Planning and Environmental Consultants

Kerry Slug Derogation Licence Application

Curraglass Wind Farm Planning Application

DOCUMENT DETAILS

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01	Final	04/04/2025	PD	SF/CC

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been provided in support of an application for a derogation license for Kerry Slug (*Geomalacus maculosus*) on behalf of Enerco Energy Ltd., who are preparing an application to Cork County Council for a renewable energy development proposed within a decommissioned wind-farm site in Curraglass, Co. Cork (hereafter referred to as the "proposed development".

This report has been prepared by Pádraig Desmond BSc of MKO and reviewed by Corey Cannon MSc BSc CEcol MCIEEM Project Director (Ecology) at MKO.

1.1 Legislation

The Habitats Directive is transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (S.I. No.477 of 2011) which replaced earlier Regulations from 1997 to, amongst other things, take account of Case law in the interim. These 2011 Regulations have had a number of amendments (S.I. No. 290 of 2013; S.I. No. 499 of 2013, S.I. No. 355 of 2015 and S.I. No. 293 of 2021). The 2011Regulations were also amended by the Planning, Heritage and Broadcasting (amendment) Act 2021 (No. 11 of 2021), Chapter 4.

Article 12 of the Habitats Directive is transposed into Irish law by Regulation 51 of the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations of 2011 and Article 16 by Regulation 54.

Articles 12 and 16 of the Habitats Directive which require member states to establish a system of strict protection for the animal species listed in Annex IV(a) and allow derogation from these provisions under strictly defined conditions. Annex IV in particular protects the species from disturbance and habitat destruction. The animal species listed in Annex IV(a) which occur in Ireland are the otter, all bats, all cetaceans (whales and dolphins), marine turtles, the natterjack toad and the Kerry slug

1.2 Guidance

This supporting document for a derogation licence has been prepared in line with NPWS *Guidance on the Strict Protection of Certain Animal and Plant Species under the Habitats Directive in Ireland* - National Parks and Wildlife Service Guidance Series 1 (NPWS, 2021).

1.3 Background

Kerry slug is protected by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and listed on Annex II and Annex IV(a) of the Habitats Directive. Therefore, it is strictly protected from injury or disturbance /damage to their breeding or resting place wherever it occurs. The overall conservation status of this species has been reported as favourable, and it is not currently considered threatened within its Irish range (NPWS, 2019). This report sets out the results of previous dedicated Kerry slug surveys undertaken at the proposed development site in 2020 and 2024/ 2025.

The proposed development, to which this derogation licence pertains, will comprise of 3 no. wind turbines, new and upgraded access roads and entrance(s), borrow pit and spoil management areas, internal electrical cabling, temporary construction compounds and a permanent meteorological mast. All wind farm site cabling will be laid underground. It is proposed to utilise the exiting wind farm infrastructure at the site, including the existing on-site substation. Much of the proposed infrastructure will be located within existing hardstand and roads which were constructed in 2005 for the original wind farm.

Kerry slug records are known within the site, from surveys undertaken in 2020 which are further detailed in Section 2-2 and 2-3. As the proposed development will result in the loss of suitable Kerry slug habitat, disturbance to Kerry slug, and potential mortality, a derogation licence is required in support of the planning application. Mitigations are proposed as part of the application to mitigate and minimise impacts on Kerry slug.

The proposed development is not within any European site, the population of this species within the proposed development site is considered as *County Importance*.

The site location of the proposed development is shown in Figure 1-1 below. The layout of the proposed development is shown in Figure 1-2 below.

