

CRAYFISH SURVEY

TUCKMILL BROOK AT JUNCTION OF WILTS & BERKS CANAL, NEAR SHRIVENHAM

For:

**West Vale Branch
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
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Carried out by:

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Introduction

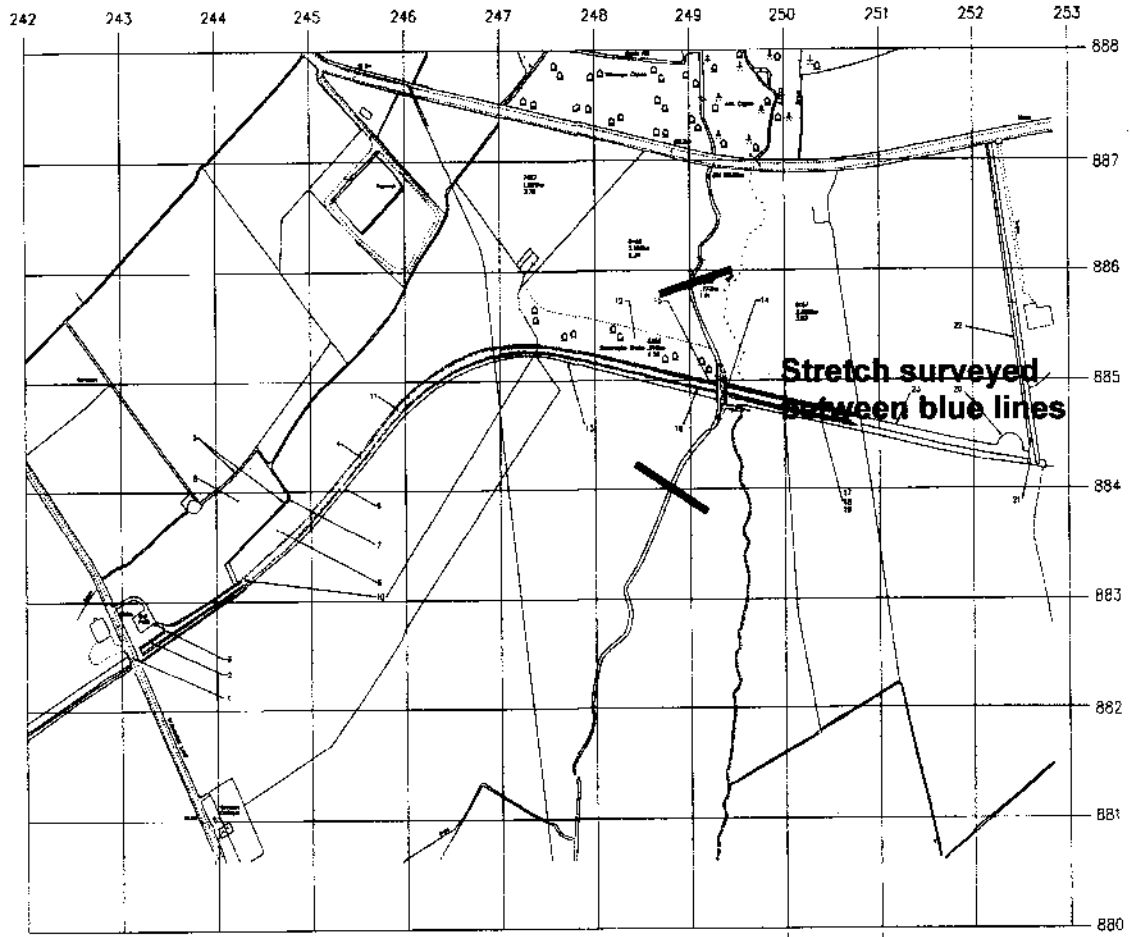
Plans are currently being considered to restore the disused Wiltshire & Berkshire Canal. At present, some sections of the canal are dry and other are still holding water. South of Shrivenham in Oxfordshire a small northward flowing, unnamed stream cuts perpendicularly across a dry section of canal at grid reference SU24938850. Should the canal be restored it is planned to construct a culvert to take this stream across the canal. The aim of this survey was to establish if the stream holds a population of White-clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. The survey was carried out by Matthew Smith BSc ARCS FRES.

Method

All survey work was carried out by a holder of a current English Nature Crayfish licence to comply with current legislation. Grid references were obtained using a hand held GPS system (Garmin GPS12). Trapping was employed to search for crayfish as the stream is unsuitable either for netting or manual searching. Commercial crayfish traps were used ('Trappy' brand, Smålandsmjärden AB, Sweden). These were covered with 1cm plastic netting to ensure the retention of any juvenile crayfish.

A total of 20 traps were employed. These were set at approximately 10m intervals along the banks of the stream from SU24888840 to SU24918859, giving coverage from approximately 100m upstream of the canal crossing to 100m downstream of the crossing point. Traps were baited with fresh mackerel, placed in the water at dusk on 17 April 2003 and retrieved early the next morning.

SITE MAP



WILTS & BERKS CANAL SHRIVENHAM MAP 1 (DRAFT)
VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT
OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY

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Results

A single male White-clawed Crayfish was recorded from a trap at the point where the stream crosses the canal. This as a large, mature individual with a carapace length of 5cm. This results of the survey suggests that this section of the stream supports a small population of the species.

Additional Information

To the west of the stream, the canal currently holds water for approximately 150m, from SU24748854 to SU24898851. A brief inspection of this stretch of water found eggs of Great Crested Newts *Triturus cristatus* at several points along the length of this section of canal. As with the White-clawed Crayfish, the Great Crested Newt is fully protected under current legislation. It is anticipated that dredging operations connected with the restoration of the canal will effectively result in the destruction of this site as a breeding habitat for Great Crested Newts. Any disturbance or destruction of the breeding habitat of this species can only be undertaken under licence from DEFRA. Granting of a licence is usually conditional on appropriate mitigation measures (e.g. construction of new, replacement breeding ponds and removal of newts from the site) being in place before work can commence.

Matthew Smith BSc ARCS FRES