

GREAT CRESTED NEWT SURVEY 2005

INTRODUCTION

Wardell Armstrong LLP was instructed to undertake great crested newts surveys on the water bodies present in the locality of the site of the proposed Intermodal Freight Terminal near Clyst Honiton, Exeter.

A previous survey in 2001 did not reveal the presence of great crested newts, although the site was considered to have potential for amphibians, and a frog and toad were recorded. The water bodies are shown on the habitat plan Figure 13.1.

Great crested newts are legally protected, as are their terrestrial habitats and breeding ponds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), EC Habitats Directive 1992 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2001. Great crested newts are the subject of a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, other amphibians, including smooth and palmate newts and common frogs cannot be deliberately harmed, sold or be offered for sale. The habitats of these amphibians are not legally protected.

The purpose of the surveys in 2005 was to determine the presence or absence of great crested newts and if found to be present, recommend appropriate mitigation measures to be implemented prior to any construction works.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Four survey visits were undertaken on the 9th, 10th May, 6th and 7th June 2005 to establish presence or absence of great crested newts within the areas of standing water.

Areas of open water were scanned by torchlight at dusk on these dates and bottle traps were set along accessible margins of the water bodies in six places on the site and checked before 10am the following mornings. 27 bottle traps were set on the 9th, 29 on the 10th May, 21 on the 6th June and 24 on the 26th May 2005. The weather was dry and clear on the 9th, 10th May and 7th June and misty on the 6th June. The 6 areas are briefly described below:

- Area 1 – a wide area of ditch east of the former landfill site, accessed from the field denoted by target note 20/20a. This ditch is difficult to access and heavily shaded by scrub and trees. It was covered in the invasive alien species water fern.
- Area 2 – an area of ditch south of the former landfill site, with steep sides, again difficult to access and heavily shaded by trees and scrub.
- Area 3 – a small area of open water present in a ditch alongside field denoted by target note 37 and 48, close to a gap in the hedge between the two fields. Heavily shaded by hedgerow trees and shrubs and covered in water fern.
- Area 4 – an area of the ditch to the west of the landfill site, accessed from the field denoted by target note 31
- Area 5 – a ditch running north east to south west through the poor semi-improved grassland, from the south of the former landfill site to the River Clyst. This is a fairly wide ditch, heavily vegetated with common reed, yellow-flag iris, floating sweet grass and reed mace in places, with areas of open water. There are scattered trees along the edge of the ditch.
- Area 6 – an area of the ditch in the alder-willow wet woodland in the north west of the site. Most of this ditch is heavily shaded and inaccessible. A small part of the ditch was surveyed at the northern end.

The amphibian torchlight surveys were carried out under a valid survey licence (A copy of licence accreditation for Alison Bennett is attached) granted by English Nature.

SURVEY RESULTS

No great crested newts were observed during the torchlight and bottle trapping surveys conducted in 2005.

One palmate/smooth newt was observed during the torchlight surveys in the ditch south of the landfill site. Tables 1-6 summarises the fauna seen by torchlight or caught in bottle traps set in the ditches during each visit.

Area 1

Table 1: Results of great crested newt survey 2005						
Date	Survey Method	Time bottletraps set	Air Temperature (°C)	Water Temperature (°C)	Fauna seen by torchlight	Fauna caught in bottletraps
9/5/05	5 Bottletraps & Torchlight	21.00	9.3	10.3	None	None
10/5/05	5 Bottletraps & Torchlight	20.43	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	None
6/6/05	5 Bottletraps & Torchlight	21.10	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	8 fish 1 male palmate newt
7/5/05	7 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	10.3	Not recorded	None	1 fish 1 male palmate newt

Area 2

Table 2: Results of great crested newt survey 2005						
Date	Survey Method	Time bottletraps set	Air Temperature (°C)	Water Temperature (°C)	Fauna seen by torchlight	Fauna caught in bottletraps
9/5/05	5 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	None
10/5/05	5 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	None
6/6/05	3 Bottletraps & Torchlight	21.20	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	2 juvenile fish
7/5/05	3 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	9.5	Not recorded	A smooth/palmate newt	1 fish 1 female palmate newt

Area 3

Table 3: Results of great crested newt survey 2005						
Date	Survey Method	Time bottletraps set	Air Temperature (°C)	Water Temperature (°C)	Fauna seen by torchlight	Fauna caught in bottletraps
9/5/05	2 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	None
10/5/05	2 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	None
6/6/05	2 Bottletraps & Torchlight	21.30	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	None
7/5/05	2 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	8.7	Not recorded	None	None