1.4 Description of the Proposed Development

Construction phase

The development will consist of the provision of the following:

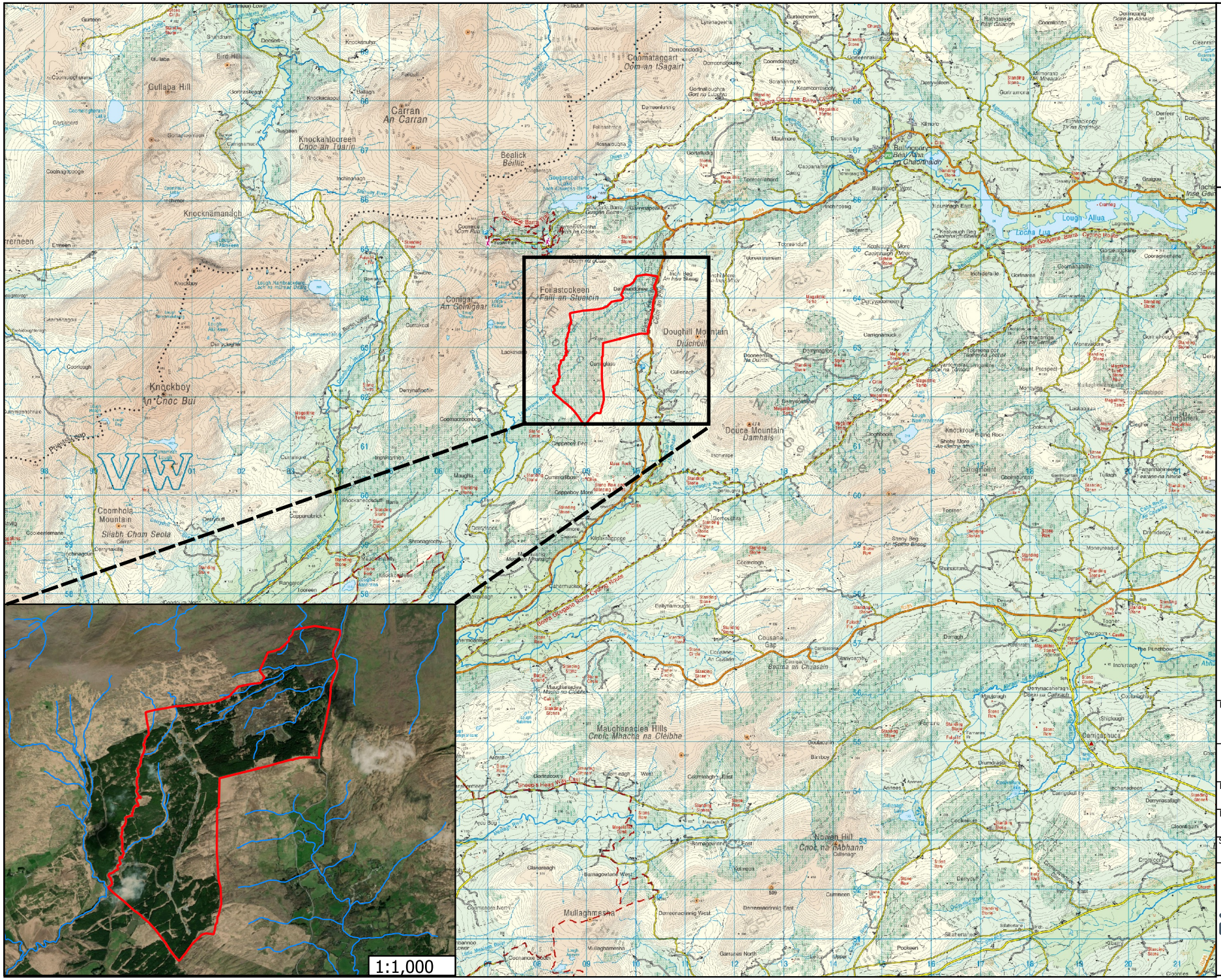
1. Up to 3 no. wind turbines and all associated foundations and hard-standing areas;
2. 1 No. borrow pit;
3. 1 No. permanent meteorological mast with a maximum height of up to 112 metres;
4. Upgrade of existing and provision of new site access roads;
5. Upgrade to existing access junction;
6. 4 no. battery storage containers, 1 no. control building with welfare facilities, associated electrical plant and equipment, security fencing, wastewater holding tank,
7. Forestry Felling;
8. A temporary construction compound;
9. Site Drainage;
10. All associated internal underground cabling, including underground grid connection cabling to the existing overhead line; and
11. All associated site development and ancillary works.

