

Article 6 (3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Conifer Regeneration in
setback areas of the Yellow
River & relevant tributaries,
Co. Leitrim





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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

MKO has been appointed to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6(3) Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the felling of conifer regeneration within the setback area of the Yellow River in County Leitrim.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment is required under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive). Where it cannot be excluded that a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, would have a significant effect on a European Site then same shall be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The current project is not directly connected with, or necessary for, the management of any European Site consequently the project has been subject to the Appropriate Assessment Screening process.

The assessment in this report is based on a desk study carried out by MKO staff and field surveys undertaken during July 2023 by Coillte personnel. It specifically assesses the potential for the proposed felling to result in significant effects on European sites in the absence of any best practice, mitigation, or preventative measures.

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010) and the Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin 7, Ireland OPR (2021).

1.2 Statement of Authority

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Sibéal Fallon (B.Sc). This report has been reviewed by Lisa Buckley (B.Sc). Sibéal and Lisa are experienced ecologists with over 3 years' professional ecological consultancy experience respectively.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Site Location

The project area is located at H 08115 18553. Located in County Leitrim, the conifer regeneration in question is located within the setback area from the aquatic zone, the Yellow [Ballinamore] River (order 2) and its tributaries, located within the Coillte properties of:

- Doon
- Seltan
- Altakeeran
- Tullylackan
- Stralongford
- Pottore

The stretch of the Yellow [Ballinamore] River in question is located approx. 8 km north-west from the town of Ballinamore and is accessed via a series of local and forest roads which connect to the Regional road, R-208, which is located approx. 6.5 km to the south. The site location can be seen in Figure 3.1.

2.2 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

2.2.1 Description of the project

This project will entail the manual removal of natural regeneration of non-native conifers from the Yellow River (Ballinamore_010) setback areas and its tributaries within the Coillte properties: Doon, Seltan, Altakeeran, Tullylackan, Stralongford, and Pottore.

Natural regeneration of non-native conifers will be removed manually from the Yellow River (order 2) and the relevant tributaries setback (20 metres). Depending on gradient and access to the project area, the following methods will be used:

- **Brush cutter** - this method will be used for small stem conifers (<14 metres in height). This handheld powered tool will be used to clear small stem conifers within the affected setback areas.
- **Chainsaw harvesting** – this method will be used for larger stem conifers (>14 metres in height). Motor manual felling or chainsaw felling is used less than in the past. However, there are situations where the chainsaw is still required such as felling large trees, trees with crooked stems and large branches such as broadleaves, trees on very steep slopes where the harvester cannot operate or felling small stands where it would not be economical to use a mechanical harvester.
- **Ring barking** – this method will involve the removal of a circular cut around the stem of the tree at approx. breast height. The areas above the debarked zone will die.

The trees will be felled to waste, untreated and left in-situ. The process of felling to waste involves felling trees as low as possible to the ground level to ensure no side branches re-develop and are left in situ. Larger trees may be de-limbed and cross-cut to reduce the bulk.

Forest machinery will not be used for this project. The operator will access the setbacks from the nearest forest road.

2.2.2

Description of the Baseline Ecological Environment

A walkover survey of the project area was conducted in July 2023 by Coillte personnel. The Yellow [Ballinamore] River (order 1) rises in the Coillte property of Doon and flows in a southerly direction through Doon and Seltan, before flowing along the western boundary of Tullylackan, the south-eastern boundary of Altakeeran, the eastern boundary of Stralongford, and finally along the western boundary of Pottore. The walkover survey identified the presence of conifer tree encroachment along the riverbanks of the Yellow [Ballinamore] River (order 2) and its tributaries within the aforementioned Coillte properties (Plate 2-1 and Plate 2-2).

