



**Boningale Developments Limited**

**Land South of Albrighton**

**White-clawed Crayfish Survey Report**

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Boningale Developments Limited

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## I Introduction

### I.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This report describes the results of the White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) survey undertaken by PJA on behalf of Boningale Developments Limited on the 16 July 2025 for land south of Albrighton, Shropshire.
- 1.1.2 PJA was commissioned by Boningale Developments Limited to undertake a White-clawed Crayfish (WCC) survey to establish the crayfish baseline conditions. The site has historically been subject to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, undertaken by Cass Design Consultants Ltd. in support of their application (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Cass Design Consultants Ltd, April 2024), which highlighted the requirement for further targeted species surveys. The following terms are used:
- **Project** – Land south of Albrighton, Shropshire; and
  - **Survey feature** – Feature of potential impact.
- 1.1.3 This report is intended to be read with reference to location map Figure 1-1 / Appendix A.

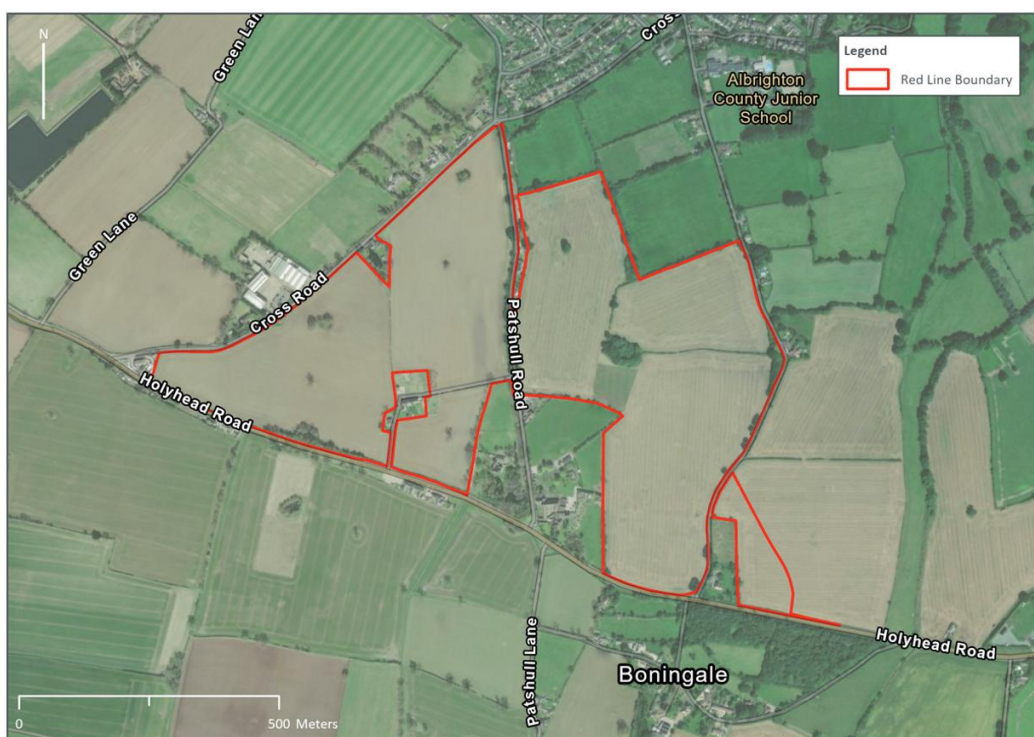


Figure 1-1. Land South of Albrighton, Shropshire.

### I.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 Surveys were commissioned in order to:



- To assess historic records of crayfish species provided by the local biological records centres and freely available sources;
- To evaluate habitats within the Project in relation to their value for crayfish;
- To undertake crayfish surveys to determine presence / likely absence of crayfish within the Project boundary;
- To provide recommendations to enable compliance with relevant nature conservation legislation and planning policy; and
- To identify the need for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and / or enhancement of the proposed Project.

1.2.2 This report provides the results of the surveys undertaken on the 16 July 2025, drawing conclusions from the findings of the surveys. The report additionally makes recommendations to further surveys and / or species mitigation required as a result of crayfish and / or other notable species being identified utilising features where required.

### **1.3 Project overview**

- 1.3.1 The project is located immediately south of the town of Albrighton, centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SJ 80814 03343. It consists primarily of arable fields divided by hedgerows, with scattered trees, ponds, and four small woodland areas. Its southern boundary lies adjacent to the A464.
- 1.3.2 The Outline proposed development comprises access for a mixed-use development comprising up to 800 no dwellings, a care home of up to 80 units, a secondary school and local centre with associated access, infrastructure, landscaping and drainage.





