

Appendix 11.5: Great Crested Newt Survey Report 2025

Project Excellence, Land at Wiggs Farm, Station Road, Coalville

Great Crested Newt Survey Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This report has been prepared by Envance on behalf of Barberry Bardon Limited and reports the findings of great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* surveys undertaken at land at off Station Road, Coalville, which is broadly centered on National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 43745 09718, and hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.

1.1.2 The work has been undertaken to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) in relation to a proposed new logistics facility at the Site. This report forms an Appendix to the Environmental Statement (ES)¹ which accompanies the planning application and further details of the development proposals and baseline conditions of the Site can be found there.

1.1.3 The Site is located north of the village of Bagworth, Leicestershire. The B565 is located immediately to the north and west, Station Road to the east, with the southern boundary bordered by grassland and arable fields. Predominantly the Site itself consists of arable fields defined by hedgerows and woodland.

1.1.4 This survey report relates to GCN surveys at Pond 1 (P1 at national grid reference SK 43809 09520) located adjacent to the Site (see Figure 11.1 of the ES).

1.2 Legislative Context

1.2.1 The great crested newt is fully protected through inclusion on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('The Habitats Regulations'). In brief, this legislation makes it offence to²:

- deliberately kill, injure, or take a great crested newt;
- deliberately disturb a great crested newt in such a way as to be likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or nurture their young; to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of that species;
- deliberately take or destroy the eggs of great crested newt;
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a great crested newt;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a place that great crested newt use for shelter or protection; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt whilst it is occupying a place which it uses for shelter or protection.

1.2.2 Great crested newts are a Priority Species under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 in England, specifically under Section 41 of the Act.

1.3 Study Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 The aims of the survey were to:

- Establish the presence/likely absence of great crested newts within the Site and describe

¹ Envance (2025) Project Excellence, Land at Wiggs Farm, Station Road, Coalville Environmental Statement Volumes 1-3

² This is not legal advice. See www.legislation.gov.uk for further details.



their distribution and abundance; and

- Evaluate the population(s) in the local, regional, and national context if GCN were positively identified within P1.

1.3.2 The Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) sets out information relating to the potential impacts of the proposed development within the Site to great crested newts and the approach to mitigation, compensation, and enhancement. This report serves as an appendix to the ES and presents the results of the GCN Survey only.

2 Methodology

2.1 Previous Surveys

2.1.1 Previous surveys for GCN using eDNA analysis were undertaken by HLPC in 2024. Methodology and results are provided in Appendix 11.1 of the ES. These surveys returned a positive eDNA result for pond P1 located at SK 43745 09718. However, the number of positive laboratory replicates was low for this pond, reported for 5 out of 12 only. Seven other ponds within 500 m of the Site (P2 – P8) were surveyed in 2024 and returned negative results for GCN eDNA. Given the positive eDNA result for P1 GCN surveys using traditional methods (see below) was undertaken as follows to confirm presence/absence in light of the low number of positive replicates and lack of any other ponds supporting this species.

2.2 Field Survey

2.1.2 A summary of the methods employed is given below, methods followed published Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (GCNMG)³.

2.1.3 Due to the confirmed presence of great crested newt eDNA in P1, the following survey was undertaken in April and May 2025 by Envance in accordance with the GCNMG using the following methods:

- Torchlight Survey: Following sunset, P1 was systematically searched using a 1,000,000 candle power torch, to detect the presence of amphibians. Amphibians, notably newt species, are easier to detect under these conditions.
- Accessible banks of P1 were scanned with the torch beam and any amphibians encountered were identified and counted. Surveys of each section of the bank was considered complete when all visible water area had been scanned with the torch beam and no further amphibians were encountered.
- Egg searching: Suitable egg laying material in pond P1 was inspected (where possible) for evidence of GCN eggs during torching surveys. Other evidence of breeding activity, e.g., courtship and egg-laying were also recorded where observed.
- Bottle trapping: 25 bottle traps were set around the perimeter of pond P1 at 2m spacing. The number of traps set was subject to the size of the waterbody and accessibility to the water's edge. The traps were left overnight and checked and collected the following morning.

Survey personnel

2.1.4 Field surveys were led by Stuart Robinson, an experienced and appropriately licenced ecologist from Envance. Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence No. WML CL08 (2015-18334-CLS-CLS)

³ English Nature (2001) Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines. JNCC (1998) Herpetofauna Workers' Manual.



accompanied by Dr Holly Smith, Hannah Karim, and Tim Jones.

Limitations

- 2.1.5 All survey visits were carried out during within the required survey season for demonstrating GCN presence/absence.
- 2.1.6 Three survey techniques were carried out on pond P1 during each survey visit.
- 2.1.7 Only 40% of the pond bank was accessible for bottle trapping, however, the survey effort remained proportionate to pond P1 conditions and is not considered a significant constraint to the survey. As such the survey results are considered to provide a robust assessment to identify the amphibian assemblage present within pond P1.

3 Results

- 3.1.1 The majority of the Site comprises an arable field under intensive crop production and regular ploughing, as such has negligible suitability for GCN. Suitable terrestrial habitat is present in the form of hedgerow bases and woodland habitats. Pond P1 is located within an area of immature plantation and is a fishing pond within the angling club. Pond 1 has fishing platforms around the perimeter of the pond and is actively used for fishing.
- 3.1.2 Table 1 below provides details of the survey undertaken in 2025.

Table 1: Summary of Survey Results – Pond P1

| Survey Visit | GCN | | | | Other Amphibians |
|--------------|------|--------|----------|--------------|---|
| | Male | Female | Juvenile | Undetermined | |
| 02/04/2025 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 common frog, 1 common toad, 4 smooth newt |
| 14/04/2025 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 common frog, 2 common toad, 7 smooth newt |
| 29/04/2025 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 smooth newt |
| 08/05/2025 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 smooth newt |

- 3.1.3 Records of eDNA survey undertaken in 2024 identified the presence of great crested newt in Pond P1. All other waterbodies surveyed in 2024 gave negative results. P1 had a low number of positive replicates in the laboratory analysis (see Appendix 11.1 of the ES). Taken with the use of the pond by the angling club for fishing (which can be an indicator of low suitability for supporting GCN) the pond was surveyed using traditional methods at a time when it would be expected to find GCN within the pond during their core breeding season (April/May).
- 3.1.4 During the surveys undertaken in 2025, GCN were not recorded during the first four surveys and so absence of GCN was confirmed and the eDNA result was considered likely to be a false positive result, particularly when taking into consideration the low number of positive replicates and the use of the pond for angling which may introduce a source of GCN eDNA from other ponds.
- 3.1.5 Smooth newts were recorded in Pond P1 with a peak count of 9. Common toad was recorded in pond P1 with a peak count of 2, during the 2025 surveys. Common frog was recorded in pond P1 with a peak count of 2. A low population of smooth newts, common toad and common frog are therefore



present at the Site.

3.1.6 Applying the selection criteria in Herpetofauna Workers' Manual the amphibian assemblage would not qualify for selection as an amphibian Site of Special Scientific Interest. The value of the Site, in terms of amphibians, is consequently assessed as being Low Local level of importance for common amphibians only.