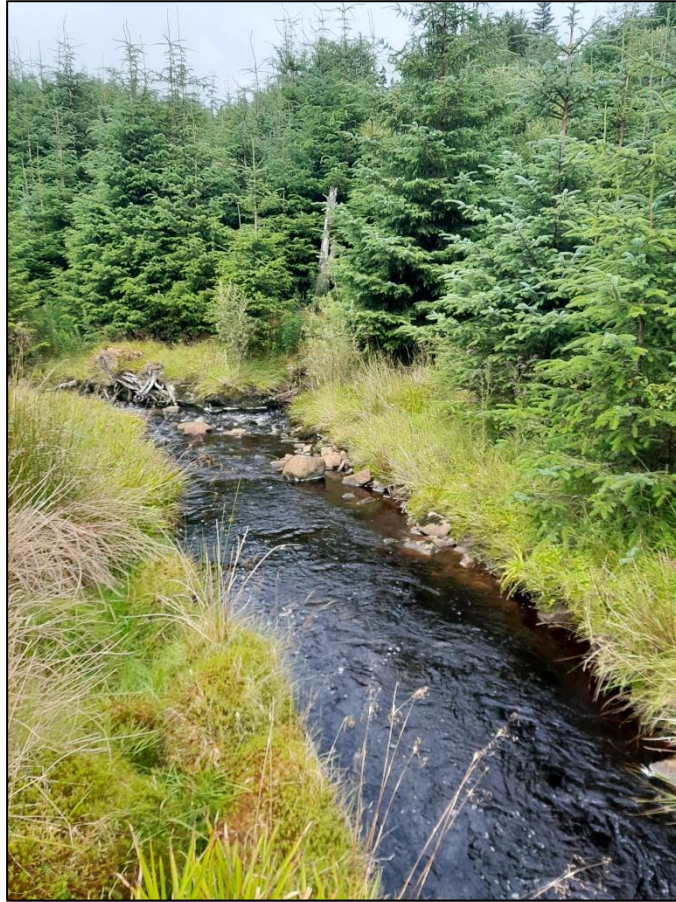


Plate 2-1. Conifer regeneration within the setback area of the Yellow River.



Plate 2-2. Conifer regeneration within the setback area of the Yellow River.

There are several points along the Yellow [Ballinamore] River (order 2) that are located on a very steep slope, with windblown forestry occurring in patches (Plate 2-3).



Plate 2-3. Very steep slope with conifer regeneration and windblown trees leading down to the Yellow River.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES

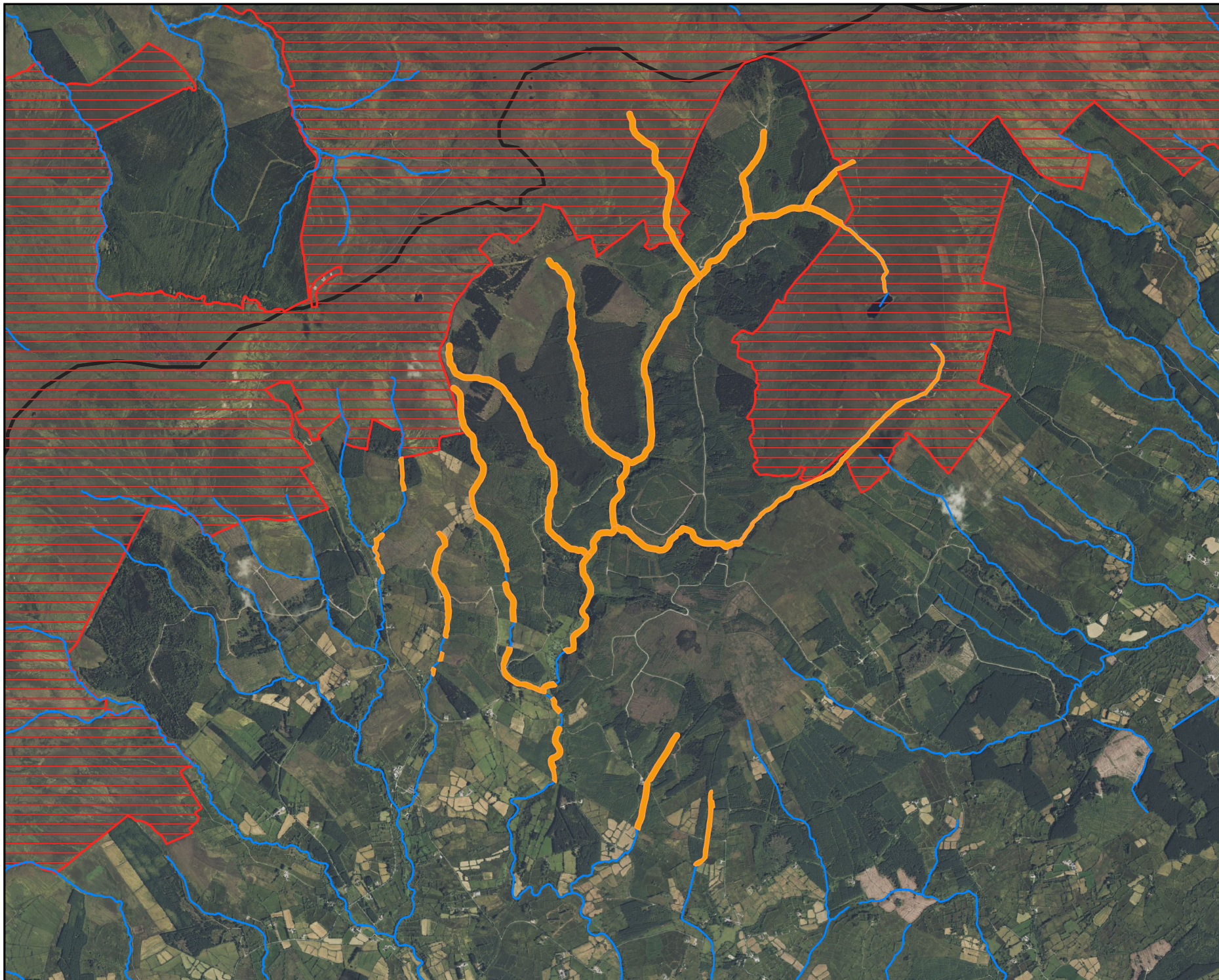
3.1 Identification of the European Sites within the Likely Zone of Impact

The following methodology was used to establish any European Sites upon which there is a potential for a likely significant effect to occur either individually or in combination with other plans and projects as a result of the proposed project:

- Initially the most up to date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments were downloaded from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) and the EPA website (www.epa.ie) on the 16/08/2023.
- All European Sites that could potentially be affected were identified using a source-pathway - receptor model. To provide context for the assessment, European Sites surrounding the development site are shown on Figure 3.2. Information on these sites according to the site-specific conservation objectives is provided in Table 3-1. Sites that were further away from the proposed development were also considered and in this case connectivity with sites that were further downstream in the catchment was identified. These included (Lough Oughter And Associated Loughs SAC (downstream distance: 51.8 km), Upper Lough Erne SAC (downstream distance: 51.8 km) Upper Lough Erne SPA (downstream distance: 51.8 km) and Donegal Bay SPA (downstream distance: 137 km). However, given the nature, scale and location of the proposed forestry operations and the attenuating properties of the intervening waterbodies, no potential pathway for significant effects was identified.
- The catchment mapping was used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the site of the proposed project and any European Sites. The hydrological catchments are also shown in Figure 3.1.
- In relation to Special Protection Areas, in the absence of any specific European or Irish guidance in relation to such sites, the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Guidance, ‘*Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPA)*’ (2016) was consulted. This document provides guidance in relation to the identification of connectivity between the proposed project and Special Protection Areas. The guidance takes into consideration the distances species may travel beyond the boundary of their SPAs and provides information on dispersal and foraging ranges of bird species which are frequently encountered when considering plans and projects.
- Table 3.1, provides details of all relevant European Sites as identified in the preceding steps and assesses the potential for likely significant effects on each.
- The assessment considers any likely direct or indirect impacts of the proposed project, both alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on European Sites by virtue of criteria including the following: size and scale, land-take, distance from the European Site or key features of the site, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of works, were considered in this assessment.
- The site synopses and conservation objectives of these sites, as per the NPWS website (www.npws.ie), were consulted and reviewed at the time of preparing this report 16/08/2023.
- The potential for the proposed forestry operations to result in cumulative impacts on any European Sites in combination with other plans and projects was considered in



the assessment that is presented in Table 3.1. Plans and projects considered include those that are listed in Appendix I.



