

Euchanhead Renewable Energy Development

Additional Environmental Information
Chapter 9: Ornithology

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Abbreviations

| | |
|---|--------|
| Additional Environmental Information | AEI |
| Dumfries and Galloway Council | DGC |
| Dumfries and Galloway Raptor Study Group | D&GRSG |
| Environmental Impact Assessment | EIA |
| Royal Society for the Protection of Birds | RSPB |

9. Ornithology

9.1. Introduction

Natural Research (Projects) Ltd. (NRP) has been commissioned by the Applicant to undertake an update of the ornithology assessment contained within the 2020 Euchanhead Renewable Energy Development Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report. This updated ornithology assessment addresses the following changes since the Euchanhead Renewable Energy Development Section 36 (S36) application was made in 2020:

- The removal of Turbines No.20 and No.21;
- The reduction in turbine blade tip height of Turbines No.9, No.10, No.11, No.18 and No.19, from 230m to 200m; and
- The updated cumulative situation in the surrounding area (primarily Sanquhar II Community windfarm being granted consent in August 2023).

This Additional Environmental Information (AEI) Chapter supplements **Chapter 9: Ornithology** of the 2020 Euchanhead Renewable Energy Development EIA Report (from herein referred to as the 'EIA Report'). The methodology employed in this AEI remains the same as that set out in EIA Report **Chapter 9: Ornithology**.

The following key documents should be read in conjunction with this AEI chapter:

- EIA Report Volume 2 – **Chapter 9: Ornithology** (2020); and
- EIA Report Volume 4a – **Technical Appendices 9.1 to 9.2** (2020).

9.2. Consultee Responses to 2020 Application

All consultation, regarding ornithology, with statutory consultees that was received prior to the 2020 S36 application being submitted, is outlined in the EIA Report **Chapter 9: Ornithology**.

Table 9:1 sets out the relevant consultee responses to the 2020 S36 application.

Table 9:1 - 2020 S36 Application Consultee Responses

| Consultee | Summary of Key Issues | Response to Comments |
|---|--|----------------------|
| Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Response Date: 10 December 2020 | We don't have any formal comments to make regarding the Euchanhead Renewable Energy Development. | Noted. no objection. |
| NatureScot Response Date: 16 February 2021 | We are broadly content due to the relatively low levels of birds that this proposed development would not have a significant effect on birds and we agree with the conclusions of the environmental statement. | Noted. no objection. |

9.3. Design Amendments

The amendments to the 2020 S36 application Site Layout are detailed in **AEI Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution**. The key amendments with regards to the LVIA are:

- The removal of Turbines No.20 and No.21; and
- The reduction in turbine blade tip height of Turbines No.9, No.10, No.11, No.18 and No.19, from 230m to 200m.

These amendments have not been made as a result of feedback from consultees regarding the assessment presented in EIA Report **Chapter 9: Ornithology**.

9.4. Changes to the Baseline Conditions

The majority of the study area is commercial forestry consisting of Euchanhead, Polskeoch and Shinnelhead forests. These forests are in a production phase with rotational felling and replanting resulting in a mosaic of sections of forestry of differing ages. Therefore, although there may have been changes, the habitat over the whole area will remain similar over time.

Other habitats that exist within the study area consist of rough grazing and open moorland of rough grass and heather patches. Given the short period of time that has elapsed since submission of the EIA Report and the grazing pressure of sheep and deer it is very unlikely there will have been any significant changes to these habitats.

There are not expected to have been any significant changes to the Baseline Conditions since submission of the EIA Report.

Three species were considered for assessment in the Ornithology Chapter of the EIA Report: goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) and golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*). Given the short time scale and lack of change in habitats there is no reason to assume that there will have been any change in the populations of any of these species.

9.5. Assessment of Design Amendment Effects

9.5.1. Construction Effects

Goshawk

In **Chapter 9** of the EIA Report, construction effects on goshawk as a result of direct habitat loss and displacement, were included for assessment and were both deemed to be negligible and therefore not significant under the EIA regulations, assuming that one pair nested within the study area.

