

Sompting Estate Ecology Surveys Results Summary

Designated Sites

Lower Cokeham Reedbed and Ditches Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SINC) falls within the Sompting Estate. This site comprises an area of reedbed and tall fen, which is crossed and bordered by wet ditches. It is of importance for wildlife as it is an area of semi-natural habitat, which is especially valuable for birds, located on the edge of a heavily built-up area.

Part of Steep Down SINC falls within the Sompting Estate. This site comprises an isolated remnant of unimproved chalk grassland situated on the west-facing slope of Steep Down. The moderately steep slope supports a mosaic of short herb-rich grassland, rank grassland and scrub. The site supports many plants and butterflies characteristic of unimproved downland.

A very small portion of Applesham Bank Farm SINC falls within the Sompting Estate. This site supports areas of excellent unimproved chalk grassland with a typically species rich sward. The quality of the sward varies somewhat across the slope. Cowslip *Primula veris* is extremely abundant on parts of the slope.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

As part of the Rampion project, an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out in March 2011 along the alignment of the proposed cable route corridor (including land within the Sompting Estate), followed by subsequent detailed botanical surveys of selected areas between May and June 2011.

The surveys were undertaken to identify the plants and habitats along the alignment of the proposed cable route. For the detailed botanical surveys, the survey area covered a 125m survey corridor. The survey was conducted in accordance with guidelines for the establishment of ecological baselines in environmental impact assessment (Institute of Environmental Assessment 1995).

The results of the survey indicate that within the Sompting Estate land holding, the following habitats were present (as indicated on Rampion Offshore Wind Farm 2012 ES Figures 2-4):

- Towards the landfall, directly north of the East Worthing railway track comprises mostly semi improved grassland with a swamp and small area of marshy grassland. There are also areas of scattered broad leaved trees and scattered scrub (Map 1/ Figure 2).
- Further away from the landfall, to the east of the sports ground, land is predominately arable with some patches of scattered scrub. There is a patch of semi improved neutral grassland east of Bramber First School (Map 1/Figure 2).
- Directly north and south of Sompting Bypass, land is predominately improved grassland, with spots of scattered scrub to the south of the disused quarry (Map 2/Figure 2-3).
- To the south of Lambleys barn is an area of unimproved calcareous grassland (Map 2/Figure 3).

- To the north of Sompting are areas of broad leaved semi natural woodland, broad leaved plantation woodland, unimproved calcareous grassland and scattered broad leaved trees (Map 2/3/Figures 3/4).

For full details please see Rampion Offshore Wind Farm 2012 ES Appendix 24.2 - Botany Technical Report.

Badgers

The surveys comprised a thorough walkover of the proposed cable route (including land within the Sompting Estate), carried out in February and March 2011.

The surveys were undertaken to identify the presence/absence of Badgers (*Meles meles*) and their setts along the alignment of the proposed cable route. A survey corridor of 125 m was used to take into account the potential for disturbance. Badgers and their setts are fully protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended).

The results of the survey indicate one badger sett was identified within the Sompting Estate land holding. The location of this sett is confidential in accordance with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Bats

The surveys comprised a roost survey for bats and bat activity surveys, carried out between February and September 2011.

The surveys were undertaken to identify the presence/absence of bats and bat habitat along the alignment of the proposed cable route (including land within the Sompting Estate). A survey corridor of 125 m was assumed for the roost surveys to take into account the potential for disturbance. All species of British bat are protected by The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

A number of trees within the Sompting Estate land holding contained features which are suitable for roosting bats; these trees were subject to further surveys including ground level tree assessments; aerial inspections and/or dusk and dawn emergence surveys.

No evidence of bat roosts were recorded during the aerial inspections or emergence surveys.

Automated bat activity surveys were undertaken at selected hedgerows using a bat detector called an Anabat. Common Pipistrelle; Soprano Pipistrelle; Nathusius' Pipistrelle; Myotis/Plecotus species; and Nyctalus species were recorded during these surveys.

The manual bat activity surveys (undertaken by ecologists rather than a static bat detector) recorded Common Pipistrelle; Soprano Pipistrelle; Myotis/Plecotus species; Nyctalus species; and Serotine. All of the species recorded were commuting and foraging.

For full details please see Rampion Offshore Wind Farm 2012 ES Appendix 24.4 - Bat Technical Report.

