The Rail Central Rail Freight Interchange and Highway Order 201[x]

Outline Ecological Creation and Habitat Management Plan

PINS Reference Number: TR050004

Document Reference: 7.10
Regulation Number: Reg 5(2)(q)

September 2018
Version 1.0

Outline Habitat Management Plan

Rail Central

855950
Document 7.10

SEPTEMBER 2018
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Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work.

This work has been undertaken in accordance with the quality management system of RSK.
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1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Report

This document has been prepared by RSK Environment Ltd to provide guidance for the creation of new habitats and ongoing ecological management in connection with the proposed development of a strategic rail freight interchange.

The proposed development is separated into three areas:

- the Main Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) Site south of Milton Malsor;
- land surrounding Junction 15a of the M1 north-west of Milton Malsor incorporating 26 ha for an ecological mitigation area; and
- Minor Highways Works at dispersed locations involving additional lanes, signage and traffic controls on existing highways.

This preparatory working document addresses objectives and prescriptions for the ecological management of areas that will be managed for wildlife benefit in the green infrastructure on the Main SRFI Site and at the Junction 15a Site, and in an ecological mitigation area at the Junction 15a Site. In this document these are taken to be those in the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan shown in Figure 1 (later versions may develop a similar graphic tailored to ecology).

Elsewhere a 15-year ‘soft-landscape maintenance, ecological enhancement and overall management plan’ sets out information on the creation of the green infrastructure and soft landscaping (including amenity grassland, ornamental shrubbery and feature trees around buildings, car parks etc.) and on proposals for their subsequent management. These matters are therefore not addressed in this document.

This document covers:

- existing and proposed trees, woodland, scrub and hedgerows;
- existing and proposed grassland (other than amenity grassland);
- existing and proposed watercourses;
- proposed arable and pasture fields in the ecological mitigation area at Junction 15a; and
- artificial nesting, breeding and hibernation features for various animal species.
This Outline Habitat Management Plan (OHMP) is designed to be a working document that will be developed and finalised following detailed design subsequent to consent and then reviewed annually. If necessary management prescriptions will be revised as a result of the annual review in response to experience (e.g. poor delivery of objectives, recognition of more cost-effective prescriptions), changing practice in ecological management (favoured techniques and even objectives are likely to evolve and change over the years), and unforeseen circumstances (e.g. UK tree-disease epidemics, changes to wildlife law). The OHMP includes a section on aims and objectives that provides a framework within which any revisions can be assessed: a changed prescription will be acceptable if it better delivers an established objective, and a larger change to prescriptions that implies a changed objective will be acceptable if it better delivers an established aim. This system allows any changes – even revised aims - to be explained, judged and recorded, ensuring continuity of focus if HMP overseers or delivery personnel change (likely over 15 years).

For the first three years after the creation of each habitat parcel, monitoring of the ecological features that are the subject of the OHMP (as it stands at that time) will be undertaken annually to cover the early critical period of vegetation establishment. If unsatisfactory outcomes at this stage necessitate major remedial actions (e.g. re-seeding of grassland), the three-year period of annual monitoring will restart at the relevant location from that time. Thereafter monitoring will take place in Year 5 and subsequently every third year.

The finalised version of the OHMP (the HMP) will provide details on who will be responsible for management works and set out how this will be funded. This might, for example, be secured through a legal agreement (e.g. section 106), or by some other mechanism. Once agreed, the HMP will be adequately funded to achieve its targets.
2 ECOLOGICAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

This section sets out the aims and objectives for the OHMP. It will be finalised following detailed design subsequent to consent and agreement on the design of the ecological mitigation area at the Junction 15a Site (which may need input from the agricultural tenants or conservation NGO yet to be appointed to manage it). Soft landscaping areas outside of the scope of this report include footpaths, amenity grassland and publicly accessible green space.

