

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Teindland Wind Farm

Volume 3

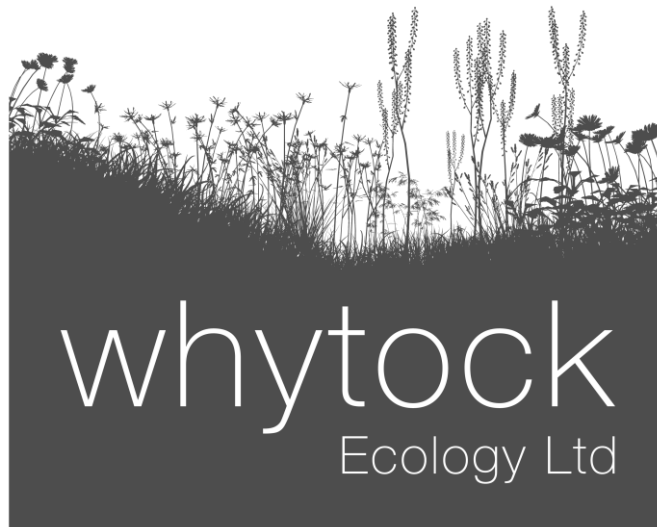
TA A6.5: Outline Habitat Management Plan

Document prepared by Envams Ltd for: Teindland Wind Farm Ltd

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Teindland Wind Farm

Outline Habitat Management Plan



8 Revoan Drive,
Grantown-on-Spey
PH26 3HA

07523 281 158

Rory.whytock@gmail.com
Ecologyscotland.com

Executive Summary

Following a review of the key habitats and species identified on site, as well as an assessment of other existing plans and policies including the Technical Appendices for habitats and protected mammals, the following aims have been identified for this outline Habitat Management Plan (oHMP):

1. To improve the biodiversity and structure of the woodland environment within the site boundary; and
2. To enhance watercourse and riparian habitats for otter and fish.

The following management measures are proposed:

- Implement staged felling and restocking/regeneration plans in areas temporarily cleared for wind farm construction purposes;
- Fell and re-stock areas surrounding watercourses and wetlands with native broadleaved woodland;
- Riparian/wetland native broadleaved creation areas to be retained for the lifetime of the wind farm; and
- Implement controls for Rhododendron in the southeast of the site.

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Introduction

Teindland Wind Farm (the Development) is located at Teindland Wood, approximately 2 km north of Rothes, Moray (the Site). The purpose of this Outline Habitat Management Plan (oHMP) is to set out a range of mitigation and enhancement measures within the enhancement area boundary (shown in Figure 1).

Current site conditions

Land use

The Site is primarily managed as a commercial forestry plantation, though sections of the woodland are used for research and public recreation purposes. Much of the woodland is proposed to be clear felled under the current Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) management plan (FLS, 2025). Some areas are under a long-term retention plan, though proposed infrastructure has avoided these stands.

Within the FLS Teindland management plan two primary objectives are identified including:

- The management of the woodland to produce a sustainable crop of quality timber suitable for the local processing mills; and
- Manage Teindland Quarry SSSI area so as to maintain its favourable condition classification.

Three secondary objectives are also provided, these are:

- Manage the deep peat areas to maximise their carbon sequestration and storage potential;
- Improve the riparian zones within the plan area; and
- Increase the area of open ground in order to move towards the UKFS requirement to have 10% open ground within a management unit.

Designated sites

Teindland quarry SSSI is situated within the survey area and is designated for geological features. The Development infrastructure is beyond the zone of influence for this designated site.

Adjacent to the Site in the east lies the River Spey which is designated under the following:

- River Spey Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and
- River Spey Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Both of these designations cover approximately the same geographical areas, though small differences in extent do exist. Both designations have the same qualifying species, these are:

- Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar*;
- Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*;
- Freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*; and
- Otter *Lutra lutra*.

Key ecological receptors and potential mitigation measures

Habitats

Much of the Site is dominated by coniferous forestry plantation, amounting to approximately 82% of the total survey area. A large proportion (799 ha) of the woodland within the enhancement area boundary is mapped within the Ancient Woodland Inventory as being of long-established of plantation origin (class 2b).

As part of the habitat surveys, an assessment regarding the state of semi-naturalness has been conducted (further details are provided within the Teindland habitat survey Technical Appendix A6.1). As a part of this assessment, the coniferous woodland has been separated into areas that exhibit some semi-natural features, and those that do not. Areas with some semi-natural features are considered to be of moderate biodiversity value. All areas of woodland proposed to be removed as part of the current infrastructure proposals are to be clear felled under the current FLS forest plan (FLS, 2025). As such, the felling proposed as part of the Development is of a similar nature to the current management regime.

Negative impacts upon habitats are predicted to be minimal as a result of the Development. However, a range of enhancement measures are provided within this oHMP so that biodiversity within the Site is enhanced.

Protected species

Eurasian otter, badger, red squirrel and pine marten were recorded during the ecological surveys carried out in 2024 (See Technical Appendix A6.2). No places of rest for otter, badger or red squirrel were identified within their respective zones of influence from proposed infrastructure. As such, no protected species licensing is required and no direct impacts are protected species places of rest at this time.

