

REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES – HABITAT

- *Land Adjacent to Lakeland Lodge, Rudyard*



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Document Control Sheet

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1. Purpose and Ecological Context

1.1 Purpose of the Statement

This Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement sets out the ecological precautions required during the habitat creation and enhancement works associated with the proposed development.

The habitat works will be undertaken within the woodland, scrub and grassland compartments surrounding Construction Compartment C1. They are intended to deliver the habitat creation and enhancement measures identified within the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan while avoiding unnecessary harm to protected species, common fauna and retained habitats.

The principal ecological objectives are to:

- Avoid killing or injuring reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs and other small animals
- Avoid disturbance, damage or destruction of active bird nests
- Maintain opportunities for animals to disperse into retained habitat
- Protect retained woodland, scrub, grassland and habitat connectivity
- Avoid damage to trees or features potentially suitable for roosting bats
- Avoid creating entrapment hazards
- Retain appropriate refuge and foraging features
- Prevent the spread of Himalayan balsam and rhododendron
- Avoid sediment or pollution entering connected wetland habitats
- Complete the habitat works in accordance with the approved HMMP

The habitat works will be small-scale and predominantly undertaken using hand tools or pedestrian equipment. The measures within this RAMS are nevertheless required because scrub, woodland edge, rough vegetation, rubble, leaf litter and habitat transitions may be used by nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs and other small fauna.

1.2 Works Covered by this RAMS

This RAMS applies to:

- Planting native shrubs within S1, S2 and S3
- Planting woodland bulbs and plug plants within W1, W2 and W3
- Overseeding other neutral grassland within G1
- Cutting the existing grassland before overseeding
- Shallow and localised scarification where required for seed-to-soil contact
- Localised management of bramble or competing vegetation
- Creation and maintenance of rough-grassland openings
- Creation of log, brash and other habitat piles
- Movement or repositioning of existing woody material
- Installation of three bat boxes on suitable mature trees
- Replacement planting and establishment maintenance
- Access by habitat contractors within the construction exclusion area

The works will not include widespread topsoil stripping, ploughing, deep cultivation or wholesale excavation within the retained habitat compartments.

Woodland bulbs and plug plants will be installed individually. Shrubs will be planted in individual pits, with excavated soil returned immediately to the planting position. Grassland enhancement will principally comprise overseeding the existing sward.

1.3 Relationship with Other Documents

This RAMS will be read alongside:

Document	Principal purpose
Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan	Habitat targets, planting prescriptions, management and monitoring
Hydrological RAMS	Surface-water, sediment and pollution controls
Development Works RAMS	Construction clearance, excavation, plant movement and development working methods
Invasive Non-Native Species Management Plan	Treatment, handling, disposal and biosecurity for Himalayan balsam and rhododendron
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	Ecological baseline, species assessment and recommended safeguards
Site Compartments Plan	W1–W3, S1–S3, G1 and C1
Exclusion Areas Plan	Construction area and protected habitat-management area

This document governs the ecological method for habitat creation. It does not replace the Hydrological RAMS or INNS Management Plan.

Where works could affect Himalayan balsam or rhododendron, the INNS Management Plan will determine the treatment and handling method. Where works could generate sediment or affect runoff, the Hydrological RAMS will apply.

1.4 Site and Habitat Context

The site comprises previously developed and disturbed land associated with former bowling-green use. Following cessation of management, the site developed into a mosaic of disturbed ground, ruderal vegetation, neutral grassland, scrub and secondary woodland edge.

The habitats are principally associated with secondary succession rather than long-established semi-natural vegetation. They nevertheless provide nesting, refuge, foraging and dispersal opportunities and form part of the wider ecological network of the Rudyard valley.

The habitat compartments relevant to this RAMS are:

Compartment	Habitat works
W1	Rhododendron and balsam control under the INNS Plan, woodland ground-flora planting and bat-box provision
W2	Woodland ground-flora planting, edge enhancement and potential bat-box provision
W3	Woodland ground-flora planting, retained deadwood and potential bat-box provision
S1	Native scrub planting and creation of a varied transition with G1
S2	Native scrub enhancement while maintaining continuous habitat connectivity
S3	Native scrub enhancement while retaining the connection between W2 and W3
G1	Cutting, shallow surface preparation where necessary and overseeding with a damp neutral-grassland mixture

The scrub currently varies between dense bramble thickets and more open scrub, ruderal vegetation and grassland. It provides nesting habitat for common birds, refuge for reptiles and small mammals, foraging habitat for invertebrates and woodland-edge habitat used by birds and bats.

The woodland compartments contribute to local habitat connectivity, bird nesting opportunities, bat commuting and foraging habitat, shelter and invertebrate diversity.

1.5 Species Records and Protected-Species Context

The desk study returned records of:

- Bat species associated with woodland and water features
- Birds, including raptors and wetland-associated species
- Slow worm
- Grass snake
- [REDACTED]
- Otter
- Common amphibians

These records confirm that the wider Rudyard valley supports a connected and varied ecological landscape. They do not demonstrate that all of the recorded species occur within the habitat compartments, and the working methods have

therefore been based on the suitability of the affected habitats and the presence of credible impact pathways.

No direct evidence of protected-species presence was identified during the ecological walkover surveys. The habitats are nevertheless considered capable of supporting common and widespread species associated with scrub, woodland edge and disturbed habitat mosaics.

1.6 Nesting Birds

The scrub, woodland edge and trees provide suitable nesting habitat for common breeding birds.

The main risk during habitat creation would arise from cutting bramble, pruning scrub, moving dense vegetation or working close to an active nest.

Vegetation cutting will therefore be undertaken outside the main nesting season, generally March to August inclusive, where practicable. Nesting can occur outside these dates, and the presence of an active nest will take precedence over the calendar period.

Where potentially suitable vegetation must be cut during the nesting season, it will be checked by a suitably experienced ecologist no more than 48 hours before work begins. Where an active nest is identified, an appropriate exclusion area will be established and retained until the nest is no longer active.

Planting through open grassland or beneath sparse woodland vegetation will not automatically require a nesting-bird check. A check will be required where access, planting or vegetation management could disturb dense scrub, tree foliage, ivy, bramble or another feature capable of supporting a nest.

1.7 Reptiles

Slow worm and grass snake are recorded within the wider landscape.

The site provides suitable habitat for common reptiles through:

- Scrub margins
- Rough and ruderal vegetation
- Rubble
- Grassland transitions
- Deadwood and debris
- Undisturbed edge habitat

The development footprint and habitat-management areas are not considered likely to support a particularly significant reptile population. Common reptiles may nevertheless occur at low to moderate levels within suitable refuges and vegetation.

The principal risks during habitat creation comprise strimming, movement of logs or rubble, disturbance of refuges and trampling or excavation around dense vegetation.

The PEA concludes that a precautionary RAMS approach is appropriate and identifies phased working, directional cutting, careful removal of rubble and refugia and ecological supervision where necessary.

1.8 Great Crested Newt and Common Amphibians

No pond occurs within or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest identified pond lies approximately 300 m away and is understood to be a heavily used fishing pond.

The pond is separated from the site by the Rudyard to Ladderedge canal feeder, which has a considerable flow and vertical sides and is considered to represent a substantial dispersal barrier. The site is therefore considered to have low potential to support great crested newt.

Common amphibians may occasionally use:

- Damp woodland litter
- Log and brash piles
- Dense vegetation
- Damp rubble or debris
- Planting holes
- Sheltered grassland and scrub margins

Precautionary measures will therefore apply to common amphibians even though great crested newt-specific survey or licensing measures are not currently considered necessary.

1.9 Bats

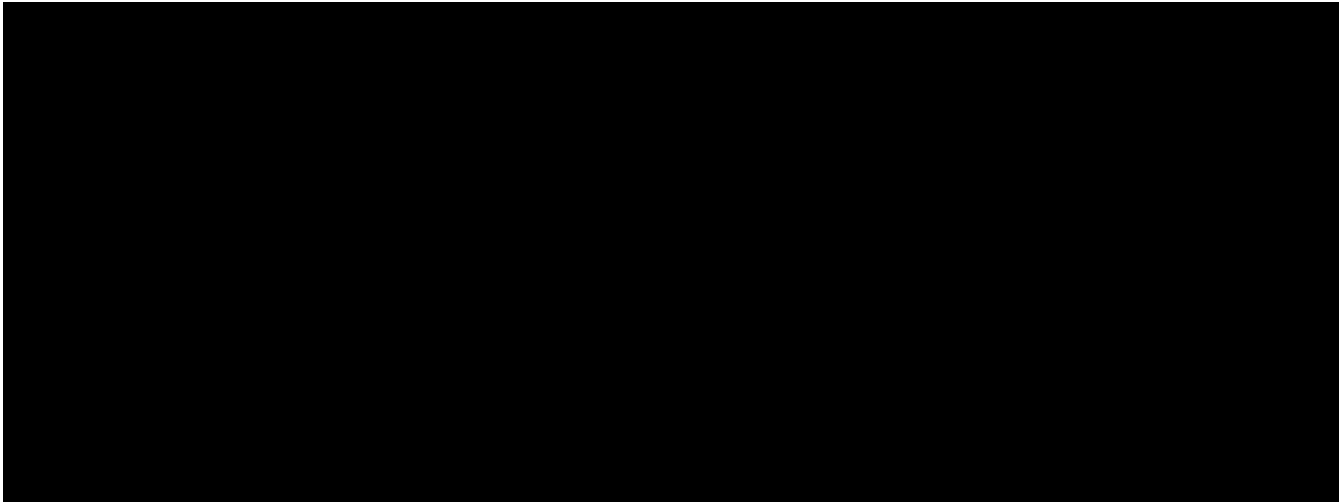
The wider Rudyard valley provides suitable bat habitat through woodland, watercourses, wetland habitats, scrub corridors and tree lines.