## 2 Legislation and Guidance

### 2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Relevant legislation and guidance relating to crayfish is summarised below.

### 2.2 Legislation

2.2.1 WCC are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).

2.2.2 It is an offence to intentionally take them.

2.2.3 It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- possess or transport them (or any part, alive or dead); and
- sell, offer, or publish an advert to sell them.

2.2.4 White-clawed crayfish is also listed under Annexes IIa and Va of the Conservation of *Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended), is included as a priority species under the *Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats* (the Bern Convention) (1982) and is on the IUCN Red Data List for endangered and threatened species (IUCN, 2025).

2.2.5 In addition, it is a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), with a BAP steering group for WCC (consisting of key organisations and individuals) overseeing the delivery of a national action plan.

2.2.6 WCC are additionally listed on the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* (NERC Act), (2006) as a priority species, specifically targeted for monitoring and survey, species-specific management and targeted habitat management.

#### **Invasive species**

2.2.7 Under Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) it is a criminal offence to release or allow non-native crayfish, including Signal (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) crayfish, into the wild.

2.2.8 Under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (2019), it restricts the keeping, release, transport, and selling of live Signal crayfish unless a license is obtained from the relevant agency. Additionally, under National Fisheries By-laws it is against the law to use any crayfish (alive or dead) or parts of crayfish as bait.



## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Desk-based assessment

3.1.1 A desk study review has been carried out to identify nature conservation designations, designations of invertebrate interest (specifically crayfish), and to evaluate existing records of crayfish species potentially relevant to the Project. Biological records data were reviewed as well as online publicly available sources and previous reports in relation to the project, detailed below:

- Defra MAGIC Interactive map (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk>);
- National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas (<https://nbnatlas.org>); and,
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Cass Design Consultants Ltd, April 2024.

3.1.2 The desk study included a search for:

- International nature conservation designations (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)) within 2 km of the proposed Project to identify sites where an invertebrate interest (specifically crayfish) is the primary reason for designation.
- National statutory nature conservation designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)) within 2 km of the proposed Project where invertebrate interest (specifically crayfish) is the primary reason for designation.
- Reference was also made to Ordnance Survey maps of the wider area and online aerial images ([www.google.co.uk/maps](http://www.google.co.uk/maps)) in order to determine any habitat features of potential interest for invertebrates (specifically crayfish) in the area.

### 3.2 Field Survey

3.2.1 A Three-phase approach was implemented during the crayfish survey to determine presence / likely absence of crayfish across the Project. The approaches utilized combined a 'Habitat Assessment' and 'manual searching survey'<sup>1</sup> along with an environmental DNA (eDNA) survey, as detailed below.

3.2.2 Once areas of interest were identified through the desk study<sup>2</sup>, an initial assessment of the site was undertaken. A habitat suitability assessment was undertaken of all waterbodies which are present within and in close proximity to the Project site, identified as areas of interest. All waterbodies were assessed for their potential to support WCC. The habitat suitability assessment involved a visual inspection of the waterbodies for physical habitat features suitable for crayfish, the quality of the water feature and riparian habitat to support WCC, based on the guidance by Peay (2003) and the following factors:

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<sup>1</sup> Where possible and by following best practice guidance and ensuring the minimum levels of destruction.

<sup>2</sup> Review of above-mentioned online sources, ecological reports and 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey mapping data.

- physical properties of the watercourse including the type of watercourse, depth, flow and channel width;
- presence of refuges in the channel and bank;
- substrate composition;
- pollution, erosion and siltation;
- presence of invasive crayfish; and
- presence of bullhead (*Cottus gobio*).

3.2.3 The presence of bullhead is a good indicator species for watercourse and habitat conditions which are suitable for WCC. Both of these species occupy similar refuge types within the channel and / or margins and thrive in areas of good water quality.

3.2.4 Manual searching surveys adopted the methodology detailed in the Crayfish Conservation Manual (Marshall & Nightingale, 2021) and followed current best practice guidance.

3.2.5 Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys were undertaken adhering to manufacturers specifications. The survey adopted the additional, following precautions:

- Water samples were collected within the WCC survey area, avoiding entering the water where possible during sample collection;
- Sampling was undertaken in an upstream direction to avoid the collection of ancient sediment that may contain historical DNA; and
- Sub-samples were taken every few metres along the watercourse to get a representative sample from the site.

