

Ballyfeeny Green Energy Project



Environmental Impact Assessment Report Volume III

Appendix 6.7 – Mammals and Other Terrestrial Receptors

September 2025

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Ballyfeeny Green Energy Limited

Ballyfeeny Green Energy Project

Appendix 6.7: Mammals and Other Terrestrial Receptors Technical Appendix

September 2025

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CONTENTS

7 Mammals and Other Receptors Results	1
7.1 Zone of Influence	1
7.1.1 Study Area and Survey Area	2
7.2 Field Survey Methods	3
7.2.1 Otter Surveys	3
7.2.2 Badger Surveys	3
7.2.3 General Mammal Walkover Surveys	3
7.2.4 Mammal Camera Trap Surveys	3
7.2.5 Amphibian and Reptile Surveys	4
7.2.6 Marsh Fritillary Survey	4
7.3 Field Survey Results	5
7.3.1 Otter Surveys	5
7.3.2 Badger Surveys	5
7.3.3 General Mammal Walkover Surveys	5
7.3.4 Mammal Camera Trap Surveys	6
7.3.5 Amphibian and Reptile Surveys	6
7.3.6 Marsh Fritillary Survey	6
7.4 Species Assessments	10
7.4.1 Otter	10
7.4.2 Badger	10
7.4.3 Hedgehog	10
7.4.4 Red Squirrel	10
7.4.5 Pine Marten	10
7.4.6 Irish Hare	10
7.4.7 Common Frog	11
7.4.8 Smooth Newt	11
7.4.9 Common Lizard	11
7.4.10 Marsh Fritillary	11
7.5 Summary of Key Ecological Receptors (KERs)	12
7.6 Figures	13

7 MAMMALS AND OTHER RECEPTORS RESULTS

Surveys for mammals and other terrestrial ecological receptors (including amphibians, reptiles and Marsh Fritillary) were conducted on the Project Site and survey area following Best Practice Guidance (as detailed in the relevant section below).

7.1 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence (Zoi) is defined as ‘the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed Project and associated activities’ (CIEEM, 2024). Zoi, and the study area, is therefore broadly considered as the geographical area over which the Project could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on ecological receptors.

Mobile receptors (such as mammals) have a ‘range’ for commuting to foraging habitats. The ranges of mobile species vary considerably, from a few metres to several kilometres (e.g. in the case of mammals). Whilst static species and habitats are generally considered to have Zois near the Project, they can be significantly affected at considerable distances from an effect source; for example, where an aquatic habitat or species is located many kilometres downstream from a pollution source. For birds, typical Zois for the range of target species are based upon literature review and Best Practice guidance in relation to their ranging behaviours (see **Table 7.1**).

Table 1: Ecological Receptors and relevant Zoi's.

Receptor	Zoi	Reference
Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	13.2km ± 5.3km	Reid <i>et al.</i> , 2013
Eurasian Badger (<i>Meles meles</i>)	1km	Smal, 1995
West European Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)	10km	Haigh <i>et al.</i> , 2012
Red Squirrel (<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>)	Unknown (assume 1km)	Lawton <i>et al.</i> 2018
Pine Marten (<i>Martes martes</i>)	20km	O'Mahony <i>et al.</i> , 2017
Irish Hare (<i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i>)	Unknown (assume 1km)	Marnell <i>et al.</i> , 2019
Red Fox (<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>)	200-600ha	Conserve Ireland
Smooth Newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>)	Unknown (assume 1km).	IWT, 2013
Common Frog (<i>Rana Temporaria</i>)	Unknown (assume 1km).	IWT, 2007
Common Lizard (<i>Lacerta vivipara</i>)	Unknown (assume 1km).	IWT, 2007
Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>)	10km	Fowles, 2003

7.1.1 Study Area and Survey Area

As with Zol, the survey area where fieldwork is undertaken to provide a baseline against which impacts (such as from the Project) can be determined. This is partially based upon the Zol, but also through Best Practice guidance for mammal species monitoring (NRA, 2009) **Table 7.2** lists the targeted surveys undertaken, following Best Practice guidance, to collect data to allow the baseline environment in the proximity of the proposed Project to be determined.

