

WATERFOWL ASSESSMENT

**LAND AT MANOR FARM,
DENVILLES,
HAMPSHIRE**

JANUARY 2012

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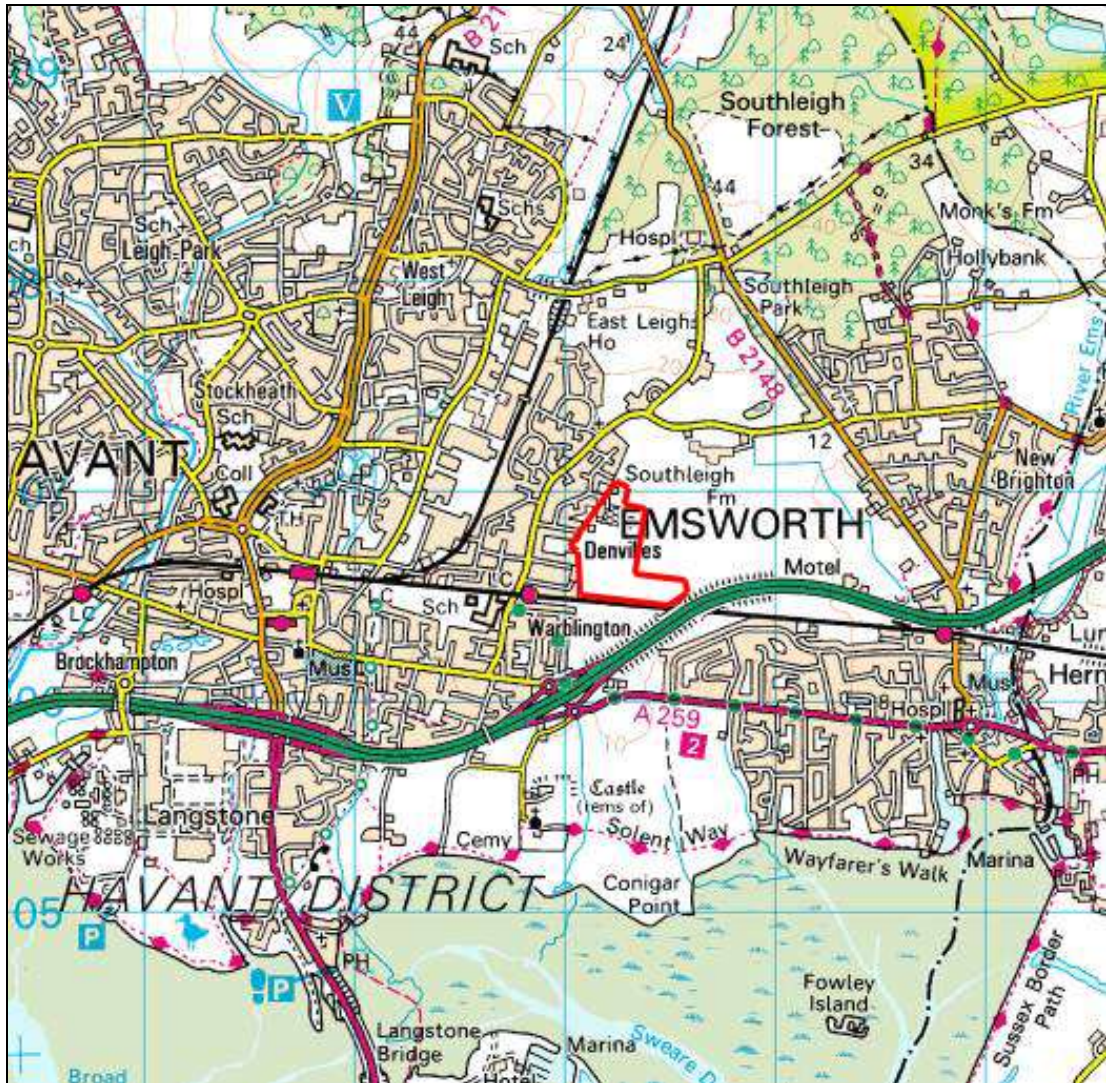
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Aluco Ecology Ltd was commissioned to carry out detailed ecological survey work of land at Manor Farm and Copsey's Nurseries, Denvilles by Barratt David Wilson Homes (Southampton) Ltd and the Generator Group. This work was undertaken during 2011.
- 1.1.2 As a part of this work Havant Borough Council highlighted the recent revised Brent Goose Strategy for the Solent (HWT, 2010). In this strategy assessment is made of all coastal grasslands and open space, including farmland and inland areas up to 2km from the coast (based on location or habitat). As a part of the general assessment, the large arable field that forms a small part of the proposed Manor Farm development site and continues further east of this proposed site was included. Access to this land was not undertaken during the survey, and a desktop assessment concluded that the land is of uncertain potential for waders. This appears to have been a blanket designation of all the arable farmland to the east of the site.
- 1.1.3 This report considers the potential for waterfowl (wildfowl and waders) use of the proposed development site and the nearest arable land that has potential to be indirectly affected by a housing scheme.

