

APPENDIX 2

MAMMAL INFORMATION

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**Protected Species Survey
Corrimony Wind Farm Site**

For

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18 June – 15 July 2007

Between 18 June & 15 July 2007 I carried out surveys for protected species along the route for the access track for the proposed Windfarm west of Corrimony, Glenurquhart.

Survey Information

The access track, the banks of any watercourses and the main site area was walked as per scope and checked for signs of protected species:

- Otter signs include holts (dens), couches (resting places), resting ledges, footprints (tracks), paths/trails and spraints (droppings). Current usage of any holts found were assessed and classed as either low, medium, or high
- Badger signs include setts, fresh excavations, dung pits (latrines), paths/trails, footprints (tracks), hairs, bedding material, foraging/feeding signs (snuffle holes) and scratch marks. All usage (apart from setts) will be indicated as either low, medium or high.

Badger setts are categorised into four types, depending on their use. In order of use and importance, they are: main sett, annex sett, subsidiary sett and outlier sett. Each entrance hole will be classified as either: active (obviously in regular use), partially-active (showing signs of seasonal or occasional use), or inactive (not used for some time). An indication will also be given as to whether they are in current use or not

- Red squirrel signs include dreys in the trees and feeding signs on the floor
- Pine marten signs include droppings and suitable den sites (in or under trees, rock crevices, old dreys or nests)
- Wildcat signs include droppings, suitable den sites (hollow trees, rocky crevices), scratch marks and prey remains
- Water vole signs include droppings, burrows and feeding signs
- Bats: All trees 'at risk' along the access route were visually inspected from the ground and carefully checked for suitable bat roosting and hibernation sites. Suitable sites would be holes, cracks, splits and cavities, under loose bark and in ivy growth round the trunk. They should be dry and provide a stable temperature for roosting bats and may occur in trees containing dead sections, or where branches have split or fallen away and may also occur in dead standing trunks: especially ones containing old woodpecker holes. The use of a high powered torch and binoculars was used to aid viewing and assessment where necessary. If no direct evidence of bats and their roosts were found, the trees were either classed as:
 - i. Unsuitable for bats – likely to have no bats or their roosts, or
 - ii. Suitable for bats – a **possibility** of having bats and their roosts: the chance rated as low, medium, or high

Any signs found were recorded on GPS.

Findings

See Excel file attached

Conclusions & Impact Assessment

Otter

Otter does not appear to be present within the survey area. There were no sprainting sites under the two road bridges: at the reserve entrance and W of the 'Ford' (NH356266) – this sign is over 90% reliable for indicating the presence of otter on a river. Their absence may be mainly due to poor feeding within the river.

Badger

Badger is present in the lower (NE) section of the survey area. However, since their setts are at least approx. 80m from the access track they should not be significantly disturbed by the new traffic.

Red squirrel

The fresh growth of grass and bracken may have hidden some of the scattered feeding signs, but the sighting of dreys was not affected. Although red squirrel is present in small numbers in some of the NE woodland, no dreys were found and so they will not be affected by the works.

Pine marten

Pine marten is present within the survey area, although no suitable trees or nests were seen for their dens. Some rock cavities were found on the higher ground, but there was no evidence of pine marten use. The works should not affect them.

Wildcat

There were no signs and is unlikely to be present – they prefer habitat with some woodland and a rabbit population for prey.

Water vole

Water vole is present in the upper reaches of several burns within the survey area, in typical habitat. The lower reaches of the burns/rivers are not suitable for them for several reasons i.e. flow too fast and regular spate conditions, lack of suitable feeding and rocky banks unsuitable for burrows.

The line of the proposed new track runs between two burns where water vole is present and, if this line is adhered to, should not affect them or their habitat. However, drainage and surface run-off would need to be carefully considered.

Bats

Bats are present, especially in the lower survey area. I presume that none of the trees identified in the findings as 'suitable' for bats will be felled, as further investigation and a licence from the Scottish Executive would be required before any such felling could take place. In order to reduce noise and light disturbance during sensitive times for any bats in these trees, I would recommend making some restrictions when working within 25m of them i.e. no bright lights, heavy machinery or loud noise during the period 1hr before sunset to ½hr after sunrise.

The lack of any sign of bats in the plantation to the W & NW could be because there is more suitable feeding and shelter nearer the river to the W. Also, the NE wind during the survey could have kept bats away from the eastern edge, although I did carry out part of the survey in the firebreaks where it was more sheltered.

Note: the second oak tree on the right before the first access gate into the reserve boundary looks suitable for bats, but I presume this will not be touched.

Recommendations

It is proposed that the access road route may go diagonally across a field after the avenue of trees. This would take it across a marshy area and then up a steep section, which may prove to be too steep. An alternative would be to take the existing track over the burn and then, after a sycamore tree on the left, branching off to the right with a new track to 'cut the sharp corner' and so avoid the several trees identified as 'potentially suitable for bats' (see tree plan attached).

Notes

1. The plantation to the W & NW was not fully searched due to dense plantings of young Scots pine and larch. However, a few of the firebreaks were walked, but the trees were found to be not suitable for roosting or hibernating bats or for pine marten dens. And the plantation in the N (NH347257) has been clear-felled and the trees left in situ.
2. Parts of the River Enrick S of the 'Waterfalls' (NH357263) and N & S of Corrimony Falls flow through steep-sided gorges which were impossible to search. However, if any otter resting ledges were present in here they would be completely out of sight and screened from noise from the works and traffic.

Enc.

