

Scroof Hill

Bird Survey
June 2021



Report prepared by [REDACTED]

Tinto Countryside Management Solutions
www.tintocountrysidemanagementsolutions.com

Mobile: [REDACTED] Email: info@tintocountrysidemanagementsolutions.com

SUMMARY

At the start of spring of 2021 Tinto Countryside Management Solutions, (TCMS) was asked by [REDACTED] to carry out a bird survey and in particular wader activity relating to the footprint of the proposed afforestation on the farmland at Scroof Hill.

The study area covered seven main areas within the wider farm with two surveys being undertaken relating to these areas and immediate adjacent ground.

Limited wader species were recorded on site and in some cases, distant territorial displays adjacent to the areas were noted.

A range of other bird species were also recorded, including a few that merit conservation concern.

· · · · ·
· · · · ·

Table of Contents

SUMMARY.....	2
1. Introduction	4
1.1 Site Description	4
1.2 Aims of Survey.....	4
2. Method	4
2.1 Field Survey.....	4
2.1.1 Waders.....	4
2.2 Conditions	5
2.3 Designated sites	5
3. Results.....	5
3.1 Waders	5
3.2 Raptors.....	6
3.3 Other birds	6
4. Discussion.....	7
5. Recommendations	7
Appendix 1 Summary of all bird registration.....	8
Appendix 2 Compartment maps	11
Appendix 4 Images	13

1. Introduction

1.1 Site Description

The site comprises a working farm situated Northeast of the village of Stow and adjacent to Lauder Common in the Scottish Borders region. Lying at approximately 310 to 367m, centred on NT 480/470. The Farm consists of predominately sheep and cattle rearing with rough grazing, permanent grass, temporary grass, and several burns. The site also has existing woodland/shelter belts and farm roads. The site was accessed from the B6362 parking by the cattle grid.

Improved grassland predominates in all of the compartments surveyed.

1.2 Aims of Survey

This bird survey was commissioned to provide information on the presence of predominantly farmland waders. Those species that are red-listed birds of conservation concern⁴ were noted.

2. Method

2.1 Field Survey

2.1.1 Waders

The survey method followed was an adaptation of the Brown & Shepherd (1993)².

All species displaying territorial, or breeding behaviour were recorded (e.g., in song, carrying food or nesting material, with young, alarm calling) were recorded on a field-map then digitized using QGIS®

Results are recorded in both table 2 and Appendix 1

Timings

Two visits were undertaken for breeding birds. Surveys were undertaken between April through to mid-June 2021, with approximately 3-4 weeks between visits and generally in good conditions; see

Table 1.

2.1.2 Bird sightings

Other bird sightings were recorded following BTO activity and symbol protocols and Breeding Bird Survey procedures and highlighted in:

Appendix 1 Summary of all bird registrations.

¹ BTO/RSPB (2015) Birds of conservation concern 4: The red list for birds.

² Brown, A. F. and Shepherd, K. B. (1993) A method for censusing upland breeding wader populations.

Table 1. Survey dates and weather conditions

Survey	Date	Visibility	Temperature (°C)	Wind (Beaufort)	Conditions
1	26/4/2021	Good	+09 to +15	2-4	Overcast and dry (c50% cloud)
2	01/6/2021	Excellent	+09 to +18	2-3	Dry with sunny periods (c20% cloud)

2.2 Conditions

Both visits as per the Brown and Shepherd method coincided with good conditions, commencing at around 7.30 am and ending around 12.30pm.

2.3 Designated Sites

Nature Scot GIS datasets were interrogated for any protected sites with bird interest within a 2 km radius of the site. The site just skims the edge of the River Tweed SAC/SSSI to the west at the 2km.

3. Results

Results relate to associated proposed woodland planting schemes and compartment field numbers, either within that area or close by.

3.1 Waders

No waders were believed to be breeding within any of the survey compartments.

Two Lapwings were recorded in compartment 4 on visit two. They flew off from the ground and headed north away from the site. On returning to compartment 4, a couple of hours later no sign of the birds having returned and it is believed for them to be non-breeders.

Two Lapwings were recorded adjacent to compartment 1 on and could have been the pair flying in that direction from compartment 4 earlier.

