

## APPENDIX 10.6: HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 1.1.1 This Habitat Management Plan (HMP) sets out proposed measures for habitat restoration, and creation within the ecological study area. The ecological study area is the area within the site boundary, as shown on Figure 10.1: Designated Sites. Carcass searching for bats is also proposed.

### Broadleaved Woodland Creation

- 1.1.2 An area of 3.5 ha has been identified in the ecological study area as suitable for the creation of broadleaved woodland, as shown on Figure 16.2: Replanting.
- 1.1.3 Woodland creation would follow the Forestry Commission Bulletin 112 'Creating New Native Woodland' (1994). Planting densities would be between 200 and 400 stems per hectare. The species of tree or shrub to be planted would be determined further to ground investigation in year 1 of the implementation of the HMP (the first year after commissioning of the development). Woodland planting would take place in agreement with Forestry Commission Scotland.
- 1.1.4 Woodland creation would be targeted along burn sides and around the badger setts identified within the ecological study area.
- 1.1.5 Riparian planting could occur along Tangy Burn to provide connectivity with the land to the south of the ecological study area. Riparian planting could also occur along the Allt nan Creamh and the Allt Trasda in the north and east of the ecological study area, respectively. Riparian woodland acts as corridors to enhance connectivity by creating links within and between woodland habitats, providing routes for dispersing or migrating mammals, such as otter *Lutra lutra* and badger *Meles meles*. Trees help prevent bank erosion and give shelter and shade for salmonid fish. Riparian vegetation also increases biodiversity and provides habitat for water vole *Arvicola amphibius*. The creation and management of riparian vegetation would follow SEPA's good practice guide (SEPA, 2009).
- 1.1.6 A stand of native broadleaved trees and shrubs could be planted around and over the badger setts to a minimum of 20 m to offer shelter and protection. This stand would remain unfelled to avoid future disturbance from felling operations.

### Peatland Restoration

- 1.1.7 An area of 27.7 ha has been identified as suitable for active peatland restoration within the areas of proposed felling, as shown on Figure 16.2: Replanting.
- 1.1.8 Restoration would involve actively encouraging the regeneration of degraded peatland habitats, principally through raising the water table. This would include blocking forest drains and managing any conifer regeneration. Mapping of drains to be blocked and determination of the most appropriate method of blocking would take place further to forestry felling in year 1 of implementation of the HMP. Drain blocking would take place in agreement with Forestry Commission Scotland. Management of conifer regeneration would be as required.
- 1.1.9 The site conditions in the proposed peatland restoration area are favourable for the regeneration of peatland habitats. M15 *Scirpus cespitosus-Erica tetralix* wet heath, which is located throughout most of the firebreaks in the coniferous plantation and parts of the open area adjacent to the south-west part of the plantation, as well as M19 *Calluna vulgaris-Eriophorum vaginatum* blanket mire, which is located over large areas of the fire breaks in the middle of the site and areas on the northern part of the existing wind farm, are both likely to regenerate. It is assumed that the modified peatland under the forest was once classifiable as M15 and M19 and that these habitats are likely to regenerate following tree removal. However, it is likely that before reaching such plant communities, there would be periods of rush, and grass dominance as typically seen on previous deforested sites.

### **Post-Construction Carcass Searches for Bats**

- 1.1.10 Although no significant effects are predicted on bats, a dedicated search for bat carcasses would be carried out on a monthly basis within a 50 m radius of each turbine. Searches would be undertaken by the applicant following the standard SSE protocol.