		Protected Mammal Species Survey, Corrimony Windfarm Site. Steve Austin June/July 2007		
		18/19 June 2007 - sunny intervals, variable cloud, 14°C, calm to W breeze Dates: 15 July 2007 - sunny intervals, variable cloud, 16°C, W breeze to NE wind - cloud increasing to some drizzle at 22.30 (sunset 22.05)		
Ref.	Sign	Grid Ref.	Description	Pic. ref.
	Otter			
	none			
	Badger			
1	Sett, Outlier	NH37406 29673	2 holes in banking in pinewood, above path. Partially-active	c9
2	Sett, Outlier	NH37354 29550	1 hole under roots of fallen pine tree, by path. Partially-active	c6
3	Trail	NH37477 29817	under fence, from field to river bank, & foraging signs. Low	x
4	Sett, Annex	NH37127 29563	1 hole on slope by field. Active	c7
5	Latrine & foraging	NH37134 29559	adjacent to annex sett above. High	x
6	Sett, Main	NH37177 29563	6 holes under scattered trees on slope. 3 active, 3 partially-active	c8
7	Foraging	NH37215 29435	in pinewood. Medium	x
	Red Squirrel			
8	Feeding	NH37365 29542	several larch cones on floor of pinewood	x
9	Feeding	NH37432 29708	several split hazelnuts (longways) on and around stump in pinewood	x
	Pine Marten			
10	Dropping	NH37465 29542	on path in pinewood	x
11	Dropping	NH36853 29043	on deer path in edge of pinewood	x

	Wildcat			
	none			
	Water Vole			
12	Burrow	NH34912 24217	2 holes (with enlarged entrances) in peat bank by pool, + latrine with fresh droppings in RH bank 8m downstream, with runs under bank	c12 & c13
13	Latrine	NH34912 24214	in pathway in RH bank, behind heather - with fresh droppings	c14
14	Burrow	NH35342 25312	3 holes in peat by burn, with signs of digging out - both banks (no sign of current use)	c15 & c16
15	Burrow	NH35236 25186	6 holes, with latrine to left with recent droppings. Also grazed area and run to burn on opposite bank. And several more burrows 3m downstream and more 7m upstream	c17 & c18
16	Burrow	NH35189 25153	several in banks of very small burn	c19
17	Burrow	NH25300 24977	6 holes with runs and latrine with recent droppings	c20
18	Burrow	NH35011 24260	2 holes in RH bank of burn	x
19	Burrow	NH34277 24423	several holes in bank of pre-burn bog (appear disused)	c21
	Bats	(no GPS under avenue trees)		
	Suitable tree - medium	Tree avenue	Douglas fir - large hole @10m, also dead sections, loose bark & woodpecker holes (10th tree after gate on LH side of avenue going in, including 'stump' @ no.8)	c10
	Suitable tree - medium	Tree avenue	Wellingtonia - large wound @12m with cavity under calloused area (11th tree after gate on LH side of avenue going in, including 'stump' @ no.8)	c11
	Suitable tree - medium	Track to L after avenue	Dead birch - with hole & cavity @3m (see plan)	c2
	Suitable tree - medium	Track to L after avenue	Silver birch - split branch leading to cavity (see plan)	c1
	Suitable tree - low	Track to L after avenue	Large oak - much deadwood with some splits & loose bark (see plan)	c3
	Suitable tree - medium	Track to L after avenue	Very large Norway spruce - too large to check visually - possible roost opportunities in dense branch network (see plan)	c4 & c5
	Suitable tree - low	Track to L after avenue	Tall oak - some splits, deadwood & loose bark (see plan)	c4 & c5

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28 April – 14 May 2008

Between 28 April & 14 May 2008 I carried out surveys for protected species along the route for the access track for the proposed Windfarm west of Corrimony, Glenurquhart, as per supplied map.

Legislation

Otters are legally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & etc) Regulations 1994. As such it would be an offence to disturb, damage, destroy or obstruct access to their holts and other resting-places. If an activity is likely to result in disturbance or damage to otters or their holts (especially breeding holts) then a licence will usually be required from the Scottish Executive. And wildcats and pine marten are similarly protected.

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any part of a badger sett, or to disturb a badger whilst it is occupying a sett. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 also made it an offence for a person to knowingly cause or permit anyone to interfere with a badger sett. Licences can be issued by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) for certain activities that would otherwise be prohibited. Generally, a licence will be required for all rock blasting and pile driving within 100m of a sett, or for any other work within 30m of a sett. Licences are not normally issued during the breeding season: December to June inclusive.

Red squirrels are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Wild Mammals (protection) Act. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act it is an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place or structure used by a red squirrel for shelter and protection or to disturb a red squirrel while it is occupying a structure used for shelter or protection. Red squirrels are also identified as a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Furthermore, you may be aware that under Section 20 of NPPG14 (Natural Heritage) planning authorities should take particular care to avoid harm to protected species (such as red squirrel) and that their presence is a material consideration in the assessment of development proposals.

Water voles are legally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), in respect of Section 9(4) only and also the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. As such it would be an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles use for shelter or protection, or to disturb them while they are using such a place. If an activity is likely to result in disturbance or damage to water voles or their places of shelter, then a licence will usually be required from the Scottish Executive.

All bats and their roosts are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & etc) Regulations 1994. As such it would be an offence to recklessly or intentionally obstruct access to a bat roost or to recklessly or intentionally disturb or harm any bat or roost. This does not mean that nothing may be done to a bat roost, but the law requires that a licence be obtained where works that will affect bats or their shelter/ breeding places (whether or not they are present) is proposed. In this case the licensing authority is the Scottish Executive.

Some Relevant Otter Facts

- Mainly solitary, with territory 15-20km for female & up to 35km for male
- Can breed and give birth at any time of year and cubs remain with mother for 10-12 months
- Otters do require resting and breeding sites and individuals are flexible and utilise a large number of alternative sites within their range. Female has up to 22 (male 35) holts & resting places in territory
- They eat up to one third of body weight per day with hunting trips 3-10km per night
- Fish dominates otter diet, although otters will feed on a variety of other taxa including amphibians, crustacea, birds, mammals and insects. A wide array of fish species is eaten and species composition of otter diet largely reflects fish species abundance. Adequate food supply is a primary requirement for otter conservation and there is good evidence that food availability can limit otter density
- Lifespan is 3-4yrs – main causes of death include food shortage, road traffic, drowning in creels/nets and disease.