Area 4

Table 4: Results of great crested newt survey 2005						
Date	Survey Method	Time of survey	Air Temperature (°C)	Water Temperature (°C)	Fauna seen by torchlight	Fauna caught in bottletraps
9/5/05	Torchlight	21.25	6.3	Not recorded	Numerous fish	N/a
10/5/05	Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	N/a
6/6/05	Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	N/a
7/5/05	Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	N/a

Area 5

Table 5: Results of great crested newt survey 2005						
Date	Survey Method	Time of survey	Air Temperature (°C)	Water Temperature (°C)	Fauna seen by torchlight	Fauna caught in bottletraps
9/5/05	14 Bottletraps & Torchlight	21.42	6.5	Not recorded	None	None
10/5/05	14 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	None
6/6/05	11 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	N/a
7/5/05	Torchlight	Not recorded	7.3	Not recorded	None	1 tadpole 2 fish

Area 6

Table 6: Results of great crested newt survey 2005						
Date	Survey Method	Time of survey	Air Temperature (°C)	Water Temperature (°C)	Fauna seen by torchlight	Fauna caught in bottletraps
9/5/05	2 Bottletraps & Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	2 fish
10/5/05	3 Bottletraps & Torchlight	21.10	7.2	10.1	None	None
6/6/05	Torchlight	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	None	None
7/5/05	Torchlight	Not recorded	8.7	Not recorded	None	None

CONCLUSIONS

No great crested newts were observed during the torchlight surveys of the streams and ditches in the site at Exeter Intermodal Freight Terminal.

The peak number of palmate newts caught using bottle traps during the suite of four surveys was 2, whilst the peak number of smooth/palmate newts was 1. These newts were found in the ditch that runs from the east of the former landfill site to the south of the former landfill. Following guidance in the Froglife's document '*Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*', this indicates that a 'low' population of palmate newts may be present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that any smooth or palmate newts found during the course of scrub clearance or construction works are carefully moved and placed within vegetation, to provide cover, close to an undisturbed water body.

BW → AB



Miss Alison Bennett
Wardell Armstrong
22 Windsor Place
Cardiff
CF10 3BY

English Nature
Northminster House Peterborough PE1 1UA
Tel +44(0)1733 455000 Fax +44(0)1733 568834
Email enquiries@english-nature.org.uk
www.english-nature.org.uk

RECEIVED
06 APR 2005

I have read and understood the conditions of this licence.

Signature of licence holder:

Alison Bennett

Date licence signed:

11 - 04 - 2005

Licence number: 20050835
Supersedes licence number: 20031467

WILDLIFE & COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 (amended by the Environmental Protection Act 1990) & THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS, &C.) REGULATIONS 1994.

This licence is granted under the following legislation - Section 16 (3) (a) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (amended by the Environment Protection Act 1990 and under Regulation 44 (2) (a) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. English Nature hereby authorises Alison Bennett hereinafter referred to as "the licensee", and the following accredited agent(s), to carry out the activities detailed on the attached annex:

None

This Licence is valid from 04 April 2005 to 04 April 2006 inclusive, and is granted under the following conditions:

- [1] While engaged in work permitted by this licence the licensee shall carry a copy of the licence and produce it to any police officer or any English Nature officer on demand.
- [2] No work shall be carried out under this licence except by the licensee.
- [5] No work shall be carried out under this licence on a National Nature Reserve except with the prior written permission of English Nature's appropriate local team.
- [8] A report of the work carried out under this licence must be sent to English Nature at the above address within two weeks of the expiry date. To renew your licence from the date it expires a request must be sent to English Nature at least three weeks prior to expiry with a report form completed to that date.
- [10] This licence is granted subject to compliance with the conditions specified. Anything done otherwise than in accordance with the terms of this licence may constitute an offence. Before exercising this licence the licensee should sign and date it in the space provided.
- [11] This licence may be modified or revoked at any time by English Nature.
- [19] The licensee shall abide by the trapping notes in Great crested newt mitigation guidelines available on English Nature's website at www.english-nature.org.uk or from the Enquiry Service tel.(01733) 455100.
- [22] Any wild animal taken under this licence shall be liberated at the site of capture immediately after examination.

Notes:

- [202] Nothing in this licence confers any right of entry onto land or property.
- [217] All equipment used for the purposes of this licence shall be so constructed and maintained as to avoid cruelty and distress to the species named on this licence.

Date: 04 April 2005

Signed:

Wardell Armstrong
FOR AND ON BEHALF OF ENGLISH NATURE