Moray Framework, Cooper Park
Preliminary Ecological Assessment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EnviroCentre Limited was commissioned by Moray Council to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to assess the current ecological baseline of Cooper Park in Elgin. The aim of the appraisal was to identify baseline ecological conditions, in terms of habitats present and evidence of protected and notable species identified on site.

A UK Habitat Classification survey was carried out on 8th April 2025 and identified ten primary habitats on site: **nationally** important other native hedgerow and modified grassland, other lowland mixed deciduous woodland, mixed scrub, other rivers and streams and other standing water, all of which are of **regional** importance, in addition to other broadleaved woodland, other coniferous woodland, non-native and ornamental hedgerow and buildings which were all identified as being of **site** importance.

No evidence was found of any protected or notable faunal species other than two birds nests (one mute swan nest and a wood pigeon actively building a nest). However, suitable habitat exists for roosting, foraging and commuting bats, hedgehog, birds, badger, otter, invertebrates and fish on site. Further surveys have been recommended for bats.

Evidence of non-native invasive species (INNS) were identified during the survey, including giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed, skunk cabbage, rhododendron, buddleia, cherry laurel and cotoneaster. Therefore, a management plan has been recommended.

The main potential negative impacts that may occur, without mitigation, as a result of development of the site include:

- Spread of invasive plant species (particularly Giant hogweed) which could cause further damage to the ecosystems on site and in the surrounding area.
- Loss of foraging, commuting and sheltering habitats for mammals, birds and invertebrates if removal of woodland, grassland, hedgerow or scrub habitat takes place.
- Death/injury to nesting birds if clearances take place during the peak breeding season (March to September inclusive).
- Loss of nesting, commuting and loafing opportunities for birds if removal or alteration of trees, shrub or island habitat within the site.
- Loss of roosting features for bats if trees or buildings with potential roost features were to be removed or altered.

The following mitigation is recommended to preserve and improve biodiversity on site:

- Trees, woodland and scrub habitats on site should be retained and protected where possible.
- Vegetation clearances should not be completed during the breeding bird season (February – September inclusive) where possible, otherwise a nesting bird check should be undertaken within 48 hours prior to works.

Opportunities for biodiversity gain include:

- Installation of bird and bat boxes in addition to bug hotels and bug boxes.
- Planting/sowing of suitable, native wildflower/grassland species to enhance habitats.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Terms of Reference

EnviroCentre Limited was commissioned by Moray Council to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at a site referred to as Cooper Park.

The 'site' is defined as the area demarcated by the red line boundary as shown in Appendix A. The 'survey area' constitutes the area of the 'site' plus appropriate buffers.

The results and recommendations in this document relate to the site boundary as provided by the client at the time of the survey.

1.2 Scope of Report

The aim of the study is to provide a baseline ecological evaluation of the site to provide an understanding of biodiversity on site. The objectives were as follows:

- Conduct a desk study to gather previously recorded biological data relating to the site;
- Categorise and map the broad habitats present on the site;
- Search for field evidence of a range of protected or notable species which may frequent the survey area;
- Identify suitable habitat for protected or notable species in the survey area;
- Evaluate the habitats and species applicable to site against geographic levels of importance;
- Appraise the potential impacts to habitats and species should no avoidance, mitigation or compensation be applied within the proposed project;
- Make recommendations for any further survey to inform the proposed project and/or species licensing requirements.
- Outline broad measures to avoid, minimise and compensate for the predicted negative ecological effects associated with the proposed project; and
- Identify opportunities offered by any proposed development to deliver biodiversity gain.

1.3 Site Description

The site is situated in the centre of Elgin at an elevation of 16 meters (m) above sea level, centred at UK grid reference NJ 21839 63263. The site is an urban public park that comprises of amenity grassland, trees, a boating pond, woodland, hedgerows, scrub, building, roads, paths and the River Lossie which flows eastward through the park, towards Lossiemouth where it leads into the Moray Firth. The River Lossie acts as an ecological corridor through urban Elgin, allowing the movement of various species of animal using the trees, undergrowth and the river itself to the broader landscape.

1.4 Project Description

No details on the project or plans for the site were given at the time of reporting.

1.5 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Legislation, planning policies, conservation initiatives and general guidance relevant to this study include:

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended);
- The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended);
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA);
- The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004;
- The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (WANE);
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- National Planning Framework 4;
- Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL)[1];
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045;
- The British Standard for Biodiversity;
- Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP)[2]
- North East Scotland Local Biodiversity Action Plan (NESBiP)[3]

A summary of protected species legislation is provided in Appendix B.

1.6 Report Usage

The information and recommendations contained within this report have been prepared in the specific context stated above and should not be utilised in any other context without prior written permission from EnviroCentre Limited.

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EnviroCentre Limited accepts no liability for use of the report for purposes other than those for which it was originally provided, or where EnviroCentre Limited has confirmed it is appropriate for the new context.

[1] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/scottish-biodiversity-list (Accessed April 2025)
[2] Moray Council (2020). Moray Local Development Plan 2020 [Online] Available from: http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_133431.html (Accessed April 2025).
[3] North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (2022-2025). 3 Year Strategic Plan 2022-2025. [Online] Available from: http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file146685.pdf (Accessed April 2025).

2 METHOD

2.1 Desk Study

In order to anticipate the potential ecological sensitivities at the site, a desk study was conducted in advance of the field survey, in April 2025. The following sources were checked:

- NBN Atlas[4] for data up to 2km from the site, including:
  - Notable Protected Species Records.
  - Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).
- NatureScot Sitelink website[5] for statutory designated sites up to 5km from the site;
- Moray LDP[1] for non-statutory designated sites up to 2km from the site;
- Records of ancient woodland and Scottish native woodland available through Scotland's Environment Web[6], within or adjacent to the site;
- The SBL for priority habitats and species;
- NESBiP for local priority habitats and species;
- Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS) interactive sightings map[7] for recent sightings of red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) and grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*);
- A search for Buglife, B-Lines[8] and Important Invertebrate Areas (IIA)[9] within 2km of the site;
- A review of Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) Obstacles to Fish Passage[10] and
- Aerial imagery from Google Earth[11].

2.2 Field Survey

The field survey was conducted on the 8th April 2025 by EnviroCentre ecologists Antonia Stewart and Caitlin McLeod. The weather conditions of the day of survey were clear skies, a slight breeze and an average temperature of 11ºC.

The PEA survey was designed using the guidelines endorsed by NatureScot and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)[12] and focussed on plants and habitats on site and the species which would most likely utilise the habitats which comprise the landscape in and around the site. Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs) were also considered during the survey.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the area surveyed for specific habitats, species and species groups. Detailed methods regarding habitat and species surveys are provided within Section 2.

Species including beaver (*Castor fiber)*, brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), pine marten (*Martes martes*) and reptiles were not included due to a lack of suitable habitats and records.

[4] NBN Atlas (202). Data Downloaded on 3rd April 2025 @ 09:32
[5] Available at: https://sitelink.nature.scot/map (Accessed April 2025)
[6] Available at: https://www.environment.gov.scot/maps/scotlands-environment-map/ (Accessed April 2025)
[7] Available at: https://scottishsquirrels.org.uk/squirrel-sightings/ (Accessed April 2025)
[8] Available at: https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/ (Accessed April 2025)
[9] Available at: https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/important-invertebrate-areas/ (Accessed April 2025)
[10] Available at: https://marine.gov.scot/maps/1746 (Accessed April 2025)
[11] Available at: https://www.google.com/earth/ (Accessed April 2025)
[12] CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. 2nd edition. Available at: https://cieem.net/resource/guidance-on-preliminary-ecological-appraisal-gpea/ (Accessed November 2024)

Table 2-1: Survey Areas

Habitat/Species/Species Group	Survey Area (where accessible)
Habitats	Site
GWDTEs	Site + consideration of a 250m buffer
INNS	Site + 50m buffer
Bats (*Chroptera spp.*)	Site + 50m buffer
Otter (*Lutra lutra*)	Site + watercourses up to a 250m buffer
Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*)	Site + watercourses up to a 250m buffer
Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)	Site + 50m buffer
Badger (*Meles meles*)	Site + 100m buffer
West European Hedgehog (Erinaceus europaeus)	Site + 50m buffer
Birds	Site + 50m buffer
Amphibians	Site + 50m buffer
Reptiles	Site + 50m buffer
Invertebrates	Site
Fish	Site + watercourses up to a 250m buffer
Freshwater Pearl Mussel (FWPM) (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)	Site + watercourses up to a 250m buffer

2.2.1 UKHAB Survey

A UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Survey was carried out in accordance with the user manual[1]. UKHab is a hierarchical system for rapidly recording and classifying habitat via satellite imagery and field survey. The system comprises 5 levels of Primary Habitats which include ecosystems, broad habitats, priority habitats and Annex I habitats, along with non-hierarchical secondary codes which provide information on the environment, management and origin of Primary Habitats. The secondary codes are also used to map habitat mosaics and identify notable species features. The information collected is used to identify ecologically sensitive features and recommend mitigation and enhancement measures in connection with a proposed development.

The surveyor utilised the UKHab Professional edition with a Minimum Mapping Unit (MMU) of 25m^2 and aimed to categorise habitats to level 5. Where the level 5 habitat could not be determined or is not reflective of the habitat type due to a lack of indicative species, habitats were categorised to level 4 or the broader level 3 habitat.

