

**APPENDIX NO. 1**

**REPORT ON FAUNA  
(MAMMALS AND BIRDS)  
AND  
RELATED HABITATS**

# DixonBrosnan

environmental consultants

Project		Report on fauna (mammals and birds) and related habitats for a proposed extension to integrated pig production farm at Annistown, Killeagh, Co. Cork.	
Client		Eoin O'Brien	
Project ref	Report no	Client ref	
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DixonBrosnan The Cedars, Bridewood, Ovens, Co Cork Tel 086 851 1437   <a href="mailto:carl@dixonbrosnan.com">carl@dixonbrosnan.com</a>   <a href="http://www.dixonbrosnan.com">www.dixonbrosnan.com</a>			
Date	Rev	Status	Prepared by
22/05/12	0	Issue to client	Carl Dixon M.Sc.
			Vincent Murphy M. Sc.
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## 1. Introduction

An Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed extension to this pig unit was submitted in December 2012. Subsequent to the granting of permission an appeal was made by An Taisce in April 2013. They noted the following:

Baseline information and mitigation for mammals and birds was left to be resolved by post consent survey, submission and agreement of mitigation measures:

It is noted that surveys summer roosts for bats cannot be carried out during the winter season during which the EIS was prepared. Generally the buildings on site would not be expected to be of value for breeding/summer roosting or hibernating bats due to the presence of pigs, regular cleaning and the construction material of the existing buildings. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 an otter survey was conducted in the stream adjacent to the land holding and to 300 meters upstream and downstream from the land holding. As a precautionary measure potential impacts on other mammal species and birds were also assessed.