Indirect impacts upon protected species are likely limited to a loss of foraging habitat from permanent loss of woodland. Compensatory planting (off site) is proposed to compensate for permanent losses from infrastructure. Furthermore, woodland enhancement measures will provide an increase in biodiversity and provide greater foraging and habitat for red squirrel, badger, pine marten and otter.

Pre-construction surveys for protected species are required to update the baseline (as detailed in Technical Appendix A6.2) and to inform the need for any micro-siting or derogation licenses from NatureScot, should any such species colonise areas near the development layout.

Designated sites

The Development infrastructure is located approximately 1 km from the River Spey SAC and SSSI. The Broad Burn, to the south of the Site and the Red Burn to the north of the Site are considered to

be valuable for spawning salmonids and tribute directly into the River Spey. The Spey, the Broad Burn and the Red Burn have been avoided as part of the evolution to the design of the wind farm.

Nonetheless, there are minor watercourses located within the Site that form part of the River Spey catchment. Accordingly, it is critical that construction works are carried out in accordance with SEPA pollution prevention guidance and that effective surface water mitigation measures are installed prior to the commencement of any site clearance or construction works.

Should any instream works be required (such as culverting) that are considered to have the potential to support fish fauna, these works will be overseen by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW). Fish population surveys will be carried out prior to construction, during construction and post-construction.

Ornithology

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* established a nest in the east of the Site in 2024. This nest is proposed to be removed as part of the Development, to minimise risk of collisions between osprey and turbine blades. As mitigation, five artificial nest platforms would be erected within the Site;

Confidential **Figure 7.8** within **Volume 2c** of the EIAR illustrates the locations identified. The locations presented should be regarded as being indicative only, as micro-siting would be required to best position each platform. The provisional locations have been identified based on positioning within parts of the wood that allow for the long-term retention of the platforms (recently clear-felled areas, areas with no planned felling for at least 25 years and areas of low impact silviculture management), whilst also avoiding tracks and other sources of potential disturbance as much as possible. Additionally, all locations are sited to the east and northeast of the Development to allow access to the River Spey valley and to minimise flight activity in the vicinity of proposed turbines.

The siting of artificial platforms in this area will provide alternatives for the currently breeding pair of osprey. Platforms would be in place ahead of construction of the Development.

Aims and Objectives

Following a review of the key habitats and species identified on Site, as well as an assessment of other existing plans and policies, the following aims have been identified for this OHMP:

- Improve the biodiversity and structure of the woodland environment within the site boundary; and
- Enhance watercourse and riparian habitats for otter and fish.

A Habitat Management Group (HMG) will oversee and monitor the implementation of the agreed HMP. The HMG should include representatives from FLS, NatureScot and the wind farm owner.

The following objectives are proposed to achieve these aims:

- Complement the objectives within the Teindland Management Plan (FLS, 2025) as far as practicable;
- Vary the age and structure of trees within the forest;
- Provide compensatory planting for permanent loss of woodland;
- Remove conifer plantation from riparian corridors and around wetlands where feasible;
- Plant riparian corridors with broadleaved woodland including species such as willow *Salix* sp. birch *Betula pubescens* and Aspen *Populus tremula*;
- Riparian corridors and native broadleaved woodland surrounding wetlands should be retained for the lifetime of the Development; and
- Maintain suitable riparian corridors for otter and fish throughout the Site.

Management Measures

The following offsetting mitigation measures are proposed to meet the objectives of the oHMP:

- Provide compensatory planting (40.21ha) for permanently felled areas;
- Temporary felled areas (36.60ha) will be replanted or facilitated to regenerate naturally in line with standard forestry practice; and
- Erection of five artificial osprey platforms.

In addition to these, the following enhancement measures are proposed (as illustrated on Figure 2):

- Riparian corridors (30m buffer) should be felled and re-planted with native broadleaf species in suitable locations (several areas totaling 20.47 ha have been identified for consideration on Figure 2);
- Fell coniferous woodland surrounding identified wetlands and re-plant with native broadleaves (areas totaling 4.12 ha have been identified for consideration on Figure 2);
- Remove/control *Rhododendron* populations (9.27 ha in total); and
- A total of 22.71 ha of keyholed woodland surrounding turbines will be left as open ground to contribute towards the 10% open ground target as detailed as a secondary objective within the Teindland Management Plan (FLS, 2025).

Monitoring measures

Habitats

A professional forester would monitor the compensatory and native broadleaf planted areas in Years 1, 3 and 5 following planting to ensure successful establishment, specifically looking for evidence of damage (e.g., browsing) or disease. Failed specimens should be replaced in the consecutive winter (i.e., between November and March). The forester would also advise on whether any further management or maintenance is required to ensure the establishment of the trees. Any additional measures would be discussed and agreed within the HMG.

These areas would be monitored again by a professional forester in operational Year 10 to ensure that there are no issues with disease or invasive species and to determine if any thinning at this stage would benefit woodland establishment. Monitoring would be undertaken again in operational Year 20 when some thinning operations may be required in woodland in order to encourage growth of better trees and create more open woodland, further new enhancement/enrichment planting may also be considered at this stage. This would aid regeneration of seedlings and begin the process of establishing a mixed age structure.