Within the site, woodland edges, scrub margins and trees may be used by commuting and foraging bats. No confirmed evidence of bat roosting was identified during the walkover surveys, and the principal bat-related consideration is the retention of habitat connectivity and dark habitat corridors.

Habitat creation works will not involve felling mature trees.

Installation of bat boxes will be undertaken without cutting into cavities, splits, lifted bark or other potential roost features. Any unexpected potential roost feature identified during installation will be left undisturbed and referred to the project ecologist.

No habitat creation work will be undertaken under artificial lighting during hours of darkness.



1.11 Otter

Otter records are associated with Rudyard Lake, connected watercourses and wetland habitats in the wider landscape.

No suitable otter resting habitat was identified within the application site, and direct effects from the habitat creation works are not anticipated.

The relevant pathway is indirect and concerns pollution, sediment or invasive plant material entering connected wetland habitats or the Rudyard to Ladderedge canal feeder. These risks will be controlled through the Hydrological RAMS and INNS Management Plan.

1.12 Hedgehog and Other Small Mammals

Scrub, ruderal vegetation, grassland margins and habitat transitions provide opportunities for hedgehogs, rodents, shrews and other small mammals.

The principal risks comprise:

- Strimming dense vegetation
- Moving logs, brash or vegetation piles
- Leaving planting holes open
- Trapping animals in stored materials
- Severing routes between retained habitats

Vegetation and refuge materials will be checked before disturbance. Open planting holes will not be left unattended or overnight. Continuous habitat links will remain available throughout the works.

The PEA recommends sensitive vegetation clearance, checks of debris and refugia, avoidance of entrapment and retention of habitat connectivity.

1.13 Invertebrates

The varied scrub, grassland, ruderal and woodland-edge habitats support common invertebrates and provide prey resources for birds and bats.

The site is not considered likely to support a particularly specialist assemblage. Habitat works will nevertheless retain:

- Deadwood
- Leaf litter
- Rough grassland
- Flowering vegetation
- Areas of dense scrub
- Sunny and sheltered habitat edges

Woody material will be retained as habitat piles where appropriate rather than routinely removed from the site.

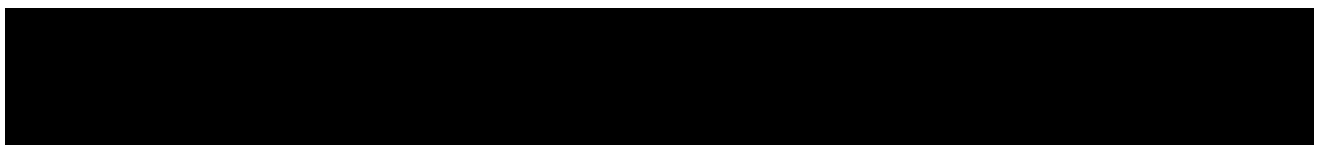
1.14 Reasonable Avoidance Principle

The habitat works will be undertaken progressively through small working areas.

Undisturbed habitat will remain available adjacent to each active working area so that reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs and other fauna can move away from disturbance.

The general sequence will be:

1. Complete a visual inspection of the working area
2. Check dense vegetation, logs, rubble, brash and other refuges
3. Remove or manage vegetation gradually
4. Work towards retained and undisturbed habitat
5. Complete planting or overseeding
6. Reinststate disturbed soil immediately
7. Remove waste and packaging
8. Leave the area secure and free from entrapment hazards



2. Habitat Compartments and Access Controls

2.1 Application of the RAMS

This RAMS applies to all habitat creation, enhancement and establishment works undertaken within:

- Woodland compartments W1, W2 and W3
- Scrub compartments S1, S2 and S3
- Other neutral grassland compartment G1
- Agreed access routes between the habitat compartments
- Locations selected for bat-box installation
- Areas used temporarily for the delivery and handling of habitat materials

Construction Compartment C1 is not a habitat-creation compartment. Habitat contractors will not use C1 or the surrounding habitat compartments for purposes outside the approved habitat works unless this has been agreed with the site manager.

The boundaries of all compartments will be identified on the Site Compartments Plan and confirmed on the ground before work begins.

2.2 Compartment Schedule

Compartment	Principal works	Main ecological constraints
W1	Woodland ground-flora planting, control of competing vegetation, retention of deadwood and potential bat-box installation	Nesting birds, bats, amphibians, hedgehogs, small mammals and INNS
W2	Woodland ground-flora planting, edge enhancement, retention of deadwood and potential bat-box installation	Nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, bats and small mammals
W3	Woodland ground-flora planting, edge enhancement, retention of deadwood and potential bat-box installation	Nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, bats and small mammals
S1	Native shrub planting and development of a varied scrub and grassland transition	Nesting birds, reptiles, hedgehogs and invertebrates
S2	Native shrub planting and enhancement of existing scrub structure	Nesting birds, reptiles, small mammals and habitat connectivity
S3	Native shrub planting and enhancement while retaining the link between W2 and W3	Nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians and habitat connectivity
G1	Cutting, removal of arisings, shallow scarification where required and overseeding	Reptiles, amphibians, ground-nesting birds, small mammals and soil compaction

The woodland and woodland-edge habitats provide local connectivity, bird nesting opportunities and bat commuting and foraging habitat. They are among the more ecologically valuable components of the site and will be protected from unnecessary access and disturbance.

The scrub compartments provide nesting habitat, reptile and small-mammal refuge, invertebrate foraging resources and sheltered transitions between grassland and woodland.

2.3 Demarcation of Working Areas

Before habitat works begin, the habitat contractor will be shown:

- The boundary of each compartment
- The extent of the approved planting or overseeding area
- Retained vegetation that must not be cut or damaged
- Agreed pedestrian and equipment access routes
- Areas containing Himalayan balsam or rhododendron
- Surface-water and sediment-control features
- Sensitive woodland and scrub margins
- Locations where materials may be temporarily placed

Compartment markers will be installed where boundaries are not readily apparent on the ground.

Markers may comprise temporary stakes, canes, biodegradable marking paint or other low-impact measures. They will not be fixed to mature trees or inserted into features that could support protected fauna.

Habitat works will remain within the identified compartment. Expansion of a planting area, removal of additional vegetation or alteration of a compartment boundary will not take place without approval from the project ecologist and confirmation that the change remains consistent with the HMMP.

2.4 Construction Exclusion Area

The woodland, scrub and grassland compartments surrounding C1 form part of the construction exclusion area.

The habitat works themselves are permitted within these compartments, but their inclusion within the habitat programme will not remove their protected status in relation to the development works.

The compartments will not be used for:

- General construction access
- Vehicle turning
- Contractor parking
- Storage of building materials
- Soil or aggregate stockpiles
- Concrete washout

- Fuel or chemical storage
- Disposal of waste
- Temporary site compounds
- Unauthorised drainage or water discharge

Any damage caused by construction access, storage or vehicle movement will be reported to the site manager and project ecologist.

2.5 Access Routes

Access will follow existing open ground, previously disturbed areas or other agreed routes wherever practicable.

Routes through dense scrub, woodland ground flora, rough grassland or damp ground will be avoided unless access is necessary to complete the approved habitat works.

Access routes will:

- Be as short and narrow as practicable
- Avoid mature trees and exposed roots
- Avoid active bird nests and associated exclusion areas
- Avoid identified refugia
- Avoid Himalayan balsam and rhododendron stands unless access is required under the INNS Management Plan
- Avoid directing workers through the southeast and southwest runoff-control points
- Retain an undisturbed route into surrounding habitat for dispersing animals

Repeated walking over a single narrow route may cause excessive compaction or vegetation damage. Where this becomes evident, access will be redirected to another agreed route or temporary ground protection will be used.

2.6 Vehicles, Machinery and Equipment

Habitat works will be completed using hand tools and small pedestrian equipment wherever practicable.

Large construction plant will not enter W1–W3, S1–S3 or G1.

The use of a small vehicle or tracked pedestrian machine may be permitted where necessary to transport plants, seed or habitat materials, provided that:

- The route has been agreed in advance
- The ground is firm enough to avoid rutting
- The equipment can operate without damaging retained trees or vegetation
- A banksman is used where visibility is restricted
- The equipment does not pass through an INNS stand
- Fuel or hydraulic leakage is absent
- The work is stopped if soil displacement, rutting or compaction occurs

Machinery will not be parked or refuelled within a habitat compartment.

