

## Appendix 7.4

Badger Survey

## Legislation

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 therefore a Natural England licensing system exists to permit certain works that would otherwise be illegal. Works that require a license include direct impacts to badger holes and certain works within close proximity to a badger sett that may disturb badgers.

## Method

### Badger Survey

On-site and site-adjacent habitats were surveyed by Michelle Bullock MCIEEM on 19 August 2016 to identify any field signs of badger activity, including:

- Feeding signs such as snuffle holes made during foraging
- Hairs caught on vegetation or fences
- Latrines, usually positioned on territorial boundaries
- Foraging tracks/runs through vegetation or under fences
- Badger setts

Incidental evidence of badgers at the Site, encountered during visits to undertake various other survey work at the Site, were also recorded.

When badger setts are found the number of holes are recorded as well as their condition. Recording this information gives an indication of the type of sett by categorising it according to the criteria listed in Table 7.5.1.

**Table 7.5.1.** Criteria used to determine sett type (Harris, et al., 1989; Cresswell, et al., 1990; Wilson, et al., 1997)

<b>Sett Type</b>
Main Setts - These usually have a large number of holes with large spoil heaps, and the sett generally looks well used. There will be well-used paths to and from the sett and between sett entrances. Although normally the breeding sett is in continuous use, it is possible to find a main sett that has become disused due to excessive digging or some other reason; it should be recorded as a disused main sett.
Annex setts - They are often close to a main sett, usually less than 150 metres away, and are usually connected to the main sett by one or more obvious well-worn paths. They usually have several holes, but may not be in use all the time even if the main sett is very active.
Subsidiary setts - These often only have a few holes. They are usually at least 50 metres from a main sett, and do not have an obvious path connecting with another sett. They are not continuously active.
Outlying setts - These usually have only one or two holes, often have little spoil outside the hole, have no obvious path connecting with another sett, and are only used sporadically. When not in use by badgers, they are often taken over by foxes or even rabbits. However, they can still be recognised as badger setts by the shape of the tunnel (not the actual entrance hole), which is usually at least 250mm in diameter, and is rounded or a flattened oval shape. Fox and rabbit tunnels are smaller and often taller than broad.
<b>Hole Type</b>
Well used holes - These are clear of any debris or vegetation, are obviously in regular use, and may or may not have been excavated recently.
Partially used holes - These are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance, or have moss and / or other plants growing in or around the entrance. Partially used holes could be in regular use after a minimal amount of clearance.
Disused holes - These have not been in use for some time, are partially or completely

blocked, and could not be used without a considerable amount of clearance. If the hole has been disused for some time, all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be, and the remains of the spoil heap, which may be covered in moss or plants.

### Camera Trapping

In some cases Spypoint HD-7 infrared trail cameras are deployed to confirm whether or not the sett is in current use.

An infrared trail camera was installed at the Site along a mammal pathway adjacent to hedgerow H8 on 09-19 August 2016.

### Limitations

There were no limitations to the badger survey at the Site.

### Results

#### Badger Survey

No badger setts were recorded at the Site. A number of mammal holes are present along the south-western boundary of the southern land parcel but these are not considered to be utilised by badger. The mammal holes appear in size and shape to be rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* burrows. Evidence of use by rabbits was recorded in the form of rabbit droppings at the entrances to the holes.

Evidence of badger utilising the Site is present including a well-used and recently-used latrine towards the western corner of the southern land parcel recorded in August and September, and a recently-used latrine towards the centre of the arable field recorded in August (see **Figure 7.5**). Numerous mammal pathways are also present at the Site including through the arable field and at the margins of the arable field, as well as several pathways throughout the semi-improved grassland in the southern land parcel.

The camera trap installed along the mammal pathway adjacent to H8 recorded a badger utilising the path on 15<sup>th</sup> August. Other species recorded include fox *Vulpes vulpes*, polecat *Mustela* sp., domestic cat *Felis catu* and numerous rabbits.