

Ballinlee Green Energy

Chapter 7 Ornithology

Appendix 7A: Statement of Competency

Woodrow Ref: P00012353

Date: 21 September 2025

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE



woodrow
APEM Group

Appendix 7A: Statement of Competency

APEM Group Woodrow, trading as Woodrow Sustainable Solution Limited, is an established and accomplished environmental consultancy committed to delivering robust ecological assessment services for clients in the private and public sectors. APEM Group - Woodrow provides an in-house team of ecologists and environmental professionals whose primary specialisms include botany, habitats, birds, bats, mammals, invertebrates, and aquatic ecology. The company's investment in high-quality technology, including field equipment and software, and the use of applications like Survey123 forms throughout all survey types ensures reliability and confidence in our work. APEM Group Woodrow staff are fully conversant with wildlife legislation in both Ireland and the UK, and work to exacting standards, according to established guidelines issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Chapter 7 Ornithology - Team Competencies

Maeve Maher McWilliams – Associate Director – Project Manager

Maeve is an Associate Director for Woodrow. Maeve has over 13 years' experience on complex EIAs and mitigation design for infrastructure and development projects across Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. Maeve has been involved in projects across several sectors such as renewable energy; linear infrastructure; flood relief schemes and port developments; tourism and recreation; residential, pharmaceutical, and data centre developments. Included in this list are over twenty onshore wind energy projects in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and associated substations and onshore grid connections. Maeve has provided advice and recommendations throughout project lifetimes from inception and due diligence, right through to the planning process and into post-planning compliance and secondary consents. As a field ecologist Maeve is skilled in multidisciplinary surveys, habitat surveys, bat surveys, mammal surveys, and specialises in ornithology surveys. As a project manager and ecologist, Maeve directs, manages and authors large scale EIA Reports (EIARs) biodiversity chapters including ornithology chapters for wind energy projects.

QUALIFICATIONS:

BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences, Queen's University Belfast, 2008

MSc Evolutionary and Behavioural Ecology, University of Exeter, 2010

Aron Sapsford – Principal Ornithologist

Aron is a principal ornithologist with Woodrow. He is a highly experienced ornithologist with over 30 years of expertise in designing and implementing large-scale bird research projects. He has a particular focus on species such as the Manx shearwater, red-billed chough, goldcrest, and wheatear. As the co-founder and scientific officer of the *Manx Bird Atlas*, he led the design and fieldwork for bird surveys that resulted in a comprehensive five-year breeding bird survey and a three-year winter atlas, culminating in the publication of the *Manx Bird Atlas*. Since earning an "A" grade British Trust for Ornithology ringing licence at the age of 18, Aron has served as the ornithological lead at several British bird observatories, processing over 250,000 birds of nearly 200 species. He is also a skilled writer with extensive report-writing experience, having contributed to numerous scientific journals. Currently, he

is authoring a 64-year review of the ornithological history of the Calf of Man. A talented trainer and public speaker, Aron regularly delivers engaging talks and demonstrations on bird ringing and conservation. He is a member of the Manx Bird Records Committee and is in the process of applying for membership with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Qualifications:

A1 NVQ Assessor (Edexcel)

Matthew Rea – Principal Ornithologist

Matt is a Principal Ornithology Consultant with ten years' experience as a professional consultant and joined APEM in January 2023. Matt leads the UK Terrestrial and Intertidal Ornithology sub-team, with extensive experience of managing large-scale EIA projects across the UK and Ireland, particularly for onshore wind developments.

Matt has worked on over 60 onshore wind projects, including leading survey and assessment for greenfield sites, undertaking monitoring of operational sites and working on repowering applications. He is highly experienced in planning, undertaking and managing large-scale survey programmes for sensitive onshore sites, leads on Collision Risk Modelling and has undertaken impact assessment (EIA and HRA) for numerous projects. In addition, Matt is capable of providing concise advice to clients on constraints, sensitive wind farm design, mitigation and habitat management to de-risk projects and aid consent. Matt has also acted as a technical reviewer on behalf of developers to assure quality of third-party reports and assessment.