Aims

The aims of the OHMP are as follows:
1. To preserve and enhance any retained habitats having high value for biodiversity.
2. Create habitats that will promote native-species biodiversity generally.
3. To create habitats that will compensate generally for losses due to the Proposed Development, in particular (but not only):
   a. hedges;
   b. stand-alone trees;
   c. neutral (mesotrophic) grassland; and
   d. at the junction 15a Site only, arable suitable for farmland birds currently present on The Main SRFI Site
4. To create habitats that will supplement biodiverse habitat-types that are scarce on the Main SRFI site, in particular (but not only);
   a. woodland generally;
   b. ponds; and
   c. wet grassland and marsh.
5. To provide compensatory habitat provision for key animal species affected by the Proposed Development, in particular (but not only);
   a. bats;
   b. Barn Owls;
   c. Yellow-faced Bees; and
   d. Farmland birds generally.
6. To create habitat types that are appropriate in the south Northamptonshire context.
7. To encourage species that are both present in the vicinity of the Proposed Development (but not necessarily within it) and notable in the south Northamptonshire context.
8. To avoid introducing or encouraging species that are inappropriate in the south Northamptonshire context, especially by means of inappropriate wild-flower seed-mixtures.
9. To create habitats and introduce or encourage species that will enhance the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (‘the NIA’).

Objectives

The objectives for the OHMP are set out below (though they are likely to be added to the design fix and on development of plans for the ecological mitigation area at the Junction 15a Site). Some of the objectives are purely for ecological benefit, but most overlap to a greater or lesser degree with landscape (and hydrological) objectives, with which they will seldom conflict. The initial OHMP list of objectives is as follows.

1. To preserve and enhance any retained habitat (e.g. certain veteran trees, hedgerows and grassland at the edges of the main SRFI site) and especially wet woodland and tall-herb swamp of local wildlife site quality (a proposed wildlife site) at the J15a Site in juxtaposition with the ecological mitigation area (see Aim 2) and the Grand Union Canal LWS (addresses Aims 1 and 9).

2. To create a 26 ha ecological mitigation area at the Junction 15a site including arable fields, pasture, restored and created hedgerows, scrub, wet grassland, ponds and ditches (addresses Aims 2 to 9).

3. To provide habitat for farmland birds in the Junction 15a mitigation area by creating small fields (addresses Aims 3d, 5d and 9).

4. To create a substantial length of new hedgerows in the Junction 15a mitigation area by creating small fields (addresses Aims 3a and 9).

5. To create pasture fields and wet grassland adjacent to the Grand Union Canal LWS in the Junction 15a mitigation area (addresses Aims 2, 4c, 6, 7 and 9).

6. To create ponds, wet scrapes, and wet grassland in the Junction 15a mitigation area (addresses Aims 2, 4b, 6, 7 and 9).

7. To use the ecological mitigation area to provide ecological links between the pWS at the Junction 15a Site, the Grand Union Canal LWS and another LWS to the south-west (addresses Aim 9).

8. To ensure that biodiversity benefit is provided through the design, species composition and management of diverse habitat created for landscape purposes in the green infrastructure at the main SRFI site (addresses Aims 2 to 9).

9. To ensure that biodiversity benefit is provided through the species composition of diverse habitat created for landscape purposes in the green infrastructure at the main SRFI site by tailoring seed mixes to the locality (addresses Aim 8).

10. To ensure that biodiversity benefit is provided through the design, species composition and management of the Milton Malsor Brook at the main SRFI site (addresses Aims 2 and 4b).

11. To ensure that biodiversity benefit is provided through the design, species composition and management of the SUDS ponds at the main SRFI site (addresses Aims 2 and 4c).

12. To ensure the success of all plantings (e.g. trees, shrubs, bulbs, wildflower grasslands etc.) from establishment and growth through to maturity (addresses Aims 2 to 9).
13. Following successful establishment, to maintain all plantings in favourable condition for their type, e.g. by grassland cutting regimes (addresses Aims 2 to 9).

14. To provide woodland in the landscape plantings at the Main SRFI Site (addresses Aims 4a, 5a and 6).

15. To include species-rich mesotrophic grassland with abundant *Daucus carota* ssp. *carota* (Wild Carrot) in the grassland creation at the Main SRFI Site (addresses Aim 5c).

