



West Winch Housing Access Road

Environmental Statement Chapter 8: Annex 8.7 Breeding Bird Survey Report

Author: WSP

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Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	Methodology	3
1.2	Results	8
1.3	References	21

Tables

Table 1-1 – Dates of survey and weather conditions	5
Table 1-2 – Territories of notable species of conservation concern	10
Table 1-3 – Breeding status of all bird species recorded throughout the breeding bird surveys within the survey area	16



1 Introduction

1.1 Methodology

Breeding Bird Survey

- 1.1.1 The 'Survey Area' in relation to breeding birds comprised a walked transect approximately 15.9km long. Due to the length and size of the Survey Area, this transect was divided into two sections. The transects covered each habitat type suitable to support breeding birds that would be impacted by the Proposed Scheme, this included woodland, hedgerows, arable, scrub, wetland and grassland. The transects are shown in Appendix A (all maps have been updated with the latest Scheme Boundary (October 2023)).
- 1.1.2 To inform an evaluation of the habitats within the Survey Area for bird species, six breeding bird survey visits were completed between April and July 2021. Given the potential impacts of the Proposed Scheme which involves a permanent loss of habitat, territory (registration) mapping techniques were undertaken (Bibby, et al., 2000). This technique forms the basis of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Common Bird Census (CBC), the outcome of which provides a sufficient level of confidence when describing the breeding bird community present. The surveys were scoped before the publication of the online Bird Survey Guidelines (Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group, 2021) however the methodology and effort applied for the Proposed Scheme is consistent with that guidance.
- 1.1.3 Surveys of breeding birds were conducted along the length of the (previous) Scheme Boundary encompassing both the route corridor and compound areas included within the Scheme Boundary to establish the breeding bird community present and the inclusion of any sensitive ornithological receptors. The Survey Area was expanded to also include a buffer of 100 m to allow for all bird territories potentially exposed to disturbance to be identified. In an effort to cover this area the proposed transect route totalled approximately



15.9km in length. Due to this length and size of the Survey Area this transect was divided into two. The survey areas are presented on in Appendix A.

- 1.1.4 All survey visits were completed in the early morning, commencing near dawn and during periods of good visibility and suitable weather conditions, i.e., avoiding periods of persistent rain or fog, extreme temperatures or high winds. Majority of the survey visits lasted between three to five hours in duration and was completed over two days, walking a different transect each day, however, the final two surveys were completed in a single day (Table 1-1).
- 1.1.5 During each survey visit the surveyors walked slowly, surveying all habitat along the transect routes while scanning and listening for birds. In accordance with good practice guidance (Bibby, et al., 2000) the start points, and direction of the route walked was varied; this serves to minimise bias, as birds may be active at different times of day in different areas. The locations of birds seen and heard were mapped using standard BTO two letter codes and activity symbols. Where breeding activity was observed this was recorded in accordance with the following categories:
- Non-breeder (NB) – Birds observed flying over, considered to still be on migration or a summering non-breeder;
 - Possible breeding (PoB) – Birds observed singing or present in suitable habitat in breeding season;
 - Probable breeding (PrB) – A pair observed in suitable habitat, territorial behaviour observed in the same place on at least two separate occasions, or by many individuals simultaneously on one day, or birds observed visiting a probable nest site, showing courtship or display behaviour in suitable breeding habitat or nest building; or
 - Confirmed breeding (CB) – Nest containing eggs or young seen or heard, adults observed carrying faecal sac or food, feigning injury as a distraction display or entering or leaving a nest site in circumstances indicating an occupied nest, a used nest or eggshells found or recently



fledged or downy young recorded (showing evidence of dependency on adults).

1.1.6 In addition, incidental bird records gathered during other ecological surveys on the Proposed Scheme have been incorporated within this report where these provide additional information to that gathered during the targeted breeding bird surveys.