Qualifications:

BSc Geography, University of Glasgow, 2014

MSc Freshwater System Science, University of Glasgow, 2015

Dr. Kerrie Mackie – Ecologist – Whooper swan specialist

Kerry has been a freelance ecologist since 2015 having worked for twenty-four years in the conservation sector with two field seasons with Birdwatch Ireland prior to working for the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, managing and developing their Castle Espie reserve in Northern Ireland. Now as an independent consultant he upholds a conservation profile in facilitating waterfowl research for universities, NGO's, Local Councils and stakeholder partnerships, coordinating and undertaking censuses for waterfowl, seabirds, as well as an ongoing breeding wader project. Within the industrial sector, he has provided surveys for wind farm development and advises and undertakes collision risk management for George Best Belfast City airport. Kerry recently completed a doctorate with University of Exeter - funded by Department for Infrastructure (DfI) - titled "Impact of a Road Development on Whooper Swans", focusing on the interplay of habitat quality and infrastructure on foraging distribution, behavioural effects of disturbance, revealing underlying mortality to powerlines and providing design input into - and an efficacy assessment of - DfI's associated whooper swan mitigation program.

Qualifications:

BSc (Hons) Earth Sciences, Oxford Polytechnic 1990

MSc Mineral Exploration, Imperial College London, 1991

PhD Biological Sciences, University of Exeter, 2025

Julieta Pedrana – Senior Ecologist

Julieta is a Senior Ecologist with Woodrow. She has completed a B.Sc. in Biological Science at University of Mar del Plata, Argentina and a Ph.D. in Conservation Biology at the University of Southern Patagonia, Argentina. From 2017 to 2023, Julieta worked as a Senior Scientist researcher of the National Council of Scientific Research from Argentina at the Department of Environmental Science, National Technological University, Argentina. The main themes of her research have been the application of GIS-based modelling in nature conservation focusing on the predictive models for species occurrence and habitat suitability. She regularly carries out ornithological surveys and compiles ornithological reports, including carrying out collision risk modelling to inform wind farm planning.

Qualifications:

BSc - Biological Sciences, University of Mar del Plata, Argentina, 2006

PhD - Conservation Biology at the University of Southern Patagonia, Argentina, 2010

Adrian Walsh – Ecologist

Adrian is an Ecologist with APEM Group Woodrow. He has completed an honours BSc with a focus on Zoology and an MSc in Wildlife Conservation and Management at University College Dublin. He is a Qualifying Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

At Woodrow, Adrian undertakes a variety of surveying including terrestrial mammals, bats and extensive ornithology monitoring. He has also authored many Ecological Impact Assessments and Appropriate Assessment Screenings. He has used a variety of surveying techniques and equipment including longworth, novel and the Mostela camera trapping techniques to survey small mammals, reptile refugia mats and various newt surveying techniques including torchlight surveys and egg searches. He is also an avid ornithologist and volunteers as a surveyor for Birdwatch Ireland for the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) and the Countryside Bird Survey (CBS).

Qualifications:

BSc (Hons) Zoology. University of Galway. 2018

MSc Wildlife Conservation and Management. University College Dublin. 2020

Jasmin Day-O'Neill – Ecology Support and Data Coordinator

Jasmin Day O'Neill is an Ecology Support and Data Coordinator within APEM Group Woodrow. Jasmin has experience of GIS and remote sensing using ArcGIS and Erdas Imagine. She is proficient in the management, analysis, and mapping of spatial data. Since joining APEM Group Woodrow, Jasmin has expanded her experience to include a variety of ecological surveys. Most extensively Jasmin has

worked on large scale upland habitat monitoring involving mapping and relevés for Annex I habitat monitoring assessments, including the monitoring of rare plant species. She has been lead author on Biodiversity Survey reports and Habitat Management and Enhancement Plan: Monitoring and Compliance reports.

Qualifications:

MSc Geographic Information Systems Ulster University, 2023

MA English Literary Studies Durham University, 2014

BA English Literature University of Sheffield, 2012

Leona McSharry - Ecology Support and Data Officer

Leona McSharry holds a Hons BSc in Zoology from the National University of Ireland Galway where she received a 1.1. She joined APEM Group Woodrow in December 2024 as Ecology support and data officer. Leona joined the Venom systems Lab in NUI Galway in 2020 as an Intern Ecologist, where she primarily conducted research involving spiders. This internship allowed her to develop her field skills, performing wildlife surveys, transect surveys, camera trapping and bat surveys. Leona also took on the role as research intern in the Dog Lab of the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna in 2022. She developed her Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and biostatistics skills through college receiving an A in her GIS module and opting to analyse her final year thesis using RStudio. Leona also has ample scientific writing experience having been author on five scientific publications and with another in the final stages of publication.