Some Relevant Bat Facts

- Roost preferences depend on the bat species, the time of year and the breeding status of the bat
- Breeding females prefer warmer roosts during spring and summer when they roost communally to rear their young (May – August). Buildings are the most favoured sites
- Male bats and non-breeding females prefer cooler conditions throughout the year; often in trees
- Pipistrelle bats prefer to roost in confined spaces, especially between slates and sarking or roof felt, under ridge tiles, or behind soffit, barge or eaves boarding, or small crevices in trees
- Pipistrelles, our smallest and commonest bat, can access gaps as small as 8mm.
- Brown long-eared (BLE) bats prefer buildings with large, open roof spaces, but will also roost in tree holes, bat boxes and in crevices in ridge tiles
- Bats also roost in other structures such as sheds, barns, walls, tree holes, bridges, bat boxes and underground sites, such as caves and mines
- Through December – mid February bats hibernate individually or in small groups: generally underground, but also in trees and buildings. Few pipistrelles are found in winter, but most winter records are of isolated individuals or small groups in crevices in buildings, trees, stone walls, bridges, barns and bat boxes

Some Relevant Pine Marten Facts

- Home range: 3-80km², population density: 1 per 82ha (mature plantation) to 1 per 10km² (young plantation), 0.3-28km travelled per hunting trip (non residents can travel over 30km per night, leaves droppings every 100-200m on forest paths)

etc.

Survey Information

Bats

All trees along the minor road (and track) from the White Bridge to the first gate into the site were searched for trees that could be affected by the proposed wide/tall loads and any such trees ('at risk') assessed for bat potential (i.e. trees with branches over road at <5.5m or giving a clearance of <4.5m wide at a height of 3m). The trees were visually inspected from the ground and carefully checked for suitable bat roosting and hibernation sites. Suitable sites would be holes, cracks, splits and cavities, under loose bark and in ivy growth round the trunk. Some holes and splits, however, can be mainly superficial and not deep enough, or can be too open (and so let in the weather) and are therefore unsuitable for bats. Suitable sites should be dry and provide a stable temperature for roosting bats and may occur in trees containing dead sections, or where branches have split or fallen away and may also occur in dead standing trunks: especially ones containing old woodpecker holes.

The use of a high powered torch and binoculars was required to aid viewing and assessment. If no direct evidence of bats and their roosts were found, the trees were either classed as:

- i. Unsuitable for bats – likely to have no bats or their roosts, or
- ii. Suitable for bats – a **possibility** of having bats and their roosts: the chance rated as low, medium, or high.

Only trees classed as 'at risk' and 'suitable for bats' were listed in the findings table, attached.

Otter

The banks of the watercourses as marked on the supplied map were searched and checked for signs of otter including, where appropriate, 50m either side of the watercourse. Water conditions were low.

A torch was used for visually inspecting under banks, rock cavities and any holes. Otter signs were recorded and described with locations identified using GPS and photographs were taken of any resting places found. Where otter paths were found, they were followed until they rejoined the watercourse or until their destination was identified (in case they led to a holt or other resting place).

Otter signs include holts (dens), other resting places (couches or lie-ups), footprints (tracks), paths/trails and spraints (droppings). Current usage of any holts and other resting places found were assessed and classed as either low, medium, or high. To indicate their age, any spraints found were classed as either old, recent or fresh (spraints last about 8 weeks before they disintegrate).

- **Holts** are characterised by a tunnel system showing clear signs of use by otters. Otter use may be shown by presence of spraints, wear at tunnel entrance, prints or a distinctive smell of otter
- **Couches** are above ground resting sites characterised by a bedding of flattened vegetation
- **Lie-ups** are above ground resting sites that lack bedding, but show clear signs of use including spraints, rubbed or smoothed ground and/or prints. Such sites include ledges under river banks and under exposed tree roots.

Badger

Badger signs include setts, fresh excavations, dung pits (latrines), paths/trails, footprints (tracks), hairs, bedding material, snuffle (feeding) holes and scratch marks. Any setts will be classed as either main, annex, subsidiary, or outlying and the activity of the setts described as active, partially active, or inactive.

Red Squirrel

Red squirrel signs include dreys in the trees, and feeding signs on the floor.

Pine marten

Pine marten signs include droppings and suitable den sites (in or under trees, and in rock crevices, old dreys or nests).

Wildcat

Wildcat signs include droppings, suitable den sites (hollow trees and rocky crevices), scratch marks and prey remains.

Water vole

Water vole signs include droppings, burrows and feeding signs.

Any signs found were recorded on GPS.

Findings & Discussion

(See Excel file table attached)

Otter

Numerous sprainting sites, lie-ups and two holts were found on the R Enrick and two sprainting sites on the Abhainn na RD. None of the spraints found were classed as fresh. No breeding sites (natal dens) were found or suspected. Data on otter breeding site requirements is sparse and sometimes ambiguous or contradictory. Most suggest that suitable breeding sites should be free from significant disturbance, at low risk of flooding, adjacent to a good supply of food and contain suitable natal dens and play areas for cubs. The restricted food supply and lack of suitable nursery areas in the River (too fast in the upper reaches and not free of disturbance from traffic in the lower reaches) suggests that the survey area is unsuitable for breeding holts.

Re repeat otter surveys in S section of river: the low water conditions allowed access into the gorges that were previously inaccessible (in survey 2007).

Water Vole

Re ref. 25: once presence had been confirmed the drain was not searched much more as the banks were soft and the ground boggy in places and I didn't want to crush dens or burrows.

Limitations of Survey

Walkover surveys using visual searches for signs of otters are a valuable means of confirming the use of an area by otters and are recognised as the standard method for survey. Nevertheless, these searches are subject to limitations:

- A lack of otter **spraints** (or other signs) does not necessarily indicate that otters do not use a particular site. Sprainting performs a social function as a scent mark and sprainting activity is affected by behavioural variables. Further, high water and heavy rain can wash away spraints. Spraint abundance and density is therefore not directly correlated with otter activity
- **Resting sites** used by otters can be recognised by a variety of features,

including location, size and the presence of other signs such as spraints or prints. Individual otters use a large number of resting sites, located throughout their home range. Sites vary in their level of use and in their structure. Structurally they may range from sites on open ground with minimal bedding, to long-established tunnel systems with chambers, bedding material and a supply of fresh water. Many of the sites used by otters for resting cannot be identified without radio tracking and, even then, some sites may be impossible to find.

- Few otter **breeding sites** have been described and published descriptions of the signs around breeding sites are variable and contradictory. The most robust data are probably those from radio-tracking studies. These suggest that otters are secretive around natal dens and that spraints and other signs are not likely to be present. It must be concluded that breeding sites cannot always reliably be located or identified during short, visual surveys.

Conclusions & Discussion

Otter

Otter visits the survey area, which will be part of a larger territory downstream, but may be transient here.

