
Appendix 7.8 – Qualifications and experience of personnel involved in this assessment

Table of Contents

A7.8.1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A7.8.2	TOM GITTINGS.....	1
A7.8.3	APEM.....	1
A7.8.4	MALACHY WALSH & PARTNERS	2
A7.8.5	NOEL LINEHAN.....	5



A7.8.1 INTRODUCTION

This appendix includes details of the qualifications and experience of the personnel involved in the ornithological surveys and assessment.

A7.8.2 TOM GITTINGS

The data analysis, including collision risk modelling, evaluation and assessment was carried out by Tom Gittings. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report chapter and appendices were written by Tom Gittings (excluding Appendices 7.3 – 7.6).

Tom Gittings has a BSc in Ecology, a PhD in Zoology and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. He has 29 years' experience in professional ecological consultancy work and research. He has specific expertise in ornithological assessments for wind energy projects and has been involved in numerous wind energy projects. His input to these projects has variously included survey work, collision risk modelling, writing the ornithological sections of EIS, EIAR and NIS reports, expert witness services at oral hearings, and provision of scoping advice and peer review services.

A7.8.3 APEM

APEM carried out bird surveys in the summer of 2023, the winter of 2023/24 and the summer of 2024.

The APEM bird surveys were managed by Matthew Rea and Billy Gardener. The vantage point surveys were carried out by Paul Connaughton, Andre Robinson and Nick Veale. The breeding bird surveys were carried out by Marc Ruddock, who led the survey team, Jamie Bailey, Frank Connolly, Douglas Ruddock and Craig Swenarton.

Marc Ruddock has over 15 years' experience as a professional consultant, managing a team of surveyors to undertake surveys for a number of significant renewable and infrastructure projects. Marc has also delivered national Hen Harrier surveys, species introductions and contributed to statutory consultee guidance.

Paul Connaughton has over 7 years' experience as a consultant surveyor, but has been recognised as an expert field ornithologist for over 20 years. Paul has extensive experience of coastal, terrestrial, and marine ornithology surveys and currently works on a number of wind farm developments on the south and east coasts of Ireland. Paul is a former chairman of the West Cork branch of Birdwatch Ireland

Frank Connolly has worked as a professional ornithologist and volunteered on national surveys for over ten years, and is experienced in VP, breeding bird and raptor surveys, Frank is particularly experienced in Hen Harrier survey, having surveyed and managed the national Hen Harrier survey for many years.

Andre Robinson has over 16 years' experience working as a professional consultant, however has been a keen birdwatcher and volunteer surveyor for over 40 years, Andre has worked across the UK and Ireland and is well-versed in survey methods and guidance for all species, having worked on a number of wind farm developments in Ireland.



Appendix 7.8 – Qualifications and experience

Douglas Ruddock has worked as a professional consultant and contributed to national species surveys since 2010, however was a keen birdwatcher before this. Working as part of the Bird Surveys Ltd. team, Douglas has experience of ecology and ornithology surveys to inform EIA across the UK and Ireland. Douglas has significant experience surveying for raptors, including for national surveys and SPA monitoring.

Craig Swenarton has worked as a professional ornithologist for over 12 years and has also taken part in volunteer national species surveys. Craig is particularly experienced in raptor survey, having taken part in Hen Harrier surveys and SPA monitoring, but has experience of generic and species specific methods.

Nick Veale has over 20 year's professional experience in ecology/ornithology, including a number of wind farm developments across Ireland and the UK. Nick has accreditations that enable him to assess bird collision, undertake bird surveys on and offshore, and undertake collision risk modelling. This is backed with a lifetime of experience as an ornithologist and former Northern Ireland Birdwatchers Association committee member.

A7.8.4 MALACHY WALSH & PARTNERS

Malachy Walsh & Partners carried out bird surveys between the winters of 2017/18 and 2022/23.

The Malachy Walsh & Partners bird surveys were scoped and designed by John N. Murphy and the survey work was carried out by Austin Cooney, Ciaran Cronin, Paidi Cullinan, Shane Cully, John Deasy, Eric Dempsey, Aidan Duggan, Ger Hayes, Ian Mc Dermott, Ger Mc Grath, Einne O Cathaisaigh, Michael O'Clery, and Tom Ryan.