Strimmers, brush cutters and powered cutting equipment will be checked before use and operated only by competent personnel who have received the ecological toolbox talk.

2.7 Protection of Trees and Rooting Areas

No excavation, soil storage or repeated vehicle movement will take place around retained mature trees except where required for approved planting or bat-box installation.

Shrub, bulb and plug planting close to trees will be undertaken using hand tools.

Where a substantial root is encountered:

- The planting position will be moved
- The root will not be severed merely to accommodate the plant
- The planting pit will be backfilled
- A suitable alternative position will be selected

Plants will not be installed directly against tree trunks, cavities, buttresses or deadwood features.

No nails, screws, ropes or storage materials will be attached to trees other than the approved non-damaging fixings required for bat boxes.

2.8 Storage and Handling of Habitat Materials

Plants, bulbs, plugs, seed and habitat materials will be delivered as close as reasonably practicable to the time of installation.

Temporary storage will occur only within an agreed area.

Materials will not be stored:

- Within dense scrub
- Against tree trunks
- Over exposed roots
- Within rough vegetation capable of supporting reptiles or small mammals
- Within an identified runoff pathway
- Within an INNS stand
- At the southeast or southwest runoff-control points
- Within an active bird-nest exclusion area

Plant containers, plastic wrapping, ties, labels and seed packaging will be removed from the habitat compartments at the end of each working period.

Plant trays, bags, rolls of material and stacked pots can create temporary refuges. Where left during a working day, they will be checked before movement.

2.9 Progressive Working and Dispersal Routes

Works will proceed through small areas rather than disturbing an entire compartment at once.

The working direction will be selected so that reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs and other small fauna can move towards retained and undisturbed vegetation.

Work will not proceed:

- From several directions towards an isolated central refuge
- In a manner that encloses animals between workers or machines
- Towards C1 or another unsuitable area
- Towards an active runoff-control barrier
- Towards a road, hardstanding or steep-sided water feature where another route is available

Directional working is particularly important where cutting or planting takes place beside dense scrub, rough grassland, rubble or other potential refuges. The PEA recommends phased and directional working towards retained habitats to maintain dispersal opportunities for reptiles, amphibians and other fauna.

At least one continuous connection to retained habitat will remain available throughout each phase.

2.10 Ground Conditions

Habitat works will be postponed where ground conditions would cause:

- Deep footprints or rutting
- Puddling or soil smearing
- Compaction of wet woodland soil
- Damage to the existing grassland sward
- Sediment movement
- Collapse of planting pits
- Unnecessary damage to surrounding vegetation

Works will not take place during heavy or prolonged rainfall.

Following rainfall, the contractor will check that access routes and planting areas are sufficiently firm before entering the compartments.

Where localised ground damage occurs, work will stop and the affected area will be reinstated before access continues.

2.11 Temporary Ground Protection

Temporary ground protection may be used where repeated access cannot otherwise be completed without damaging vegetation or soil.

Ground protection will:

- Be placed by hand where practicable
- Be positioned on an agreed route
- Avoid cavities, logs, refugia and potential nests
- Be removed promptly following the works
- Be lifted carefully because reptiles, amphibians and small mammals may shelter beneath it

Any board, mat or sheet left in place may become an attractive refuge. It will therefore be checked before lifting, moving or driving over it.

2.12 Protection of Habitat Connectivity

Continuous woodland, scrub and rough-grassland links will be maintained throughout the habitat works.

Planting and vegetation management will not create an unnecessary open break between:

- W1 and adjoining scrub
- W2 and S3
- S3 and W3
- The scrub compartments and G1
- Retained habitats and the surrounding woodland network

Temporary breaks required for access will be kept as narrow and short-lived as practicable.

Habitat piles will be positioned where they strengthen rather than obstruct ecological connectivity.

2.13 Completion of Each Working Area

At the end of each working period:

- Planting holes will be backfilled
- Loose soil will be firmed
- Tools and waste will be removed
- Packaging will be collected
- Temporary refuge hazards will be checked
- Access routes will be left unobstructed
- Protective fencing and runoff controls will remain intact
- No open container, pipe or excavation will be left capable of trapping fauna
- Any accidental damage will be recorded and reported

The habitat contractor will complete a visual sweep of the working area before leaving the site.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 General Responsibility

All personnel involved in habitat creation and enhancement works will comply with this RAMS, the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and the approved compartment plans.

Responsibility for ecological protection does not rest solely with the project ecologist. The client, site manager, habitat contractor and individual operatives each have a duty to ensure that the approved working methods are followed and that unexpected ecological constraints are reported.

No person will knowingly:

- Disturb an active bird nest
- Injure or kill a reptile, amphibian, hedgehog or other wild mammal
- Damage a potential bat-roost feature
- Remove vegetation outside the approved working area
- Move material through an invasive non-native species stand
- Damage retained woodland, scrub or grassland
- Alter the approved habitat compartments without authorisation

The PEA recommends that ecological safeguards, vegetation-clearance controls, protected-species precautions, biosecurity and ecological supervision are maintained throughout the relevant works.

3.2 Client or Landowner

The client or landowner will be responsible for ensuring that:

- This RAMS is issued to the appointed habitat contractor
- The contractor has access to the approved HMMP and relevant plans
- Adequate time and funding are provided to complete the works correctly
- An appropriately experienced project ecologist is retained where attendance or advice is required
- Habitat materials conform to the approved specification
- Contractors are not instructed to undertake works that conflict with the RAMS
- Records of planting, inspections and incidents are retained
- Replacement planting and remedial works are funded where establishment failures or accidental damage occur
- The habitat compartments remain protected from unrelated construction activity

The client will ensure that any future land manager or maintenance contractor is informed of the ecological requirements applying to the site.

3.3 Site Manager

A named site manager will be appointed before habitat works begin.

The site manager will coordinate the habitat contractor, project ecologist and principal contractor where habitat works overlap with ongoing construction.

The site manager will be responsible for:

- Confirming that the ecological hold point has been completed
- Ensuring that compartment boundaries and access routes are understood
- Checking that the contractor has attended the ecological toolbox talk
- Preventing construction workers or materials from entering habitat compartments
- Ensuring that hydrological controls remain operational
- Confirming that INNS areas are demarcated
- Recording daily or phase-completion checks
- Ensuring that open planting holes are not left unattended
- Arranging remedial works where habitat damage occurs
- Keeping emergency and ecological contact details available

The site manager will have authority to stop habitat works immediately.

Works will be stopped where:

- An active bird nest is identified
- A reptile, amphibian, hedgehog or other animal is at risk
- A potential bat-roost feature could be affected
- Himalayan balsam or rhododendron is encountered outside a previously identified area
- Workers leave the agreed compartment or access route
- Ground conditions are causing excessive trampling, rutting or compaction
- Sediment or pollution is entering a runoff pathway
- The approved method cannot be followed safely
- Ecological supervision required by this RAMS is not present

Work will not resume in the affected area until the site manager has received appropriate ecological or technical advice.

3.4 Project Ecologist

The project ecologist will provide ecological advice and supervision proportionate to the risks presented by each phase of habitat creation.

The project ecologist will be responsible for:

- Delivering or approving the ecological toolbox talk
- Confirming the principal ecological constraints before works
- Advising on the positioning of access routes and working areas
- Undertaking nesting-bird checks where required
- Checking high-risk refugia before disturbance where appropriate
- Advising on phased and directional working
- Identifying suitable retained habitat into which fauna may disperse
- Advising where a reptile, amphibian, hedgehog or other animal is encountered

- Advising on the siting of habitat piles
- Confirming suitable bat-box locations
- Reviewing accidental damage to retained habitats
- Recommending remedial or adaptive action
- Maintaining records of ecological attendance and findings

The project ecologist is not required to supervise every planting activity continuously.

Ecological attendance will be targeted towards activities presenting a credible risk, including:

- Initial vegetation management within dense scrub or rough vegetation
- Movement of established rubble, log, brash or debris piles
- Works during the nesting-bird season where nesting habitat could be affected
- Works close to a suspected mammal refuge
- Installation of bat boxes
- Unexpected encounters with protected or notable fauna
- Works where the contractor cannot confidently apply the RAMS without assistance

The PEA identifies ecological supervision during initial clearance or disturbance of refugia as appropriate where the risk warrants it.

3.5 Habitat Contractor

The habitat contractor will be responsible for completing the approved planting, overseeding and habitat-feature works in accordance with:

- This RAMS
- The HMMP
- The approved planting and seeding specification
- The compartment plans
- The Hydrological RAMS
- The INNS Management Plan where applicable
- Instructions provided through the ecological toolbox talk

Before beginning work, the habitat contractor will ensure that all personnel understand:

- The limits of each working compartment
- Agreed access routes
- The identification of common ecological receptors
- The nesting-bird procedure
- The reptile and amphibian precautions
- The unexpected-find procedure
- The location of INNS exclusion areas
- The requirement to stop and report rather than independently relocate fauna

The habitat contractor will provide suitable tools and equipment for low-impact working.

