

Ferry Wetlands

“Ecological Enhancement of RSPB Ferry Field through reprofiling of and extension of existing ditch and footdrains, creation of islands in existing saline lagoon, installing a predator exclusion fence, replacing a hydrological control structure and installing a solar pump.”

Planning Application ref: 24/01262/FUL

As part of the Downs to the Sea project funded by the
National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)

Badger Mitigation Statement August 2024



There is a badger sett in the south-east corner of Ferry Field. During 2023-2024, this was monitored via trail cameras on the badger trails leading from the sett and found to be active. There is an obvious badger trail leading around the edge of the field and out through a field gate into some neighbouring foraging areas to the north.

The following mitigation will be put in place:

- The location of the predator exclusion fence has been planned to ensure that it is more than 30m away from the badger sett, in line with current guidance. The nearest point is 38m from the sett.
- Prior to any works ground commencing, all contractors will be made aware of the presence of badgers on site and the location of the sett.
- Due to the potential for badgers to access the field during the construction phase, if there is a risk of them falling into any of the excavations, it will be ensured that all excavations are covered overnight or that an adequate escape route is provided. However, as the scrapes will be shallow (of 250-500mm depth), this is unlikely to be a problem.
- Prior to fencing works commencing, the fencing contractor will be instructed to ensure that construction plant machinery will remain on what will be the inside of the fence-line, when erecting the section of fence closest to the sett.
- Temporary fencing will be erected to demarcate the 35m buffer zone line to act as a visual reminder to plant operatives (see Fig 1). Erection of temporary fencing will not involve any disturbance to the sett as it will be outside of the 30m buffer.
- All construction work will be undertaken in daytime hours, between 8.00 – 18.00, when badgers are not active.
- RSPB staff will be onsite during the construction phase to ensure compliance with these conditions.

Although the exclusion fence will exclude badgers from c.12 ha of existing foraging area, it is not considered that this will have a detrimental effect on the welfare of the badgers, given the availability of additional high-quality forage areas within the foraging range of the sett (see Fig. 2). These comprise extensive areas of rough grassland, hay meadows and grazed fields (including grassland beneath the nearby solar farm and fields in Countryside Stewardship managed by the RSPB), scrub, woodland, reedbed and mature hedgerows – forming a diverse range of interconnected habitats.

In addition:

- A substantial (c. 3m) grass margin will be retained between the new fence and existing field boundary (inc. scrub, hedge, banks) that will allow badgers to use their existing trail around the perimeter of the field and access the areas of forage on neighbouring land.
- If deemed necessary, it will be possible to include one-way badger gates in the fence to allow any badgers that gain access to the fence interior to exit through it. Our preference would be not to include these as:
 - a) the fence has been designed specifically to exclude badgers (ie. mesh buried and extended outwards), which should prevent them from accessing the fence interior at all, and
 - b) badger gates may increase the chance of badgers and foxes entering from the outside if they learn how to open them.

Badger activity will continue to be monitored via trail cameras and observation until the work commences and during the construction period, to assess if there are any changes to the current situation.