Map Legend

- Project Area
- EPA Rivers
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- EPA Catchments

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Drawing Title

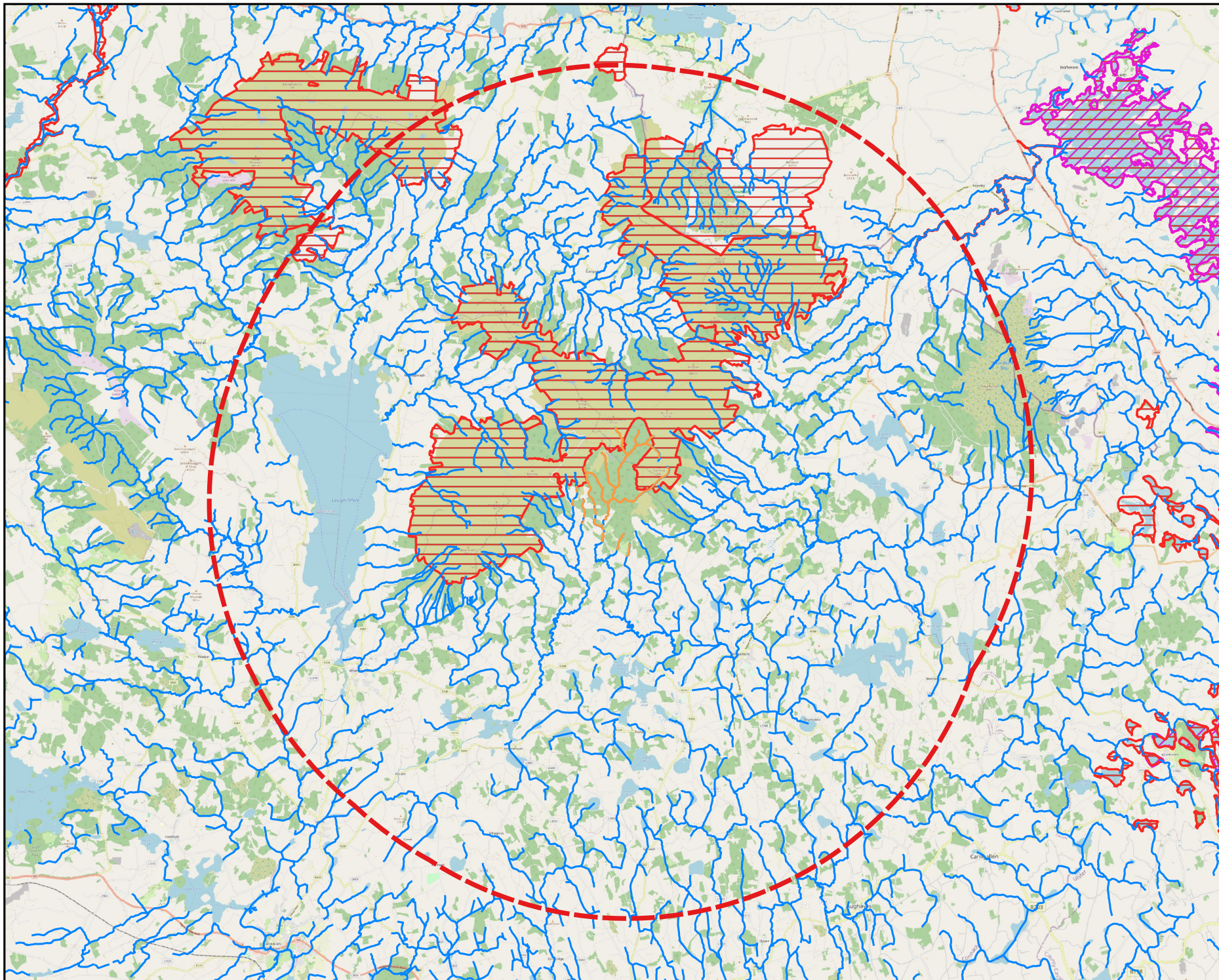
Site Location

Project Title

Conifer Regeneration in setback of Yellow River

Drawn By LB	Checked By SF
Project No. 200704	Drawing No. Figure 3-1
Scale 1:35000	Date 2023-08-18

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Map Legend

-  Project Area
-  EPA Rivers
-  Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
-  Special Protection Area (SPA)
-  15km Buffer



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Drawing Title
Overview of European Sites

Project Title
Conifer Regeneration in setback of Yellow River

Drawn By LB	Checked By SF
Project No. 200704	Drawing No. Figure 3-2
Scale 1:205000	Date 2023-08-18



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Table 3-1 Identification of Designated sites within the Likely Zone of Impact

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Corratirrim SAC [000979] Distance: 14.3 km	> [8240] Limestone pavements	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, April 2019), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	There will be no direct effects as the project area is located entirely outside this SAC. The following habitat for which the SAC is designated are terrestrially based, therefore no pathway for indirect effects exist: > [8240] Limestone pavements No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.
Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River SAC [UK0030116]	> [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 2, April 2015), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.daera-ni.gov.uk	There will be no direct effects as the project area is located entirely outside this SAC.

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
<p>Distance: 13.2 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitans</i> and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation 		<p>There is no downstream hydrological connection between the project area and this SAC. Therefore, there is no pathway for indirect effects on the following aquatic QIs for which the SAC is designated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) ➤ [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitans</i> and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