Table 2: Study Area and Survey Area for each receptor.

Receptor	Study Area	Survey Area
Otter	The study area for each terrestrial receptor is defined by the location of the Project, which is located within the M97 and M98 10km grid squares.	Guidance on the extent of the survey area for Otters was taken from NRA, 2008, Reid <i>et al.</i> , 2013 and Highways Agency, 1999.
Badger		Within a 1km buffer of the Project (Nature Scot, 2003). Surveys of setts within 50m of the Project location is required (NRA, 2005).
Hedgehog		Suitable habitats within the Project (e.g. hedgerows, coniferous woodland, marsh and arable land (Vincent Wildlife Trust).
Red Squirrel		Suitable habitats within the Project (e.g. woodlands) (Carey <i>et al.</i> , 2007).
Pine Marten		Suitable habitats within the Project (e.g. woodlands) (Lawton <i>et al.</i> , 2020).
Irish Hare		Suitable habitats within the Project (e.g. grasslands) (NRA, 2009).
Red Fox		Suitable habitats within the Project (NRA, 2009).
Smooth Newt		Walkover surveys were conducted to determine the presence and suitability of habitats (e.g. ponds, drainage ditches and natural pools) (IWT, 2013).
Common Frog		
Common Lizard		Walkover surveys were conducted to determine the presence and suitability of habitats (e.g. ponds, drainage ditches and natural pools) (IWT, 2013).
Marsh Fritillary		Following relevant guidance, specifically, the Marsh Fritillary Monitoring Scheme (NBDC, 2015), all suitable habitats within 50m of the footprint for the proposed Project were assessed for their suitability for Marsh Fritillary, specifically the presence of abundant Devils-bit Scabious

7.2 Field Survey Methods

7.2.1 Otter Surveys

Otter (*Lutra lutra*) surveys followed the NRA Guidelines for *Treatment of Otters During Construction of National Road Schemes* (NRA, 2006; Reid *et al.*, 2013), which state that, although there are no seasonal constraints for Otter surveys, any dense vegetation (especially in summer) can reduce success in the identification of Otter holts or couches.

Guidance on the extent of the study area for Otter was taken from the British Highways Agency's Nature Conservation Advice in Relation to Otters HA8199 (Highways Agency, 1999) which dictates a linear search of 300m of each watercourse crossing is undertaken.

The presence of Otter was assessed through the recording of Otter sign within 150m upstream and downstream of each survey site. Notes on the age and location (ITM coordinates) of field sign were recorded, in addition to the quantity and visible constituents of spraint (i.e. remains of fish, crustaceans, molluscs etc.).

7.2.2 Badger Surveys

Badger (*Meles meles*) surveys followed the NRA Guidelines for the *Treatment of Badgers Prior to Construction of National Road Schemes* (NRA, 2005), which state that survey of setts within 50m of the construction works area is required. Badger surveys are significantly constrained by vegetative cover and season and are best conducted from November to April (NRA, 2005).

In accordance with NRA guidance, all areas were systematically searched for setts and all hedgerows and boundaries were checked comprehensively by Inis ecologists. Ecologists also searched for tracks, scat and feeding signs (snuffle holes). Photographs and detailed notes were recorded for each identified feature, and features were mapped with GIS software. Badger were completed in October 2023 and January 2024.

7.2.3 General Mammal Walkover Surveys

General mammal walkover surveys followed the National Road Authority (NRA) Guidelines for multi-disciplinary walkover surveys outlined in *Ecological Surveying Techniques for protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes* (NRA, 2009b).

Field signs, including well-used pathways, prints/tracks, scats/spraints/droppings, signs of feeding (e.g. foraged pine cones, Badger snuffle holes) and places of shelter and features or areas likely to be of particular value as foraging resources (NRA, 2005) were recorded during terrestrial mammal surveys within the study area:

Photographs and detailed notes were also recorded for each feature and mapped using QGIS.

