Fyrish BESS

784-B067560

Protected Species Survey Report

CONFIDENTIAL

TNEI on behalf of Field Fyrish Ltd.

January 2025

Document prepared on behalf of Tetra Tech Limited. Registered in England number: 01959704

TETRA TECH

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APPENDICES

GLOSSARY

Acronyms/Abbreviations	Definition
[redacted]	
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management
CEMP	Construction Environment Management Plan
EPS	European Protected Species
EPSL	European Protected Species Licence
LERC	Local Ecological Record Centre
MCIEEM	Member of Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
SPP	Species Protection Plan
SSSI	Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest
W&CA	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contents	Summary
Site Location	The Site is located on land 650m South of Fyrish Substation, Alness, IV17 0XH and comprises a mosaic of upland flush, mixed scrub, lowland meadow, and neutral grassland, bordered by broadleaved and coniferous woodland.
Proposals	The development proposals consist of the creation and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of up to 200 MW with associated infrastructure (including cable route to substation), access and ancillary works (including landscaping and biodiversity enhancement).
Scope of this Survey(s)	The purpose of this report is to: • Undertake a desk study search of Protected Species records within 2km of the Site. • Survey the Site and adjacent habitats to determine the presence or likely absence of protected species and field evidence of their activity. • Identify if any additional survey or monitoring is required to inform this assessment or ongoing species protection measures. • Ascertain the potential impacts on protected species which could arise from the development. • Provide outline species protection strategies to avoid, mitigate and compensate for any likely impacts and inform licensing processes.
Results	[redacted]
Recommendations	[redacted]

1.0 INTRODUCTION

[redacted]

1.1 BACKGROUND

Tetra Tech was commissioned by TNEI on behalf of Field Fyrish Ltd. ("the Applicant"), in October 2024 to undertake a protected species survey of an area of land 650m South of Fyrish Substation, Alness, IV17 0XH, hereafter referred to as "the Site".

This report has been prepared by a Tetra Tech Ecologist of 'capable' competency for this type of report, as per the CIEEM Competency Framework (CIEEM, 2024), and the conditions pertinent to it are provided in Appendix A.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The Site is located approximately 1.25km west of Alness in the Scottish Highlands and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference NH 62960 68934 (Figure 1).

The Site comprises a large, enclosed field with a mosaic of upland flush, mixed scrub, lowland meadow, and neutral grassland, bounded by broadleaved woodland and coniferous woodland. In the adjacent field to the north-east there is a field of pasture for grazing sheep. The Site contains networks of irrigation ditches, and a burn along the southern edge. To the south of the Site is a timber processing yard and heading eastward along the unnamed road is a residential property. The B9176 bounds the east of the Site and leads to Fyrish Substation in the north, with the access road leading to the substation surrounded by mixed coniferous plantation.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The development proposals consist of the creation and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of up to 200 MW with associated infrastructure (including cable route to substation), access and ancillary works (including landscaping and biodiversity enhancement).

1.4 SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this survey and assessment are to:

- Identify any internationally, nationally and locally designated sites with protected faunal species as qualifying features within 2km of the Site.
- Extrapolate any protected species records attributable to the Site and its surrounds from the Highland Biological Recording Group (HDBRG) data.
- Conduct field survey to ascertain the presence or likely absence of protected species on site and collate field evidence for those species within influence of the Site's boundary.

- Determine scope for additional surveys and/or monitoring of the protected species required to inform this assessment, and the design, planning and construction phases.
- Highlight risks or impacts to protected species which are reasonably foreseeable to arise from the development.
- Provide avoidance and mitigation measure or species protection strategies to minimise predicted risks and impacts.
- Confirm the need for species licensing based on current design proposals and collated field evidence.

Scientific names are provided at the first mention of each species and common names (where appropriate) are then used throughout the rest of the report for ease of reading.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 HISTORIC SURVEYS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal survey (PEA) was undertaken on the Site on 2nd August 2024 by Tetra Tech ecologists, the results of which are discussed within Section 3.1.1.

2.2 DESK STUDY

The desktop study comprised two elements:

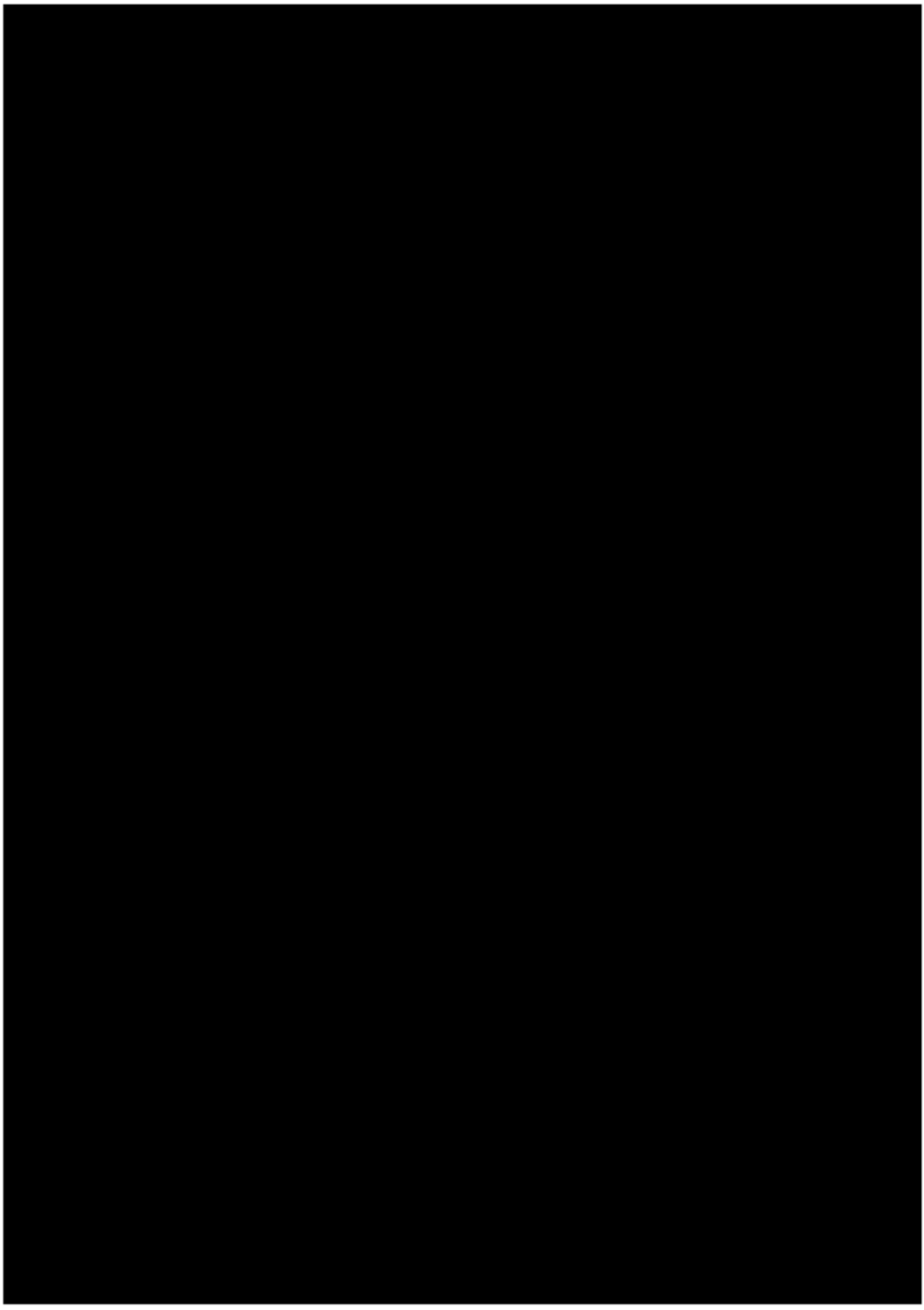
- To provide additional baseline data for the ecological desk study, records of legally protected or priority species identified within 2km of the Site, within the past ten years, were sought from Highland Biological Recording Group (HBRG).
- A data search obtained from The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas in October 2024; and
- Online element including a search using: NatureScot Sitelink (https://sitelink.nature.scot), Scotland's Environment Map (https://map.environment.gov.scot/sewebmap), and Ordnance Survey (OS) and Aerial Imagery (https://www.bing.com/maps).

The geographical extent of the search area was related to the significance of species and potential zones of influence. For this site the following search areas were considered appropriate:

- 2km for sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), protected or otherwise notable species and non-statutory designated sites of County Importance (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)); and
- 2km for biological records.

2.3 FIELD SURVEYS

A protected species survey was undertaken on the Site on 6th November by Tetra Tech Associate Director Doug Blease MCIEEM and Assistant Ecologist Bethany James BSc (Hons). The weather conditions were 12-14°C, 60% cloud cover, dry and with a gentle breeze.



2.3.2 Pine Marten

2.3.2.1 Habitat-based assessment

A precursory HBA was completed during the August 2024 PEA, any changes to habitat were noted during the November 2024 survey. This comprised a field survey to determine whether optimal pine marten habitat preferences were supported. Habitat suitability was determined by assessing the habitats on site and whether connecting habitats within the wider landscape supported resting, commuting and foraging pine marten. This included an assessment of the following features:

Foraging resources of importance including:

- Fruit-bearing trees and scrubs.
- Rough grassland/pre-thicket plantations.
- Mature conifers with well-developed field layer.
- Broadleaf woodland and scrub.
- Tree-lined streams and wetlands.
- Rabbit abundance.

Potential den sites including:

- Over-mature woodland with associated features of tree cavities.
- Burrows under tree roots.
- Scree and log piles.
- Squirrel dreys, raptor or corvid nests.
- [redacted]

2.3.2.1 Field Survey

The Site and adjacent suitable habitats (as shown on Figure 1) were surveyed for passive pine marten field evidence in accordance with standard methodology described in *UK BAP Mammals - Interim Guidance for*

Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation (Birks, 2012) . This comprised a search for the presence or absence of pine marten signs and location of likely sites for these, as follows:

- Scats.
- Footprints.
- Potential den sites.

The survey area was mapped along with the positions and densities of the above field signs. All field signs were mapped using a handheld GPS device (Survey 123 software saved on phone or tablet).

2.3.3 Red Squirrel

2.3.3.1 Habitat-based assessment

A precursory HBA was completed during the August 2024 PEA, any changes to habitat were noted during the November 2024 survey. This comprised a field survey to determine whether red squirrel habitat preferences were supported. Habitat suitability was determined by assessing the habitats on site and the connecting habitats within the wider landscape to support resting, commuting and foraging red squirrel. This included an assessment of:

- Mature conifer and mixed woodland with dense canopy cover providing foraging, nesting and breeding opportunities.
- Broadleaf woodland with high abundance of nut bearing species.
- Hedgerows and treelines providing commuting routes.

2.3.3.2 Field Survey

The Site and adjacent suitable habitats (as shown on Figure 1) were surveyed for red squirrel field evidence in accordance with standard methodology described in *UK BAP Mammals - Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation* (Gurnell & Lurz, 2012). This comprised a search for the presence or absence of red squirrel signs and location of likely sites for these, as follows:

- Foraging evidence: stripped pinecones and split hazelnuts/acorns.
- Dreys.
- Footprints.

The survey area was mapped along with the positions and densities of the above field signs. All field signs were mapped using a handheld GPS device (Survey 123 software saved on phone or tablet).

2.4 LIMITATIONS

The absence of desk study records cannot be used to infer the absence of a species or habitat, as this may result from under-recording in the search area. During the survey, areas of dense bracken were starting to die back but remained thick, which limited access and obscured visibility in some parts of the Site. While this habitat was searched in a logical manner and is not considered to significantly affect the assessment, it is possible that some field signs were completely obscured. It is important to note that the lack of field signs does not rule out the presence of protected species in the area.

Despite these limitations, the survey effort is deemed sufficient to achieve the objectives of this report, in line with the established guidelines.

3.0 RESULTS & EVALUATION

3.1 DESK STUDY

3.1.1 Previous Survey Results

[redacted]

The PEA survey also recorded scat located north of the timber yard which was typical of pine marten and habitat suitable to host red squirrel on and adjacent to site. No other protected species field signs were observed during the appraisal.