Re refs. 1 & 2: these sites are only 4-5m from the track and **may require a Licence** for European Protected Species, although the position should be checked with SNH i.e. if there are no fresh spraints then it suggests the visits by otter are occasional and therefore any disturbance minimal. Also, any otter present will probably be used to a moderate amount of farm traffic (tractors etc. always up and down the road). Further, the ash tree with the holt underneath needs a large limb to be removed that is overhanging the road at 5m and this in itself **may require a Licence** before this work can be done – check.

Re ref. 14: this is directly below where the track goes closest to the river, but the gorge banks are very high here. Non-breeding holts and other resting places are protected from disturbance from general machinery noise usually by a 30m exclusion zone, so any works will probably be further away than this (in any case, I think the new track route branches away from the existing track before (N of) the ref. 14 area).

The constraints of visual surveys for signs are considered, together with the type of watercourses present and site topography. I conclude that breeding sites are unlikely to be present within the survey area.

Badger

Badger is still present in the lower (NE) section of the survey area and their main and annex setts found last year were still active. Several new latrines were found in the woodland of this years extended survey area, but no new setts. Therefore they will not be affected by the works.

Red squirrel

Several small numbers of feeding signs were found in the N section, including the small plantation to the N of the first access gate into the site, but no dreys were found and so they will not be affected by the works.

Pine marten

Pine marten ranges through the survey area. No suitable trees, rock cavities or nests were seen for their dens. They will not be affected by the works.

Wildcat

There were no signs and is unlikely to be present – they prefer habitat with some

woodland and a larger rabbit population for prey. They will not be affected by the works.

Water vole

Water vole signs were found along the burn running into the S end of Loch Comhnard (refs. 25 & 26) and in the lower section of the burn where they were found last year (refs. 27 & 28). During track upgrading/construction, drainage and surface run-off would need to be carefully considered to avoid affecting their habitat, especially for refs. 25 & 26.

Bats

It is my opinion that it will not be necessary to fell any of the trees along the survey route. However, numerous trees will need to have some of their branches lopped to accommodate the high/wide loads – mostly small branches, but also some larger ones and significant limbs. Seven of these trees have been classed as 'suitable for bats' (see table). If the mitigation advice given in the table is followed then bats or their roosts will not be disturbed.

All other trees (classed as 'unsuitable for bats') can have their branches lopped as required.

Recommendations

Notes

1. It was noted that damage was being done to water vole habitat from trampling by cattle in several places in the survey area. Once landowners know about the presence of water voles, the law is unclear as to whether it could be seen as 'reckless' to continue to allow cattle into vulnerable water vole habitat. It may be wise to check with SNH; but in any case, it would be good conservation practice to fence cattle out of any such habitat.
2. The only part of the S River Enrick that was impossible to search this time was approx. the last 50m or so (heading upstream) at around NH2575.2584 due to vertical cliff sides and deeper pools.
3. Several fox droppings were seen on the main track around NH356 260.
4. A greylag goose nest with 3 eggs was found at NH35968 26506.
5. A tawny owl flew out of a tree stump around NH3699 2885 – suspect nest.
6. Re sighting of a small mammal in grass at around NH : the vegetation surveyor may well have seen a water vole here, but I didn't find any signs of them (I did notice numerous field vole burrows and tunnels though).

Enc.

Findings						Protected Mammal Species Survey, Corrimony Windfarm Site.		Steve Austin April /May 2008	
Dates & weather: 28/04/08 - light drizzle, calm, & 9°C. 06 & 07/05/08 - mostly sunny, dry, SW breeze & 6-24°C.									
Ref.	Sign	Date	Grid Ref. (NH)	Description	Pic. ref.				
	Otter			(all River Enrick unless stated otherwise)					
1	Resting place - lie-ups & holt	28/04/08	37676 30190	lie-up with 3 oily spraints (recent) on stones under roots of lge ash, R bank of river +1 spraint on roots +(on up-stream side of roots) 2 spraints (recent) in front of 2nd lie-up leading to holt (long tunnel under tree roots into bank). Medium	Co3				
2	Resting place - lie-up	"	37676 30179	lie-up with 2 spraints (recent) on stones under roots of small ash overhanging R bank of river in front of large ash. Low	Co4				
3	Sprainting site	"	37599 30084	4 spraints (old/recent) on stones under bridge, R bank					
4	Sprainting site	"	37601 30114	2 spraints (recent) on stone under ash by river, L bank, where tributary enters river					
5	Resting place - lie-up	06/05/08	37616 30143	under ash tree roots (leaning across river, LB) & 6 spraints (old-recent) on stones inside. Medium	Co5				
6	Sprainting site	"	37591 29882	1 spraint (old) on rock in burn, LB, under hazel					
7	Resting place - lie-up	"	37565 29870	under roots of large ash, LB, with 2 spraints (old-recent) on stones inside. Low	Co6				
8	Resting place - lie-up	"	37484 29785	on rock ledge under rocks, LB, & 5 spraints (recent) inside. Medium	Co7				
9	Resting place - lie-up	"	37444 29670	on rock ledge under rocks, LB, & 5 spraints (4old, 1recent) inside. Low	Co8				
10	Resting place - lie-up	"	37453 29618	on rock ledge under rocks, LB, & 5 spraints (3old, 2recent) inside. Medium. And feint trail up bank from river	Co9				
11	Resting place - lie-up	"	35718 26340	on rock ledge below rock, LB, by falls with 3 spraints (2old, 1recent) & lie-up in cavity at rear. Medium	Co10				
12	Sprainting site	"	35713 26303	3 spraints (old) on ledge, side of waterfall, LB,					
13	Sprainting site	07/05/08	35147 26172	2 spraints (old) on large boulder in centre of Abhainn na RD					
14	Resting place - holt & lie-up	"	35677 25440	lie-up in small cave in LB +3 spraints (old) on stone outside & 4 spraints on stone inside (old-recent) - leading to holt to L in rockfal cavities. Also, with trail to back entrance round corner(u/s) & spraint (old) under rock 4m u/s. Medium	Co14 & 15				
15	Sprainting site	"	35655 25285	2 spraints on grass under rock bank, LB, on bend					
16	Sprainting site	"	35596 26558	2 spraints (old) on rock of old foot bridge support, LB of Abhainn na RD, + 4 traces of spraints on rock on LB 5m u/s					
17	Sprainting site	"	35344 26329	2 spraints (old) on rock by RB of Abhainn na RD					

