

APPENDIX 15.6

Breeding Bird Survey Report

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(please see Figure 1.2 of ES for final red line boundary)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Atkins Limited was commissioned by Portsmouth County Council to undertake breeding bird surveys of an area of Dunsbury Hill Farm, Havant, Hampshire.
- 1.2 The aim of the surveys was as follows:
- to record which species of birds use the site during the breeding season, in particular to identify the presence of any birds notable for their protected or conservation concern status (Annex 1, Schedule 1, UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or Bird of Conservation Concern (BoCC); see Legislative background below for more details); and
 - to establish the number and locations of notable bird territories within and immediately adjacent to the site.
- 1.3 This report presents the findings of bird surveys carried out between 24th March and 16th June 2011.
- 1.4 It is intended that this report will advise on the ornithological value of the habitats found within the survey area. The survey area and transect route is shown in **Figure 15F.1**.
- 1.5 This report does not consider the impacts of the proposed development on birds. It does highlight notable bird species recorded on the site.

Legislative background

- 1.6 All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended), making it illegal to kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy a nest (whilst being built or in use) or their eggs. Birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Act have special protection against disturbance at their nests, or with their dependent young.
- 1.7 Birds species listed under Annex 1 of the Birds Directive 79/409/EEC are considered endangered or important migratory species in Europe. These species have been protected by the establishment of a coherent network of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) comprising the most suitable habitats to ensure the survival and reproduction of these species in their area of distribution.
- 1.8 The population status of birds that are regularly found in the UK has been reviewed by leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK to produce a list of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC). Red List species are of high conservation concern and Amber List species are of medium conservation concern (RSPB, 2009).
- 1.9 A number of bird species are included in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). This list was updated in 2007 and the number of bird species was increased to 59 (JNCC, 2007). This new list of Priority Species corresponds with the list of flora, fauna and habitats considered to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity produced in November 2008 by the Secretary of State as a requirement under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- 1.10 The Section 41 list is used as a guide for decision makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions.

2. Methodology

Desk Study

- 2.1 A request was made to the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) for records of birds within 1 km of Dunsbury Hill Farm. These records were reviewed and notable bird species (Annex 1, Schedule 1, BoCC or UK BAP) were identified.

Field Survey

- 2.2 Breeding bird surveys were carried out between 24th March and 16th June 2011, which is within the optimal period for such surveys. Four survey visits were carried out following the standard Common Bird Census (CBC) methodology (Gilbert *et al.*, 1998).
- 2.3 Surveys were started at sunrise as this is the time when breeding birds are most vocal and were carried out in fair weather conditions (i.e. not in heavy rain, poor visibility or wind greater than Beaufort 4) to ensure that birds were active.
- 2.4 For each survey, a transect route was walked which covered the hedgerows within the site and also allowed all open fields to be surveyed. There are woodland edges adjoining the site and these woodland edges were also surveyed as part of the transect route (see **Figure 15F.1** for a map of the transect route).
- 2.5 The direction walked was alternated between visits to optimise detection and minimise recording bias. All birds observed and the behaviours they were displaying were recorded on a map.
- 2.6 Survey maps were combined to produce a map showing the distribution of breeding territories for notable bird species (Annex 1, Schedule 1, BoCC or UK BAP) present within or in habitats adjacent to the application site (**Figure 15F.2**). Registrations¹ of birds were judged to be 'breeding', 'probable breeding', 'possible breeding' or 'non-breeding' according to the following criteria:

Breeding

- Adults observed at nest; or
- Nest with eggs; or
- Unfledged young; or
- Carrying nest material, food or faecal sac; or
- Present in one location (within normal territory range) on at least two occasions and displaying behaviour indicative of breeding (such as singing) on at least one occasion.

Probable Breeding

- Present in suitable habitat in the same location (within normal territory range) on two or more occasions; or
- Displaying breeding behaviour on one occasion only.

Possible breeding

- Present in suitable habitat on one occasion only.

Non-breeding

¹ This term refers to the recording of a sighting on a map (it is registered) and over successive visits to the site multiple registrations of the same species in the same general area (a cluster of registrations) is likely to indicate a territory.

- Present in non-suitable habitat for breeding; or
- Immature birds.

2.7 Breeding behaviour includes displaying, singing, territorial activity, agitated or defensive behaviour, pair of adults together.