The contractor will ensure that:

- Hand tools are used where practicable
- Cutting equipment is in good condition
- Machinery is free from leaks
- Plants and materials are stored safely
- Planting pits are closed promptly
- Waste and packaging are removed
- No fires are lit
- No chemicals are used unless specifically approved
- No unauthorised vegetation is removed
- No habitat feature is moved without first checking it

The habitat contractor will report any deviation from the approved method to the site manager.

3.6 Individual Operatives

Each operative will take reasonable care to avoid harming wildlife and retained habitat.

Operatives will:

- Check the immediate working area before beginning
- Watch for movement within vegetation, leaf litter and planting holes
- Lift logs, stones and other potential refuges carefully
- Work progressively rather than disturbing extensive areas at once
- Keep dispersal routes into retained habitat open
- Stop immediately when an animal or nest is identified
- Inform the supervisor rather than attempting unauthorised handling
- Keep tools, containers and packaging under control
- Avoid walking unnecessarily through retained vegetation
- Leave the working area safe at the end of the day

Operatives will not collect, remove or keep any wild animal found during the works.

Where an uninjured animal moves away independently, it will be allowed to enter retained habitat without pursuit or obstruction.

3.7 Arborist or Bat-Box Installer

Bat boxes will be installed by a competent arborist, tree climber or other suitably trained person capable of working safely at height without damaging the host tree.

The installer will work in consultation with the project ecologist regarding:

- Host-tree selection
- Box type
- Height
- Aspect
- Flight access
- Shading and exposure
- Fixing method
- Avoidance of potential roost features
- Avoidance of active bird nests

The installer will not:

- Cut into cavities, cracks, splits or lifted bark
- Remove limbs solely to create access unless separately assessed and approved
- Install boxes directly over an entrance to a potential roost feature
- Use fixings likely to constrict or significantly injure the tree
- Undertake noisy or illuminated installation work at night

Where a potential bat-roost feature or evidence of bat use is identified, installation will stop and advice will be obtained from an appropriately licensed bat ecologist.

3.8 INNS Contractor

Treatment of Himalayan balsam and rhododendron will be undertaken under the separate INNS Management Plan.

Where the habitat contractor is also responsible for INNS works, the two activities will remain operationally distinct.

The INNS contractor will be responsible for:

- Confirming affected areas
- Preventing contaminated material from entering unaffected compartments
- Cleaning tools and footwear
- Containing plant material
- Preventing seed dispersal
- Preventing soil movement
- Coordinating treatment with planting and overseeding
- Informing the habitat contractor when an area is safe to enter

Habitat planting will not take place within an active treatment area until the implications for soil disturbance, herbicide application and follow-up control have been considered.

3.9 Principal Contractor Interface

Where development works remain active, the principal contractor will coordinate with the habitat contractor so that:

- Habitat access routes do not cross unsafe construction areas
- Construction materials are not stored within habitat compartments
- Temporary fencing is not removed without approval
- Runoff controls are not damaged by planting or material delivery
- Planting is not undertaken where later construction access will be required
- Construction lighting does not unnecessarily illuminate habitat works
- Habitat workers are informed of vehicle movements and other site hazards

The principal contractor will not direct habitat workers to undertake additional clearance or groundworks outside the approved habitat-creation scope.

3.10 Authority to Stop Works

The following persons may require the affected habitat work to stop:

- Site manager
- Project ecologist
- Principal contractor
- Habitat contractor supervisor
- Arborist or bat-box installer where a tree-related constraint is found

Any operative may also stop their own activity where they believe an animal, active nest or retained habitat is at risk.

No disciplinary action should arise from a reasonable stop-work decision made to protect wildlife or comply with the RAMS.

3.11 Ecological Escalation

The following escalation procedure will apply:

1. Stop the affected activity
2. Leave the animal, nest or feature undisturbed
3. Keep other workers and equipment away
4. Mark an interim exclusion area where this can be done without approaching the feature
5. Inform the site manager
6. Contact the project ecologist
7. Record the location and circumstances
8. Resume only after appropriate advice has been provided

Where the finding may involve bats, [REDACTED] a great crested newt or another species requiring specialist licensing advice, an appropriately licensed ecologist will be consulted before the works proceed.

3.12 Responsibility Schedule

Task	Primary responsibility	Supporting responsibility
Issue approved documents	Client	Site manager
Mark habitat compartments	Site manager	Project ecologist
Agree access routes	Site manager	Habitat contractor and ecologist
Deliver toolbox talk	Project ecologist	Site manager
Check nesting habitat	Project ecologist where required	Habitat contractor
Complete daily visual checks	Habitat contractor	Site manager
Maintain hydrological controls	Principal contractor	Site manager
Implement INNS controls	INNS contractor	Project ecologist
Install bat boxes	Competent arborist or installer	Project ecologist
Stop works following an unexpected find	Any responsible person	Site manager
Record ecological incidents	Site manager	Project ecologist
Complete planting records	Habitat contractor	Client
Authorise completion	Client or site manager	Project ecologist

3.13 Contact Schedule

The final issued RAMS will include the following details:

Role	Name	Contact details
Client representative	TBC	TBC
Site manager	TBC	TBC
Principal contractor	TBC	TBC
Habitat contractor	TBC	TBC
Project ecologist	Thomas Egerton	Hewitt&Carr Services
Arborist or bat-box installer	TBC	TBC
INNS contractor	TBC	TBC
Emergency veterinary or wildlife contact	TBC	TBC

4. Pre-Commencement Ecological Hold Point

4.1 Requirement for the Hold Point

Habitat creation and enhancement works will not begin until the ecological constraints, working areas and precautionary measures have been confirmed on site.

The pre-commencement hold point applies before the first phase of:

- Woodland ground-flora planting
- Scrub planting or management
- Grassland cutting, scarification or overseeding
- Movement of rubble, logs, brash or other refuge material
- Creation of habitat piles
- Installation of bat boxes
- Establishment works requiring access into retained habitat

The hold point is intended to ensure that the approved habitat works can proceed without avoidable harm to protected species, active nests, retained habitats or ecological connectivity.

Completion of the hold point will be recorded and signed by the site manager. Where ecological attendance is required, the project ecologist will also confirm that the relevant checks have been completed.

4.2 Review of Documents and Plans

Before works commence, the site manager and habitat contractor will review the current approved versions of:

- This Habitat Creation and Enhancement Works RAMS
- The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan
- The Site Compartments Plan
- The Exclusion Areas Plan
- The proposed habitat plan
- The Hydrological RAMS
- The Invasive Non-Native Species Management Plan
- The planting and seeding specification
- Any arboricultural protection information relevant to retained trees

Superseded plans or earlier planting layouts will not be used.

Any difference between the approved plans and conditions encountered on site will be referred to the project ecologist before the affected work proceeds.

4.3 Identification of Working Compartments

The boundaries of W1–W3, S1–S3 and G1 will be confirmed on the ground.

The habitat contractor will be shown:

- The extent of each compartment
- The approved habitat intervention
- Areas where vegetation is to be retained
- Areas where localised vegetation management is permitted
- Agreed access routes
- Material-delivery points
- INNS exclusion or treatment areas
- Runoff-control features
- Areas where planting or access is restricted

Where a boundary is unclear, temporary markers will be installed before work starts.

No additional scrub removal, grassland disturbance or woodland access will occur merely because an area appears convenient for access or material storage.

4.4 Ecological Walkover

A pre-commencement visual walkover will be completed before the first habitat-creation phase.

The walkover will check for material changes since the PEA surveys, including:

- Newly established bird nests
- Newly excavated mammal holes
- Reptiles or amphibians beneath visible refuges
- Hedgehog nests or sheltering animals
- Newly fallen trees or branches
- Previously unidentified rubble or debris piles
- Potential bat-roost features affecting box installation
- Expansion of Himalayan balsam or rhododendron
- Waterlogging, erosion or new runoff pathways
- Damage caused by construction activity
- Changes in the location or condition of retained habitats

The scope of the walkover will be proportionate to the proposed activity. A general visual check by the site manager or habitat contractor will be sufficient for open planting areas presenting low risk. The project ecologist will undertake or supervise checks where dense vegetation, established refuges, active nesting habitat or another credible protected-species risk will be disturbed.

4.5 Nesting-Bird Check

Vegetation cutting and management will be undertaken outside March to August inclusive where practicable.

Where potentially suitable nesting habitat must be cut, pruned or disturbed during this period, a suitably experienced ecologist will undertake a nesting-bird check no more than 48 hours before the work begins. The check will include the vegetation to be affected and any adjoining habitat within which the proposed activity could cause disturbance.

The PEA identifies scrub, woodland edge and trees as suitable nesting habitat and recommends a pre-clearance nesting-bird check within 48 hours where vegetation work is required during the nesting season.