3.1.2 Local Records Centre

The data provided by NBN atlas returned 17 records of red squirrel within 2km of the Site, the closest record located in an area of woodland 100m north of the Site. [redacted]

The HBRG desk study included the following records within 2km of the Site:

- [redacted]
- A single record of pine marten, location undisclosed.
- A single record of wildcat, location undisclosed.
- A single record of otter located approximately 900m south of the Site.

[redacted] and other protected species within 2km of the Site; Novar Special Protection Area (SPA) (located 270m west of the site) and Morangie Forest SPA (located 5.44km northeast of the site). Neither have direct connectivity to the Proposed Development Site.

Four ancient woodland habitats were identified within 1km of the Site; Toll Belt, and three unnamed woodland parcels. The closest of these woodlands lies directly adjacent to the north boundary of the Site. These habitats are also likely to host habitat suitable for a range of protected species.

3.2 FIELD SURVEY

3.2.1 Habitat-based Assessment

Descriptions and photos of the habitats through the survey area are detailed in the October 2024 PEA report. The location of field signs recorded during the survey are provided in Figure 2.

[1] Biological records from wildlife centres often omit exact locations to protect vulnerable species from potential persecution or disturbance.

3.2.1.2 Pine Marten

The timber yard buildings adjacent to the Site and boulder pile at the foot of the mound in the centre of the Site provide suitable temporary resting sites or den habitat for pine marten. There are several active rabbit warrens on site which may also provide suitable den habitat and opportunities for predation. The adjacent coniferous woodland is considered highly suitable connective habitat for pine marten and it is reasonable to assume that the Site may also be used for commuting, foraging or resting purposes.

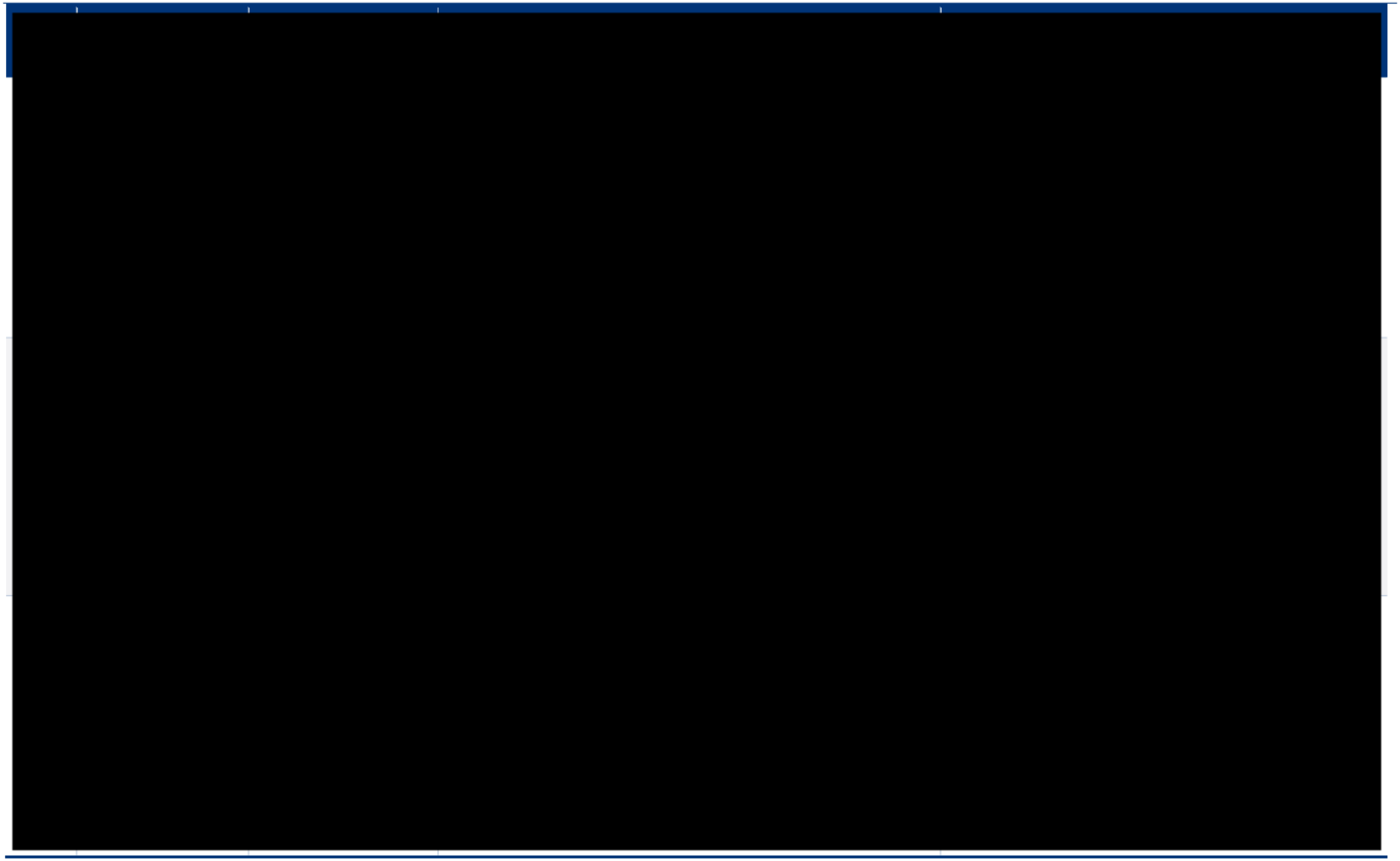
3.2.1.3 Red Squirrel

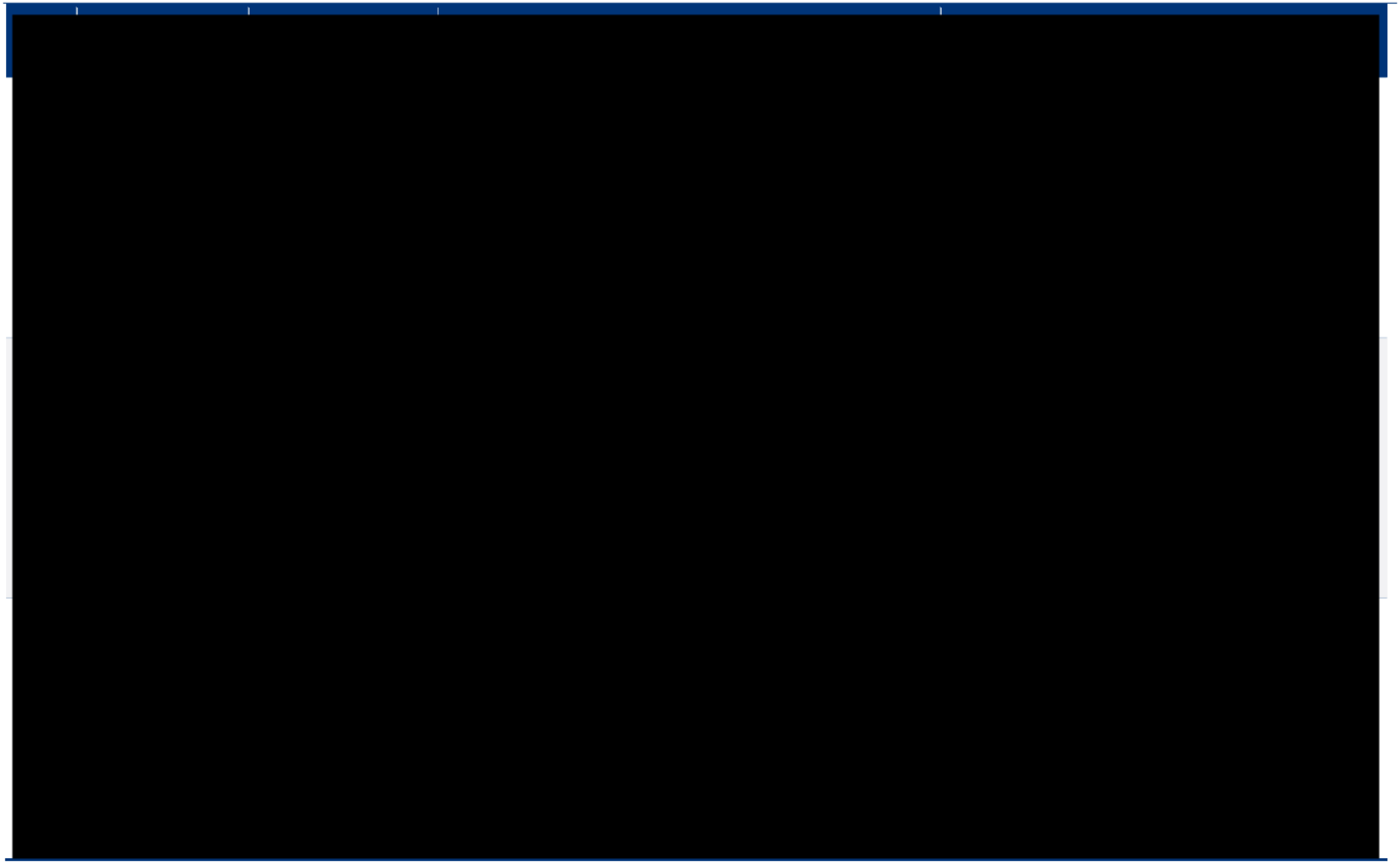
The adjacent coniferous woodland is considered highly suitable habitat for resting, commuting and foraging red squirrel. It is reasonable to assume that the Site may be used for limited commuting and foraging purposes.

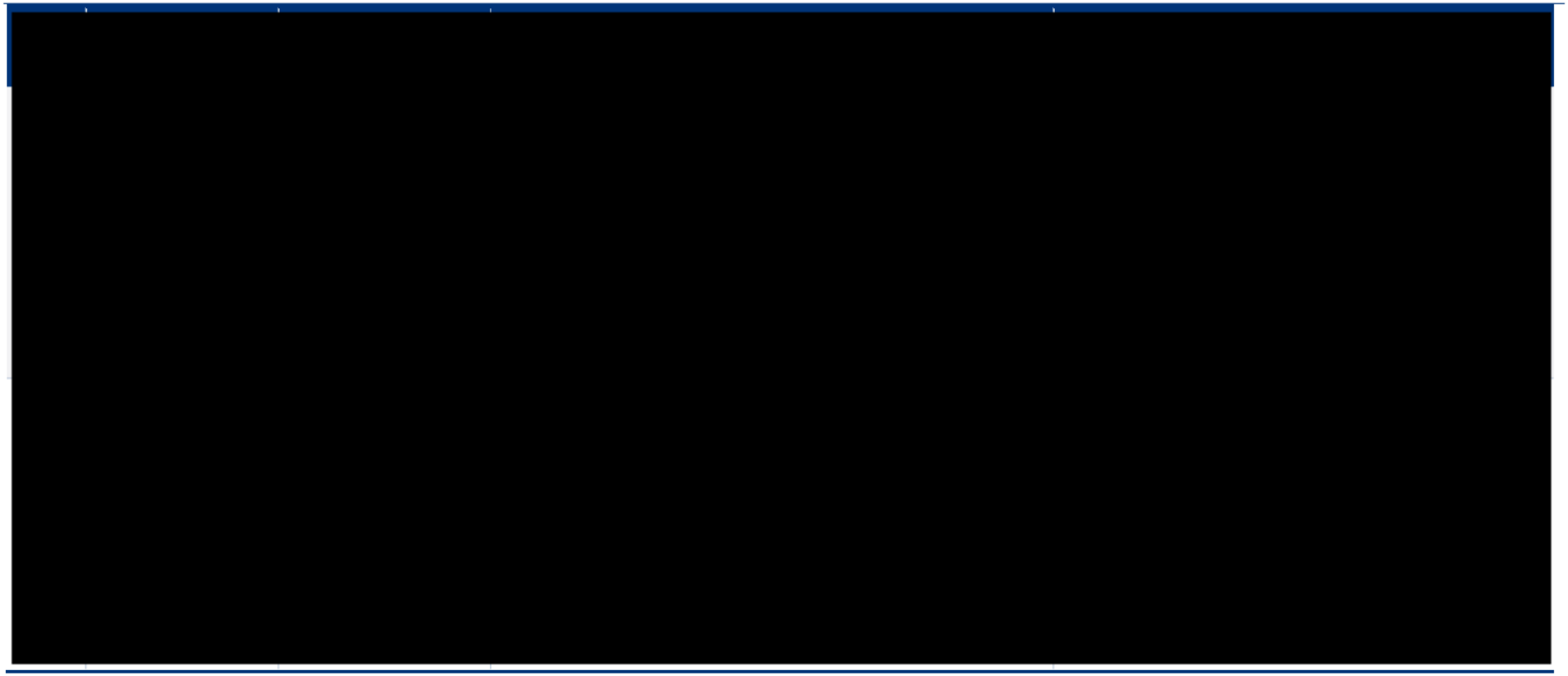
3.3 SURVEY RESULTS

Table 1 [redacted]

[redacted]







3.3.2 Pine Marten

No direct field signs of pine marten were record during the survey. Potential den sites in the timber yard structures, rabbit warrens and disused badger setts should be considered.