Dates of Survey and Personnel

1.1.7 Lead surveyors were competent and experienced in conducting breeding bird surveys. The dates and weather conditions for each survey visit are displayed in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1 – Dates of survey and weather conditions

Survey Visit	Dates	Weather Conditions (Based on weather codes from the Breeding Bird Instructions (BTO, et al., 2015))	No data	No data
No data	No data	Day:	1	2
1	08/04/2021 & 09/04/2021	Temperature: Wind: Cloud Cover: Rain:	2 2-3 6 0%	5 1-2 6 0%



2	27/04/2021 & 28/04/2021	Temperature: Wind: Cloud Cover: Rain:	3 1-2 5 0%	6 0-1 2 0%
3	12/05/2021 & 13/05/2021	Temperature: Wind: Cloud Cover: Rain:	9 2-3 2 0%	9 1-2 7 0%
4	25/05/2021 & 26/05/2021	Temperature: Wind: Cloud Cover: Rain:	9 2-3 7 0%	10 1-2 8 0%
5	16/06/2021	Temperature: Wind: Cloud Cover: Rain:	Mild 2-3 5 0%	No data
6	30/06/2021	Temperature: Wind: Cloud Cover: Rain:	12 2-3 8 Light rain	No data

Notes and Limitations

1.1.8 The optimal timing for a survey of breeding birds is April-June. Natural England guidance (2010) suggests that, in terms of frequency of survey visits, at least one visit every two weeks from March to July i.e., 10 visits are required. However, this generic recommendation follows, without question, that of the historic CBC guidelines from the BTO which was designed for the purposes of providing reliable population trends for the UK's commoner breeding species. For the purpose of determining a robust baseline for the Proposed Scheme, six visits were considered adequate to provide enough information on baseline conditions and to enable impacts to be properly



assessed (see the biodiversity chapter of the Environmental Statement). The survey effort applied to breeding birds is consistent with that proposed by Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group (2021) and was agreed in principle with Natural England.

- 1.1.9 The final two survey visits were undertaken over a single day where both transects were walked one morning. This was due to surveyor preference and is not expected to place limitations on the interpretation of results as both transects were walked in good time with the surveys taking no more than five hours. Additionally, the previous four surveys were completed over the two-day period with one transect being walked on each day.
- 1.1.10 The spring of 2021 was characterised by consistent cold temperatures as noted for both April survey visits with temperatures as low as 2°C. This is not expected to place limitations on the interpretation of results as on some of the April survey days took place during periods of warmer weather.
- 1.1.11 Certain species such as Raven *Corvus corax* and Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* amongst others, typically commence breeding before April. The habitats present within the Survey Area, results of the desk study and location of the Proposed Scheme suggest that the breeding presence of such species is unlikely. As a result, this is expected to place no limitations on the interpretation of the breeding bird community present.
- 1.1.12 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.



1.2 Results

Overview

- 1.2.1 A total of 74 species were recorded on or over the Survey Area during the breeding bird survey, of these 39 are known to either breed or probably breed within the Survey Area (CB or PrB, section 1.1.5). Of the 74 species recorded, 38 are considered to be of conservation concern through listing on either Red or Amber Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC), Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) or as a Species of Principal Importance (SPI). Eighteen of these species are considered to either breed or probably breed within the Survey Area.
- 1.2.2 The numbers of birds recorded within each category are listed below, it should be noted categories are not exclusive and a species can be listed in more than one conservation category (for example listed as both a Species of Principal Importance (SPI) in accordance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and as either a Red or Amber list Bird of Conservation Concern (BoCC).
- Two species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). One species, Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* were considered possible breeders within the Survey Area, whilst Hobby *Falco subbuteo* were not considered to breed within the Survey Area;
 - 13 species listed as SPI in accordance with Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (also UKBAP species). Nine species were confirmed or probable breeders within the Survey Area, whilst one species was considered possibly breeding;
 - 14 BoCC Red list species. Seven were confirmed or probable breeders within the Survey Area, whilst one was considered as possibly breeding; and



- 23 BoCC Amber list species. 11 were confirmed or probable breeders within the Survey Area, whilst four were considered as possibly breeding within the Survey Area.

Breeding Bird Survey

- 1.2.3 In total, 80 species of bird were recorded within the Survey Area on at least one occasion during the six survey visits. Of the 80 species, four species protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were identified. These comprised Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, Firecrest, Hobby and Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*.
- 1.2.4 13 species listed as a Species of Principal Importance (SPI) were recorded during the breeding bird survey, these were: Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, Skylark *Alauda arvensis*, Linnet *Linaria cannabina*, Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*, Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*, Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*, Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* and Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*.
- 1.2.5 15 species included on the Red List BoCC (Stanbury, et al., 2021) were recorded during the breeding bird survey, these were: Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*, Herring Gull, House Sparrow, House Martin *Delichon urbicum*, Lapwing, Linnet, Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, Grey Partridge, Lesser Redpoll, Skylark, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, Swift *Apus apus*, Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*, Yellow Wagtail and Yellowhammer.
- 1.2.6 A further 27 species included on the Amber List BoCC (Stanbury, et al., 2021) were recorded during the breeding bird survey, these were: Avocet, Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, Bullfinch, Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, Gadwall *Anas strepera*, Greylag Goose *Anser anser*, Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*, Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii*, Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*, Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*, Marsh Harrier, Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, Reed Bunting, Rook *Corvus frugilegus*, Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus*



schoenobaenus, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, Shelduck
Tadorna tadorna, Stock Dove *Columba oenas*, Shoveler *Anas clypeata*,
 Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*, Whitethroat *Curruca communis*, Woodpigeon
Columba palumbus, Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* and Willow Warbler
Phylloscopus trochilus.

