



518a Shepherds Lodge

Stag Park

Petworth

West Sussex

GU28 9LT

Tel: 01798 342 610

E-Mail: info@azur-ecology.co.uk

Brent Goose Survey

**Land at Horsham Road,
Emsworth**

Paul Whitby

5th March 2014

Report Summary:

1. The proposed development at land off Horndean Road is within an area identified as 'Uncertain' within the current use '*Waders and Brent Goose Strategy 2010*' Maps. Surveys were commissioned to establish if this development could impact upon land used by wintering brent geese or wading birds.

2. No brent geese were identified during the survey assessments carried out by Azure Ecology between November 2013 and March 2014, or during surveys undertaken by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre on behalf of Havant Borough Council from November 2012 to March 2013.

This report has been prepared by Azure Ecology, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. This report remains the sole property of Azure Ecology until payment for its production is received.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report gives details of a brent goose survey undertaken at land off Horndean road where it is proposed to build up to 140 new homes upon arable land.

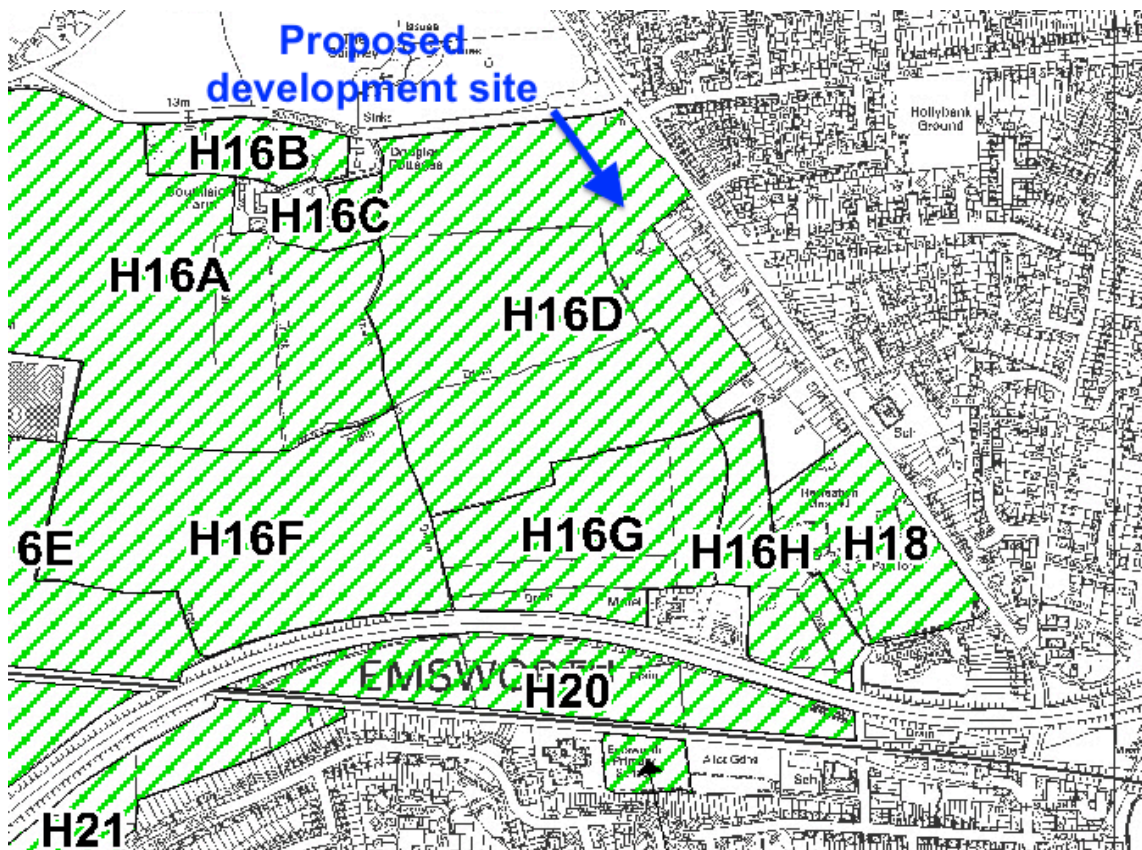
This survey comprised of a number of bird surveys between November 2013 and march 2014 and was carried out by Paul Whitby, a chartered ecologist and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

This survey and report was carried out and produced at the request of Bidwells.

1.2 Background

This land where a proposed new development of up to 140 new homes is proposed is within the 'Waders and Brent Goose Strategy 2010'. This strategy outlines policy designed to protect the conservation status of Brent Geese across the Solent and the isle of Wight.