<p>Cuilcagh Mountain SAC [UK0016603]</p> <p>Distance: 8.3 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [7130] Active blanket bog ➤ [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds ➤ [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heath with <i>Erica tetralix</i> ➤ [4030] European dry heaths 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 2.1, October 2017), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.daera-ni.gov.uk</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project area is located entirely outside this SAC.</p> <p>The following habitats for which the SAC is designated are terrestrially based, therefore no pathway for indirect effects exist:</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths ➤ [8110] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Caleopsietalia ladanii</i>) ➤ [8220] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [7130] Active blanket bog ➤ [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heath with <i>Erica tetralix</i> ➤ [4030] European dry heaths ➤ [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths ➤ [8110] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Caleopsietalia ladanii</i>) ➤ [8220] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation <p>There is no downstream hydrological connection between the project area and this SAC. Therefore, there is no pathway for indirect effects on the following aquatic habitat for which the SAC is designated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
<p>Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands SAC [000584]</p> <p>Distance: 0.3 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) ➤ [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds ➤ [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> ➤ [4030] European dry heaths ➤ [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths ➤ [6230] Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) ➤ [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) ➤ [7140] Transition mires and quaking bogs ➤ [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) ➤ [8110] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, September 2016), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project area is located entirely outside this SAC.</p> <p>The following habitats for which the SAC is designated are terrestrially based, therefore no pathway for indirect effects exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> ➤ [4030] European dry heaths ➤ [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths ➤ [6230] Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) ➤ [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) ➤ [7140] Transition mires and quaking bogs ➤ [8110] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) ➤ [8220] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation ➤ [1393] Slender Green Feather-moss (<i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i>)