7.2.4 Mammal Camera Trap Surveys

Walkover surveys were undertaken in November 2023 and January 2024 to identify any evidence of Badger, Otter and other mammal species within and surrounding the Project site. Surveys were

undertaken within a 50m buffer of the site, with the exception of Otter (listed separately). Camera traps were deployed in January 2023 on site at locations that were expected to be of high mammal use and were left on site for 14 days (see **Figure 7.1** for camera trap deployment locations).

7.2.5 Amphibian and Reptile Surveys

Best Practice guidance ‘*Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna During the Planning of National Road Schemes*’ (NRA, 2008a) was followed when carrying out surveys. Walkover surveys were conducted in August and September 2023 in concert with the aquatic ecology surveys and during the terrestrial mammal walkover surveys to determine the presence and suitability of habitats for amphibians and reptiles

7.2.6 Marsh Fritillary Survey

Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) is provided protection under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive and has experienced a decline in population due to decreasing suitable habitat. Therefore, this species requires consideration when conducting ecology surveys for developments.

Surveys for Marsh Fritillary involved visiting any suitable habitat within the proposed works area and identifying, if any, the abundance of the butterfly’s food plant, Devil’s-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*). Any Devil’s-bit Scabious should also be checked for larval webs around the base of the plant, where the larva will be visible within a web like material. Occupied webs are counted and then recorded. These surveys are conducted in late August and September when webs will be most conspicuous and prior to the larva entering hibernation.

These surveys are conducted according to the methodology of the Marsh Fritillary Monitoring Scheme which was created by the National Biodiversity Data Centre to assess population status of the species across the island of Ireland. More information can be found at <https://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/marsh-fritillary-monitoring-scheme/>.

7.3 Field Survey Results

Detailed results for the field surveys undertaken for the Project are presented below.

7.3.1 Otter Surveys

Suitable Otter habitat, such as watercourses, are located within the vicinity of the Project (see **Figure 7.2**). No sightings or secondary evidence of Otter was recorded within the Site boundary or along the TDR. See **Table 7.3** for the Otter survey effort.

Two signs of Otter were recorded during the aquatic surveys, with prints identified at site C5 on an unnamed Curraghroe River tributary (26_1714) and a regular spraint site at site C6 on the Curraghroe River (a site previously known to support Otter; see **Appendix 6.8**). Kilglass Lough and the River Shannon were of high foraging and commuting suitability for the species (despite a lack of recorded signs). The paucity of Otter signs was considered to reflect the often-poor foraging opportunities (small fish populations) for Otters on the heavily modified riverine channels in the vicinity of the Project, in addition to a paucity of suitable instream/riparian marking features such as boulders and large woody debris (features typically removed through historical drainage). No breeding (holt) or couch (resting) areas were identified in the vicinity of the Project.

7.3.2 Badger Surveys

Badgers were recorded 119 times within the M97 and M98 grid squares, the most recent record was on 31/12/2016 (NBDC, 2024). A single Badger was observed on camera trap 19065 on the 29/01/2023 (three images). However, during site surveys, no Badger setts were recorded within the proposed wind farm Site, TDR or GCR, although there was secondary evidence of Badger activity with two trails recorded (See **Table 7.4** and **Figure 7.3**).

7.3.3 General Mammal Walkover Surveys

The results of the general mammals walkover surveys are shown in **Table 7.5** and **Figure 7.4**.

7.3.3.1 Hedgehog

Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) was recorded 13 times within the M97 and M98 grid squares, the most recent recording is from 22/06/2020 (NBDC, 2024). No Hedgehogs or secondary evidence was recorded during the multi-disciplinary walkover survey within the proposed wind farm Site, TDR or GCR.

7.3.3.2 Red Squirrel

Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) was recorded 13 times within the M97 and M98 grid squares (NBDC, 2025). Red Squirrel was not observed during surveys undertaken within the proposed wind farm Site, and no secondary evidence of Red Squirrel was recorded during the mammal surveys.

