

BRITISH STANDARD 5837

TREE SURVEYS ARBORICULTURAL IMPLICATION STUDIES

TPO/PLANNING ADVICE/ PROJECT MANAGEMENT

TREE INVENTORIES AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLANS

TREE PLANTING SCHEMES

TPO RE-SURVEY



Three Gates Barn Conversion, Turton Road, Tottington

Ecological Assessment

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Kingdom Ecology have carried out a Protected Species Scoping Assessment of two agricultural buildings and adjacent habitats located at Three Gates, Turton Road, Tottington, Bury, BL8 3QG (National Grid Reference SD 75715 14408). The assessment has been carried out to identify any ecological constraints which should be considered during proposed works to redevelop the site.

Development proposals are to replace/convert the two existing agricultural sheds with a new dwelling. The proposed applicants will reside in the dwelling and therefore the development is considered to fall under the self-build exemption from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. The study site measures approximately 800 m² in area.

The site currently comprises two portal-framed agricultural sheds, with adjacent areas of modified grassland. Hawkshaw Brook Site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located approximately 120 m north-east of the site at its closest point.

Surveys were led by Richard Roe (BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, CEnv). Richard has extensive experience of undertaking habitat and protected species surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty-five years' experience. Richard holds a Level 4 Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC).

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report describes the findings of field surveys completed in January 2026. Surveys aimed to identify habitats and species which are either of importance in terms of their conservation value or are afforded statutory legal protection. The presence of such habitats or species would form a material consideration during the planning process and could pose a constraint to the redevelopment of the site.

The field surveys comprised of an ecological walkover survey with a search for habitats that could support any protected species. Following a description of the survey findings and an evaluation of habitats at the site, the report goes on to make recommendations for mitigation measures and ecological enhancements where relevant.

1.3 Protected Species Legislation

1.3.1 Breeding Birds

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

1.3.2 Non-native Invasive Plant Species

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides the primary control on the release of non-native species into the wild in Great Britain. It is an offence under section 14(2) of the Act to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9, Part II. Schedule 9 of the Act includes Himalayan balsam.

1.4 Survey Methods

1.4.1 Ecological Walkover Survey

An ecological walkover survey was undertaken on 16th January 2026. The aims of the walkover survey were to assess habitats present using the UK Habitat Classification system and to evaluate the site's potential to support protected species. All habitat features were mapped and described, and target notes were recorded for areas of ecological interest. The location of habitats and target notes are shown on Figure 1 (Site Map) and photographs of the site are provided in the Appendix.

Species that are considered unlikely to be significantly affected by the proposed development, even if known to be present in the general vicinity, were 'scoped out' of the assessment. Survey also aimed to identify opportunities for ecological enhancement and to inform potential mitigation measures, if required, to ameliorate any negative impacts attributable to the proposed works.

1.4.2 Daytime Bat Inspection

The two outbuildings were assessed as to their suitability to support bats following standard methodologies prescribed in Natural England's *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones 2004) and the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 4th Edition (BCT 2023).

Survey, comprising of an inspection of the interior and exterior of the dwelling, was undertaken during daylight conditions using binoculars and a high-powered torch. The survey was undertaken during daylight hours on the 16th January 2026.

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In addition to searching for evidence of an actual bat roost the survey also aimed to assess the suitability of the building to support bats and consequently the likelihood of a bat roost being present but with no obvious field signs.

Survey assessed each building's roost suitability by examining structural features and the surrounding habitat. Structural features that will influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void; access points into a building including gaps beneath barge boards, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry, loose tiles etc, complexity of any roof void, daytime light levels in roof void etc.

Important habitat features surrounding the structures which could influence roost potential include: whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, proximity to a significant linear feature (e.g. watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane) or an area of woodland etc.

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, each building was assigned a level of roost suitability. This assessment considered roost suitability criteria as summarised in Table 1 below and taken from the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 4th Edition.

Table 1 - Bat Roost Suitability Criteria

<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of Potential Roosting Habitats</i>
<i>None</i>	<i>No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels.</i>
<i>Negligible</i>	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion. Structure has Negligible habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats.
<i>Low</i>	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger number of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground of features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
<i>Moderate</i>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.

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<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of Potential Roosting Habitats</i>
<i>None</i>	<i>No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels.</i>
<i>High</i>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

2 Survey Results

2.1 Site Description

The study site comprises two agricultural sheds and adjacent habitats located on at Three Gates, Turton Road, Tottington. The site occupies a broadly rectangular plot of land measuring approximately 800 m² in area. The sheds are currently used for storage and as a workshop and are set on a concrete plinth.