1.2 Site Location

- 1.2.1 The land consists of a farm with farm house, yards, arable land, horticultural glasshouses and a modern detached house to the east of the village of Denvilles, Hampshire. To the east of this is a large arable field that is used as a commercial market garden area with a variety of crops grown. Its location is shown at **Figure 1** below.



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Figure 1: Location of the Main Survey Area

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The survey area (the proposed development site and the wider arable land) was scanned using binoculars to check for any feeding or roosting waders, wildfowl, gulls or other wintering birds. As well as waterfowl time was taken to record all species, including amber and red listed species on the current Birds of Conservation Concern UK list (Eaton *et al.* 2009). Observations of other species were sometimes recorded on an incidental basis. For each visit a note was usually made of the state of the tide and weather conditions (which might affect use by waders for example).
- 2.2 The main survey area was then walked on foot, scanning all open areas and crops to locate feeding birds. Some species favoured feeding in the dead stems of crops of maize, onions and other crops, so these were walked through to ensure any birds hiding in them were recorded. Adjacent arable land was also scanned from the main survey area.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The majority of the proposed development site at Manor Farm and Copsey's Nurseries contains no habitats suitable for regular use by waterfowl (wildfowl and waders). It comprises farm buildings, formal gardens, a farmyard and horticultural glass houses.
- 3.1.2 The wider arable field is a large and open arable landscape, currently intensively farmed, but as a market garden with a diverse mix of crops. The use of the land as arable mostly provides limited opportunity for waterfowl (see **Photo 1**). This combined with the distance from the coast provides a low potential for use of the site by waterfowl. A small agricultural pond is present on the eastern boundary of the main survey area. However given the size of this pond (see **Photo 2**) it is considered to be of negligible value to wintering waterfowl.



Photo 1: Wider Arable land looking towards main proposed development site (around the distant trees)



Photo 2: Agricultural Pond on Site

3.2 Results of Winter Visits

- 3.2.1 The survey comprised seven visits carried out between early November and the end of December 2011. Details of timing are presented at **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Survey Dates

Date and time	Tide state	Weather
5 November, 0925-1015	High	Overcast, light N wind, mild.
8 November, 1220-1325	High	Overcast, drizzle, very light E wind, mild (c.10°C).
18 November, 1400-1500	Low	Mainly cloudy, light S wind, warm (15°C).
30 November, 1415-1525	High	Showers with sunny spells, F4 S wind, mild (c.12°C).
12 December, 1230-1340	High	Sunny, clear, light SW wind, cold (10°C, frost earlier).
21 December, 1325-1400	Low	Sunny spells (6/8 cloud), F4 SW wind, very mild (13°C).
30 December, 1200-1325	High	Overcast, light rain, light SW wind, mild (9°C).

- 3.2.2 There were no records of Brent Geese *Brenta bernacula* agg. or waders recorded from the survey area.
- 3.2.3 The wider farmland supported a reasonably diverse mixture of farmland passerine birds, which mainly fed on the barer, previously harvested areas or underneath the old maize crops. Linnets (BoCC red listed) were recorded on six out of seven visits, in a single flock, which increased from 20 to 48 birds during the period. Skylark (BoCC, red listed) were present on

all visits, initially in small numbers (1-6 birds), but increasing by mid-December following a cold spell in northern Britain. The highest count was 27 on 30 December. Meadow Pipit (amber listed) were present in similar numbers, with a maximum of 21. A Reed Bunting (amber listed) was present on 12 and 30 December.