The information is used to identify ecologically sensitive features/habitats, inform relevant species surveys and, aid in the recommendation of mitigation and enhancement measures in connection with a proposed development.

Where applicable, alterations to UKHab symbology on maps may occur where relevant for clarity.

2.2.2 Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems

The Functional Wetland Typology (FWT) was used to aid identification of wetland habitats that may derive their water from groundwater and surface water. This information is useful in identifying if and where further surveys are required to identify the presence and potential sensitivity of GWDTEs. To help assess ground water dependency, observations of local topography, underlying geology, and features such as springs, diffuse ground water emergence and floristic indicators of base enrichment were made.

2.2.3 Invasive Non-Native Species

The survey included recording the presence of any INNS found on site, including but not limited to the following:

- Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*);
- Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*); and
- Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

2.2.4 Bats

An assessment was undertaken in accordance with the criteria set out by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)[13]. The suitability of roosting habitats in structures and commuting and foraging habitats was classified according to the criteria in Table 2-2 below.

Table 2-2: Suitability Classification of Roosting Habitat in Structures and Commuting and Foraging Habitats for Bats

Suitability	Roosting Features	Foraging and Commuting Habitats
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/ stable hibernation site.	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. The site is close to and connected to known roosts.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not

[13] Collins, J.(ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).* The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-978-1-7395126-0-6

Suitability	Roosting Features	Foraging and Commuting Habitats
	potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/ stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).	very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats as any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/ suitable shelter at all ground/ underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/ protection for flight-lines, or generate/ shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).

The suitability of roosting habitats in trees was classified according to the criteria in Table 2-3 below.

Table 2-3: Suitability of Roosting Habitat in Trees

Suitability[14]	Roosting Features
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any

2.2.5 Otter

The otter survey followed best practice guidelines[15], and aimed to identify suitable otter habitat and field signs, including:

- Spraints (otter faeces/droppings used as territorial signposts. Often located in prominent positions and can be placed on deliberate piles of soil or sand). Three categories are used for describing otter spraint: Dried fragmented (Df); Dried intact (Di); and Not fully dry (Nd);
- Footprints;
- Feeding remains (can often be a useful indication of otter presence);
- Paths/slides (otter can often leave a distinctive path from and into the watercourse);
- Holts (underground shelter) are generally found:
    - Within trees roots at the edge of the bank of a river;

[14] Potential Roost Feature (PRF), Further Assessment Required (FAR)
[15] Chanin, P. (2003). *Monitoring the Otter Lutra Lutra. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers, Monitoring Series (No. 10).* Peterborough: EN, CCW, EA, SEPA, SNH & SNIFFER.

  - Within hollowed out trees;
  - In naturally formed holes in the river banks that can be easily extended;
  - Or preferably in ready-made holes created by other large mammals such as badger setts, rabbit burrows or outlet pipes; and
- Couches/lay-ups (couches or lay-ups are places for lying up above ground are usually located near a watercourse, between rocks or boulders, under dense vegetation).

2.2.6 Water Vole

The water vole survey was undertaken in conjunction with the otter survey and covered the same area. The survey consisted of assessing the habitat suitability of the site[16] whilst undertaking a survey for field evidence following standard survey guidelines[17].

Factors that influence the suitability of habitat for water voles include:

- Positive: The presence of riparian vegetation along the banks and in the water.
- Positive: A steep bank on a watercourse reducing the risk of burrow inundation.
- Positive: Slow-flowing, relatively deep (over 1m) watercourses.
- Negative: The presence of rocky or otherwise impenetrable substrates.
- Negative: Over-shading by trees.
- Negative: Fast flowing or shallow water, and flashy watercourses.
- Negative: The presence of American mink.

The site and an appropriate buffer was surveyed for field evidence of water vole. Field evidence includes:

- Faeces: 8-12 mm long, 4-5 mm wide; cylindrical and blunt ended pellets; colour variable with food type. Most droppings left in latrines near the nest, at range boundaries and at water entry points;
- Latrine sites: concentrations of faeces, often with fresh droppings on top of old ones;
- Runways: often 5-9 cm broad and multi-branched; usually within 2m of water's edge and often forming tunnels through vegetation; leading to water's edge or burrows;
- Burrows: 4-8 cm diameter, wider than high; eroded entrances then contract down to typical size; entrances located at water's edge; however some entrances can be up to 3m from the water; no spoil heaps;
- Nests: size and shape of a rugby ball, often in base of rushes, sedges or reeds;
- Feeding stations: located along runways, or at platforms along water's edge; usually a pile of cut/chewed vegetation in sections approximately 10cm long; vegetation ends show marks of two large incisors. Piles of chopped grass, sedge or rush stems, rush pith and leaves;
- Lawns: short, grazed vegetation around land entrances, often used during nursing periods;
- Footprints: difficult to tell from rat; adult hind foot 26-34 mm (heel to claw); stride 120mm (smaller than rat); occur at water's edge and lead into vegetation; and
- Sound: characteristic 'plop' when a vole enters the water.

Emphasis was placed on locating latrine sites, as they are the most useful sign for recording purposes. They indicate whether there is definite presence of water voles at a site.

[16] Strachan, Rob & Moorhouse, Tom. (2006). *Water Vole Conservation Handbook, Second Edition*.
[17] Dean, M., Strachan R. Gow, D. & Andrews, R. (2016). *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series)*. Eds: Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The Mammal Society, London.

2.2.7 Red Squirrel

A survey was undertaken based on best practice guidance[18] which involves a search of suitable habitat (primarily coniferous woodland) for two distinct signs of squirrel activity. It should be noted that neither of these methods accurately distinguishes between red or grey squirrels.

- Drey count – dreys are the nests made by both species of squirrel in trees. Dreys are distinguishable from birds' nests as they are normally 50cm in diameter and 30cm deep, comprise a ball shape and are usually densely constructed. The dreys are normally located close to the main stem of the tree at a height of 3m or more; and
- Feeding evidence – where cone producing trees (conifers) are evident evidence of squirrel feeding is searched for. Although the two species of squirrel cannot be distinguished from feeding remains, the manner in which squirrels break open seeds and nuts, which are then left on the forest floor, is diagnostic.

2.2.8 Badger

A badger survey was undertaken in suitable and accessible habitat, with reference to the methodology described by Scottish Badgers[19] and NatureScot[2021], which aimed to identify the following field evidence:

- Setts (any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by badger/located within an active badger territory, as defined by NatureScot guidance[22]);
- Day beds (above ground area where badgers sleep, characterised by flattened vegetation or bundles of grass);
- Dung pits (single faeces deposit placed in a small excavation);
- Latrines (collection of faecal deposits often used by badger clans to mark home range boundaries);
- Foraging signs such as diggings or snuffle holes (badgers use their snout to turn over vegetation or soft soil to forage for bulbs and invertebrates);
- Paths (network of paths generally linking setts to foraging habitat);
- Breach points (gaps in fences or crossing points over roads);
- Scratching posts (marks on tree trunks/ fallen trees where badgers have left claw marks);
- Guard hair; and
- Footprints.

Badger foraging habitat was classified on a primary and secondary basis as per best practice guidance[23]. An assessment of the distribution of primary and secondary habitat (defined below) within the survey area was undertaken:

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[18] Gurnell, J., Lurz, P., McDonald, R. & Pepper, H. (2009) *Practical Techniques for surveying and monitoring squirrels. Forestry Commission Practice Note 11.*

[19] Scottish Badgers: Surveying for Badgers – Good Practice Guidelines. Version 1: 2018. Available from: https://www.scottishbadgers.org.uk/userfiles/file/planning_guidelines/Surveying-for-Badgers-Good-Practice-Guidelines_V1.pdf (Accessed April 2025)

[20] NatureScot: Licensing Guidance. Available from: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-10/Guidance%20-%20Licensing%20-%20Badgers%20-%20What%20is%20a%20Badger%20sett_.pdf (Accessed April 2025)

[21] NatureScot: Protected Species Advice for Developers – Badger. Available from: https://www.nature.scot/species-planning-advice-badger (Accessed on April 2025)

[22] NatureScot definition of current use: "*There is no case law to clarify what signs of current use means. For the purpose of this guidance, and in the absence of such case law, we consider that the presence of field signs such as bedding, fresh spoil heaps, signs of recent digging, hair, latrines, or footprints in or around the potential sett or evidence of badgers entering or exiting the structure or place in question would indicate current use of the structure / place by a badger.*"

[23] The Highland Council. Best Practice Guidance – Model badger Protection Plan (BPP)– Badger foraging habitats (2006). Available from: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/2635/badger_best_practice_guidance_badger_protection_plans_september_2006 (Accessed April 2025)

- Primary foraging habitat: short grazed or mown grassland, improved or unimproved, golf course habitat and broadleaved woodland (> 80% broadleaves); and
- Secondary foraging habitat: arable, rough grassland (not grazed by domestic stock or mown), scrub and mixed woodland.

2.2.9 Hedgehog

The suitability of the habitats for hedgehog was assessed according to guidance[24]. Suitable habitats include:

- Grazed pastureland separated into small fields by hedgerows;
- Deciduous woodland copses (oak, beech);
- Overgrown verges or margins; and
- Suburban gardens, woodpiles or parklands.