A snipe was recorded calling adjacent to compartment 7 within a wet rushy area and believed to a territory.

On survey 1 and adjacent to compartment 4 a pair of curlew were recorded flying within Lauder Common and on survey 2 a single curlew was recorded flying in the same place. A distant calling curlew was noted to the south of the B6362 road opposite the cattle grid.

It was noted on both survey dates that dog walkers walking within Lauder Common along the boundary between compartments 3,4,6 &7. This will no doubt deter any curlew nesting close to the boundary of the two properties.

Table 2. Wader Registrations

Refer to Appendix 2 and Appendix 3

Species			Field Description /Compartment Number	Number of birds
Scientific name	Common name	BTO Code		
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lapwing	L.	Compartment 4 and not within survey area but adjacent to compartment 1.	2 Birds
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Snipe	SN	Not within survey area but adjacent to compartment 7 and within Lauder common.	1 Bird
<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Curlew	CU	Not within survey area but adjacent to compartment 4 and within Lauder Common.	2 Birds

- Snipe – Heard just one bird calling on visit two, indicating a territory adjacent to compartment 7. Suspected to be breeding within suitable habitat adjacent to some compartments.
- Curlew - No breeding pairs on site but believed to be at least 1 pair off the site within Lauder Common.
- Lapwing - two birds recorded on second visit flying off from compartment 4 and heading north. No territorial displays or breeding recorded.
- No oyster catchers were recorded with compartments or on adjacent land.

3.2 Raptors

- Buzzard – flying predominately along the boundaries of existing tree plantations. Believed to be at least one breeding pair using plantations adjacent to the compartments.
- Kestrel hunting over the recent tree planted area to the west of compartment 4.

3.3 Other birds

Thirty - one bird species were recorded (Appendix 1) with twenty of those species confirmed or suspected as breeding.

Notable species, (being on the BoCC4 Red list)

- Skylark – up to 10 individuals were noted displaying in the survey area and immediately adjacent. Juvenile birds were noted. Based on this assessment this species is considered not to be significantly more abundant than would be expected on other farmland of this type.
- Mistle Thrush – several birds noted feeding in the fields and taking food back to woodland blocks. Believed to be breeding in the area.

4. Discussion

Most species recorded were considered to be common species with stable UK populations (i.e., green listed) though there were a few breeding species shown in Appendix 1, that merit conservation consideration as they are either listed as Birds of Conservation Concern⁴ (BoCC4; red or amber listed) and/or listed on the Scottish Biodiversity List⁵.

Of the red listed species, mistle-thrush was recorded in association with the existing woodland blocks, and it would be hoped that this species would remain part of the avifauna if compartments were planted.

Red listed moorland/open ground birds include curlew, lapwing and skylark. Habitat for skylark would be lost if the site is afforested. However, skylark are likely to persist in unplanted areas while the trees are young.

Consideration should be taken in the planting design along the boundary between compartments, 3,4,6 & 7 and Lauder Common following recommendations below. This may have implications for curlew breeding success in the common, close to the boundary of the two properties.

It was noted on both survey dates that dog walkers walking within Lauder Common along the boundary between compartments 3,4,6 & 7. This will no doubt deter any curlew nesting close by.

5. Recommendations

The tree species does not affect breeding wader success, rather that all tree species could provide perching opportunities and cover for predators. However, having a mix of conifer and broadleaved species will benefit a wider range of bird species including red listed species like, mistle and song-thrush.

Guidance on tree, shrub, and hedge planting in relation to farmland wader conservation from **RSPB Farming and Crofting for Birds**³

‘Curlew - avoid nesting and feeding in areas close to tall tree and shrub cover. Avoid planting trees, shrubs, or hedges within 30 metres curlew nesting and feeding areas. The minimum viable area of open ground is approximately three hectares, but the ideal is to have more than 10 hectares of open ground’.