### 3.3 Biosecurity

3.3.1 Biosecurity means taking steps to make sure that good hygiene practices are in place to reduce and minimise the risk of spreading invasive non-native species and disease. A good biosecurity routine is essential, even if invasive non-native species or disease are not apparent.

3.3.2 Biosecurity adopted the Great Britain (GB) Non-native Species Secretariat “Draft Bio-security Guidance for Biological Surveyors / samplers: A Good Practice Guide to minimising the risk of moving non-native species, parasites and diseases”.

3.3.3 There are 3 levels of biosecurity based on the risk posed by the activity being carried out and the area in which it is taking place. These are:

#### 1. Basic Level

- All visits to sites to carry out biological and/or surveying.

#### 2. Medium level



- Direct handling of animals (e.g., some amphibian / reptile / mammal surveys);
- Visits to ponds with invasive plants such as *Crassula*, *Hydrocotyle*, *Azolla*, *Ludwigia* etc.; or
- Handling of *Rhododendron* plants e.g., in removal operations.

### 3. High level

- Surveying / sampling in aquatic situations involving many sites in different parts of the country;  
or
- Visiting areas with ongoing / recent disease outbreaks – e.g. known Chytrid infection area, outbreak of crayfish plague, areas with *Phytophthora ramorum* / *kernoviae* infection.

3.3.4 Biosecurity Level 3 was adopted during site surveys undertaken on the 16 July 2025.

#### 1. Basic Level

- Arrive at the site with clean footwear and vehicle;
- Ensure footwear is clean (visually free from soil and debris) before you leave the site;
- Ensure vehicle is kept clean – in particular remove any accumulated mud before you leave the site;
- Make sure you use any facilities provided on the premises to clean footwear/equipment etc;
- Keep access to a minimum. If practical don't take vehicles onto premises and keep to established tracks. Try to park vehicles on hard standing;
- Where possible avoid livestock areas or areas with known plant disease; and
- Plan visits so that the most risky visit is the last of the day.

#### 2. Medium Level

- Clean and disinfect footwear before you leave the site;
- If vehicle has entered an area close to waterbodies ensure the tyres and wheel arches are adequately cleaned and disinfected (ensure all mud and vegetation are left at the site);
- If you will be coming into direct contact or physically handling animals such as amphibians, voles, fish or invertebrates, the risk of coming into contact with pathogens or infected material increases. You must wear appropriate protective clothing which can be easily disinfected or disposed of to minimise the risk of carrying any disease to other locations;
- In freshwater situations clean and disinfect (or appropriately dispose of) all relevant equipment when moving between sites especially if they are in different catchments;
- Take care to avoid transporting any non-native invasive species between waterbodies;
- Avoid contact with dead or dying amphibians or crayfish;



- Any equipment or other items used should be cleaned and disinfected after the visit. Such equipment includes nets bottles, boats etc.; and
- Wear appropriate protective clothing which can be either disposed of after the visit or adequately cleaned and disinfected.

### 3. High Level

3.3.5 As well as following the guidance in the Medium Level category the following is recommended:

- Where possible avoid all contact with potentially infectious material e.g.
  - Avoid touching Rhododendron, especially if it looks wilted/dying;
  - Avoid entering water in an area of known chytrid infection; and
  - Avoid entering water in an area of known crayfish plague.
- If you do come into contact with potentially infectious material (e.g. dead amphibian, crayfish, dying Rhododendron) you must:
  - Use appropriate protective clothing: Disposable gloves, washable boots etc.;
  - Thoroughly disinfect all equipment such as bottle traps, nets etc.;
  - Dispose of gloves appropriately; and
  - Dispose of or thoroughly disinfect all external clothing and footwear.

## **3.4 Personnel**

3.4.1 Surveys and reporting have been undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced ecologists;

3.4.2 Dr. S. A. Graham BSc (Hons), MSc, CEcol, CEnv, MCIEEM, FLS.

Dr. S. A. Graham has been a practicing ecologist for over eighteen years, holding a BSc (hons), MSc and PhD as well as being a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and both a Chartered Ecologist (CEcol) and Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv).

3.4.3 Mr Phil Playford BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM, MRSB.

Mr Phil Playford is a Natural England Crayfish Class CL11 (2019-43665-CLS-CLS) Licenced Ecologist. Mr Playford has been a practicing ecologist for over seventeen years, holding a BSc (hons) and MSc as well as being a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and The Royal Society of Biology (MRSB).