7.3.3.3 Pine Marten

Pine Marten was recorded 13 times within the M97 and M98 grid squares (NBDC, 2024), the most recent records was on 29/06/2021. A single Pine Marten was observed on camera trap 19067 on the

30/11/2023 (six images). Another single Pine Marten was observed on camera trap 19065 on the 06/02/2024 (three images). Secondary evidence of Pine Marten in the form of scat was recorded three times during field surveys undertaken within the proposed wind farm Site. The nearest sign (scat) to the proposed Project was recorded 135.7m southeast of the proposed Project boundary.

7.3.3.4 Irish Hare

No Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*) was recorded within the M97 and M98 grid squares (NBDC, 2025). Mountain Hare (*Lepus timidus*), a subspecies of Irish Hare was recorded by the NPWS Article 17 Map Viewer for terrestrial species, 3.12km west of the wind farm Site boundary. Irish Hare was recorded several times on camera trap 19065 during the January deployment (between 25/01/2023 and 03/02/2024 (53 images)). Irish Hare was not observed during surveys undertaken within the proposed wind farm Site, and no secondary evidence of Irish Hare was recorded during the mammal surveys within the Project.

7.3.4 Mammal Camera Trap Surveys

Information from the general mammal walkover was used to inform on the deployment locations of remote cameras in areas of likely high mammal activity. Camera traps deployed during the course of these deployments captured evidence of Pine marten, Irish Hare, Badger, and Fox within the Project (see **Table 7.6** for details of the camera trapping survey efforts and **Table 7.7** for the camera trap sightings; results for individual species records are indicated under those species accounts above).

7.3.5 Amphibian and Reptile Surveys

Smooth Newt was recorded within the M98 10km grid square and Common Frog was recorded within the M97 and M98 10km grid squares (NBDC, 2025) 14 times and once respectively. The walkover surveys undertaken at the Project revealed an abundance of suitable foraging habitats for amphibians and reptiles (e.g., heath, exposed rock, bog, flushes), but of limited value for breeding.

Despite the suitable habitat present at the Project, no amphibians or reptiles were observed during the walkover surveys.

Smooth Newt was recorded in moderate abundances via sweep netting at pond site P1 and the species was also detected via eDNA sampling at the site (Appendix 6.8). Both adults and efts (juveniles) were recorded in August 2023.

7.3.6 Marsh Fritillary Survey

Three Marsh Fritillaries were recorded within the M97 and M98 10km grid squares. The most recent record was on 01/06/2023 (NBDC, 2025). No Marsh Fritillary was recorded during the larval webs survey, and there were no sightings of the food plant Devil's-bit Scabious, or evidence of larval webs within the 50m study area around the Project.

No Marsh Fritillary was recorded during the larval webs survey, and there were no sightings of the food plant Devil's-bit Scabious, or evidence of larval webs during Marsh Fritillary surveys (see **Table 7.8** and **Figure 7.5**).

Table 1: Otter survey efforts and results table 2023-2024.

Date	Surveyor	Rain	Temp	Wind Speed	Wind Direction	Mammal	Sign/sighting	Location (ITM)
05/10/2023	JOC	Light drizzle	16	F3	S	Nil sightings	-	597754.56, 782001.47
27/11/2023	JOH	None	8	F2	N	Nil sightings	-	598028.14, 781878.02
25/01/2024	HM	Mist/light rain	11	F2	SSW	Nil sightings	-	597844.92, 781922.99

Table 2: Badger survey efforts and results table 2023-2024.

Date	Surveyor	Rain	Temp	Wind Speed	Wind Direction	Mammal	Sign/sighting	Location (ITM)	Notes
20/10/2023	JOH	Mist/light rain	11	F2	ESE	Badger	Mammal Trail	598118.72, 781492.26	Horses in field
20/10/2023	JOH	Mist/light rain	11	F2	ESE	Badger	Mammal trails	598537.02, 781621.15	-
20/10/2023	JOH	Mist/light rain	11	F2	ESE	Fallow Deer	Droppings and mammal tracks through the forestry	598466.76, 781522.14	-
07/12/2023	JOH	Heavy showers	11	F3	SE	Nil sightings	Nil sightings	-	-
26/01/2024	HM	Heavy Showers	7	F4	SW	Nil sightings	Nil sightings	-	-

Table 3: Mammal survey efforts and results table 2023-2024.