Invertebrates

An initial walkover survey was undertaken on 11th May 2011 along the alignment of the proposed cable route corridor (including land within the Sompting Estate). Subsequent to the initial site visit, sampling visits were undertaken within the months of June, July, August and September 2011 at specific locations including land within the Sompting Estate.

The surveys were undertaken to provide a baseline account of the invertebrate communities present.

No invertebrate species that are afforded direct legal protection under any UK or European legislation were encountered during the survey.

For full details please see Rampion Offshore Wind Farm 2012 ES Appendix 24.9 – Terrestrial Invertebrate Technical Report. A list of invertebrate recorded within the Sompting Estate land holding is provided in Appendix 1 (See Areas 2 and 4).

Dormouse

The surveys comprised nest box and nest tube surveys, carried out between July and October 2011.

The surveys were undertaken to identify the presence/absence of dormice along the alignment of the proposed cable route (including land within the Sompting Estate). A 65 m survey corridor was used. The The hazel dormouse or common dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) is a European Protected Species.

The results of the survey indicate that a single Dormouse nest was found in a nest tube on the south side of the South Downs (east of Titch Hill Farm) within the Sompting Eastate land holding.

For full details please see Rampion Offshore Wind Farm 2012 ES Appendix 24.5 – Dormouse Technical Report.

Great Crested Newt

The surveys comprised habitat suitability assessment surveys, scoping surveys, and presence-absence surveys carried out in March, April and May 2011.

The surveys were undertaken to identify the presence/absence of Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) in ponds located within 250 m of the edge of the 65 m working width of the proposed cable route (including land within the Sompting Estate). Great Crested Newt is listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and receives full protection under Section 9. This species is also listed as a European Protected Species on Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994 which gives it full protection under Regulation 39.

No Great Crested Newts were recorded within the Sompting Estate land holding.

Water Vole

The surveys comprised a preliminary habitat assessment carried out in December 2010 and subsequent detailed surveys of selected areas, carried out between May and early September 2011.

The surveys were undertaken to identify the presence/absence of Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) in watercourses along the alignment of the proposed cable route (including land within the Sompting Estate). For the detailed surveys the search area extended 100 m up and downstream of each proposed crossing point was carried out at all suitable watercourses. *Arvicola amphibius* (Water Vole) is fully protected under Section 9 of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Protection was extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Water Vole is included as a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).

The results of the survey indicate that though the habitat is suitable for Water Voles, no evidence was found indicating that the species is absent.

No Water Voles were recorded within the Sompting Estate land holding.

Otter

The surveys comprised a preliminary habitat assessment carried out in December 2010 and subsequent detailed surveys of selected areas, carried out between May and early September 2011.

The surveys were undertaken to identify the presence/absence of Otter (*Lutra lutra*) in watercourses along the alignment of the proposed cable route. For the detailed surveys the search area extended 100 m up and downstream of each proposed crossing point was carried out at all suitable watercourses. *Lutra lutra* (Otter) is listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and receives full protection under Section 9. This species is also listed as a European Protected Species on Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994 which gives it full protection under Regulation 39. Protection was extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act). The Otter is included as a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) and also as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England under Section 74 of the CRoW Act. The Otter is also protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This protection relates specifically to trapping and direct pursuit of the species. The European sub-species is also listed as globally threatened on the IUCN/WCMC RDL.

No otters were recorded within the Sompting Estate land holding.

Reptile

The surveys comprised a preliminary habitat assessment carried out in December 2010 and subsequent presence/absence surveys using artificial refugia in selected areas, carried out between May and September 2011.

The surveys were undertaken to identify the presence/absence of reptiles along the alignment of the proposed cable route. For the reptile surveys, the search area covered a 65 m survey corridor.

The three common species of reptiles were found within the Sompting Estate land holding, these include; Common Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*), Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) and Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*). All are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), in respect of Section 9(5) and part of Section 9(1).

For full details please see Rampion Offshore Wind Farm 2012 ES Appendix 24.8 - Reptile Technical Report.

Aquatic Invertebrate

The surveys comprised standard three minute kick/sweep net surveys with one minute visual search, carried out between May and September 2011. There were two sampling locations within the vicinity of the Sompting Estate land holding.

The surveys were undertaken to provide a baseline account of the invertebrate communities present within watercourses crossed by the proposed cable route.

The results of the survey indicate the overall diversity of invertebrates over the sites sampled is not particularly high and all beetle, bug and damselfly species recorded were common.

For full details please see Rampion Offshore Wind Farm 2012 ES Appendix 24.10 – Aquatic Invertebrate Technical Report.