G.2 Badger

Damhead Creek Phase II Proposed Development
Badger Survey Results

Survey Date: 26th October 2006.

Surveyors: Miranda Cowan and Ceri Griffiths.

Survey Methods
The survey method was based on the standard approach detailed in the Mammal Society publication *Surveying Badgers* (Harris *et al*., 1989) and used during the National Badger Survey (Cresswell *et al.,* 1990). This involved searching for field signs associated with badger, such as searching for setts, runs, foraging activity, latrines and footprints. Other signs searched for included scratching posts and hairs caught on fences.

Using nationally recognised sett classification criteria (Harris *et al* 1994; Creswell *et al* 1990) all setts during the survey were categorised as either main, annex, subsidiary or outlier. Individual badger holes were further classified as A to indicate active, B as partially active or C disused.

Survey Constraints
Access was the only constraint, particularly to the west where there is optimal badger habitat to include grazed pasture and small wooded areas. This land is privately owned and access permission was not available at the time of survey.

Survey Results
The extent of the survey area and results are plotted on figure 3 entitled 'Badger Survey Findings 2006'.

There is evidence that badgers are present within the vicinity of Damhead Creek, although the field signs are patchy, which makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions. The results are described in more detail below.

Badger sett
A partially used outlier sett (S1) was located in a small block of woodland to the north west of the Damhead Creek site. Whilst the entrance hole was open for badger occupation, there was no evidence (in the form of prints, hair, or recent excavations) to suggest the sett was currently used. Leaf debris had also stated to accumulate over the spoil mound, which was compact and spread out over the ground.

The sett had the character of having been occupied in the recent past, possibly during the spring/early summer. It is possible that there are active setts present on land to the west of Damhead Creek Power Station (not accessed), which is characterised by grazed pasture and small wooded patches.

General activity
There is a run that extends alongside the drain immediately south of Damhead Creek. This run is faint and is likely to be periodically used by badger and other mammals such as fox. There were a number of badger snuffle holes along the length of the run.

Badger runs and associated foraging were also present by the road to the south of Damhead Creek, close to the Kingsnorth Power Station. The grassland area by the road is regularly mown and so provides good foraging habitat for badger. There are also a number of mammal tracks throughout the grassland to the east where the

sports ground is located, although there is no supporting evidence to confirm these tracks are attributed to badger.

There are two road traffic accident (RTA) records of badger on the road leading down to Kingsnorth Power Station (provided by the West Kent Badger Group). These records fall within the vicinity of badger runs, which indicates the road forms a regular crossing point during foraging excursions.

A number of badger prints were found on a track to the east of Damhead Creek. These tracks radiated from an embankment to the south and may indicate where a sett is located. Due to unauthorised access this area could not be investigated any further.

Within the Damhead Creek proposed development site there was one fresh latrine and a badger hair found on a gate by a fence line. A number of runs were also present within the site, although these may have also been formed by rabbit and fox.

Conclusion

It is apparent that there is badger activity throughout the area investigated, although there is no sett within the immediate vicinity. The location of setts is uncertain, but may be to the west of the Damhead Creek Power Station on land that was not able to be accessed during this survey. The results indicate that the area investigated forms part of a badger clan's territory, although not actually containing the sett, with the variety of habitats being used to fulfil different feeding requirements.

The area proposed for development does not provide optimal foraging opportunities for badger because they mostly favour mown grassland (rather than the rank grassland of this site) where earthworms are more readily available towards the surface. When earthworms are in short supply tall grassland and tall herb will be used more readily as a foraging resource, particularly for small mammals and other invertebrates. Therefore the value of the grassland as foraging habitat may be significant in drier periods (when earthworms retreat deeper into the soil) or during winter.

References

Cresswell, P., Harris, S., & Jeffries, D.J., 1990. *The history, distribution, status and habitat requirements of the badger in Britain.* Nature Conservancy Council.

Harris, S., Jefferies, D., Cheeseman, C. and Booty, C., 1994. *Problems with badgers?* RSPCA. Horsham.

Harris, S., Creswell. P., and Jefferies, D.J., 1989. *Surveying badgers*. Mammal Society, London.

Legend

- Extent of survey area

Badger Evidence

- Badger foraging
- Badger latrine
- Badger hair
- Badger print
- Badger RTA records from West Kent Badger Group
- Badger sett
- Badger run

Scale: 1:3,500 @ A3

0 25 50 100 150 200 Metres

Vegetation in the area outlined for development on Damhead Creek land is characterised by tall herb, which does not provide optimal foraging opportunities for badger. Badger may utilise this area to feed on invertebrates & small mammals when earthworms are less available.

Very faint run, which could also be used by a fox

Land adjoining Damhead Creek to the west is characterised by grazed pasture & small wooded patches. It is possible that badger setts are located in this area with badgers moving onto industrialised land as part of their foraging territory

Area of dense bramble scrub on embankment. Given the high number of badger prints on the track, a badger sett could be located on the embankment. No access was permitted to this area.

Holm Lodge
Works
Kingsnorth
Sports Ground
Reservoir
Kennels
Drain
Track
FB
SI
Sluice

paa
Penny Anderson Associates Ltd
Consultant Ecologists

Title: Badger Survey Findings 2006

Client: Scottish Power Plc.

Project: Damhead Creek Phase II

Date:	Dwg:
Nov 2006	Figure 3
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