³http://ww2.rspb.org.uk/Images/Curlew_tcm9-207634.pdf (accessed 25/06/2021)

Appendix 1 - Summary of all bird registrations

Birds identified at Scroof Hill Forestry Grant Scheme areas (number of registrations of all bird species with confirmed or suspected breeding species within the compartment areas or immediately adjacent in **bold**)

BTO Species Code	Species		Survey Timing		Conservation and Protection Status (JNCC/BTO) ³⁻⁴
	Scientific name	Common name	April 26 th 2001	June 1 st 2001	
GJ	<i>Anser anser</i>	Greylag Goose		8	Amber
WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Woodpigeon	8	3	Green
MG	<i>Pica pica</i>	Magpie		1	Green
CU	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Curlew (Eurasian)	2 (not within area)	1 (not within area)	Red; BAP
SN	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Snipe		1 (not within area)	Amber
L.	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lapwing		2	Red; BAP
BZ	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Buzzard	3	3	Green
JD	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Jackdaw	2		Green
C.	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Carrion crow	6	2	Green
HG	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	European Herring Gull		8	Red
CC	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Common Chiffchaff		1	Green
CT	<i>Periparus ater</i>	Coal tit		1	Green
S.	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark	4	6	Red; BAP
LB	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Lesser Black-Backed Gull	2		Amber
M.	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Mistle Thrush	3	3	Red
WW	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Willow Warbler		1	Amber
BC	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Blackcap		1	Green
W.	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Northern Wheatear	4		Green
GC	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	Goldcrest	1	2	Green
WR	<i>Troglodytes</i>	Wren	2	4	Green
SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling		5	Red; BAP
B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Blackbird	2		Green
PH	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Common Pheasant	7	4	Green
K.	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Common Kestrel	1		Amber
PW	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Pied wagtail	1		Green
MP	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Meadow pipit	7	10	Amber

CH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Chaffinch			Green
RO	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Rook		12	Green
CR	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Crossbill, (common)	2		Green
GO	<i>Carduelis citrinella</i>	Goldfinch		6	Green

Most species recorded were considered to be common species with stable UK populations (i.e., green listed) though there were a few breeding species shown in the above table, that merit conservation consideration as they are either listed as Birds of Conservation Concern⁴ (BoCC4; red or amber listed) and/or listed on the Scottish Biodiversity List⁵.

⁴ https://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/birdsofconservationconcern4_tcm9-410743.pdf (accessed 25/06/2021)

⁵ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Wildlife-Habitats/16118/Biodiversitylist/SBL> (accessed 25/06/2021)

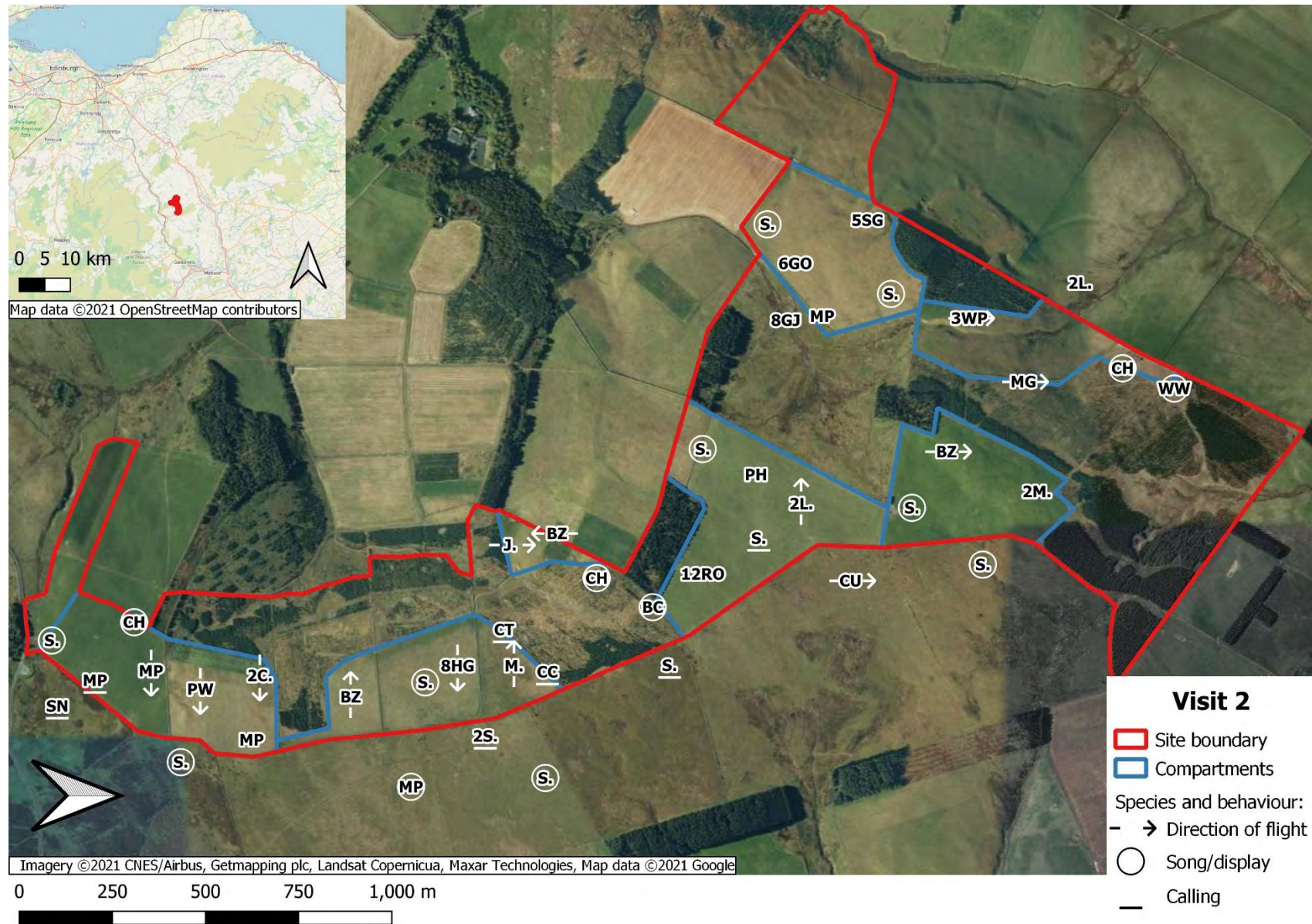
Appendix 2 - Compartment Map



Appendix 3 - Bird Survey Maps



Scroo Hill Bird Survey June 2021



Scroff Hill Bird Survey June 2021

Appendix 4 - Images



Compartment 1



Compartment 2



Compartment 3



Compartment 4



Compartment 5



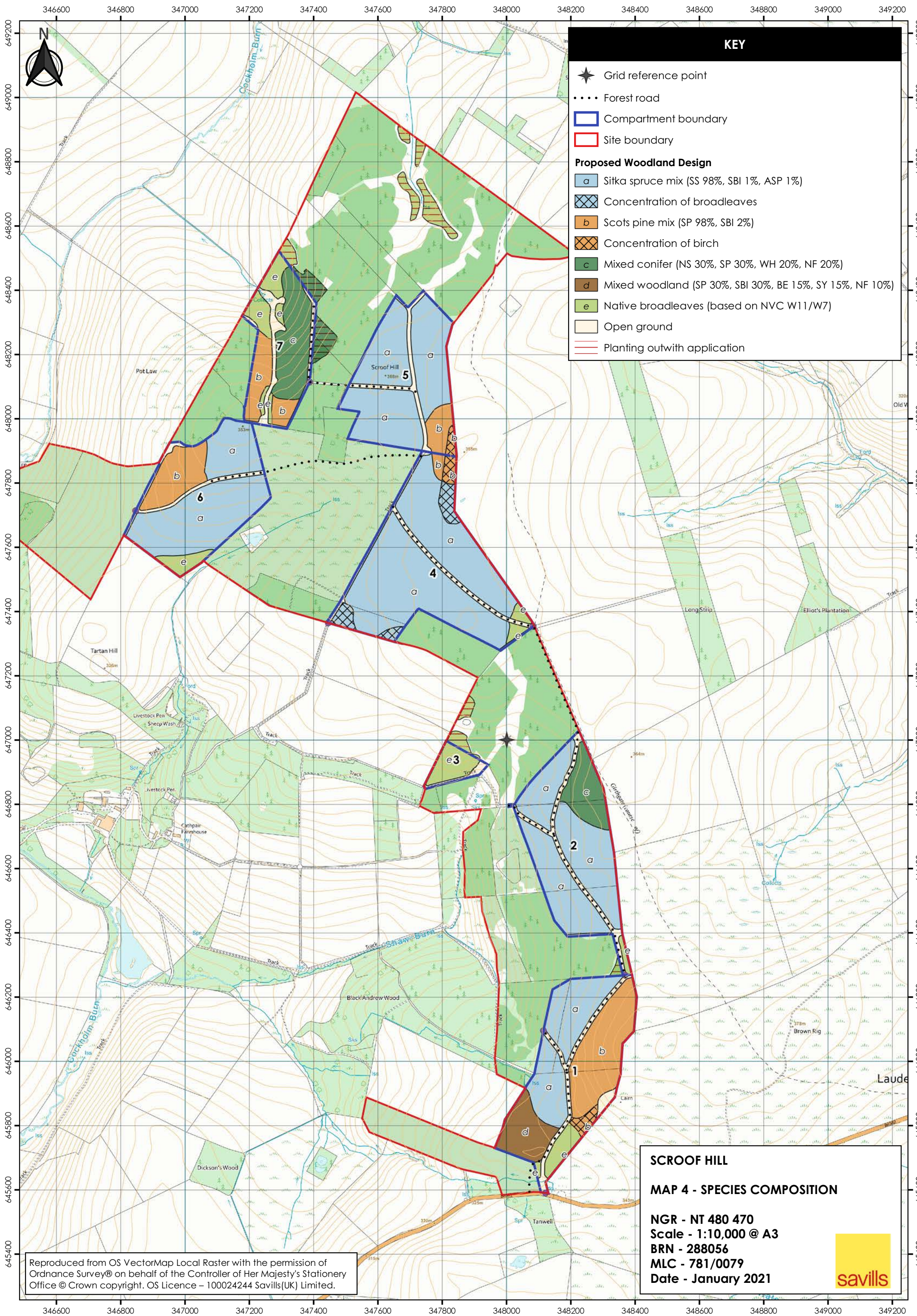
Compartment 6



Compartment 7



Boundary with Lauder Common



KEY

- ★ Grid reference point
- Forest road
- ▭ (Blue) Compartment boundary
- ▭ (Red) Site boundary

Proposed Woodland Design

- ▭ (Light Blue) Sitka spruce mix (SS 98%, SBI 1%, ASP 1%)
- ▭ (Cross-hatched) Concentration of broadleaves
- ▭ (Orange) Scots pine mix (SP 98%, SBI 2%)
- ▭ (Diagonal-hatched) Concentration of birch
- ▭ (Green) Mixed conifer (NS 30%, SP 30%, WH 20%, NF 20%)
- ▭ (Brown) Mixed woodland (SP 30%, SBI 30%, BE 15%, SY 15%, NF 10%)
- ▭ (Light Green) Native broadleaves (based on NVC W11/W7)
- ▭ (White) Open ground
- ▭ (Red outline) Planting outwith application

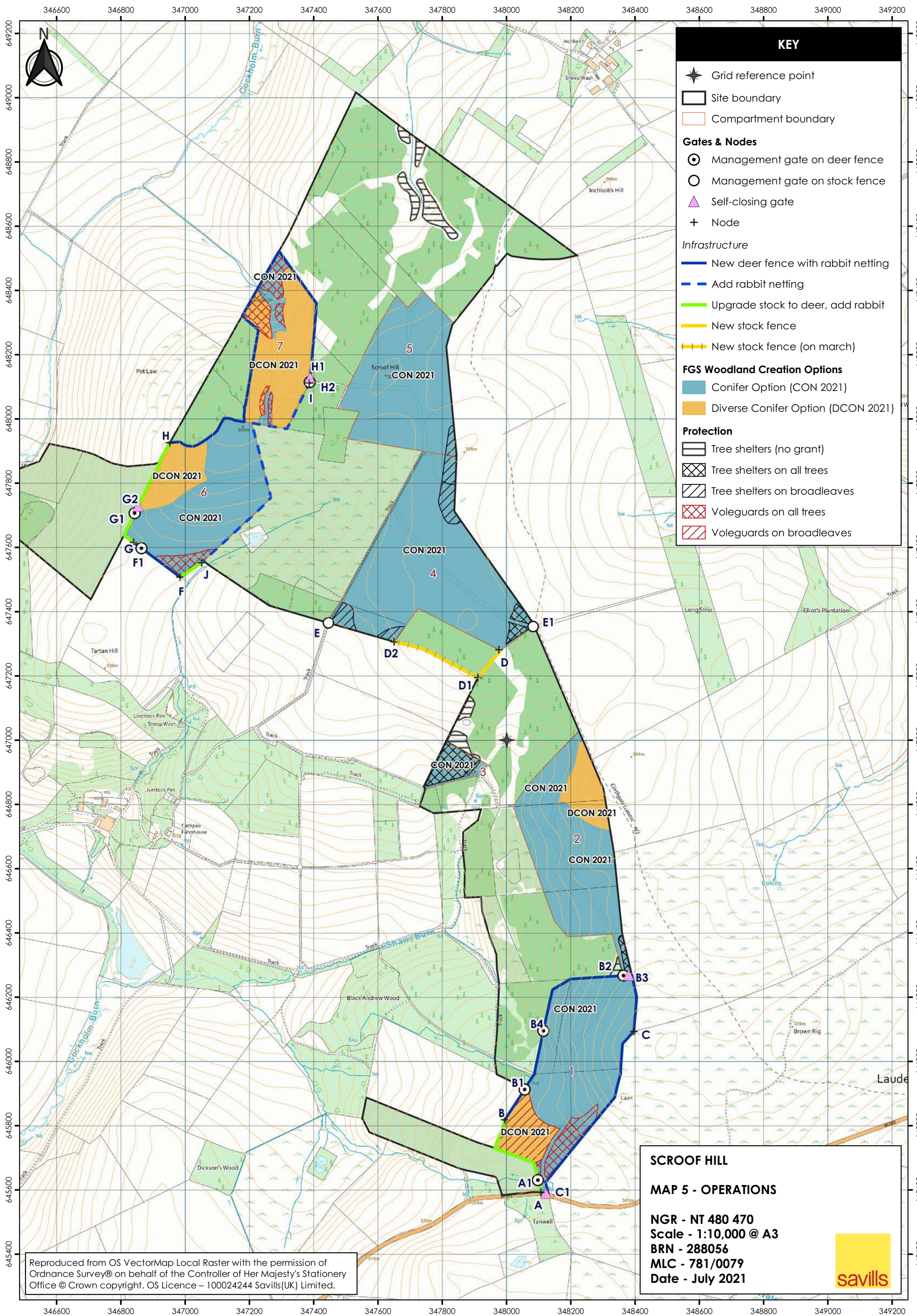
SCROOF HILL

MAP 4 - SPECIES COMPOSITION

NGR - NT 480 470
Scale - 1:10,000 @ A3
BRN - 288056
MLC - 781/0079
Date - January 2021



Reproduced from OS VectorMap Local Raster with the permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. OS Licence - 100024244 Savills(UK) Limited.



KEY

- ★ Grid reference point
- Site boundary
- ▭ Compartment boundary

Gates & Nodes

- ⊙ Management gate on deer fence
- Management gate on stock fence
- ▲ Self-closing gate
- + Node

Infrastructure

- New deer fence with rabbit netting
- - Add rabbit netting
- Upgrade stock to deer, add rabbit
- New stock fence
- - New stock fence (on march)

FGS Woodland Creation Options

- CON 2021 Conifer Option (CON 2021)
- DCON 2021 Diverse Conifer Option (DCON 2021)


Protection

- Tree shelters (no grant)
- ▨ Tree shelters on all trees
- ▧ Tree shelters on broadleaves
- ▩ Vologuards on all trees
- ▨ Vologuards on broadleaves

SCROOF HILL

MAP 5 - OPERATIONS

NGR - NT 480 470
 Scale - 1:10,000 @ A3
 BRN - 288056
 MLC - 781/0079
 Date - July 2021



Reproduced from OS VectorMap Local Raster with the permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. OS Licence - 100024244 Savills(UK) Limited.