Literature Review on Nearby Ecological Baseline Condition

1. Introduction

1.1.1 The Application Site is located at the far fringe of Nam Sang Wai, connecting to Shan Pui Road via a local track road. The Application Site falls within the Wetland Buffer Area (WBA) as designated under the TPB PG-No. 12C for "Application for Developments within Deep Bay Area under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance.

1.1.2 Complying with its "no-net-loss in wetland" principle, this Proposed Development is in line with the guideline's intention to protect the ecological value and functions of the existing fish ponds and wetlands within the sensitive Wetland Conservation Area (WCA) through the rehabilitation of agricultural area and fish ponds. Development within the WBA causing negative impacts on the ecological value of the WCA should be avoided unless appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.

1.1.3 According to the TPB PG-No. 12C for "Application for Developments within Deep Bay Area under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance", for development or redevelopment within the WBA, which requires planning permission from the Board, an ecological impact assessment (EcoIA) would be required to demonstrate that the negative impacts could be mitigated through positive measures unless the use/development are exempted from the requirement of EcoIA, for instance 'Agricultural Use (except in the "Site of Special Scientific Interest" ("SSSI") Zone)'. Also, as considered by the AFCD, EcoIA could be exempted for 'Agricultural Use (except in SSSI Zone)' for this s.16 planning application.

1.1.4 A desktop research on the nearby ecological baseline condition has been prepared and conducted to evaluate the potential ecological impact associated with the Proposed Development within the Application Site.

2 The Site

2.1.1 Located at the far fringe of Nam Sang Wai, the surrounding environment of the Application Site is in rural village context intermixed with temporary uses. The Application Site is surrounded by the Shan Pui Village, Shan Pui Chung Hau Tsuen and Chung Hau Yu Man San Tsuen, with other low-rise residential developments.

2.1.2 The area surrounding Nam Sang Wai was formerly active fishponds, but these were filled over the course of the channelisation works and it is now largely grassland and plantation woodland. Part of Nam Sang Wai is occupied by active fishponds is also subject to disturbance from fish farming activities and from the residents of farming and domestic structures.

2.1.3 In addition to the active and more recently abandoned fishponds, there is a number of fishponds which were abandoned many years ago and which have undergone ecological succession due to siltation and colonisation of vegetation.

2.1.4 Nam Sang Wai lies at the intertidal confluence of the Kam Tin Main Drainage Channel (KTMDC) to the east and the Shan Pui River Channel (SPRC) to the west. Both rivers have been channelised with construction completed in 1997.

3 Relevant Legislation, Standards and Guidelines

3.1.1 Relevant legislation, standards, guidelines and related documents that are relevant to this literature review as follows: -

- Forests and Countryside Ordinance (Cap. 96) and its subsidiary legislation, the Forestry Regulations (Cap. 96A);
- Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (WAPO) (Cap. 170);
- Country Parks Ordinance (Cap. 208) and its subsidiary legislation;
- Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) (Cap. 499) and the Technical Memorandum on Environmental Impact Assessment Process (EIAO-TM);
- Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586) and its subsidiary legislation;
- Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines Chapter 10, "Conservation";
- Planning, Environment &. Lands Branch Technical Circular No. 1/97 / Works Branch Technical Circular No. 4/97, "Guidelines for Implementing the Policy on Off-site Ecological Mitigation Measures";
- EIAO Guidance Note (GN) No. 3/2010 – Flexibility and Enforceability of Mitigation Measures Proposed in an EIA Report;
- EIAO GN No. 6/2010 - Some Observations on Ecological Assessment from the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance Perspective;
- EIAO GN No. 7/2023 – Ecological Baseline Survey for Ecological Assessment; and
- EIAO GN No. 10/2023 – Methodologies for Terrestrial and Freshwater Ecological Baseline Surveys.