2.2.10 Birds

Habitats within the survey area were assessed for their suitability to support breeding and over wintering birds. Observations of birds were noted during the survey.

2.2.11 Amphibians

Guidance[25,26] was used to identify direct evidence of amphibians and to assess the suitability of the habitats for amphibians as follows:

- Suitable aquatic habitat: medium (10 – 100m^2) or large (> 100m^2) ponds, on or within 50m of the site; and
- Suitable terrestrial habitat: lightly grazed pasture, scrub, open woodland, gardens and moors.

2.2.12 Invertebrates

Habitats within the site were assessed for their suitability to support invertebrates.

2.2.13 Fish

In addition to the desk-based assessment, a general habitat suitability assessment[27] was made of the River Lossie within the site and survey area for suitability to host fish species, with specific focus on Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), sea/brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), river lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) and sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*). Any obstacles to migration were also identified during the survey.

[24] Cresswell, W.J., Birks, J.D.S., Dean, M., Pacheco, M., Trewhella, W.J., Wells, D. and Wray, S. (2012). *UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation.* The Mammal Society, Southampton
[25] McInerny, C. & Minting, P. (2016) *The Amphibians and Reptiles of Scotland.*
[26] Beebee TJC, Griffiths RA (2000) *Amphibians and reptiles*. HarperCollins, vol 270. New Naturalist, London
[27] https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/131098/hydropower_annexb.pdf

2.2.14 Freshwater Pearl Mussel

A general habitat suitability survey was made of the watercourses associated with the site and their substrate types within the survey reaches, by walking along the bank. The aim was to identify specific areas that were most likely to harbour mussels using information on their habitat preferences from previous studies and experience[28]. Habitat preferences of freshwater pearl mussel include:

- Coarse sand and gravel beds of fast-flowing, non-calcareous streams and rivers; and
- Dependent on the presence of trout or salmon to complete their life cycle.

2.3 Constraints

2.3.1 Desk Study

Desk studies are limited by the reliability of third-party information and the geographical availability of biological and/or ecological records and data. This emphasises the need to collate up-to-date, site-specific data based on field surveys by experienced surveyors. The absence of a species from biological records cannot be taken to represent actual absence. Species distribution patterns should be interpreted with caution as they may reflect survey/reporting effort rather than actual distribution.

2.3.2 Field Survey

The small islands in the pond feature were directly inaccessible however, the area could be observed from a distance using binoculars providing a general consensus for suitability for protected or notable species. However, some plant species may have been missed within the UKHab descriptors. This is not considered to have significantly impacted the survey results or assessment as the general broad habitat types were discernible.

Areas of the buffer zone along the river also could not be fully accessed due to a high presence of INNS, therefore binoculars were also used to observe these areas. This is not considered to have affected the results or assessment, particularly given the preliminary nature of the survey.

2.4 Evaluation of Ecological Features

European, national and local governments and specialist organisations have together identified a large number of sites, habitats and species that provide the key focus for biodiversity conservation in the UK and Ireland, supported by policy and legislation. These provide an objective starting point for identifying the important ecological features that need to be considered. A geographical level of importance, as described in Appendices C and , has been assigned to the designated sites, habitats and species identified on the site and in the survey area. Where a feature is important at more than one level in the table, its overriding importance is that of the highest level. Usually only the highest level of legal protection is listed.

[28] https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/species/S1029/

3 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

3.1 Designated Sites

3.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

No statutory designated sites are present within the site. However, five are present within a 5km radius of the site as detailed in Table 3-1:

Table 3-1: Statutory Designated Sites

Site Name	Designation[29]	Distance and Orientation from Site	Designated Features	Ecologically connected to the Site
Quarry Wood	SSSI	1.3km west	Upland oak woodland	No, via extensive road networks and residential housing
Loch Spynie	SSSI	2.6km northeast	Breeding bird assemblage Eutrophic loch	Yes, hydrologically via River Lossie and within commuting distance of avian species.
	SPA		Greylag goose, non-breeding	
	RAMSAR		Eutrophic loch Greylag goose, non-breeding	

SPA and RAMSAR sites are all of international importance. SSSI sites are of national importance.

3.1.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

No non-statutory sites are present within the site. However, one is present within a 2km radius of the site as detailed in Table 3-2:

Table 3-2: Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Site Name	Designation[30]	Distance and Orientation from Site	Designated Features	Ecologically connected to the Site
The Wards Wildlife Site	Non-statutory wildlife site	1.04km SW	Northern Marsh Orchid Native Broadleaf Woodland Wetland	No

LNCS and LNRs are of county importance.

3.2 Ancient and Native Woodland

No ancient or native woodland is located on or adjacent to the site.

3.3 Habitats

The UKHab Habitats Survey plan can be found in Appendix E and Photographic Record in Appendix F.

[29] SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), SPA (Special Protected Area), RAMSAR (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance)
[30] LNCS (Local Nature Conservation Site), LNR (Local Nature Reserve)

Ten UKHab primary habitats were present within the site, as summarised in Table 3-3. Where there are distinct differences within the primary habitat code classification due to management and/or species composition, these have been identified using secondary codes.

Table 3-3: On-site Habitats

Habitat Type	Primary Habitat	Primary Code	Secondary Code
Grassland	Modified Grassland	g4	32 – scattered trees 10 – scattered scrub 106 – mown 823 – children's play space
Woodland and forest	Other broadleaved woodland	w1g	33 – line of trees
	Other coniferous woodland	w2c	
	Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland	w1f7	
Heathland and scrub	Mixed scrub	h3h	32 – scattered trees
	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	h2b	523 – non-native
Rivers and lakes	Other standing water	r1g	41 – pond (non-priority)
	Other rivers and streams	r2b	
Urban	Developed land – sealed surface	u1b	528 – walking or cycling route 800 – road 804 – car park 824 – adventure playground
	Buildings	u1b5	

3.3.1 Modified Grassland

The dominant habitat on site was modified grassland, with most areas being managed and recently mown (Photograph 1). This habitat was characterised by dominant perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) along with abundant white clover (*Trifolium repens*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and dandelions (*Taraxacum spp.*). Frequent cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), occasional daisy (*Bellis perennis*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) was also present.

Throughout the modified grassland occasional planted cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) was identified in addition to rarely occurring planted common lime (*Tilia x europaea*), cherry (*Prunus sp.*) and Berberis sp.

Modified grassland falls within the NESBiP Grasslands Habitat Statement under 'amenity grassland' and so is considered important at the **regional** level[31].

3.3.2 Other Broadleaved Woodland

Two parcels of broadleaved woodland were present within the site; one block of trees located on one of the islands in the boat pond, and the other comprised a line of trees to the west of the pond, mainly characterised by dominant Common lime, crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and *Amalanchia sp*. (Photograph 2).

Other broadleaved woodland is common and widespread, so is considered to be of **site** importance.

[31] Available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Grasslandsv1.pdf (Accessed April 2025)

3.3.3 Other Coniferous Woodland

One small parcel of other coniferous woodland was located next to the pond on the east side and comprised of abundant semi-mature European larch (*Larix decidua*) and cypress (*Cupressus lawsoniana*) along with frequent Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*).

Other coniferous woodland is common and widespread, and this woodland parcel is not a commercial plantation, so is considered to be of **site** importance.

3.3.4 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Two small parcels of other lowland mixed deciduous woodland were present within the north west of the site, along the banks of the River Lossie.

The woodland parcels were dominant in weeping willow (*Salix babylonica*) and goat willow (*Salix caprea*), with frequent wild cherry and occasional common lime and sycamore. Gorse (*Ulex europeaus*), was also frequently present, and the ground flora characterised by cow parsley, giant hogweed, ribwort plantain, cleavers (*Galium* aparine), green alkanet (*Pentaglottis sempervirens*) and ground elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*).

Other lowland mixed deciduous woodlands are a SBL priority habitat and are, therefore, considered to be of **national (Scotland)** importance.

3.3.5 Mixed Scrub

An area of mixed scrub was present along the northwest boundary of the site an abundant weeping willow, gorse and broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) was noted, with frequent occurrence of cherry laurel, occasional occurrence of sycamore and rarely occurring cypress sp. and wild cherry.

Other than ground elder, the ground flora was predominantly characterised by the presence of dense giant hogweed.

Mixed scrub is listed in the NESBiP Woodlands Habitat Statement[32] as being important at a **regional** importance.

3.3.6 Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerow

Non-native and ornamental hedgerows occur throughout the site; three are located around the tennis courts within the southeast of the site, and two are situated east of the boating pond and one surrounds the bowling green located in the southeast corner of the site. These hedgerows are comprised of dominant beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) with rare common lime (*Tilia x europaea*) in some areas. Other areas are characterised by dominant *Berberis sp*. and Himalayan cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster simonsii*) with frequent sycamore, or occasional bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), cherry laurel and rare barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*). The hedgerow surrounding the bowling green was comprised primarily of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and privet (*Ligistrum spp.*) with frequent holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and occasional sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and yew (*Taxus*

[32] More information is available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/our-biodiversity-in-the-north-east-of-scotland/invasive-non-nativespecies/
(Accessed April 2025)

baccata). Due to the presence of privet in this hedgerow, which was not confirmed as a native species of privet, this hedgerow has been classed as non-native and ornamental rather than native.