The appropriate methods for Rhododendron removal should be assessed in operational year 1. Follow up procedures and timelines will be agreed once suitable methods for removal have been assessed. Following this, removal will also take place in operational year 1 and follow agreed timelines for future management.

Ornithology

Artificial osprey nest platforms will be monitored by a suitably qualified ecologist holding the relevant schedule 1 species license where applicable. Occupancy and success will be monitored on an annual basis through operational years 1-5. Following this and informed by the first five years monitoring results, future monitoring will be agreed by the HMG.

Reporting and Review

A report will be submitted by the wind farm owner to the HMG in Years 1, 3 and 5 of operation. This report will detail:

- Management undertaken in the past year(s);
- Monitoring undertaken, results and discussion of results; and
- Management and monitoring proposed for the following year(s).

The HMG may meet periodically to discuss the reports and management of the Site, if this is considered necessary by the members of the HMG.

Where monitoring indicates any management objectives are not met, further management prescriptions or interventions would be agreed by the HMG.

The requirement for the measures, monitoring and reporting following year 5 of the operational phase would be dependent on the results of the monitoring which would be discussed and agreed within the HMG in year 5, or as agreed in writing with the HMG.

In addition, the HMP would be reviewed by the HMG every five years from its commencement, or earlier if the HMG consider it necessary. The purpose of the review will be to assess the effectiveness of the proposed management prescriptions at achieving the aims and objectives of the HMP. If necessary, such measures may be amended by the HMG at any time.

Summary

This oHMP sets out a range of enhancement measures that will be implemented to improve biodiversity within the Site. Enhancement measures have been formulated by taking consideration of the long-term objectives within the Teindland management plan (FLS, 2025) and information relating to adverse effects identified within **Chapter 6: Ecology** and **Chapter 7: Ornithology** of the EIAR.

Offsetting mitigation measures include compensatory planting, regeneration of felled coniferous woodland and the erection of five artificial osprey platforms.

The main enhancement measures include an increase in native broadleaved woodland communities surrounding watercourses and standing water bodies (where appropriate); an increase in open ground within the Site through retaining open areas around the turbines; and the removal of invasive non-native *Rhododendron* populations in the west of the Site.

These proposals will contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including restoring degraded habitats (riparian zones) and building and strengthening nature networks and the connections between them (along the watercourses). These proposals integrate nature-based solutions, by facilitating the improvement of riparian corridors and wetland environments through active management of the trees in these areas.

The proposals will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention, and this includes future management. The proposals are based on an understanding of the existing characteristics of the Site, this being a long-term managed coniferous woodland, which is common across Scotland and does not contain any irreplaceable habitats.

EIAR chapters 6 (Ecology) and 7 (Ornithology) present an assessment of potential negative effects which have been fully mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy prior to identifying enhancements. The enhancements (beyond mitigation) set out in this oHMP are significant biodiversity enhancements which include nature networks (i.e., the watercourses and their surrounding habitats), linking to and strengthening habitat connectivity within and beyond the development. The proposals can be secured within a reasonable timescale (the establishment of the native broadleaf trees in the riparian and wetland areas) and with reasonable certainty, in that these measures have been implemented successfully elsewhere and the process is well established. Management arrangements for their long-term retention and monitoring have been included. Opportunities for local community benefits of the biodiversity and/or nature networks are limited at this Site, however, as the Site is used for public recreation activities, the increase in biodiversity will be apparent to the public and will benefit those that are interested in it.

References

FLS (2025) Teindland Land Management Plan. Available online at:

<https://forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/planning/active/teindland-land-management-plan>

[Accessed 02/02/2025]

Appendix A – Management and Monitoring timetable

Year	0*	1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15***
Work Item																
Management Prescription	Year of implementation															
Provide compensatory planting for areas proposed to be permanently felled	HMG to agree specific prescriptions in operational year 1. Follow up management throughout operational period.															
Riparian corridors/ wetlands should be felled and re-planted with native broadleaf species	✓	Non-native species along riparian corridors should be felled and re-planted along clear-fell														
Erection of five artificial osprey nest platforms	✓															
Remove Rhododendron populations	HMG to agree specific prescriptions in operational year 1. Follow up management/control throughout the lifetime of the fifteen-year operational period															
Monitoring																
Broadleaved woodland establishment/growth monitoring		✓		✓		✓					✓					✓
Woodland condition monitoring assessment in thinned areas		✓		✓		✓					✓					✓
Riparian woodland condition monitoring assessment		✓		✓		✓					✓					✓
Rhododendron removal monitoring		✓		✓		✓	As required after operational Year 5, as agreed by HMG									
Artificial osprey nest platform monitoring		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	As required after operational Year 5, as agreed by HMG									
Reporting/Reviews																
HMG report		✓		✓		✓	Reporting schedule to be agreed by HMG after year 5									
HMG 5-year review of Habitat Management Plan						✓					✓					✓

* Construction Phase

**First year after final commissioning of the Proposed Development / Operational Year 1.

***HMG to agree ongoing schedule as required