



White Cross Offshore Wind Farm ES Addendum

Appendix K: Approach to Lapwing
Mitigation



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Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
m	Metre
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
NE	Natural England
OS	Ordnance Survey
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UK	United Kingdom
WTG	Wind Turbine Generator

Glossary of Terminology

Defined Term	Description
Applicant	White Cross Offshore Windfarm Limited
Export Cable Corridor	The area in which the export cables will be laid, either from the Offshore Substation or the inter-array cable junction box (if no offshore substation), to the NG Onshore Substation comprising both the Offshore Export Cable Corridor and Onshore Export Cable Corridor.
Land Manager	The person or company responsible for managing the land through which the Project passes.
Mitigation Fields	The fields identified outside of the cable corridor that could potentially support lapwing mitigation during construction works.
Onshore Development Area	The onshore area above MLWS including the underground onshore export cables connecting to the White Cross Onshore Substation and onward to the NG grid connection point at East Yelland. The onshore development area will form part of a separate Planning application to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
Onshore Export Cables	The cables which bring electricity from MLWS at the Landfall to the White Cross Onshore Substation and onward to the NG grid connection point at East Yelland.
Onshore Export Cable Corridor	The proposed onshore area in which the export cables will be laid, from MLWS at the Landfall to the White Cross Onshore Substation and onward to the NG grid connection point at East Yelland.
the Onshore Project	The Onshore Project for the onshore TCPA application includes all elements onshore of MLWS. This includes the infrastructure associated with the offshore export cable (from MLWS), landfall, onshore export cable and associated infrastructure and new onshore substation (if required).
the Project	the Project is a proposed floating offshore windfarm called White Cross located in the Celtic Sea with a capacity of up to 100MW. It encompasses the project as a whole, i.e. all onshore and offshore infrastructure and activities associated with the Project.
White Cross Offshore Windfarm	100MW capacity offshore windfarm including associated onshore and offshore infrastructure

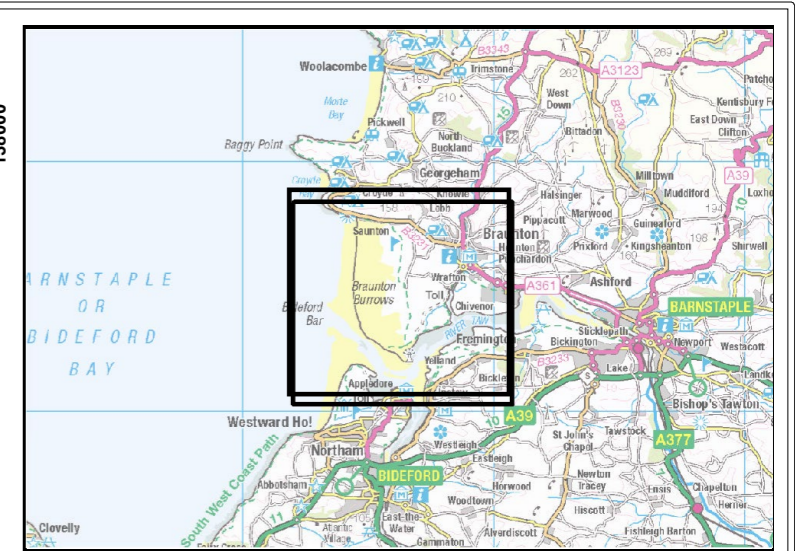
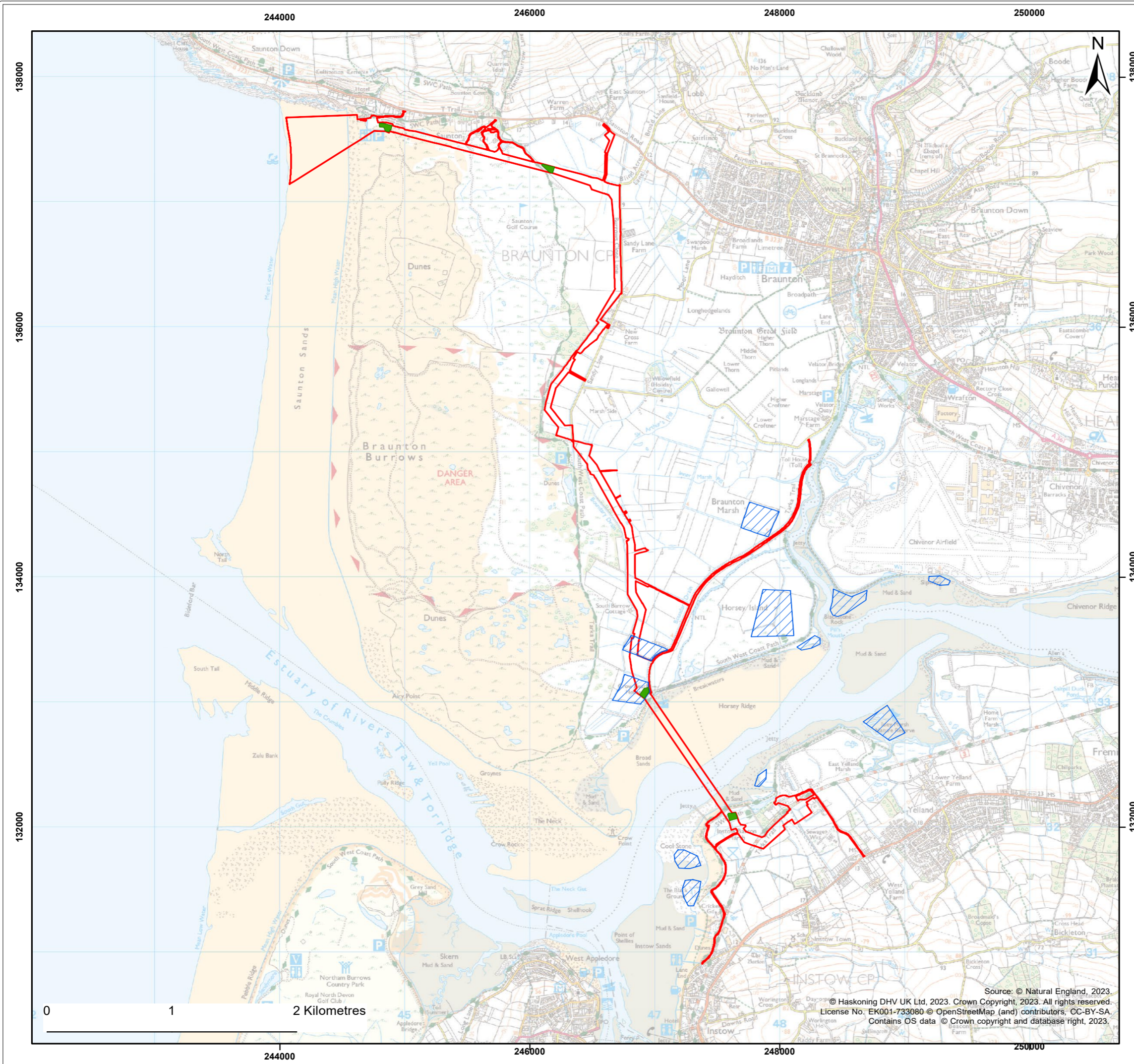
1. Introduction

1. This document has been prepared for the White Cross Offshore Windfarm (the Project) and provides additional information on mitigation for overwintering bird roosts. Specifically, this document provides North Devon Council and statutory consultees with further information regarding the approach to management of land identified for lapwing mitigation during the construction phase of the Project. This document is provided in advance of the final detail of the management prescriptions which are to be agreed following input from the land managers to take into account any specific location considerations/constraints.

1.1 Background and Rationale

2. Overwintering flocks of lapwing roost within Braunton Marsh, with a total of 21 high tide roosts being identified during a recent study¹. Two of the high tide roost areas identified are close to/and partially within the Onshore Development Area. The location of the Onshore Development Area in relation to the roost sites is provided in **Figure 1**. Birds using these roosts are potentially at risk of disturbance from construction activities associated with the installation of Onshore Export Cable. This may mean that they are prevented from using these particular roosting areas in the winter months (October to March) during the construction phase. **Figure 1** also shows other regularly used roosts in the local area identified in the 2019 study include a field further to the north, and Horsey Island (which is increasingly used due to recent changes in management).
3. As mitigation, it is proposed that work is carried out to ensure that alternative roosting habitat is available in the immediate local area to minimise the significance of this effect during the construction phase.
4. This note sets out the management requirements for the alternative roost areas which will be agreed between the Applicant and the land managers in advance of the commencement of development.

¹ Berridge, R. (2019). Identification of Wintering Wildfowl High Tide Roosts & Recreational Disturbance Impacts on the Taw Torridge Estuary. Report to Natural England by ECON Ecological Consultancy Ltd, May 2019.



Legend:

- Onshore Development Area
- High Tide Roost Area
- HDD Compounds

Client: Offshore Wind Ltd.	Project: White Cross Offshore Windfarm
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Title:
Onshore Development Area and High Tide Roosts

Figure: 1 Drawing No: PC2978-RHD-ZZ-XX-DR-Z-0757

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Co-ordinate system: British National Grid

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2. Identification of Lapwing Mitigation Land

5. Suitable fields for potential use as lapwing roost mitigation land have been identified immediately to the north of the Crow Point Toll Road, outside the Onshore Development Area. These are two fields centred on Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid Reference SS 47286 34036 and SS 47206 33906.
6. The fields lie within Braunton Marsh and currently support cattle-grazed modified grassland interspersed with hedgerows, wet ditches and trackways. Other features of these fields which indicate their potential suitability for use as alternative lapwing roost sites include:
 - The fields are located at least 500m away from location of the proposed construction activities associated with the Project and therefore considered unlikely to be disturbed by the work.
 - The fields are drained and not always wet, although there are some small areas of standing water in places, particularly during wet conditions.
 - The fields are open in character; there is an absence of enclosing woodland or scrub around the fields.
 - Hedgerows around the fields grow to generally no more than 2m high.
 - The fields are not publicly accessible and therefore not at risk of disturbance from people or dogs.
 - Current levels of disturbance in these fields (from farming activities or recreational activities in adjacent land – e.g. vehicles driving along the adjacent toll road), are expected to be similar to those currently experienced by the existing roost sites. Lapwing here are therefore habituated to this type and level of disturbance.

3. Management Prescriptions

7. The Land Managers of the identified mitigation fields are currently being approached with the aim of agreeing a management regime that would ensure that suitable habitat conditions for lapwing are available during the construction period.
8. The management regime will include the following management prescriptions during the Onshore Project construction period (which is likely to be in the region of 18 months, and could include up to two winter periods):
 - The fields should be grazed by cattle at a sufficient level to ensure that the overall sward is maintained short (optimum height of 5-7cm; and no higher than 10cm) between October and March, although some tussocks may remain.

- This may need to involve grazing the fields harder in late summer/early autumn to ensure that a short sward is available from October onwards. The condition of the fields would need to be monitored from August onwards to determine if additional management (e.g. mowing/additional grazing) was likely to be required (see Monitoring section below).
- Other vegetation (e.g. scrub or taller herbaceous species e.g. thistles/nettles) should be kept low, and if necessary, these species should be managed (by cutting/mowing) to avoid encroachment.
- Coverage of rushes (hard and soft rush) should be maintained at no higher than 20% across the fields.

4. Activities to be Avoided

9. Activities that have the potential to disturb over-wintering birds should be avoided within the mitigation fields between October and March (including any farming operations involving the use of machinery, with the exception of mowing, where this is required to maintain a short sward).
10. If mowing is carried out between October and March this should ideally be completed during the period around low tide, when birds are likely to be foraging within the estuary rather than roosting in the fields.

5. Survey and Monitoring

11. Additional wintering bird survey work has been undertaken within a survey area encompassing the proposed mitigation fields and the recognised high-tide lapwing roosts falling within and close to the Onshore Development Area.
12. This survey work involved two visits per month between mid-October and mid-March, carried out at high tide, and is intended to provide data to inform the proposed mitigation strategy by providing up-to-date data on the current status of these fields.
13. The full report of the findings of these surveys can be found in **Appendix J: Wintering Bird Survey Report.**
14. The results of the survey work show that the known roosts (1, 2 and 3) in Braunton Marsh survey area were not found to regularly support large numbers of lapwing. Roost 1 supported only small flocks (6-20 birds) on half the visits; Roost 2 supported larger flocks (43, 147, 40 lapwings) but only on three occasions, otherwise it was not used. No lapwings were recorded in Roost 3.

15. Lapwing was recorded on the ground in the proposed mitigation area during one visit (39 birds) and flocks of between 38 and 80 birds were recorded occasionally from the surrounding fields.
16. The survey report also found that the proposed mitigation area and adjacent fields are considered to be in a suitable location for use by birds for roosting and foraging, and flocks of target species were recorded from all the adjacent fields. With management to ensure habitat conditions are optimised, it is considered likely that the suitability of these fields could be improved.
17. The survey data are not considered to alter the impact assessment set out within the onshore ES **Chapter 16: Onshore Ecology and Ornithology**. There will be some temporary disturbance and displacement, but this will be localised, and given the availability of suitable alternative habitat, and the apparent variable use of fields for roosting/foraging across the marshes, the assessment of significance of this impact is considered to be unchanged from the that set out within the ES chapter. The mitigation approach for disturbance to Roosts 1 and 2, is proportionate.
18. During the construction phase, the habitat condition of the lapwing mitigation land will be monitored on a six-weekly basis between August and March. Monitoring will involve a visual inspection of the lapwing mitigation land by a suitably qualified Ecologist to be appointed by the Applicant, and liaison with the Land Manager to confirm that the land is being managed in accordance with the measures set out above. A record of habitat condition (sward height) will be made using photographs.
19. A brief monitoring report will be prepared by the Ecologist following each monitoring visit which will outline the results of the inspection and advice for any further management and remedial measures that may be required.
20. The monitoring report will be shared with the client/project manager, the land manager, and any other relevant stakeholders.