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GREAT CRESTED NEWT (TRITURUS CRISTATUS) HABITAT SUITABILITY INDEX (HSI) SURVEY AND SITE RISK ASSESSMENT

LAND WEST OF PARSONS FIELD STABLES, PICKHURST LANE, PULBOROUGH, RH20 1DA

1.0 SITE SURVEY AIMS

1.1 This document presents the findings of a habitat suitability index survey (HSI) (Oldham *et al.* 2000) and great crested newt risk (GCN) assessment carried in relation to the proposed installation of static caravan pitches located on land west of Parsons Field Stables, Pickhurst Lane, Pulborough, RH20 1DA (henceforth referred to as the 'Site').

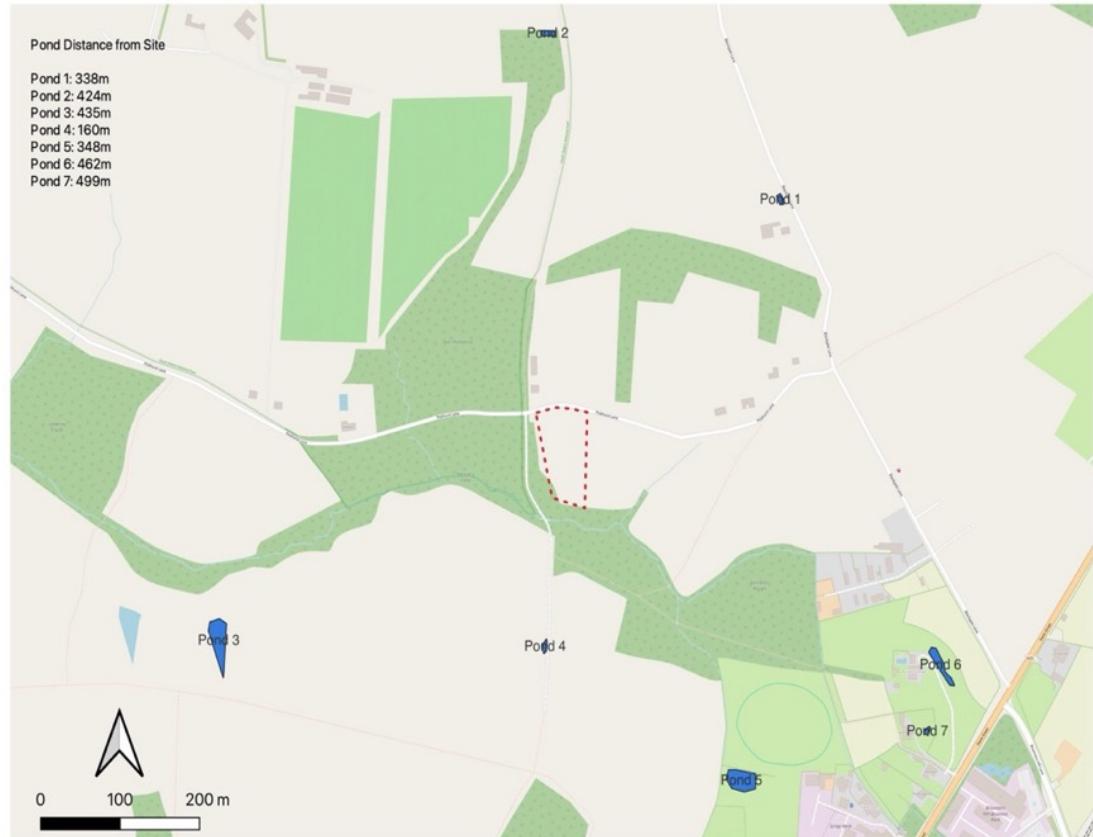
1.2 ***Figure 1: Proposed Development Area (Redline Boundary)***



1.3 The site comprised of a large expanse of heavily horse grazed modified grassland with a native species hedgerow providing a site boundary to the north. There was a large block of deciduous woodland to the west, which was separated from the site by an access track leading from Pickhurst Lane to the north.

1.4 The location of Pond 4 was accessible on this occasion. No of the other ponds were accessed at this stage. The site visit was conducted on the 2nd March 2025.