Operational phase

The proposed development is expected to have a lifespan of approximately 30 years. During the operational period, on a day-to-day basis the wind turbines will operate automatically, responding by means of meteorological equipment and control systems to changes in wind speed and direction. All operating systems will be managed from an off-site facility. Maintenance will be undertaken on the development but all envisioned works will be undertaken on infrastructure, using the established road system. No potential for significant impacts on Kerry slug are anticipated during operation.

Decommissioning phase

There will be no requirement for additional habitat loss during any decommission of the development. Should the wind farm be decommissioned and removed at the end of its operational life, established roads will be utilised to remove the infrastructure. No potential for significant impacts on Kerry slug are anticipated during decommissioning.



Map Legend

EIAR Site Boundary

Drawing Title

Site Location

Project Title

Curraglass Wind Farm - Derogation licence application

Drawn By	Checked By
PD	PD
Project No. 230614-a	Drawing No. Figure 1-1
Scale 70,000	Date 2025-03-27

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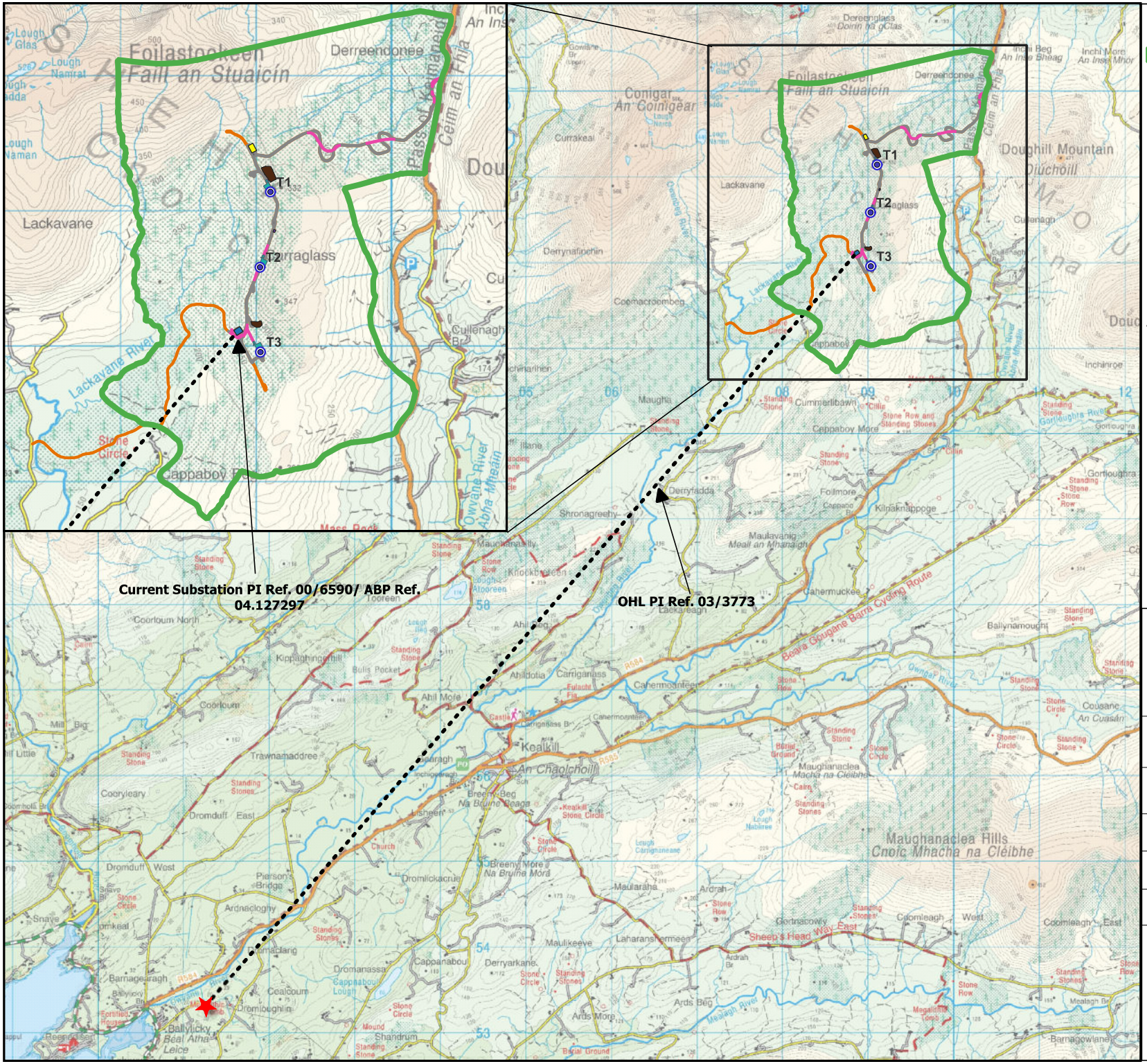