16. To restore field barns at the Main SRFI Site and the Junction 15a Site to provide long-term roosting sites for Barn Owls and bats (addresses Aims 5a and 5b).

17. To provide additional roosting sites for Barn Owls at the Junction 15a site through the provision of pole mounted nest boxes for Barn Owls (addresses Aims 5b).

18. To maintain and progress standards by thorough site monitoring.

**Legal Considerations**

This section will set out legal and environmental considerations including the legal implications of working with protected species and sensitive habitats.

- The following protected species have been identified as being on or adjacent to the Main SRFI Site and Junction 15a Site, namely: Otter, Barn Owl, Badger, bats, birds, Grass Snake and Great Crested Newts.

- The legal requirements of working with Signal Crayfish and the translocation of fish during channel modifications of the Milton Malsor Brook will be detailed.

- The presence of these species may influence site management and, in some cases, additional advice from a suitably qualified ecologist should be sought prior to undertaking work.

- All ecological management and site operations should take due regard to protected species legislation. This is summarised in *Appendix A*. 
3 PRESCRIPTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

General

Regardless of the HMP, the CEMP will ensure that all green infrastructure works during the construction phase will be carried out under the supervision of an ecology manager who may appoint and direct an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to oversee specific operations. A similar system will be used in setting up the ecological mitigation area.

During operation a similar system may be required for ecological works, and especially for any that may affect protected animal species. The HMP will therefore set out the requirement for an ecology manager.

This section gives advice on management actions which will be developed into numbered prescriptions in later versions of the HMP. At this stage it gives examples of actions that are foreseeable prior to the detailed design of landscape plans and the design of the ecological mitigation area, but it should not be regarded as complete or fixed. Among things addressed here in respect of the Main SRFI Site are:

- retained trees and hedgerows;
- native tree planting, woodland, scrub and hedgerow creation;
- wildflower and grassland habitat creation;
- channel diversion of the Milton Malsor Brook and associated aquatic and riparian habitat creation;
- SUDS riparian planting;
- bird boxes, bat boxes, hibernacula; and
- restoration of the field barns for Barn Owls and bats.

Among things addressed here in respect of the Junction 15a Site are:

- creation of new arable fields and associated hedgerows;
- creation of new pasture fields and associated hedgerows;
- native tree planting;
- planting of standing deadwood;
- creation of pond, ditch and scrape habitats;
- bird boxes, bat boxes, hibernacula; and
- restoration of the field barns for Barn Owls and bats.
Junction 15a Ecological Mitigation Area

Habitat Design

This section will set out prescriptions for the creation and subsequent management of a working agricultural area in the 26 ha ecological mitigation area at the Junction 15a Site. The area is currently a single arable field mostly under a Miscanthus biomass-grass crop. The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan shows an intention to divide it into two roughly equal parts on either side of a central trackway (to be extended to span the site); the part to the west is shown as small arable fields (implying extensive hedgerow creation), and the part to the east (adjacent to the Grand Union Canal) is shown as a series of small but linked fields in pasture with many patches of scrub, wet scrapes and ponds mostly in field corners. Until mechanisms for delivering ecological management in this area are agreed and the design of habitat creation is completed it is not possible to give definitive prescriptions either for the habitat creation or subsequent habitat management phases. At this stage aspirations for this area include:

- Create hedged arable fields of the smallest size possible allowing for agricultural viability.
- Crop arable fields with traditional crops (not biomass crops, oilseed rape, maize or any crop requiring very high chemical applications).
- Manage arable fields to provide headlands c. 7 m wide and manage rotationally to provide winter stubble in at least some of the fields.
- Plant new species-rich native-species hedges to form field boundaries with a bank and ditch and connections to existing hedges (to restore damaged hedgerow networks if possible).
- In about 35% of hedges provide standard trees at about 50 m intervals – mostly Quercus robur (Pedunculate Oak) but Castanea sativa (Sweet Chestnut) and Tilia × europaea (Lime) could be used to provide some diversity.
- Create irregularly shaped pasture fields c. 100 m x 100 m but interlinked so that livestock can either move freely or be penned by temporary fencing for livestock husbandry purposes.
- In the pasture fields, create field corner or field edge ponds of varying design (shape, profile, depth etc.), and also wet scrapes and patches of scrub. Wet scrapes can be allowed to colonise naturally, but some should be just deep enough to maintain areas of standing water with deep pools at the centre.
- Create a few ‘follies’ of traditional engineering brick in the fields near the canal for scarce plants including ferns and mosses. These do not need to be elaborate. If they can be given some meaning, e.g. sides of cattle track-ways over wet scrapes then so much the better.
Management

