



West Winch Housing Access Road

Environmental Statement Chapter 8: Annex 8.8 Wintering Bird Survey Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Methodology

Wintering Bird Survey

- 1.1.1 The area covered by the wintering bird survey (the 'Survey Area') comprised a walked route approximately 15.9km long. Due to the length and size of the Survey Area, this route was divided into two transects, each being walked on a separate day, both comprising a single survey visit.
- 1.1.2 Four wintering bird survey visits were completed on each month between November 2020 to February 2021. The survey methodology employed was based on standard survey techniques, primarily the Winter Farmland Bird Survey methodology (Gillings, et al., 2008) and direct counting methods (Bibby, Burgess, Hill, & Mustoe, 2000). All four monthly surveys were completed over two days in each month. These began in the early morning and each of the survey visits was of approximately two - four hours in duration.
- 1.1.3 Two transects routes were identified to capture the full range of habitats suitable to support wintering birds within the Survey Area that would be impacted by the Proposed Scheme. These habitats included woodland, hedgerows, arable, scrub, wetland and grassland. The Survey Area was subsequently divided into 11 sections on the base maps that could be used to refer to a more specific location (Appendix A) (all maps have been updated with the latest Scheme Boundary (October 2023)).
- 1.1.4 During each survey visit the transects within the Survey Area were walked slowly, approaching all suitable habitat whilst scanning and listening for birds. In accordance with good practice guidance the start points and direction of the route walked were varied on each survey visit; this serves to minimise bias, as birds may be active at different times of day in different areas (Bibby, Burgess, Hill, & Mustoe, 2000). The locations of birds seen and heard were mapped digitally using ArcGIS Collector. Species, number of individuals, sex



if possible, behaviour (call, alarm call, in song, in flight, visual contact) and location of each observation were recorded.

Dates of Survey and Personnel

- 1.1.5 The wintering bird survey visits were completed by competent surveyors with at least six years' experience of ecological survey, including wintering bird surveys. Dates of survey and weather conditions are given in Table 1-1 below.

Notes and Limitations

- 1.1.6 Whilst every effort has been made to detect all species present some bird species are more difficult to detect due to their ecology (crepuscular species) or behaviour (secretive nature) and therefore may have gone undetected by this survey. As a factor applicable to all bird surveys, this is not considered to place significant constraints upon interpretation of the results for this Survey Area.

Table 1-1 – Dates of survey and weather conditions

Survey Visit	Date	Start time / end time	Weather conditions
1	25/11/2020	Start: 07:30 End: 10:00	Temperature: 7-8°C Wind (Beaufort): 1 Cloud (Oktas): 1 Rain: 0%
1	26/11/2020	Start: 07:30 End: 09:30	Temperature: 1 - 3 °C Wind (Beaufort): 1 Cloud (Oktas): 4 Rain: 0%
2	16/12/2020	Start: 08:15 End: 10:30	Temperature: 8 - 9°C Wind (Beaufort): 2 Cloud (Oktas): 3 Rain: 0%
2	17/12/2020	Start: 08:15 End: 10:15	Temperature: 6 - 8°C Wind (Beaufort): 1 Cloud (Oktas): 1 Rain: 0%
3	20/01/2021	Start: 08:00 End: 10:30	Temperature: 9 - 11°C Wind (Beaufort): 3 Cloud (Oktas): 8 Rain: 10%

Survey Visit	Date	Start time / end time	Weather conditions
3	21/01/2021	Start: 08:00 End: 10:00	Temperature: 4 - 6°C Wind (Beaufort): 2 Cloud (Oktas): 6 Rain: 0%
4	09/02/2021	Start: 07:15 End: 09:30	Temperature: -1 - 1°C Wind (Beaufort): 1 Cloud (Oktas): 6 Rain: 0%
4	10/02/2021	Start: 07:15 End: 09:00	Temperature: -2 - 0°C Wind (Beaufort): 2 Cloud (Oktas): 2 Rain: 0%