Non-native and ornamental hedgerows are considered to be of **site** importance. Other Standing Water

The boating pond located within the south of the site is manmade, with vertical, walled edges. The bed substrate was not clearly visible though it is considered to be rocky/muddy. There are three small islands situated within the pond as detailed in the above sections.

NESBiP Built Environment Habitat Statement[33] classes urban habitats such as ponds as providing important habitats for wildlife therefore, considered to be of **regional** importance.

3.3.7 Other rivers and streams

The River Lossie runs though the site to the north, with a slow flow eastward. The bank vegetation in Cooper Park within the site boundary varies due to both natural features and landscaping. Giant hogweed was found to be densely growing along the riverbanks, in amongst areas of mixed scrub and woodland. Some sections of the riverbanks are artificially reinforced with stonework, specifically in areas beneath the bridges. The riverbed substrate was composed of a variety of fine sediment, gravel and organic matter. The watercourse forms a key ecological corridor for a number of species. Habitat connectivity upstream and downstream is good despite the surrounding urban pressures.

NESBiP Freshwater Habitats Statement[34] classes rivers as providing important habitats for wildlife therefore, considered to be of **regional** importance.

3.3.8 Developed land – sealed surface

A road (North Street) was present in the northwest of the site, providing access through Elgin to Bishopmill.

Multiple paths associated with the Cooper Park were present throughout the site.

A small area of car parking is also present adjacent to the pond in the south of the site.

Developed land – sealed surface features do not provide sufficient resources for wildlife and are common throughout the landscape, therefore the developed land – sealed surface areas on site are of **negligible** importance.

3.3.9 Buildings

Three buildings were present within the site, two of which are disused public toilets, and one is a bowling club. The disused toilets were both rendered buildings with slate roofing whilst the bowling club comprised a wooden construction building with a flat roof.

NESBiP Built Environment Habitat Statement[35] classes buildings as providing important habitats for wildlife therefore, considered to be of **regional** importance.

[33] Available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/BuiltEnvironmentv1.pdf (Accessed April 2025)
[34] Available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/FreshwaterHabitatsv1.pdf.pdf (Accessed April 2025)
[35] Available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/BuiltEnvironmentv1.pdf (Accessed April 2025)

3.3.10 Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE)

No GWDTEs were identified within the site or a 250m buffer.

3.3.11 Invasive and Non-native Species (INNS)

The INNS Survey Results Plan can be found in Appendix G.

One record of American Mink (*Neovison vison*) was returned from the NBN Atlas 816m southwest of the site in 2020. One record of Giant Hogweed was returned from the NBN Atlas 1.54km east of the site in 2015.

Giant hogweed was identified along the banks of the River Lossie within the site and surrounding area to the north and northeast of the site during the survey, (Photograph 3).

Cherry laurel, Rhododendron and Himalayan cotoneaster were also identified throughout the site.

Buddleia was identified growing along the area surrounding the River Lossie to the north and northeast of the site and skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*) was noted growing on the northern bank of the River Lossie to the northwest of the site.

Although out with the standard survey area, Japanese knotweed was identified on the northern bank of the River Lossie 200m to the east of the site

INNS reduce presence of diversity of native species and are therefore of **negative** importance to the site.

3.4 Faunal Species and Species Groups

The Protected Species Survey Results Plan can be found in Appendix H and the Photographic Record in Appendix F.

3.4.1 Disclaimer

Faunal species are transient and can move between favoured habitats regularly throughout and between years. This survey provides a snapshot of field signs present in the survey area in April 2025.

3.4.2 Bats

One record of 50 common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bats, recorded in 2015, approximately 600m north of the site was returned by NBN Atlas. This indicates the presence of a maternity roost, however no detailed information was provided.

Buildings and Structures

Three buildings are present on site. The buildings on site comprised two public toilets which are rendered buildings with slate roofs and currently disused (boarded up), located in the centre of the park and to the southeast corner, and the third building (a bowling club) was of wooden clad walls and a flat roof with wooden fascia that was also located in the southeast of the site. PRFs were present via gaps in the slate roofing of both of the public toilet buildings. The bowling club building was identified as offering PRFs in areas where there may be gaps underneath the wooden facia on the roof.

Due to the presence of PRFs, the two public toilets buildings and the bowling club were assessed as offering **low** suitability for roosting features whereby '*A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats'* in reference to Table 2-2.

There are a number of buildings (residential, commercial and historical) within the survey buffer that likely host a range of PRFs and are therefore likely to offer low-high suitability for bats in reference to Table 2-2.

Trees

The trees and woodland areas throughout the site consist of a mixture of young, semi-mature and mature trees. The trees are generally in good condition, with one tree (*Salix spp.*) in a line of trees immediately within the eastern site boundary identified as having a PRF, a small cavity from an old branch wound in the trunk of the tree (Photograph 4). Two bat boxes were noted to be present on trees along the northern edge of the site.

PRFs were also identified within two trees in the 50m buffer zone, comprising of a hole in the trunk of a mature willow to the north of the site, and a split branch on a horse chestnut to the south of the site.

These trees are all assessed as PRF in reference to Table 2-3.

Habitats

Suitable foraging and commuting habitat was present on site, particularly along the River Lossie where areas of riparian woodland and treelines and the river itself can act as corridors to other suitable habitats. These habitats can also provide ideal foraging areas for bats. The boating pond within the site, as well as the woodland, treelines, scrub, hedgerows and grassland all offer foraging and commuting habitats for bat species in the locale, which are well connected to other foraging and commuting habitat in the wider landscape. The site was assessed as offering **moderate** suitability for foraging and commuting bats, whereby '*Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland, or water*', in reference to Table 2-2.

All UK bat species are European Protected Species (EPS) and are therefore of international importance.

3.4.3 Otter

One record of otter within 2km of the site in 2018 was returned the NBN Atlas. This individual was found dead on the road (A96) approximately 620m southeast of the site. A resident otter 'Cooper' that frequented the Cooper Park was also found to be dead in on the banks of the River Lossie 2019[36].

No rest sites or field evidence of otter was noted during the survey.

The site has the potential to support otter foraging and commuting activity along the River Lossie, as fish are present within the River Lossie and the bankside habitats could provide suitable habitat for small mammals, birds' eggs, amphibians and invertebrates, offering additional prey resource for otter. Additionally, there are areas of riparian cover, woodland and hedgerows around the northern end of

[36] https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/moray/1905085/elgins-much-loved-otter-cooper-has-been-found-dead/

the site where the river is situated and the boating pond, all of which may offer additional foraging and commuting resources.

Although no rest sites were confirmed, a range of suitable features are present within the riparian woodland habitats along the River Lossie. These offer opportunities for otter to rest, shelter or create a holt within and under hollowed out tree roots, overhanging banks, excavations of sandy soils along the edge of the riverbank and within the dense vegetation present along banks.

However, the site is regularly frequented by members of the public including people walking dogs, which will limit suitability for breeding otter.

Otter are EPS and are therefore of international Importance.

3.4.4 Water Vole

No records of Water Vole were returned by the NBN Atlas. No field evidence of water vole was noted during the survey.

Due to the moderate flow of the River Lossie, it is considered unsuitable for water vole who are not overly strong swimmers. In addition, the banks were considered unsuitable as they were steeply sloping. In addition, soft rush (their favoured foraging resource) is lacking along the section of the River Lossie surveyed.

The pond was also assessed as being unsuitable for water vole due to the absence of natural/vegetated banks easily accessible banks.

Overall the site is considered unsuitable for water vole.

Water vole are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) and are therefore considered to be of national (UK) importance.

3.4.5 Red Squirrel

A total of 144 records of Red Squirrel were returned from the NBN Atlas within a 2km radius of the site, between the years 2015-2025.

SSRS returned records of two red squirrels seen approximately 570m northeast of the site on the 20th February 2025[7].

No field evidence of red squirrel was identified on site during the survey.

The Cooper Park contains woodland and treeline habitats, that could provide foraging and commuting opportunities for red squirrel, however, these are relatively isolated patches around the site and lack connectivity to significant wooded areas. The riparian woodland associate with the River Lossie within the survey area and further may provide opportunities for drey creation, however the survey area lacks continuous coniferous woodland. Overall, the isolation of the habitats on site combined with the lack of continuous coniferous habitat greatly reduce the suitability for red squirrel.

Red squirrel are protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA and are therefore considered to be of national (UK) importance.

3.4.6 Badger

No records were returned from NBN Atlas for badger.

No evidence of badger was identified during the survey.

The woodland and scrub habitats within and surrounding the site provide features for sheltered commuting, with opportunities for sett creation predominantly along the Wooded embankments of the River Lossie, and offer habitat connectivity within the site and habitats in the wider landscape.

The grassland, scrub and woodland habitats in the site and locale offer primary and secondary foraging habitat for badger. The River Lossie would also provide a regular drinking water supply to badger.

Badger are protected under the Badger Protection Act and are therefore considered to be of National (UK) importance.

3.4.7 Hedgehog

No records of hedgehog were returned by the NBN Atlas.