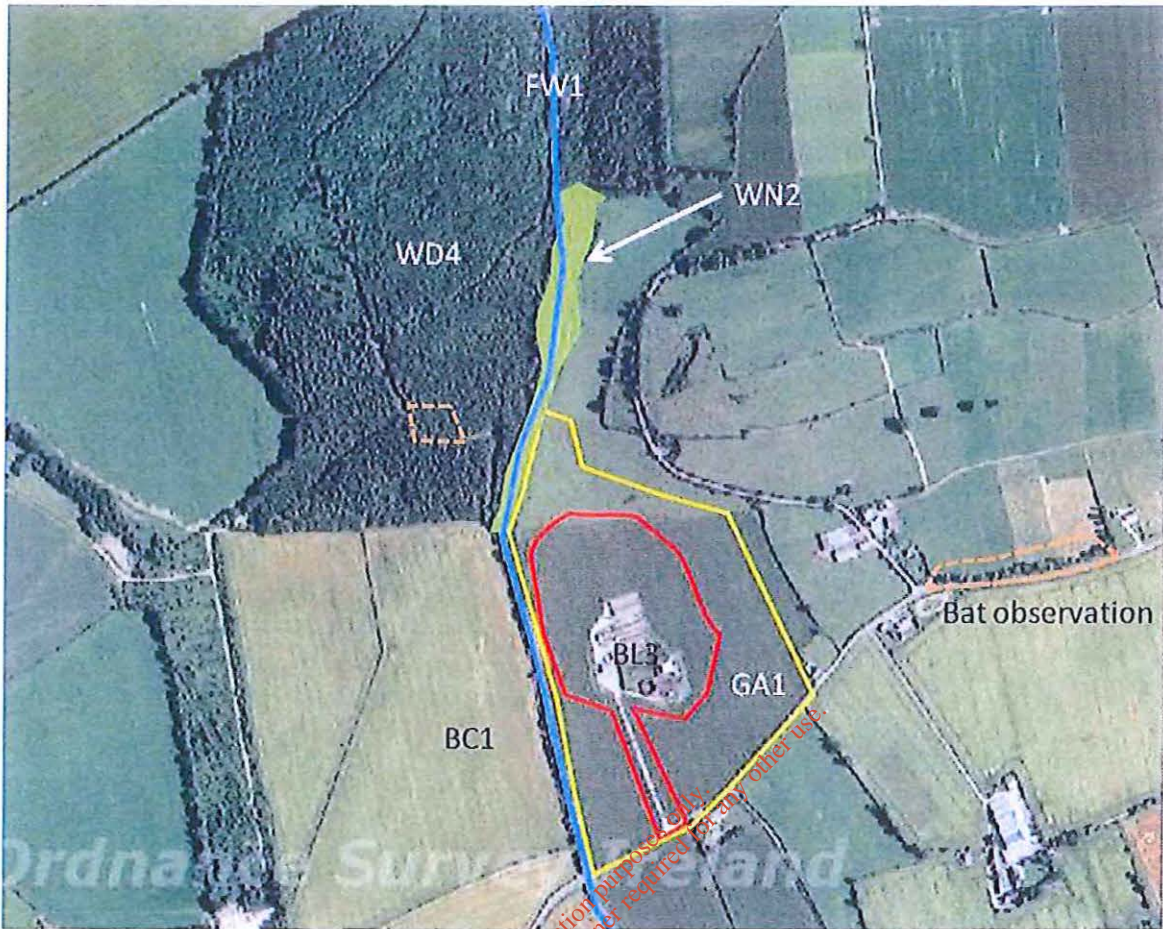
## 2. Methodology

Site surveys were carried out on the May 12 and 14, 2013. Habitats within the proposed development site and in proximity to it were classified to level 3 of the classification scheme outlined in Fossit, 2000. A walk over survey was carried out to determine if other mammal species were present with a particular emphasis on badger which can be significantly affected by disturbance and otter which are listed on Annex 2 of the Habitats Directive. Birds were also identified during walkover surveys; due to the nature of the habitats noted on site the present of rare or uncommon species was considered unlikely and specialised bird surveys were not considered necessary. The most valuable habitat from an ecological viewpoint is the Oak-ash-hazel woodland (WN2) which adjoins the proposed development site. It is a natural habitat which is limited in extent in Ireland (Fossit, 2000). This habitat will not be affected by the proposed extension to the existing pig unit.

## 3. Habitats

The habitats noted on site or in proximity to it are noted below and shown on **Fig. 1**. The habitats to be directly affected by the proposed development are of low value in the context of the local landscape and no rare or uncommon species were noted or are predicted to occur.





BC1 - Arable crops. GA1 - Improved agricultural grassland. BL3- Buildings and artificial surfaces. WD4- Conifer plantation. WN2- Oak-ash-hazel woodland.

#### 4. Mammal survey

##### 4.1 Bats

All bat species in Ireland are protected under the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended 2000 and the Habitats Directive which was transposed into Irish law in the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations (S.I 94 of 1997), as amended. The Irish government is also a signatory to the Bonn convention (Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals, Bonn 1979) and the Bern convention, 1982 (The convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats) and has a commitment to the 'Eurobats' agreement (Agreement on the Conservation of bats in Europe, 1991). (NRA 2005a).

Two separate emergence bat surveys were conducted at this site on 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2013. A bat detector 'Batbox Duet' was used to detect and determine the species of bats present, if any. The bat survey began approximately 15mins before sunset and ended



approximately two hours after dusk. After this period the bat survey was extended up to 1000m into the surrounding landscape to determine general activity levels.

On the May 12 wind speed was approximately 10-15kmph, but was gusting periodically to 30kmph. The air temperature was approximately 9°C. In addition around the buildings and earth banks there were wind tunnel effects in the westerly wind. There was also occasional interference on the bat detector from the buildings such as pumps and other automated mechanics turning on and off. No bats were recorded emerging from any of the buildings on site. An inspection of the cracks and crevices on the outside of the buildings that could be located showed no potential signs of bats such as grease or faecal stains. No bats were recorded along any of the habitats in the surrounding landscape such as hedgerows, treelines or woodlands.

On the May 14, the conditions were more favourable with intermittent winds of 5-10kmph from the north with occasional gusts of up to 15kmph. The air temperature was approximately 12-13°C. No bats were recorded during the emergence survey. The extended bat survey recorded bats at two locations. One fleeting bat call was recorded from the neighbouring area of mature conifer plantation, approximately 200meters north of the development site. This may have been a commuting bat. Approximately 450 meters east of the proposed development site, there is a treeline on the Mogeely to Killeagh road where a number of common pipistrelle bats were feeding.

In conclusion no bats emerged from, or flew over any of the existing buildings and the buildings are not of value for roosting bats. Although bats could conceivably occur within the wider landscape there is no evidence to indicate that this area is of particular value for bats. On this basis no significant impact on this species is predicted to occur.