1.2 Results

Wintering Bird Survey

Overview

- 1.2.1 A total of 56 species were recorded on or over the Survey Area during the 2020/2021 wintering bird surveys. Of these species, 25 were recorded as non-notable and/or flying over the Survey Area.
- 1.2.2 A further five species were recorded on the Hardwick lagoon, located in section 1 (Appendix A), which was visited during the wintering bird surveys despite the fact it lies outside the bounds of the Survey Area. The following species were identified at the lagoon: Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*, Teal *Anas crecca*, Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* and Wigeon *Anas penelope*. The designations of these species are included within Table B-1 (Appendix B), however, as this report is intended to provide a baseline within the Survey Area, these are not discussed further.
- 1.2.3 During the 2018/2019 wintering bird surveys undertaken in relation to a similar road scheme that was later cancelled, seven further species were recorded that were not subsequently identified during the 2020/2021 survey effort. These species were: Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*, Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*, Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* and Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*. The protected status afforded to these species are included within Table 1-1 (Appendix B) however, as this report is intended to provide a baseline within the Survey Area for the 2020/2021 survey effort, these are not discussed further.
- 1.2.4 The additional twelve species from the Lagoon and 2018/2019 surveys takes the total to 68 species, which are all shown in Table 1-1 (Appendix B).
- 1.2.5 Of the 56 species from the 2020/2021 wintering bird surveys, 31 receive protection under either Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) or are species of conservation concern. The numbers of birds



recorded within each category are listed below. Notable species are those that meet the following criteria:

- Listed on Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive (Directive 79/409/EEC);
- Listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended);
- Listed on Section 41 (Priority Species) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006;
- Included in Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) (Stanbury, et al., The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain, 2021) Red List;
- Included in BoCC Amber List; and
- Included within the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

1.2.6 It should be noted that these categories are not exclusive, and a species can be listed in more than one conservation category. For example, a species listed as both a Species of Principal Importance (SPI) in accordance with the NERC Act 2006 can also be listed on either the Red or Amber List of BoCC.

1.2.7 The wintering bird species assemblage for the 2020/2021 surveys at WWHAR included (not including those on Hardwick Lagoon):

- One species listed on Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive;
- Two species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- 10 species listed as SPI in accordance with Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (also UKBAP species);
- 13 BoCC Red List species;



- 17 BoCC Amber List species; and
- Three species listed on the Norfolk BAP.

Results of the Wintering Bird Survey

1.2.8 A full breakdown of survey results is presented within Appendix B (Table 1-1 and Table 1-2). A summary of notable species recorded within the Survey Area are detailed below.

1.2.9 Those species that are not considered notable or were flying over the Survey Area, are presented in Table 1-2.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* – Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive

1.2.10 Golden Plover were recorded on each of the survey visits with a cumulative count of 52 individuals across the four surveys. A peak count of 23 individuals was recorded during the November survey. With the exception of one individual flying over section 10, all other records were of birds foraging in an area of arable habitat north of Rectory Lane (section 7, Appendix A).

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* – Schedule 1 WCA 1981 and BoCC Red List

1.2.11 Fieldfare were recorded across majority of the surveys, with the highest number of records originating from the November survey. In total, 34 observations of Fieldfare were recorded, these comprised mostly of fly over counts with a maximum peak count of 27 individuals flying over an area of arable habitat (section 7, Appendix A). Only five Fieldfare were recorded foraging within the Survey Area with a peak count of three individuals observed in a hedgerow bordering arable fields (section 5, Appendix A).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus* – Schedule 1 WCA 1981 and BoCC Red List

1.2.12 Redwing were recorded frequently throughout the surveys with a peak count of 21 individuals recorded during the December surveys. These comprised mostly of small groups of up to 10 birds foraging in mixed farmland habitat within the Survey Area.



Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* –SPI under S41 NERC 2006 and BoCC

Amber List

1.2.13 A total of two Bullfinch were noted during the January survey. One individual was observed foraging along a field margin (section 4, Appendix A) and the other was observed within a hedgerow along Chequers Lane (section 9, Appendix A). No other records of Bullfinch were recorded.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* – SPI under S41 NERC 2006 and BoCC

Red List

1.2.14 A total of 150 Herring Gull were recorded over the surveys, with a peak count of 66 observed during the January survey. These records mostly comprised of fly over observations with a maximum of 50 individuals recorded flying over arable habitat (section 6, Appendix A).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* –SPI under S41 of NERC 2006 and BoCC Red List and

1.2.15 House Sparrow were recorded across all the survey visits with a total of 161 individuals noted. Of these, 113 records were from a hedgerow along Rectory Lane (section 8, Appendix A) with a peak count of 74 occurring during the February survey. All records of House Sparrow were of birds foraging in suitable habitat, none were observed flying over the Survey Area.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* –SPI under S41 of NERC 2006 and BoCC Red List

1.2.16 Lapwing were recorded during all but the January survey with a total count of 195. This included a peak count of 110 individuals observed during the February survey flying above an area consisting of arable fields and a water body (section 11, Appendix A), 28 flying over an area of grassland (section 6, Appendix A), and one flying over arable land (section 5, Appendix A). In total, nine Lapwing were observed foraging within the Survey Area, seven of which were foraging within an area of rough grassland (section 6, Appendix A) during the December survey visit.



Linnet *Linaria cannabina* –SPI under S41 of NERC 2006 and BoCC Red List

1.2.17 A total of eight Linnet were recorded across the surveys, with a peak count of five recorded during the November survey which included a count of four individuals flying over mixed farmland habitat (section 11, Appendix A). Only one Linnet was observed foraging within the Survey Area and this individual was located in an arable field East of the A10 (section 11, Appendix A).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* – SPI under S41 of NERC 2006, BoCC Amber List and listed on the Norfolk BAP

1.2.18 Reed Bunting were recorded in majority of the survey visits with a total count of 13 individuals noted. All records of Reed Bunting were from ditches lining the edges of Setch Road (sections 10 & 11, Appendix A). A peak count of eight individuals were observed here during the November survey.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis* – SPI under S41 of NERC 2006, BoCC Red List and listed on the Norfolk BAP

1.2.19 Skylark were recorded consistently throughout the surveys and were more abundant within the south of the Survey Area with a total count of 146 recorded. A peak count of 55 Skylark were recorded in an arable field margin north of a ditch (section 10, Appendix A), 20 in an arable field (section 7, Appendix A) and one further in an arable field (section 9, Appendix A) during the February survey.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* – SPI under S41 of NERC 2006, BoCC Red List and listed on the Norfolk BAP

1.2.20 A total of 10 Song Thrush were recorded over the surveys, with a peak count of five recorded during the November surveys. Song Thrush were recorded across the Survey Area with individuals heard singing in woodland, hedgerows and scrub (sections 3, 6, 10 & 11, Appendix A).



Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* –SPI under S41 of NERC 2006 and BoCC Red List

1.2.21 Starling were recorded in flocks with counts typical for this species, the peak count occurring during the February survey with 254 recorded, which included a flock of 200 birds flying over arable fields East of the A10 (section 10, Appendix A). 116 individuals were also recorded during the November survey foraging within arable habitat along Rectory Lane (section 8, Appendix A).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* –SPI under S41 of NERC 2006 and BoCC Red List

1.2.22 Yellowhammer were noted during the November and December surveys with a total of 16 individuals observed. This included a peak count of eight individuals foraging within an area of rough grassland and scrub during the November survey (section 6, Appendix A), and two within arable fields (sections 4 and 9, Appendix A). Other records of this species were from hedgerow and mixed farmland habitats across the Survey Area.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* – BoCC Red List

1.2.23 Greenfinch were recorded in low numbers during each survey visit. A peak count of four individuals were recorded on the November and February surveys. Greenfinch were observed in habitats such as woodland, hedgerows and mixed farmland.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* – BoCC Red List

1.2.24 Two Grey Wagtail were observed flying along a hedgerow North of Chequers Lane (section 9, Appendix A) during the December survey visit. No other grey wagtail were recorded within the Survey Area.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* – BoCC Red List

1.2.25 Woodcock were recorded during each survey visit with all observations coming from within areas of wet grassland and scrub (sections 5 and 6, Appendix A). This included a peak count of four individuals during the February survey with at least two individuals being recorded across each other survey visit.



Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.26 Black-headed Gull were recorded throughout the Survey Area, across all the survey visits. A peak count of 15 individuals were recorded during the February survey with majority of these flying over an area of arable habitat (section 7, Appendix A).

Common Gull *Larus canus* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.27 Common gull were recorded during each survey visit with observations coming from across the Survey Area for a total of 31 birds observed. A peak count of 12 individuals were recorded during the November and December surveys with majority of these individuals foraging within urban areas and arable fields (sections 2 & 7, Appendix A, respectively).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.28 Dunnock were recorded consistently throughout the Scheme Boundary and across the Survey Area with a total count of 22 and a peak count of 13 in February. Dunnock were observed individually or in small flocks of up to 3 in areas of mixed farmland habitat across the Survey Area.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.29 Great Black-backed Gull was recorded twice during the November survey. Both these observations were of single individuals, one of which was foraging in mixed farmland (section 8, Appendix A) and the other flying over an area of arable land (section 11, Appendix A).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.30 Greylag Goose were observed during the January and February surveys. They were only recorded in an area of arable habitat North of the A47 (section 1, Appendix A) with 36 individuals observed foraging here in January and 70 individuals observed foraging here in February.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.31 A total of eight Kestrel were noted throughout the surveys with a peak count of three individuals recorded in February. The species was evenly distributed



throughout the Survey Area, consisting mostly of foraging individuals in mixed farmland habitat.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.32 A total of 37 Mallard were recorded across the surveys, with peak counts of 16 recorded in November and January. Five Mallard were observed on a water body in section 8 (Appendix A) during both the November and December survey. Other records of Mallard mostly consisted of small flocks foraging on water bodies across the Survey Area.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.33 A total of 160 Meadow Pipit were recorded across the survey visits, the majority of these originating from flocks of up to 18 individuals foraging in areas of mixed farmland habitat including arable fields and hedgerows. A peak count of 64 was recorded in January which included flocks of meadow pipit across the Survey Area.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.34 Moorhen were recorded on all except the final survey visit with all observations coming from a water body within section 1 (Appendix A). This included a peak count of two individuals during the November survey with only one individual being recorded across each other survey visit.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.35 The total of 395 Pink-footed Goose were recorded in November only, with 320 of these relating to a flock foraging along the banks of Hardwick lagoon (section 1, Appendix A). The remaining counts relate to a flyover of 75 birds heading east over an area of arable land East of the A10 (section 10, Appendix A).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.36 Overall, 36 Snipe were recorded throughout the surveys, with a peak count of 15 recorded in November. All but two individuals were recorded within areas of wet grassland and scrub south of the A47 (sections 5 & 6, Appendix A).



The remaining two records relates to individual birds flying over an area of arable and foraging along a wet ditch (sections 10 & 1, Appendix A, respectively).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.37 Sparrowhawk were recorded on all except the January survey visit with observations coming from across the Survey Area. A peak count of two individuals were observed during the November and February surveys with a total of six records being returned in total for this species across the wintering bird surveys.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.38 A total of 50 Stock Dove were recorded during the surveys, with a peak count of 23 individuals recorded during the November survey. Majority of records relate to small flocks flying over mixed farmland habitat, however, during the December visit 21 Stock Dove were recorded foraging in an arable field (section 4, Appendix A).

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.39 Woodpigeon were recorded the November survey with a total of 350 individuals being recorded. This included a flock of 300 birds foraging within an arable field within section 10 (Appendix A). Due to Woodpigeon being common and widespread across the Survey Area they were not included in subsequent surveys.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* – BoCC Amber List

1.2.40 Wren were recorded during each survey visit with observations coming from across the length of the Survey Area. A peak count of seven individuals was recorded on the first survey visit and habitats generally used by Wren consisted of woodlands and hedgerows.



1.3 References

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