3.3.3 Red Squirrel

No direct field signs of red squirrel were record during the survey. It is expected that drey sites will be present in the adjacent woodland and potentially within trees on and adjacent to site between February and September.

3.3.4 Other Protected Species

Other protected species evidence is included within Table 3. The location of mammal field signs are mapped in Figure 2. Photos and detailed descriptions for each field sign is/are provided in Appendix B.

Table 3. Other protected species field signs

Field Sign TN	Field Sign	Brief description of evidence
TN2	Raptor nest	Large nest, typical of raptors, observed on the outer tree line of the conifer woodland adjacent to the north survey area boundary.

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 IMPACTS

[redacted]

No resting sites of pine marten or red squirrel were recorded on site during the survey, however, habitats in the wider landscape are of high suitability to resting, commuting and foraging pine marten and red squirrel. As such, it can be predicted that the Proposed Development Site may be used for commuting and foraging purposes and suitable habitat may be affected by the construction and operation of the Site.

[redacted] It is anticipated that during the BESS operational phase, staff attending the Site will be made aware, through their induction process, of local protected species and how to limit any risk that their actions on site may present to those species.

4.2 PRE-COMMENCEMENT SURVEY

[redacted] red squirrel and pine marten are dynamic and highly mobile species, it is recommended that baseline data is maintained leading up to a pre-commencement protected species survey (pre-works checks).

Should no additional licensable constraints (beyond what is published in this report) become apparent, the construction phase should be planned to implement the Reasonable Avoidance Measures detailed in section 4.3 and included with the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) to avoid accidental harm to protected species as detailed in Table 5.

[redacted]

4.2.2 Pine Marten

It is recommended that a pre-commencement pine marten survey is timetabled into project plan and conducted as close to the construction works as possible and always within the most recent survey period. This is to enable checks for any new dens or resting places that may have become occupied and allow for adaptations to the species protection plan.

4.2.3 Red Squirrel

It is recommended to schedule a pre-commencement survey for red squirrel in the project plan, ensuring it takes place as close to the construction start date as possible, and no more than three months prior. This timing allows for the identification of any newly occupied dreys and facilitates necessary adjustments to the species protection plan.

4.3 SPECIES PROTECTION PLAN

The CEMP must include a Species Protection Plan (SPP) detailing the measures to implemented and audited during construction and operation to avoid and minimise the risk of negative impacts to [redacted]

In order to complete the works **without a license** there needs to be a high level of confidence that using Reasonable Avoidance Measures under a SPP, as highlighted in Table 5 below, will be adhered to and that will be no offence committed by the proposed actions.

Note:

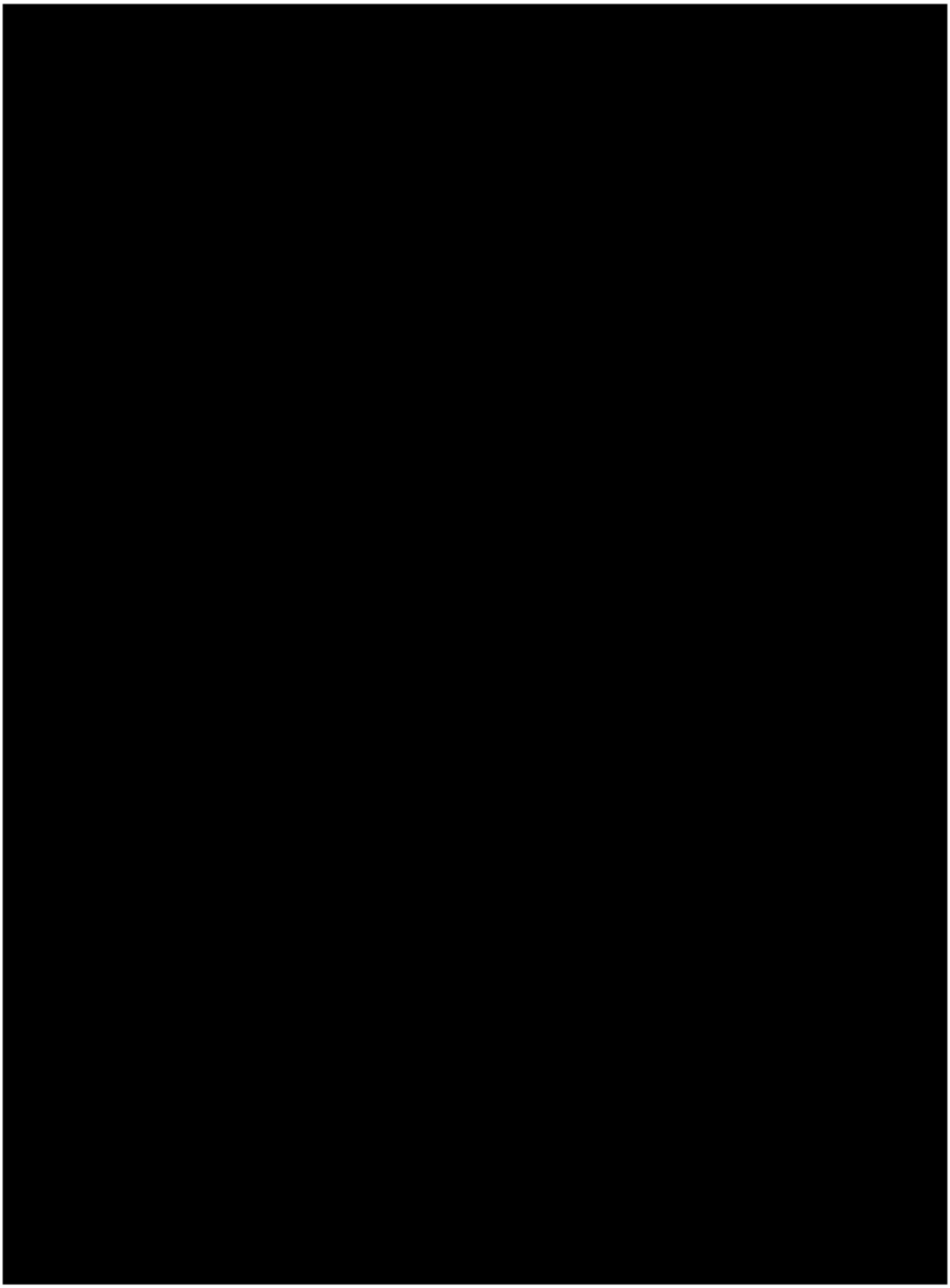
In the event that any protected species are observed on site at any stage during site clearance, construction or operation then works should stop and an appropriately qualified ecologist contacted for advice.

Table 5 Recommended Reasonable Avoidance Measures

Project element	Suggestions for avoidance measures
Construction methods and special precautions	(a) Maintain baseline ecological data. [redacted]; allowing time for any potential adaptation to the SPP or licensing which may be required. (c) An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be appointed to guide the project in relation to protected species constraints and good environmental practice during construction. (d) Assurance of site staff awareness of protected species will be made through appropriate induction material and toolbox talks. (e) Vehicle speed limits will be implemented on site to reduce the risk of harm to [redacted] present in the locale (suggested 15mph max).

	(f) Maintain connectivity between all retained habitats and avoid site-wide vegetation removal [redacted] (g) Frequently check stored materials such as pipes, voids beneath cabins/containers/stockpiles for signs of access [redacted] Suspected field signs will be reported promptly to the project ecologist/ECoW. [redacted] (h) Cover of backfill trenches and other unattended excavations especially before nightfall. Alternatively, slope the sides of an excavation to 45° or less, or leave a ramp to allow trapped mammals to easily exit. (i) [redacted]
Location & Layout	(a) Where possible, the Site's logistics and compound will be located as far as possible [redacted] by human activity. (b) The design layout and landscaping will avoid severance of [redacted] (c) The Site's temporary and permanent lighting scheme will be designed accordingly to avoid direct illumination [redacted] and limit the use of unnecessary lighting, or light spill during construction and operation. (d) Acoustic, wooden panelled fencing will be installed around the development to prevent/minimise pine marten, red squirrel and other mammals from accessing the site during operation.
Timing & duration	(a) Work will be planned efficiently to keep the duration of construction as short as possible. (b) [redacted]

[redacted]



5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

It is a requirement of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) to provide enhancements for biodiversity as part of development. The following measures are proposed to enhance the site [redacted]

Table 6 Recommended enhancement measures for works potentially affecting protected species

Project element	Suggestions for enhancement
Habitat connectivity	(a) Maintain and protect existing woodland habitats, particularly those with dense canopies and diverse vegetation, which provide essential cover and food sources. (b) [redacted] (c) Install den boxes to mature trees on or adjacent to the Site to enhance the Site for pine marten. (d) Install artificial dreys in suitable locations to provide additional nesting options, especially in areas where natural sites are limited. *(e)* Plant new trees including native conifer species such as Scots pine, yew *Taxus baccata*, juniper *Juniperus communis*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and rowan to benefit red squirrels and pine marten.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the field signs recorded during the survey, [redacted]

[redacted]

Implementation of Reasonable Avoidance Measures, included in this report, is expected to minimise the potential effects on red squirrel and pine marten. [redacted]

minimise the potential effects on red squirrel and pine marten. [redacted]
this report to inform a derogation licencing process to close the [redacted]

REFERENCES

Birks, J. (2012). Pine Marten. In W. Cresswell, J. Birks, M. Dean, M. Pacheco, W. Trewhella, D. Well, & S. Wray, *UK BAP Mammals Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, impact Assessment and Mitigation* (pp. 68-81). Southampton: The Mammal Society.

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Gurnell, J., & Lurz, P. (2012). Red Squirrel. In W. Cresswell, J. Birks, M. Dean, M. Pacheco, W. Trewhella, D. Wells, & S. Wray, *UK BAP Mammals Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation* (pp. 9-21). Southhampton: The Mammal Society.

FIGURES

Survey Area Plan

Fyrish BESS

TNEI on behalf of Field

Legend

Survey Area

Notes:

Drawn by: lily.dunwell

Checked by: Bethany James

Figure No. 1

Revision No. A

27 January 2025

0 100 200 300 400 Meters

Scale 1:10,000 @A3

British National Grid

NGR: 262963E 869000N

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REPORT CONDITIONS

[redacted]

APPENDIX C: KEY LEGISLATION

[redacted]

APPENDIX A: REPORT CONDITIONS

This Report has been prepared using reasonable skill and care for the sole benefit of TNEI (“the Client”) and Field Fyrish Ltd. (“the Applicant”) for the proposed uses stated in the report by Tetra Tech Limited (“Tetra Tech”). Tetra Tech exclude all liability for any other uses and to any other party. The report must not be relied on or reproduced in whole or in part by any other party without the copyright holder’s permission.