1.2.7 Species of conservation concern were subject to territory (registration) mapping (Bibby, et al., 2000). A summary of these species is included in Table 1-2 below and territory maps are presented in appendices E – S.

Table 1-2 – Territories of notable species of conservation concern

Species	Conservation Status	Transect 1	Transect 2	Total
Bullfinch	BAmb & FEP7/2	1	0	1
Dunnock	BAmb & Bern2	4	6	10
Greenfinch	Bred & Bern2	0	3	3
House Sparrow	BRed, Sect.41 & UKBAP	0	24	24
Linnet	Bern2, Bred & FEP7/2	3	2	5
Mistle Thrush	BD2.2 & BRed	1	0	1
Reed Bunting	BAmb, Bern2, FEP7/2, Sect.41 & UKBAP	3	4	7
Skylark	BD2.2, BRed, FEP7/2, & Sect.41	17	19	36
Song Thrush	BD2.2, BAmb & FEP7/2	4	0	4
Starling	BD2.2, Bred & FEP7/2	0	25	25
Stock Dove	BAmb & BD2.2	2	0	2
Whitethroat	BAmb	12	6	18



Species	Conservation Status	Transect 1	Transect 2	Total
Woodpigeon	BAmb & BD2.1	1	3	4
Wren	BAmb & Bern2	25	14	39
Yellow Wagtail	Bern2, Bred & FEP7/2	1	1	2
Yellowhammer	Bern2, BRed, FEP7/2, Sect.41 & UKBAP	6	4	10

1.2.8 The conservation status’s included within Table 2 above are expanded on below:

- BAmb - Bird Population Status – amber;
- BRed - Bird Population Status – red;
- Bern2 - Bern Convention Appendix 2;
- FEP7/2 - Farm Environment Plan Guidance 007- Table 2;
- Sect.41 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 - Species of Principal Importance in England Section 41;
- BD2.1 - Birds Directive Annex 2.1;
- BD2.2 - Birds Directive Annex 2.2; and
- UKBAP – UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species.

Summary of Territory Mapping

Bullfinch

1.2.9 In total, 11 records of Bullfinch were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, a single territory was mapped for Bullfinch (Appendix B). This territory was located along transect 1 and is partially encompassed by both the Scheme Boundary and Survey Area. This territory mostly consisted of scrub, hedgerow and semi-mature woodland habitats.



Dunnock

1.2.10 In total, 47 records of Dunnock were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, 10 territories were mapped for Dunnock (Appendix C). Eight of these territories are within the 100m Survey Area and three are partially encompassed by the Scheme Boundary. Dunnock territories were generally located within areas composed of woodland edge, hedgerow and field margin habitat.

Greenfinch

1.2.11 Overall, 16 records of Greenfinch were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records three territories along transect 2 were mapped (Appendix D). Two of these territories were partially encompassed by the Scheme Boundary while the other is only partially encompassed by the Survey Area. Habitats within these territories consisted of mixed farmland, hedgerow and urban housing.

House Sparrow

1.2.12 Overall, 69 records of House Sparrow were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, 24 territories were mapped for house sparrow. Each of these was along transect 2 with three territories being located along Rectory Lane and the remainder being located within habitat mostly consisting of urban housing along the A10 (Appendix E).

Linnet

1.2.13 Overall, 39 records of Linnet were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records five territories was mapped, four of which were within the Survey Area and two of these were partially encompassed by the Scheme Boundary. Linnet territories were primarily composed of hedgerow, field margin and ditch habitat with the highest concentration of linnet records being located within a complex of wet ditches South of Chequers Lane (Appendix F).



Mistle Thrush

1.2.14 In total, eight records of Mistle Thrush were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, a single territory was mapped in Sheep's Course Wood CWS just south of the A47. This territory extends within the Scheme Boundary (Appendix G) and is mostly composed of woodland habitat.