## **3.5 Limitations**

3.5.1 Field surveys for crayfish were undertaken at appropriate times of day and in suitable weather conditions. Considering the habitat types and extents, and the species for which the Project site is



potentially suitable, the survey visit completed on the 16 July 2025 is considered sufficient to record any crayfish populations present across the Project.

- 3.5.2 Desk study data is useful in providing supplementary ecological information for a site, it should, however, be acknowledged that data is dependent on the submission of records to the relevant organisation / recording body / local species group. As such, a lack of records for a particular species does not necessarily mean that the species is absent from the site and / or wider search area. Similarly, records of a particular species do not necessarily mean that the species is still present within a given area.
- 3.5.3 The lack of evidence of a protected and / or notable species does not preclude their possible presence at a later date. Any survey represents only a 'snapshot' of possible activity. Importantly, lack of evidence of a species does not guarantee their absence and therefore consideration should be given to the need to update the data in the future in the event of substantial delay to the implementation of Project.
- 3.5.4 This report is valid for a period of 12 to 18 months from the time of survey, not report production. Reliance on the findings of this report, post this period, should seek clarity from the report author, as per the CIEEM (2019) Guidance.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Desk-based assessment

#### Designated Sites

- 4.1.1 The desk study identified no internationally designated sites with features of invertebrate interest (specifically crayfish) within 2 km of the Site.
- 4.1.2 The desk study identified no nationally designated sites with features of invertebrate interest (specifically crayfish) within 2 km of the Site.
- 4.1.3 The desk study identified no non-statutory designated sites with features of invertebrate interest (specifically crayfish) within 2 km of the Site.

#### Data search

- 4.1.4 A review of data obtained from Staffordshire Ecological Record (SER) and Telford & Wrekin Council's Ecological Data Service (EDS) returned two records of white-clawed crayfish ca.1.6 km to the north-west, from 2001<sup>3</sup>.
- 4.1.5 A review of freely available data identified 17 records of Signal crayfish from between 1984 – 2019 concentrated within Donington Pool and along Humphreston Stream; ca. 1.3 km to the north.

#### Field Surveys

- 4.1.6 Surveys were conducted on 16 July 2025 when weather conditions were generally conducive to crayfish surveys i.e., relatively warm, and dry and during the month of July. Full weather details are provided within Table 4-1.

**Table 4-1: Environmental variables encountered during the crayfish survey in 2025.**

| Environmental variable           | Conditions experienced during survey |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                                  | Start                                |
| Temperature (°C)                 | 20                                   |
| Cloud cover (in eighths)         | 6                                    |
| Wind speed (mph)                 | 5                                    |
| Wind direction (8-point compass) | NNE                                  |
| Precipitation                    | None                                 |

- 4.1.7 A total of 10 watercourses, ditches and culverts were assessed during the survey. Appendix B shows the location of all watercourses assessed as part of the survey.

<sup>3</sup> Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, Cass Design Consultants Ltd, April 2004.

**Table 4-2: Habitat Assessment & Survey Results recorded during the crayfish survey in 2025.**

| Survey Feature          | Survey Findings       |                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | Water present (Y / N) | eDNA Survey undertaken (Y / N) | Survey Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Ditch 1                 | N                     | N                              | Dry at time of survey and unsuitable for crayfish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Ditch 2                 | N                     | N                              | Dry at time of survey and unsuitable for crayfish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Ditch 3                 | N                     | N                              | Dry at time of survey and unsuitable for crayfish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Ditch 4                 | N                     | N                              | Dry at time of survey and unsuitable for crayfish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Ditch 5                 | N                     | N                              | Dry at time of survey and unsuitable for crayfish (checked from within the site boundary)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Culvert 1               | N                     | N                              | Dry at time of survey and unsuitable for crayfish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Culvert 2               | N                     | N                              | Dry at time of survey and unsuitable for crayfish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Culvert 3               | N                     | N                              | Dry at time of survey and unsuitable for crayfish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Watercourse 1 (WC-OR01) | Y                     | Y                              | Located on site at SJ80661 03211 and had habitat suitable for crayfish with multiple rocks suitable for cover and vegetated banks suitable for burrowing. At the time of survey the water course had mostly dried up with water concentrated around a culvert. This makes it less suitable for white clawed crayfish, although they can survive buried in mud in drought conditions. There were Ephemeridae mayfly larvae, freshwater shrimp, pea mussels, pond skaters, blackfly larvae, Chironomidae sp. midge larvae, Oligochaeta sp. worms and water slaters present in the water. No crayfish or evidence of crayfish found. |
| Watercourse 2           | Y                     | N                              | Located off-site at SJ81491 02821 and had habitat suitable for crayfish with flowing oxygenated water, multiple rocks suitable for cover and vegetated banks suitable for burrowing. There were Ephemeridae mayfly larvae, freshwater shrimp, pea mussels, pond skaters, blackfly larvae, Chironomidae sp. midge larvae, Oligochaeta sp. worms, leeches and water slaters present in the water. No crayfish or evidence of crayfish found.                                                                                                                                                                                        |