2.2 Surrounding Habitats

The site is situated within a rural landscape on the edge of the West Pennine Moors. A tree-lined access track extends to the west of the site, bordered by semi-mature horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) trees. Land to the south comprises concrete hardstanding with further agricultural buildings. Land to the east and north comprises agricultural pasture.

Hawkshaw Brook Site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located approximately 120 m to the north-east of the site at its closest point. A pond is located approximately 75 m to the south-east, although this was dry at the time of survey, with the landowner reporting that the pond has been dry for approximately 10 years. A wooded clough with a flowing stream is located to the south of the main car park area, approximately 30 m to the south of the proposed development area. There is a large lake located approximately 220 m to the east of the proposed development area.

The wider landscape comprises a mosaic of pastoral farmland, scattered trees, hedgerows and semi-natural habitats associated with the fringes of the West Pennine Moors.

2.3 Habitats

Recorded habitats are targets noted and shown in Figure 1 in the Appendix. Target note descriptions are provided below.

2.3.1 Buildings (Target Note 1)

The westerly of the two sheds (Building 1) is a modern portal-framed structure constructed of corrugated metal panels around a steel frame. The building has a corrugated fibre cement roof with skylights, which is tightly fitted with a shallow pitch. The easterly shed (Building 2) is a further portal-framed structure constructed around a steel frame. The lower approximately 1 m of this building is constructed of railway sleepers with the upper sections constructed of Yorkshire boarding.

Building 2 has a shallow sloping mono-pitched roof clad in corrugated roofing panels with skylights. Both buildings are set on a concrete plinth.

Both buildings are in active use as a workshop and for storage.

Neither building supports any obvious suitable bat roosting habitat. The buildings lack roof voids, crevices, gaps beneath fascia boards, or other features that could provide shelter or roosting opportunities for bats. Both buildings are assessed as offering '**negligible**' bat roosting potential.

2.3.2 Modified Grassland (Target Note 2)

Agricultural pasture is present to the east and north of the buildings along with an area of bare ground. The grassland is closely grazed and comprises a species-poor sward dominated by Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) with very limited herbs including rare creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*). Tussocks of soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) are present around the field boundaries. The grassland is assessed as modified grassland in 'poor' condition due to its species-poor composition and dominance of agricultural grasses.

2.3.3 Ruderal Vegetation (Target Note 3)

Patches of ruderal vegetation are present to the rear of the sheds. These comprise areas dominated by common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*). Dead stem material of Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was also recorded within this area, indicating the presence of this invasive non-native species during the growing season.

Small piles of stone and waste materials are present to the rear of the sheds. These features offer some limited habitat suitability for amphibians as refugia

2.3.4 Shallow Depression (Target Note 4)

A shallow depression is located to the rear of the sheds, measuring approximately 5 m² in area. At the time of survey, the depression held approximately 15 cm of standing water which was filled with leaf litter. Vegetation around the margins comprises Yorkshire fog and creeping buttercup with tussocks of soft rush. This feature is too small and ephemeral to function as a breeding pond for amphibians. This feature would not be affected by development proposals.

2.3.5 Hedgerow (Target Note 5)

A line of beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) hedgerow extends along the northern boundary of the site for approximately 18 m. The hedgerow is of limited

extent and is species-poor, comprising a single species. The hedgerow would not be affected by development proposals.

2.3.6 Hardstanding (Target Note 6)

The buildings are set on a concrete plinth, with further areas of concrete hardstanding present to the south. These areas are of negligible ecological value.

3 Summary and Recommendations

3.1 Habitats

The site supports a limited range of habitats including two agricultural sheds, modified grassland in poor condition, ruderal vegetation, a shallow ephemeral depression, a short section of beech hedgerow, hardstanding, and small piles of waste materials. The habitats present are of limited ecological value, comprising principally of highly modified agricultural and built habitats.

The proposed development will result in the loss of the two existing agricultural sheds and associated areas of hardstanding, ruderal vegetation and modified grassland within the developable area. The beech hedgerow on the northern boundary should be retained. Ecological enhancements as detailed below should be incorporated into the development to provide biodiversity benefits.

The applicant considers the site to be exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements under the exemption for self-build and custom build development, and therefore a full BNG assessment has not been carried out.

3.2 Protected Species

3.2.1 Bats

Both buildings at the site were assessed during the walkover survey and were found to support no obvious suitable bat roosting features. The buildings are modern portal-framed agricultural structures of corrugated metal and Yorkshire boarding construction with tightly fitted roofing and no roof voids, crevices, or other features that could provide shelter for roosting bats. Both buildings are therefore assessed as offering 'negligible' bat roosting potential.