Qualifications:

BSc (1.1 Hons) – Zoology, National University of Ireland, Galway, 2022.

Field surveys during the monitoring period (October 2021 – October 2024) were carried out by appropriately skilled and experienced observers and are provided in the following sections:

Year 1 (October 2021-September 2022)

Field surveys during Year 1 were carried out by the following surveyors:

Joe Kelly - Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist
Tom Tarpey - Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist
Padraig Cullinan - Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist
Gerry Murphy - Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist
Michael O'Clery - Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist

Malachy Walsh and Partners (MWP) surveyors also included:

Fiona McKenna - Field Ecological Surveyor
Deidre O' Brien - Field Ecological Surveyor
Ciara Barry-Hannon - Field Ecological Surveyor
Davey Farrar- Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist
Marie Keane - Field Ecological Surveyor

Year 2 (October 2022-September 2023)

Field surveys during Year 2 were carried out by the following members of the Irish Ornithological Survey Group (IOSG):

John N Murphy - Environmental Manager & Lead Ornithologist
John Hehir – Field Ecologist/Ornithologist, BSc (Hons) Wildlife Biology
Tom Ryan – Field Ecologists/Ornithologist, BSc (Hons) Environmental & Natural Resource Management
Stan Nugent - Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist, BSc (Hon) Environmental Studies
Tom Tarpey - Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist
Padraig Cullinan - Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist
Gerry Murphy - Field Ecological Surveyor/ Ornithologist
Seán Dundon – Field Ecological Surveyor/Ornithologist

Year 3 (October 2023-September 2024)

Field surveys during Year 3 were carried out by the following surveyors:

Andre Robinson

André Robinson is a highly experienced freelance ornithologist working with APEM Group Woodrow, with over 40 years of field ecology expertise across Ireland, the UK, and North America. Since 2020, he has conducted a wide range of ornithological surveys, including seabird transit counts, vantage point surveys, breeding bird surveys, and turbine fatality searches, following industry-standard methodologies. His extensive field experience, meticulous data collection, and deep knowledge of bird identification and behaviour ensure high-quality, reliable survey results that contribute to robust ecological assessments.

Edward Morris

Edward Morris is an experienced conservationist and field ecologist with a strong academic background, including an MSc in Conservation and Land Management. Since 2022, he has worked as a freelance ornithologist with APEM Group Woodrow, conducting a variety of bird surveys to industry standards. His previous roles with the RSPB have given him hands-on experience in species monitoring, habitat management, volunteer coordination, and GIS mapping. Edward's practical field skills, combined with his thorough survey work and ecological knowledge, contribute to accurate and reliable data collection for environmental assessments.

Geoffrey Oliver

Geoffrey Oliver is a highly skilled ornithologist and ecologist with decades of experience conducting bird surveys and ecological assessments across Ireland and the UK. Holding a PhD in coastal lagoon ecology, Geoffrey has worked extensively on wind farm projects, hen harrier breeding surveys, and coastal habitat studies for organizations like NPWS, EPA, and various environmental consultancies. His meticulous data collection, deep ecological knowledge, and long history of producing detailed reports make him an invaluable contributor to robust environmental assessments and conservation efforts.

Patrick Devereux

Patrick Devereux is a dedicated ecologist with a BSc (Hons) in Applied Freshwater and Marine Biology from Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology. Passionate about wildlife, he has extensive experience in ecological surveying, fieldwork, and data analysis, covering bird surveys, bat monitoring, aquatic surveys, and biodiversity assessments in various environments. His skills include laboratory techniques, GIS, statistical analysis (R-stats, Minitab), and environmental legislation. Patrick also excels in report writing and communication. As an amateur wildlife photographer, he shares his knowledge of Irish wildlife and animal behaviour through his Instagram account.