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Tata Steel UK Ltd

Electric Arc Furnace

Badger Survey Report

2487033 - P&C EAF (Issue for PAC)

MAY 2024

RSK GENERAL NOTES

Project No.: 2487033


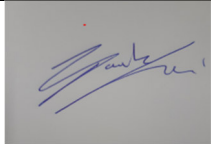

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Author	Kailey O'Brien	Technical and quality reviewer	Mark Lang Technical Director FCIEEM, CEcol, CEnv
Signature		Signature	
Date:	20/05/2024	Date:	29/05/2024
Project manager	Alexandra Ellis Principal Ecologist MCIEEM		
Signature			
Date:	31/05/2024		

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Switchboard: +44 (0)330 223 1074 Company contact: Enquiries@biocensus.co.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report presents the findings of badger surveys carried out on land at Tata Steelworks in Port Talbot, South Wales. A badger survey was carried out between April and August 2022 and in November 2023. This report has been produced to support the Electric Arc Furnace project. The surveys were based on the 2021/2022 survey area (the survey boundary for the previous iteration of the project) and subsequent updated red line boundary of the development site provided by the client.

The purpose of this survey was to establish the presence or likely absence of badger in connection with the proposed development. The desk study returned records of badger within 2 km of the site, the nearest record approximately 1 km east of the site. No badger setts were identified on site during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, but a latrine was observed adjacent to an area of dense scrub within one of the fields to the south of the site at approximate grid reference: [REDACTED].

The badger survey itself identified one outlier sett, two latrines, two dung pits, badger footprint and mammal paths.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1.1 The report presents the findings of badger (*Meles meles*) surveys carried out on land at Tata Steelworks in Port Talbot, South Wales (central Grid Ref SS 77524 86021). The area termed 'the site' throughout this report is delineated in Figure 1 by the red-line boundary.
- 1.1.2 Surveys were commissioned to inform the planning process and Environmental Statement ecology chapter in respect to badger using the site. The surveys were undertaken to determine the constraints posed (if any) by badger and how they may be impacted, and to inform mitigation works required prior to development. The surveys were carried out on behalf of Tata Steel (UK) Limited.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 A badger survey was carried out between April and August 2022 within the 2021/2022 survey area [REDACTED]. Subsequently, adjustments were made to the proposed development, and a further badger survey was undertaken in November 2023 [REDACTED] to ensure full survey coverage of the current red line boundary.

1.3 Ecological context

- 1.3.1 A preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA), including a background data search (BDS) was completed by RSK (RSK, October 2021). The desk study returned records of badger within 2 km of the site, the nearest record approximately 1 km east of the site. within the site boundary was identified as suitable for badger during the PEA. No badger setts were identified on site during the PEA, but a latrine was observed adjacent to an area of dense scrub within one of the fields to the south of the site at approximate grid reference: [REDACTED] suggesting badgers were using the site.
- 1.3.2 The approximately 160 ha site is located to the south-east of the town of Port Talbot. The site is predominately bare ground/ developed land. While the site is predominantly industrial and dominated by buildings and hard standing, open mosaic habitat is the most dominant habitat type comprising a mixture of scrub, grassland and ephemeral vegetation. There are a number of channels throughout the site and one large lake associated with the steelworks, located at the northern extent of the site.
- 1.3.3 The site is immediately bordered to the north, east and west by Tata Steelworks with coastal floodplain grassland, reedbed, an access road and Margam Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) adjacent to the south of the site. The surrounding landscape is a mixture of woodland, hedgerows, waterbodies (reservoir), coastal floodplain grassland and residential properties within Margam. Swansea Bay (Bristol Channel) is located approximately 880 m west of the site.

1.4 Development proposals

- 1.4.1 The Proposed Development will require the demolition of existing buildings and structures, and the construction of a new EAF steel production facility. The Proposed Development also includes a scrap metal handling facility and associated scrap yards, slag processing facility, chemical and material storage structures, buildings, handling systems, electrical control rooms and power infrastructure, laboratories, offices and ancillary facilities, together with new and amended transport infrastructure, landscaping and associated development.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 The site was surveyed between April and August 2022 and November 2023 by Alexandra Ellis (MCIEEM), Kailey O'Brien (ACIEEM) and Elisabeth Brooks. All surveyors have experience in identifying badger field signs.

2.2 Habitat assessment

- 2.2.1 An initial assessment was carried out to identify areas that might be used by badger for commuting, foraging and sett-building within 30 m of all areas potentially affected by works (where access was possible). The area was systematically searched for signs of badger including setts, foraging signs, paths (runs) and latrines.

