

Progress note

Project	Worcestershire County Council Major Scheme Bid	Date	19 June 2009
Note	SLR, P&R and City Centre Bridge, Breeding Bird and Habitat Suitability Index Surveys	Ref	CEWAKA101/02
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1 *Introduction*

1.1 This progress note is the Stage 3 deliverable for the Worcester Transport Strategy Major Scheme Bid (WTS MSB), GCN HSI & breeding birds June fieldwork for SLR, P&R sites and City Centre Bridge.

2 *Access and Survey Period*

2.1 Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) surveys for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* commenced in May 2009 once access permissions to the majority of the land had been secured. The surveys commenced on 21 May 2009 by a team of ecologists working to a recognised methodology¹. 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). In some locations relevant survey information is missing, particularly adjacent to the existing SLR at its eastern extent.

2.2 The breeding bird surveys commenced on 1 June 2009 and are on-going. Up to two out of the planned three survey visits have been completed. It is proposed to complete these surveys by early-July. Breeding birds and great crested newts are not considered to be significant issues at the location of the proposed City Centre Bridge and therefore detailed surveys for these species are not being undertaken.

3 *Findings*

3.1 HSI surveys have been undertaken on 15 ponds within the SLR to date. Two of these ponds, which scored 'good' on HSI also had a full great crested newt trapping survey undertaken as they are on publicly accessible land (Sustainable Drainage ponds at Norton roundabout), but no great crested newts were found present, although a high population of smooth

¹ 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.

newts were present. HSI surveys at New College P&R (four ponds) and Worcester Parkway P&R (five ponds) identified two ponds as 'excellent' and four as 'good'. HSI surveys at other P&R sites have yet to be completed.

3.2 Breeding bird surveys on SLR and P&R sites have not yet identified any rare or significant species, although the habitats around St. Peter the Great residential area has been noted to include a high population of house sparrows (Birds of Conservation Concern, Red List species). Other species recorded include cuckoo (Red List), song thrush (Red List), whitethroat and lesser whitethroat. Several territories of sky lark (Red List) have been identified in arable fields within SLR and the P&R sites.

4 ***Current Conclusions***

4.1 HSI surveys indicate that there are ponds present within the zone of influence of the SLR and P&R sites that could include populations of great crested newts, although most of the ponds adjacent to the SLR are of average or below average score.

4.2 Breeding bird surveys indicate no likely significant constraints to SLR or P&R sites, however, consideration will need to be given to mitigating and/or compensating for potential impacts to sky lark habitat, and to urban and scrub habitats that might support populations of house sparrow and song thrush.