4.1.8 A single watercourse (Watercourse 1 WC-OR01) was subject to eDNA sampling, which subsequently returned negative results, confirming the likely absence of WCC within the survey area. A copy of the survey results provided by SureScreen are provided in Appendix C.





## 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 The desk study identified no internationally, nationally or non-statutory designated sites with features of crayfish interest within 2 km of the Site.
- 5.1.2 A review of data obtained from SER and EDS returned two records of white-clawed crayfish ca.1.6 km to the north-west, from 2001<sup>4</sup>.
- 5.1.3 A review of freely available data identified 17 records of Signal crayfish from between 1984 – 2019 concentrated within Donington Pool and along Humphreston Stream; ca. 1.3 km to the north.
- 5.1.4 A total of 10 watercourses, ditches and culverts were assessed during the survey. Eight out of the ten were dry at time of survey and unsuitable for crayfish. Two watercourses were subject to further survey, where no crayfish or evidence of crayfish found.
- 5.1.5 A single watercourse (Watercourse 1 WC-OR01) was subject to eDNA sampling, which subsequently returned negative results, confirming the likely absence of WCC within the survey area.
- 5.1.6 Given the absence of WCC during the survey, the presence of Signal crayfish within Donington Pool and along Humphreston Stream, it is considered unlikely that WCC are present within or adjacent to the Project Site. Impacts to WCC are unlikely to occur as a result of the proposed Project.

### 5.2 Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

- 5.2.1 Not Applicable.

### 5.3 Ecological Enhancement Measures

- 5.3.1 As a result of Signal crayfish having been identified within Donington Pool and along Humphreston Stream, and with Signal crayfish known to travel ca. 100's m a night overland (DEFRA, 2025), any waterbody on site could be readily colonised at any time. Taking this into consideration, no ecological enhancement measure for WCC are proposed.

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<sup>4</sup> Information provided from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Cass Design Ltd, April 2024) is assumed to be correct.



## 6 References & Sources of Reference

- 6.1.1 All UK (and individual UK countries) legislation can be viewed at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/browse>
- 6.1.2 Biological Records Centre (2004). Crayfish (Crustacea; Astacura) data for Britain and Ireland to 2003. Occurrence dataset on the NBN Atlas – accessed 14/09/2025].
- 6.1.3 Bradley P, Hall R and Peay S (2015) ‘Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Freshwater Fauna. CSM Monitoring Protocol 2 - Common Standards Protocol for Population Monitoring of Whiteclawed Crayfish’. Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- 6.1.4 Cass Design Consultants Ltd. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Land South of Albrighton (doc ref SH5034(5)C.R.01.1), Issue date April 2024.
- 6.1.5 CIEEM (2013) Competencies for Species Survey: White-clawed Crayfish. Hampshire, Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management.
- 6.1.6 DEFRA, (2025). Non-native Species Secretariat, Non-native species information portal: Signal Crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus*. [Available at: <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/information-portal/view/2498#:~:text=Signal%20crayfish%20are%20able%20to,although%20this%20is%20now%20illegal>. – accessed 15/09/2025].
- 6.1.7 Defra MAGIC Interactive map [Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>].
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- 6.1.14 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). [Available at: Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 ([legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)) – accessed 14/09/2025].



- 6.1.15 Peay, S. (2023) Guidance on Habitat for White-clawed Crayfish and its Restoration. [Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-habitat-for-white-clawed-crayfish> – accessed 14/09/2025].
- 6.1.16 Peay S (2000) 'Guidance on works affecting white-clawed crayfish'. English Nature Species Recovery Programme.
- 6.1.17 Peay S (2003) 'Monitoring the White-clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*', Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No. 1. English Nature, Peterborough.
- 6.1.18 Shropshire Ecological Data Network (2025). Shropshire Ecological Data Network database. Occurrence dataset on the NBN Atlas – accessed 14/09/2025].