1.5 **Figure 2: Location of Ponds**



1.6 The survey work and reporting has been led by Richard Law BSc MRes CEnv MCIEEM FLS. Richard has been undertaking ecological survey work within the last 18 years on many different locations throughout the United Kingdom, for a variety of protected species, including bats (Class 2 2015-12576), reptiles, amphibians including great crested newt (Class 1 2016-20290) and terrestrial mammals including dormice (Class 1 2015-13188) and birds including barn owl licence (CL29/00236). Richard is also qualified in track and sign and trailing *via* an international system of assessment (www.trackercertification.com).

2.0 HABITAT SUITABILITY INDEX

2.1 **Table 1: Habitat Suitability Index of Pond 4**

<i>Component</i>	<i>Pond 4</i>
Scale, 500mm on ground = mm on map	
Number of Waterfowl	
Shape	
Calculated Area (m ²)	
% Shaded Area	
% Macrophyte Cover	
Fish	
Water Quality	N/A – Pond not present
Ponds within 500m	
Years Dry per Decade	
Barriers to Newt Migration	
Geographic Zone	
Area of Good Habitat on Map (mm ²)	
Length of Good Hedges on Map (mm)	
<i>Habitat Suitability Index (HS) for Site</i>	
<i>HSI Category</i>	

2.2 Pond 4 was completely dried up and covered in bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub. Therefore, this pond is not considered as a potential source of ecological constraints regarding the potential development works on Site.

3.0 GREAT CRESTED NEWT RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 The absence of Pond 4, changes the results of the risk assessment calculation tool. The next most proximal pond is now Pond 5, which was 348m away from the development footprint. Assuming, that this pond has the capacity to support a breeding population of great crested newt, also noting the poor quality of terrestrial habitats present within the site survey boundary, the risk assessment calculation gives a score of 0.03 for land > 250m way from a breeding pond with between 0.5 to 1.0ha lost or damaged. The rapid risk assessment result of Green; Offence Highly Unlikely.

3.2

Table 2: Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Calculator (Natural England)

Component	Likely Effect	Notional Offence Probability Score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0.0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0.0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0.0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.5 to 1.0ha lost or damaged	0.03
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0.0
Maximum:		0.03
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

Non-Licenced Method of Works for Great Crested Newt

3.3

While the habitat on Site is heavily grazed modified grassland and can be considered as poor habitat for great crested newt and the likely hood of an offence being 'highly unlikely', a precautional method of works is recommended.

- *The schedule of works is yet to be finalised, but any vegetation and soil removal should be undertaken outside of the terrestrial phase of the life cycle of great crested newt. This period is normally considered to be between March and April, with this species within aquatic habitats for their breeding season,*
- *Vegetation removal would be carried out by hand and these clearance works would be supervised by a licenced ecological consultant. This licenced ecologist would only be required onsite during this vegetation removal but would brief all site workers on amphibian identification and what to do if one is found and where to relocate it to, with the worker given advice on how to proceed with care and where to relocate any amphibian if required. If great crested newt are found, then the works would cease and consultation sought with the licenced ecological consultant,*
- *Hibernaculum habitat would be created prior to the start of the construction phase, with this being situated outside of the works impact zone. This would consist of a mixture of soil over stone and untreated wood, normally cut vegetation. Any amphibians found would be moved to this hibernacula,*
- *Any excavations should be covered at night to prevent any amphibians falling in and becoming trapped. This would also be applicable to terrestrial mammals and any transient reptiles.*

- *Ground works would be carried out for a short a period as possible and all works would be conducted during daylight hours only, so to above the time when great crested newt are most active,*
- *The storage of any debris, soil or cut vegetation on site would be avoided to prevent this becoming hibernacula for great crested newt.*

4.0 SUMMARY

4.1 Overall, the risk to GCN, as a result, of the proposed development at this location is **negligible**. The measures outlined as part of the non-licensed method of works will prevent any potential harm to individual GCN that are potentially found to be present onsite, however unlikely it is for this to occur.

Signed



Richard Law BSc (Hons) MRes CEnv MCIEEM FLS
Sylvatica Ecology Ltd

References

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.

Sylvatica Ecology Ltd (2025) Preliminary Ecological Assessment: Land to the West of Parsons Field Stables. Pickhurst Lane

APPENDIX A: PHOTOS OF POND 4 LOCATION

<i>Plate 1: Scrub at Pond 4 Location</i>	<i>Plate 2: Adjacent Field to Pond 4</i>
	
<i>Plate 3: Hedgerow and Dry Ditch</i>	<i>Plate 4: Hedgerow Adjacent to Pond 4</i>