The check will remain valid only where:

- The work starts within the stated period
- The extent and method of work remain unchanged
- No substantial interruption allows nesting conditions to change
- The vegetation has not been altered since the inspection

Where work does not begin within 48 hours, or the affected area changes, a further check will be undertaken.

If an active nest is identified:

- The nest will not be touched or approached unnecessarily
- An exclusion area will be established
- The size of the exclusion area will reflect the species, location and nature of the works
- Workers will be informed of the restricted area
- Work will continue elsewhere where this can be done safely
- The exclusion will remain until the project ecologist confirms that the nest is no longer active

4.6 Reptile and Amphibian Refuge Check

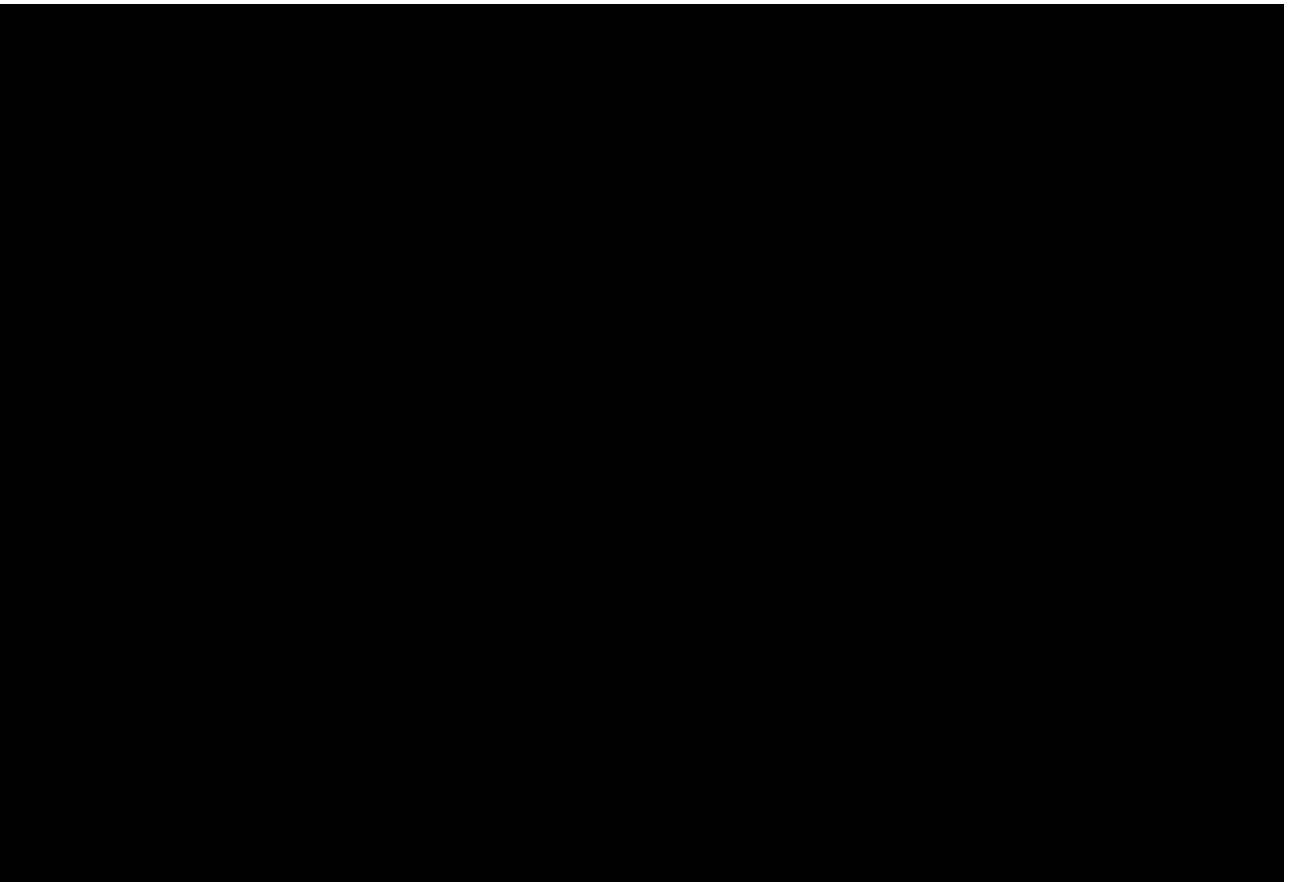
Before cutting dense vegetation or moving refuge material, the working area will be checked for features capable of sheltering reptiles or amphibians. These may include:

- Logs and deadwood
- Brash piles
- Rubble
- Stones
- Boards or sheets
- Discarded materials
- Dense mats of bramble
- Grass cuttings
- Leaf litter accumulations
- Damp hollows
- Existing habitat piles

Where a feature can be checked safely, it will be inspected visually before disturbance.

A large, embedded or well-established refuge will not be dismantled before the working method has been agreed. Ecological attendance will be arranged where the feature presents a credible risk of supporting reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs or other small fauna.

Slow worm and grass snake are recorded within the wider landscape, and the PEA identifies scrub margins, rubble, ruderal vegetation and unmanaged habitat mosaics as suitable reptile habitat.



4.8 Bat-Box Installation Check

Before bat-box installation:

- The proposed host trees will be identified
- Their condition and accessibility will be reviewed
- The proposed fixing points will be inspected
- Potential bat-roost features will be avoided
- Active bird nests will be checked for where relevant
- Safe and unobstructed flight access will be confirmed
- The proposed box type, height and aspect will be agreed

A tree will not be used where installation would require damage to a cavity, split, lifted bark, rot hole or another feature potentially suitable for bats.

The PEA did not identify confirmed roost evidence, but it recognises the value of the woodland edge and tree network for bats and requires potential roost features to be considered before tree-related works.

4.9 INNS Check

Before habitat workers enter the compartments, current Himalayan balsam and rhododendron areas will be identified.

The habitat contractor will be informed of:

- Areas that must not be entered
- Areas subject to treatment
- Biosecurity requirements
- Restrictions on soil movement
- Restrictions on moving plant material
- Cleaning arrangements for tools and footwear
- Locations where habitat creation must be deferred

The absence of visible Himalayan balsam at a particular time of year will not be taken as confirmation that an area is uncontaminated where it is known to have supported the species previously.

Any invasive plant identified outside the mapped treatment area will be reported before the work continues.

Detailed treatment and disposal requirements will remain within the separate INNS Management Plan.

4.10 Hydrological and Ground-Condition Check

The habitat contractor will confirm that ground conditions are suitable before access or planting begins.

Works will be postponed where:

- Soils are saturated
- Access would cause rutting or compaction
- Planting pits would fill with water or collapse
- Sediment could enter a runoff pathway
- Heavy or prolonged rainfall is occurring
- Hydrological controls are damaged or incomplete
- Work would disturb the southeast or southwest runoff-control points
- Grassland cutting would cause severe tracking or sward damage

The Hydrological RAMS will remain operative during habitat creation.

Habitat works will not commence where they would interfere with a temporary sediment barrier, settlement feature or approved clean-water route.

4.11 Inspection of Plants, Seed and Materials

Before installation, habitat materials will be checked against the approved specification.

The check will include:

Material	Pre-installation requirement
Native shrubs	Correct species, healthy condition and no evidence of invasive weeds
Woodland bulbs and plugs	Correct species, viable condition and suitable for the receiving habitat
Grassland seed	Correct mixture, sealed or clearly labelled and free from obvious contamination
Stakes and guards	Only where specified and capable of installation without unnecessary habitat damage
Bat boxes	Correct approved types and undamaged
Deadwood or habitat-pile material	Clean, suitable and free from waste, treated timber and INNS material
Mulch or soil improver	Used only where specifically approved within the HMMP

Plants containing visible invasive weeds or contaminated growing medium will not be introduced to the habitat compartments.

Peat-based compost, fertiliser, manure and nutrient-rich imported topsoil will not be used unless specifically required by the approved habitat specification.

4.12 Tools and Machinery Check

Tools and equipment will be inspected before entering the habitat compartments.

The check will confirm that:

- Equipment is clean
- Soil and vegetation from another site have been removed
- Machinery is free from fuel or hydraulic leaks
- Cutting guards are fitted
- Hand tools are suitable for localised work
- Fuel is not being carried unnecessarily into retained habitat
- Spill materials are available where powered equipment is used
- Powered machinery is limited to that agreed for the work

Where equipment has previously been used within an INNS treatment area, it will be cleaned in accordance with the INNS Management Plan before entering an unaffected compartment.

4.13 Ecological Toolbox Talk

All habitat contractors and operatives will receive an ecological toolbox talk before commencing work.

The toolbox talk will cover:

- The purpose of the habitat works
- The compartment layout
- Retained habitat and exclusion areas
- Nesting-bird precautions
- Identification of slow worm and grass snake
- Common amphibian precautions
- Hedgehog and small-mammal precautions
- Bat-box installation constraints
- INNS identification and biosecurity
- Directional working
- Refuge checks
- Ground-condition restrictions
- The unexpected-find procedure
- The authority of workers to stop an activity
- Emergency and ecological contact details

Attendance will be recorded.