No trees with bat roosting potential are present within the site. The horse chestnut trees lining the access track to the west are outside the site boundary and would not be affected by development proposals. No further bat surveys are considered necessary.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that a precautionary approach is adopted during works whereby demolition/conversion of the buildings is carried out in a careful manner, with roof panels stripped by hand prior to full demolition/conversion. In the unlikely event that any evidence of roosting bats is found during any phase of the development, works should immediately halt and further advice be sought from a licensed bat ecologist.

3.2.2 Breeding Birds

The beech hedgerow offer suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds during the nesting season. It is not envisaged that any significant vegetation will be affected by development proposals. However, if works will require the management of any tall vegetation, these should avoid taking place during the breeding bird season (March to August inclusive). Where this is not possible, a check for nesting birds should be completed immediately prior to removal by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

3.2.3 Amphibians

A pond is identified on ordnance survey mapping approximately 75 m to the south-east of the site; however, the pond has been dry for several years. The shallow depression to the rear of the sheds is too small and ephemeral to function as a breeding pond. Therefore, there is no suitable amphibian breeding habitat within proximity to the site.

Habitats at the site itself are highly modified and offer limited opportunities for amphibians. The small piles of stone and waste materials to the rear of the sheds offer some limited refugia. As a precaution, these piles should be carefully dismantled by hand prior to the start of construction works to check for sheltering amphibians. Any amphibians encountered should be carefully moved to a suitable area of retained habitat outside of the works boundary.

3.2.4 Other Protected Species

No other protected species are considered likely to be present at the site based on the habitats present and the nature of the proposed development.

3.3 Invasive Non-Native Species

Dead stem material of Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was recorded within areas of ruderal vegetation to the rear of the sheds (Target Note 3). Himalayan balsam is listed on Schedule 9, Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence under section 14(2) of the Act to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild.

Himalayan balsam is an invasive species that can grow in dense stands and out-compete native flora. The plant is able to rapidly spread by seed dispersal, with seed pods able to catapult seeds up to 7 m away on contact or slight disturbance.

It is recommended that a Himalayan balsam management plan is produced and adhered to during site clearance. Given the relatively limited extent of the plants recorded at the site, it is recommended that plants are removed by hand-pulling or cutting.

This should be carried out between May and July to be most effective, before the plants have set seed. Cutting should be carried out at ground level and below the first node to achieve the best results. Cut plant material can be safely composted on site provided that plants have been removed prior to setting seed.

Any soil disturbance within areas where Himalayan balsam has been recorded should be undertaken with care, as the soil seed bank may contain viable seeds. Where soils from areas of known Himalayan balsam are to be moved or exported from the site, these should be treated as controlled waste under the Environmental Protection Act (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991 and disposed of at a suitably licensed waste facility. All tools and equipment used during clearance works should be cleaned thoroughly to prevent the spread of seeds to other areas.

3.3.1 Bat and Bird Boxes

It is recommended that the overall site be enhanced for bats and breeding birds. This can be achieved through the installation of bat boxes (recommended model Habibat 003, Vivara build-in bat box or similar) and sparrow and swift nest boxes (recommended models Schwegler Swift Brick, Vivara build-in swift box or similar) into the proposed new dwelling. Swift bricks are also used by house sparrows and other small bird species so are considered a 'universal bird brick'.

The bat and bird boxes can be built into the brick walls of the proposed new dwelling so as to remain visually unobtrusive and to be permanently fixed in place. Bat boxes should be located on south, south-east or south-west facing elevations at a minimum height of 4 m above ground level, with a clear flight line to the entrance. Swift bricks should be installed at a minimum height of 5 m above ground level in sheltered locations with no obstruction to flight lines.

The precise location, model and number of bat and bird boxes should be determined by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

3.4 Ecological Enhancements

The development will largely comprise of the new dwelling and associated access, parking and landscaping. However, the landscaping design for the development should include new trees and planting. It is recommended that new planting includes species which can provide nectar sources for insects and berries or fruits for invertebrates and birds.

The following small to medium-sized tree species are recommended as they offer suitable foraging opportunities to various native wildlife (including birds and invertebrates): rowan, wild cherry, crab apple, silver birch, holly, and willow.

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Areas of new shrubbery should include suitable nectar sources for insects. The Royal Horticultural Society provides a list of suitable plants for invertebrates (see rhs.org.uk/plantsforpollinators). It is recommended that this list is consulted when producing detailed landscaping designs for the site.

It is recommended that the beech hedgerow on the northern boundary is retained and enhanced through additional native hedgerow planting where gaps are present. Any new boundary fencing should incorporate hedgehog gaps (15 cm x 15 cm) at ground level.

