

# Environmental considerations

As part of the planning process, RES will undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The purpose of an EIA is to identify any significant potential effects of a development on the environment and, where applicable, identify mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potential effects. It also identifies opportunities for restoration and enhancement. The EIA for Clune Wind Farm will include the following assessments:

## Ecology

The non-avian Ecology Impact Assessment will involve a range of studies including habitats, protected species, notable species (e.g. national and European Protected Species) and locally protected species. To date, we have undertaken botanical survey work to identify habitats that are of conservation importance or have groundwater dependence, and protected species survey work to investigate for protected mammals, such as badgers, bats, otters, water voles and wildcats. Further habitat and species assessment work will be undertaken over the coming months as the design develops and infrastructure siting is refined.

## Ornithology

Avoiding impacts on bird species, wherever possible, is an important factor in the design of the site. We have commissioned over 200 hours of baseline ornithological survey work over the two years during breeding and non-breeding seasons to build our understanding of the species on site. Surveys have included flight path activity, breeding behaviour and winter walkover surveys, as well as specific black grouse and raptor surveys. Some of the key species we are monitoring in the area are red kite, white-tailed eagle, hen harrier and golden eagle.

## Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The Clune Wind Farm proposal has the potential to cause changes to the baseline hydrological and hydrogeological conditions on the site and to the receiving water environment so the EIA process will seek to identify sensitive water environment features; assess potential impacts and propose mitigation where required.

A number of initial studies and assessments have been carried out to map the groundwater-dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE), groundwater, water supplies and surface water features, and other potential water environment receptors.

The mapping of private water supplies forms a key part of the hydro and hydrogeological work; further consultation will be undertaken to identify the complete water supply infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm. A Private Water Supply Risk Assessment will also be developed to accompany the planning application. Any construction work close to water supplies is strictly regulated but please talk to our team if you have any concerns or questions regarding your private water supply.

Should any significant impacts be identified as part of the EIA process, appropriate mitigation will be proposed. Mitigation seeks, first, to avoid adverse impacts and, where impacts are unavoidable, to reduce the significance of residual effect to an acceptable level. It also seeks enhancement and compensation, where possible, to provide the best practicable outcome.