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Rooaunalaghta Green Energy Project

Appendix 7-1

Statement of Competencies

ROOAUNALAGHTA
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BUILT ON KNOWLEDGE

Rooaunalaghta Green Energy Ltd.

Chapter 7 Ornithology

Appendix 7-1: Statement of Competencies

Woodrow Ref: P00016381
Date: October 2026

woodrow
APEM Group

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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 specialism is ornithology. 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).

The following APEM Group Woodrow personnel were involved in the preparation of the Ornithology Chapter of this EIAR, including field surveys.

Aron Sapsford – Principal Ornithologist – Principal Chapter Author

Aron Sapsford is a highly experienced ornithologist with over 30 years of expertise in designing and delivering large-scale bird research projects. His work has focused particularly on species such as the Manx shearwater, red-billed chough, goldcrest, and wheatear. As co-founder and scientific officer of the Manx Bird Atlas, he led the design and implementation of comprehensive field surveys, resulting in a 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 and has processed over 400,000 birds of nearly 200 species. His experience also includes participation in international ringing studies in both Uganda and The Gambia, contributing to research on Afro-Palearctic migratory birds.

Aron is a qualified A1 NVQ Assessor and a skilled trainer, regularly mentoring others in bird ringing techniques and field survey methods. A confident public speaker, he frequently delivers engaging talks and practical demonstrations on bird ringing and conservation.

He is also an accomplished writer with extensive experience in scientific reporting and has contributed to numerous publications. He is currently authoring a 64-year review of the ornithological history of the Calf of Man. Aron is a member of the Manx Bird Records Committee and is in the process of applying for membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Julieta Pedrana – Senior Ecologist and GIS Analyst – Chapter Author

Julieta Pedrana is a Senior Ecologist with APEM Group (MacroWorks) and has worked in the field of ecological consultancy for 8 years in South America (Argentina) and over 3 years in Ireland.

In Argentina, Julieta completed a BSc in Biological Sciences from the National University of Mar del Plata and a PhD in Conservation Biology from the University of Puerto Deseado (with a Scholarship from the National Council of Scientific Research of Argentina (CONICET)), and was also granted post-doctoral position with the Department of Natural Resource and Environmental Management at the National Institute of Agricultural Technology. For her BSc thesis, Julieta evaluated the association between habitat variables at local and landscape scales and diurnal raptors inhabiting Argentina's temperate grasslands, while her doctoral project focused on predicting species distributions for sustainable management and conservation decisions in Southern Patagonia.

From 2013 to 2017, Julieta worked as a Scientist for the Department of Natural Resource and Environmental Management at National Technological University. Then, from 2017 until 2022, Julieta was a Senior researcher of the CONICET at the Department of Environmental Science. During this time, her main focus of research was the application of GIS-based modelling in nature conservation focusing on the predictive models for species occurrence and habitat suitability. Since 2023, Julieta has been employed as a Senior Ecologist in Ireland for APEM Group (Woodrow and MacroWorks).

Julieta's expertise lies in Remote Sensing and GIS tools, migration studies (waterbirds and penguins), wildlife habitat modelling and landscape ecology (marine mammals, sea turtles and marine birds), statistical analyses programming and modelling in R, Distance sampling, and current and future land cover scenarios analysis. She has also been trained in Collision Risk Modelling, bird survey techniques for ecological and environmental assessments, and other skills for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) following CIEEM guidelines. She is also currently in the process of applying for CIEEM membership.