Map Legend

- Site Boundary
- Turbine Location
- Proposed Hardstanding
- Exisiting Road to Upgrade
- New Road
- Existing Roads
- Temporary Compound Locations
- Proposed Borrow Pits
- Met Mast
- Current Substation Location_V1_2024.10.08 - 24
- Ballylickey Substation
- OHL Ballylickey

Drawing Title: Curraglass Wind Farm Layout

Project Title: Curraglass Wind Farm

Drawn By	Checked By
NM	OM
Project No.	**Drawing No.**
240614	1-2
Scale	**Date**
1:43,076	2024-11-07

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2. POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON KERRY SLUG

No impacts on Kerry slug are anticipated during operational or decommissioning phase of the proposed development.

The proposed development has been designed to minimise the loss of any habitat of ecological importance by utilising existing hard surfaces, such as previous hard stands and existing roads. The total approximate footprint of the proposed development is 2.55 ha, within a study area of approximately 267 ha. However, there will be a requirement for the removal of habitats such as conifer plantation, recently felled woodland, mixed broad-leaved woodland, degraded wet heath, and scrub. As these habitats provide supporting habitat for Kerry slug, and given these species' known presence within the site, there is potential for direct disturbance or mortality of this species, as a result of excavations, machinery movement, and vegetation clearance.

2.1 Kerry Slug Records

The proposed development site is within the range of the Kerry slug distribution in Ireland (Reich et al. 2012) and is situated within a larger landscape which contains suitable habitat for the species. There is no Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in the vicinity of the site designated for Kerry slug. The population found within the study site is not associated with any European Site, given the distance to the closest SACs (Killarney National Park, Macgillycuddy's Reeks and Caragh River Catchment SAC which is approx. 16km north and Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC which is approx. 17km west southwest). This is due to the slow rate of dispersal shown by Kerry slugs (average mobility of 1m per day) and their strong affinity for the microhabitats with which they are associated (McDonnell & Gormally 2011). Further, the study site is isolated from any Kerry slug designated SAC by aquatic barriers from a network of rivers to the north and west of the site. Therefore, actions permitted by a derogation licence will not affect the Kerry slug populations in any surrounding SAC's.

The methodologies and results of Kerry slug surveys undertaken in 2020 are provided in the below sections, which were submitted as a Licence Return Report (C71/2020) in 2021 and included in Appendix 1 of this report. These results are further presented in Figure 2-2.

