

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

As part of the planning process, RES is required to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The purpose of an EIA is to investigate and alleviate any significant potential effects of a development on the natural, physical and human environment. This includes plants and animals, soil, water, air, climate, landscape and archaeology. The interaction between these factors and the development is examined and their significance assessed and where applicable, mitigation measures to eliminate or reduce potential effects are identified.

We commissioned studies to assess how the construction and operation of the proposed wind farm might affect plant and animal life at the site. The site area was surveyed for habitats and protected species such as water vole, badgers, wildcat, pine martins and otters.

Bird surveys over the breeding and wintering seasons have been ongoing since late 2012. Initial survey results have identified several species present or in close proximity to the site, which include golden eagle, merlin, black grouse and geese. Given the high conservation status of golden eagle, RES has also carried out a specific eagle prey and habitat survey to gain a better understanding of eagle activity and habitats in the surrounding area.

Other surveys and assessments that have been carried out include hydrology, peat, archaeology and cultural heritage. The results of the surveys will be included in the Environmental Statement which will be submitted with the planning application later this year.

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A water vole

For illustrative purposes only