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**Date** 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
**Project Ref** UG2289

Dear Paige,

**Re: Bolton Fold Farm – eDNA surveys for great crested newts**

An eDNA survey of Bolton Fold Farm, Longridge (hereafter referred to as “the site”) was completed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 by Jake Healy, Ecologist and Toby Mills, Assistant Ecologist at Urban Green. The weather conditions were 10°C, intermittent clouds (6/8 oktas), with a windspeed of 3 on the Beaufort scale.

This report has been produced to demonstrate the results of environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys which were completed on the standing waterbodies on site. The surveys were conducted to assess the likely absence or presence of great crested newts on site. The report has been produced in support of the proposed planning application.

Relevant UK legislation for the protection of great crested newt is detailed in Appendix 1

**Ecology**

No ponds were located on site, although one pond (P1) was located within 250m of the site. As great crested newts’ upper dispersal limit is generally considered to be up to 250m from a waterbody, ponds beyond this distance were not considered for survey. This pond was considered for its potential to host great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), which could potentially utilise the site for foraging and commuting.

P1 was assessed for its suitability to support great crested newts, and therefore underwent a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment following the methodology set out in ARG UK Advice Notice 5 (Oldham et al, 2010). Ten habitat suitability indices were assessed and inputted into the HSI equation, which generates a score between 0 and 1. The calculated score corresponds to the estimated pond suitability for great crested newt.

To complete eDNA survey of P1, samples were collected from each pond during a period of high activity for GCN (March–June, Inclusive) to provide the most accurate results. Twenty samples were collected from the pond, with samples collected from evenly distributed points around the perimeter of the pond to create an accurate depiction of the pond. The sample bag was shaken, and small amounts are distributed into six conical tubes with preserving fluid.

The eDNA samples were sent to SureScreen Scientifics to be analysed.

**Results**

Pond P1 was assessed as ‘Good’ (0.79), through the HSI assessment.



Pond P1 returned a negative result for the presence of great crested newt eDNA. Zero of twelve replicates were returned positive for the pond.

**Assessment**

Pond P1 was confirmed to be absent of great crested newt DNA at the time of survey, and as such, GCN are highly unlikely to be present with the site.

**Mitigation Recommendations**

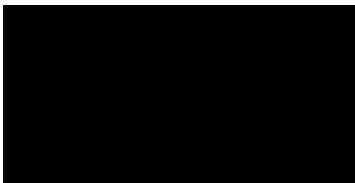
It is recommended that Reasonable Avoidance Measures are to be followed during site clearance for common amphibians. All site contractors are to be inducted to the potential presence of the species. Any debris is to be cleared by hand, and any common amphibians located moved carefully, by hand, to outside of the development area.

**Summary**

The eDNA surveys conducted on pond P1 concluded that great crested newts are absent from the waterbody and are highly unlikely to be present on site.

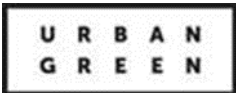
Please let me know if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Toby Mills

Assistant Ecologist, BSc



# Appendix 1 - Relevant Legislation

## Legislation relating to European Protected Species

European Protected Species and their resting places (e.g. bat roosts) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transpose the European Union's 'Habitats Directive' (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (EC Habitats Directive) into UK law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European Sites', the protection of 'European Protected Species' (EPS), and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. EPS are listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

### Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take certain animals listed in Schedule 5;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to sale, possession and control of wild animals listed in Schedule 5.

- Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it is an offence to:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal listed as a European Protected Species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species in such a way as to be likely:
- to impair their ability:
  - to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or;
  - in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate, or;
- to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to possession, control sale and exchange of an EPS.

Great crested newt, otter and several species of bat are listed as a SoPI under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