The site provides some suitable areas of habitat, with deciduous and coniferous woodland present in small areas of the site, in addition to hedgerows. However, much of the site is frequently mown grassland covering vast areas with little to no vegetation cover. The areas around the river banks are mainly characterised by dense giant hogweed cover with some scattered trees and scrub. The woodland and scrub could provide some suitable habitat for foraging and commuting hedgehog.

Hedgehog are listed on the SBL and are therefore of national (Scotland) importance.

3.4.8 Birds

Records of a range of bird species were returned from the NBN Atlas, with those considered relevant to the site detailed in Table 3-3 below.

Table 3-4: Bird Species within 2km of the Site

Species	SBL, Annex I species	BOCC[37] Designation
Great Black-Backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)	No	BOCC – Red list[38]
Eurasian Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)	No	BOCC – Amber list[39]
Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)	No	BOCC – Green list[40]
Black-Headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)	SBL	BOCC – Amber list
Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)	SBL	BOCC – Red list
House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)	SBL	BOCC – Red list

[37] Birds of Conservation concern List, available at: https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/publications/bocc-5-a5-4pp-single-pages.pdf
[38] Red-list criteria - Globally threatened, historical decline in the breeding population, severe breeding population decline over 25 years/longer term, severe non-breeding population decline over 25 years/longer term, severe breeding range decline over 25 years/longer term, severe non-breeding range decline over 25 years.
[39] Amber-list criteria - Threatened in Europe, historical decline – recovery, moderate breeding population decline over 25 years/longer term, moderate non-breeding population decline over 25 years/longer term, moderate breeding range decline over 25 years/longer term, moderate non-breeding range decline over 25 years, breeding/non-breeding rarity, breeding/non-breeding localisation, breeding/non-breeding international importance.
[40] Green list criteria: naturally occurring species with self-sustaining populations meeting none of the criteria for BOCC Amber or Red list species.

Species	SBL, Annex I species	BOCC[37] Designation
Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)	No	BOCC – Amber list
Jackdaw (*Coloeus monedula*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*)	No	BOCC – Red list
Magpie (*Pica pica*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)	No	BOCC – Amber list
Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Common Wood Pigeon (*Columba palambus*)	No	BOCC – Amber list
Eurasian Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)	No	BOCC – Green list
European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Common Gull (*Larus canus*)	No	BOCC – Amber list
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Rock Dove (*Columba livia)*	No	BOCC – Green list
Lesser Black-Backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)	No	BOCC – Amber list
Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)	No	BOCC – Green list
European Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*)	No	BOCC – Red list
Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus)*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Western House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)	No	BOCC – Red list
Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Common Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Great Tit (*Parus major*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)	No	BOCC – Amber list
Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Long-Tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)	No	BOCC – Green list
White-Throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*)	No	BOCC – Green list
White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe Oenanthe*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Ring-Necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)	No	Introduced
Common Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Eurasian Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Common whitethroat (*Curruca communis*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Swift (*Apus apus)*	SBL	BOCC – Red list
Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)	SBL	BOCC – Amber list
Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*)	SBL	BOCC – Red list
Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)	SBL	BOCC – Red list
Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)	SBL	BOCC – Red list
Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)	SBL	BOCC – Amber list

Bird species identified during the survey are detailed in Table 3-4 below:

Table 3-5: Bird Species On-site

Species	SBL, Annex I species	Designation
Mallard	No	BOCC – Green list
Common Wood Pigeon	No	BOCC – Amber list

Species	SBL, Annex I species	Designation
Common Moorhen	No	BOCC – Green list
Herring Gull	SBL	BOCC – Red list
Eurasian Blue Tit	No	BOCC – Green list
Chaffinch	No	BOCC – Green list
Eurasian Wren	No	BOCC – Amber list
Jackdaw	No	BOCC – Green list
Blackbird	No	BOCC – Green list
Robin	No	BOCC – Green list
Black-headed Gull	SBL	BOCC – Amber list
Mute Swan	No	BOCC – Green list
Carrion Crow	No	BOCC – Green list
Coal Tit (*Periparus ater*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Great Tit	No	BOCC – Green list
House Sparrow	SBL	BOCC – Red list
European Goldfinch	No	BOCC – Green list
Common Gull	No	BOCC – Amber list
Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Oystercatcher *)*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Magpie (*Pica pica*)	No	BOCC – Green list
Eurasian Collared Dove	No	BOCC – Green list
Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)	No	BOCC – Amber list
Eurasian Blackcap	No	BOCC – Green list
Lesser Black-Backed Gull	No	BOCC – Amber list

Mating and nesting behaviour was exhibited by Herring Gulls and Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the roof of the Halfords building 30m to the southwest of the site.

Several old, likely inactive Wood Pigeon nests were identified in four trees throughout the site. One Wood Pigeon was observed building a nest in a tree in the site on the south side of the road adjacent to the library building (Photograph 5). A pair of Mute Swans were observed in the boating pond, with one individual sitting on a nest located on one of the small islands in the south of the pond (Photograph 6).

The grassland, scrub, River Lossie, pond and trees on site provide foraging, commuting, loafing and nesting resources for a range of bird species. The three artificial islands situated in the boating pond provide ideal resting habitat for various species and ideal nesting habitat for species such as Mallard, Moorhen and swan, predominantly isolated from mammalian predators and disturbance from humans and dogs.

Annex 1 birds are of international importance. Schedule 1 birds or birds on the red list are of national (UK) importance, those on SBL are of UK (Scotland) importance, those on the amber list are of regional importance and green listed birds are of local importance in line with Birds of Conservation Concern.

All wild bird species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

3.4.9 Amphibians

Two records of amphibians within 2km of the site in 2022 were returned from NBN Atlas. One record of Common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and one record of Common toad (*Bufo bufo*) from the same location approximately 1.03km north of the site.

No field signs of amphibians were noted during the survey.

While the site offers some suitable aquatic habitat for amphibians in the form the boating pond and vegetated terrestrial features such as woodland and hedgerows, the fragmentation and isolation of these features combined with the presence of small fish in the pond and the surrounding urban landscape reduces this site to having limited suitability for amphibians. In addition, the boating pond has vertical, walled edges that would inhibit any amphibian species from exiting the water other than to the islands which have had ramps installed (most likely for the wildfowl and gulls), suggesting that the presence of amphibians around this feature is highly unlikely. The River Lossie would also be considered too fast flowing to support amphibians. More suitable habitat is likely present in the locale.

Common toad are listed as priority species on the SBL and as such are considered of national (Scotland) importance. All other amphibian species found naturally in Scotland are given limited protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

3.4.10 Invertebrates

The site does not fall within 2km of a B-Line or an IIA.

The NBN Atlas returned 995 records of invertebrates within 2km of the site. None of these were listed on the SBL.

Various species of invertebrates were identified during the survey, including the Small tortoiseshell butterfly (*Aglais urticae*), Buff/white-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris/lucorum*), Red-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*), Common carder bee (*Bombus pascorum*), Tree bumblebee (*Bombus hypnorum*), Mayfly (*Ephemeroptera* spp.), Alderfly (*Sialis* spp.), Hoverfly (*Syrphidae* spp.) and a number of solitary bee species. None of the invertebrate species identified during the survey are listed on the SBL.

The Cooper Park provides a number of habitats that could provide resources for shelter, pollen, nectar and larval resources for a wide variety of invertebrate species. The boating pond and the River Lossie also may provide larval habitat for species that have aquatic life stages. The structural variation of habitats throughout the site shows the potential to support a relatively diverse assemblage of invertebrates. However, the seemingly regular mowing of grassland habitats reduces the value of the site, limiting the availability of early nectar resources which are vital for invertebrates in an area surrounded by an urban landscape.

Invertebrates are important biodiversity indicators and are therefore of site importance.

3.4.11 Fish

Atlantic salmon, sea trout, brown trout and European eel[41] have all been reportedly caught on the River Lossie.

SEPA obstacles to fish passage data[42] identified three passable barriers to fish passage within and downstream of the site boundary. The weirs are considered to be passable for fish but would be improved by removal.

The River Lossie provides opportunities for foraging and spawning fish due to the presence of a mixture of bed substrate types (gravel, pebble, cobble, sand and boulders), undercut sections and

[41] https://fishbrain.com/fishing-waters/j4tB8XCA/river-lossie
[42] https://marine.gov.scot/maps/1746

marginal vegetation along banks, as well as the flow comprising a mix of run, riffle, still marginal, deep and shallow pools and glide.

The River Lossie is also considered to provide suitable habitat for European eel, lamprey (brook (*Lampetra planeri*), river (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) and sea (*Petromyzon marinus*) due to a range of habitats which these species require, being present.

Atlantic salmon, sea trout, brown trout, brook lamprey, river lamprey, sea lamprey and European eel are all listed as priority species on the SBL. Atlantic salmon and brook lamprey are both also listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. Therefore, all species aforementioned are of National (Scotland) importance.

3.4.12 Freshwater Pearl Mussel

No records of freshwater pearl mussel were returned from NBN Atlas.

Suitable habitat within the River Lossie is likely present for freshwater pearl mussels, due to the presence of a mixture of bed substrate types (gravel, pebble, cobble, sand and boulders) and suitable habitat for salmonids (which are an important part of their lifecycle).

Freshwater pearl mussel are a SBL species of National (Scotland) importance.

