *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations*.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made>.
2012. *National Planning Policy Statement*.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Anon. 1995. *Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group report. Vol 2: Action Plans*. HMSO, London.
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 2004 (ed.). *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit*. JNCC, Peterborough.
1992. *Protection of Badgers Act*. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/51/contents>.
- Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D. 1989. *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society. London.
- 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
- Chanin P. 2003(a). *Ecology of the European Otter*. Conserving Natura 2000, Ecology Series No.10. English Nature, Peterborough.
- Chanin P. 2003(b) *Monitoring the Otter Lutra lutra*. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No. 10. English Nature, Peterborough.
- Peay S. 2003. *Monitoring the White-Clawed Crayfish Austropotamobius pallipes*. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No. 1. English Nature, Peterborough.
- English Nature. 2001. *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines*.
- Langton T, Beckett C, Foster J. 2001. *Great Crested Newt: Conservation Handbook*. Froglife, Suffolk.
- Oldham et al. 2000. *Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Assessment. ARG UK Advice Note 5, May 2010*.
- Collins J. (ed.) 2016. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologist: Good Practice Guidelines*. 3rd ed. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- English Nature. 2004. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough, UK.
- BOCC4 Eaton et al. 2015. *Birds of Conservation Concern 4: The Population Status of Bird's in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man*.
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 2004. *Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Birds*. 2004 ed. JNCC, Peterborough.
- Froglife. 1999. *Froglife Advice Sheet 10: Reptile Survey*. Froglife, London.
- Bright P, Morris P, Mitchell-Jones T. 2006. *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook* 2nd edition. English Nature, Peterborough.
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 2004 (ed.). *Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for: Reptiles and Amphibians*. JNCC, Peterborough.
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 1996. *UK Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Appendix I. GREAT CRESTED NEWT INFORMATION.

Ecology

Great Crested Newts breed in ponds and other water bodies. They can begin to migrate to their breeding ponds as early as the first frost-free days in late January with the majority reaching their breeding ponds by mid-March. Timing will be influenced by several factors, primarily evening temperatures above 5°C and rainfall.

The peak egg-laying period is from mid-March to mid-May. The newts will lay their eggs individually, mainly on the leaves of submerged plants. The larva hatch after three weeks and then take another 2-3 months to complete larval development. Adult newts generally leave their breeding ponds from late May onwards.

Once the larvae have completed metamorphosis (the transition from aquatic larvae, efts, to land-adapted juveniles), they emerge from the pond. This emergence begins in late August and generally continues until late October. It takes 2-4 years to reach sexual maturity, during which time the newts will be land based.

Adults and immature newts spend the winter in places that afford protection from frost and flooding. This will generally be underground amongst tree roots, in mammal burrows, or under suitable refuges above ground like deadwood or rubble piles. Hibernation may last from October to February.

Whilst on land, outside the hibernation period, great crested newts will forage at night, taking a wide range of invertebrate prey.

Great Crested Newts therefore spend the majority of their time on land and only visit the ponds for breeding purposes.

Great Crested Newts will travel large distances between ponds and terrestrial refuges. It is recommended that anywhere within 500m of a pond should be treated as potential Great Crested Newt habitat.

Surveys

Walkover surveys will identify the suitability of any ponds within the area for Great Crested Newts by using a HSI assessment. The terrestrial habitat and their links will also be assessed.

Aquatic surveys of newts can be carried out through the trapping of ponds in suitable weather conditions during the breeding season, although these surveys do not provide accurate population estimates.

Terrestrial surveys and exclusions can be conducted between March and September when newts are moving out of breeding ponds.

An experienced surveyor must carry out the surveys and must be in possession of an appropriate Natural England Great Crested Newt survey license.

It is essential that Great Crested Newt surveys are planned well in advance of any development and ideally before Planning Consent is sought. Surveys can only be carried out at the appropriate time of year and repeat surveys are essential.

Legislation

Great Crested Newts are protected under Appendix II of the BERN Convention (1982), Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive, Annex II of the Conservation and Wildlife Regulations (2010) and are 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 kill, injure or take any Great Crested Newt, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

If Great Crested Newts are to be affected by any development, a thorough assessment of the population is essential followed by the design of a comprehensive mitigation package. Only when this has been done can a license application be submitted to Natural England for approval. It takes 30 working days for a license application to be determined and the period that mitigation measures take can be measured in months. It is therefore essential to plan well in advance of development commencing.