3.1.2 The following Mainland legislation have also been made reference to this literature review: -

- List of Wild Animals under State Priority Conservation, promulgated by the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Affairs; and
- List of Wild Plants under the State Priority Protection, promulgated by the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

3.1.3 Other international conventions and guidelines that are relevant to this literature review include the followings: -

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species; and
- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

4 Literature Review

4.1.1 The following previous studies and information sources were reviewed for this literature review: -

- Proposed Temporary Transitional Housing and Ancillary Uses for a Period of 3 Years with Filling of Land and Excavation of Land (Approved planning application No. A/YL-NSW-281);
- Proposed Residential Development and Minor Relaxation of Plot Ratio and Building Height Restrictions with Filling of Land and Excavation of Land (Approved planning application No. A/YL-NSW-282);
- Proposed Comprehensive Development with Wetland Enhancement (CDWE) at Nam Sang Wai and Lut Chau (EIA No. AEIAR-266/2025);
- Yuen Long Barrage Scheme (EIA No. AEIAR-228/2021);
- Improvement of Yuen Long Town Nullah (Town Centre Section) (EIA No. AEIAR-223/2020);
- Yuen Long Effluent Polishing Plant (EIA No. AEIAR-220/2019);
- Annual Reports and other publications of The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS);
- Porcupine! – Newsletter of Division of Ecology & Biodiversity of University of Hong Kong;
- The Terrestrial Biodiversity Survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong;
- Hong Kong Biodiversity – Newsletter of the Agriculture, Fisheries and

Conservation Department (AFCD); and

- Other publications by the AFCD.

4.1.2 Locations of the above approved planning applications are illustrated in **Diagram 1** below.

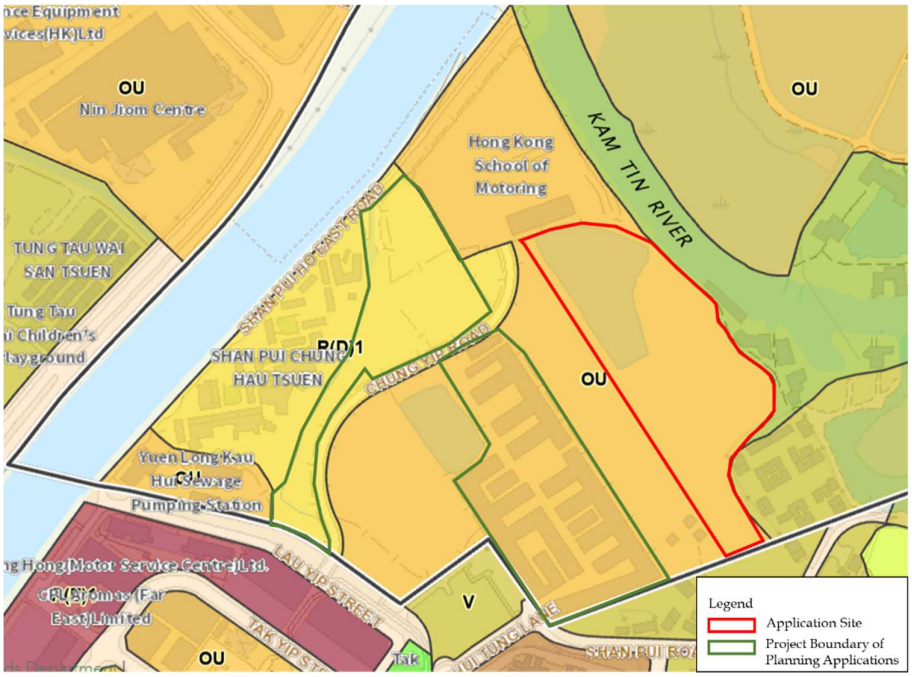

Diagram 1 Previous Approved Planning Applications with submitted and approved Ecological Impact Assessments near the Subject Site
(Source: Town Planning Board, HKSAR Government)

4.1.3 Locations of the above approved EIAs are illustrated in **Diagram 2** below.

Diagram 2 Previous Approved Environmental Impact Assessments near the Subject Site

(Source: Environmental Protection Department, HKSAR Government)