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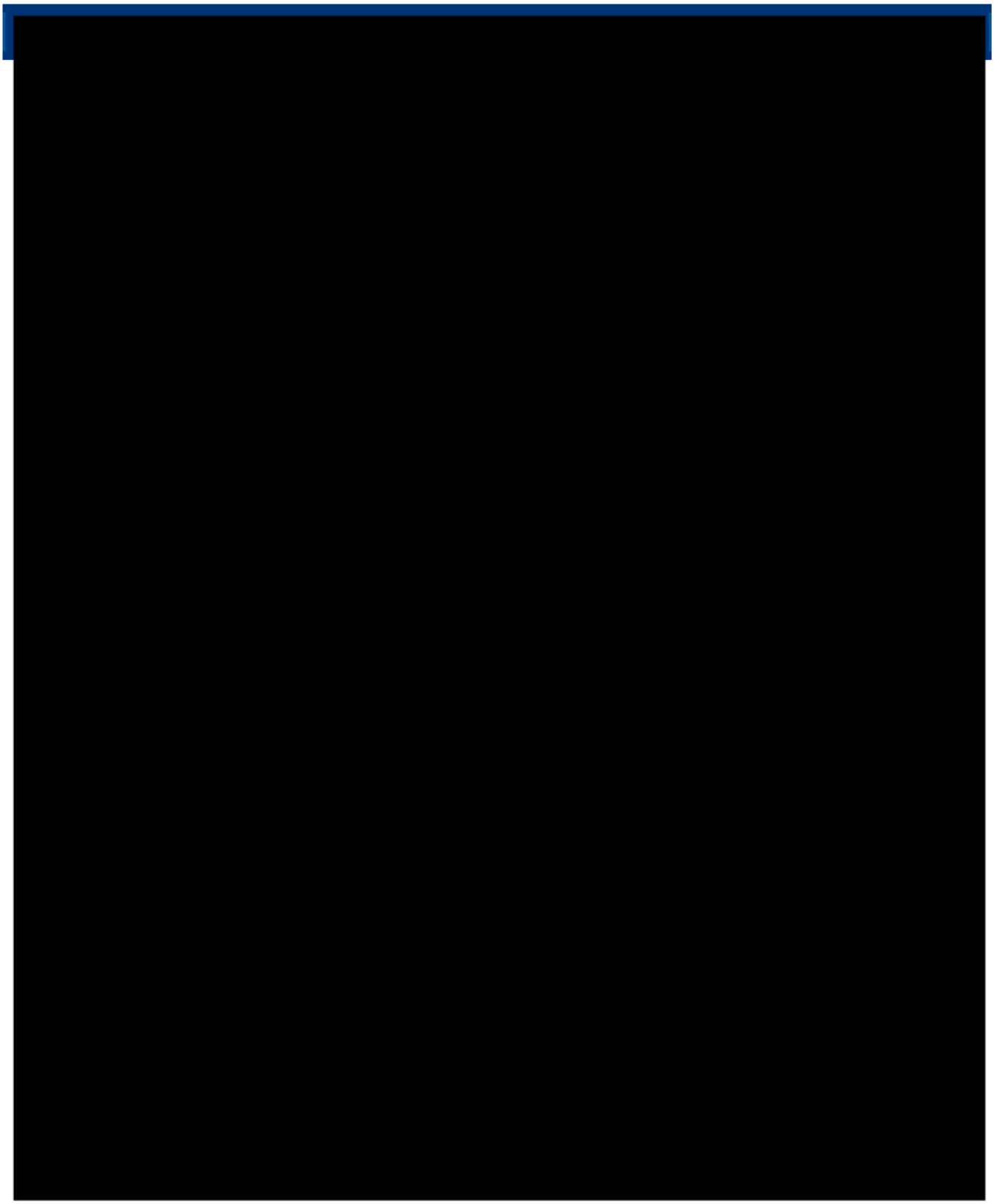
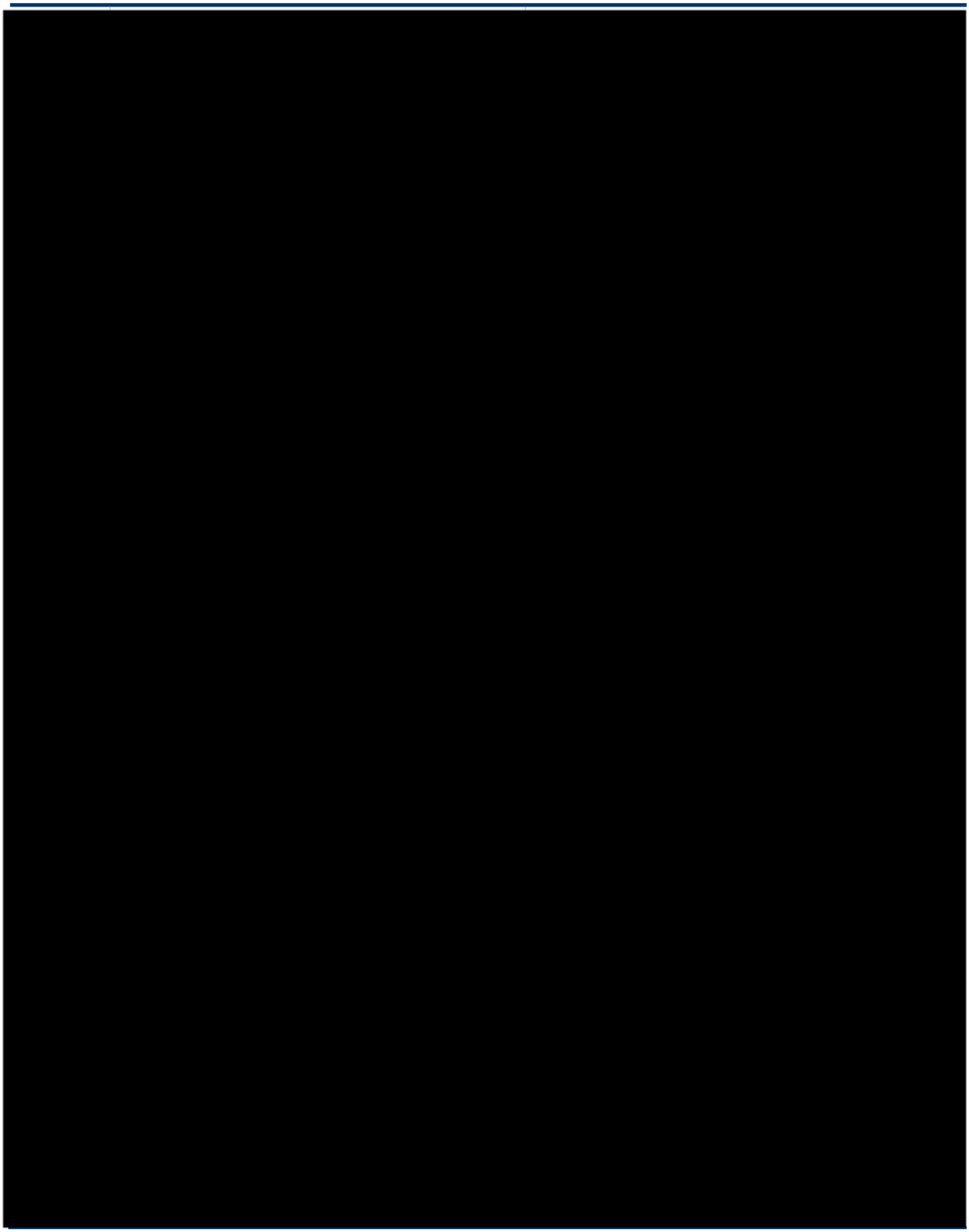
The report refers, within the limitations stated, to the environment of the site in the context of the surrounding area at the time of the inspections'. Environmental conditions can vary and no warranty is given as to the possibility of changes in the environment of the site and surrounding area at differing times. No investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or not fully representative information. Any monitoring or survey work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations, including for example timescale, seasonal and weather-related conditions. Actual environmental conditions are typically more complex and variable than the investigative, predictive and modelling approaches indicate in practice, and the output of such approaches cannot be relied upon as a comprehensive or accurate indicator of future conditions. The “shelf life” of the Report will be determined by a number of factors including; its original purpose, the Client’s instructions, passage of time, advances in technology and techniques, changes in legislation etc. and therefore may require future re-assessment.

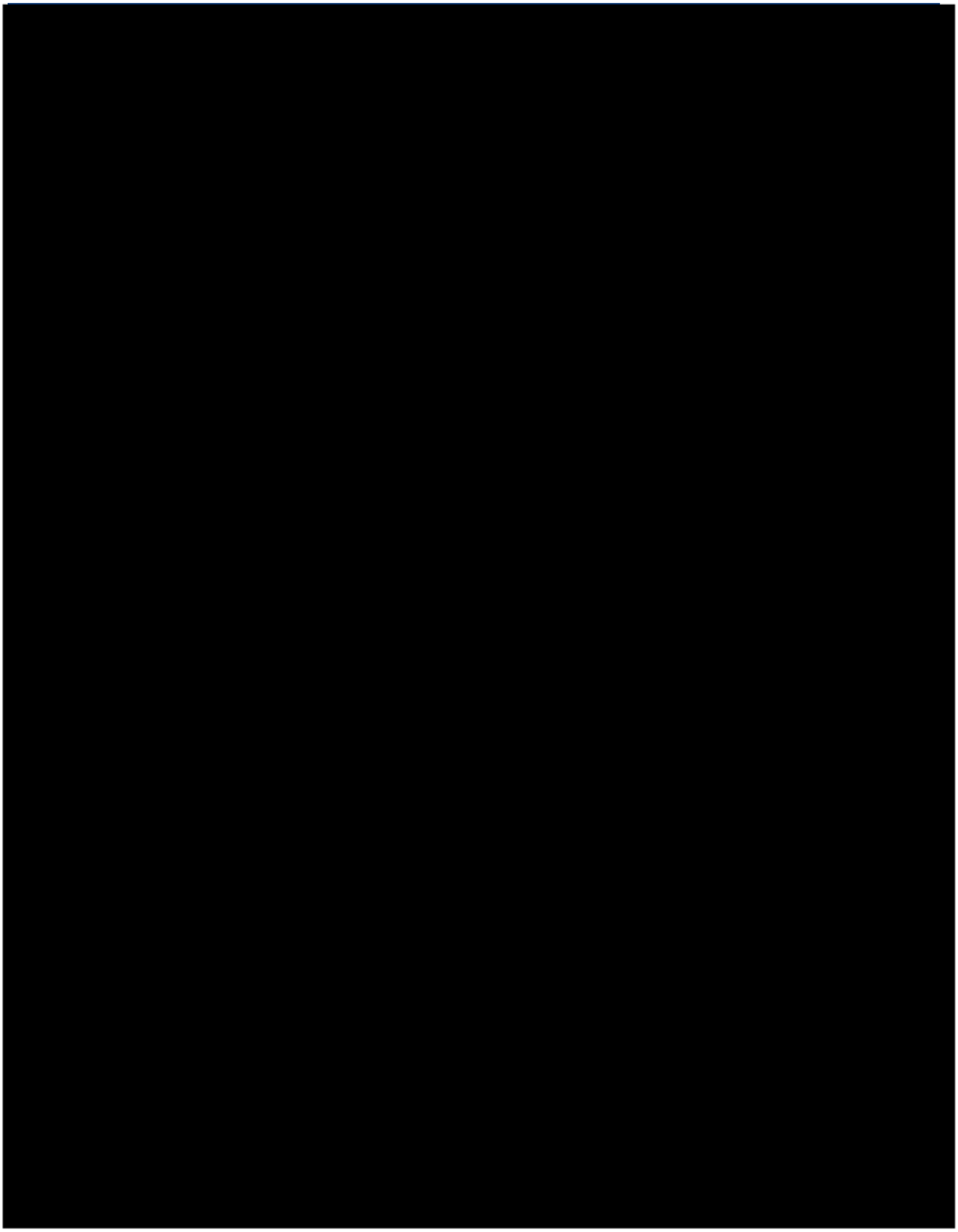
The whole of the report must be read as other sections of the report may contain information which puts into context the findings in any executive summary.