New workers arriving after the initial talk will receive the same information before entering the habitat compartments.

4.14 Sequencing of Works

The habitat works will be programmed to avoid conflict between:

- INNS treatment
- Vegetation management
- Nesting-bird constraints
- Development works
- Hydrological controls
- Planting seasons
- Grassland preparation and sowing
- Bat-box installation
- Follow-up establishment maintenance

Where practicable, the sequence will be:

1. Confirm and demarcate INNS areas
2. Complete required INNS treatment or exclusion
3. Confirm habitat compartments and access routes
4. Complete ecological checks
5. Undertake any necessary vegetation management
6. Complete woodland and scrub planting
7. Prepare and overseed G1

8. Install habitat piles and retained refuge features
9. Install bat boxes
10. Complete inspection, records and sign-off

The sequence may be adjusted to reflect appropriate planting seasons and site conditions, but ecological checks will always be completed immediately before the relevant risk activity.

4.15 Hold-Point Acceptance Criteria

Habitat work may begin only when:

- Current plans are available
 - Compartment boundaries are confirmed
 - Access routes are agreed
 - Retained habitat is clearly identified
 - Required ecological checks are complete
 - No active nest prevents the proposed work
-
- High-risk refugia have been assessed
 - INNS areas are demarcated
 - Hydrological controls are intact
 - Ground conditions are suitable
 - Plants and materials comply with the specification
 - Workers have received the toolbox talk
 - Named ecological and site contacts are available

4.16 Hold-Point Record

Requirement	Completed	Comments
Current RAMS, HMMP and plans available		
Compartment boundaries marked		
Access routes agreed		
Retained vegetation identified		
Nesting-bird requirements checked		
Reptile and amphibian refuges checked		
Bat-box host trees checked		
INNS areas marked		
Hydrological controls inspected		
Ground conditions suitable		
Plants, seed and materials checked		
Tools and machinery checked		
Toolbox talk completed		
Habitat works authorised to commence		

5. General Working Methods

5.1 General Approach

Habitat creation and enhancement works will be undertaken using low-impact methods intended to retain existing habitat structure while establishing the approved woodland, scrub and grassland enhancements.

Works will proceed progressively through small working areas. Extensive areas of vegetation will not be cut, disturbed or trampled simultaneously.

The working method will maintain a continuous connection between the active working area and retained habitat. This will allow reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs and other small fauna to move away from disturbance.

Existing scrub, woodland edge, rough grassland, deadwood and litter will be retained wherever they do not prevent delivery of the approved habitat targets.

5.2 Working Hours

Habitat works will be undertaken during daylight hours.

There will be no routine habitat creation work:

- During the hours of darkness
- Under artificial floodlighting
- During periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall
- When the ground is frozen
- When soils are saturated or readily compacted
- During weather conditions that prevent effective observation of the ground and vegetation

Daylight working will reduce the potential for disturbance to nocturnal fauna, including bats [REDACTED] dgehogs and other mammals.

5.3 Tools and Equipment

Hand tools will be used wherever practicable.

Suitable equipment may include:

- Spades and planting trowels
- Mattocks
- Rakes
- Seed spreaders
- Pedestrian mowers
- Strimmers and brush cutters
- Wheelbarrows
- Small pedestrian vegetation-management equipment
- Suitable tree-climbing equipment for bat-box installation

Large construction plant will not enter the habitat compartments.

Powered equipment will only be used where the work cannot be completed effectively by hand and where its use will not cause excessive disturbance, compaction or injury risk.

5.4 Working Through Vegetation

Before entering dense vegetation, the operative will visually inspect the ground immediately ahead.

Vegetation will be disturbed progressively. Workers will not:

- Jump into dense vegetation
- Stand directly on brash or refuge piles
- Drive equipment over uninspected vegetation
- Throw logs, rubble or vegetation into retained habitat
- Collapse a dense vegetation patch from several directions
- Enclose fauna between workers or machines

Where vegetation is being reduced, the working direction will lead towards retained scrub, woodland edge or another suitable undisturbed area.

The PEA requires phased and directional vegetation clearance towards retained habitat so that reptiles, amphibians and other fauna have opportunities to disperse.

5.5 Two-Stage Vegetation Cutting

Where tall or dense grass, ruderal vegetation or scrub margins may support reptiles, amphibians or small mammals, cutting will be undertaken in stages.

The first cut will reduce the vegetation to approximately 150 mm above ground level. The cut will proceed slowly and directionally towards retained habitat.

The area will then be left for a minimum period appropriate to the weather and condition of the vegetation, normally at least 24 hours, before a second cut reduces the vegetation to the height required for planting or overseeding.

The second cut will also proceed towards retained habitat.

Where vegetation is already short, open and regularly disturbed, the project ecologist may confirm that a two-stage cut is unnecessary.

Arisings will be removed carefully rather than left in thick piles that could trap or attract fauna before subsequent disturbance.

5.6 Hand Searching

Logs, stones, rubble, boards, brash and accumulated vegetation will be checked before movement.

Where safe to do so, the item will be:

1. Approached slowly
2. Lifted from one edge
3. Lifted towards the operative so that any animal beneath can move away in the opposite direction
4. Inspected before being moved or incorporated into a habitat pile

Large or embedded features will not be rolled or dragged across the ground without an agreed method.

An established refuge feature that cannot be checked safely will be left in place or inspected under ecological supervision.

5.7 Planting Excavations

Planting pits will be excavated immediately before planting.

Each pit will be no larger than required to accommodate the root system.

Excavated soil will be placed beside the pit and returned immediately after installation. It will not be spread across surrounding vegetation.

Planting pits will not be left open:

- Overnight
- During extended breaks
- When workers move to another compartment
- Where animals could become trapped
- During heavy rainfall

Where a pit must remain temporarily open while the plant is prepared, it will remain under direct observation.

5.8 Soil Protection

Soil disturbance will be limited to the minimum required for planting and seed establishment.

There will be no:

- Widespread topsoil stripping
- Deep cultivation
- Ploughing
- General excavation
- Importation of nutrient-rich topsoil
- Routine use of fertiliser or manure
- Unnecessary trafficking over wet soils

Where a substantial tree root is encountered, the planting position will be moved rather than severing the root.

Disturbed soil will be firmed and reinstated promptly.

5.9 Vegetation Arisings

Vegetation arisings will be managed according to their origin and condition.

Clean native woody material may be retained for habitat-pile creation where this is consistent with the HMMP.

Grass cuttings and herbaceous arisings will not be left in thick piles across G1 because this could suppress the sward and produce nutrient enrichment.

Material containing Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or potentially contaminated soil will be managed only under the INNS Management Plan.

Vegetation will not be burned on site.

5.10 Chemicals and Herbicides

No pesticide, herbicide, fertiliser or soil improver will be used as part of habitat creation unless it is specifically required by an approved habitat or INNS prescription.

Where herbicide is required for invasive-species control:

- It will be applied under the INNS Management Plan
- Treatment will be targeted
- Application will avoid non-target vegetation
- Work will not take place where immediate wash-off is likely
- Habitat planting will be coordinated with the treatment programme

General herbicide application will not be used to prepare G1 for overseeding.

5.11 Artificial Lighting and Noise

Habitat creation will not be undertaken under temporary floodlighting.

Powered cutting equipment will be used for the shortest practicable duration and will not be left running unnecessarily.

No equipment will be directed towards tree cavities, dense scrub or another potential wildlife refuge.

5.12 Daily Completion Check

At the end of each working day:

- All planting pits will be closed
- Tools and equipment will be removed or securely stored
- Plant containers and packaging will be collected
- Logs and habitat materials will be left stable
- No animal-entrapment hazard will remain
- Access routes will remain unobstructed
- Hydrological controls will remain intact
- Any ecological incident will be recorded
- Any accidental habitat damage will be reported

6. Nesting-Bird Procedures

6.1 Habitat Suitability

Trees, scrub, bramble, ivy, woodland edge and dense herbaceous vegetation may support nesting birds.

The habitat works could affect nesting birds through:

- Scrub pruning
- Bramble reduction
- Cutting dense vegetation
- Movement of brash
- Work close to tree or shrub nests
- Installation of bat boxes within trees
- Repeated activity close to an active nest

The PEA confirms that the site provides suitable nesting habitat for common birds associated with scrub, woodland edge and trees.

6.2 Timing

Scrub management, woody vegetation cutting and other work capable of damaging a nest will be undertaken outside March to August inclusive where practicable.

These dates provide a guide rather than an absolute definition of the nesting period. An active nest will be protected whenever it occurs.

Planting can proceed during the nesting season where:

- No suitable nesting vegetation requires disturbance
- Access does not pass through dense scrub
- Work will not cause sustained disturbance close to a nest
- The working area has been checked where necessary

6.3 Pre-Work Checks

Where potentially suitable nesting habitat will be cut or disturbed during March to August inclusive, an ecologist will undertake a check no more than 48 hours before work begins.