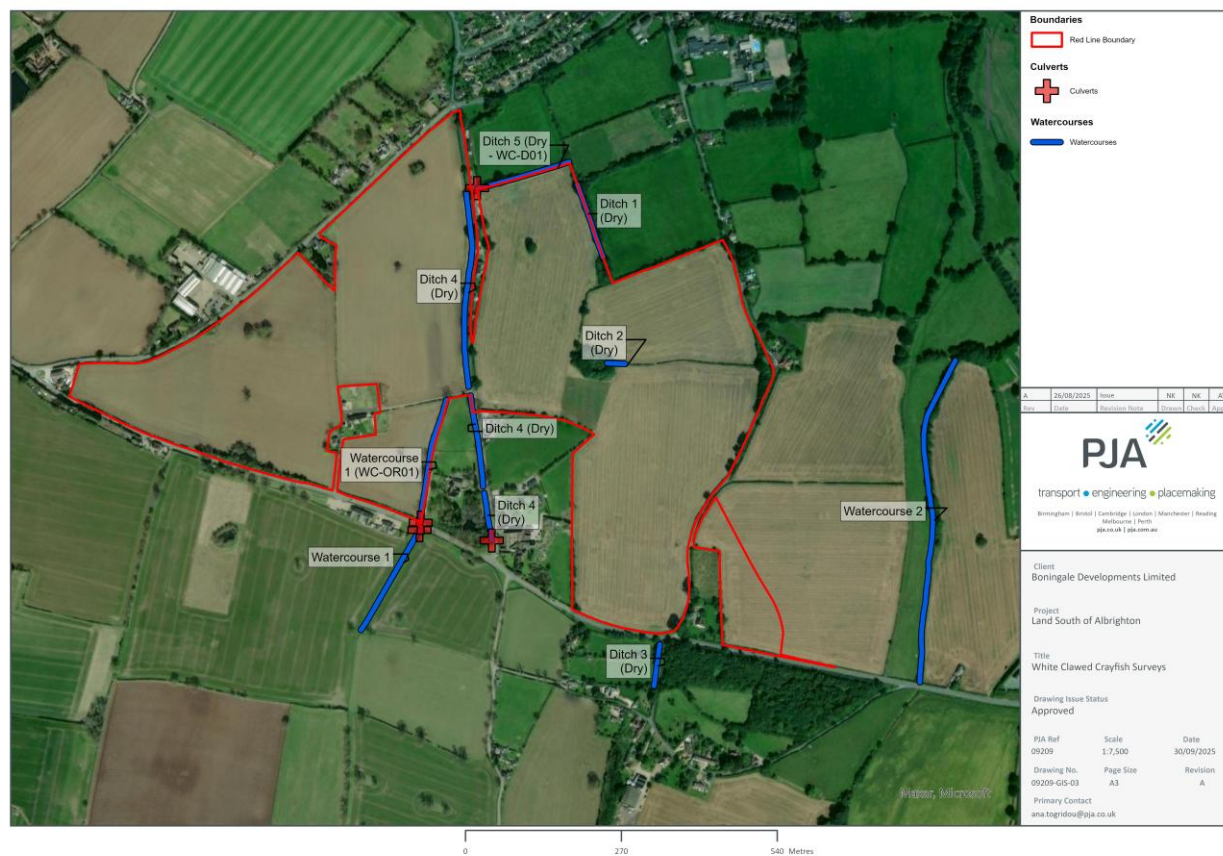


**Appendix A      Site location plan.**





## Appendix B WCC Surveys





## Appendix C WCC eDNA Survey Results - 2025.

Folio No: 3900-2025  
Purchase Order: [REDACTED]  
Contact: Ecologia  
Issue Date: 15.08.2025  
Received Date: 01.08.2025



# eDNA Analysis

## Summary

When aquatic organisms inhabit a waterbody such as a pond, lake or river they continuously release small amounts of their DNA into the environment. By collecting and analysing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm the presence or absence of the target species within the waterbody.

## Results

| Lab ID | Site Name        | OS Reference   | Target Species                                    | Sample Integrity Check | Result   | Positive Replicates |
|--------|------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| FK3401 | Albrighton - WC2 | SJ 80661 03211 | Signal crayfish (Pacifastacus leniusculus)        | Pass                   | Negative | 0                   |
|        |                  |                | White-clawed crayfish (Austropotamobius pallipes) | Pass                   | Negative | 0                   |

Matters affecting result: none

Reported by: Lauryn Jewkes

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