EAST PARK ENERGY

East Park Energy

EN010141

Environmental Statement
Volume 2 – Technical Appendices

Appendix 7-6: Otter and Water Vole Survey Report

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TABLES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This appendix has been prepared to accompany **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** of the Environmental Statement (ES) for the East Park Energy project (the 'Scheme').

1.1.2 This report presents detailed survey methodology and results of the otter and water vole survey undertaken in relation to the Scheme.

1.2 Survey Area

1.2.1 Locations where the Scheme will require crossings over watercourses were identified from **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-3: Indicative Crossing Plans [EN010141/DR/6.3]**, with a description of each potential crossing set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. At each location where crossing a watercourse is required, a water vole and otter survey was undertaken 100m upstream and downstream from the crossing point (collectively, the 'Survey Areas').

1.2.2 Due to impacts of the Scheme on watercourses being localised, areas beyond the 100m buffer were not considered.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 A total of 37 Survey Areas where watercourse crossings are required were identified. A summary of each Survey Area identified, and the watercourse name, where applicable, is summarised in Table 2.1 below and shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-3: Indicative Crossing Plans [EN010141/DR/6.3].**

Table 2.1: Summary of watercourses where crossings are required

Survey Area Reference	Watercourse Type
C01	Pertenhall Brook
C02	Field Ditch
C03	Field Ditch
C05a	Unnamed Stream
C05b	Unnamed Stream
C06	Field Ditch
C07	Field Ditch
C08	Field Ditch
C09	Field Ditch
C10	Field Ditch
C11	Field Ditch
C12	Field Ditch
C16	Field Ditch
C20	Field Ditch
C21	Field Ditch
C29	Field Ditch
C32	Field Ditch
C33	Field Ditch
C34	Field Ditch
C35	Field Ditch
C36	Field Ditch
C37	Field Ditch
C38	Field Ditch
C40	Field Ditch
C41	Field Ditch
C42	Field Ditch
C43	Field Ditch
C46	Field Ditch
C48	Field Ditch
C52	Field Ditch
C53	South Brook
C54	South Brook

C55	Field Ditch
C56a	Field Ditch
C56b	Field Ditch
C58a	Duloe Brook
C58b	Duloe Brook

2.1.2 A combined otter and water vole survey was undertaken, where access was possible, on 23rd and 24th June 2025. The survey was undertaken by K. Love *MSc* and L. Quarton *MSc BSc*.

2.1.3 Where access was unavailable on 23rd and 24th June, a further survey was undertaken on 15th July 2025. The survey was undertaken by K. Love *MSc* and E. Phillips *MSc*.

2.1.4 All surveyors are competent in the identification of field signs of otters and water voles, as well as using appropriate survey methodologies.

2.2 Otter

2.2.1 The survey comprised an assessment of the relative habitat suitability of the watercourses within the Survey Area. Notes were also taken on any field signs encountered including spraints, footprints, feeding remains, slides and potential holts (or other resting or breeding places).

2.3 Water vole

2.3.1 The water vole methodology was broadly designed to follow Dean (2021)[1] and Dean *et al.* (2016)[2]. A search for field signs was undertaken, indicating the presence or possible presence of water vole within the Survey Area.

2.3.2 A search of the waterbodies and ditches within the survey area was undertaken predominantly by walking within or along the watercourse/ditch edge, and where this was not possible, undertaking spot checks and searches

[1] *Dean, M. (2021)* Water Vole Field Signs and Habitat Assessment; A Practical Guide to Water Vole Survey. *Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.*
[2] *Dean, M., Strachan, R., Gow, D. & Andrews, R. (2016)* The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series). *Eds Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The Mammal Society, London.*

from the bankside to record the location of any water vole field signs. Searches for field signs were undertaken from the toe[3] of the watercourse/ditch bank within each section, up to at least 1m out into the water and at least 1m up the bank, in accordance with guidance (Dean *et al*., 2016).

2.3.3 Searches for the following field signs of water vole presence as per Strachan *et al*. (2011)[4] were undertaken along each survey section: sightings, droppings/latrines, burrows, footprints, pathways, feeding stations and lawns.

2.3.4 The presence of water vole droppings/latrines is the only field sign that can be used reliably on its own to confirm species presence.

2.4 Limitations

2.4.1 Areas of dense vegetation were present which may have obscured field signs of otter and/or water vole within the Survey Areas.

2.4.2 Typically, two surveys for water vole are undertaken during the breeding season, which is generally considered to be between mid-April and September. Only one survey was undertaken, in June. This is considered to be sufficient to inform the Scheme as the works impacting watercourses will be undertaken in localised areas across the Site, and also subjected to pre-commencement checks.

[3] *In accordance with Dean* et al. *(2016) the toe of the bank is defined here as the area of the bank at, and immediately above, water level.*
[4] *Strachan R., Moorhouse T.P. & Gelling M. (2011).* Water Vole Conservation Handbook *3rd Edition. Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, Oxford.*

3.0 RESULTS

3.1.1 A description of the watercourses surveyed, photographs and indication of suitable habitat for otter and water vole are presented in Table 3.1.