Given that two turbines have been removed from the original layout and five turbines have been reduced in height, the extent of the wind farm has been reduced, which in turn would reduce the scale and magnitude of spatial effects. Therefore, as there have been no significant changes to the baseline conditions there will be no change to the conclusions of the EIA Report and all construction effects will remain negligible.



Peregrine

In **Chapter 9** of the EIA Report, construction effects on peregrine due to displacement were included for assessment and were deemed to be negligible and therefore not significant under the EIA regulations assuming that one pair nested within the study area.

Given that two turbines have been removed from the original layout and five turbines have been reduced in height, the extent of the wind farm has been reduced, which in turn would reduce the scale and magnitude of spatial effects. As there have been no significant changes to the baseline conditions and no proposed infrastructure will be closer to the nest location than the layout described in the EIA Report, construction effects will remain negligible and therefore not significant under the EIA regulations.

Golden plover

In **Chapter 9** of the EIA Report construction effects on golden plover due to direct habitat loss and displacement were included for assessment and both were deemed to be negligible and therefore not significant under the EIA regulations assuming that four pairs nested within the study area.

Chapter 9 of the EIA Report assessed the potential construction effects of the access track extending to the north of the Site. Given that the route of the track has not changed and there have been no significant changes to the baseline conditions there is nothing to suggest that there will be any change in the magnitude of any effects of construction on golden plover and they will remain negligible and therefore not significant under the EIA regulations.

9.5.2. Operation Effects

Goshawk

In **Chapter 9** of the EIA Report, operational effects on goshawk due to habitat modification and direct habitat loss, displacement and collision were included for assessment, and all were deemed to be negligible and therefore not significant under the EIA regulations assuming that one pair nested within the study area.

Two turbines have been removed and there has been a reduction in height of five turbines since the EIA Report was produced. Given that there is not likely to be an increase in collision risk due to these changes and that the effect of collision mortality was not significant in the EIA Report further collision risk analysis is not required.

Due to the removal of two turbines and the reduction in height of five turbines the extent of the wind farm has been reduced, which in turn would reduce the scale and magnitude of spatial effects. Therefore, as there have been no significant changes to the baseline conditions there will be no change in the conclusions of the EIA Report and all operational effects will remain negligible.

Peregrine

In **Chapter 9** of the EIA Report operational effects on peregrine due to the risk of collision were included for assessment and were deemed to be negligible and therefore not significant under the EIA regulations assuming that one pair nested within the study area.

Two turbines have been removed and there has been a reduction in height of five turbines since the EIA Report was produced. Given that there is not likely to be an increase in



collision risk due to these changes and that the effect of collision mortality was considered to be not significant in the EIA Report further collision risk analysis is not required.

Golden plover

In **Chapter 9** of the EIA Report operational effects on golden plover due to habitat modification and direct habitat loss and displacement were included for assessment and all were deemed to be negligible and therefore not significant under the EIA regulations assuming that four pairs nested within the study area.

Chapter 9 of the EIA Report assessed the potential operational effects of the access track extending to the north of the Site. Given that the route of the track has not changed and there have been no significant changes to the baseline conditions there is nothing to suggest that there will be any change in the magnitude of any operational effects on golden plover and they will remain negligible and therefore not significant under the EIA regulations.

9.6. Cumulative Assessment

In **Chapter 9** of the EIA Report, no significant effects of the proposed Development during the construction phase were identified, and all effects during the operational phase were assessed as negligible. As such, the predicted in-isolation effects of the proposed Development were considered to have no potential to contribute to cumulative effects and were therefore considered negligible across all species. There have been no changes to the baseline conditions and the removal of two turbines and the reduction in height of five turbines are not predicted to have any significant additional construction or operational effects.

Therefore, the position since the EIA Report was submitted has not changed and the predicted in-isolation effects of the proposed Development are considered to have no potential to contribute to cumulative effects and remain negligible across all species.

9.7. Summary of Changes to the Significance of Effects

Any changes in the likely effects of the proposed Development have been evaluated in accordance with the methods described in the methodology section in **Chapter 9** of the EIA Report. It is concluded, overall, that the likely effects of the proposed Development on all bird species remain not significant under the terms of the EIA Regulations.