



Our Ref: 5162160CO247

Vincent O'Malley
Transport Infrastructure Ireland



16th June 2021

By email to: 

Re. Submission of Natura Impact Statement pursuant to the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media pursuant to the requirements of Regulation 49(9)(c) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended)

Coolturk Bridge (MO-N59-006.00), County Mayo

Matters related to Appropriate Assessment

Further to the submission of a Natura Impact Statement relating to works proposed to be undertaken at Coolturk Bridge (MO-N59-006.00), Co. Mayo correspondence was received from Gerry Clabby, Head of Ecological Assessment, National Parks and Wildlife Service dated 18th May 2021.

This correspondence acknowledged Transport Infrastructure Ireland's (TII) email dated 6th April 2021 in respect of the project referred to above and confirmed that they had reviewed the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) referred to the Minister in this regard.

Furthermore, they noted that *"The Department considers the assessment carried out in the NIS to be satisfactory and notes the mitigation measures proposed to ensure that the proposed project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The Department advises that these measures be fully incorporated into the project at implementation phase, and that they must be carried out in full as part of project implementation."*

No additional information was requested by the Department.

It is further our understanding that the Contract to be put in place by TII will include both engineering and ecological oversight necessary to ensure that mitigation measures proposed in the NIS will be *"carried out in full as part of project implementation"* as required by the Department in correspondence dealing with similar work on culverts. This will include the requirement that the appointed Contractor has an ecologist on their team; as well as the appointment by TII of a Resident Engineer and Ecological Clerk of Works.

General Ecological Concerns

The Department notes that while works are to take place between July 1st and September 30th, that this is within the nesting period for birds (i.e. 1st March to 31st August). Particular attention is drawn by the Department to the red listed Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) and Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), a species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive). It should be noted however that the proposed works window coincides with the Fisheries Open Season for instream works as defined by Inland Fisheries Ireland.

The site was originally visited by an ecologist in September 2019. At the time of the survey flows in the upper reaches of the Rakestreet Stream were low with a wetted width of 0.25m – 0.5m across and a



depth of <0.1m. The riverbanks both immediately upstream and downstream of the bridge were found not to be suitable for use by nesting Kingfisher; the riverbanks are generally low and vegetated. There are no steep sand / clay banks in which a Kingfisher could excavate a nest.

Furthermore, the corrugated metal culvert is generally unsuitable as a place to nest by Grey Wagtail, or species such as Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*), due to the smooth nature of the culvert. However, as per the Department's requirements, nest searches are to be carried out prior to commencement of works.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul O'Donoghue', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul O'Donoghue
Associate Director / Ecologist