5 Methodology

5.1.1 The Study Area includes all areas within 500 metres from the Project Boundary, shown in **Diagram 3**.

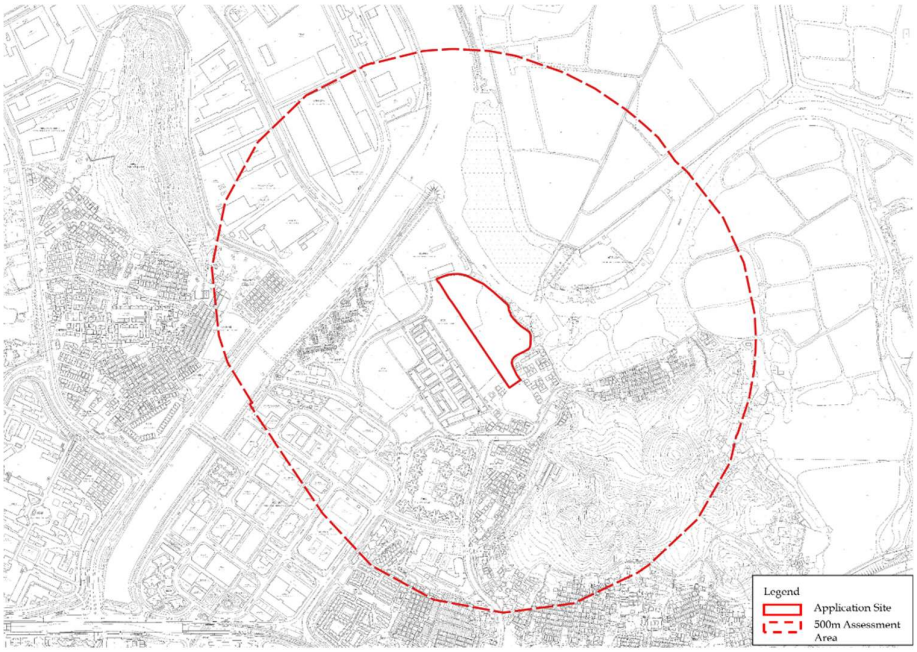

Diagram 3 Assessment Area of the Subject Site

5.1.2 The Application Site is located within the WBA surrounded by the Hong Kong School of Motoring, the KTMDC and residential areas. The planning intention of the WBA is to protect the ecological integrity of the fish ponds and wetland within the WCA and prevent development that would have a negative off-site disturbance impact on the ecological value of fish ponds, while the planning intention of the WCA is to conserve the ecological value of the fish ponds which form an integral part of the wetland ecosystem in the Deep Bay Area. It comprises the existing and contiguous, active or abandoned fish ponds in the Deep Bay Area, which should all be conserved. New development within the WCA would not be allowed unless it is required to support the conservation of the ecological value of the area or the development is an essential infrastructural project with overriding public interest.

6 Literature Review

6.1.1 A desktop research on the nearby ecological baseline condition was carried out to evaluate the potential ecological impact associated with the Proposed Development within the Application Site.

6.1.2 Findings of relevant studies or surveys were reviewed and summarized in

Table 1 below, all the above have been reviewed and approved by the AFCD.

Relevant Literature	Habitat and Vegetation	Avifauna	Mammal	Herpetofauna	Butterfly and Odonate	Firefly	Fisheries
Proposed Temporary Transitional Housing and Ancillary Uses for a Period of 3 Years with Filling of Land and Excavation of Land (Approved planning application No. A/YL-NSW-281)	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Proposed Residential Development and Minor Relaxation of Plot Ratio and Building Height Restrictions with Filling of Land and Excavation of Land (Approved planning application No. A/YL-NSW-282)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Proposed Comprehensive Development with Wetland Enhancement (CDWE) at Nam Sang Wai and Lut Chau (EIA No. AEIAR-266/2025)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Yuen Long Barrage Scheme (EIA No. AEIAR-228/2021)		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Yuen Long Effluent Polishing Plant (EIA No. AEIAR-220/2019)		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Monthly Waterbird Monitoring Winter Report 2022-2023. Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site Waterbird Monitoring Programme, Monthly Waterbird Monitoring		✓					
Monthly Waterbird Monitoring Summer Report 2022. Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site Waterbird Monitoring Programme, Monthly Waterbird Monitoring		✓					
The List of Wild Plants and Wild Animals Under Special State Protection under the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Wildlife		✓	✓				

Table 1 Relevant studies or surveys on Literature Review

(Source: Environmental Protection Department and Town Planning Board, HKSAR Government)

Habitat and Vegetation

6.1.3 The above relevant studies or surveys recorded that Nam Sang Wai mostly comprised active and abandoned fishponds (some of which had been colonised by reedbed or grassland), while other habitats included mangrove, watercourses, terrestrial grassland, plantation, temporary structures (houses and other buildings) and other developed areas (roads).