The land at Horndean Road is outlined as an 'uncertain' area within this strategy, meaning that it has the potential due to it's geographical location to support brent geese, but little or no information is known about its use by this species.



Picture 1 – the proposed development site, situated within an area identified within the Waders and Brent Goose Strategy.

Surveys were commissioned in order to establish the status of this land for brent geese and wading birds and if necessary determine if any perceived impact could be adequately mitigated.

1.3 Ecological Context

During a Phase 1 habitat survey assessment by Azure Ecology in May 2013, all of the habitats on the proposed development site were mapped and the potential for nesting birds was evaluated.

The majority of the site comprises of arable land managed for cereal crops. In 2013 this was managed as winter wheat, whilst following crop damage from flooding the fields have been left cultivated and unsown over the winter of 2013/2014. The value of the site for feeding brent geese would be restricted to the buffer strips over the 2013/2014 winter period, whilst during the HBIC surveys geese could have fed on the young winter wheat crop.



Picture 1 – The walking route used by Azure Ecology when undertaking the site bird surveys.



Picture 2 – Part of the proposed development site which is largely cultivated, but includes a wide grassland buffer strip.



Picture 3 – The wider farmed landscape with large cultivated fields with drainage ditches and grassland buffer strips.

1.4 Results

Results are provided for both the surveys undertaken by Hbic (for which a précis methodology is not available) and for those undertaken by Azure Ecology.

Table 1: The data produced by Hbic from bird surveys between November 2012 and March 2013 (Note 'Site H16d' location on Picture 1 in section 1.2)

Site	Date	Time	Species	Count	Bird activity	Comment
H16d	19/11/12	14:20	x - no birds seen	0	n/a	-
H16d	19/11/12	15:55	x - no birds seen	0	n/a	-
H16d	04/12/12	13:05	x - no birds seen	0	n/a	-
H16d	10/01/13	09:30	x - no birds seen	0	n/a	-
H16d	10/01/13	10:12	x - no birds seen	0	n/a	-
H16d	11/02/13	12:00	x - no birds seen	0	n/a	-
H16d	14/03/13	11:40	x - no birds seen	0	n/a	-

Table 2: The data produced by Azure Ecology from bird surveys undertaken between November 2013 and March 2014

Date	Time	Weather notes	Brent Geese Y/N	Other Observations
05/11/13	13:15	11 ° C, 20+mph wind, dry but overcast.	N	20+ meadow pipit, 3 green woodpecker.
14/11/13	14:00	8 ° C, 20+mph wind 10% cloud cover	N	2 grey wagtail, 8 redwing
05/12/13	13:45	8 ° C 30+ mph gusts overcast but dry	N	50+ black headed gulls
20/12/13	10:20	9 ° C, 15-20 mph wind 0% cloud cover	N	3 green woodpecker
08/01/14	12:30	7 ° C 10mph wind 90% cloud cover	N	2 song thrush, 1 green woodpecker, 2 kestrels, 1 buzzard, corvids.
28/01/14	11:00	7 ° C, 80% cloud cover, dry	N	2 goldfinch, 1 song thrush, 1 kestrel
07/02/14	12:15	7 ° C, 15-20 mph wind 50% cloud cover, dry	N	1 wren, 1 song thrush, 1 peregrine falcon 1 buzzard, 8 crows
19/02/14	10:20	7 ° C, 60% cloud cover, dry	N	6 crows, 1 robin, 1 blackbird, 1 great tit, 1 black-headed gull, 1 magpie, 1 Buzzard
05/03/14	10:30	8 ° C.90% cloud cover, 0-5mph wind	N	200-300 black headed gulls, 5 rooks, 3 blackbirds, 2 dunnoek 3 skylark territories

1.5 Conclusions

The findings of the surveys undertaken by Hbic and Azure Ecology between the autumn of 2012 and the spring of 2014 show that no brent geese were observed at any time. Some bird observations made did however show the use of the wider farm by skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) (which are known to nest on the larger fields) and the sighting of a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*).

The development area is on the edge of the area identified for possible use by brent geese in the *Waders and Brent Goose Strategy* map, which suggests it is on the outer

edge of their preferred territorial range. The lack of valuable habitat, coupled with the lack of sightings of any brent geese on the site following the above survey effort suggests that it is unlikely that wintering brent geese or wading birds use the site at any time.

The proposals for the development at this site does however include the development of a new flood abatement wetland, which if managed appropriately could be of some value to wading birds in the future. It is perceived that the impact of the development at a site level is negligible, with the possibility of a small gain in the long-term.