This section will set out the required management techniques required for each distinct habitat type including the following:

- a management agreement with a tenant farmer or wildlife organisation;
- sympathetic agricultural management of the arable fields;
- a financially sustainable grazing regime for the pasture fields;
- grassland management including stocking rates and perhaps mowing programmes;
- hedgerow and tree management; and
- pond management.

For example;

Wildlife Ponds

Ponds will be created in field corners in the Junction 15a wildlife area. Pond management is likely to include the following:

- maintenance of bankside vegetation to ensure approximately 50% of the shore line is clear of shading vegetation (scrub and trees) to keep the margins relatively open to encourage emergent macrophytes;
- macrophyte planting where appropriate and control of macrophyte growth to ensure some open water habitats are maintained; and
- control of cattle access to ponds and rotation of drinking areas between ponds and within each pond.

Green Infrastructure – Within Order Limits

Trees

Management of Trees

This section will set out the protection and management of retained trees.

- Any tree surgery works will be carried out in accordance with the latest legislation and best practice.
- Guidance will be provided to ensure retained trees are protected from any potential impacts during operational phases of the project.
- Prior to all tree works an ecologist will be consulted to ensure nesting birds and roosting bats are considered.
- Advice will be provided regarding the use of felled branches to create additional microhabitats for wildlife.
- Disposal of prunings following any tree works will be detailed.
Tree Resurrection

This section will set out methods for the installing and managing standing large deadwood from trees felled at the Main SRFI site (some but not all of this may involve transferral to the Junction 15a ecological mitigation area).

Large diameter stems should be used in as large a single length as possible. They should be installed resting on the ground at the base of an existing tree and attached at the top by non-invasive methods. The location and method should be coordinated by an ecologist and an arboriculturist (to choose provide habitat for a variety of species while satisfying arboricultural and health and safety requirements).

Hedgerows

This section will specify hedgerow management regimes designed to maintain discrete hedges in grassland (as distinct from scrub-edges). Since there is an agenda to compensate for the loss of agricultural hedges the likelihood is that the prescriptions will specify trimming to heights and widths of no more than about 2 m, but some hedges may be managed differently.

Wildflower and Grassland Habitat

This section will set out the methods for managing wildflower and grassland habitat. Although things such as planting mixes will be specified in the detailed landscape design (not in the HMP), any subsequent ecological enhancement of established grassland swards, e.g. by plug-planting, would fall within the scope of the HMP.

Since grazing is unlikely to be acceptable at the Main SRFI Site, the management plan will set out cutting regimes designed to maintain swards rich in small broad-leaved herbs. This requires a balance between allowing seed-set, which implies relatively late cutting (late-July to September is often recommended) and prevention of competitive exclusion of broad-leaved herbs by grasses over-topping at the mid-summer peak of photosynthetic opportunity, which implies relatively early cutting. For this reason, rotational cutting of different parcels – early June cutting in some years (to favour those broad-leaved herbs that depend primarily on vegetative growth and reproduction, i.e. most grassland herbs) and late-July or August cutting in others (to favour the smaller group of species such as Yellow-rattle that depend on seed-set). Parcels would be assigned so that in any given year some are cut early and some are cut late to allow flowering, thus ensuring an annually constant flower display for pollinators.

The grassland will also be managed for animals, especially birds. Some areas will be left uncut over winter to ensure a diversity of sward heights. Specific management techniques to create habitat for small mammals and therefore foraging habitat for Barn Owls will be provided.
The Milton Malsor Brook and SUDS Ponds

Management of riparian vegetation will be undertaken where and when necessary including scrub and tree management to prevent shading of the water in some places. There will also be advice on how to manage emergent water plants (which can form dense stands of a single species to the detriment of biodiversity), and invasive non-native plant and animal species which can arrive in any water by chance.

