

WATERFOWL ASSESSMENT – INTERIM REPORT

**LAND AT MANOR FARM & COPSEYS NURSERY,
DENVILLES,
HAMPSHIRE**

FEBRUARY 2013

WATERFOWL ASSESSMENT

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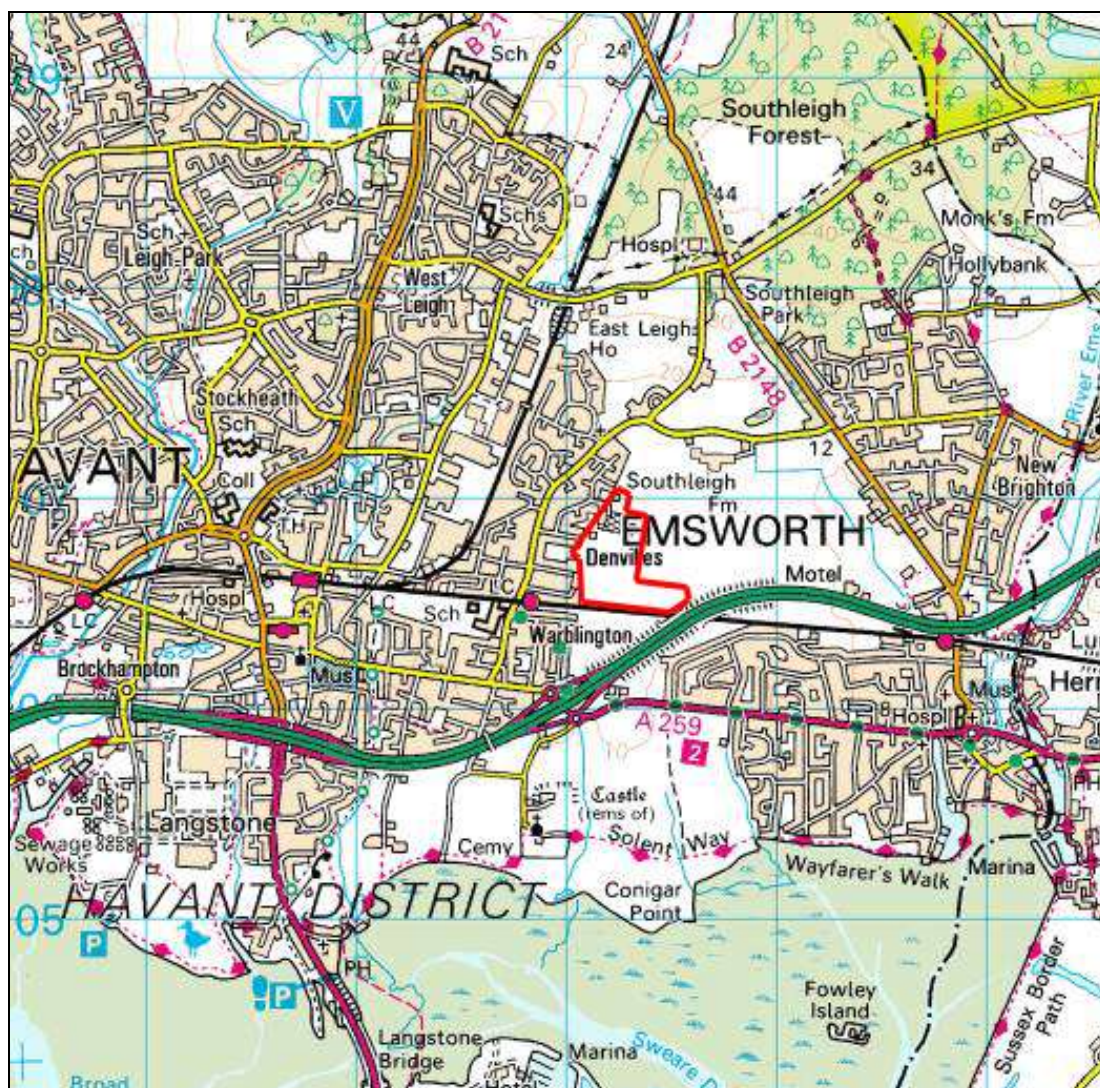
1.0 INTRODUCTION

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 2010, 2011 and 2012 with additional information provided from data searches on local area.
- 1.1.2 As a part of this work Havant Borough Council highlighted the revised Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (HWT, 2010) which updated the original Brent Goose Strategy for the Solent of 2002. In this strategy, assessment was 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 and classified as 'uncertain' for waders. It is worth noting that the new strategy added wader use to the original Brent Goose strategy as a precautionary measure to highlight and stimulate survey of these sites.
- 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. Its location is shown at **Figure 1** below.