	Badger				
18	Latrine	28/04/08	37599 30099	3 latrines (recent & fresh) on bank by main bridge over river, L bank	
19	Latrine	06/05/08	37243 29205	2 latrines & snuffle holes by track in pinewood, E side & near fallen tree	
20	Latrine	"	37252 29231	1 latrine & snuffle holes by track in pinewood, E side	
	Red Squirrel				
21	Feeding	28/04/08	37574 30165	feeding signs on large pine cones in small fenced pine plantation (recent)	
22	Feeding	06/05/08	37511 29753	small no. of feeding signs on large pine cones, top of slope (old)	
23	Feeding	"	37017 29178	a few feeding signs on Scots pine cones in plantation, W of track (recent)	
	Pine Marten				
24	Dropping	"	27532 29767	2 droppings (old) under large beech by fence, top of bank slope	
	Wildcat				
	None				
	Water Vole				
25	Burrow	07/05/08	35694 27009	tunnel in grass coming from small drain, LB, to path in grass. And burrow & latrine in opposite bank. Also several tunnels & burrows 5-20m downstream	Co11 & 12
26	Feeding/ latrine	"	35769 27184	path from drain to grazed area, LB, with many droppings on latrine area	Co13
27	Burrow	"	35522 26299	burrow to tunnels to L & R in RB of drain (some trampling by cattle)	Co16
28	Burrow	"	35566 26355	burrow & tunnels to drain in RB + 2 droppings on stone under bank	Co17

	Bats				
29	Suitable tree	28/04/08	39313 30102	large alder on bend of road (N side) from White Bridge - hollow core + several holes & cavity in dead limb @5m. High. But load should clear it and so not be affected.	Co1
30	Suitable tree	"	39192 30114	large sycamore by small bridge (N side of road) - small cavity at 6m. Medium. Advice: okay to lop small branches overhanging road	Co2
31	Suitable tree	"	37543 30098	large beech by 1st gate to site, S side of track - some dead sections with holes, but open to weather. Low. Advice: okay to lop small branches overhanging road	
32	Suitable tree	"	37545 30100	oak, 2nd tree E of above gate, N side of track - 2 dead limbs with minor holes & cracks. Medium. Advice: okay to trim minor hanging dead bits only, but leave the main dead and hanging branches in place . Would need dawn survey before any other work	
33	Suitable tree	14/05/08	39071 30202	large sycamore (S side of road) with large scar & dead section @3m with hole & cracks (no bats in hole). Low. But load should clear it and so not be affected.	
34	Suitable tree	"	38914 30262	large oak (S side of road) with broken branch @6m with splits. Medium. Advice: okay to trim the thin branches but leave the broken section in place . Would need dawn survey before any other work	
35	Suitable tree	"	38794 30269	large oak (N side of road) with split branch over road @6.5m. High. Advice: okay to cut lower branch, minor hanging bits and the end of the split branch, but leave the split section in place . Would need dawn survey otherwise	

**Protected Species Survey
Corrimony Wind Farm Cable Route**

For

Andrew Upton
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Heddle
Finstown
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KW17 2JS

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31October 2008

On 31 October 2008 I carried out a survey for protected species along the proposed route for the cable – from the proposed Corrimony wind farm site down to the minor road at Fasnakyle – as per supplied map. I was assisted by Christine Matheson, of Abriachan.

Legislation

Otters are legally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & etc) Regulations 1994. As such it would be an offence to disturb, damage, destroy or obstruct access to their holts and other resting-places. If an activity is likely to result in disturbance or damage to otters or their holts (especially breeding holts) then a licence will usually be required from the Scottish Executive. And wildcats and pine marten are similarly protected.

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any part of a badger sett, or to disturb a badger whilst it is occupying a sett. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 also made it an offence for a person to knowingly cause or permit anyone to interfere with a badger sett. Licences can be issued by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) for certain activities that would otherwise be prohibited. Generally, a licence will be required for all rock blasting and pile driving within 100m of a sett, or for any other work within 30m of a sett. Licences are not normally issued during the breeding season: December to June inclusive.

Red squirrels are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Wild Mammals (protection) Act. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act it is an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place or structure used by a red squirrel for shelter and protection or to disturb a red squirrel while it is occupying a structure used for shelter or protection. Red squirrels are also identified as a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Furthermore, you may be aware that under Section 20 of NPPG14 (Natural Heritage) planning authorities should take particular care to avoid harm to protected species (such as red squirrel) and that their presence is a material consideration in the assessment of development proposals.

Water voles are legally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), in respect of Section 9(4) only and also the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. As such it would be an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles use for shelter or protection, or to disturb them while they are using such a place. If an activity is likely to result in disturbance or damage to water voles or their places of shelter, then a licence will usually be required from the Scottish Executive.

All bats and their roosts are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & etc) Regulations 1994. As such it would be an offence to recklessly or intentionally obstruct access to a bat roost or to recklessly or intentionally disturb or harm any bat or roost. This does not mean that nothing may be done to a bat roost, but the law requires that a licence be obtained where works that will affect bats or their shelter/ breeding places (whether or not they are present) is proposed. In this case the licensing authority is the Scottish Executive.

Some Relevant Otter Facts

- Mainly solitary, with territory 15-20km for female & up to 35km for male

- Can breed and give birth at any time of year and cubs remain with mother for 10-12 months
- Otters do require resting and breeding sites and individuals are flexible and utilise a large number of alternative sites within their range. Female has up to 22 (male 35) holts & resting places in territory
- They eat up to one third of body weight per day with hunting trips 3-10km per night
- Fish dominates otter diet, although otters will feed on a variety of other taxa including amphibians, crustacea, birds, mammals and insects. A wide array of fish species is eaten and species composition of otter diet largely reflects fish species abundance. Adequate food supply is a primary requirement for otter conservation and there is good evidence that food availability can limit otter density
- Lifespan is 3-4yrs – main causes of death include food shortage, road traffic, drowning in creels/nets and disease.

Some Relevant Pine Marten Facts

- Home range: 3-80km², population density: 1 per 82ha (mature plantation) to 1 per 10km² (young plantation), 0.3-28km travelled per hunting trip (non residents can travel over 30km per night, leaves droppings every 100-200m on forest paths etc.