John Murphy is a senior ornithologist formerly of Malachy Walsh and Partners and was the Project Ornithologist at conception of this project. John Murphy was involved in setting the scope and design of the bird surveys for this site. He is very experienced having worked in the field of ornithology and ecology since 1982 and has extensive knowledge of the Irish landscape with regard to bird populations. He collaborates regularly with NPWS on different projects throughout the country. John is one of the country's foremost ornithologists and is a licensed bird ringer. He has always had an interest in wildlife photography and his work has been published in many magazines and books. As a 'Heritage in the Schools Specialist', he has travelled the country lecturing in schools and colleges, and to various clubs and organizations. He was the Biodiversity Officer with Clare County Council and has been working as part of the MWP Ecology team on a variety of projects nationwide since 2010. He spends as much time in the field as possible as a bird observer.

Austin Cooney has over 30 years of bird-watching experience both in Ireland and abroad and is an active member of the Clare branch of BirdWatch Ireland, organising and leading several of the branch outings. Austin has over 10 years of I-WeBS experience and has participated in numerous Common Bird Surveys. Austin has coauthored the book "Shannon Airport Lagoon – A Unique Irish Habitat" and has worked on and contributed to the production of wildlife documentaries for WaxWing productions.

Ciaran Cronin has been an active naturalist and birdwatcher for over 30 years with a particular passion for birds. Working as a professional ornithologist and ecologist for over 20 years, Ciaran has a postgraduate qualification in 'Ecological Assessment' from University College Cork (1st Class Honours). Ciaran is a former member of the Irish Rare Birds Committee, an international



Appendix 7.8 – Qualifications and experience

wildlife tour guide with National Geographic/Lindblad Expeditions and a trainer/assessor for the international ESAS seabird group. Ciaran is an expert in both bird and marine mammal identification and runs training courses in bird identification nationally. Ciaran's highly expert-level knowledge of bird identification by sight and sound allows for maximum detection of bird species through all habitats at all times of the year and Ciaran combines this with many years of experience in implementing rigorous survey protocols, consistent with guidance and to the highest standards. Although Ciaran has particular expertise with birds of prey and seabirds, his ornithological skills extend at a high level across the complete range of Irish bird species.

Paidi Cullinan has more than 20 years of bird watching experience in Ireland and abroad and is the Vice Chairperson of the Clare branch of Birdwatch Ireland and the eBird county recorder for Clare. Paidi has worked on a variety of projects in many locations around Ireland. He is proficient in I-WeBS, common bird census, Vantage Point surveys, Transect surveys, Hen Harrier roost watches, Point count surveys, hinterland surveys, Merlin, Golden plover and Red Grouse survey. He is a subscriber to British Birds, Dutch Birding & BirdGuides. He has field experience of bird ringing & bird sound recording.

Shane Cully has a Degree in Wildlife Biology and has over 6 years general birding experience. He has experience of Vantage Point Surveys, Transect surveys, Merlin/Golden Plover walkover surveys, Nightjar/Woodcock Surveys, Red Grouse Surveys and Hen Harrier Roost Surveys. He has previously been involved in the Corncrake Conservation Project with Birdwatch Ireland where he undertook dedicated night-time surveys, on a nightly basis during peak season, and dealt directly with landowners with regards to participation in the Corncrake Grant scheme. He has also worked with Birdwatch Ireland on the Results Based Agri-Environment Payments Scheme (RBAPS) in the Shannon Callows. This work included surveying of breeding waders, monitoring of whinchat, and signing farmers/landowners up to the scheme.

John Deasy is an independent ecological consultant with experience across a range of ecological disciplines including bird surveys (particularly raptors and waterbirds), botanical and habitat surveys, mammal surveys and protected invertebrate surveys. John has over 5 years of experience as a professional ecologist and has undertaken a range of bird surveys including vantage point surveys, transect and point count surveys, winter waterbird surveys, Red grouse tape lure surveys under licence and winter roost surveys. These surveys have been undertaken for a number of projects across Munster, primarily for renewable energy and associated grid connection projects as well as forestry activities. In addition, he has undertaken winter waterbird surveys to inform assessments of foreshore activities on coastal SPAs such as aquaculture and maintenance dredging. John holds a MSc. in Ecological Assessment and BSc. in Earth and Environmental Science from University College Cork.