6.1.4 Surveys of the approved planning application No. A/YL-NSW-282 recorded that most of the forementioned Assessment Area (of about 75%) were covered by developed area/wasteland, while plantation, channelized watercourse and reedbed were also recorded ranging with the percentage of about 7% to 14%. Most of the plantation were planted for screening and greening purpose that dominated by landscaping and horticultural, of which species such as *Batavia Cinnamon*, *River Red Gum*, *Queen Crape Myrtle* and *Tree Cotton*. Some self-colonized shrub and herb species were also recorded, namely *Garden Spurge*, *Goose Grass* and *Microcos*. All the recorded species were commonly found in the urban area in Hong Kong.

6.1.5 Referring to the EIA No. AEIAR-266/2025, active fishponds at Nam Sang Wai were maintained with mostly open water and little emergent vegetation, whilst abandoned fishponds had been progressively colonised by vegetation to varying extents, so that some retained open water while others were overgrown with grasses. Grassland was dominated by common grass species, including *Cynodon dactylon*, *Chloris barbata* and *Eleusine indica*. Survey findings also observed that most habitat types at Nam Sang Wai were wetland (which mostly dominated by reedbed), only a small area of secondary woodland was present to the south of Shan Pui Tsuen and Shan Pui Hung Tin Tsuen, this area was also heavily influenced by human activities.

6.1.6 Both approved planning application No. A/YL-NSW-282 and EIA No. AEIAR-266/2025 noted that most of the ponds within Nam Sang Wai were abandoned for a period of years, and being dominated by *Spiny Bears Breech*, *Blunt Signal-grass*, *Gairo Morning Glory* and *Burma-reed*, none flora species of conservation interest were recorded.

6.1.7 Other species including wet grassland was recorded in the survey of the approved planning application No. A/YL-NSW-281, the exotic *Brachiaria mutuca* was recorded, in which is a common lowland weed that readily colonizes wet areas in wasteland. Mangoves belt was also recorded along a section of Nam Sang Wai Road immediately adjacent to the wet grassland across the KTMDC. True mangrove species *Exocecaria agallocha* and *Kanelia obovate*, as well as mangrove associate species *Acanthus ilicifolius* and *Hibiscus tiliaceus* were commonly found in Hong Kong.

6.1.8 Our Project Site is currently fenced off, largely paved with vegetations covering a major portion of the site and a pond is situated in the northwest. Specifically, all studies and surveys also illustrated that our Project Site were covered by plantation and abundant pond, directly reflecting the current

condition of our Application Site. Maps of surveyed habitat and plantation extracted from the relevant studies or surveys are provided in **Diagram 4.**