Reed Bunting

1.2.15 Overall, 54 records of Reed Bunting were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records seven territories were mapped, all of which were either partially or wholly within the Survey Area and three of these territories were also partially within the Scheme Boundary (Appendix H). Most records for Reed Bunting were identified within either wet or dry ditches however other habitats such as woodland edge and rough grassland were also utilised by the species.

Skylark

1.2.16 In total, 148 records of Skylark were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, 36 territories were mapped (Appendix I). Of these, 23 were located within the Survey Area and 12 were located either wholly or partially within the Scheme Boundary. All territories were composed primarily of arable habitat.

Song Thrush

1.2.17 Overall, 35 records of Song Thrush were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, four territories were mapped, three of which were either partially or wholly encompassed by the Scheme Boundary. Although Song Thrush were recorded across the Survey Area, all mapped territories were identified on transect 1 (Appendix J) and composed of woodland habitat.

Starling

1.2.18 In total, 64 records of Starling were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, 25 territories were mapped (Appendix K). Of



these, 11 were located within the Survey Area. All mapped territories were located along transect 2 with 22 territories being located within urban housing habitats in the town along the A10. Two territories were located along Rectory Lane and one territory was located along Chequers Lane.

Stock Dove

1.2.19 Overall, 23 records of Stock Dove were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, two territories were mapped. The first of these was along the A47 near the interchange and contained a Stock Dove nest and the second was located in an area of garden and semi-mature woodland North of Rectory Lane (Appendix L). Stock Dove were recorded across the Survey Area in a wide range of habitats including woodland, hedgerows and arable fields.

Whitethroat

1.2.20 In total, 84 records of Whitethroat were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, 18 territories were mapped (Appendix M). Of these territories, 12 were either partially or entirely encompassed by the Scheme Boundary or Survey Area. Whitethroat territories consisted of primarily ditch, hedgerow, scrub and rough grassland habitats.

Woodpigeon

1.2.21 In total, 29 records of Woodpigeon were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records four territories were mapped (Appendix N). Each of these were partially encompassed from the Survey Area and consisted of a range of habitats including woodland and urban housing. It is likely that the number of Woodpigeon records and territories have been under-recorded and there are several more within the Survey Area.

Wren

1.2.22 In total, 137 records of Wren were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records 40 territories were mapped (Appendix O). 30 of these territories were within the Survey Area and 15 were either partially or entire encompassed within the Scheme Boundary. Wren territories consisted



of a wide range of habitats but mostly covered hedgerow, woodland, scrub and field margin habitats.

Yellow Wagtail

1.2.23 In total, 15 records of Yellow Wagtail were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records two territories were mapped. One of these was located near Setch Road and was composed of arable and field margin habitats while the second was located North of Rectory Lane and composed of similar habitat (Appendix P). Individual Yellow Wagtail were also identified across the Survey Area.

Yellowhammer

1.2.24 In total, 66 records of Yellowhammer were identified throughout the breeding bird surveys. Using these records, 10 territories were mapped. Of these, six were within the Survey Area and three were within the Scheme Boundary (Appendix Q). Habitats within these territories consisted of hedgerows, field margins, woodland edge, scrub and arable fields.

Other Species Results

1.2.25 Table 1-3 below shows the breeding status of all bird species recorded throughout the breeding bird surveys within the Survey Area. Notation within is in line with the descriptions listed in section 1.1.5.

Table 1-3 – Breeding status of all bird species recorded throughout the breeding bird surveys within the survey area

Species	Transect 1	Transect 2
Blackbird Turdus merula	PrB	PrB
Blackcap Sylvia atricapilla	PrB	PrB
Black-headed Gull	NB	NB
Blue Tit	CB	PrB
Bullfinch	PrB	not applicable
Buzzard Buteo buteo	PoB	PoB
Carrion Crow Corvus corone	PrB	PrB
Chaffinch Fringilla coelebs	PrB	PrB
Chiffchaff Phylloscopus collybita	PrB	PrB
Coal Tit Parus ater	PoB	not applicable
Collared Dove Streptopelia decaocto	PrB	CB
Dunnock	PrB	PrB
Egyptian Goose Alopochen aegyptiaca	NB	NB
Fieldfare Turdus pilaris	NB	NB
Firecrest	PoB	not applicable
Garden Warbler Sylvia borin	PrB	not applicable

