

~~Abstract 7/6~~ **CASE ISSUE 7 AR26**

Letter Vincent Wildlife Trust to AMEC (FOI)

Wilder, Gina

From: Harper, Nick
Sent: 18 October 2011 12:02
To: neil.hall@amec.com; Jowett, Chris; gary Pleasants
Cc: Wilder, Gina
Subject: Fw: Habitat for greater horseshoe bats

(1)

All

See below. A draft response please. To come from Amec as the technical specialists.

Nick

From: Colin Morris [<mailto:colinmorris@vwt.org.uk>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 18, 2011 11:13 AM
To: Harper, Nick
Subject: Habitat for greater horseshoe bats

Dear Nick.

I thought I'd better email you regarding the habitat requirement for the colony of greater horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) that reside near the river Stour, in the grounds of Bryanston School. I understand that some of the habitat that the bats currently use is subject to a housing development and The Crown Estate's mitigation is to offer to supply some land as an alternative.

I'm not fully sure you understand the complexity of this issue. Two of the greater horseshoe bats main prey items are cock-chaffer beetles (*Melolontha melolontha*) and Dung-beetles (*Geotrupes spp*). These species habitat requirements are grazed pasture, and dung from cattle that aren't chemically treated with insecticides.

Whilst in theory to give an area of land as compensation for the loss of habitat is a great idea, the mitigation for the loss of feeding will not have been met. It's not so much the loss of land that's an issue but the loss of insect bio-mass and quality. The cock-chaffer beetle larvae requires pasture and it may take up-to 20 years for a viable and equivalent bio-mass to be built-up from 'virgin' land. **Basically both pieces of land will need to be grazed at the same time for 20 years (maybe more)**, and there's no certainty that the cock-chaffer beetle larvae will even 'take' to soil that has been below crops that will have had pesticides used on them. Due consideration should also be given to the planting and management of suitable hedgerows for the bats to use as corridors, these will also take many years to develop.

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Morris.

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