Date	Surveyor	Rain	Temp	Wind Speed	Wind Direction	Mammal	Sign/sighting	Location (iTM)	Notes
07/12/2023	JOH	Heavy showers	11	F4	SE	Pine Marten	Scat	598453.16, 781572.4	Berries in scat
07/12/2023	JOH	Heavy showers	11	F4	SE	Pine Marten	Scat	598477.57, 781569.08	Berries in scat
07/12/2023	JOH	Heavy showers	11	F4	SE	Pine Marten	Scat	598437.8, 781617.06	Berries and small insects in scat
07/12/2023	JOH	Heavy showers	11	F4	SE	Fox	Scat	598659.29, 782470.88	-
07/12/2023	JOH	Heavy showers	11	F4	SE	Fox	Scat	598748.01, 782434.89	Hair in scat
07/12/2023	JOH	Heavy showers	11	F4	SE	Fox	Bones	598884.05, 782360.55	Long curved canines. Three premolars & three molars
26/01/2024	HM	Heavy showers	7	F4	SW	Nil sightings	Nil sightings	-	-

Table 6: Camera trap survey efforts 2023-2024.

Date Deployed	Date Collected	Surveyor	Rain	Temp	Wind Speed	Wind Direction	Trap No	Location (iTM)
27/11/2023	07/12/2023	JOH	None	F2	N	8	INIS19067	598485.25, 781574.16
27/11/2023	07/12/2023	JOH	None	F2	N	8	INIS19068	598949.07, 782345.1
27/11/2023	07/12/2023	JOH	None	F2	N	8	INIS19084	598605.77, 782502.51
23/01/2024	07/02/2024	HM	Constant Rain	F4	SW	13	INIS19066	598484, 781457.47
23/01/2024	07/02/2024	HM	Constant Rain	F4	SW	13	INIS19067	598622.21, 782521.9
24/01/2024	07/02/2024	HM	Light Showers	F2	SW	7	INIS19056	598007.61, 781399.52

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Table 7: Camera trap survey results 2023-2024.

Effort	Trap number	Species	Number of records
November	19067	Pine Marten	6
November	19068	Nil sightings	
November	19084	Nil sightings	
January	19065	Hare	53
		Badger	3
		Fox	15
		Pine marten	3
January	19066	Nil sightings	
January	19067	Nil sightings	

Table 8: Marsh Fritillary Survey Results 2023.

Date	Surveyor	Rain	Temp	Wind Speed	Wind Direction	Sign/sighting
04/08/2023	NL	None	15	F2	W	Nil Sightings
08/07/2023	DP	None	17	F2	S	Nil Sightings

7.4 Species Assessments

Detailed results for target species based on the results of the surveys for mammals and other receptors are discussed below. The sensitivity of each bird to the Project is evaluated following the guidance from Percival (2007) and NRA (2009) combined.

7.4.1 Otter

Although there were no Otter records during the mammal surveys, and two secondary records during the aquatic ecology surveys downstream from the Project, this mobile species has a foraging range of $13.2\text{km} \pm 5.3\text{km}$, (Reid *et al.*, 2013). The distance between the proposed Project and the Lough Ree SAC, of which Otter is a QI, is 11.8km. Therefore, any Otter populations which may be found downstream of the proposed Project could be associated with the aforementioned SAC. Otter populations are evaluated as being of **International Importance** and are **included** as a KER.

7.4.2 Badger

No Badger setts or secondary evidence were recorded within the proposed wind farm Site, TDR or GCR, apart from two mammal trails. As such, Badger is **not considered** a KER for consideration in the impact assessment.

7.4.3 Hedgehog

No Hedgehogs or secondary evidence was recorded during the multi-disciplinary walkover survey within the proposed wind farm Site, TDR or GCR. As such, Hedgehog is **not considered** a KER for consideration in the impact assessment.

7.4.4 Red Squirrel

Red Squirrel was not observed during surveys undertaken within the proposed wind farm Site, and no secondary evidence of Red Squirrel was recorded during the mammal surveys within the Project. As such, Red Squirrel is **not considered** a KER for further assessment.

7.4.5 Pine Marten

With evidence of Pine Marten activity within and surrounding the Project, and given suitable habitats are present within the Project, Pine Marten are evaluated as being of **Local Importance (Higher Value)** and are **included** as a KER for consideration in the impact assessment.

7.4.6 Irish Hare

There were no Irish Hare observed during the walkover surveys undertaken within the proposed wind farm Site and no secondary evidence of Irish Hare was recorded during the mammal surveys within the Project. Camera trap surveys yielded 53 records spread across 25th, 27th, 29th, 30th January and 2nd, 3rd February. Although present, the sightings on any

individual date do not support presence of levels above a one or two individuals passing the cameras multiple times. Furthermore, with a substantial extent of alternative, suitable habitat in and surrounding the Project, Irish Hare is **not considered** a KER for consideration in the impact assessment.

7.4.7 Common Frog

Due to the absence of sightings of Common Frog during the walkover surveys, coupled with no significant areas of suitable habitat for breeding on the wind farm Site, this species is therefore **not included** for further consideration as KERs.

7.4.8 Smooth Newt

Although there are no significant areas of suitable habitat for breeding on the wind farm Site, Smooth Newt were recorded in a pond just outside the wind farm Site boundary. Also, with adults and efts (juveniles) recorded during aquatic surveys, Smooth Newt are evaluated as being of **Local Importance (Higher Value)** and are **included** as a KER for consideration in the impact assessment.

7.4.9 Common Lizard

Due to the absence of sightings of Common Lizard during the walkover surveys, coupled with no significant areas of suitable habitat for breeding on the wind farm Site, this species is therefore **not included** for further consideration as KERs.

7.4.10 Marsh Fritillary

No Marsh Fritillary was recorded during the larval webs survey, and there were no sightings of the food plant Devil's-bit Scabious, or evidence of larval webs during Marsh Fritillary surveys. Therefore, Marsh Fritillary it is **not included** for further consideration as a KER.

7.5 Summary of Key Ecological Receptors (KERs)

Based on the assessments provided above, A summary of Key Ecological Receptors (KERs) for the Project are presented in **Table 7.9**. These species will be taken forward for further assessment within the main EIAR, **Chapter 6: Biodiversity**.

Table 9: *Summary of species importance and identification of Key Ecological Receptors.*

Species	Importance	KER
Otter	International Importance	Yes
Badger	Local Importance (Lower Value)	No
Hedgehog	Local Importance (Lower Value)	No
Red Squirrel	Local Importance (Lower Value)	No
Pine Marten	Local Importance (Higher Value)	Yes
Irish Hare	Local Importance (Lower Value)	No
Common Frog	Local Importance (Lower Value)	No
Smooth Newt	Local Importance (Higher Value)	Yes
Common Lizard	Local Importance (Lower Value)	No
Marsh Fritillary	Local Importance (Higher Value)	No

7.6 Figures

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Figure: 6.7-7.1 Camera Trap Locations

Legend:

- Camera Trap Locations - Effort 1
- Camera Trap Locations - Effort 2
- Proposed Turbine Layout
- Study Area

