

**INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY
RIVENHALL AIRFIELD
NEAR SILVER END
ESSEX**

**ECOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT
2016**

January 2017

for:

Gent, Fairhead & Co Ltd

Report number: 499/16

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This document has been prepared by Green Environmental Consultants Ltd on behalf of Gent, Fairhead & Co Ltd and is produced in relation to on-going works at the site known as the Integrated Waste Management Facility (IWMF) at the former Rivenhall Airfield, near Silver End, Essex.

The purpose of this report is to record the ecological management work undertaken at the IWMF following the implementation of planning permission ESS/34/15/BTE, to assess its success and any on-going work required. Monitoring is required as part of the planning permission, after construction is complete.

The scope of works is provided in the key document:

Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for the Integrated Waste Management Facility ('IWMF') at Rivenhall Airfield, was originally produced by Golder Associates in 2011 (Letter of discharge reference DM/CMT/DS/ESS/37/08/BTE of 27 July 2011) which was prepared in accordance with Condition 54 of planning permission, reference ESS/37/08/BTE and subsequently ESS/55/14/BTE. It was updated in 2015 by Green Environmental Consultants to take in to account changes since it was first produced, and the proposed modifications and improvements that have been made to the Site design, lay-out and mitigation proposals, relating to the existing and implemented IWMF planning permission ESS/34/15/BTE.

1.2 Habitat Management Plan Review

The HMP is based on a twenty-year plan as per the requirements of the Fourth Schedule of the S106 agreement. It is realistic however, to only prepare objectives and prescriptions for five-year periods at a time, as described in Condition 54. Accordingly, every five years site audits should be undertaken to review and update the HMP, addressing any major issues or changes at the Site, in consultation with the Waste Planning Authority. This review would target for instance, objectives which are not being met.

In addition to the five year review, in order to keep the HMP updated and relevant to Site operations, an annual ecological review will also be carried out, and a summary report produced. This will be an opportunity to report on the status of features, informed by the on-going surveys and monitoring events. Allied with this, the five-yearly and annual reviews will also enable a process of fine-tuning, allowing for the alteration or addition of new management projects to the work programme for subsequent years.

This document provides the annual review for 2016. The Site was visited on a number of occasions in 2016, in winter 2016 for scrub works, summer and early autumn, for Great Crested Newt works, and on 18th January 2017 for a specific monitoring review.

2 MANAGEMENT FEATURES

2.1 River Blackwater

No works have been undertaken in 2016 which physically affect the River Blackwater. Traffic calming and signage have been installed either side of the Bailey Bridges.

2.2 Woodland, Hedgerow and Scrub Network

The species-diverse hedgerow (W2a) translocated to the southern boundary of the set-aside strip (area W2b, reserved for later tree planting) has been monitored in previous years and the small number of individual specimens which had not established have been replaced. The hedgerow was in good condition in 2016 and developing well. Area W2b has not yet been planted and was serving as a receptor for storage of the top soil taken from the IWMF area.

Area W1a has changed in the last year. The woodland/scrub within the footprint of the IWMF construction area has been removed (outwith the bird nesting season). The remaining external boundary of mature W1a, is in the same condition and acts as the buffer it was designed to be.

2.3 Open Habitats

The main open habitat within the IWMF/Woodhouse Farm area is grassland. This remained substantially the same as in previous years, receiving occasional mowing to prevent it becoming too rough or covered in scrub. The new newt habitat (G01) is well developed.

The main difference is in the grassland to the west of Woodhouse Farm where the newt fence was realigned (see under 2.6 Great Crested Newts).

2.4 Ponds

Pond 1 close to the IWMF site has had some scrub removal as per the HMP. Further work may be required to open the southern side even further - this will be reviewed as the site develops.

The moat is covered in scrub on its outside bank. This has been left to act as a barrier to the footpath which is close to its edge.

New pond (ditch) P2a is present and acts as an ephemeral pond close to the newly created newt habitat.

2.5 Bats, Barn Owls and Badgers

No works have been carried out with regard to bats and Barn Owls in 2016, above those already implemented.

A Badger survey was undertaken on surrounding land in 2015 with a review in 2016. It is clear that Badgers cross adjacent land from the west, but there is no evidence that they are resident near to the IWMF site or that they use it to any degree.

2.6 Great Crested Newts

The major Great Crested Newts works in 2016 involved the realignment of a section of fence around a grass field to allow for construction at a later date, of the car park. This was undertaken under a European Protected Species (EPS) Annex licence from Natural England.

The newt fence also received a major condition review with some clearance of over-hanging scrub and cutting back of long vegetation along the fence line. The troughs have been cleared

out on a regular basis.

2.7 Biodiversity

During the visit in January 2017, a number of birds were seen within and around the Site.

Blackbirds and others were seen using the scrub W1a. A number of birds including Lapwings were seen using nearby arable fields.

It is clear from the latest visit and others that birds continue to use the remaining resources, moving around seasonally and as land use changes. The removal of scrub at W1a does not seem to have disturbed birds to any great extent.

2.7 Green Roof and Retaining Wall

As the IWMF has not been constructed these features are not present.