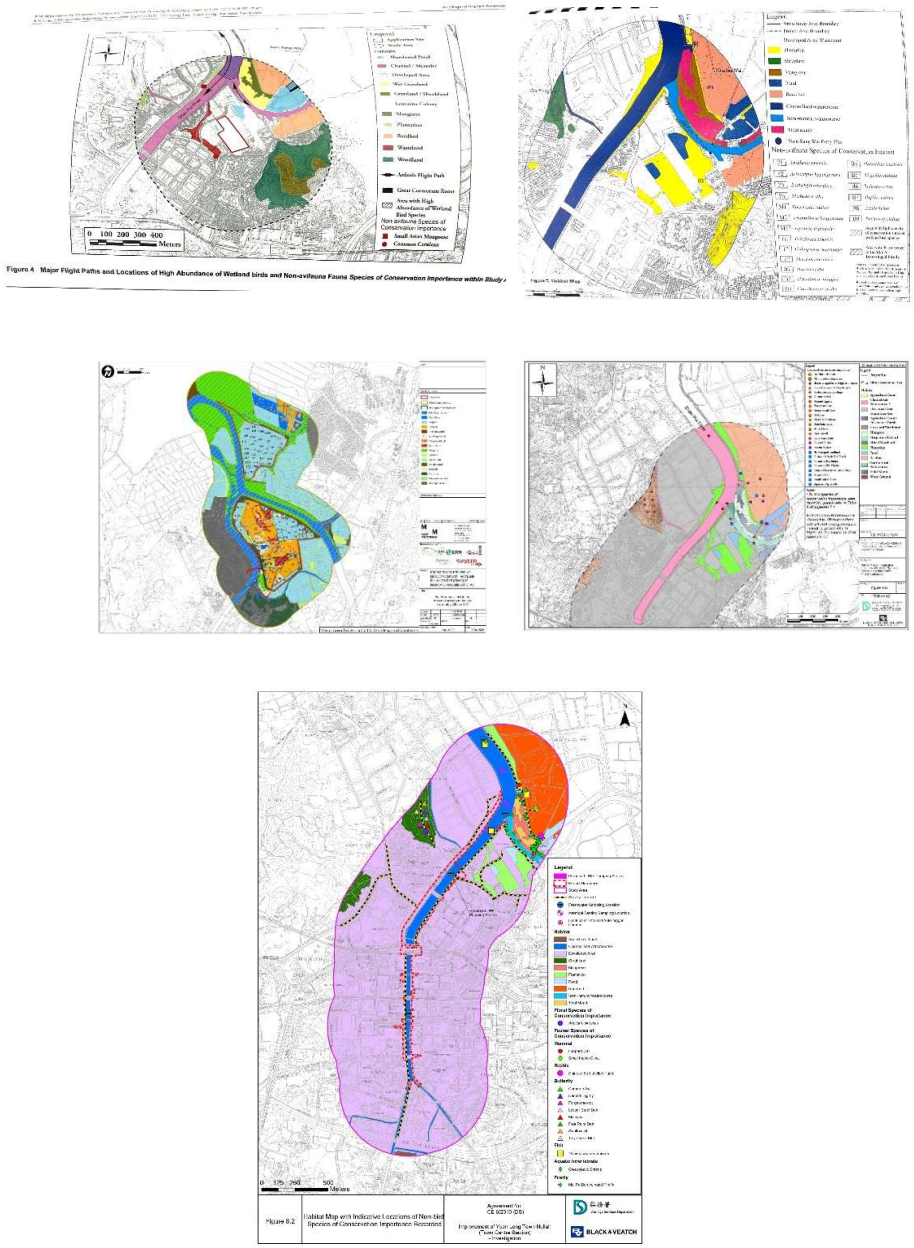

Diagram 4 Surveyed Habitat and Plantation Extracted from Relevant Studies or Surveys for Literature Review
(Source: Environmental Protection Department and Town Planning Board, HKSAR Government)

6.1.9 No plant species of conservation importance were recorded at Nam Sang Wai.

Avifauna

6.1.10 Referring to the above relevant studies or surveys recorded, all survey findings were similar. Based on the latest EIA No. AEIAR-266/2025, relatively high numbers of wetland birds were recorded foraging or roosting as Nam Sang Wai is dominated by fishponds, notably Wigeon, ardeids, Pied Avocet and Black-headed Gull, together with the wetland-associated Collared Crow and starlings.

6.1.11 Some waterbird species recorded, including Little Grebe, Yellow Bittern, Common Moorhen and White-breasted Waterhen, are known to breed in fishponds and reedbeds in Hong Kong. The only confirmed breeding behaviour took place in the Shan Pui River Egretry. The total number of nests at the Egretry has decreased significantly since the first recorded in the 2019 breeding season, the cause of the decline is unknown but similar declines were noted at other Egretries in the Deep Bay Area in 2022 (Anon 2022). This might be related to the absence of obstacle along the KTMDC and SPRC, and the presence of foraging habitats (i.e. mudflat) in these rivers (approved planning application No. A/YL-NSW-281).

6.1.12 Noted from the Monthly Waterbird Monitoring Summer Report 2022 and Winter Report 2022-2023 by the HKBWS, the recorded waterbird groups were less than the survey conducted in the year 2021 summer and winter.

6.1.13 No significant waterbird flight path was observed.

Mammal

6.1.14 To summarize the above relevant studies or surveys, less than 10 mammal species were recorded. Of which, Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Leopard Cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), Small Indian Civet (*Viverricula indica*), Small Asian Mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*) and Japanese Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus abramus*) were considered of conservation importance.

6.1.15 Currently, no species with conservation importance was recorded within the 500m Assessment Area of our Project Site throughout the present ecological survey and data from AFCD.