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
	<p>(<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [8220] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation ➤ [1393] Slender Green Feather-moss (<i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i>) 		<p>There is no downstream hydrological connection between the project area and this SAC. Therefore, there is no pathway for indirect effects on the following aquatic habitats for which the SAC is designated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) ➤ [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds ➤ [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
<p>Boleybrack Mountain SAC [002032]</p> <p>Distance: 13.5 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds ➤ [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> ➤ [4030] European dry heaths ➤ [6410] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) ➤ [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, August 2016), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project area is located entirely outside this SAC.</p> <p>The following habitats for which the SAC is designated are terrestrially based, therefore no pathway for indirect effects exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> ➤ [4030] European dry heaths ➤ [6410] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) ➤ [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) <p>There is no downstream hydrological connection between the project area and this SAC. Therefore, there is no pathway for indirect effects on the following aquatic habitat for which the SAC is designated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.
<p>Lough Oughter And Associated Loughs SAC [000007]</p> <p>Distance: 20.7 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3150] Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation ➤ [91D0] Bog woodland ➤ [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, November 2021), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project area is located entirely outside this SAC.</p> <p>The following habitats for which the SAC is designated are terrestrially based, therefore no pathway for indirect effects exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [91D0] Bog woodland <p>This SAC is located approx. 51.8 km downstream of the project area. However, given the nature, scale and location of the proposed forestry operations and the attenuating properties of the intervening waterbodies, no potential pathway for significant effects was identified on the following aquatic QIs for which the SAC is designated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3150] Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>➤ [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
<p>Upper Lough Erne SAC [UK0016614]</p> <p>Distance: 24.4 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3150] Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation ➤ [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles ➤ [91E0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion alvae</i>) ➤ [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 2, April 2015), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.daera-ni.gov.uk</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project area is located entirely outside this SAC.</p> <p>The following habitats for which the SAC is designated are terrestrially based, therefore no pathway for indirect effects exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles ➤ [91E0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion alvae</i>)

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>This SAC is located approx. 51.8 km downstream of the project area. However, given the nature, scale and location of the proposed forestry operations and the attenuating properties of the intervening waterbodies, no potential pathway for significant effects was identified on the following aquatic QIs for which the SAC is designated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [3150] Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation ➤ [91E0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion alvae</i>) ➤ [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
Special Protection Area (SPA)			
Upper Lough Erne SPA [UK9020071] Distance: 24.6 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [A038] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) ➤ [A999] Wetlands and Waterbirds 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 3, April 2015), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.daera-ni.gov.uk	<p>The project area is located outside the boundary of this SPA and there is no potential for direct effect.</p> <p>There is no suitable habitat for the listed SCI species within the boundary of the development site, therefore there is no potential for indirect impact through ex-situ disturbance or displacement.</p> <p>There is no potential for indirect effects on the SPA via hydrological pathways. This SPA is located approx. 51.8 km downstream of the project area. However, given the nature, scale and location of the proposed forestry operations and the attenuating properties of the intervening waterbodies, no potential pathway for significant effects was identified.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 16/08/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
<p>Donegal Bay SPA [004151]</p> <p>Distance: 47.7 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [A003] Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) ➤ [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ➤ [A065] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) ➤ [A144] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) ➤ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, May 2012), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>The project area is located outside the boundary of this SPA and there is no potential for direct effect.</p> <p>There is no suitable habitat for the listed SCI species within the boundary of the development site, therefore there is no potential for indirect impact through ex-situ disturbance or displacement.</p> <p>There is no potential for indirect effects on the SPA via hydrological pathways. This SPA is located approx. 137 km downstream of the project area. However, given the nature, scale and location of the proposed forestry operations and the attenuating properties of the intervening waterbodies, no potential pathway for significant effects was identified. No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>

3.2

Likely Cumulative Impact of the Proposed Works on European Sites, in-combination with other plans and projects

The potential for the proposed project to contribute to a cumulative impact on European Sites was considered. The online planning system for Leitrim County Council was consulted on the 16/08/2023. Plans and projects in the vicinity of the proposed forestry operations within the last 5 years are detailed in Table 3.2 in Appendix I.

No pathway or mechanism for the proposed forestry operations to result in any significant effect on any European Site was identified when considered on its own during the assessment process and therefore there is no potential for it to contribute to any such effects when considered in-combination with any other development.

The review of plans and projects that is described in Appendix I did not reveal any additional potential pathways for effect on European Sites that may have arisen as a result of those plans or projects.