For illustrative purposes only. Map not to scale

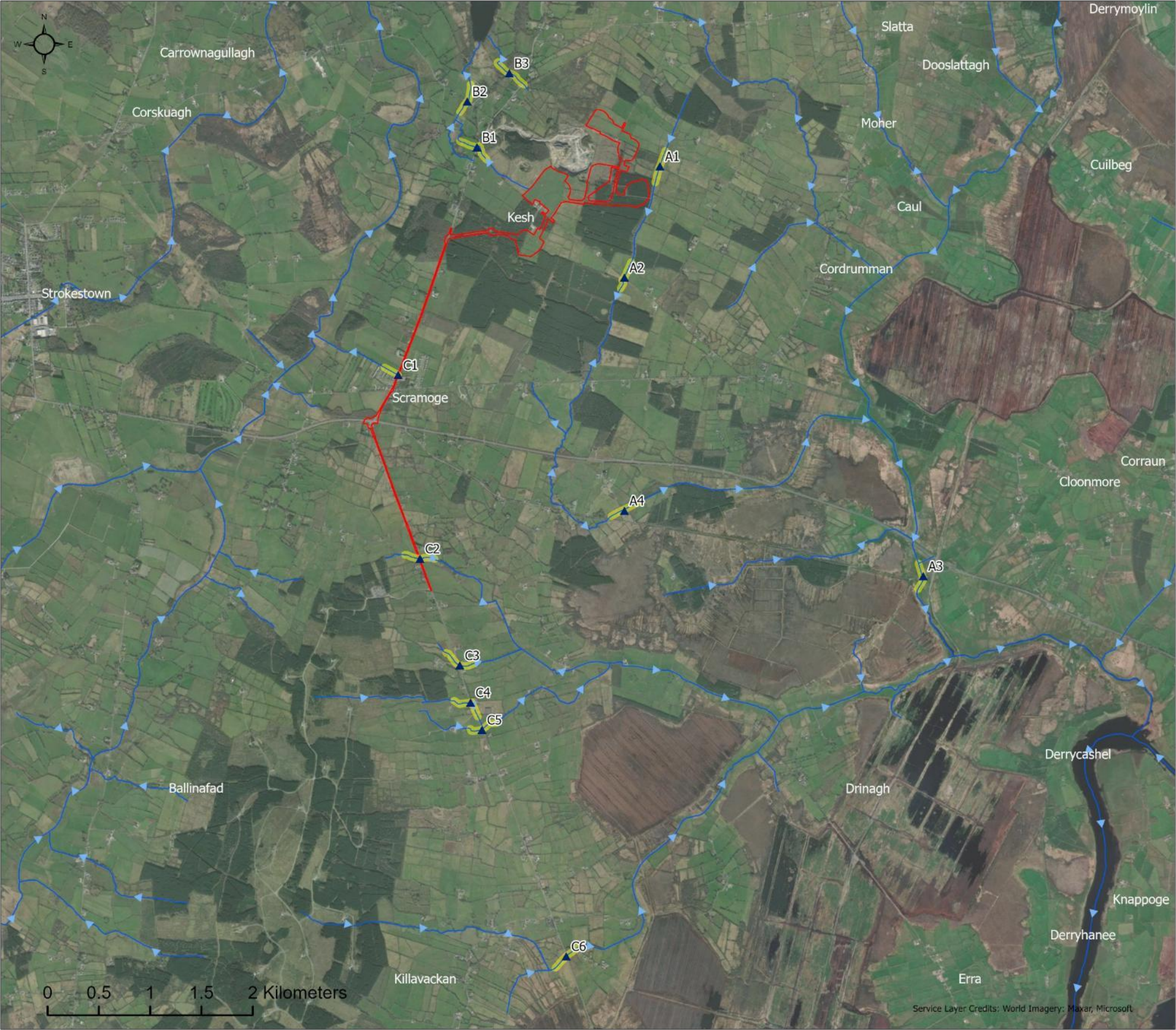
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Figure 7.1: Camera trap locations.



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Project: Ballyfeeny Green Energy Project

Figure: 6.7-7.2 Otter Survey Locations



Legend:

- ▲ Ballyfeeny Aquatics Sites
- River Waterbodies*
- Otter Survey Transects
- Redline Boundary

* EPA (January 2021)
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Figure 7.1: Otter Survey Locations.



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Figure: 6.7-7.3 Badger Surveys



- Legend:
- Badger Run
 - ▭ Redline Boundary
 - ▭ Study Area

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Figure 7.2: Badger sign locations identified during mammal surveys.



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Project: Ballyfeeny Green Energy Project

Figure: 6.7-7.4 Other Mammals

Elphin

Stokesstown

Longford

Legend:

Species - Field Sign

- Fallow Deer - Droppings
- Fox - Scat
- Unknown - Bones
- Unknown - Run
- Unknown - Scat
- Redline Boundary
- Study Area

For illustrative purposes only. Map not to scale

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Figure 7.3: General mammal survey results.