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Figure 1: Location of the Main Survey -Area including the field unit beyond proposed site.

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 and crops of maize, onions and other crops, so these were walked through to ensure any birds were recorded that had been hiding in them. 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 contain 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 An area of the wider arable field is included in the scheme, a significant part of which is to provide the open space and suitable alternative natural green space (SANGS) (see **Photo 1**). The arable land is under intensive cultivation as part of a small holding which appears to be quite varied with some small scale animal husbandry (chickens & formally possibly pigs). The field area is currently intensively farmed as a market garden with a diverse mix of crops grown to support a vegetable box scheme. Crops are strip / patch grown in a similar way to a large Allotment and a diverse range of crops are grown including onions, leeks, brassicas, potatoes etc.

The land use results in an undulating topography with greater weed growth than in high intensity arable due to the diverse crop mix and row system. This has been the consistent long term use of the land and the use will continue on the remaining area of field.

The use of the land as arable mostly provides limited opportunity for waterfowl (see photographs in **Technical Appendix 1**). This, combined with the distance from the coast, provides a low potential for use of the site by waterfowl. Similarly due to the distance from the coast and market garden cropping, the land does not hold any real potential for waders (apart from potentially, although no records to date, some very occasional use by Lapwing and Golden Plover which could be applied to any larger field in Hampshire).

In relation to Brent Geese there is little favoured food species on the arable land, for there are only small often weedy rank areas of grassland (for example, trackways / ley periods between crops etc.). Characteristics of favoured feeding areas locally include short nitrogen rich grass swards, with heavy use of local sport fields by Brent Geese. Improved grasslands are often favoured as they have a higher and more available calorific content, which reduces potential foraging times and therefore are beneficial to the energy cycles of the Geese. There is some use of local autumn sown winter cereals, although use is often discouraged by landowners.

A small agricultural pond is present on the eastern boundary of the main survey area and will be retained. Given the size and situation of this pond (see **Photo 2**) it is considered to be of negligible value to wintering waterfowl.

In summary the use of the land as arable generally provides limited opportunity for waterfowl. This, combined with the distance from the coast, provides a low potential for use of the site by 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 visits carried out in December 2010, January 2011, November and the end of December 2011, February 2013 with on-going survey in March 2013. Details of survey is presented at **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Survey Dates

Date and time	Tide state	Weather
21 December 10, 0845-1200		Period after light snow, ground frozen
26 January 11 1000-1200		Cold Clear
Note above Survey conducted during general ecological site assessment. See Appendix 1 Photos		
5 November 11, 0925-1015	High	Overcast, light N wind, mild.
8 November 11, 1220-1325	High	Overcast, drizzle, very light E wind, mild (c.10°C).
18 November 11, 1400-1500	Low	Mainly cloudy, light S wind, warm (15°C).
30 November 11, 1415-1525	High	Showers with sunny spells, F4 S wind, mild (c.12°C).
12 December 11, 1230-1340	High	Sunny, clear, light SW wind, cold (10°C, frost earlier).
21 December 11, 1325-1400	Low	Sunny spells (6/8 cloud), F4 SW wind, very mild (13°C).
30 December 11, 1200-1325	High	Overcast, light rain, light SW wind, mild (9°C).
6 February 13, 1245-1345	Low	overcast, wind light N but gusting to F5, 6°C
Survey on-going – March 2013		

- 3.2.2 There were no records of Brent Geese *Brenta bernacula agg.* or waders recorded from the survey area to date. Survey on going and will be complete in March 2013.
- 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 (see **Table 2**). 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 2011. 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 2011.
- 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 (amber listed), 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 listed) with a maximum count of 25 on 30 December 2011. Further information on the breeding and passage spring summer birds in Ecological Assessment (2012).

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	6/2/13	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	1	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	12	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.