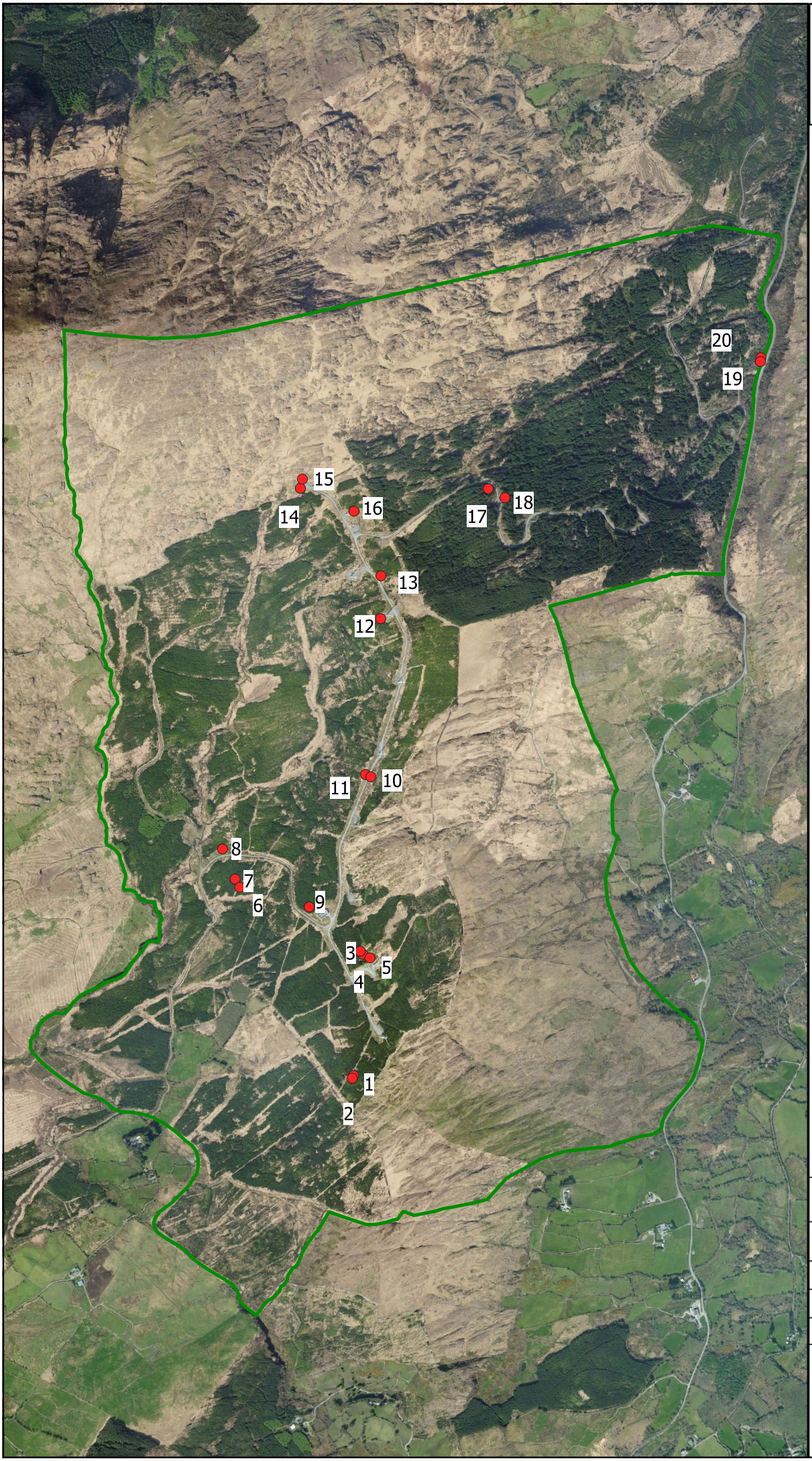
2.2 Survey Methodology 2020

Given that the proposed development was identified are being within the known range for Kerry slug, as highlighted by NPWS data provided in the desk study, a general survey for Kerry slug was carried out within areas of suitable supporting habitat within the site on the 25th of March 2020. In addition, a designated survey was carried out within the study area by means of trapping. A licence was obtained from NPWS (Licence No.: C71/2020) and metric traps were placed within areas of the proposed development footprint and other habitat areas within the study site.

Surveys for this species comprised a combined methodology based on most recent studies and guidelines. Hard searching is the first stage in determining presence/absence. If no evidence is found, then metric traps should be deployed for a 4-6 week period to confirm absence of the species (McDonnell, 2011). As the purpose of this survey was to determine presence/absence of Kerry slug within the study area a combined approach was used. Trapping should take place during wet weather on blanket bogs and heaths, and during spells of dry weather in woodlands (O'Donnell 2011). Hand searching was carried out in appropriate weather conditions (damp weather, according to Platts & Speight, 1988 (Reich 2012)) with temperatures at a minimum of 8 degrees celsius on the 25th of March 2020. This comprised searching the surface of rocky outcrops and tree trunks as well as peeling back moss from the tree base to confirm if individuals were present. De Sangosse traps were used which comprised a square of absorbent material with reflective upper surface and perforated dark lower

surface measuring 50cm x 50cm. The traps were baited with a piece of carrot approx. 2.5cm in size, moistened with water and placed within conifer plantation, rocky outcrops and other suitable habitat within and adjacent to the proposed development footprint. Areas of newly proposed infrastructure such as turbine bases, borrow pits, substation and construction compound were targeted for placement of traps. The traps were secured with string and/or rocks and pegs where placed on the ground. Band traps were also erected around tree trunks. These were placed approximately 1.5m from the ground and secured with string.