Appendix II. 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 III. 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 IV. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA.



- Short Ephemeral
+ + + +
- Tall Ruderal
/ / / /
- Bare Ground
.
- Scattered Tree
●
- Hedge, Defunct, Speices Poor
- - - -
- Wall
—
- Target Note
⊙

Site: South View Farm, Ingbirchworth
Reference: 190841

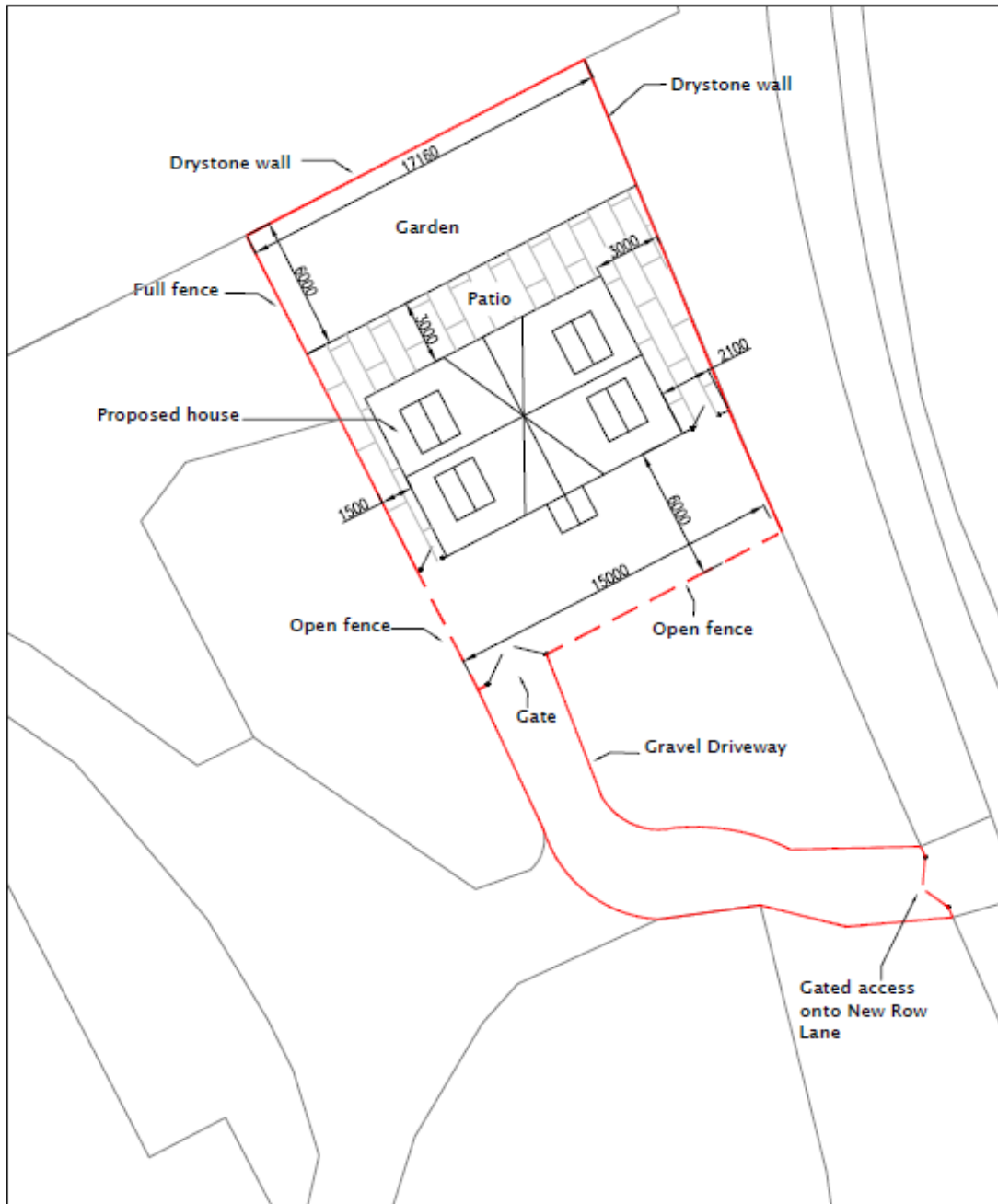
Prepared by: Whitcher Wildlife Ltd
Date: 12th August 2019



Appendix V. TARGET NOTES.


