

**Project** Worcestershire County Council Major Scheme Bid **Date** 23 June 2009  
**Note** North West Link Road, Habitat Suitability Index and Breeding Bird Surveys **Ref** CEWAKA101/04  
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## **1** *Introduction*

1.1 This progress note is the Stage 1 deliverable for the Worcester Transport Strategy Major Scheme Bid (WTS MSB) Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) survey for great crested newts and breeding bird survey fieldwork for the North West Link Road (NWLR).

## **2** *Access and Survey Period*

2.1 Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) surveys for great crested newt commenced in June 2009 once access permissions to the majority of the land had been secured. The surveys commenced on 9 June 2009 by a team of ecologists working to a recognised methodology<sup>1</sup>. Where access to land had not been agreed with the landowner the survey was undertaken from public rights of way if possible (i.e. if right of way was adjacent or very near to the pond).

2.2 The breeding bird surveys commenced on 4 June 2009 and are on-going. Two out of the planned three survey visits have been completed. It is proposed to complete these surveys by early-July.

## **3** *Findings*

3.1 HSI surveys to date indicate that the ponds are of 'below average' score, primarily due to size of the ponds and possible stocking with fish.

3.2 The breeding bird survey has indicated about six skylark territories (Birds of Conservation Concern, Red List species), breeding confirmation of reed buntings (UKBAP species) and otherwise large numbers of common species such as wrens, blackbirds, wood pigeons and common whitethroats.

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<sup>1</sup> Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143-155.

3.3 The Tarmac site at the north end of the study area has not been visited, but breeding pairs of lapwing (Red List) common terns (Amber List), and oystercatcher (Amber List) have been picked up by the survey.

#### 4 ***Current Conclusions***

4.1 Due to the limited data to date it is difficult to draw any conclusions at this stage, although ponds so far have not provided good quality habitat for great crested newts.

4.2 Breeding bird surveys indicate that consideration will need to be given to mitigating and/or compensating for potential impacts to skylark habitat and in the north of the site for mitigation and/or compensation may need to consider wetland bird species. Birds include UKBAP species and Birds of Conservation Concern.