Restoration of field barns

This section will set out the design of the field barns on both the Main SRFI site and Junction 15a site. The barns will be retained for agricultural use but with bespoke access and roosting locations for both Barn Owls and bats. Bat bricks, tiles and boxes will be incorporated within each barn. Specification for Barn Owl nest boxes placed within the loft space will be provided along with recommendations for monitoring of these sites by appropriately trained and licenced ecologists.

Bird boxes

This section will set out specification, number and location for bird boxes for the main SRFI site and Junction 15a site. A wide range of bird boxes will be selected to ensure suitability for a range of garden and farmland birds focusing on the species recorded during the breeding bird surveys.

Pole-mounted Barn Owl boxes will be installed at the Junction 15a Site and potentially in the wider landscaped following agreement with landowners. A variety of bird boxes will be installed on buildings and trees. Recommendations are likely to include:

- the Schwegler brick box (Schwegler No 25 Brick Box), which has a large enough entrance hole for sparrows;
- smaller wood or woodcrete boxes with a small hole entrance (around 25 to 32mm in diameter) suitable for smaller bird species such as blue tits;
- larger wood or woodcrete boxes with a larger hole entrance (around 45mm in diameter) suitable for starlings; and
- wood or woodcrete open-fronted boxes suitable for robins, blackbirds and wagtails.

Bird boxes will require annual cleaning (in the autumn) to help reduce parasites and diseases. After removing the old nest material use boiling water to wash out the box, and then let the box dry out thoroughly before replacing the lid. Insecticides must not be used. If there are any unhatched eggs in the box, these can only be removed legally between August and January - and must then be disposed of.

Bat boxes

This section will set out the specification, number and location for bat boxes for the main SRFI site and Junction 15a site. Boxes will be selected to offer roosting
opportunities for bats. Locations will be chosen within green corridors to ensure commuting routes are available.

Depending on the types of bat boxes used, some maintenance may be required, particularly if the box has been used by nesting birds. After the bird nesting season in autumn, the box should be checked; if bats are present the lid should immediately be replaced and then the box should be left undisturbed. If it is unoccupied and contains old bird-nesting material this should be removed, and the box should be cleaned. No licence is required to undertake maintenance of bat boxes unless bats are found, but in that event subsequent checks and maintenance will require a licensed bat ecologist.

Boxes will include a range of box designs that promote roosting by the species identified on site. These boxes should include Schwegler 1FF and Schwegler 3FF both flat boxes that are known to be attractive to all Pipistrelle species and Plecotus species, Schwegler 1FD box suitable for Pipistrelle and Plecotus spp. Maternity roosts.

**Artificial Hibernacula**

Hibernacula are constructed to act as refuges for species such as reptiles and amphibians as well as invertebrates, providing habitat, shelter and places to bask. Hibernacula are usually made of a combination of logs, stone, brick and turf, and topped with soil and planted with grass seeds to provide optimum habitat for reptiles and amphibians. Hibernacula need to be free-draining and have good sun exposure. The south facing side should ideally have slightly sparser vegetation so that the reptiles and amphibians can bask easily. Vegetation should be thicker on the north side to provide extra shelter. Several hibernacula should be built in rough. No ongoing management of the hibernacula is required although an annual check should be made.

Some of the grass cuttings from the amenity areas can be used to create a compost heap for reptiles (as described above). This should be placed in a sunny, south-facing location, and should use an open timber frame to allow access. Frogs, toads and newts may also forage or hibernate in a compost heap. Grass snakes sometimes use compost heaps to lay their eggs in. There is a good, constant temperature within the heap, allowing the eggs to incubate whilst being well-protected from predators. Contractors should take care not to disturb the compost heap in late summer when there may be eggs present. Additional material can be added on annual basis as the compost material starts to decompose.