Conleth Conway – Ecologist – Chapter Author

Conleth Conway is an Ornithologist with APEM Group Woodrow since April 2024. Conleth has an MSc in Biodiversity Conservation from Bournemouth University and is experienced in species identification, field survey methodology and data analytics using ArcGIS, Excel and RStudio. His knowledge includes ecological assessment methods and collision risk modelling. Conleth has over seven years' experience working with international nature conservation NGOs and ecological consultancies as a field biologist and conservation manager in various places around the world including Southeast Asia, Central Africa, Central and South America and the Mascerene Islands where he gained valuable experience in scientific methodology, data analysis, GIS mapping and report writing. Conleth is in the process of applying for membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

James Spencer – Service Line Director for Ornithology – Technical Review

James joined APEM in 2021 and is Service Line Director and Ornithology lead for the APEM Group. James has over 16 years of experience within ornithological consultancy, working in both the terrestrial and offshore sectors and has a wide array of experiences involving EIA and HRA, and is an expert field ornithologist, familiar with all regularly occurring European bird species and with extensive knowledge of global avifauna. James has supported major infrastructure developments through project management, technical leadership, survey design (including implementing novel methods), team leadership and reporting. At APEM, James currently oversees delivery of all ornithological projects and provides technical and strategic leadership.

Qualifications: BSc (Hons) Biology with Ornithology, ESAS Surveyor (JNCC).

Matt Rea – Associate Director for Ornithology - Technical Review

Matt is an Associate Director and Head of Terrestrial Ornithology with over 10 years' experience as a professional ornithological consultant, leading APEM's Terrestrial and Intertidal Ornithology team. Based in Northern Ireland, he has managed and delivered ornithological surveys, impact assessments and technical reviews for renewable energy developments across Ireland and the UK, including more than 60 onshore wind energy projects. Matt has led ornithological assessments for projects throughout both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and is highly experienced in Collision Risk Modelling (CRM), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAR/EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA/HRA). He has designed and coordinated numerous large-scale survey programmes for wind farm

and wind farm repowering developments, providing technical oversight from baseline data collection through to impact assessment and mitigation design. Matt has substantial experience of the Irish planning and consenting process, including the assessment of impacts on designated sites and protected bird species, and regularly provides technical leadership and quality assurance for EIAR ornithology chapters.

Conn Barry – Ecological Data and GIS Officer

Conn Barry is an Ecological Data and GIS Officer with APEM Group - Woodrow, holding a Master's in Environmental Resource Management from University College Dublin (UCD). His Master's thesis was a survey of Irish farmers' opinions of agroforestry in tillage systems. He also obtained a Level 6 Certification in Irish Wildflower Identification from Atlantic Technological University Sligo in 2023.

Conn has diverse experience in organising and conducting ecological surveys, including bat roost, terrestrial mammal, Phase 1 and marsh fritillary surveys. Conn is also proficient in QGIS, ArcGIS Pro and data management, and regularly manages datasets and GIS packages for bird surveys and large-scale habitat projects.

A Qualifying member of CIEEM, Conn is currently applying for Associate-level membership with CIEEM. He is also actively involved in health and safety procedures and has participated in various bird survey and conservation programs, including the Countryside Bird Survey and IWeBS.

Rosaleen Keehan – Ecology Support and Data Officer

Rosaleen Keehan is an Ecology Support and Data Officer at APEM Group – Woodrow and has worked organising and collating ecological data at APEM Group – Woodrow and Edinburgh since June 2017. She holds an MA (Hons) in English Language and Literature from the University of Edinburgh and an MLitt in Women, Writing and Gender from the University of St Andrews.

Rosaleen has knowledge of and experience with specialist ecological software such as ArcGIS Pro, Survey 123, and Kaleidoscope. She has shadowed and assisted with ecological field surveys, such as bat, mammal, aquatic and botanical surveys, as well as reviewing and analysing trip camera footage.

Dr James O'Connor – Senior Ecologist – Project Manager

James O'Connor is a senior ecologist with APEM Group Woodrow, who holds a PhD in aquatic sciences with a primary technical specialism in freshwater ecology. James has a BSc (Hons) Agriculture and Environmental Management, a MSc Applied Environmental Science, and a PhD Aquatic Sciences. He has considerable aquatic field experience, particularly in electrofishing, crayfish and freshwater pearl mussel surveying as well as water quality biological assessments employing benthic macroinvertebrate fauna (e.g. Q-value, SSRS). James has prior experience monitoring wild bird populations with BirdWatch Ireland (BWI) and is heavily involved in ornithological work as part of his role with APEM Group Woodrow. Here, he regularly undertakes vantage point (VP), breeding bird, wetland bird (I-WeBS), and species-specific surveys (e.g. hen harrier). His terrestrial expertise extends to mammal surveys, particularly for otter and badger, which also includes mitigation and monitoring.