Eric Dempsey is an Environmental Consultant and Ornithologist who has worked on a wide range of conservation, research and ecological monitoring projects across Ireland. Eric has over 40 years in the field and is the author of the best-selling books, The Complete Field Guide to Ireland's Birds and Finding Birds in Ireland. He is experienced in coordinating and undertaking surveys along with being highly proficient in report writing and data management. Eric is very experienced with all survey methodology and has inputted in various Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Assessments and Appropriate Assessments for numerous projects. Eric is currently leading the team of field ornithologists undertaking the long-term Dublin Winter Birds Survey.

Aidan Duggan has a wide range of field and bird surveying experience with more than 15 years working for various Ecological Consultancies. Aidan is proficient in Vantage Point surveys,



Appendix 7.8 – Qualifications and experience

Transect Surveys, Point Count surveys, and Hinterland surveys, as well as Breeding Merlin surveys, Red Grouse surveys, Hen Harrier nest monitoring, White-tailed Eagle roost watches, Hen Harrier roost watches, Countryside bird surveys, Breeding waders surveys, Breeding Woodcock survey, & Chough Surveys. From 1999 to 2004 Aidan was a voting member of the Irish Rare Bird Committee (IRBC), the recognized national expert group on bird identification, which operates under the auspices of Birdwatch Ireland.

Muiréad Kelly is an experienced field ecologist who has been working as part of the Malachy Walsh and Partners team for over five years. She has been working on a variety of ecological projects including wind farm projects. She works with the ornithology team and assists in bird survey work across the country including large-scale bird surveys for BNM in the midlands. Muiréad has particular experience in seabirds and waders.

Ian Mc Dermott is an experienced bird surveyor. His recent survey experience includes both summer and winter VP's and transect surveys. Ian is proficient in SNH methodology and has always had a keen interest in Irish wildlife, with a particular emphasis on Irish avian species.

Ger McGrath graduated from University College Cork in 2013 having completed a bachelor's degree in Zoology in 2012 and completed a master's degree in Ecological Assessment in 2013. Ger has experience in counts and mapping surveys, design and interpretation of bird and bat surveys. He is also competent in the interpretation of ecological data in the context of environmental legislation, habitat mapping, Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. He has attained skills in the ecological assessment of both terrestrial and freshwater habitats. Ger has been working as a freelance ecologist since 2013 carrying out bird surveys (VP and transect), in several sites around Munster/Leinster area.

Einne Ó Cathasaigh is a recent graduate of Marine Biology (MSc) with an undergraduate degree in Zoology (Bsc). Einne has a wide range of field surveying experience with more than 5 years of international fieldwork, statistical analysis, data collation and field ecology experience. Einne is proficient in Vantage Point surveys, Transect Surveys, Point Count surveys, and Hinterland surveys.

Michael O'Clery graduated from the National College of Art & Design, Dublin in 1992. Immediately upon leaving college, he was commissioned to paint all 640 bird paintings for the best-selling book, 'The Complete Guide to Ireland's Birds'. He has since worked as a full-time bird surveyor, wildlife artist, bird illustrator, designer and author. As well as illustrating and co-authoring major books on birds in Ireland, he has undertaken numerous bird surveys, including vantage point and transect counts, throughout the country. He has also been actively involved with many ornithological projects such as the Co. Kerry Raptor Conservation Project, and the National Bird Atlas Project, as well as contributing to ongoing schemes such as the Countryside Bird Survey, and Maharee Islands seabird surveys.

Tom Ryan has more than 6 years of bird surveying experience in Ireland. Tom has worked on a variety of projects in many locations around Ireland. He is proficient in Vantage Point surveys, Transect Surveys, Point Count surveys, Hinterland surveys, Merlin surveys, Barn owl surveys, Red grouse surveys and Hen harrier surveys. Tom is proficient in carrying out all SNH bird survey methodologies and very competent at locating and understanding the ecology of red listed and annex 1 species found in Ireland, including some rarities. Toms most notable experience to date has been with breeding common crane, breeding and roosting hen harrier, breeding waders, red grouse tape lure surveys and breeding barn owl surveys.



A7.8.5 NOEL LINEHAN

A breeding Snipe survey was carried out by Noel Linehan under the direction of Tom Gittings in 2022.

Noel Linehan is an ornithologist with expertise in bird identification and bird survey work. His experience includes vantage point surveys, breeding and wintering hinterland surveys focusing on waterbirds, waders, raptors and Hen Harrier roost sites, breeding and wintering passerine transects and breeding wader surveys, for multiple wind farm projects. He has also carried out bird surveys for solar farm and other development projects and is a surveyor with the Birdwatch Ireland Countryside Bird Survey.