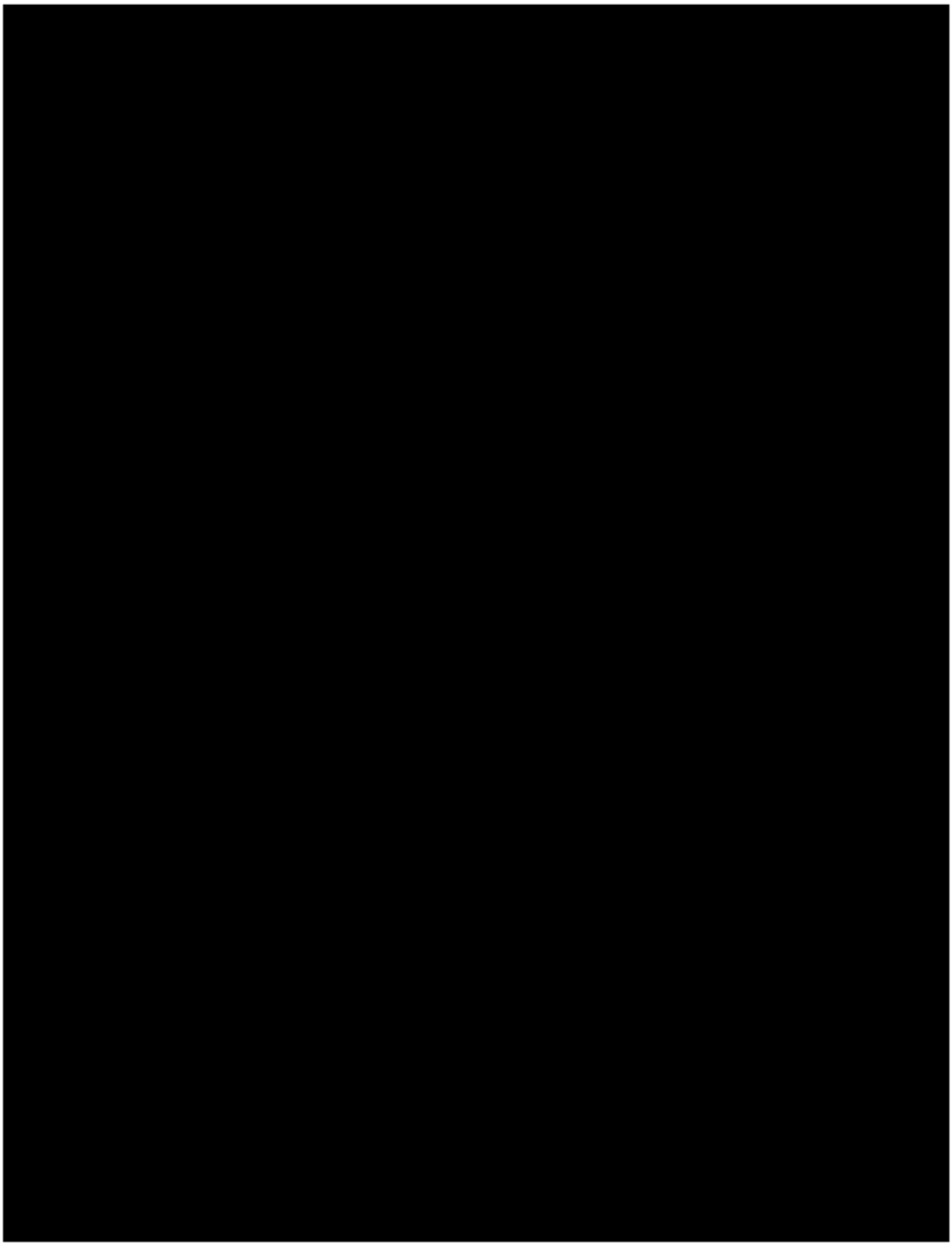
Tetra Tech reserves the right to share this Report and any related materials, surveys, drawings and/or documents at any time with the relevant Local Ecological Records Centre (LREC), any relevant statutory body or any equivalent organisation as Tetra Tech may reasonably require from time-to-time.

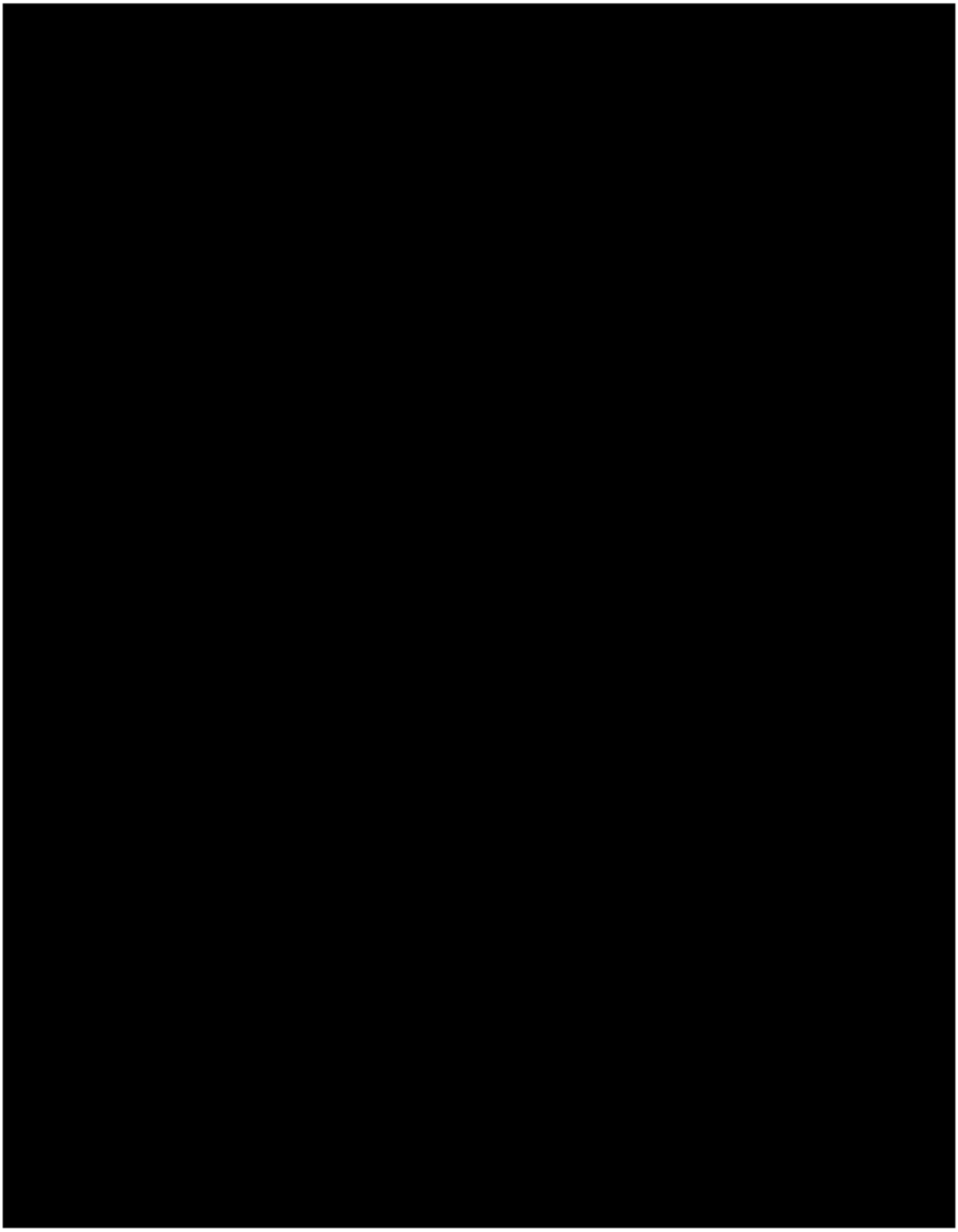
The performance of environmental protection measures and of buildings and other structures in relation to acoustics, vibration, noise mitigation and other environmental issues is influenced to a large extent by the degree to which the relevant environmental considerations are incorporated into the final design and specifications and the quality of workmanship and compliance with the specifications on site during construction. Tetra Tech accept no liability for issues with performance arising from such factors.