The following plans been reviewed and taken into consideration as part of this assessment:

- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021
- Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021
- Draft Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

The review focused on policies and objectives that relate to European sites. None of the objectives reviewed had the potential to result in cumulative adverse effects on any European Site.

The review of these Plans is provided below in Appendix I.

3.2.1

Conclusion of in-combination/cumulative assessment

The review of plans and projects that is described above did not reveal any additional potential pathways for effect on European Sites that may have arisen as a result of those plans or projects.

There were no Annex I habitats identified within the works site boundary and there was no evidence of Annex II species or SCI species using the areas of habitat surveyed. There was no evidence of protected fauna using the proposed study area.

No pathway or mechanism for the proposed forestry operations to result in any significant effect on any European Site, was identified when considered on its own during the assessment process and therefore, there is no potential for it to contribute to any such effects when considered in-combination with any other development.

4. ARTICLE 6(3) APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING STATEMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Data Collected to Carry Out Assessment

In preparation of the report, the following sources were used to gather information:

- > Review of NPWS Site Synopses, Conservation Objectives for the European Sites
- > Review of 2019, 2013 and 2007 EU Habitats Directive (Article 17) Reports.
- > Review of online web-mappers: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Teagasc, EPA, Water Framework Directive (WFD), Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), Irish Wetland Bird Survey I-WeBS
- > Review of Bird Atlases: (Sharrock, 1976; Lack, 1986; Gibbons et al., 1993; Balmer et al., 2013).
- > Review of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCCI) in Ireland 2014-2019 (Colhoun & Cummins, 2013)
- > Review of OS maps and aerial photographs of the site of the proposed project.
- > Review of other plans and projects within the area.

4.2 Concluding Statement

It is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a significant effect on any European Site.

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APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PLANS AND PROJECTS CONSIDERED IN THE CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Plans

The following plans been reviewed and taken into consideration as part of this assessment:

- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021
- Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021
- Draft Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

The review focused on policies and objectives that relate to Natura 2000 sites. None of the objectives reviewed had the potential to result in cumulative adverse effects on any European Site. The policies and objectives reviewed are detailed in Table

Table 3.2 Review of plans

Plan	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to European Sites in The Zone of Influence	Assessment of development compliance with policy
<p>Draft Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029</p>	<p>Policy 6 - To protect and where possible enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features which act as ecological corridors/networks and stepping stones, such as river corridors, hedgerows and road verges, and to minimise the loss of habitats and features of the wider countryside (such as ponds, wetlands and trees) which are not within designated sites.</p> <p>Policy 8 - To protect ecological networks linking protected and designated important sites within the county, in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>Objective 7 - To encourage appropriate management of landscape features, particularly through the development management process and using planning agreements with landowners and developers, where appropriate.</p>	<p>The County development plan was reviewed with particular reference to Policies and Objectives that relate to biodiversity. No potential for cumulative impacts when considered in conjunction with the current proposal were identified.</p> <p>The proposed forestry operations involve the felling of coniferous non-native trees within the setback area of the Yellow River (order 1) and its tributaries within the Coillte properties: Doon, Seltan, Altakeeran, Tullylackan, Stralongford, and Pottore, which will enhance the riparian buffer zone of this river.</p>

<p>National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021</p>	<p>Target 6.2 - Sufficiency, coherence, connectivity, and resilience of the protected areas network substantially enhanced by 2020.</p>	<p>The National Biodiversity Action Plan was comprehensively reviewed with particular focus on policies and objectives related to the Natura 2000 network. No negative effects to the Natura 2000 Network were identified with regard to the proposed development.</p>
<p>Leitrim Biodiversity Plan 2022-2027</p>	<p>Theme 2 Actions - Encourage projects to promote local community stewardship (protection, enhancement) of rivers and other waterbodies and raise awareness of the importance of the riparian zone as a biodiversity corridor.</p> <p>Theme 2 Actions - Support local community groups to map and assess condition of local hedgerows and treelines and protect and/or restore hedgerows to good condition or plant new hedgerows/trees in community biodiversity plans.</p>	<p>The proposed project will not result in significant effects on habitat and features of ecological importance. There will be no impact on designated sites or biodiversity as a result of the proposed forestry operations.</p> <p>The proposed forestry operations involve the felling of coniferous non-native trees within the setback area of the Yellow River (order 1) and its tributaries within the Coillte properties: Doon, Seltan, Altakeeran, Tullylackan, Stralongford, and Pottore, which will allow for natural regeneration in these areas and raise awareness of the importance of the riparian zone as a biodiversity corridor.</p>