Survey Information

Generally, the proposed cable route was walked and the area 200-250m or so either side was searched for signs of protected species. For otter, this distance was increased to 300m or so out to or along 'significant' watercourses. These distances allow for 50m or so of variation in the final route from the one proposed. More specifically:

Otter

The banks of the 'significant' watercourses were searched and checked for signs of otter including, where appropriate, 50m either side of the watercourse. A torch was used for visually inspecting under banks, rock cavities and any holes. Otter signs were recorded and described with locations identified using GPS and photographs were taken of any resting places found. Where otter paths were found, they were followed until they rejoined the watercourse or until their destination was identified (in case they led to a holt or other resting place).

Otter signs include holts (dens), other resting places (couches or lie-ups), footprints (tracks), paths/trails and spraints (droppings). Current usage of any holts and other resting places found were assessed and classed as either low, medium, or high. To indicate their age, any spraints found were classed as either old, recent or fresh (spraints last about 8 weeks before they disintegrate).

- **Holts** are characterised by a tunnel system showing clear signs of use by otters. Otter use may be shown by presence of spraints, wear at tunnel entrance, prints or a distinctive smell of otter
- **Couches** are above ground resting sites characterised by a bedding of flattened vegetation. They can be found under banks or under and amongst rocks

- **Lie-ups** are above ground resting sites that lack bedding, but show clear signs of use including spraints, rubbed or smoothed ground and/or prints. Such sites include ledges under river banks and under exposed tree roots.

Bats

All trees along or near to the proposed route that could be affected by the proposed works (trees considered to be 'at risk') were assessed for bat potential. The trees were visually inspected from the ground and carefully checked for suitable bat roosting and hibernation sites. Suitable sites would be holes, cracks, splits and cavities, under loose bark and in ivy growth round the trunk. Some holes and splits, however, can be mainly superficial and not deep enough, or can be too open (and so let in the weather) and are therefore unsuitable for bats. Suitable sites should be dry and provide a stable temperature for roosting bats and may occur in trees containing dead sections, or where branches have split or fallen away and may also occur in dead standing trunks: especially ones containing old woodpecker holes.

The use of a high powered torch and binoculars was required to aid viewing and assessment. If no direct evidence of bats and their roosts were found, the trees were either classed as:

- i. Unsuitable for bats – likely to have no bats or their roosts, or
- ii. Suitable for bats – a **possibility** of having bats and their roosts: the chance rated as low, medium, or high.

Badger

The survey area was searched for signs of badger including setts, fresh excavations, dung pits (latrines), paths/trails, footprints (tracks), hairs, bedding material, snuffle (feeding) holes and scratch marks. Any setts will be classed as either main, annex, subsidiary, or outlying and the activity of the setts described as active, partially active, or inactive.

Red Squirrel

The survey area was searched for signs of red squirrel including dreys in the trees, and feeding signs on the floor.

Pine marten

The survey area was searched for signs of pine marten including droppings and suitable den sites (in or under trees, and in rock crevices, old dreys or nests).

Wildcat

The survey area was searched for signs of wildcat including droppings, suitable den sites (hollow trees and rocky crevices), scratch marks and prey remains.

Water vole

The watercourses within the survey area were searched for signs of water voles including droppings, burrows and feeding signs.

Any signs found were recorded on GPS.

The weather during the survey was sunny with a light NW wind & 6°C. There was a thin, patchy covering of snow above 325m.

Findings & Discussion

Otter

1. NH34491 26482: a spraint (fresh) on moss under the S bank of the unnamed loch in Druim na h-Aibhne and close to an open tunnel under the overhanging bank with worn otter path going through (possible occasional lie-up)

2. NH32689 26895: although there was no access to the boathouse on Loch nam Freumb, when looking into it from the water-side and from underneath at the back, it appeared there were several spraints (old-recent) on the wooden walkway and a couple (old) on the stones inside.
3. No breeding sites (natal dens) were found or suspected. Data on otter breeding site requirements is sparse and sometimes ambiguous or contradictory. Most suggest that suitable breeding sites should be free from significant disturbance, at low risk of flooding, adjacent to a good supply of food and contain suitable natal dens and play areas for cubs. The restricted food supply in the watercourses suggests that the survey area is unsuitable for breeding holts.

Bats

All the trees considered for bats within the survey area lacked any of the features that would be suitable for bat roosts and so were classed as *unsuitable* for bats. No direct evidence of bats or their roosts were found.

Other species

No signs of any of the other protected species were found within the survey area.

Water conditions were just above average after recent rains.

Limitations of Survey

Walkover surveys using visual searches for signs of otters are a valuable means of confirming the use of an area by otters and are recognised as the standard method for survey. Nevertheless, these searches are subject to limitations:

- A lack of otter **spraints** (or other signs) does not necessarily indicate that otters do not use a particular site. Sprainting performs a social function as a scent mark and sprainting activity is affected by behavioural variables. Further, high water and heavy rain can wash away spraints. Spraint abundance and density is therefore not directly correlated with otter activity
- **Resting sites** used by otters can be recognised by a variety of features, including location, size and the presence of other signs such as spraints or prints. Individual otters use a large number of resting sites, located throughout their home range. Sites vary in their level of use and in their structure. Structurally they may range from sites on open ground with minimal bedding, to long-established tunnel systems with chambers, bedding material and a supply of fresh water. Many of the sites used by otters for resting cannot be identified without radio tracking and, even then, some sites may be impossible to find.
- Few otter **breeding sites** have been described and published descriptions of the signs around breeding sites are variable and contradictory. The most robust data are probably those from radio-tracking studies. These suggest that otters are secretive around natal dens and that spraints and other signs are not likely to be present. It must be concluded that breeding sites cannot always reliably be located or identified during short, visual surveys.

Conclusions & Discussion

Otter

Otter visits the survey area and this will be part of a larger territory (or several territories) in all directions. I would expect visits to the sites where the spraints were found to be

'infrequent'. The banks around the lochs were suitable in places for holts, although none were found or suspected.

The constraints of visual surveys for signs are considered, together with the type of watercourses present and site topography. It is my opinion that breeding sites are unlikely to be present within the survey area.