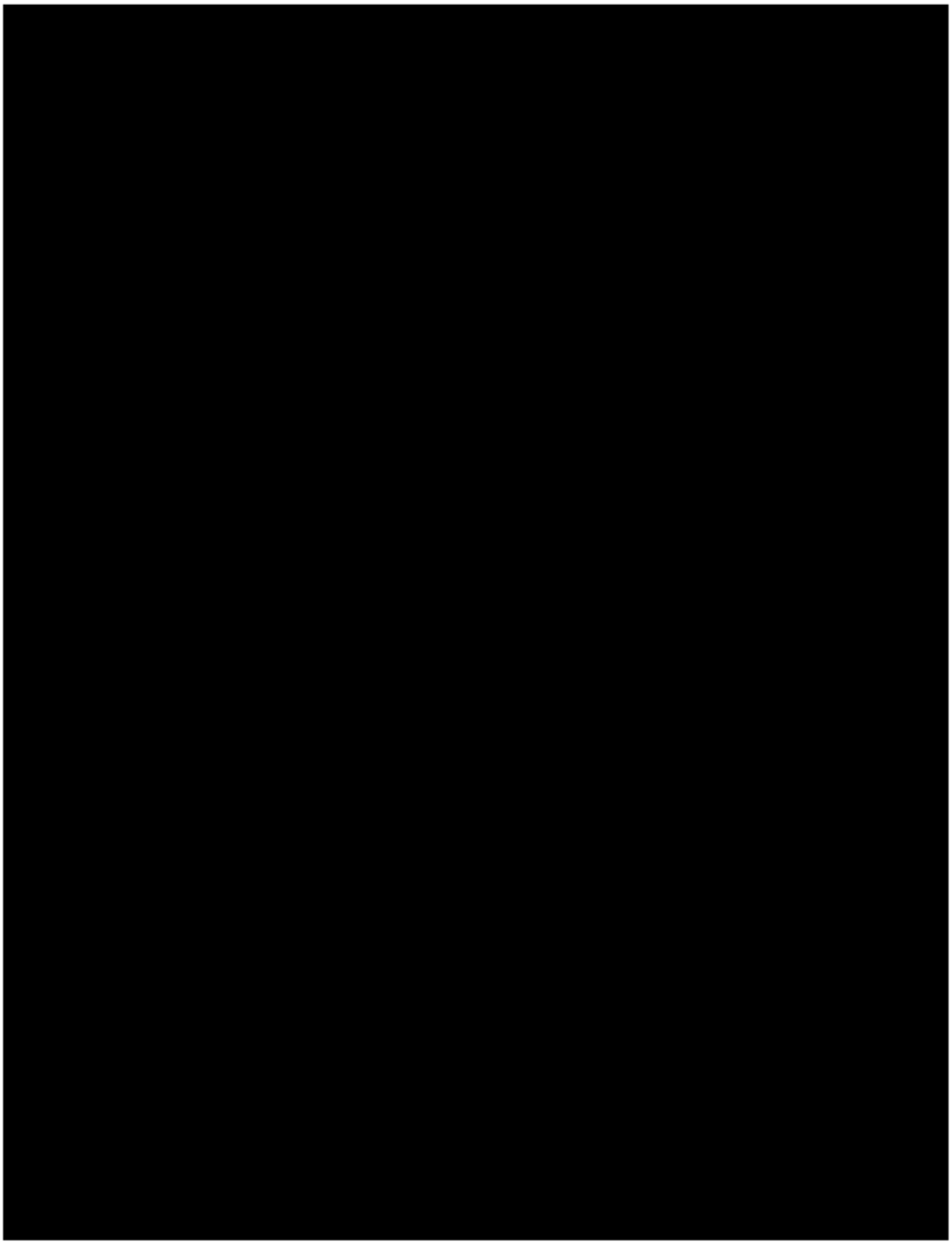


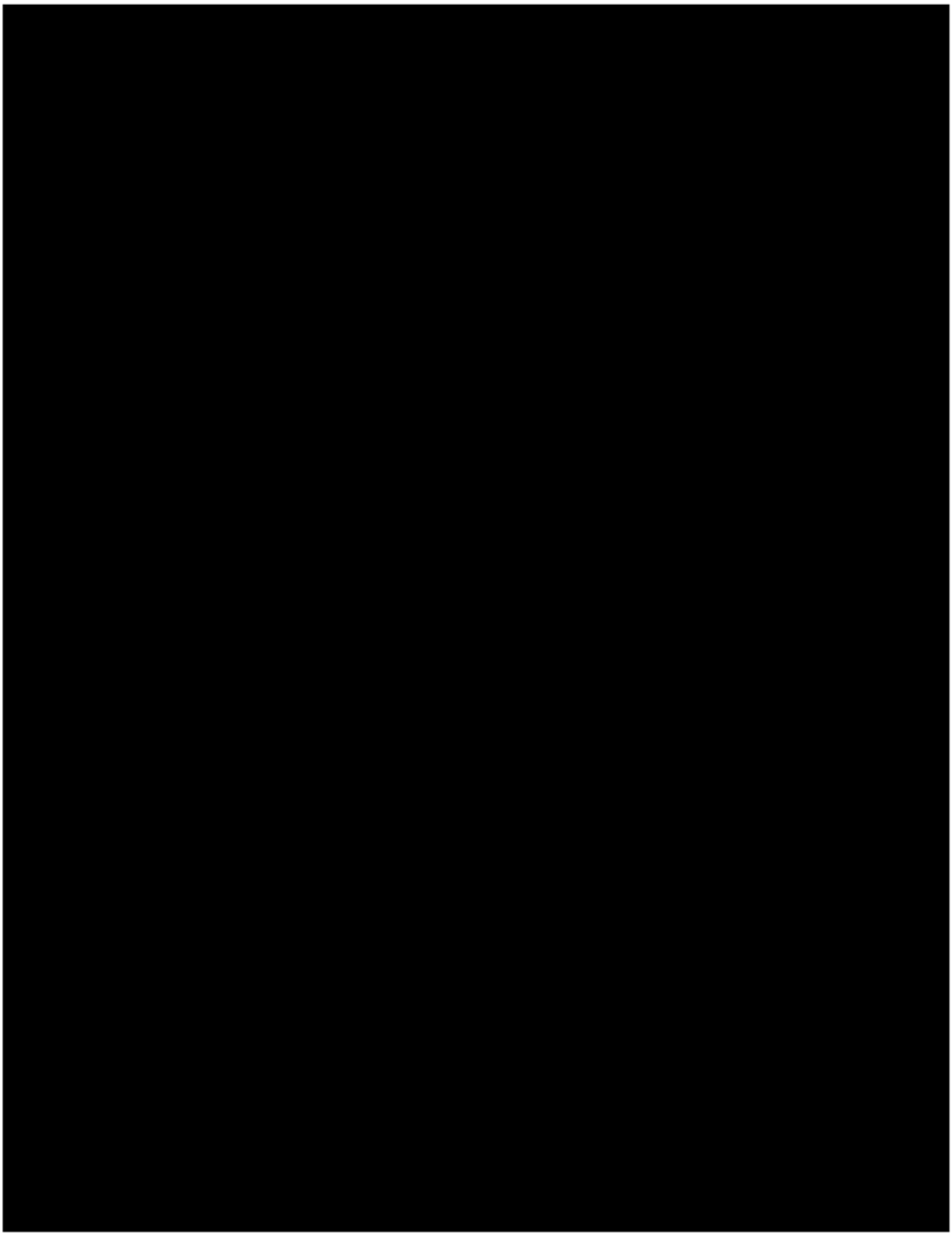


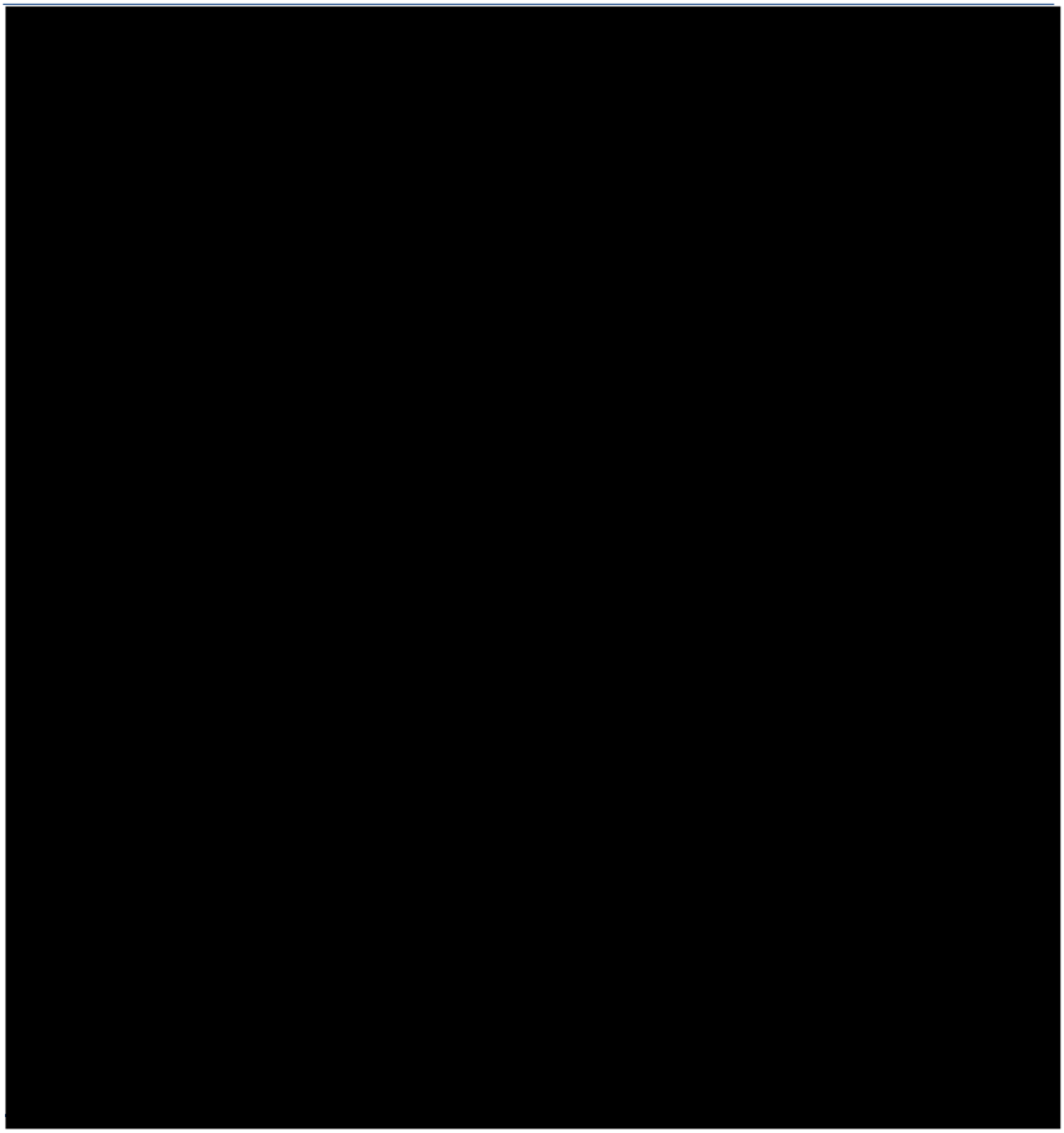


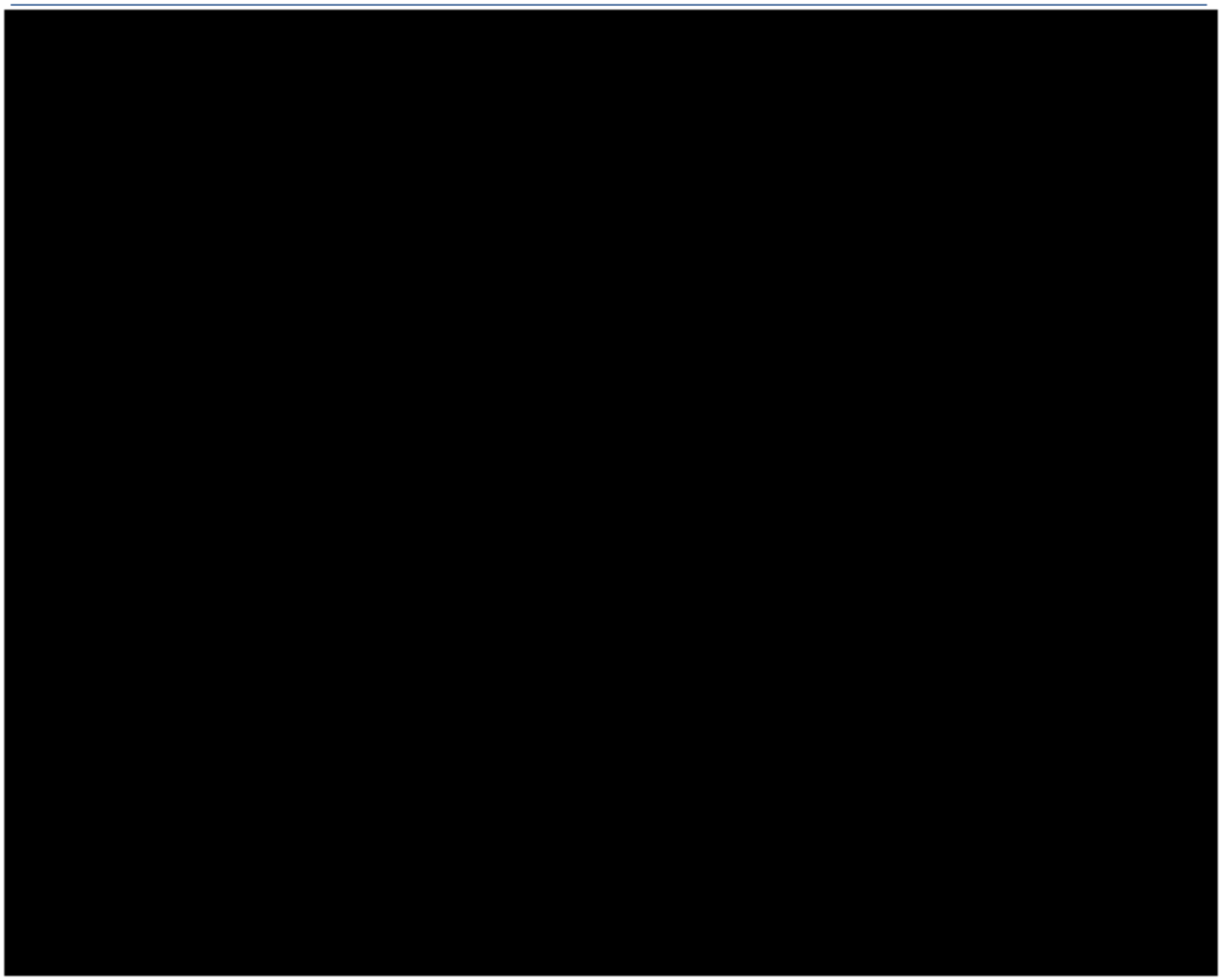


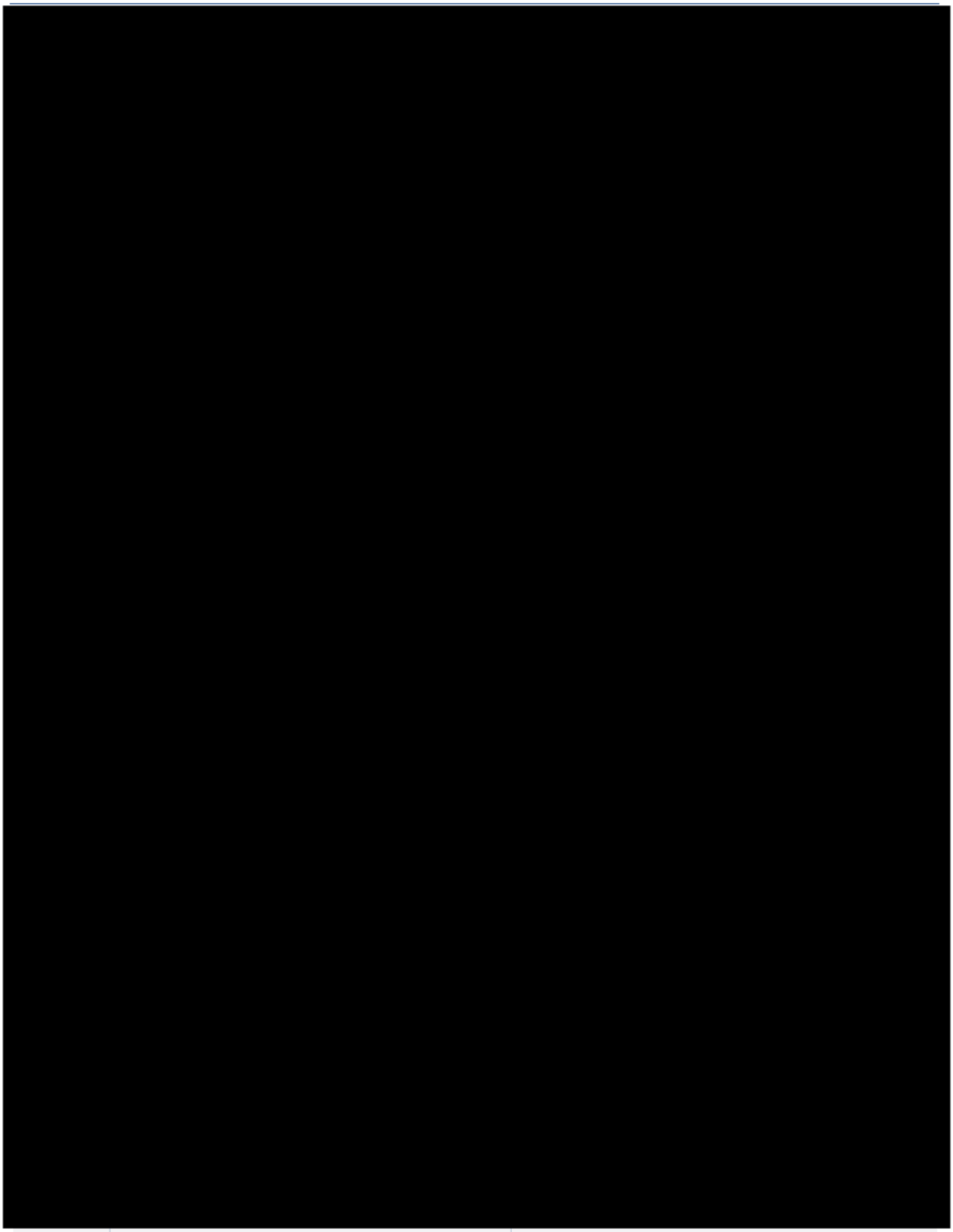


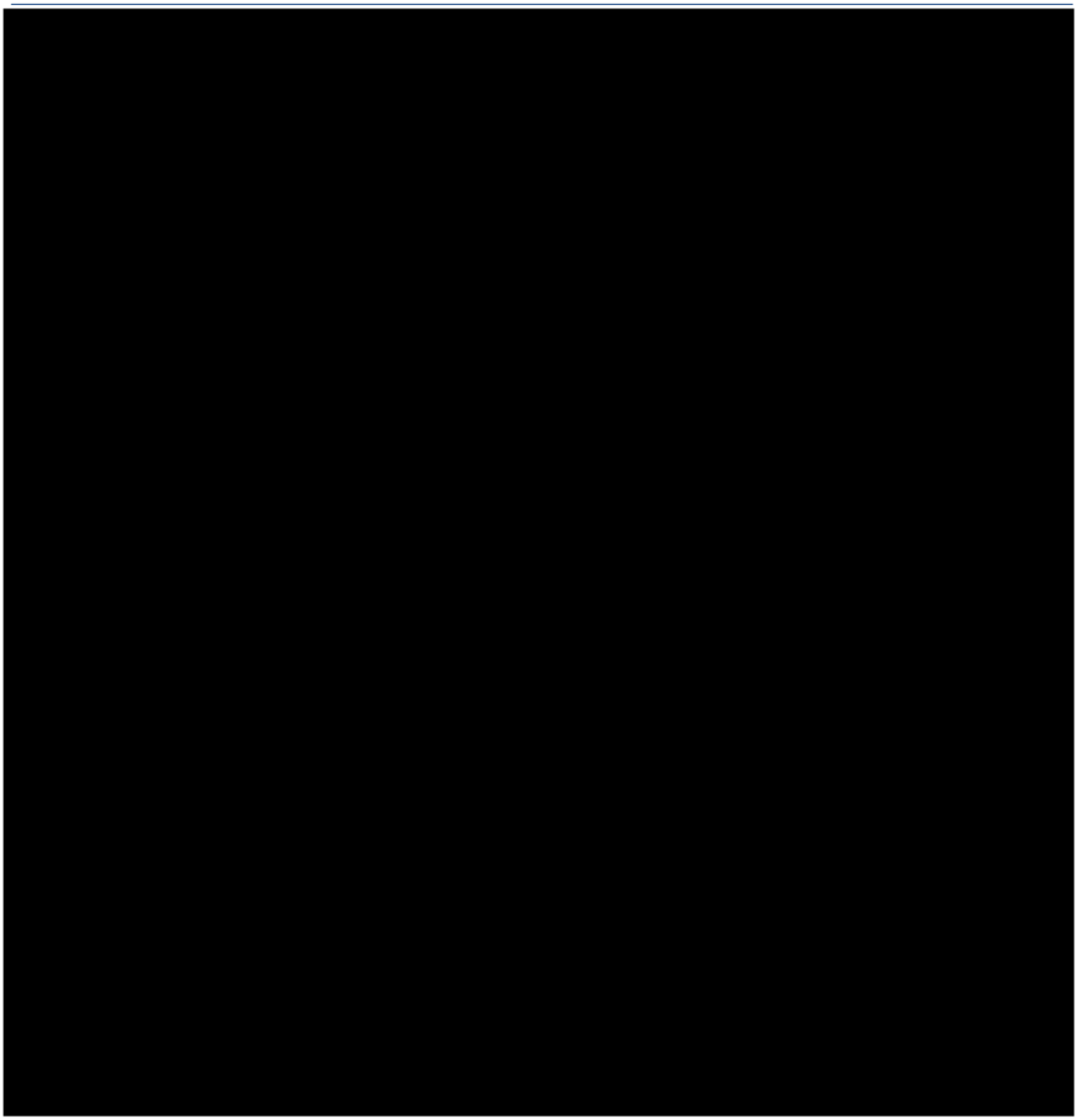


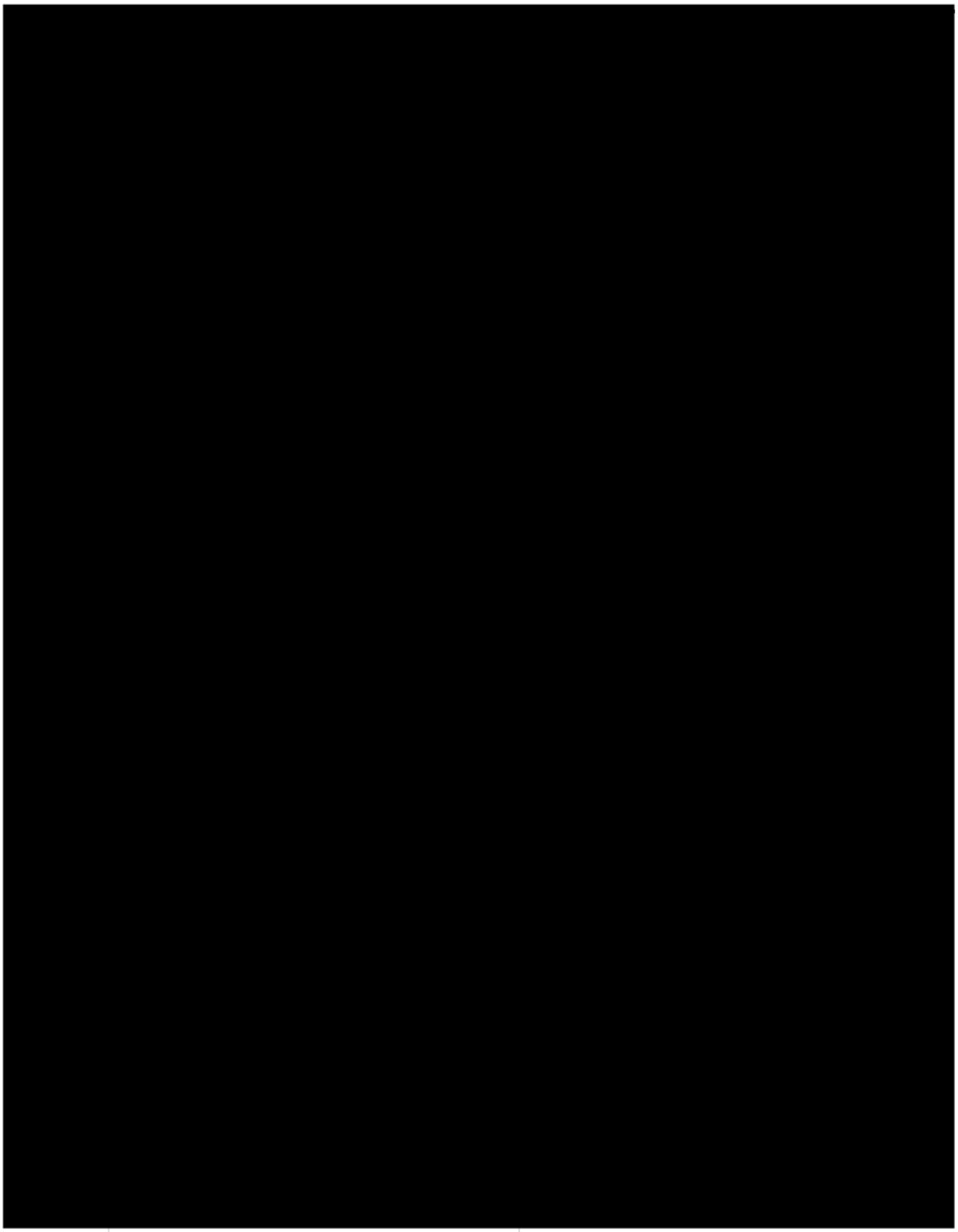


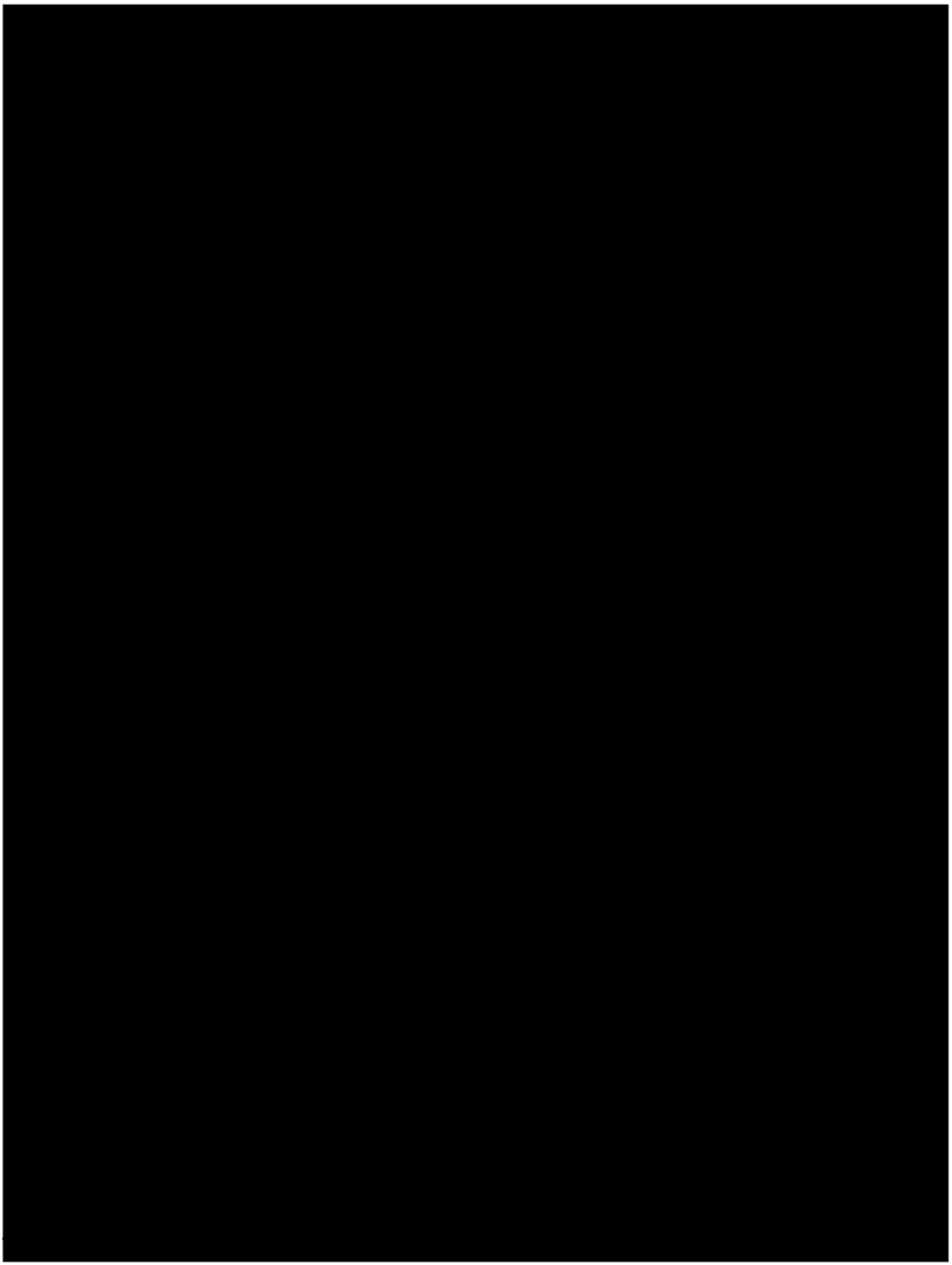


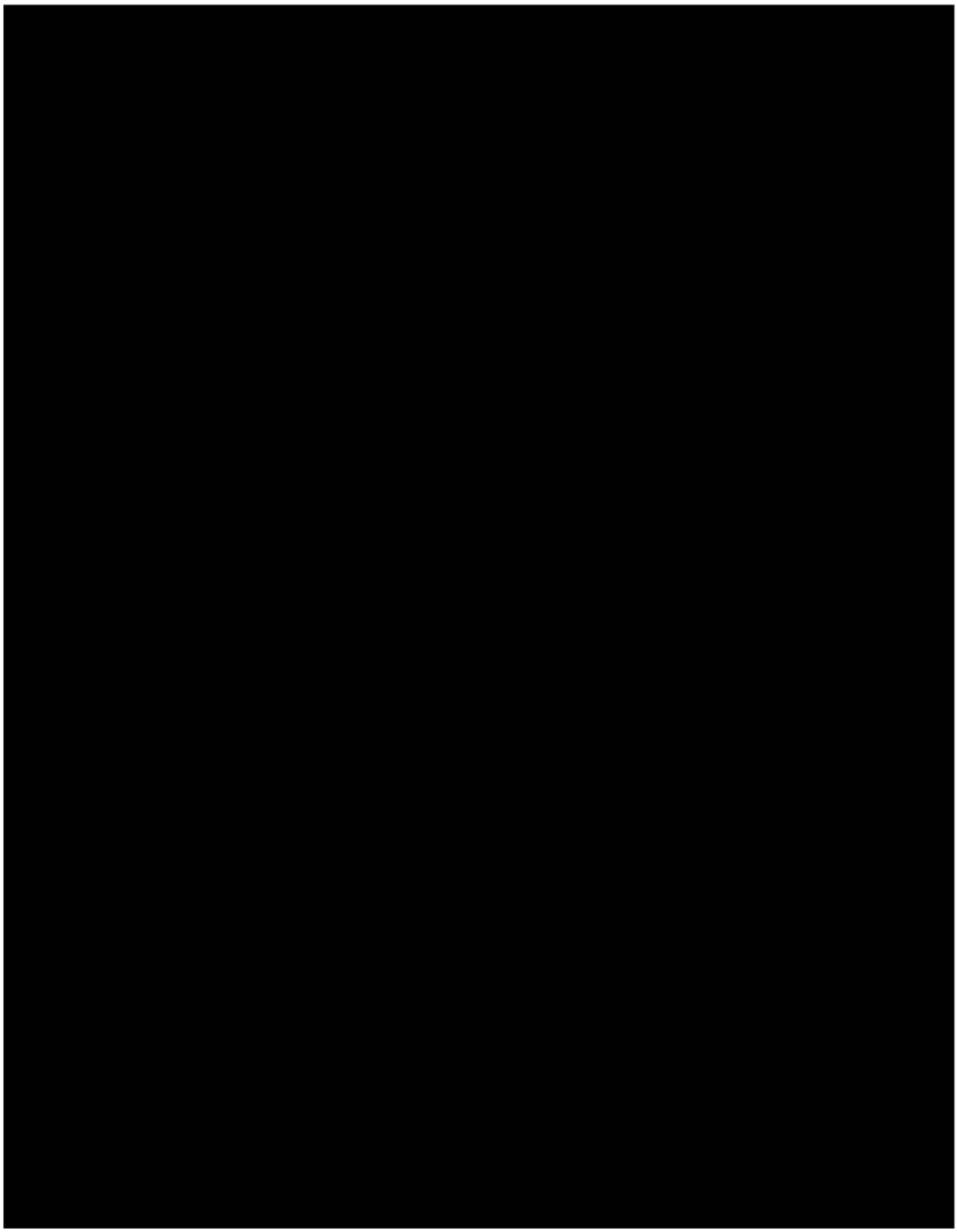


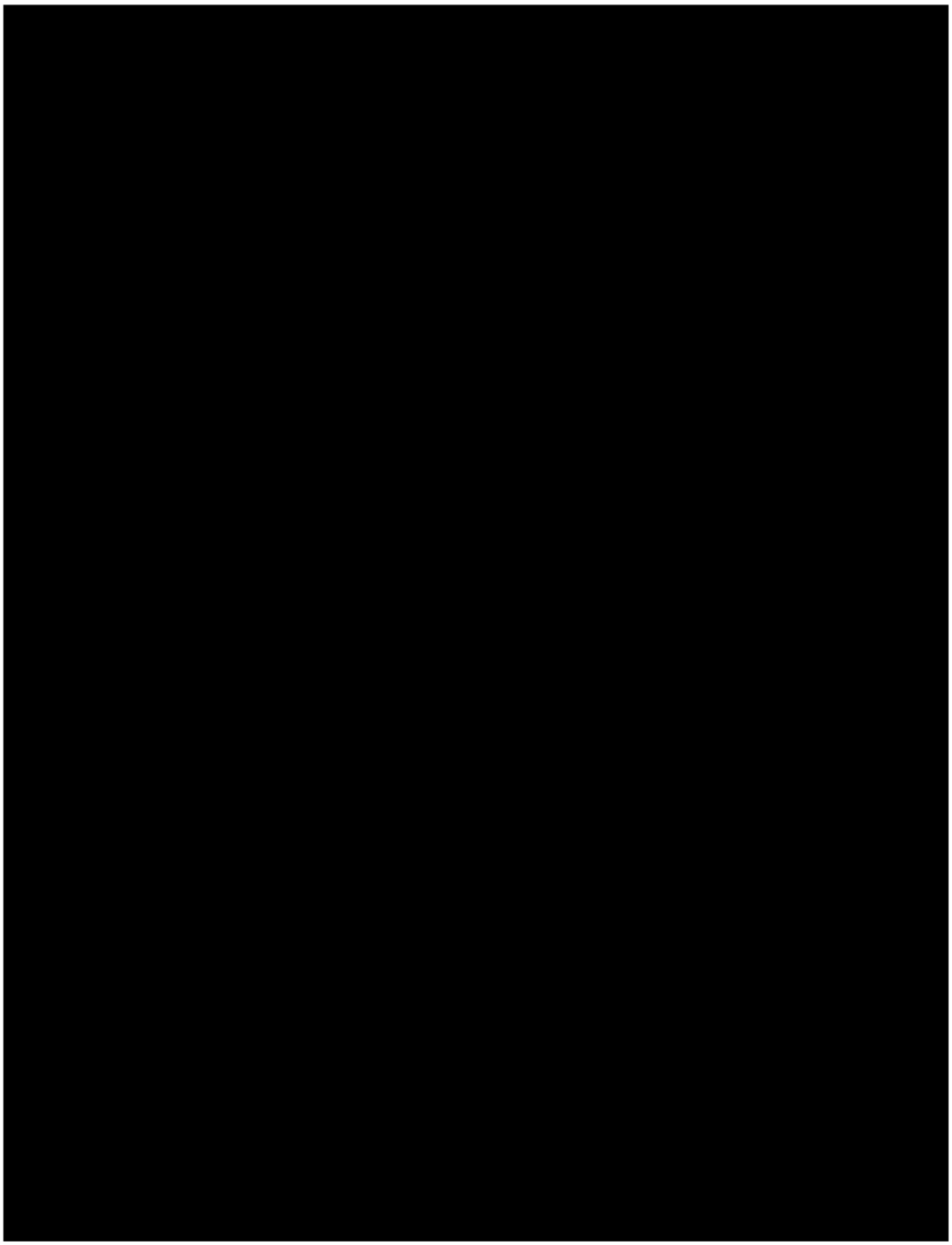












APPENDIX C: KEY LEGISLATION

Habitats Directive

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, or the 'Habitats Directive', is a European Union directive adopted in 1992 in response to the Bern Convention. Its aims are to protect approximately 220 habitats and 1,000 species listed in its several Annexes.

In the UK, the Habitats Directive is transposed into national law via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in Scotland, and via the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) in Northern Ireland.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994

Within Scotland, the primary legislation in relation to Habitats Regulations remains the 1994 statutory instrument.

All species protected under this legislation are European Protected Species and licensing is required for the undertaking of certain activities affecting these species. The protection is applied to all stages of the animals' life.

Under Regulations 39 of the Habitats Regulations it is unlawful to deliberately or recklessly:

- capture, injure or kill such an animal;
- harass an animal or group of animals;
- disturb an animal while it is occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- disturb an animal while it is rearing or otherwise caring for its young;
- obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place, or otherwise deny an animal use of a breeding site or resting place;
- disturb an animal in a manner or in circumstances likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- disturb an animal in a manner or in circumstances likely to impair its ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or otherwise care for its young;
- disturb an animal while it is migrating or hibernating;
- take or destroy its eggs (in Scotland, this is relevant only to the great crested newt and natterjack toad); and
- disturb any cetacean (dolphin, porpoise, or whale).

If impacts to protected species are considered unavoidable then the works may need to be carried out under a site-specific licence from NatureScot. Certain displacement operations may be carried out under a Class licence by a registered person or a site-specific licence.