- 2.3.4 Other amber and red listed species recorded comprised House Sparrow (using a hedgerow near to houses), Dunnock and Song Thrush (these two species mainly in hedgerows but also feeding within scrub in middle of site). Other passerines regularly seen included Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Pied Wagtail. Other birds using the site included Kestrel, with a female present on four visits, and Buzzard. Two overwintering Chiffchaffs were seen foraging in the hedgerow by the railway on 30 December. The field was also visited briefly by a flock of Stock Doves (amber) with a maximum count of 25 on 30 December.

Table 2: Species of Conservation Concern Recorded during Survey

Species (BoCC*)	05/11/11	08/11/11	18/11/11	30/11/11	12/12/11	21/12/11	30/12/11	Comments
Black-headed Gull (amber)					1		1	Occasionally feeding on bare soil areas.
Buzzard						1	2	One hunting on 21/12, one perched in trees at eastern end on 30/12 (and another nearby in adjacent woodland)
Chaffinch	1	6	8	28	12	24		Often present in maize crops.
Chiffchaff							2	Feeding in hedgerow, N side of railway.
Dunnock (amber)		2			2	1	3	In hedges, but often feeding in low bramble and other vegetation in middle of site.
Goldfinch			2		1		2	Most records of flyovers.
House Sparrow (red)					8			Near houses in south-west corner of site, and using bushes along railway corridor.
Kestrel (amber)		1		1	1		1	Female regularly hunting, usually at eastern end of site, but close to farm on 30 December.
Linnet (red)	20	26	16	22		35	48	Regularly feeding on an area of fairly bare soil with scattered weeds.
Meadow Pipit (amber)	3	8	6		1	21	15	Using whole of site except Brassicas
Pied Wagtail	3		7	5		6	9	Usually feeding on same area as Linnets.
Reed Bunting (amber)					1		1	Flushed from maize
Skylark (red)	4	1	6	5	5	25	27	Using whole of site except Brassicas
Song Thrush (red)		1			2			Occasionally feeding within crops and other vegetation.
Stock Dove (amber)		2			15	19	25	Flock briefly feeding on site, but mainly present on adjacent land to north-east.

* Birds of Conservation Concern (Eaton *et al.* 2009), amber and red listed species.

4.0 ASSESSMENT & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The proposed development area within Manor Farm and Copsey's Nurseries is considered to be of negligible value to waterfowl (wildfowl & waders) and contains no suitable foraging or loafing habitat.
- 4.2 The wider farmland contains large open fields, including the main survey area adjacent to the mostly adjacent to the proposed development area (but incorporating the western most extent of the field). The land, whilst open is of substantial distance from the coast, far enough to be of lower value to waterfowl using the coast. This combined with the long term use of the field for market garden arable farming provides only very low quality habitat for use by waterfowl. The results of seven visits to the site during winter 2011 show this to be the case, with no records of waterfowl during different tide states and weather conditions.
- 4.3 The assessment in the Brent Goose Strategy of 'uncertain' use for waders is based solely on desktop research. The value of the site for wintering waders is considered negligible.
- 4.4 Use of the survey area by breeding birds in the spring/summer is assessed in Aluco Ecology (2012). No waterfowl were recorded during the spring or summer survey work in 2011, although Mediterranean Gull was recorded during the short period when the fields were ploughed (Aluco Ecology, 2012). This use is considered opportunistic feeding during this short period, as is likely to be the case with all local farmland, and no records of this species were made during numerous survey visits at other times (Aluco Ecology, 2012). The majority of the farmland utilised is being retained in situ with continued farm management.

5.0 REFERENCES

Aluco Ecology (2012) Ecological Assessment, Land at Manor Farm & Copsey's Nurseries, Denvilles, Havant

Eaton MA, Brown AF, Noble DG, Musgrove AJ, Hearn R, Aebischer NJ, Gibbons DW, Evans A and Gregory RD (2009) Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. British Birds 102, pp296–341

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HWT) (2010) Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy