

Appendix 9.15

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**Brown Hare Surveys**



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This technical appendix underpins Chapter 9 of Volume 1A of the Environmental Statement. It outlines the methodology and results of the brown hare *Lepus europaeus* survey undertaken in 2003.

1.1.2 The survey was undertaken by Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited.

# 2 2003 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 The survey was undertaken on 24 and 25 March 2003 within the Preesall (gas storage) site.

2.1.2 The method involved walking field boundaries and surveying each individual hedgerow and field with binoculars. The survey was conducted at a suitable distance to ensure that the hares were not disturbed. Generally, surveys were undertaken throughout the morning and early afternoon when hares are thought to be most active and feeding.

2.1.3 The number of hares in each field or hedgerow was recorded, together with the nature and use of the field, climatic conditions and time of day. Due to the survey not being conducted within the actual field area, the presence of forms and faeces was not recorded.

2.1.4 The survey concentrated on areas of suitable land within the survey area that were clearly visible from the field boundary. Any areas of dense woodland or scrub were not surveyed. The saltmarsh was also surveyed in the same manner, although a thorough visual assessment was hindered by the height of vegetation and the undulating nature of this habitat.

# 3 2003 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1.1 The survey identified 24 brown hares within the survey area. Most hares were observed in the morning of 25 March 2003 in the fields to the south of Corcas Lane. To the north of Corcas Lane, observed activity was not as prevalent. However, these areas were surveyed during early afternoon, when activity could have been limited. Anecdotal evidence from the residents of Cote Walls Farm did suggest that brown hares were active within the fields surrounding the dwelling.

3.1.2 No brown hare activity was observed in the saltmarsh area to the west.

3.1.3 Incidental sightings of brown hares within the application site have also been recorded during a number of ecological surveys undertaken since 2003.

# 4 REFERENCES

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