Limitations

2.8 Ecological surveys are limited by a variety of factors which affect the presence of flora and fauna such as season, climate, migration patterns and species behaviour. Even if evidence of a notable bird species is not discovered during the survey, this does not mean that such a species is not present, or that it will not be present in the future.

2.9 There are factors such as weather, behaviour of certain species and density of habitat that could cause certain birds to be missed when conducting CBC surveys. However, it is thought that site was surveyed thoroughly and the majority of territories will have been recorded.

3. Results

Desk study

The HBIC supplied all notable bird records within 1km of Dunsbury Hill Farm for the past 15 years. There are records of 44 bird species, however 27 of these species are thought unlikely to have bred in or near the survey area and are likely to have been recorded during winter or on passage.

Seventeen of the species recorded could possibly have bred in or near the survey area, due to the presence of potentially suitable habitat (see Table 1).

Table 1– HBIC bird records of species that could potentially breed in or near the survey area

Species	Notable Status
Firecrest	Schedule 1, Amber List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Hobby	Schedule 1, Hants LBAP
House sparrow	UK BAP, Red List BoCC
Kingfisher	Annex 1, Schedule 1, Amber List BoCC
Lapwing	Annex 1, UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Lesser spotted woodpecker	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Linnet	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Marsh tit	UK BAP, Red List BoCC
Nightingale	Amber List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Reed warbler	Hants LBAP
Sand martin	Amber List BoCC
Song thrush	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Spotted flycatcher	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Starling	UK BAP, Red List BoCC

Stock dove	Amber List BoCC
Willow tit	UK BAP, Red List BoCC
Woodcock	Amber List BoCC

Field survey

- 3.1 A total of 39 bird species were recorded during the 4 survey visits. Of these, 34 species were thought to be breeding on or very near to the site, either due to showing signs of breeding or due to the presence of suitable breeding habitat. A summary list of the species observed on the site and in adjacent habitats, along with their potential breeding status on site is shown in Table 2.
- 3.2 Of the 39 species observed, 15 species are notable for their Schedule 1, UK BAP or BoCC status (see Table 2). Eight of these notable species were confirmed to be breeding within the survey area (see **Figure 15F.2** for a map of territories) and a further 3 species were thought to probably/possibly be breeding within or near the survey area due to repeated sightings and/or the presence of suitable breeding habitat within or near the survey area.
- 3.3 Only one species protected under Schedule 1 (Part 1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) was recorded during the bird surveys; a flock of three redwings were recorded during the first breeding bird survey. These birds have overwintered in the UK and would have left the UK for their breeding grounds further north soon after this first survey. This species did not breed on site.
- 3.4 Eight of the species recorded are listed as priority species on the UK BAP; bullfinch, dunnock, house sparrow, linnet, skylark, song thrush, starling and yellowhammer. Seven of these UK BAP species were confirmed to have bred within the survey area due to repeated sightings demonstrating breeding behaviour (bullfinch, dunnock, house sparrow, skylark, song thrush, starling and yellowhammer). Linnets were thought to have possibly bred within or near the survey area; a single bird was observed on one occasion, however the habitat is suitable for breeding.
- 3.5 Six of the eight UK BAP species recorded are also Red List BoCC species; house sparrow, linnet, skylark, song thrush, starling and yellowhammer. Typically these species have suffered a severe decline of greater than 50% of their UK breeding population size and/or breeding range over the past 25 years and therefore their breeding sites are particularly important. The other two UK BAP species recorded (dunnock and bullfinch) are on the Amber List of BoCC due to having suffered declines in population size and/or breeding range of 25-49% over the past 25 years.
- 3.6 A further 6 Amber List BoCC species were recorded. Of these, three species were recorded as breeding or probably breeding on or near site; common whitethroat, green woodpecker and stock dove.
- 3.7 An additional Amber List BoCC species, nightingale, was not recorded during the breeding bird surveys but was heard singing during an evening newt survey and was thought to have possibly bred at the edge of the survey area.
- 3.8 Bullfinch, linnet, little egret, nightingale, skylark and song thrush, lapwing, reed bunting and yellowhammer are also on the Hampshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (HBP, 2000)