Target Note 1 – The location of the five telegraph poles laid on the ground.

Appendix VI. DEVELOPMENT PLAN.



PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
SCALE 1:250

DRAWING CREATED IN REVIT.

	<small>TITLE</small> INGBIRCHWORTH	<small>DRAWING No.</small> 003
---	--	--

Toolbox Talk: Reptiles

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants



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 back zig-zag 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

Toolbox Talk: Great Crested Newts

The great crested newt population has suffered a major decline in Britain over the last century. Numerous ponds have been lost, unmanaged ponds have become silted up and over-shaded, development has destroyed ponds and associated terrestrial habitat and caused fragmentation of populations. The loss of grassland, scrub and woodland has resulted in fewer opportunities for foraging, dispersal and hibernation.

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants



Identification: Great Crested Newts.

Great crested newts are dark, nearly black in colour with a speckled belly, distinctly orange in colour and with orange stripes across their toes. Great crested newts can grow up to 15cm in length.



Identification: Smooth and Palmate Newts.

Smooth newts are predominantly lighter in colour although their colour may vary from sandy coloured to very dark. Smooth newts also have a speckled orange belly but the orange colour fades to pale.



Palmate newts are similar to smooth newts but with a pinker belly and wedged feet.

Habitat.

Great crested newts live predominantly on land but breed in ponds between March and June.

Great crested newts may be found on land almost all year round. They spend the daytime under rocks or logs, in cracks, crevices or holes, or anywhere that is moist and cool and emerge at night to forage. During the winter months great crested newts hibernate deep down away from frost.

When disturbed in terrestrial habitats newts will usually be very sluggish and will take time to move away.

Legislation.

The great crested newt is listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, recently modified by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. The great crested newt is therefore subject to the provisions of Schedule 9, which make it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a great crested newt.
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

The great crested newt is also listed on Annex II and Annex IV of The Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 1994. Regulation 39 makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a great crested newt.
- Deliberately disturb a great crested newt.
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of a great crested newt.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a great crested newt.

The legislation applies to all life stages of great crested newts.

The maximum fine on conviction of offences under Section 9 and Regulation 39 currently stands at £5,000. The CroW Act 2000 amendment also allows for a custodial sentence of up to six months instead of, or in addition to, a fine. In addition, items, which may constitute evidence of the commission of an offence, may be seized and detained.

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

Toolbox Talk: Amphibians

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants



Identification: Smooth Newts.

Smooth newts can grow to around 10cm in length. They are usually brown in colour, often with visible black spots on the upper body. Their belly is pale orange with black spots fading away to the sides. The males have a wavy crest running from head to tail, although this can sometimes only be visible in water.



Other Amphibians.

In addition to the common amphibians listed adjacent there are also three other species present in the UK, those being great crested newts, natterjack toads and pool frogs. These species are less common.

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

Identification: Palmate Newts.

Palmate newts are very similar to smooth newts but are usually smaller, to around 9cm. Their throat is usually pink and unspotted. The males often have webbed back feet and a fine filament at the end of the tail during the breeding season.



Habitat.

Amphibians predominantly live on land but breed in ponds. The aquatic requirements for each species vary slightly although the presence of one species does not rule out the potential presence of the other species.

When not in their ponds amphibians require a variety of refugia for shelter and can therefore be found under log piles, in rubble, under tree roots or within areas of scrub or rough grassland. Amphibians hibernate, spending the winter in burrows or under logs protected from the cold and predators.

Identification: Common Frogs.

Common frogs are one of the more common amphibians in the UK. They have smooth skin with a distinctive patch behind their eyes. They are predominantly green or brown with black patches although their colour can vary through orange, red or black.



Identification: Common Toads.

Common toads are a Species of Principal Importance in the UK.

Common toads have rough warty skin with two distinctive lumps behind the eyes. When disturbed they have a tendency to remain still, when moving they crawl rather than hopping.



Legislation.

The common amphibians listed above are protected only by Section 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This section prohibits sale, barter, exchange, transporting for sale and advertising to sell or to buy. Collection and keeping of these amphibians is not an offence.

The common toad is also listed as a Species of Principal Importance in the UK.

If amphibians are identified during works, allow them to move away of their own accord.

If large numbers or amphibians (5+) are identified stop works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk