

## APPENDIX 9 – PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY TARGET NOTES

**Target Note 1** (NO064262 & NO065262) - High forest semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, which fringes either side of the steep river valley of the River Almond. Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* dominate the canopy with frequent scrub sized wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, which does not reach maturity due to chronic Dutch elm disease. Horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* and downy birch *Betula pubescens* are fairly common and alder is commonplace where the woods fringe the river. Non-native species are occasionally present at the eastern margins of the woodland, including a large shrub-sized cotoneaster species and damson *Prunus domestica*. The woodland is mostly dense and well shaded with a good age structure. The ground-layer comprises mainly a lush growth of tall ruderal vegetation (common nettle *Urtica dioica*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* and rosebay willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium*) but there are areas with some cover of native woodland plants (e.g. bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, nipplewort *Lapsana communis* and male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*). Ivy *Hedera helix* is locally abundant in some mature trees. Overall the woodland is not intensively managed apart from the area where the woodland fringes a working mill lade (NO065262) that feeds a fish farm. By the mill lade, young tree growth is annually cut back to prevent damage to the banks. The 2005 survey indicated that common woodland birds nest in the woodland, e.g. wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* and blackbird *Turdus merula* and several of the mature (ivy clad) trees contain potential bat habitat. Moreover, the start of the mill lade (within a long stretch of stone clad tunnel) contains potentially bat habitat due to the presence of crevices.

**Target Note 2** (NO065261) - A moderately large river island located close to the eastern bank of the River Almond. The island has become well colonised by young scrub-sized woodland habitat, including sycamore.

**Target Note 3** (NO066254) - Marshy grassland (dominated by reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* present on approximately 50m of the north bank of the East Pow Burn. Scattered willow scrub *Salix sp.* is also present. This is the most natural section of the East Pow Burn within the survey area.

**Target Note 4** (NO066260) - Almondbank fish farm situated on a narrow, mostly flat lying area of land on the east bank of the River Almond. The site contains a mill lade and several feeder channels and ponds. In between these water features are landscaped areas with amenity grassland and scattered mature exotic conifers and broad-leaved trees. There is a large, old mill building within the site. In general the site has very good bat habitat potential including the old mill buildings and the scattered mature trees and a grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* population was recorded within the local area in 2005.

**Target Note 5** (NO066258) - Four individually separate plants of giant hogweed recorded growing within riparian woodland on the east bank of the River Almond, close to the site of the dismantled weir.

**Target Note 6** (NO067257) - Riverbank erosion has caused the loss of several square metres of rank neutral grassland (and scattered riparian scrub) that bordered a large area of amenity grassland by the access road to Almondbank bowling club, located immediately upstream of the footbridge over the River Almond (near a public amenity building). The erosion extends to the northern edge of the tarmac access road, which has been diverted around the southern side of the public amenity building.

**Target Note 7** (NO066253) - A reasonably large area of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland to the south of the East Pow Burn. It is mostly very steeply sloping ground that slopes down to the burn. Observations indicate that it is fairly young woodland in which birch is particularly abundant. Also the groundlayer primarily comprises dense tall ruderal vegetation (e.g. rosebay willowherb) and common native woodland plants were not seen. Overall, it is likely that the woodland has developed fairly recently following felling. The site of the woodland appears to have been used for industry in past times as evidenced by remains of some structures.

**Target Note 8** (NO067258) - Intensive management of the grassland on the east side of the footbridge over the River Almond has altered the habitat from semi-improved neutral grassland to amenity grassland.

**Target Note 9** (NO0692570) - A moderately sized area of tall ruderal vegetation, dominated by nettles *Urtica dioica* on a broad west-facing ridge at the edge of a strip of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland that borders a large property (garden of No. 4 Deer Park) on the north side of Low's Work (weir).

**Target Note 10** (NO069256) - Approximately 30m length of the north bank of the River Almond dominated by rank semi-improved neutral grassland, which itself borders an arable field. About 50% of the stretch of grassland which forms the bank of the river is heavily eroded by the river. Young, scattered scrub is developing in the grassland, including a single plant of geulder rose *Viburnum opulus*, broom *Cytisus scoparius* and saplings of sycamore. River erosion is planned to be alleviated in this area by Perth and Kinross Council (J.Seller, pers. comm.). A kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* was recorded flying along the riverbank in this area during the 2009 fieldwork.

**Target Note 11** (NO070258) - Strip of rank semi-improved neutral grassland evident on the remnants of a former railway embankment that divides an area of arable land from an area of improved grassland to the north of the River Almond between Deer Park and Craigneuk. The grassland strip forms a potential wildlife corridor for mammals and invertebrates. Scattered scrub is starting to develop within parts of the grassland.