Given the low potential of the buildings on site for bats the risk that bats will colonise these buildings in the immediate future is minimal. Thus the demolition of these buildings will not impact on bats and no further surveys are considered necessary.

#### **4.2 Otters**

Otters, along with their breeding and resting places are protected under the provisions of the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000. Otters have

additional protection because of their inclusion in Annex II and Annex IV of the Habitats Directive which is transposed into Irish law in the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations (S.I 94 of 1997), as amended. Otters are also listed as requiring strict protection in Appendix II of the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and are included in the Convention on International Trade of Endangered species (CITES) (NRA 2005b).

This stream is known as the Dower River. This stream is relatively narrow (circa 70cm), and was shallow (<10cm deep) during the period of the survey. The occasional pools are approximately 40cm in depth. Much of the stream parallel to the site boundary has been altered in the last 2-3 years. This work is associated with the improvements to a forestry access track on the opposite side of the stream outside the applicants landholding. No trout were observed in this stream, and only the lowest part of the stream surveyed had the potential for trout and stickleback. No signs of otter were observed along any part of this stream and no holts were detected. The lack of fish significantly reduces the potential value of this stream to otters, however, streams such as these i.e off main channels are sometimes used by female otters for the location of breeding holts. No such breeding holts were detected and no impact on otter is predicted to occur.

#### 4.3 Badgers

Badgers and their setts are protected under the provisions of the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000. It is an offence to intentionally kill or injure a protected species or to wilfully interfere with or destroy the breeding site or resting place of a protected wild animal. The density of badgers in Ireland is approximately one social group per km<sup>2</sup> in lowland areas with a high component of pasture. In upland areas where feeding is scarce, badgers are generally found at lower densities. Overall the average density in Ireland is approximately one social group per 2 km<sup>2</sup>. Badger setts are formed by a complex group of interlinked tunnels and therefore works in proximity to setts can potentially cause considerable damage. The presence of badgers can be recognised by feeding signs, paths, latrines and setts.

A survey of the proposed development land and surrounding habitat found no signs of badgers, or setts within the land holding or surrounding habitats. It was noted however that the mix of habitats i.e improved agricultural grasslands, with neighbouring hedgerows,



treelines and some deciduous woodlands does provide suitable habitat for this species. No impacts on badgers are predicted to occur.

#### **4.4. Other mammals**

Other mammal species protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, which could conceivably occur, are fallow deer, Irish hare, red squirrel, pygmy shrew, hedgehog and stoat, given the presence of hedgerows, conifer plantation and open grasslands. However the site is unlikely to be of high value for any of these species. Irish hare and fallow deer are widespread in the Irish countryside and range over large areas and may potentially move through neighbouring habitats occasionally. Red squirrel, pygmy shrew, hedgehog and stoat are widely distributed and may be present in proximity to the proposed development site. However, all of these species are mobile and can move from away from sources of disturbance. No significant impact on these habitats is predicted to occur.

#### **4.5 Birds**

A number of common bird surveys were noted during site surveys including corvids (rook, jackdaw), blue tit, goldfinch, pigeon, wren, blackbird and song thrush. Based on the habitats noted within this general area a wide range of countryside birds are likely to occur. However none of the habitats noted are likely to support rare or uncommon species. The impact on birds is predicted to be minor negative at a local level.

#### **5. Mitigation measures**

It is noted that the Wildlife Amendment Act 2000 (S.46.1) provides that it is an offence to cut, grub, burn or destroy any vegetation on uncultivated land or such growing in any hedge or ditch from the 1<sup>st</sup> of March to the 31<sup>st</sup> of August. Exemptions include the clearance of vegetation in the course of road or other construction works or in the development or preparation of sites on which any building or other structure is intended to be provided. Where possible, removal of vegetation during the breeding season should be avoided. No other mitigation in relation to flora and habitat is considered necessary.

No mitigation in relation to fauna is considered necessary.

## **6. Residual impacts on fauna**

There may be some limited local displacement of common species of fauna however no significant impact on fauna and in particular no significant impact on protected/Annex 2 species is predicted.

## **7. Residual impacts on flora**

Oak-ash-hazel woodland (WN2) is considered of ecological value in a local context. However this lies outside the applicants land holding and will not be affected by the proposed development. The habitats to be affected by the development are common and of low value and the impact on habitats overall is predicted to be long-term and minor negative at a local level and insignificant at a regional or national level.

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