It is my opinion that the proposed works will not significantly disturb otters.

Other species

Within the survey area, the small amount of mainly birch woodland near Fasnakyle could have been suitable for badger, but no signs were found. The larch plantation to the NE of the birch woodland could have been suitable for red squirrel, but no signs were found. On the moorland, several rock outcrops were searched for suitable cavities for wildcat, pine marten and bats, but all were small and offered little shelter and, again, no signs were found. The watercourses were largely unsuitable for water voles; being either too small, running too fast, or had a lack of suitable feeding.

It is my opinion that the other protected species will not be significantly disturbed by the proposed works.

Enc.

**Protected Species Survey
Corrimony Wind Farm – Revised Access Route**

For

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21 July 2009

MAMMAL SURVEY – REVISED LOWER ACCESS APPENDIX 2

On 21 July 2009 I carried out a survey for protected species along the revised route for the lower part of the access road to the proposed Corrimony wind farm site.

(Refer to my previous surveys of June/July 2007, April/May 2008 & October 2008 for details of findings for the wind farm site, other access track and supply cable route).

Further, a brief habitat survey was carried out to identify the different habitats within the survey area, and a note of the birds seen or heard during the surveys was also made.

Legislation

Otters are legally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & etc) Regulations 1994. As such it would be an offence to disturb, damage, destroy or obstruct access to their holts and other resting-places. If an activity is likely to result in disturbance or damage to otters or their holts (especially breeding holts) then a licence will usually be required from the Scottish Executive. And wildcats and pine marten are similarly protected.

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any part of a badger sett, or to disturb a badger whilst it is occupying a sett. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 also made it an offence for a person to knowingly cause or permit anyone to interfere with a badger sett. Licences can be issued by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) for certain activities that would otherwise be prohibited. Generally, a licence will be required for all rock blasting and pile driving within 100m of a sett, or for any other work within 30m of a sett. Licences are not normally issued during the breeding season: December to June inclusive.

Red squirrels are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Wild Mammals (protection) Act. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act it is an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place or structure used by a red squirrel for shelter and protection or to disturb a red squirrel while it is occupying a structure used for shelter or protection. Red squirrels are also identified as a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Furthermore, you may be aware that under Section 20 of NPPG14 (Natural Heritage) planning authorities should take particular care to avoid harm to protected species (such as red squirrel) and that their presence is a material consideration in the assessment of development proposals.

Water voles are legally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), in respect of Section 9(4) only and also the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. As such it would be an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles use for shelter or protection, or to disturb them while they are using such a place. If an activity is likely to result in disturbance or damage to water voles or their places of shelter, then a licence will usually be required from the Scottish Executive.

All bats and their roosts are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & etc) Regulations 1994. As such it would be an offence to recklessly or intentionally obstruct access to a bat roost or to recklessly or intentionally disturb or harm any bat or roost. This does not mean that nothing may be done to a bat roost, but the law requires that a licence be obtained where works that will affect bats or their shelter/ breeding places (whether or not they are present) is proposed. In this case the licensing authority is the Scottish Executive.

Some Relevant Otter Facts

- Mainly solitary, with territory 15-20km for female & up to 35km for male
- Can breed and give birth at any time of year and cubs remain with mother for 10-12 months
- Otters do require resting and breeding sites and individuals are flexible and utilise a large number of alternative sites within their range. Female has up to 22 (male 35) holts & resting places in territory
- They eat up to one third of body weight per day with hunting trips 3-10km per night
- Fish dominates otter diet, although otters will feed on a variety of other taxa including amphibians, crustacea, birds, mammals and insects. A wide array of fish species is eaten and species composition of otter diet largely reflects fish species abundance. Adequate food supply is a primary requirement for otter conservation and there is good evidence that food availability can limit otter density
- Lifespan is 3-4yrs – main causes of death include food shortage, road traffic, drowning in creels/nets and disease.

Some Relevant Pine Marten Facts

- Home range: 3-80km², population density: 1 per 82ha (mature plantation) to 1 per 10km² (young plantation), 0.3-28km travelled per hunting trip (non residents can travel over 30km per night, leaves droppings every 100-200m on forest paths etc.
- Breeding period (dependent young in den): April-July.

Survey Information

The proposed new access route runs from the A831 Cannich Road, at approximately NH384315, roughly SW across a field and joins with an existing track, also running SW to and through Grange Farm, and then round to the original track (previously surveyed) at approx. NH374300. The new access route was walked, including an area to approx. 200m either side of the existing track and W borrow pit, and an area to approx. 500m either side of the new road (except for E of the A831: surveyed to 50m only) and searched for signs of protected species. For otter, this distance was increased to 250m or so out to or along 'significant' watercourses. More specifically:

Otter

The banks of the 'significant' watercourses were searched and checked for signs of otter including, where appropriate, 50m either side of the watercourse. A torch was used for visually inspecting under banks, rock cavities and any holes. Otter signs were recorded and described with locations identified using GPS and photographs were taken of any resting places found. Where otter paths were found, they were followed until they rejoined the watercourse or until their destination was identified (in case they led to a holt or other resting place).

Otter signs include holts (dens), other resting places (couches or lie-ups), footprints (tracks), paths/trails and spraints (droppings). Current usage of any holts and other

MAMMAL SURVEY – REVISED LOWER ACCESS APPENDIX 2

resting places found were assessed and classed as either low, medium, or high. To indicate their age, any spraints found were classed as either old, recent or fresh (spraints last about 8 weeks before they disintegrate).

- **Holts** are characterised by a tunnel system showing clear signs of use by otters. Otter use may be shown by presence of spraints, wear at tunnel entrance, prints or a distinctive smell of otter
- **Couches** are above ground resting sites characterised by a bedding of flattened vegetation. They can be found under banks or under and amongst rocks
- **Lie-ups** are above ground resting sites that lack bedding, but show clear signs of use including spraints, rubbed or smoothed ground and/or prints. Such sites include ledges under river banks and under exposed tree roots.