3.2 Results of Data Search

To add to the specific on-site data, survey data for the area was reviewed. A source of information being the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HWT) (2010) Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy. Data for the site and area is presented in **Appendix 2**.

Each of these sites were visited between one and six times for the SWBGS. One or more of the sites was surveyed on seven separate survey dates covering two winter seasons, 2007-08 and 2008-09. All the surveys resulted in negative records for waders. The site covering Manor Farm (H16E) was surveyed on three dates, 22 December 2007, 27 January 2008 and 2 March 2009. To date there is no published data for Waterfowl for the site or local adjacent fields in the SWBGS including the proposed development site.

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 limited suitable foraging or loafing habitat. It is noted that the assessment of the arable field in the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy (2010) as '*uncertain*' use for waders was a precautionary measure assessment based on desktop research.
- 4.2 The wider farmland contains large open fields, including the main survey area 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 survey during 2010-2012 support the habitat assessment with no records of waterfowl during different tide states and weather conditions. Survey is on-going to add further information to the findings to date.
- 4.3 Use of the survey area by breeding birds in the spring/summer was assessed in Aluco Ecology (2012). No waterfowl were recorded during the spring or summer survey work in 2011 (Aluco Ecology, 2012). The site is of low value to waterfowl on account of the market garden/intensive mixed vegetable growing use of this area, distance from the coast, and lack of supporting features that would be of value to waterfowl (e.g. substantial wetland areas). When this is combined with the fact that the development footprint is mostly within the former Nursery complex, farmyard and associated nearby land, the value of the site for wintering waders is considered negligible and the majority of the arable unit will remain as a private functioning farm unit.

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

Technical Appendix 1
Site Photographs



Photo 1 / 2 Large areas of the proposed site comprise glass house and agricultural buildings



Photo 3 Development area where it extends onto the field edge used as market garden for vegetable box scheme 21/12/10. Soft Fruit area



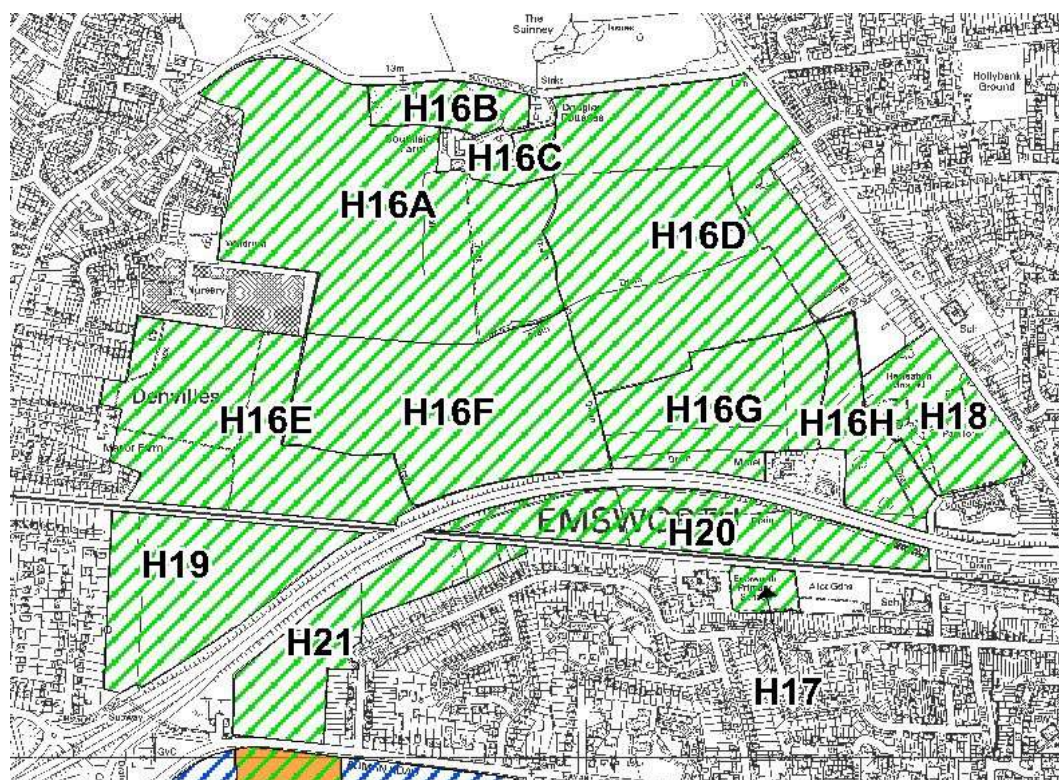
Photo 4 Development area where it extends onto the field edge used as market garden for vegetable box scheme 26 / 1/ 11. Area used for brassicas.