As a project manager, James manages projects of varying scales and works closely with clients, providing regular consultation and guidance. His reporting experience includes contributions to EIARs, particularly for onshore wind energy developments, as well as the production of AA Screening and NIS reports and various technical reports. He is the first author of five academic peer-reviewed published

research papers and has contributed to reports disseminating key research findings to state agencies such as the Irish EPA and Irish county councils.

Adrian Walsh – Ecologist – Field Surveys

Adrian was an Ecologist with APEM Group Woodrow until November 2025. He 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 CIEEM. At APEM Group Woodrow, Adrian undertook a variety of surveys including terrestrial mammals, bats and extensive ornithology monitoring. He also authored many EcIAs and AA Screenings. He 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).

Sub-consultants that worked on the proposed project

David Russell – Ecological Surveyor – Field Surveys

David Russell is an experienced conservation professional and field ecologist who has been working as a freelance sub-consultant with Woodrow APEM Group since 2020, undertaking ornithological surveys to support ecological assessment projects. He holds an MSc in Environmental Forestry and a BSc (Hons) in Conservation Management, with over two decades of experience working and volunteering in ecological roles in the UK and internationally, including with organisations such as the RSPB, National Trust for Scotland, Voluntary Services Overseas, and community woodland trusts. David has strong experience in habitat assessment, Phase 1 and NVC surveys, and vegetation monitoring, and has designed and delivered university-level ecology and monitoring courses overseas. He possesses strong species identification skills, particularly in birds (including song), botany, invertebrates, and lichens, with a particular focus on woodland and upland habitats. His broad ecological knowledge, adaptability, and clear understanding of field survey methodologies ensure the delivery of high-quality, reliable data for environmental assessments.

Dáithí Lavelle – Field Ecologist – Field Surveys

Daithí Lavelle is a skilled field ornithologist with experience conducting bird surveys across a range of habitats in Ireland. During his time with Woodrow Sustainable Solutions (2022–2023), he contributed to ornithological fieldwork as part of multidisciplinary ecological teams, supporting habitat and bat surveys alongside avian monitoring. His work included data collection for ecological assessments and participation in community biodiversity workshops.

Daithí brings a practical and educational background to his ornithology work, having managed a native woodland and delivered biodiversity-focused workshops to schools and community groups. His training includes certified courses in habitat management, biodiversity education, and environmental awareness, complemented by hands-on experience in ecological restoration and wildlife conservation. He holds a Certificate in Fisheries (Distinction) and is a certified Leave No Trace trainer.

Andrea Parisi – Field Ecologist – Field Surveys

Andrea Parisi is a field ecologist who brings a wealth of experience in ornithology built on over ten years of academic and practical experience. He holds an MSc in Biodiversity, Evolution and

Conservation with the University of Middlesex, and has conducted ornithological field research for academic projects in Italy, Germany and China. These projects have examined a wide variety of subjects including acoustic detectability of owls and woodpeckers, sexual dimorphism in Alaskan red phalarope and genetic traits in common tern. Andrea is extremely technically proficient, having worked extensively in GIS (e.g., Arc GIS), data analysis (RStudio, SPSS) and genetic and phylogenetic software (e.g., Mr Bayes). In 2025, Andrea concluded a PhD with Atlantic Technological University (ATU) Sligo which surveyed corncrake through passive acoustic monitoring and thermal imaging. This formed part of the Corncrake LIFE project, which aims to improve the conservation status of corncrakes in Ireland.