Table 2 – Bird species recorded during the Breeding Bird Surveys

Species	Notable Status	Breeding Status
Blackbird		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Blackcap		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Black-headed gull	Amber List BoCC	Not breeding
Blue tit		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Bullfinch	UK BAP, Amber List BoCC, Hants LBAP	Confirmed breeding in survey area
Buzzard		Probably bred near survey area
Carrion crow		Probably bred within or near survey area
Chaffinch		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Chiffchaff		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Coal tit		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Collared dove		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Common whitethroat	Amber List BoCC	Confirmed breeding in survey area
Dunnock	UK BAP, Amber List BoCC	Confirmed breeding in survey area
Goldcrest		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Goldfinch		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Great spotted woodpecker		Probably bred within or near survey area
Great tit		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Green woodpecker	Amber List BoCC	Probably bred within or near survey area
Greenfinch		Confirmed breeding in survey area
House sparrow	UK BAP, Red List BoCC	Confirmed breeding in survey area
Jay		Probably bred within or near survey area
Linnet	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP	Possibly bred within or near survey area
Linnet		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Little egret	Hants LBAP	Not breeding
Magpie		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Meadow pipit	Amber List BoCC	Not breeding
Nuthatch		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Pheasant		Probably bred within or near survey area
Redwing	Schedule 1, Red List BoCC	Not breeding
Robin		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Skylark	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP	Confirmed breeding in survey area

Species	Notable Status	Breeding Status
Song thrush	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP	Confirmed breeding in survey area
Starling	UK BAP, Red List BoCC	Confirmed breeding in survey area
Stock dove	Amber List BoCC	Probably bred within or near survey area
Swift	Amber List BoCC	Not thought to have bred in survey area
Treecreeper		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Woodpigeon		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Wren		Confirmed breeding in survey area
Yellowhammer	UK BAP, Red List BoCC	Confirmed breeding in survey area

- 3.9 All territories of notable birds thought to be breeding within the survey area are shown in **Figure 15F.2**. This figure shows the centre of their territories, based on the location where the majority of their breeding behaviour occurred.
- 3.10 In addition to confirmed territories, probable territories were also noted where birds were recorded displaying breeding behaviour on a single occasion. Table 3 below lists the number of confirmed and probable breeding territories within the survey area for each notable species. Table 3 also lists the status of each bird species in Hampshire, based on the 2009 Bird Report (HOS, 2010).

Table 3 – The number of confirmed and probable/possible notable bird territories within the survey area

Species	Number of confirmed territories within survey area	Number of probable/possible territories within survey area	Status in Hampshire ² (HOS, 2010)
Bullfinch	2	1	Numerous resident
Black-headed gull	N/A	N/A	Numerous resident
Common whitethroat	10	8	Numerous summer visitor
Dunnock	6	7	Abundant resident
Green woodpecker	-	1	Common resident
House sparrow	1 territory consisting of several pairs	-	Numerous resident
Linnet	-	1	Numerous resident
Meadow pipit	N/A	N/A	Numerous passage migrant
Redwing	N/A	N/A	Numerous to abundant winter

² Common resident = 1001-5000 breeding pairs, numerous resident = 5001-30,000 breeding pairs, winter/numerous passage = 10,001-60,000, abundant resident = 30,000+ pairs

Species	Number of confirmed territories within survey area	Number of probable/possible territories within survey area	Status in Hampshire ² (HOS, 2010)
Skylark	1	-	Numerous resident
Song thrush	4	7	Numerous resident
Starling	-	2	Abundant but declining
Stock dove	-	1	Numerous resident
Swift	-	-	Numerous summer visitor
Yellowhammer	5	4	Numerous resident

4. Discussion and Conclusions

- 4.1 The range of breeding bird species and the number of notable species and confirmed territories is thought to be typical of the habitat present and geographic location of the survey area.
- 4.2 The number of breeding pairs of notable species within the survey area is low compared to the county populations as listed in Table 3. Therefore the survey area is not of national or county importance for breeding birds. However, much of the area surrounding Dunsbury Hill farm is developed housing and therefore the breeding bird population within the survey area is considered to be of local importance.
- 4.3 Although not recorded during the Breeding Bird Surveys, a singing nightingale was heard at the edge of the survey area during an evening newt survey and therefore there is a possibility that a pair of nightingales bred. Nightingales are a scarce and declining breeder in Hampshire according to the latest HOS report (HOS, 2010) and there are estimated to be 11-100 breeding pairs in the county. If this nightingale did breed in or at the edge of the survey area, then this would be of county importance. It is recommended that nightingales are considered in any proposed mitigation to ensure that there is available breeding habitat.

5. References

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