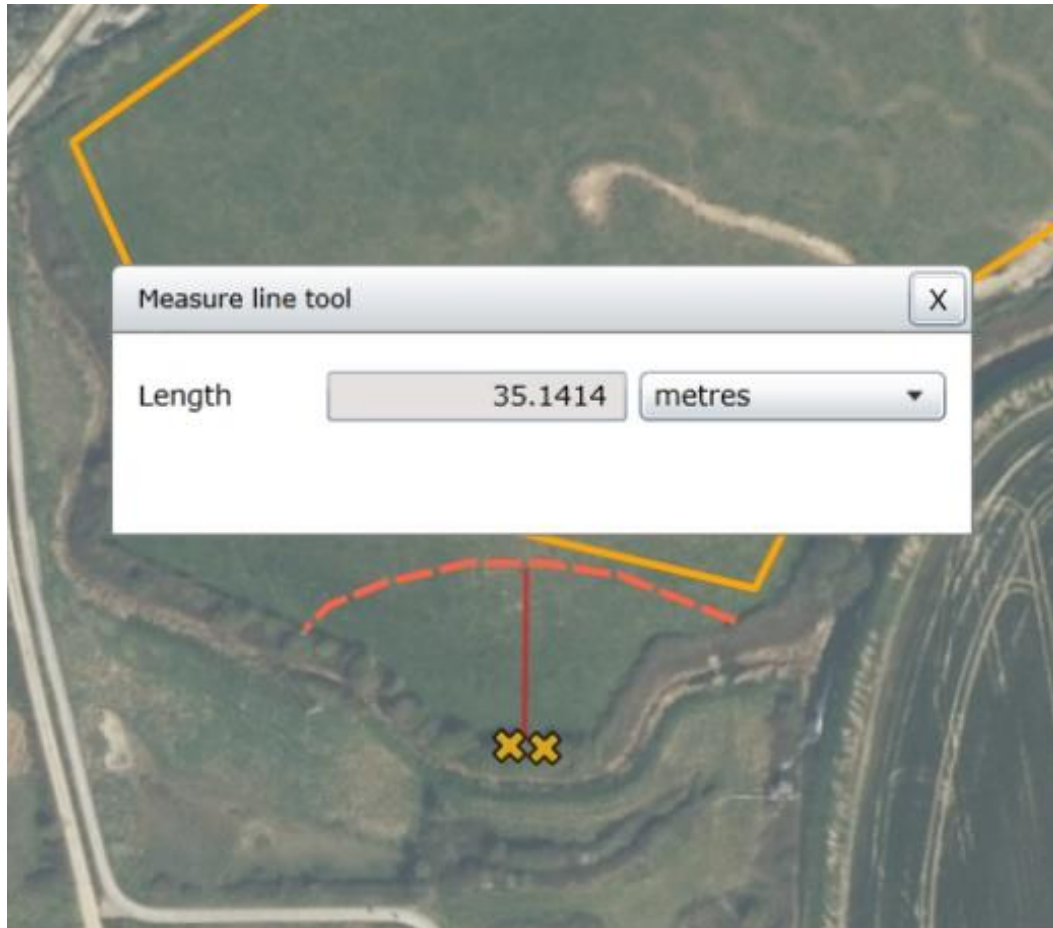


Fig. 1 South west corner of Ferry field. X is location of sett. Yellow line is proposed fence-line and orange dotted line is temporary fencing placed at least 35m away from sett.

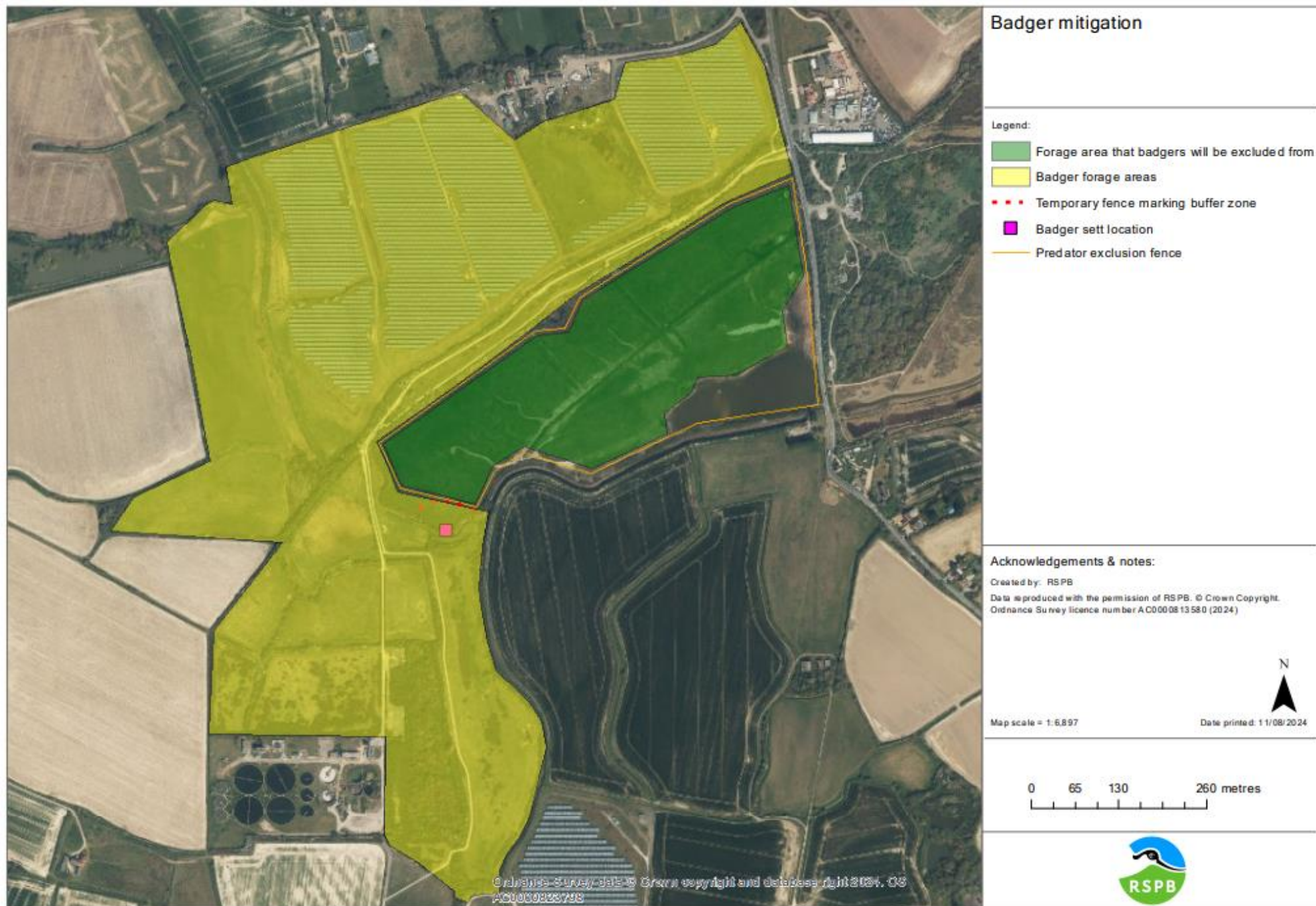


Fig. 2 Location of Badger forage areas on land surrounding Ferry field.