Species listed on Annex II of the Habitats Regulations are attributed further protection which means that Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) may be designated to internationally important sites for these species.

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

This is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in the UK. This legislation is the chief means by which the 'Bern Convention' and the Birds Directive are implemented in the UK. Since it was first introduced, the Act has been amended several times.

The Act makes it an offence to (with exception to species listed in Schedule 2) intentionally:

- kill, injure, or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Or to intentionally do the following to a wild bird listed in Schedule 1:

- disturbs any wild bird while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or
- disturbs dependent young of such a bird.

In addition, the Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5;
- interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places; and
- The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking wild animals.

[redacted]

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

This Act offers a form of protection to all wild species of mammals, irrespective of other legislation, and focussed on animal welfare, rather than conservation.

Unless covered by one of the exceptions, a person is guilty of an offence if he mutilates, kicks, beats, nails or otherwise impales, stabs, burns, stones, crushes, drowns, drags or asphyxiates any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

Its application is typically restricted to preventing deliberate harm to wildlife (in general) during construction works etc.

Global IUCN Red List

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Threatened Species was devised to provide a list of those species that are most at risk of becoming extinct globally. It provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information about threatened taxa around the globe.

The system catalogues threatened species into groups of varying levels of threat, which are: Extinct (EX), Extinct in the Wild (EW), Critically Endangered (CE), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Least Concern (LC), Data Deficient (DD), Not Evaluated (NE). Criteria for designation into each of the categories is complex and consider several principles.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) identify habitat and species conservation priorities at a local level (typically at the County level), and are usually drawn up by a consortium of local Government organisations and conservation charities.