A map showing the location of the 20 Kerry Slug traps deployed on the 25th March 2020 is shown on Figure 2-1.



Map Legend

- EIAR Site Boundary
- Kerry Slug Trap Locations

Drawing Title	Kerry Slug Trap Locations Curraglass
Project Title	Proposed Renewable Energy Development
Drawn By: Laoise Kelly	Checked By: John Hynes
Project No.: 190301	Figure: Figure 2-1
Scale: 1:175000	Date: 17.06.2020

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2.3 Survey results 2020

Hand searches confirmed the presence of Kerry slug within the study area and a total of 19 observations were recorded in a range of habitats through the study area (see Table 2-1 below).

Seventeen records of Kerry slug were obtained on collection of the metric traps on 26th May 2020 the results of which are shown in Table 2-2. The overall locations of Kerry slug recorded in the site are shown in Figure 2-2.

Table 2-1 Incidental records of Kerry Slug recorded within the study area 25.03.2020

Habitat	No. Kerry Slug Recorded	Grid reference/Location
Rocky outcrop, boulder	3	E108796; N063602
Felled conifer plantation	N/A	N/A
Boulders at existing turbine base	3	E109091; N063144
Rocky outcrop/boulder	1	E109035; N062576
Conifer tree near proposed hardstanding area	1	E108589; N062175
Individual boulders	3 3 3	E109007; N061959, E109017; N061968 E109031; N061952
Boulder	1	E109006; N061619
Conifer tree	1	E108970; N061536
Incidental Records TOTAL	**19**	

Table 2-2 Kerry Slug recorded in metric traps 26.05.2020

Habitat	No. Kerry Slug Recorded	Grid reference/Location	Metric Trap No.
Tree in Conifer Plantation (WD4)	3	E108976 N061533	1
Tree in Conifer Plantation (WD4)	1	E108988 N061873	3
Individual boulder	2	E109007 N 061964	4
Tree in Conifer Plantation (WD4)	1	E108583 N062193	6
Tree in Conifer Plantation (WD4)	5	E108526 N062327	8
Recolonising Bare Ground (ED3) adjacent to Conifer Plantation (WD4)	1	E109071 N063121	12
Rocky outcrop, boulder adjacent to Conifer Plantation (WD4)	2	E109072 N063267	13
Oak-Birch-Holly Woodland	1	E110385 N064022	20
Metric Trap Records TOTAL	**16**		