4 POTENTIAL IMPACTS, FURTHER SURVEY AND LICENSING

4.1 Potential Impacts

If future works were to occur on site, the following potential negative (without mitigation) impacts and positive (with biodiversity gains) have been identified:

Negative impacts:

- Loss, fragmentation, or alteration of **nationally** important SBL priority other lowland mixed deciduous woodland, **regionally** important modified grassland, mixed scrub, pond and river habitats in addition to other **site** important habitats to facilitate works..
- Spread of invasive plant species (particularly Giant hogweed) which could cause further damage to the ecosystems on site and in the surrounding area.
- Loss or fragmentation of foraging, commuting and sheltering habitats for mammals, birds and invertebrates if removal of woodland, grassland, hedgerow or scrub habitat takes place.
- Death/injury to nesting birds if clearances take place during the peak breeding season (March to September inclusive).
- Loss of nesting, commuting and loafing opportunities for birds if removal or alteration of trees, shrub and island habitats within the site.
- Disturbance of foraging and commuting nocturnal and crepuscular species such as badger, bats and hedgehogs if artificial lighting is used during the construction period or installed permanently as part of the completed development.
- Loss of roosting features for bats if trees with PRFs or buildings on site are to be removed/ undergo works.
- Disturbance to wildlife as a result of increased noise and vibration as a result of machinery and works during development.
- Death, injury, or disturbance to wildlife as a result of open trenches or formation of temporary water bodies during works.
- Death, injury, or disturbance to ground-dwelling species as a result of vehicle collisions following an increase in vehicles on site, post-development.
- Pollution of River Lossie, as a result of surface runoff, thereby also causing death, injury, or disturbance to otter, fish, and invertebrates utilising this features.

Positive impacts:

- Through the removal and long-term management of INNS, in conjunction with additional planting/sowing of native species, the abundance and diversity of native plant populations on site could increase.
- Increase in foraging, commuting and sheltering provisions for mammals, birds and invertebrates through careful landscaping.

4.2 Further Survey Work and Licensing

4.2.1 Bats

As the habitats on site were assessed as **moderate** for foraging and commuting bats, if there is to be any vegetation removal, fragmentation or increased lighting associated with the project, in line with Bat Conservation Trust survey guidelines, a site with moderate commuting and foraging suitability should undergo static monitoring. Static detectors would be positioned across the site and data collected for a minimum of five consecutive nights per month (April-September) in appropriate weather conditions for bats. There is scope to reduce the number of surveys dependent on the initial survey results.

As the three buildings on site were assessed as offering low suitability for roosting bats, should there be plans to demolish or alter these buildings or if works are to occur within 30m of the buildings a bat activity survey should be undertaken during the summer roosting period (May-August). This will identify the likely presence/ absence of roosting bats and the need for any licensing prior to works.

If the trees with PRFs are to undergo any arboricultural works, be felled or are within 30m of proposed works, detailed ground-based/ elevated inspections should be undertaken to determine the presence/ absence of bats to inform the need for any licensing ahead of works.

4.2.2 Otter

Whilst no further surveys for otter are currently required, if works are due to take place on the River Lossie, targeted otter surveys would be required as a result.

Ecological data on protected faunal species is generally valid for a period of 12-18 months, therefore updates to maintain a valid dataset are recommended.

4.3 Licencing

Whilst no licences are currently required, this may be subject to change following the results of further surveys.

5 MITIGATION AND OPPORTUNITES FOR BIODIVERSITY GAIN

5.1 Mitigation

The following mitigation is recommended in regards to any future development to avoid and/or minimise the above potential negative impacts to the site:

- The other lowland mixed deciduous woodland in the northeast of the site is considered of **national (Scotland)** importance and therefore efforts should be made to retain the habitat where possible and minimise any impacts as a result of any future works.
- Retention of **regionally** important grassland, mixed scrub, other standing water, other rivers and burns and **site** important habitats.
- Where habitat protection is implemented, an appropriate buffer, dependent on the operation impacts, shall be established. Heras fencing is commonly used to protect all retained habitat from accidental damage or pollution.
- Woodland and trees on site should be retained where possible and, in the instance where they must be removed, appropriate replacement must be provided.
- If any hedgerows are to be removed, appropriate replacement must be provided.
- Removal and long-term management of INNS, specifically giant hogweed, should be conducted, with caution, ensuring the species is contained and disposed of at the appropriate facility, or on site if treated and buried.
- A pre-construction works check of the site is recommended to identify any unforeseen ecological constraints.
- A toolbox talk to be provided to all personnel providing information of protected species and appropriate mitigation to be implemented prior to commencement.
- Vegetation clearances should not be completed during the breeding bird season (February – September inclusive). Where vegetation clearance cannot be scheduled outside this season, a nesting bird check should be undertaken within 48 hours prior to works. Should any nesting birds be identified, an appropriate buffer zone should be maintained and works suspended until all dependent young have left the natal site.
- Works causing loud noise and vibration May to August inclusive (main activity season) should be limited to daylight hours to avoid intolerable disturbance to foraging and commuting bats in the locality.
- Where hedgerow or areas of dense leaf litter are to be removed during the hedgehog hibernation period (November-March) and the breeding season (April-September), a fingertip search shall be conducted prior to any works commencing.
- Care must be taken during clearance/groundworks to ensure wildlife is not harmed. In the event any protected species are found when the ecologist is not in attendance, works must stop, the animal must not be handled, and the project ecologist contacted immediately.
- Any excavations created during works should not be left open for mammals to become trapped. Appropriate covers should be fitted at the end of every working day. At the very least, a shallow sloping edge or temporary ramp should be placed in the excavations to allow any animals to climb out.
- Any permanent lighting should be designed to be ‘wildlife friendly’ following a sensitive lighting strategy following recommendations within the ‘Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night’ UK guidance[43].

[43] Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night [Online] Available at: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/

5.2 Opportunities for Biodiversity Gain

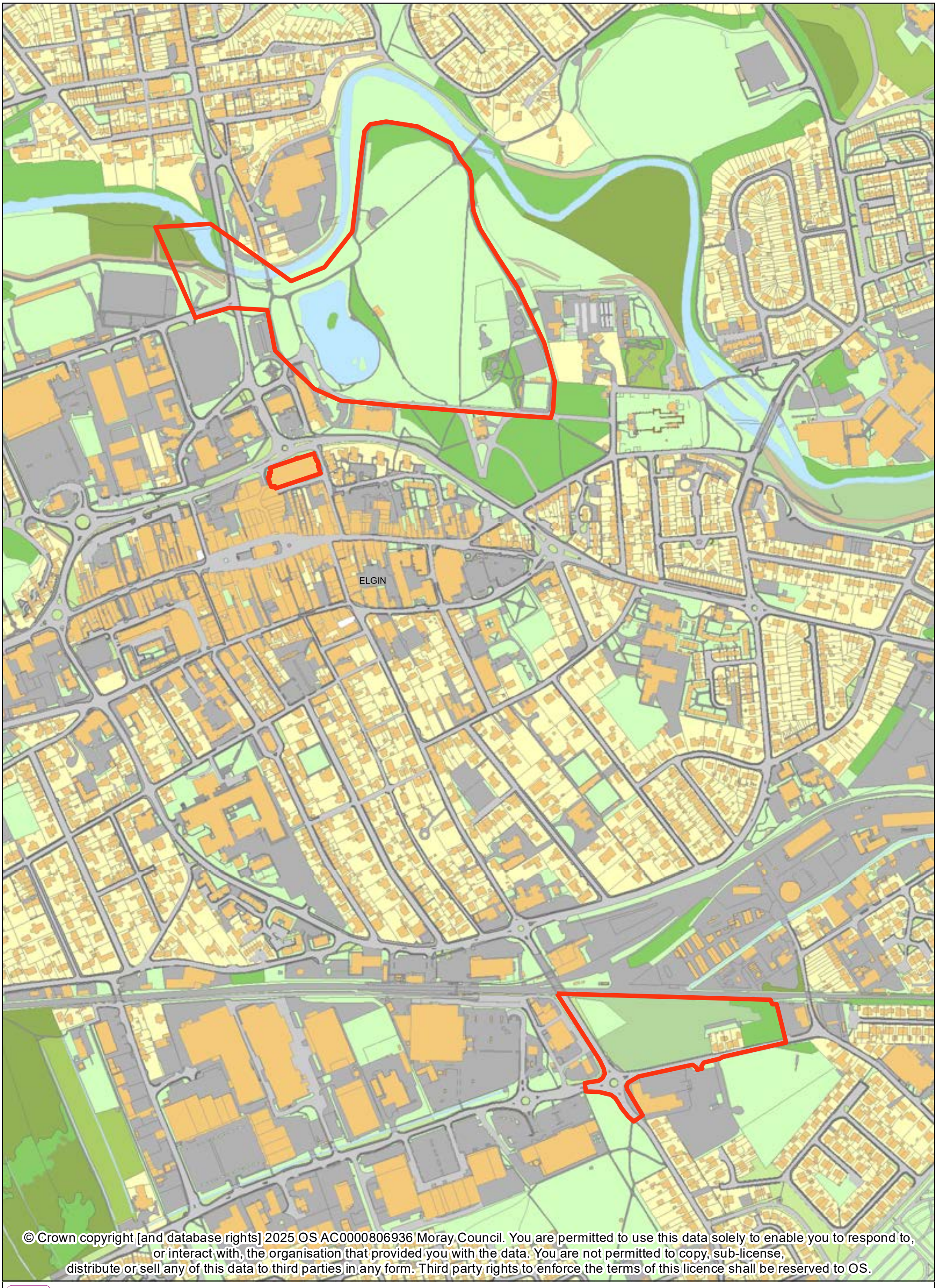
To comply with local and national planning policy and planning policy guidance, including NPF4, the following opportunities for biodiversity gain have been suggested in reference to the Moray LDP and NESBiP LBAP:

- Bat and bird boxes[44,45] could be affixed to posts within the site to enhance roosting/nesting provisions, at a height of 2m.
- Installation of bug hotels, invertebrate mounds or invertebrate boxes throughout the park, to increase provisions for invertebrates[46].
- Where possible, planting/sowing of suitable wildflower/grassland species could be used on site to increase and enhance habitat for invertebrates. Seed mixes should include native plants appropriate to the local area[47].