3.1.2 Watercourses where evidence of otter and/or water vole were recorded are detailed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1: Watercourse Description and Suitability for Otter and Water vole ***(Y = Yes, N = No, P = Potential)***

Watercourse Reference	Description & Photograph	Otter Suitable Habitat	Water vole Suitable Habitat
C01	The watercourse has steep and vertical/undercut vegetated banks and some marginal and emergent vegetation. Water was up to 1m in depth and had a slow flow rate. Access was limited within the western extent of the Survey Area due to areas of deeper water. 	Y	Y

C02	Dry ditch with steep banks. 	N	N
C03	Dry ditch with steep banks. 	N	N
C05a C05b	A stream ranging between 1-2m in width and less than 0.5m in depth. Banks are steep and vegetated, with patches of bare earth. Water has a very slow flow. Access was limited in places as banks were steep and dense scrub vegetation was present. 	Y	Y

C06	Dry ditch with vertical banks. 	N	N
C07	Dry ditch with steep banks. 	N	N
C08	Dry ditch with vertical banks. 	N	N
C09	Dry ditch with shallow banks. 	N	N
C10	Dry ditch with vertical banks.	N	N

			
C11	Mostly dry ditch with some pools of water present, likely to be seasonally wet. Banks are steep and vegetated. The ditch is split by a culvert. 	N	N
C12	Dry ditch with steep banks. 	N	N

C16	Dry ditch with steep banks. 	N	N
C20	Dry ditch with vertical/undercut banks. 	N	N
C21	Dry ditch with steep and vertical/undercut banks. 	N	N
C29	Dy ditch with steep banks. 	N	N

C32	Dry ditch in a T-shape format, extending both north-south and east. 	N	N
C33	Densely vegetated dry ditch, connected to C34. 	N	N
C34	Densely vegetated dry ditch, connected to C33. 	N	N

C35	Ditch with steep vegetated banks. Water flow was static, and depth <0.5m. 	P	Y
C36	Mostly dry ditch, with small damp area where joins with C37. Dense vegetation and steep banks preventing full access. C36 does not extend full 100m south of crossing point. 	N	N
C37	Ditch with steep banks and less than 5mm of water present. Ditch is split by existing culvert/track. Hedgerow borders ditch within eastern extent. Ditch connects to C36. 	P	P

C38	Dry ditch with steep vegetated banks. Part of ditch with very low water levels (<5mm). Ditch split into two by a culvert. Northern extent adjacent to woodland, southern extent adjacent to arable land. 	N	N
C40	Dry ditch with vertical/undercut banks. 	N	N
C41 C42	Dry ditch infilled to north and shares southern Survey Area with C43. Banks are steep or vertical/undercut and vegetated. 	N	N

C43	Dry ditch with steep or vertical/undercut banks. Part of ditch runs adjacent to the woodland to the west. 	N	N
C46 C48	C47 and C49 are connected. Dry ditch with vegetated steep and vertical/undercut banks. 	N	N
C52	Dry ditch. *No photo available.*	N	N
C53 C54	C54 and C55 connected by culvert. C54 is adjacent to woodland, C55 is adjacent to arable land. Vegetated banks are steep or vertical/undercut. Water levels are <0.5m and flow is sluggish. 	P	Y

C55	Dry and no true ditch present. 	N	N
C56a C56b	Dry ditch. 	N	N
C57	Dry ditch. 	N	N
C58a C58b	Duloe Brook has steep and vertical vegetated banks and slow to sluggish water flow. Marginal vegetation was present in patches of the watercourse, whilst absent in other areas. The water was less than 0.5m in depth. *No photograph available.*	Y	Y

3.1.3 Habitat suitable to support otter was identified in C01, C05a, C05b, C58a and C58b.

3.1.4 C35, C37, C53 and C54 were identified as being potentially suitable to support otter, as these watercourses typically had low water levels, therefore are likely to provide limited foraging opportunities for otter; however, have potential to support commuting and sheltering/breeding otter.

3.1.5 Habitat suitable to support water vole was identified in watercourses C01, C05a, C05b, C35, C53, C54, C58a and C58b.

3.1.6 Watercourse C37 was identified as providing potentially suitable habitat for water vole, however water levels were noted to be very low, reducing the suitability of the watercourse for this species.

3.2 Field Signs

3.2.1 Evidence of otter was recorded within one watercourse (C05a/C05b) at the Site. Potential evidence of water vole was recorded in two watercourses at the Site (C54, C58a/C58b), however no field signs that can definitely confirm presence of water vole (i.e., droppings/ latrines) were identified.

3.2.2 A summary of the findings is presented in Table 3.2

Table 3.2: Field signs relating to otter and water vole recorded at the Site

Watercourse Reference	Photograph	Description of Field Signs Recorded
C05a / C05b		An old otter spraint was recorded along the southern bank of C05a/C05b.

		A possible resting / layup area for otter was recorded beneath a mature willow along C05a/C05b.
C54		A potential water vole borrow was recorded above the berm on the northern bank of C54.
		A burrow and old feeding remains, likely attributed to water vole, were recorded on the southern bank of C54.
C58a / C58b		A small mammal burrow was present on the southern bank, located at the water margin. No definitive evidence of water vole was recorded; however, the burrow was considered suitable to support water vole.