Species	Transect 1	Transect 2
Goldcrest Regulus regulus	PrB	not applicable
Goldfinch Carduelis carduelis	PrB	PrB
Great Spotted Woodpecker Dendrocopos major	PrB	NB
Great Tit	PrB	PrB
Green Woodpecker Picus viridis	PrB	PoB
Greenfinch	PrB	PrB
Grey Heron Ardea cinerea	NB	not applicable
Greylag Goose	NB	NB
Grey Partridge	not applicable	PoB
Herring Gull	NB	NB
House Martin	NB	NB
House Sparrow	CB	CB
Hobby	NB	not applicable
Jackdaw Corvus monedula	CB	PoB
Jay Garrulus glandarius	PrB	PoB
Kestrel	PoB	PoB
Lapwing	NB	NB
Lesser Black-backed Gull	NB	NB
Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia curruca	PrB	PrB
Linnet	PrB	PrB

Species	Transect 1	Transect 2
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	PoB	not applicable
Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i>	PoB	not applicable
Long-tailed Tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	PrB	PrB
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	PoB	PoB
Mallard	NB	NB
Marsh Harrier	NB	not applicable
Mistle Thrush	PrB	not applicable
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	NB	NB
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	PrB	not applicable
Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	NB	NB
Oystercatcher	NB	NB
Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	PrB	PrB
Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	NB	NB
Red-legged Partridge <i>Alectoris rufa</i>	PoB	PoB
Lesser Redpoll	NB	not applicable
Reed Bunting	PrB	PrB
Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	PrB	PrB

Species	Transect 1	Transect 2
Robin	CB	PrB
Rook	NB	NB
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	PoB	PrB
Skylark	PrB	PrB
Snipe	NB	not applicable
Song Thrush	PrB	PoB
Sparrowhawk	PoB	NB
Starling	PrB	CB
Stock Dove	PrB	PoB
Stonechat <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	not applicable	PoB
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	NB	NB
Swift	NB	NB
Tawny Owl <i>Strix aluco</i>	PoB	not applicable
Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	PrB	not applicable
Whitethroat	PrB	CB
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	NB	not applicable
Woodpigeon	PrB	PrB
Wren	PrB	PrB
Yellow Wagtail	PrB	PrB
Yellowhammer	PrB	PrB
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	not applicable	PoB



Transect 1

- 1.2.26 Overall, 71 species of bird were recorded along transect 1. Of these: 4 species were confirmed as breeding, 34 species as probably breeding, 11 species as possibly breeding and 22 species non-breeding.
- 1.2.27 Of the species considered confirmed or probably breeding along transect 1, eight species (Greenfinch, House Sparrow, Linnet, Mistle Thrush, Skylark, Starling, Yellow Wagtail and Yellowhammer) were designated as Red List BoCC and nine species (Bullfinch, Dunnock, Whitethroat, Moorhen, Reed Bunting, Song Thrush, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon and Wren) were designated as Amber List BoCC (Stanbury, et al., 2021).
- 1.2.28 Of the species considered as possibly breeding along transect 1, one was protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Firecrest. A single singing male was observed on one occasion throughout the breeding bird surveys. In addition, four species (Kestrel, Sedge Warbler, Sparrowhawk and Tawny Owl) were designated as Amber List BoCC (Stanbury, et al., 2021)
- 1.2.29 Hardwick flood lagoon lies outside of the Survey Area (approximately 400 m to the North-East of transect 1). The lagoon supports a minimum of 2 breeding pairs of the schedule 1 listed Avocet amongst other species such as Gadwall, Shelduck, Shoveler and Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* which were not found within the Survey Area. As these records lay outside of the Survey Area they have been removed from Table 1-3.

Transect 2

- 1.2.30 Overall, 57 species of bird were recorded along transect 2. Of these: 4 species were confirmed as breeding, 23 species as probably breeding, 12 species as possibly breeding and 18 species non-breeding.
- 1.2.31 Of the species considered confirmed or probably breeding along transect 2, seven species (Greenfinch, House Sparrow, Linnet, Skylark, Starling, Yellow Wagtail and Yellowhammer) were designated as Red List BoCC and six



species (Dunnock, Whitethroat, Reed Bunting, Sedge Warbler, Woodpigeon and Wren) were designated as Amber List BoCC (Stanbury, et al., 2021).

1.2.32 Of the species considered as possibly breeding along transect 2, one species (Grey Partridge) was designated as Red List BoCC and four species (Kestrel, Song Thrush, Stock Dove and Willow Warbler) were designated as Amber List BoCC (Stanbury, et al., 2021).

1.3 References

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