

APPENDIX 15.7

Wintering Bird Survey Report

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Atkins Limited was commissioned by Portsmouth County Council to undertake wintering bird surveys of an area of Dunsbury Hill Farm, Havant, Hampshire.
- 1.2 The aim of the surveys was to record:
- the species of birds and the numbers that use the site during the winter 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);
 - to determine if dark-bellied brent geese use the survey area over winter. The survey area is approximately 6.3 km from Portsmouth Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) which qualified for its overwintering populations of dark-bellied brent geese (JNCC, 2001). If brent geese use this site during the winter and could therefore be potentially affected by the proposed project, then a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) may be necessary.
- 1.3 This report presents the findings of two wintering bird surveys carried out on 22nd December 2010 and 27th January 2011.
- 1.4 It is intended that this report will advise on the ornithological value of the habitats found within the survey area for wintering bird species. The survey area and transect route is shown in Figure 15G.1. This report does not consider the impacts of the proposed development on birds. It does highlight notable bird species recorded on the site and consider the need for an HRA.

Legislative background

- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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 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).
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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 a kilometre 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 Two wintering bird surveys were carried out on 22nd December 2010 and 27th January 2011.
- 2.3 The survey visits generally followed the standard Common Bird Census (CBC) methodology (Gilbert *et al.*, 1998), walking a route through the survey area that allowed coverage of the hedges and open fields within the survey area (see **Figure 15G.1** for a diagram of the transect route).
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Surveys were started early morning in fair weather conditions (i.e. not in heavy rain, poor visibility or wind greater than Beaufort 4) to ensure that birds were active and could be seen.

Limitations

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 There are factors such as weather, behaviour of certain species and density of habitat that could cause certain birds to be missed when conducting bird surveys. However, it is thought that site was surveyed thoroughly and a fair representation of overwinter usage of the survey area by birds will have been recorded.

3. Results

Desk study

- 3.1 The HBIC supplied all notable bird records within 1 km of Dunsbury Hill Farm for the past 15 years. There are records of 44 bird species, although several of these species are summer visitors to the UK, such as hobby and nightjar, or rare records, such as white-tailed eagle and twite.
- 3.2 A full list of desk study species can be found in Annex 1.

Field survey

- 3.3 A total of 32 bird species were recorded during the wintering bird surveys.
- 3.4 Of the 32 species observed, 11 species are notable for their Annex 1, Schedule 1, UK BAP or BoCC status. See Table 1 for a list of notable species recorded within the survey area,

the maximum number counted during a survey and the status of each bird species in Hampshire, based on the 2009 Bird Report (HOS, 2010).

Table 1 – Bird species recorded during the Wintering Bird Surveys

Species	Notable Status	Maximum number recorded	Status in Hampshire ¹ (HOS, 2010)
Black-headed gull	Amber List BoCC	3	Numerous resident and winter visitor
Bullfinch	UK BAP, Amber List BoCC	4	Numerous resident
Dunnock	UK BAP, Amber List BoCC, Hants BAP	5	Abundant resident and winter visitor
Green woodpecker	Amber List BoCC	1	Common resident
Kestrel	Amber List BoCC	1	Common resident and winter visitor
Lapwing	Annex 1, UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants BAP	9 (flying over the survey area)	Numerous winter visitor
Meadow pipit	Amber List BoCC	2	Numerous winter visitor
Mistle thrush	Amber List BoCC	5	Numerous resident
Redwing	Schedule 1, Red List BoCC	9	Numerous to abundant winter visitor
Song thrush	UK BAP, Red List BoCC	5	Numerous resident and winter visitor
Yellowhammer	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants BAP	1	Numerous resident

4. Discussion and Conclusions

- 4.1 The survey area was thought to support a fairly typical range of winter bird species for the habitat present and geographic location.
- 4.2 The maximum counts for the notable species recorded within the survey area is low compared to the estimated county populations as listed in table 1. Therefore the survey area is not of national or county importance for wintering birds. However, much of the area surrounding Dunsbury Hill farm is developed housing and therefore the wintering bird population within the survey area is considered to be of local importance.

¹Common resident = 1001-5000 breeding pairs, numerous resident = 5001-30,000 breeding pairs, abundant resident = 30,000+ breeding pairs, common winter visitor = 2201-10,000 individuals, numerous winter visitor = 10,001-60,000, abundant winter visitor = 60,000+ individuals

- 4.3 No brent geese were recorded during the wintering bird surveys and it is considered unlikely that these birds would forage within the survey area. Therefore the proposed development will not affect this species. Therefore, a formal Habitats Regulations Assessment would not be required in relation to site impacts on this species.

5. References

Gilbert, G., Gibbon, D., Evans, J. (1998) *Bird Monitoring Methods; a manual of survey techniques for key UK species*. Sandy:RSPB.

HBP (2000) Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire: Priority Species
<http://www.hampshirebiodiversity.org.uk/pdf/vol2/Vol2PrioritySpecies.pdf>

HOS (2010) Hampshire Bird Report 2009 Winchester: Hampshire Ornithological Society

JNCC (2001) SPA description: Portsmouth Harbour <
<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2036>> (accessed 19/08/2011)

JNCC (2007) *UK Biodiversity Action Plan: UK List of Priority Species and Habitats* <
<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/NewPriorityList.aspx>> (accessed 10/08/2011)

RSPB (2009) *Birds of Conservation Concern 3* <
http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/BoCC_tcm9-217852.pdf> (accessed 10/08/2011)

Annex 1 – Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre bird records

Species	Notable status
Black-headed gull	Amber List BoCC
Brent goose	UK BAP, Amber List BoCC
Common gull	Amber List BoCC
Crossbill	Schedule 1
Curlew	UK BAP, Amber List BoCC
Dartford warbler	Schedule 1, Amber List BoCC, Hants BAP
Dunlin	Red List BoCC, Hants BAP
Fieldfare	Schedule 1, Red List BoCC
Firecrest	Schedule 1, Amber List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Green sandpiper	Schedule 1, Amber List BoCC
Hobby	Schedule 1, , Hants LBAP
Honey Buzzard	Schedule 1, Amber List BoCC, Hants BAP
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 black-backed gull	Amber List BoCC
Lesser spotted woodpecker	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Linnet	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Little egret	Amber List BoCC, Hants BAP
Marsh harrier	Schedule 1, Amber List BoCC
Marsh tit	UK BAP, Red List BoCC
Mediterranean gull	Schedule 1, Amber List BoCC, Hants BAP
Nightingale	Amber List BoCC, Hants LBAP
Nightjar	UK BAP, Red List BoCC, Hants BAP
Oystercatcher	Amber List BoCC
Peregrine falcon	Schedule 1
Red kite	Schedule 1, Amber List BoCC
Redshank	Amber List BoCC, Hants BAP
Redwing	Schedule 1, Red List BoCC
Reed warbler	Hants LBAP
Rock pipit	
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
Twite	UK BAP, Red List BoCC
Water rail	
Whimbrel	Schedule 1, Red List BoCC
Whinchat	Amber List BoCC, Hants BAP
White-tailed eagle	Schedule 1, Red List BoCC
Willow tit	UK BAP, Red List BoCC
Woodcock	Amber List BoCC
Wryneck	Schedule 1, UK BAP, Red List BoCC