Brash/log piles can be created from arisings of scrub control. Piles should be placed in a sunny location and set within existing vegetation (for example, areas of long grass or scattered scrub), so that there is cover immediately surrounding, or adjacent to, the pile. To be useful to reptiles brash does not have to be tightly compacted. To provide diverse structure within a brash pile, it is recommended that the central core be compacted, while the outer layers are laid more loosely on top. Vegetation growing through the outer edges of the brash pile will provide additional cover. Brash and log piles should be located away from areas of high public access to reduce disturbance.
Monitoring

This section will set out the monitoring of habitats created and enhanced will be needed to ensure it meets the required level of quality.

Following these annual monitoring visits, a short report outlining the survey results and details on any necessary remediation works (required to improve the quality of the created or enhanced habitat) will be prepared.

Ongoing surveys could perhaps be undertaken by local wildlife groups or community volunteers to encourage ownership of the ecological management area. However, they must be overseen by professional ecologists (CIEEM registered).
APPENDIX A: LEGISLATION

General

This section briefly describes the legal protection afforded to the protected species referred to in this report. It is for information only and is not intended to be comprehensive or to replace specialised legal advice. It is not intended to replace the text of the legislation but summarises the salient points.

Badger

*Melles meles* (Badger) is protected in Britain under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The legislation affords protection to Badgers and Badger setts, and makes it a criminal offence to:

- wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or to attempt to do so;
- interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it;
- to obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a Badger sett; or
- to disturb a Badger when it is occupying a sett.

Bats

All species of British bat are protected by The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. This legislation makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take;
- possess or control;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb whilst the animal occupies a breeding site or resting place.

Bats are also European Protected Species listed on The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 2010 (as amended). This legislation makes it an offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill;
- deliberately disturb, including in particular any disturbance which is likely (a) to impair their ability - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or (ii) hibernate or migrate, where relevant; or (b) to affect
significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place; and
- possess, control, transport, sell, exchange, or offer for sale or exchange.

### Birds

**Birds (general protection)**

All species of bird are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The protection was extended by the CRoW Act 2000. The legislation makes it an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

**Birds (specially protected species)**

Certain species of bird are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and receive protection under Sections 1(4) and 1(5) of the Act. The protection was extended by the CRoW Act 2000. The legislation confers special penalties where the above mentioned offences are committed for any such bird and also make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb any such bird, whilst building its nest or it is in or near a nest containing dependant young; or
- disturb the dependant young of such a bird.

### Common Reptiles

*Zootoca vivipara* (Common Lizard), *Natrix natrix* (Grass Snake), *Anguis fragilis* (Slow-worm), and *Vipera berus* (Adder) 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). This protection was extended by the CRoW Ac (2000). Under the above legislation it is an offence to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill or injure any individual of such a species; or
- sell or attempt to sell any part of the species alive or dead.

### Great Crested Newt

The Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) 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 2010 which gives it full protection under Regulation 39. Protection was extended by the CRoW Act 2000. Under the above legislation it is an offence to:

- kill, injure or take an individual of such a species;
- possess any part of such species either alive or dead;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place or structure used by such species for shelter, rest, protection or breeding;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb such a species whilst using any place of shelter or protection; or
- sell or attempt to sell any such species.

The Great Crested Newt 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.

**Water Vole**

*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.

Under this legislation, it is an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) a Water Vole;
- possess or control a live or dead Water Vole, or any part of a Water Vole;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which Water Voles use for shelter or protection, or to intentionally or recklessly disturb Water Voles while they are using such a place; or
- sell, offer for sale or advertise for live or dead Water Voles.

The Water Vole is included as a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).

**White-Clawed Crayfish**

The White-clawed Crayfish is afforded partial protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 section 9(1) and section 9(5) (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) against taking from the wild and sale. In addition, crayfish habitat is protected under the European Habitats and Species Regulations Annexe II and V, implemented in the UK by the Habitats and Species Regulations 1996.

The White-clawed Crayfish is classed as globally threatened on the IUCN/WCMC red data list and the Bern Convention Appendix III. It is also a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species.
Any actions that might impact on White-clawed Crayfish must first be agreed with the Natural England and/or the Environment Agency (EA).