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## **Breeding Bird Survey**

## **Bartons Road, Havant**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Ecology Co-op was instructed to undertake a breeding bird survey during June of 2015 in order to determine the use of the site by nesting birds. It is proposed that arable land within the site is to be developed for a new 175 dwelling residential development.

The site currently consists of part of a large arable field, fringed with mature, native mixed species hedges and narrow belt of semi-mature mixed broadleaf woodland. At the time of the survey, the fields were cultivated with oil seed rape.

The site supports residential and industrial units to the west, woodland and large domestic gardens to the north and arable land to the east and south (Fig. 1).

All species of birds, whilst breeding within the UK are protected via The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2010) and also the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended. Therefore, it is an offence to kill most species of bird or interfere with any nesting site.

The results of this survey will guide any necessary mitigation to ensure that compensatory breeding sites are proposed, if breeding territories are indeed recorded within and therefore no offence is committed under UK and EU wildlife legislation.

## BARTONS ROAD



**Figure 1.** The boundary of the site at Bartons Road is outlined in red. The yellow circle denotes the location of the suspected blackbird territory, the blue circle denotes the location of the suspected blue tit territory. Figure orientated north to south.



## **2. SURVEY METHODS**

The Common Birds Census territory mapping methodology, as defined by the British Trust for Ornithology, was used to survey the site for breeding birds. The survey visit was undertaken upon the 16th June 2015. The survey visit took place between 06:00 and 08:30. The survey work focused upon the arable field within the proposed zone of impact and boundary hedgerows and margins fringing the site.

A transect encompassing the boundary of the field was walked slowly. Each bird spotted during the course of the survey was recorded. Notes upon the behaviour of the birds were made to determine their breeding status. Birds were said to be breeding, and therefore within a territory, if:

- They were observed displaying or heard singing
- Nests, eggs, or recently fledged young were located
- Adults were heard repeatedly alarm-calling
- Distraction displays were seen

All the survey visit was made during appropriate weather conditions, whereby avoiding heavy rain, poor visibility or strong winds. After the surveys were completed the total number of territories were estimated by comparing the locations of birds recorded on each of the survey visits. The total number of territories is based on the maximum number of territories recorded on any one visit plus any territories recorded on another visit in a different area of the site.



### 3. RESULTS

Seventeen species of birds were recorded during the course of the survey (Appendix 1), in June 2015. Most of the bird activity was confined to the hedgerows to the north and west of the boundary of the site, whereby the impact from the proposed change of use from agricultural to domestic will most likely have a minimal impact. All of the birds recorded are largely common species associated with arable, hedgerow and woodland habitats.

However, only two species were recorded displaying any breeding behaviour during the survey, with both of these birds recorded within the hedgerow fringing the west of the site. The table below and Figure 1 shows that the western fringing hedgerow supports at least one blackbird and blue tit breeding territories.

| <i>Survey date</i> | <i>blackbird</i>                                                               | <i>Blue tit</i>                                                                 |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 16/11/15           | Single bird observed displaying and singing within the area denoted in Fig. 1. | Three fledgling birds recorded foraging within the hedge and denoted in Fig. 1. |

The proposed construction zone at Bartons Road is fringed by mature trees along all of the western boundary and around a field pond, meaning that there does not appear to be any potential ground nesting bird sites that would not be overlooked by nearby trees. Ground nesting birds commonly avoid such sites because of the greater ease with which perching predators are then able to spot chicks and nests.



#### **4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results of the survey suggest that the western boundary hedgerow (Fig. 1) supports at least one blackbird and one blue tit breeding territory. This survey represents just a snapshot of breeding bird activity and it is most likely that most of the species of birds recorded are using the fringing hedgerow as breeding habitat.

The UK's birds have been split into three categories of conservation concern by the RSPB (red, amber and green status), with red being of greatest conservation importance, whereby these species have suffered a severe (at least 50%) decline in UK breeding population over last 25 years. Amber species are listed as species suffering a moderate (25-49%) decline in UK breeding population over last 25 years and Green species, are species that occur regularly in the UK but do not qualify under any of the above criteria.

Both black birds and blue tits are listed as Green status. All of the species recorded during the course of the survey are listed as Green status, with the exception of herring gulls, that are listed as Red status. Herring gulls have suffered moderate declines over the past 25 years and over half of their UK breeding population is confined to fewer than ten sites<sup>1</sup>.

In order to mitigate against any impact to breeding birds upon this site, it is necessary that no cutting back of the fringing hedgerow or margins of the field are undertaken during the bird breeding season (April-September). It is assumed that only gardens will be backing onto the fringing hedgerows to the north and west of the site, these gardens will serve as marginal habitat for birds currently using the hedgerows.

Should you need any further advice on the information provided above please do not hesitate to contact us.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/discoverandlearn/birdguide/name/h/herringgull/index.aspx>



**Appendix 1 - Species recorded during the course of the survey**

black bird *Turdus merula*  
blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*  
carrion crow *Corvus corone*  
chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*  
chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*  
dunnuck *Prunella modularis*  
great tit *Parus major*  
house sparrow *Passer domesticus*  
herring gull *Larus argentatus*  
magpie *pica pica*  
red leg partridge *Alectoris rufa*  
ring necked pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*  
robin *Erithacus rubecula*  
starling *Sturnus vulgaris*  
swallow *Hirundo rustica*  
wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*  
wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*