2.3 Sett terminology

- 2.3.1 Individual holes of setts are described using terminology defined by Harris *et al.* (1989 and 1994) as set out below:
- Well-used holes – These are clear of any debris and vegetation, are obviously in regular use, and may or may not have been excavated recently.
 - Partially-used holes – These are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves or twigs in the entrance or have moss or other plants growing in or around the entrance. Partially used holes could be regular use after a minimal amount of clearance.
 - Disused holes – These have not been in use for some time, are partially or completely blocked, and cannot be used without a considerable amount of clearance. If the hole has been disused for some time, all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be, and the remains of a spoil heap, which may be covered in moss or other plants.
 - Currently-used setts – Any sett entrance that is well-used or partially-used can fall within the category of current use as interpreted by English Nature (1995 & 2002).
 - Disused setts – If all the entrances of a sett are disused, then even though it was originally dug by a badger, it is no longer a badger sett as defined under The Badger Act 1992.
 - Cohabitation – Both fox and rabbit are sometimes known to occupy badger setts at the same time as badgers are resident. The presence of fox hair and rabbit signs at a sett complex does not necessarily indicate that the sett is being used exclusively by these animals. These findings should be considered in conjunction with other findings or observations in and around the sett.
 - Main sett – A badger sett forming the main abode of a group of badgers. Main setts are occupied continually throughout the year and are generally used by at

least one sow to rear young. In a national survey of setts, the average number of holes for a main sett was we, although there may be any number of holes from one to more than 40.

- Annex sett – Setts situated in the immediate vicinity of a main sett. Although such setts are often occupied throughout the year, they will generally only be used for breeding when the main sett is used by another breeding sow. These setts can have any number of holes although it is usually around eight. The distinguishing feature of these setts is an obvious, well-used path running to the main sett.
- Subsidiary sett – Setts situated away from the main sett that may represent an area of particularly good foraging. Such setts are used occasionally throughout the year and occasionally for breeding but are most likely to be used only to exploit a seasonal food source. These setts usually have around four holes.
- Outlier sett – These setts are away from the main sett. They have a small number of holes, often only one or two. Such setts are rarely in continuous occupation and are most often used wither to exploit a seasonal food source or as a refuge when visiting certain parts of the territory.

2.4 Validity of data

- 2.4.1 Badgers regularly change location and establish new outlier setts, therefore this data is only valid for a period of 12 months (November 2024) and the site should be surveyed again prior to construction.

2.5 Constraints and limitations

- 2.5.1 There are several areas of dense bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) across the site which could not be accessed for a full survey.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Survey results

3.1.1 There was suitable habitat on the site for badger. The areas of grassland are suitable for foraging and the wooded areas, scrub and embankments are suitable for sett building. The survey recorded many signs of badger, including: an outlier sett, runs; and latrines. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] One active outlier sett (**Plate 1**;) was found [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] It was a west facing, well-used, single-hole badger sett with a large fresh spoil heap and visible badger (**Plate 2**) and fox prints. The entrance of the hole was approximately 45 cm by 50 cm and appeared to head east. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

3.1.3 One footprint was identified outside the gas holder within damp mud, approximately 370 m south of the outlier sett. The gas holder is located along a large haul road which leads directly to Longlands Lane and the SSSI.

[REDACTED]

4.0 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion

- 4.1.1 Tunnels of large badger setts can extend up to 30 m underground. However, this outlier sett is small with only a single entrance hole, so any underground tunnels are considered unlikely to extend more than 10 – 15 m from sett entrances. The development plan shows that the red line boundary is c. 20 m east of this sett with works proposed c. 30 m east from this sett. However, due to distance, and the nature of works it is considered unlikely that the sett would be directly impacted.
- 4.1.2 Most areas could be accessed for full survey except for the areas of dense bramble bordering the southern green field areas (as shown in Figure 1). Although setts were not confirmed in these areas, there were signs of badger activity (paths and badger latrines) and the dense bramble prevented full inspection underneath.
- 4.1.3 The proposed development should not affect badger access to the sett, foraging or water as there would be a corridor of retained scrub and trees.

4.2 Conclusion

- 4.2.1 An active single entrance outlier sett was found [REDACTED]
Proposed works are c. 30 m from the sett entrance so works should not directly impact the sett (provided works are kept within the development footprint, Figure 1). It is considered unlikely that the sett would be directly impacted by the development due to distance and the existing level of disturbance and therefore badgers are not considered a constraint to the proposed development.

5.0 REFERENCES

RSK Biocensus (October 2021), Project Cronus: Port Talbot – PEA REV00. RSK

English Nature (2002), Badgers and Development. English Nature, Peterborough.

Harris, S., Cresswell, P. & Jefferies, D. (1989), Surveying Badgers. Mammal Society, Occasional Publications 9, London.

Harris, S., Jefferies, D., Cheeseman, C. & Booty, C. (1994), Problems with Badgers? (3rd edition). RSPCA, Horsham.

6.0 FIGURES

Figure 1 – Badger survey results

APPENDIX A - PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 1: Outlier sett with sandy spoil heap	Plate 2: Badger footprint outside outlier sett
	
Plate 3: Three out of five pits in badger latrine	
	



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Registered office
Spring Lodge, 172, Chester Road, Helsby, Frodsham, England, WA6 0AR, UK
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www.rsk.co.uk