Photo 5 Development area where it extends onto the field edge used as market garden for vegetable box scheme 26 / 1/ 11. Area used for Onions and Leeks.



Photo 6 Open areas of the Nursery are in low use and Ruderal vegetation is developing opportunistically

Technical Appendix 2**Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HWT) (2010) Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy
Data**

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Figure 2: Field recording units within the Brent and Wader Strategy 2010

H16A	South west of Southleigh Farm
H16B	North of Southleigh Farm
H16C	East of Southleigh Farmhouse
H16D	West of Horndean Road
H16E	South of nursery
H16F	South east of nursery
H16G	North of Motel
H16H	West of Recreation Ground
H17	School grounds off Victoria Road
H18	Recreation Ground
H19	East of Castle Avenue
H20	South of A27, Emsworth
H21	North of Roman Road

Visit Records

Site	Date	Season	Time on site	Species	Count	Use	Disturbance
H16A	22/12/2007	2007-2008	09:00	No birds seen	0		No
H16A	27/03/2009	2008-2009	12:27	No birds seen	0		No
H16A	29/01/2009	2008-2009	12:30	No birds seen	0		No
H16A	11/01/2009	2008-2009	12:45	No birds seen	0		No
H16A	27/01/2008	2007-2008	14:45	No birds seen	0		No
H16B	22/12/2007	2007-2008	09:00	No birds seen	0		No
H16B	29/01/2009	2008-2009	12:40	No birds seen	0		No
H16B	27/01/2008	2007-2008	14:30	No birds seen	0		No
H16C	29/01/2009	2008-2009	12:45	No birds seen	0		No
H16C	27/01/2008	2007-2008	14:40	No birds seen	0		No
H16D	22/12/2007	2007-2008	09:00	No birds seen	0		No
H16D	27/03/2009	2008-2009	12:30	No birds seen	0		No
H16D	11/01/2009	2008-2009	12:45	No birds seen	0		No
H16D	29/01/2009	2008-2009	12:47	No birds seen	0		No
H16D	27/01/2008	2007-2008	14:30	No birds seen	0		No
H16D	26/02/2008	2007-2008	14:30	No birds seen	0		No
H16E	22/12/2007	2007-2008	09:15	No birds seen	0		No
H16E	02/03/2009	2008-2009	14:15	No birds seen	0		No
H16E	27/01/2008	2007-2008	14:45	No birds seen	0		No
H16F	02/03/2009	2008-2009	14:15	No birds seen	0		No
H16F	27/01/2008	2007-2008	14:55	No birds seen	0		No
H16G	02/03/2009	2008-2009	14:30	No birds seen	0		No
H16H	22/12/2007	2007-2008	09:30	No birds seen	0		No
H16H	29/01/2009	2008-2009	13:00	No birds seen	0		Yes
H17	29/01/2009	2008-2009	13:20	No birds seen	0		Yes
H18	22/12/2007	2007-2008	09:30	No birds seen	0		No
H18	29/01/2009	2008-2009	12:58	No birds seen	0		Yes
H19	22/12/2007	2007-2008	09:15	No birds seen	0		No
H19	02/03/2009	2008-2009	14:15	No birds seen	0		No
H19	27/01/2008	2007-2008	14:55	No birds seen	0		No
H20	27/03/2009	2008-2009	12:35	No birds seen	0		No
H20	29/01/2009	2008-2009	13:10	No birds seen	0		No
H20	02/03/2009	2008-2009	14:30	No birds seen	0		No
H21	22/12/2007	2007-2008	09:15	No birds seen	0		No
H21	27/03/2009	2008-2009	13:18	No birds seen	0		No
H21	29/01/2009	2008-2009	13:35	No birds seen	0		No
H21	27/01/2008	2007-2008	14:55	No birds seen	0		No