Bats

All trees along or near to the proposed route that could be affected by the proposed works (trees considered to be 'at risk') were assessed for bat potential. The trees were visually inspected from the ground and carefully checked for suitable bat roosting and hibernation sites. Suitable sites would be holes, cracks, splits and cavities, under loose bark and in ivy growth round the trunk. Some holes and splits, however, can be mainly superficial and not deep enough, or can be too open (and so let in the weather) and are therefore unsuitable for bats. Suitable sites should be dry and provide a stable temperature for roosting bats and may occur in trees containing dead sections, or where branches have split or fallen away and may also occur in dead standing trunks: especially ones containing old woodpecker holes.

The use of a high powered torch and binoculars was required to aid viewing and assessment. If no direct evidence of bats and their roosts were found, the trees were either classed as:

- i. Unsuitable for bats – likely to have no bats or their roosts, or
- ii. Suitable for bats – a **possibility** of having bats and their roosts: the chance rated as low, medium, or high.

Badger

The survey area was searched for signs of badger including setts, fresh excavations, dung pits (latrines), paths/trails, footprints (tracks), hairs, bedding material, snuffle (feeding) holes and scratch marks. Any setts will be classed as either main, annex, subsidiary, or outlying and the activity of the setts described as active, partially active, or inactive.

Red Squirrel

The survey area was searched for signs of red squirrel including dreys in the trees, and feeding signs on the floor.

Pine Marten

The survey area was searched for signs of pine marten including droppings and suitable den sites (in or under trees, and in rock crevices, old dreys or nests).

Wildcat

The survey area was searched for signs of wildcat including droppings, suitable den sites (hollow trees and rocky crevices), scratch marks and prey remains.

Water Vole

The watercourses within the survey area were searched for signs of water voles including droppings, burrows and feeding signs.

Any signs found were recorded on GPS.

The weather during the survey was sunny intervals, with a light W wind & 18°C.

Water conditions were just above average after recent rains.

Findings & Discussion

Otter

1. NH38471 31452: sprainting site – two spraints (old) on rock on LH bank of the Allt Drimneach, under the old bridge (by road bridge)
2. NH37600 30115: sprainting site – two spraints (old) on rock on LH bank, where a tributary enters the River Enrick

No spraints were found at the holt and other resting places on the Enrick; as found previously (refs. 1 & 2 of report April/May 2008)

No breeding sites (natal dens) were found or suspected. Data on otter breeding site requirements is sparse and sometimes ambiguous or contradictory. Most suggest that suitable breeding sites should be free from significant disturbance, at low risk of flooding, adjacent to a good supply of food and contain suitable natal dens and play areas for cubs. The restricted food supply in the watercourses suggests that the survey area is unsuitable for breeding holts.

Red Squirrel

1. NH37391 30390: feeding signs – on Scots pine cones in S pine plantation – scattered (recent)
2. NH37334 30342: feeding signs – on Scots pine cones in S pine plantation – scattered (recent)

No feeding signs were found this time in the small fenced pine plantation to the SW of the farm, and no dreys were seen within the survey area.

Bats

All the trees considered 'at risk' with respect to bats within the survey area lacked any of the features that would be suitable for bat roosts and so were classed as *unsuitable* for bats. No direct evidence of bats or their roosts were found.

Other species

No signs of any of the other protected species were found within the survey area.

Limitations of Survey

Walkover surveys using visual searches for signs of otters are a valuable means of confirming the use of an area by otters and are recognised as the standard method for survey. Nevertheless, these searches are subject to limitations:

- A lack of otter **spraints** (or other signs) does not necessarily indicate that otters do not use a particular site. Sprainting performs a social function as a scent mark and sprainting activity is affected by behavioural variables. Further, high water and heavy rain can wash away spraints. Spraint abundance and density is therefore not directly correlated with otter activity, and recent high water may have washed away some spraints on lower rocks.
- **Resting sites** used by otters can be recognised by a variety of features, including location, size and the presence of other signs such as spraints or prints. Individual otters use a large number of resting sites, located throughout

their home range. Sites vary in their level of use and in their structure. Structurally they may range from sites on open ground with minimal bedding, to long-established tunnel systems with chambers, bedding material and a supply of fresh water. Many of the sites used by otters for resting cannot be identified without radio tracking and, even then, some sites may be impossible to find.

- Few otter **breeding sites** have been described and published descriptions of the signs around breeding sites are variable and contradictory. The most robust data are probably those from radio-tracking studies. These suggest that otters are secretive around natal dens and that spraints and other signs are not likely to be present. It must be concluded that breeding sites cannot always reliably be located or identified during short, visual surveys.

Further, the many cattle and sheep in the fields, along with a large herd of red deer in the field just N of Grange, could have masked some species signs e.g. feeding signs and trails by badger, and droppings by pine marten.

Conclusions & Discussion

Otter

As previously concluded otter visits the survey area and this will be part of a larger territory (or several territories) in all directions; including the Allt Drimneach. I would expect visits to the sites where the spraints were found to be 'infrequent'. Some of the banking along the Allt Drimneach was suitable for otter resting places, although none were identified.

The constraints of visual surveys for signs are considered, together with the type of watercourses present and site topography. It is my opinion that breeding sites are unlikely to be present within the survey area, and that the proposed works will not significantly disturb otters.

Other species

Although suitable for foraging badgers, much of the survey area was unsuitable for badger setts. There was little suitable red squirrel habitat along or near the revised route. The survey area was also unsuitable for wildcat due to lack of prey species and den sites. The watercourses in the survey area were largely unsuitable for water voles; being either too small, running too fast, or had a lack of suitable feeding. Den sites for pine marten were not suspected around the farm due to the lack of visible droppings on the roads/ tracks.

It is my opinion that the other protected species will not be significantly disturbed by the proposed works.

Advice

As bat roosts will not be affected, the horse chestnut tree by the cottage (NH375303) can be felled to make way for the access track, as can the ash, birch, sycamore & wych elm by the bend in the track/ water trough (NH380307); if required.

Habitat Survey – See attached sheet for details.

Bird Notes

MAMMAL SURVEY – REVISED LOWER ACCESS APPENDIX 2

W of Grange Farm: chaffinches, great tit, mistle thrush families, buzzard, wren, swallows, house martins, spotted flycatcher family & singles, great-spotted woodpecker, robin, meadow pipit family, willow warbler family, coal tit, & siskins.

E of Grange Farm: Blackbirds, chaffinches, swallows, house martins, stonechat family, willow warbler, and on the Allt Drimneach: grey wagtail, pied wagtail family, & goosander.