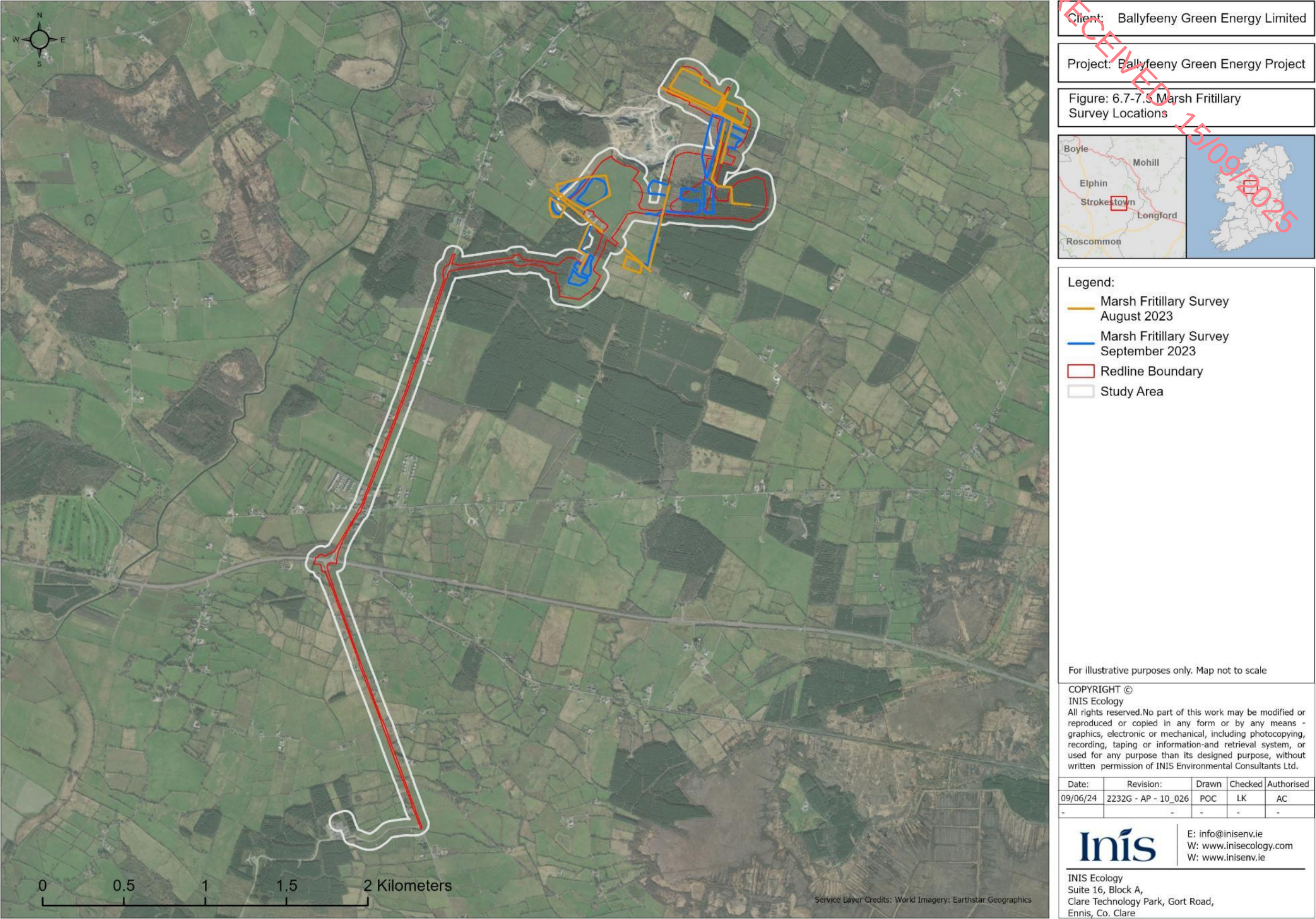


Figure 7.4: Marsh Fritillary survey area.