[44] Example can be found at: https://www.nhbs.com/2f-schwegler-bat-box-general-purpose
[45] Example can be found at: https://www.nhbs.com/1b-schwegler-nest-box
[46] Guidance available at: https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/09/how-to-build-a-bug-hotel/
[47] Example can be found here: https://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/shop/coastal-mix/

APPENDICES

A SITE LOCATION PLAN



PEA Site Extents

1:5,000 @ A3

N W E S

B SUMMARY OF PROTECTED SPECIES LEGISLATION

European Protected Species – Bats, Otter and Beaver

European Protected Species are protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (the "Habitat Regulations") as amended. Under this legislation it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly:

- capture, injure or kill such an animal;
- harass an animal or group of animals;
- disturb an animal while it is occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- disturb an animal while it is rearing or otherwise caring for its young;
- obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place, or otherwise deny an animal use of a breeding site or resting place;
- disturb an animal in a manner or in circumstances likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- disturb an animal in a manner or in circumstances likely to impair its ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or otherwise care for its young;
- disturb an animal while it is migrating or hibernating;
- possess, control, transport, sell or exchange specimens of any animal listed on Annex IV of the Habitats Directive. This applies to living or dead specimens and to their derivatives.

It is an offence of strict liability to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal. These sites and places are protected even when the animal isn't present. For example, great crested newt ponds are protected all of the time as long as it can be shown that the newts use the ponds some of the time.

A licence may be issued to permit the otherwise unlawful activities listed above if these three tests are satisfied:

- There must be a licensable purpose which includes 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;'
- There is 'no satisfactory alternative'; and
- The derogation (i.e. any permission/licence granted) is 'not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

Red Squirrel / Basking Shark / Pine Marten / Fresh Water Pearl Mussel

Red squirrel are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Subject to certain exceptions, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure or take (capture) an individual;
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which they use for shelter or protection;
- disturb an individual while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose; or to
- possess or control, sell, offer for sale or possess or transport for the purpose of sale any live or dead animal or any derivative of such an animal.

Knowingly causing or permitting any of the above acts to be carried out is also an offence.

In some cases licences may be issued by NatureScot to enable certain otherwise illegal activities to take place for social, economic or environmental reasons (including development) as long as:

- the licensed activity will contribute to significant social, economic or environmental benefit;
- there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- there will be no significant negative impact on the conservation status of the species.

Water Vole

Water voles are partially protected under Schedule 5, Part 4 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to 'intentionally or recklessly':

- damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which a water vole uses for shelter or protection; or to
- disturb a water vole while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Knowingly causing or permitting any of the above acts to be carried out is also an offence.

In some cases licences may be issued by NatureScot to enable certain otherwise illegal activities to take place for social, economic or environmental reasons (including development) as long as:

- the licensed activity will contribute to significant social, economic or environmental benefit;
- there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- there will be no significant negative impact on the conservation status of the species.

Badger

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992) (as amended). Offences under the Act include:

- wilfully taking, injuring or killing a badger;
- cruelty to a badger;
- intentional or reckless interference with a badger sett;
- sale or possession of a badger; and
- marking or ringing of a badger.

Interfering with a badger sett includes:

- damaging or destroying a sett or any part of it;
- obstructing access to a sett;
- disturbing a badger while it is in a sett; and
- causing or allowing a dog to enter a badger sett.

Where an offence is committed the individual (as well as the body corporate, Scottish partnership or, as the case may be, unincorporated association) is guilty of the offence and is liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

Licences can only permit someone to 'interfere' with a badger sett for the purpose of development. A licence cannot permit the removal, translocation or killing of badgers for the purpose of development.

Interference primarily means anything that might:

- disturb any badger in a sett; and
- damage or block the tunnels that radiate from a sett's entrances.

Licences aren't generally issued during the breeding season (30 November to 1 July). Activities that necessarily involve disturbance should be scheduled to take place outside of this period.

Birds

All wild bird species in the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with species listed on Schedules A1, 1 and 1A afforded additional protection.

For any wild bird species, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure or take a bird;
- take, damage, destroy or interfere with a nest of any bird while it is in use or being built;
- obstruct or prevent any bird from using its nest;
- take or destroy an egg of any bird;
- possess or control a living or dead wild bird; and
- possess or control an egg of a wild bird (or any such derivatives).

For any wild bird species listed on Schedule 1, it's an offence to disturb:

- any bird while it is building a nest;
- any bird while it is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young;
- any bird while lekking; and
- the dependent young of any bird.

For any wild bird species listed on Schedule 1A, it's an offence to intentionally or recklessly harass any bird.

For any wild bird species listed on Schedule A1, it's an offence to intentionally or recklessly take, damage, destroy or interfere at any time with a nest habitually used by any bird.

Licences cannot be issued for the purpose of development in relation to any of the above offences.

Brown Hare

Brown hares are partially protected under Schedule 5A of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take an individual within the closed season. The closed season for brown hare is 1 February to 30 September.

Common Lizard/Slow Worm/Adder

Common lizards/Slow worms/Adders are partially protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under the legislation you are not permitted to intentionally or recklessly permit or cause the killing and injury of individuals.

Licences permitting otherwise unlawful acts in relation to the above are not available for development purposes.

Invasive Non-Native Species (Plants)

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to plant, or otherwise cause to grow, any plant in the wild at a location outside its native range.

'Native range' is defined in the 1981 Act as, "the locality to which the animal or plant of that type is indigenous, and does not refer to any locality to which that type of animal or plant has been imported (whether intentionally or otherwise) by any person."

The Scottish Governments Non-natives Code of Practice[48] defines 'in the wild'. Just about everywhere is wild except for:

- arable and horticultural land;
- improved pasture;
- settlements; and
- private and public gardens.

In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to obtain a licence from NatureScot to permit the above offence.

[48] https://www.gov.scot/publications/non-native-species-code-practice/

C GEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE OF ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

Level of Importance	Sites	Habitats	Species
International	Designated, candidate or proposed Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites; UNESCO (Ecological) World Heritage Sites; UNESCO Biosphere Reserves; Biogenetic Reserves.	A viable area of habitat included in Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive; a habitat area that is critical for a part of the life cycle of an internationally important species.	A European Protected Species; an IUCN Red Data Book species that is globally Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered; a Category A internationally important bryophyte assemblage[49].
National (UK)	Sites of Special Scientific Interest/Areas of Special Scientific Interest; National Nature Reserves; Nature Conservation Review Sites; Marine Conservation Zones (UK offshore).	An area of habitat fulfilling the criteria for designation as an SSSI/ASSI or MCZ; a habitat area that is critical for a part of the life cycle of a nationally important species.	An IUCN Red Data Book species that is Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered in the UK; a species that is Rare in the UK (<15 10km grid squares); a Schedule 5[50] (animal) or Schedule 8 (plant) species included in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; any species protected under national (UK) legislation where there is the potential for a breach of the legislation; a Category A nationally important bryophyte assemblage[51]; a species that is Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered in The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain[52].
National (England, Scotland, Wales,	National Parks (England, Scotland, Wales); Natural Heritage Areas (Ireland); Marine Conservation	Habitats of principal importance for biodiversity in the relevant countries[53], including;	Species of principal importance for biodiversity in the relevant

[49] Averis, A.B.G, Genney, D.R, Hodgetts, N.G, Rothero, G.P. & Bainbridge, I.P. 2012. Bryological assessment for hydroelectric schemes in the west highlands – 2nd edition. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 449b
[50] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/5/enacted
[51] Averis, A.B.G, Genney, D.R, Hodgetts, N.G, Rothero, G.P. & Bainbridge, I.P. 2012. Bryological assessment for hydroelectric schemes in the west highlands – 2nd edition. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 449b
[52] Cheffings, C.M. & Farrell, L. (eds), Dines, T.D., Jones, R.A., Leach, S.J., McKean, D.R., Pearman, D.A., Preston, C.D., Rumsey, F.J., Taylor, I. (2005) *The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain. Species Status No. 7*. JNCC, Peterborough. Available at: https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/cc1e96f8-b105-4dd0-bd87-4a4f60449907 (accessed 08/09/2020)
[53] These are all the habitats that were identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and continue to be regarded as conservation priorities in the subsequent UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, including any additions.