Some LBAPs may also include Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and/or Species Action Plans (SAP), which are used to guide and inform the local decision-making process

National Planning Framework

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is the top tier of planning policy. The Framework provides guidance to local authorities and other agencies on planning policy and the operation of the planning system.

“Policy 1 gives significant weight to the nature crisis to ensure that it is recognised as a priority in all plans and decisions. Policy 4 protects and enhances natural heritage, and this is further supported by Policy 5 on soils and Policy 6 on forests, woodland and trees. Policy 20 also promotes the expansion and connectivity of blue and green infrastructure, whilst Policy 10 recognises the particular sensitivities of coastal areas.

Protection of the natural features of brownfield land is also highlighted in Policy 9, and protection of the green belt in Policy 8 will ensure that biodiversity in these locations is conserved and accessible to communities, bringing nature into the design and layout of our cities, towns, streets and spaces in Policy 14.

Most significantly, Policy 3 plays a critical role in ensuring that development will secure positive effects for biodiversity. It rebalances the planning system in favour of conserving, restoring and enhancing biodiversity and promotes investment in nature-based solutions, benefiting people and nature. The policy ensures that Local Development Plans (LDPs) protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and promote nature recovery and nature restoration. Proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including by restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks. Adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, of development proposals on the natural environment will be minimised through careful planning and design, taking into account the need to reverse biodiversity loss. Development proposals for national, major or Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks, so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention. Proposals for local development will include appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity.”

See here for full details: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/