4 Appendix

***Three Gates
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Photograph 1 - Buildings 1 and 2



Photograph 2 - Building 1 (western shed) interior



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Photograph 3 - Building 2 (eastern shed) interior



Photograph 4 - Modified grassland to the north of the buildings



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Photograph 5 - Ruderal vegetation, waste materials and Himalayan balsam dead stems to the rear of the sheds



Photograph 6 - Shallow depression and grassland habitats to the rear of the sheds



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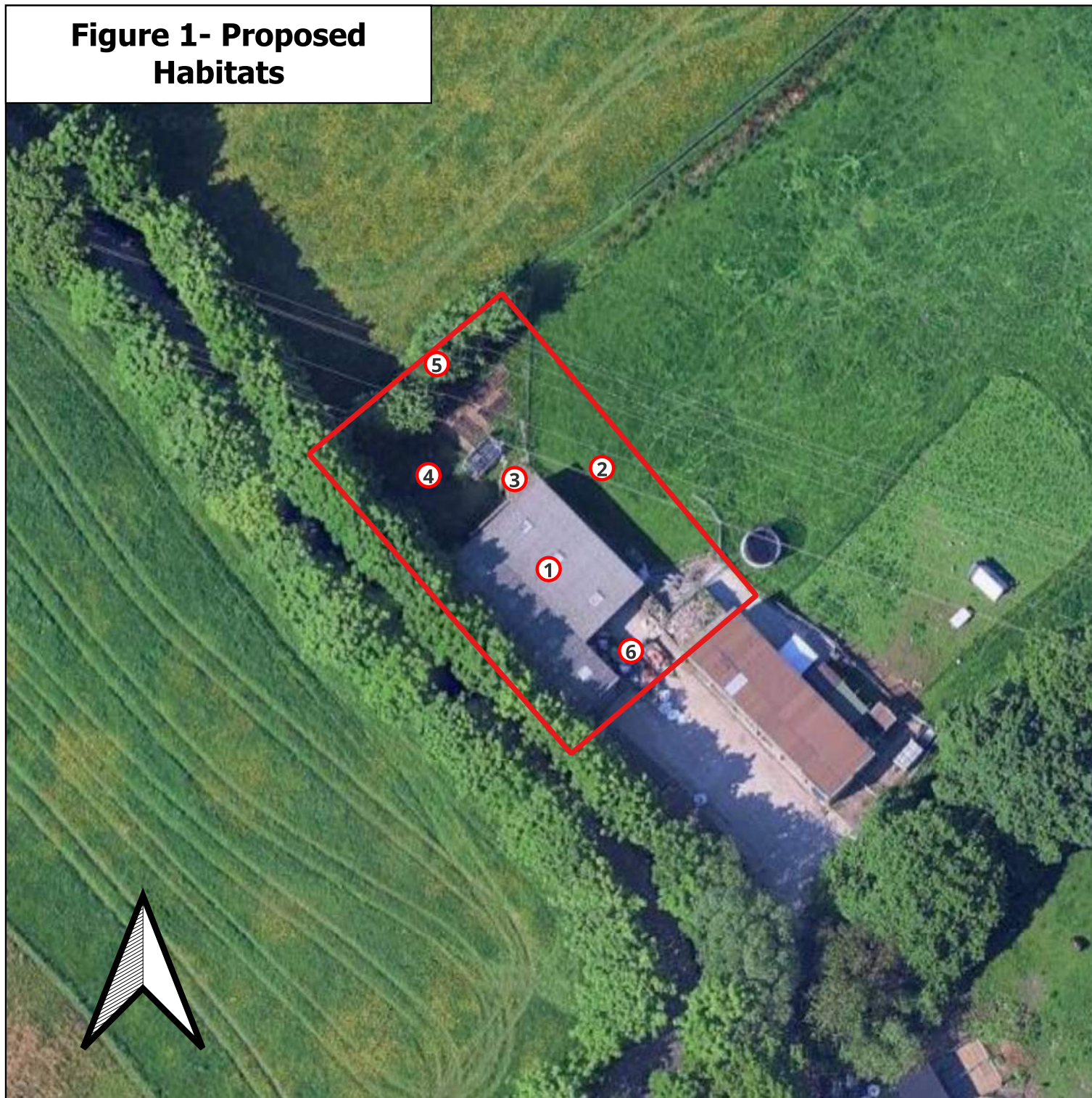
Photograph 7 - Beech hedgerow on the northern boundary



Photograph 8 - Dry pond located approximately 75 m south-east of the site



**Figure 1- Proposed
Habitats**



KEY



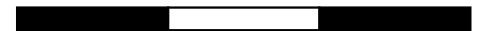
Study Site



Target Note



0 10 20 30 m



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