The check will include:

- The vegetation to be affected
- Adjoining vegetation that could be disturbed
- Ground vegetation where ground-nesting birds could occur
- Ivy and dense climbing vegetation
- Tree canopies relevant to bat-box installation
- Existing brash or vegetation piles

A check does not guarantee the continuing absence of nesting birds. Workers will remain alert throughout the works.

6.4 Active Nests

Where an active nest is found:

- Work will stop in the immediate area
- The nest will not be touched
- Workers will withdraw without prolonged observation
- The project ecologist will establish an appropriate exclusion area
- The exclusion will be marked without drawing unnecessary attention to the exact nest location
- Materials and equipment will not be stored inside the exclusion area
- Work may continue elsewhere where this does not cause disturbance

The size of the exclusion area will be determined by the species, nest position, vegetation structure and intensity of the proposed work.

The exclusion will remain until the ecologist confirms that the nest is no longer active.

6.5 Ground-Nesting Birds

Before cutting G1 or another open area during the nesting season, workers will check for:

- Adults repeatedly entering one location
- Alarm calling
- Distraction displays
- Nests concealed within tussocks
- Eggs or dependent young

Where behaviour indicates a possible nest, work will stop and ecological advice will be obtained.

6.6 Habitat-Pile Creation

Brash and log piles will not be placed directly against an active nest or within an established exclusion area.

Existing piles will be checked before dismantling or repositioning.

Once a habitat pile has been completed, it will be retained undisturbed wherever practicable because it may subsequently be used by nesting birds or other fauna.

7. Reptile and Amphibian Working Methods

7.1 Species Context

Slow worm and grass snake records occur within the wider landscape.

The site provides suitable reptile habitat through scrub margins, rubble, ruderal vegetation, rough grassland and transitional habitat. Common amphibians may occur within damp refuges, woodland litter and shaded vegetation.

The site is considered capable of supporting common reptiles at low to moderate levels, and the PEA recommends phased cutting, directional working and careful disturbance of refugia.

The likelihood of great crested newt presence is considered low because no pond occurs within or adjoining the site, the nearest identified pond lies approximately 300 m away and the Rudyard to Ladderedge canal feeder forms a substantial dispersal barrier. Precautionary methods remain appropriate for common amphibians.

7.2 Suitable Working Conditions

Vegetation reduction within reptile-suitable habitat will be completed during suitable mild and dry conditions where practicable.

Cutting will be avoided:

- During frost
- During very cold conditions when reptiles are unlikely to move
- During heavy rainfall
- Where vegetation is waterlogged
- During exceptionally hot conditions that could expose animals without nearby cover

The working method will always retain an accessible route into undisturbed habitat.

7.3 Grassland and Ruderal Vegetation

Tall grass and ruderal vegetation will be cut using the staged method in Section 5.

Cutting will:

- Begin at the least suitable or most disturbed side
- Progress towards retained scrub or woodland
- Avoid cutting inwards from all sides
- Proceed at a speed that allows animals to move away
- Stop where an animal is observed

Cut material will be lifted or raked carefully.

7.4 Scrub Margins

Dense scrub and bramble will not be removed wholesale.

Where local management is required to establish planting or a graded edge:

- Work will be confined to clearly marked areas
- A visual check will precede cutting
- Cutting will begin above ground level
- The base will be inspected before lower vegetation is cut
- Retained scrub will remain connected to surrounding habitat
- Root systems will be retained unless removal is specifically required

7.5 Rubble, Logs and Refugia

Rubble, logs, boards and other potential refuges will be lifted individually by hand where practicable.

Material will not be:

- Crushed in situ
- Driven over
- Dragged blindly through vegetation
- Tipped directly from machinery
- Placed into a new pile without inspection

Where an existing refuge pile is to be retained, planting will be positioned around it rather than dismantling it unnecessarily.

7.6 Encountering a Reptile

Where a reptile is found:

1. Stop work immediately
2. Allow the animal an opportunity to move into retained habitat
3. Prevent machinery and workers from entering the area
4. Inform the site supervisor
5. Contact the project ecologist where the animal does not move, is at risk or multiple animals are found

Operatives will not chase or independently capture reptiles.

Any handling or movement considered necessary will be undertaken or directed by a suitably experienced ecologist.

Where repeated reptile encounters occur, work will stop while the method and need for further ecological input are reviewed.

7.7 Encountering an Amphibian

Where a common frog, common toad or newt is encountered:

- Work will stop in the immediate area
- The animal will be allowed to move away
- The surrounding refuge will be checked carefully
- Planting holes will be closed promptly
- Ecological advice will be obtained where the animal cannot move safely

Where an animal suspected to be a great crested newt is identified:

- It will not be handled by the contractor
- The location will be protected
- Work will stop
- An appropriately licensed ecologist will be contacted

7.8 Habitat-Pile Construction

New log and brash piles will be created using clean, untreated native woody material where available.

The pile will be:

- Constructed gradually
- Stable and resistant to collapse
- Connected to retained vegetation
- Positioned away from runoff pathways
- Outside INNS treatment areas
- Away from active bird nests
- Outside routine access routes
- Left undisturbed following completion

A combination of shaded and partially sunlit locations may be used to provide varied microclimates.

Material will be lowered into position rather than thrown.

8.2 Hedgehog

Before strimming dense vegetation or moving brash and leaf piles, workers will check for hedgehogs and hedgehog nests.

Particular attention will be given to:

- Dense bramble bases
- Long grass
- Accumulated leaves
- Log and brash piles
- Stored planting materials
- Areas beneath boards or sheeting

Where a hedgehog is encountered:

- Work will stop
- The animal will not be handled unnecessarily
- It will be allowed to move into retained cover where safe
- Ecological advice will be sought where it is nesting, injured or unable to move safely

A hedgehog nest containing dependent young will be left undisturbed and protected until ecological advice confirms that work can proceed.

8.3 Small Mammals

Rodents, shrews and other small mammals may shelter within vegetation, leaf litter and habitat piles.

Material will be moved slowly and progressively. Workers will allow animals to escape

No poison or rodenticide will be used within the habitat compartments as part of the habitat works.

8.4 Entrapment Prevention

Planting pits will be closed immediately after planting.

Open pipework, plant guards, containers and packaging will be stored so that animals cannot enter and become trapped.

Any container left upright during the working day will be checked before movement or removal.

Where a temporary hole cannot be closed immediately, it will be securely covered or provided with a suitable escape route. This will be an exceptional arrangement rather than routine practice.

9. Bat-Box Installation

9.1 Purpose

Three bat boxes will be installed on suitable mature trees to provide additional roosting opportunities within the retained woodland network.

The boxes will supplement the retained commuting and foraging habitat associated with woodland edge, scrub and tree lines.

9.2 Final Siting

The final host trees will be agreed by the project ecologist and competent installer.

Subject to tree suitability and the approved plan, boxes should be distributed across the retained woodland compartments rather than clustered on a single tree.

Locations will provide:

- Clear flight access
- Connection with woodland edge or scrub
- Shelter from excessive exposure
- Minimal artificial illumination
- Suitable height above ground
- A range of aspects and thermal conditions
- Safe access for installation

9.3 Host-Tree Inspection

Before installation, the installer and project ecologist will check:

- Tree condition
- Potential roost features
- Active bird nests
- Suitable fixing positions
- Branch stability
- Access and safety
- Future tree growth
- Nearby artificial lighting

The box will not obscure or damage a cavity, split, rot hole, lifted bark or other potential bat-roost feature.

9.4 Installation Method

Boxes will be installed by a competent arborist or suitably trained installer.

Fixings will be suitable for the box and host tree and will allow for future tree growth.

Installation will not involve:

- Unnecessary branch removal
- Cutting into the trunk
- Sealing a cavity
- Damaging lifted bark

- Using wire likely to constrict the tree
- Working during darkness
- Floodlighting the tree

Where minor pruning is necessary for safe installation, it will be agreed in advance and checked for nesting birds and potential bat features.

9.5 Unexpected Bat Evidence

If a bat, droppings, staining or another possible sign of roosting is identified:

- Work will stop
- The feature will not be touched
- The tree will be left undisturbed
- An appropriately licensed bat ecologist will be contacted
- Installation will move to another tree only following ecological advice

9.6 Installation Record

The following will be recorded for each box:

Record	Requirement
Box reference	Unique number
Box type	Manufacturer and model
Compartment	W1, W2 or W3
Host tree	Species or identifying reference
Grid reference	Recorded position
Height	Approximate height above ground
Aspect	Direction faced
Fixing method	Recorded
Installation date	Recorded
Installer	Name
Photograph	Host tree and installed box

10. Habitat-Specific Creation Methods

10.1 Woodland Compartments W1–W3

Woodland enhancement will focus on establishing appropriate ground flora, retaining structural diversity and protecting mature trees, deadwood and habitat connectivity.