Other Projects

Assessment material for this in-combination impact assessment was compiled on the relevant developments within the vicinity of the proposed forestry operations and was verified on the 16/08/2023. The material was gathered through a search of relevant online Planning Registers, reviews of relevant documents, planning application details and planning drawings, and served to identify past and future projects, their activities, and their environmental impacts. All relevant projects were considered in relation to the potential for in-combination effects. All relevant data was reviewed (e.g., individual EISs/EIARs, layouts, drawings etc.) for all relevant projects where available. These consisted mainly of small-scale domestic developments and upgrades.

The online planning system for Leitrim County Council as well as the An Bord Pleanála Website (planning searches), was consulted on the 16th August 2023 for the wider area surrounding the site.

Relevant projects identified in the wider area of the development from the last 5 years are:

- Permission for the construction of a new forestry access entrance to an existing mature forestry and all ancillary works (Planning ref: 208)
- Retention consisting of the retention of the existing dwelling house with changes to door and window locations as compared to original planning permission (The original dwelling was granted planning approval under P.01/48). In addition to the retention, planning is also being sought for the addition of a door to the South West elevation and a dormer window to the North West Elevation (Planning ref: 20176)
- retain velux roof lights to southern and northern elevations of existing dwelling and permission to provide living accommodation at attic floor level of existing dwelling (Planning ref: 2297)
- Retention of entrance location, treatment system & percolation area location, site boundaries, 2 No. rooflights on front elevation (prev, planning ref. no. 05/885) (Planning ref: 2244)
- Retention of the following alterations to the existing dwelling house: (a) new glazed double doors on front elevation, with window on rear and side elevation all associated with revisions to permitted ground floor layout altering the position of kitchen, bathroom, and store and replacing permitted front lobby with entrance porch; (b) construction of a new replacement pitched A roof on the dwelling with slate finish including increasing the height of the rear wall of the dwelling and associated increase in both gable walls; (c) provision of four number velux windows on the front elevation of the roof and one number on the rear; (d) new vehicular access to the dwelling (Planning ref: 20126)
- Permission for alterations and extension to existing dwelling to include (a) kitchen, living area at ground level and 2 en-suite bedrooms at first floor; (b) install new treatment system & percolation area &(c) widen existing dwelling at rear (Planning ref: 2032)
- Permission to construct a bungalow type domestic dwelling with living accommodation in the roof space. To construct a domestic garage. To construct new site access entrance. To construct a Waste Water Treatment System to current EPA Code of Practice and all ancillary works (Planning ref: 20141)
- Permission to construct dormer and single storey extension to existing bungalow, with alterations to existing elevations, new vehicular entrance, associated development works and connection to existing services (Planning ref: 18186)
- Permission for kitchen/dining room extension to gable end of existing bungalow and associated site works. (Planning ref: 2360006)
- Permission to construct a single storey extension to the side of existing dwelling for habitable use and connect to all existing associated services (Planning ref: 2196)
- Permission for development consisting of (1) conversion of existing open car port to enclosed storage are/garage and (2) the addition of a first floor extension to the South elevation, above the converted carport, together with all associated site development works. (Planning ref: 19166)
- Permission for a forest bell mouth entrance onto a public road including all other associated site works (Planning ref: 18203)
- Permission for the installation of a sewerage treatment unit, polishing filter and all associated works to service existing cottage (Planning ref: 234).

- Permission for the construction of a new forestry access entrance to an existing mature forestry and all ancillary works (Planning ref: 1943).