6.1.16 Based on the EIA No. AEIAR-266/2025, no evidence was found to suggest significant bat roosts occur in Nam Sang Wai.

Herpetofauna

6.1.17 Based on the above relevant studies or surveys, the maximum of 7 amphibian species and 12 reptile species were recorded respectively. All species were common throughout Hong Kong, and none were considered of conservation importance.

Butterfly and Odonate

6.1.18 According to the above relevant studies or surveys, the butterflies recorded

in Nam Sang Wai were largely common and widespread species that feed on common flora during larval and adult stages (DSD, 2002, DSD, 2004, MLI Ltd, 2008, and EIA No. AEIAR-220/2019). The maximum number of recorded butterflies among the above relevant studies or surveys were 41, including five species of conservation importance namely *Common Awl*, *Pale Palm Dart, Danaid Egg-fly*, *Grass Demon (Udaspes folus)*, *Spotless Grass Yellow (Eurema laeta)* and *Small Cabbage White (Pieris rapae)*, all of which are considered of Local Concern (LC), with the Hong Kong status of rare to very rare (Fellowes *et al*. 2002).

6.1.19 No dragonflies recorded at Nam Sang Wai.

Firefly

6.1.20 Survey on the Mai Po Bent-winged Firefly (MPBWF) has been recorded under the EIA No. AEIAR-266/2025. Only small numbers of the MPBWF were observed in the mangroves along KTMDC. No MPBWF were observed in other habitats at Nam Sang Wai.

Fisheries

6.1.21 Noted that pond fish culture has long been practised in the New Territories. Mostly, only primarily freshwater and brackish water species were included for pond fishing, while certain high-value marine species have also been cultured in diluted seawater by fish farms in recent years, such as Giant Grouper, Yellowfin Seabream and Spotted Scat, which were found closer to the coast at Mai Po.

6.1.22 Referring to the above relevant studies or surveys, the recorded fish ponds at Nam Sang Wai which were actively managed for fish production the physical environment were generally in poor context due to improper management practices and unauthorized activities. These include the storage of materials unrelated to fisheries (i.e. abandoned vehicles, containers, construction materials, general waste), illegal dumping of toxic materials and construction waste, burning of waste, suction dredging of fishponds into adjacent creeks connected to Deep Bay Area, and the destruction of mangroves to expand fishponds.

6.1.23 No capture fisheries nor other forms of aquaculture, including marine fish culture and oyster culture, were identified within or near the Assessment Area.

7 Identification and Evaluation of Potential Impacts

7.1.1 With reference to the aerial photos, the Application Site has been engaged in agricultural use for a long period of time. From 1976 to 2006, the Application Site was used for pond fish culture and cultivation activities. Subsequently, there was court proceeding which halt the agricultural activities on the Application Site. It is left vacant from early 2010s onwards.

Diagram 5 Aerial Photos of 2011 (Left) and 2024 (Right)
(Source: Aerial Photo no. CS32480 taken in 2011 and Aerial Photo no. E237024C taken in 2024 both by Lands Department, HKSAR Government)

7.1.2 The Proposed Development will be operated by experienced cultivators for agricultural use daily, subject to the actual operation by the future users. South portion of the Application Site will be for rehabilitation of agricultural land (i.e. growing vegetables and crops), and taking advantage of the existing pond in the northwest portion, pond fish culture for freshwater fish would also be considered.

7.1.3 Refer to **Section 6** above, it noted that findings of all studies and surveys have summarized our Project Site were plantation and pond, and hence no species were recorded within the Project Site. Direct habitat loss arising from the Proposed Development including the footprint of the development (primary impact) and habitat which will be lost due to the conversion of one type of wetland habitat to another to mitigate for the wetland area to be developed (secondary impact) are minimal. Developed area habitats within the assessment area mostly fall within the WBA as well as our Project Site, thus developed area habitats is of low ecological value. There will be no net permanent loss of the area of plantation, whilst new plantation will be included under this Project as provided in the Tree Preservation and Landscaping Proposal in **Annex 5**.