The existing woodland includes sycamore, goat willow, wild cherry, Norway maple, oak, beech, silver birch, spruce and holly, with bramble and ivy in the understory. Himalayan balsam and rhododendron occur locally.

Before planting:

- INNS treatment areas will be confirmed
- Dense ground refuges will be checked
- Active bird nests will be avoided
- Suitable planting microsites will be selected
- Exposed roots and deadwood will be protected

Bulbs and plug plants will be installed individually using hand tools.

Planting positions will:

- Avoid substantial roots
- Avoid tree cavities and bases
- Avoid dense existing native ground flora
- Avoid waterlogged hollows unless the approved species are suited to them
- Follow the approved HMMP specification
- Be irregularly distributed rather than planted in rigid rows

No fertiliser will be applied.

Existing leaf litter will be retained and replaced around planting positions where disturbed.

Deadwood will remain in situ unless movement is necessary to create an approved habitat pile or to access a planting position safely.

10.2 Scrub Compartments S1–S3

Scrub enhancement will retain existing native structure while increasing the diversity and continuity of the compartments.

Existing hawthorn, goat willow, bramble, ivy and other suitable native vegetation will be retained wherever consistent with the approved target.

Shrubs will be planted in irregular groups rather than uniform rows.

Before excavation:

- The planting position will be checked for nesting birds and ground fauna
- Dense bramble bases will be inspected
- Potential refuges will be retained
- INNS areas will be avoided

- Existing habitat connections will be identified

Each shrub will be planted into an individual pit. Excavated soil will be returned to the same position.

Planting will not create a continuous dense block across every part of the compartment. Openings, edge structure and rough vegetation will be retained to provide habitat diversity.

S3 will remain functionally connected with W2 and W3. Access and planting will not create a permanent break within this linkage.

10.3 Other Neutral Grassland G1

G1 will be enhanced through management and overseeding of the existing grassland.

The baseline grassland is structurally variable and generally species-poor, with perennial ryegrass, timothy, cock's-foot, plantain, common nettle, dandelion, common daisy and rosebay willowherb recorded. It provides foraging habitat and forms part of the wider habitat mosaic used by common fauna.

The creation sequence will comprise:

1. Check for nesting birds, reptiles and other fauna
2. Undertake directional cutting where the vegetation is tall
3. Remove arisings
4. Complete shallow scarification only where required
5. Sow the approved seed mixture
6. Lightly press or roll the seed where appropriate
7. Protect the area from unnecessary access
8. Monitor establishment

There will be no deep cultivation or topsoil stripping.

Scarification will expose only sufficient ground to provide seed-to-soil contact. It will not destroy the existing sward.

At least one undisturbed grassland or scrub margin will remain available during each phase.

Seed will not be sown:

- During heavy rainfall
- During strong winds
- Onto saturated soil
- Where it may wash into a runoff route
- Within an INNS treatment area
- Where later construction access is expected

No fertiliser, manure or lime will be applied unless subsequently supported by an approved ecological prescription.

10.4 Habitat Piles

Habitat piles will be constructed from suitable clean material arising from approved management.

Material may include:

- Logs
- Branches
- Brash
- Untreated woody offcuts
- Suitable stones or clean rubble where approved

The piles will not contain:

- Treated timber
- Plastic
- General construction waste
- Concrete containing contaminants
- Himalayan balsam
- Rhododendron
- Seed-bearing INNS material
- Contaminated soil

Piles will be positioned at retained habitat edges where they will not obstruct management access or surface-water controls.

10.5 Establishment Maintenance

Establishment visits may include:

- Replacement of failed plants
- Adjustment or removal of damaged guards
- Localised control of competing vegetation
- Watering during establishment
- Repair of disturbed planting positions
- Further overseeding of failed patches
- Removal of litter

All follow-up works will continue to follow this RAMS.

Before moving guards, mats or stored materials, workers will check beneath them for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.

Watering will use clean water and will not cause erosion or runoff.

11. Unexpected Finds and Stop-Work Procedure

11.1 General Procedure

Where an unexpected ecological receptor is encountered:

1. Stop the affected work
2. Leave the animal, nest or feature undisturbed
3. Move workers and equipment away
4. Prevent other personnel entering the area
5. Inform the site manager
6. Contact the project ecologist
7. Record the location and circumstances
8. Follow the ecological advice provided
9. Resume only when authorised

11.2 Species-Specific Response

Finding	Immediate response
Active bird nest	Stop work and establish an exclusion area under ecological advice
Slow worm or grass snake	Allow it to disperse, protect the area and contact the ecologist where necessary
Suspected great crested newt	Do not handle, stop work and contact a licensed ecologist
Common amphibian	Allow it to move into cover or seek ecological advice
Hedgehog	Stop work and allow dispersal; protect any nest
Bat or potential roost evidence	Stop work, leave the feature undisturbed and contact a licensed bat ecologist
Otter evidence	Stop work in the relevant area and obtain ecological advice
Injured wildlife	Stop work and contact the project ecologist or suitable wildlife veterinary service
Unexpected INNS	Stop soil or vegetation movement and implement the INNS procedure
Significant erosion or runoff	Stop work and implement the Hydrological RAMS

11.3 Multiple or Repeated Finds

Where several reptiles, amphibians or other animals are encountered, this may indicate a greater level of habitat use than anticipated.

In these circumstances:

- Work will stop
- The affected area will remain undisturbed
- The project ecologist will review the findings
- The method, timing and need for additional survey or supervision will be reconsidered

The RAMS will not be used to continue work where evidence indicates that the original risk assessment is no longer appropriate.

11.4 Injured or Dead Animals

An injured animal will not be left exposed to ongoing work.

The site manager will contact the project ecologist and an appropriate veterinary or wildlife rescue service where necessary.

Dead animals will be photographed and recorded. They will not be removed until ecological advice has been obtained where protected-species identification or reporting may be required.

12. Inspection, Records and Sign-Off

12.1 Inspection Frequency

Habitat creation works will be inspected:

- Before the first phase begins
- At the start of each new compartment
- Following a substantial break in works
- Following heavy rainfall
- Where the working method changes
- Following an unexpected ecological find
- At completion of each habitat type
- At final completion

Routine low-risk planting does not require continuous ecological attendance. The habitat contractor and site manager will maintain daily responsibility for compliance.

12.2 Daily Check

The following will be checked at the beginning and end of each working period:

Inspection item	Requirement
Compartment boundary	Clearly understood and not exceeded
Access route	Suitable and free from avoidable damage
Ground conditions	Firm enough for work
Nesting constraints	No active nest at risk
Refugia	Checked before disturbance
INNS areas	Avoided and clearly identified
Planting holes	Closed promptly
Habitat connectivity	Maintained
Hydrological controls	Intact
Waste and packaging	Removed
Unexpected finds	Recorded and reported
Accidental damage	Recorded and addressed

12.3 Habitat-Creation Records

The habitat contractor will record:

- Date of work
- Compartment
- Activity completed
- Plant species and quantities
- Seed mixture and batch information
- Area overseeded
- Habitat piles created
- Weather and ground conditions
- Equipment used
- Ecological supervision
- Wildlife encountered
- Deviations from the approved method
- Remedial action
- Photographs

12.4 Ecological Attendance Record

Where the project ecologist attends, the record will include:

Record	Details
Date and time	
Compartment	
Activity supervised	
Weather	
Checks completed	
Species or features found	
Exclusion areas established	
Advice provided	
Works stopped or modified	
Follow-up required	
Ecologist	

12.5 Completion Inspection

Following completion, the site manager and project ecologist will inspect the habitat works.

The inspection will confirm:

- Planting has remained within the approved compartments
- Planting pits have been reinstated
- G1 has been prepared and sown appropriately
- Retained vegetation has not been unnecessarily damaged
- Habitat connectivity remains intact
- Habitat piles are stable and suitably positioned
- Bat boxes have been installed and recorded
- Waste and packaging have been removed
- No entrapment hazards remain
- Hydrological controls remain functional where required

- INNS requirements have been followed
- Accidental damage has been rectified or scheduled for remediation
- Monitoring can commence under the HMMP

12.6 Completion Sign-Off

Completion requirement	Complete	Comments
W1 works completed		
W2 works completed		
W3 works completed		
S1 works completed		
S2 works completed		
S3 works completed		
G1 prepared and overseeded		
Habitat piles completed		
Three bat boxes installed		
Waste removed		
Habitat connectivity retained		
No unresolved ecological incidents		
Monitoring records established		

Sign-off	Name	Signature	Date
Habitat contractor			
Site manager			
Project ecologist			
Client representative			

12.7 Document Review

This RAMS will be reviewed where:

- The habitat layout changes
- Additional vegetation removal is proposed
- A protected species is found
- [REDACTED]
- Repeated reptile or amphibian encounters occur
- Construction damage affects a habitat compartment
- The INNS distribution changes materially
- The approved HMMP is amended
- The working method cannot be implemented as written

Any material revision will be issued to the client, site manager and habitat contractor before the affected work continues.