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Neart na Gaoithe Bat activity surveys

Following a general habitat assessment of the proposed cable route and a more detailed examination of three areas (designated 17, 18 and 23) identified as having high roosting potential, a series of dusk and dawn surveys were carried out to measure extent and type of bat activity and species concerned.

In a further area (designated 42), a possible site for construction base, passive monitoring was undertaken over a series of nights to establish extent of bat use and species concerned.

All surveys were undertaken in accordance with, “**Bat surveys – good practice guidelines**”, (BCT), “**Bat mitigation guidelines**”, (Natural England), and “**Bat workers’ manual**”, (JNCC).

Dusk and dawn surveys

Recordings of bat activity were made with Anabat SD1 and surveyors positioned to observe activity for periods of 1 ½ to 2 hours after sunset/before sunrise on six occasions between 3rd and 25th September 2011.

Passive monitoring

Recording of bat activity was undertaken over the period from 14th to 20th September 2011 using a Songmeter SD1.

Results All data collected and spreadsheet showing survey results are included on a CD which accompanies this report.

Area 17

Dusk survey Foraging activity was recorded and observed from some 20 minutes after sunset of Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pigmaeus*), with small numbers of Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) some 30 minutes later. No emergence observed.

Dawn survey 1 Foraging activity was observed until some 36 minutes before sunrise. Soprano pipistrelle with a single Myotis species pass. No swarming observed.

Dawn survey 2 A small number of bat passes up to some 35 minutes before sunrise. Predominantly Soprano pipistrelle with two Common pipistrelle and one Myotis species. No swarming observed.

Area 18

Dusk survey Little activity. Small number (6) of bat passes from some 30 minutes after sunset. All observed as foraging bats coming from and returning to south. No emergence observed.

Dawn survey 1 No activity.

Dawn survey 2 No activity.

Area 23

Dusk survey Foraging and commuting activity observed and recorded from some 26 minutes after sunset. Predominantly Soprano pipistrelle with some Common pipistrelle later. No emergence observed.

Dawn survey 1 Foraging and commuting activity until some 31 minutes before sunrise, predominantly Soprano pipistrelle with some Common pipistrelle and single Myotis species and Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*). No swarming observed.

Dawn survey 2 Small amount of foraging until some 51 minutes before sunrise. All Soprano pipistrelle. No swarming observed.

Area 42

Passive monitoring Recordings show regular but low level foraging activity dominated by Soprano pipistrelle, with smaller numbers of Common pipistrelle and Myotis. The area has no roosting potential.

Conclusions

- Areas 17, 23 and 42 have regular, significant levels of foraging activity and a smaller amount of commuting
- Area 18 has a small amount of bat activity
- No evidence was found of roosting in areas of woodland adjacent to proposed cable route

Recommendations

- As a precautionary measure the cable route should, if possible, avoid any need to remove trees in all areas surveyed
- If tree removal is unavoidable, it should be done using, “soft felling” methods with a licensed bat worker present
- If area 42 is used as a construction base, disturbance should be minimized by maintaining the existing vegetation lines and the use of low level lighting