7.1.4 As part of the Proposed Development will be regularized the ponds that have been filled for more than two decades, thus pond fish culture will be proposed in the existing pond. Habitat loss to species is unlikely happened, no net loss of open water and fishpond. The Project Site was not the habitat for wetland

bird and/or waterbird species. There will be no loss of pond area due to the proposed pond fish culture and no significant increase in human disturbance to habitats is anticipated comparing with the current status of the abundant pond. No direct or indirect disruption to the species, and hence the net effect of the changes to habitat areas and water areas within the Project Site will be ecologically positive.

7.1.5 No pollution of air or water may arise from a large number of different sources and could occur during construction, operation or both.

7.1.6 Fragmentation impacts arise where development or other human activities impede or sever ecological linkages between or within habitats and areas. Construction of a development between habitats which show ecological linkage may result in the loss of these links and thus a decrease in the suitability of the habitat for particular species and a reduction in the overall value of the habitat. Mitigation measures as discussed in **Section 8** will be proposed to reduce the potential impacts, the overall impact shall be minor.

8 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

8.1.1 Mitigation measures are proposed during both construction and operation phases, to avoid, minimise, mitigate and compensate for potential environmental impacts to ensure that the Proposed Development do not harm the wetland or impose adverse environmental effects.

8.1.2 The Application Site will retain its original agriculture use and will adhere to the relevant mitigation measures and requirements outlined in the latest "*Code of Practice on Handling Environmental Aspects of Temporary Uses and Open Storage Sites*" issued by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to minimise any potential environmental impact. The Proposed Development would have irreversible adverse ecological impact to the surrounding area and undermine the integrity of the wetland ecosystem.

8.1.3 Precautionary measures will be carried out, including but not limited to no substantial piling works, no night time construction works, adjusting outdoor lighting to lower intensity, tree planting along the site boundary, adopting good site practices, etc..

8.1.4 Relevant environmental protection/ pollution control ordinance will be strictly complied during construction phase as follows: -

Air Quality

- Construction works and exhaust emission from the Powered Mechanical Equipment (PME) are the potential sources of air quality impact during construction phase. To mitigate the construction air quality impact, the control measures stipulated in the Air pollution Control (Construction Dust) Regulation and other relevant regulation

and standards shall be followed. With proper control measures, air quality impact is expected to be minimal.

Noise

- All the construction works will be conducted between 07:00 to 19:00 hours on any day not being a Sunday or general holiday. To eliminate the construction noise, *Practice Note for Professional Persons Minimizing Noise from Construction Activities (ProPECC PN 1/24)* shall be followed. In addition, quieter construction method and or equipment will be prioritised and adopted as far as practicable. With proper measures, noise impact is expected to be minimal.

Water Quality

- Surface runoff generated from the Site will be generated during construction phase. To prevent the runoff entering the surrounding waters, Best Management practices, proper site practice and good site management in accordance with *Practice Note for Professional Persons Construction Site Drainage (ProPECC PN 2/24)* shall be followed.
- Furthermore, *ETWB Technical Circular (Works) No. 5/2005 Protection of natural streams / rivers from adverse impacts arising from construction works (ETWB TC (Works) No. 5/2005)* should be adopted where applicable to minimise the potential water quality impacts from the construction works.
- With appropriate measures and good site practices, water quality impact is not expected during construction phase.

Light Impact

- The construction activities will only conduct during daytime. Therefore, light pollution is not anticipated.

9 Conclusions

9.1.1 A literature review surveys have been conducted making reference to the completed studies and surveys that were reviewed and approved by the AFCD, to evaluate the potential ecological impact associated with the Proposed Development within the Application Site.

9.1.2 The Proposed Development with the proposed operation of pond fish culture and cultivation activities will improve the ecological impact in the local context of Nam Sang Wai as compared to the baseline condition. This Project will in fact have a positive effect to Nam Sang Wai in the long run. As such, no significant adverse drainage impact is expected.

9.1.3 Direct habitat loss arising from the Proposed Development is considered minimal, no net permanent loss of the area of plantation nor pond area under

the Proposed Development. No direct or indirect disruption to the species, and hence the net effect of the changes to habitat areas and water areas within the Project Site will be ecologically positive. The cumulative impacts with other concurrent developments were considered insignificant.

9.1.4 To address potential impacts on wildlife during the construction and operational phases of the Project, mitigation measures will be adopted to ensure no adverse infrastructural nor environmental impacts on the surrounding environment.

10 Reference

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