Level of Importance	Sites	Habitats	Species
Northern Ireland)	Zones (England and Wales inshore); Marine Protected Areas (Scotland offshore); Marine Consultation Areas (Scotland); Marine Nature Reserves (Wales, Northern Ireland); Sensitive Marine Areas (England); Heritage Coasts (England and Wales).	Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL) Priority Habitats, Priority Marine Features (PMFs)[54] and ancient woodland (Scotland); Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation (England); Section 7 list of Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation (Wales); Northern Ireland (NI) Priority Habitats (NI).	countries[55], including;SBL Priority Species and PMFs (Scotland); Species of Principal Importance for Conservation (England); Section 7 list of Species of Principal Importance for Conservation (Wales); NI Priority Species (NI) .
Regional	Regional Parks (Scotland).	Regional Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats noted as requiring protection.	A species that is Nationally Scarce in the UK (present in 16-100 10km grid squares); a species that is included in the Regional LBAP; an assemblage of regionally scarce species.
County / Metropolitan	Local Nature Reserves; Wildlife Trust Reserves (England and Wales); Woodland Trust Sites; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Sites; Local Wildlife Sites (Scotland).	County LBAP habitats noted as requiring protection.	A species that is included in the County LBAP; an assemblage of species that are scarce at the county level.
Local		Semi-natural habitats that are unique or important in the local area.	Species as defined by Local Authority lists (if available).
Site		Common and widespread habitats not covered above.	Common and widespread species not covered above.
Negligible		Habitats not considered to have any importance	
Negative			An Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) as defined by the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) and supported by the GB Invasive Non-native Species Strategy (2015);

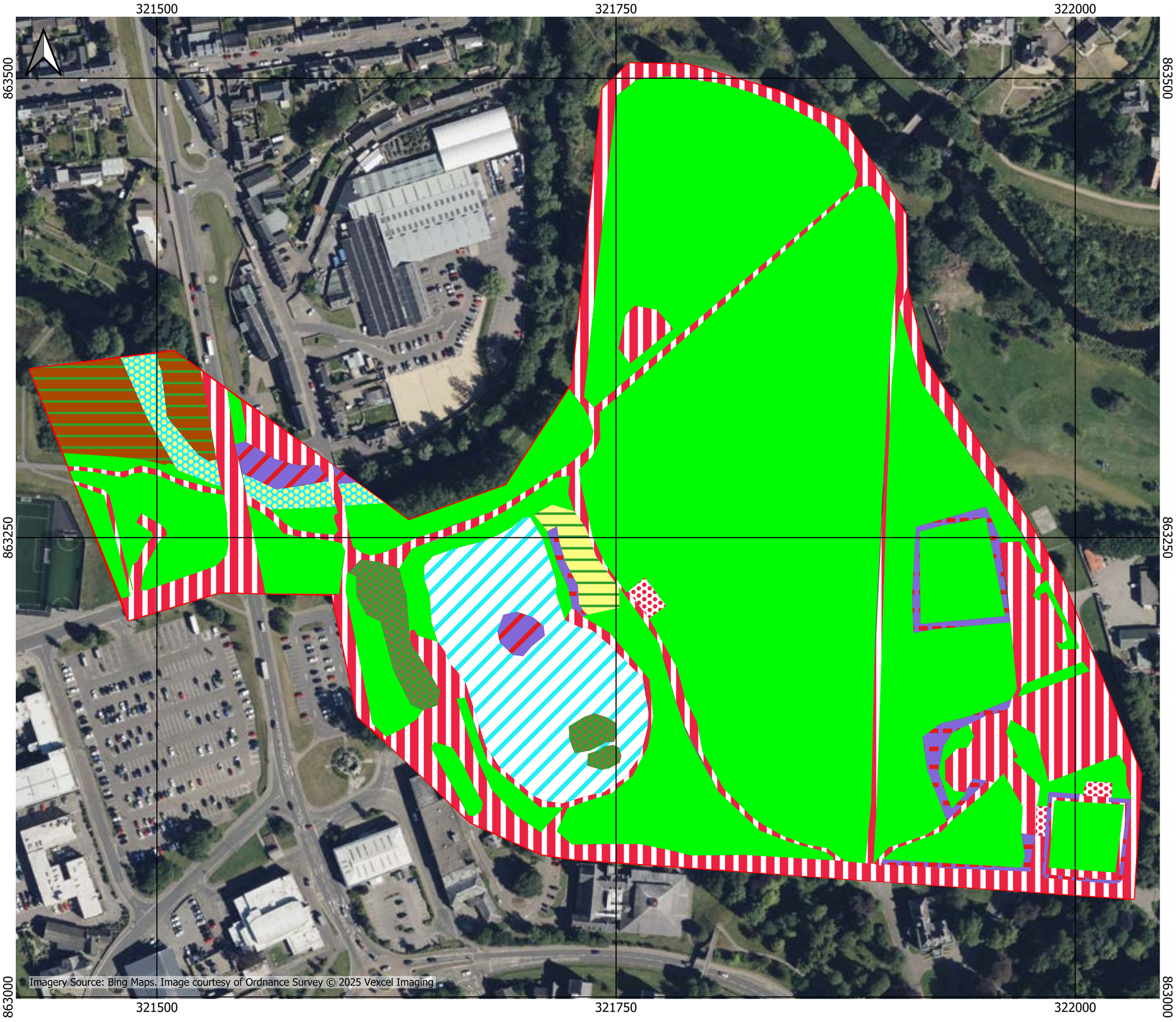
[54] In July 2014, Scottish Ministers adopted a list of 81 priority marine features (PMFs) – many of which are features characteristic of the Scottish marine environment. Most are on other conservation status lists so may be valued higher than this.
[55] These are all the species that were identified as requiring action in the UKBAP and continue to be regarded as conservation priorities in the subsequent UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, including any additions.

Level of Importance	Sites	Habitats	Species
			legally controlled species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the relevant country legislation).

D GEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE OF ORNITHOLOGICAL FEATURES

Level of Importance	Assessment Criteria		
	Legal Protection	Conservation Status	Population Size
International	Any species within Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive	Any species which is listed as Critically Endangered or Endangered on the IUCN Red List	Supporting greater than 1% of the EC population
National (UK)	Any species within Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act	Any species on the BoCC Red List	Supporting greater than 1% of the UK population
National (Scotland)		Any species on the Scottish Biodiversity List	Supporting greater than 5% of the Scottish population
Regional		Any species on the BoCC Amber List	Supporting greater than 0.5% of the UK population
County		Any species that is listed as a Priority Species in the LBAP	Supporting greater than 0.05% of the UK population
Local		BoCC Green List; or species with no conservation concern; common and widespread throughout the UK	Supporting less than 0.05% of the UK population

E HABITAT SURVEY RESULTS



Legend

- Site Boundary

UKHab Habitats

- g4 - modified grassland
- w1f7 - other lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- w1g - other broadleaved woodland
- w2c - other coniferous woodland
- h2b - non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- h3h - mixed scrub
- r1g - other standing water
- r2b - other rivers and streams
- u1b - developed land - sealed surface
- u1b5 - buildings

Do not scale this map

Client
Moray Council

Project
Moray Framework - Cooper Park, Elgin

Title
UKHab Habitats Survey

Status
FINAL

Drawing No.	Revision	Date
379866-QGIS018	-	28 Apr 2025
Drawn	**Checked**	**Approved**
CM	JEP	GN

Scale
1:1,962 @ A3 0 21 42 63 m

Rev	Date	Amendment	Initials
-	-	-	-

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F PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

Photograph 1: Typical grassland habitat on site

Photograph 2: Island feature with woodland

Photograph 3: Giant hogweed growing along riverbank

Photograph 4: Tree with PRF

Photograph 5: Wood pigeon building nest

Photograph 6: Mute swan sitting on nest

G INNS SURVEY RESULTS

Legend

- Site Boundary
- 50m Buffer

INNS

- Buddleia
- Cherry laurel
- Cotoneaster
- Rhododendron
- Skunk cabbage
- Giant hogweed (scattered)

Do not scale this map

Client
Moray Council

Project
Moray Framework - Cooper Park, Elgin

Title
Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Survey Results Plan

Status
FINAL

Drawing No.	Revision	Date
379866-QGIS008	-	23 Apr 2025
Drawn	**Checked**	**Approved**
CM	JEP	GN

Scale
1:2,293 @ A3 0 25 50 75 m

Rev	Date	Amendment	Initials
-	-	-	-

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H FAUNAL SURVEY RESULTS

321250 321500 321750 322000

863500 863250 863000

Legend

- Site Boundary
- 50m Buffer
- 100m Buffer
- 250m Buffer

Protected Species

- Bird nests
- Trees with suitability for bats – PRF
- Buildings with suitability for bats - low

Do not scale this map

Client
Moray Council

Project
Moray Framework - Cooper Park, Elgin

Title
Protected Species Survey Results Plan

Status
FINAL

Drawing No.	Revision	Date
379866-QGIS012	-	24 Apr 2025
Drawn	**Checked**	**Approved**
CM	JEP	JEP

Scale
1:3,164 @ A3 0 25 50 75 m

Rev	Date	Amendment	Initials
-	-	-	-

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