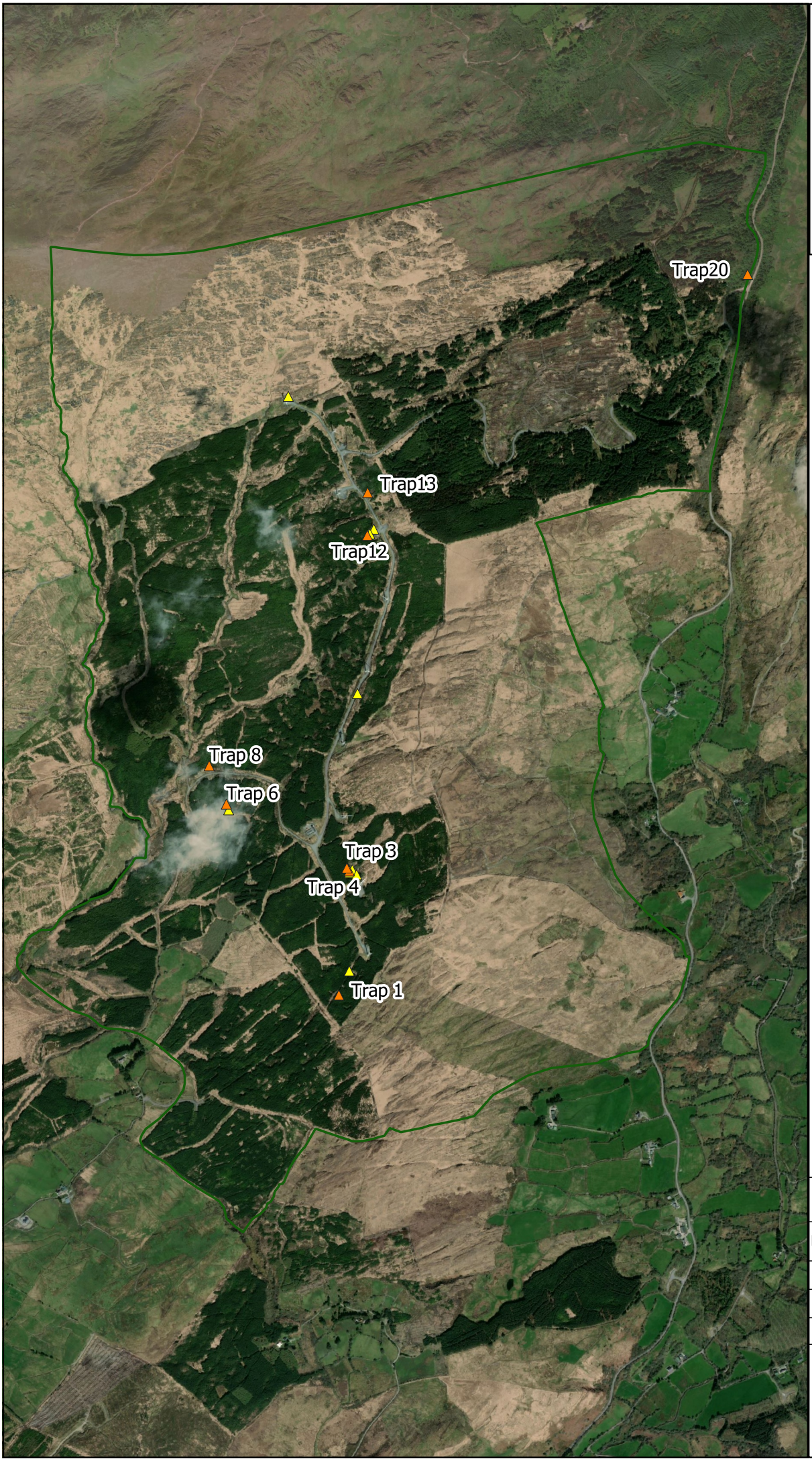
Given the widespread records of Kerry slug recorded, the above results indicate that this species is utilising most habitats within the site and therefore, Kerry slug are assumed to be present in suitable supporting habitat throughout the site. Such supporting habitats including conifer plantation, recently

felled woodland and scrub mosaic, rocky outcrops, and woodland will remain in abundance post construction.

2.4 Survey Results 2024 & 2025

Additional surveys of the proposed development site have been undertaken in 2024 and 2025. The aim of these surveys was to identify any significant changes in the ecological baseline since the previous surveys in 2020. There appears to be no active forestry operations in place at the site, which remains dominated by conifer plantation and recently felled woodland with self-establishing sitka spruce and other conifer species. As such, the extent of supporting habitat for Kerry slug remains the same as identified in 2020, with no significant changes to the habitats within the site.

Figure 2-3 below provides the 2020 habitat map of the site, which remains valid today.



Map Legend

- EIAR Site Boundary
- Incidental Kerry Slug Records 25.03.2020
- Kerry Slug Metric Trap Records 26.05.2020

Drawing Title	Kerry Slug - Incidental and Metric Trap Records
Project Title	Proposed Renewable Energy Development, Curraglass
Drawn By: LK	Checked By: PR
Project No.: 190301	Drawing No.: Figure 2-2
Scale: 1:17500	Date: 30-06-2021

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