Aoife Moroney – Ecologist – Field Surveys

Aoife Moroney is an Ecologist – Ornithologist with Woodrow APEM Group. She has completed a B.Sc. in Engineering at University College Dublin and M.Sc. in Environmental Engineering (specialising in Environmental Management) at the Technical University of Denmark and the Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden. She has also recently completed a Post-graduate Certificate in Ecological Survey Techniques at the University of Oxford, achieving a distinction. In addition to being a skilled bird surveyor, Aoife is highly proficient in data analysis and management as well as mapping using ArcGIS and QGIS. Aoife regularly carries out ornithological surveys and compiles ornithological reports, including carrying out Collision Risk Modelling (CRM) to inform wind farm planning submissions. She volunteers as a surveyor with Birdwatch Ireland for the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (IWeBS) and the Countryside Bird Survey (CBS), in addition to the Irish Hen Harrier Survey (coordinated by BWI along with Golden Eagle Trust Ltd., and the Irish Raptor Study Group).

Seán Dundon – Field Ecologist – Field Surveys

Seán Dundon is an experienced field ecologist who holds a BSc in Wildlife Biology with the Institute of Technology in Tralee. The extent of his field ecology experience includes natterjack toad population mapping, VP surveys for birds and deployment of bat detectors trip cameras. Seán has also surveyed the relationships between anthropogenic activities and biodiversity and ecosystem services, which includes surveys of invertebrate biodiversity in grazed fields and contributing to the Aughinish Biodiversity Management Plan.

Simon Leo Mitchell – Ornithologist – Field Surveys & Data Analysis

Simon Leo Mitchell is a freelance ornithologist with a strong academic and research background, underpinned by a PhD focused on avian ecology from the University of Kent. His doctoral research examined bird ecology and behaviour in detail, providing a robust foundation in scientific methods, data analysis, and ecological interpretation.

Since 2022, Simon has been working as a freelance ornithologist with Woodrow, delivering a broad range of field surveys across Ireland. His experience includes vantage point surveys, breeding raptor surveys, breeding bird surveys, and wintering and wetland bird monitoring, contributing to renewable

energy and infrastructure assessments. He combines strong field identification skills with a rigorous, research-led approach to survey design, data collection, and reporting.

Simon brings a blend of academic depth and practical field experience, enabling him to produce high-quality, defensible ecological data for consultancy and conservation projects.

Brien Foley – Field Ornithologist – Field Surveys

Brien Foley is an experienced field ornithologist and environmental scientist working as a freelance sub-consultant with Woodrow APEM Group, with extensive experience supporting ecological assessments for large-scale infrastructure projects across Ireland. Since 2022, he has undertaken ornithological surveys in line with Scottish Natural Heritage (NatureScot) guidelines, requiring a high level of bird identification expertise, detailed knowledge of Irish flora and fauna, and rigorous data collection. Brien holds a BSc (Hons.) in Marine Science and brings a strong multidisciplinary background in environmental impact assessment, marine and terrestrial field surveys, GIS and spatial data analysis, and land management. His strong field skills, analytical approach, and experience with industry-standard survey methodologies ensure the delivery of accurate, high-quality data to inform robust environmental assessments.

Michael Hoit – Ecologist and Project Consultant – Field Surveys

Michael Hoit is a field ecologist with over twenty years of experience in ecological consultancy, citizen science surveys and ecotourism. He holds a BSc in Ecology with the University of East Anglia, where his dissertation subject was on breeding habitat selection by nightjars. Bird surveys have been the primary focus of Michael's career, including VP surveys, winter waterbird surveys and breeding bird surveys. He has also conducted tailored surveys of rare and protected species including golden eagle, white-tailed eagle, red kite and barn owl. As well as Ireland, Michael's career has extended to the UK, Georgia, South Africa and Sri Lanka. Michael has also gained experience in surveys of non-avian wildlife, including water voles, great crested newt and bats.