

Mitigation Area Creation, Management and Monitoring Strategy



Site:	College Road, Campdown
Client:	Persimmon Homes
Job Number:	A100376
Survey Type(s):	Mitigation Area Creation, Management and Monitoring Strategy
File Location:	I:\Projects\Projects A100000 on\A100376 Campdown\REPORTS

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

WYG were commissioned by Persimmon Homes to prepare a detailed strategy for the establishment, management and monitoring of the proposed Winter Bird Mitigation Area as part of the proposed development at Campdown (see WYG, 2019¹).

This is intended to set out details of the proposed actions to be undertaken to improve the condition of the mitigation area, such that it is suitable to compensate for the loss of foraging habitat at the development site. It also sets out measures to prevent future disturbance of the mitigation area, management activities and a monitoring schedule.

The Site encompasses H106, H113, H125 and H02A which have been monitored for the presence of brent geese as part of the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (SWBGS). Of these, only H02A was part of the interim strategy in 2015. The updated strategy takes into account which incorporates spatial considerations such as movements rather than just numbers.

As compensation for the loss of habitat within the Site, it is proposed that a mitigation area is created on land owned by Havant Borough Council at Broadmarsh. This comprises H07A and H07B within the SWBGS. These are listed as core and primary support sites respectively, however this designation is due to their location within the wider network and proximity to the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA. Surveys conducted over three years by Havant Borough Council found no evidence of use by wading birds (including searches for goose droppings). This was considered likely to be a result of unmanaged access by dog walkers and the unsuitable condition of the habitat (scrub encroachment, long grass and absence of water).

1.2 Baseline

Tables 1 and 2 set out baseline data for the Site from the SWBGS.

¹ WYG, (2019), College Road, Campdown: Winter Bird Mitigation Strategy.

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Table 1 Data from SWBGS 2015

Site Code	Waders Recorded Post-2010 Strategy	Maximum Count of Waders	Brent Geese Recorded Post-2010 Strategy	Maximum Count of Brent Geese
H02A	Yes	1	Yes	70
H106	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
H113	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
H125	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 2 Data from SWBGS 2019

Site Code	Max Count	Network Score	GB Score	SPA Score	SPA Assm Score	Total Score	Num Recs	Classification
H02A	200		0	3	0	3	92	Primary Support Area
H113	45		0	2	0	2	7	Secondary Support Area
H106	80		0	3	0	3	6	Primary Support Area
H125	300		0	2	0	2	15	Secondary Support Area

WYG² have also undertaken a series of winter bird surveys during 2015/16 and 2016/17 at the site. These surveys revealed that up to 50 brent geese were utilising the site and up to 150 curlew. During these surveys both species were recorded during most visits.

Since the 2015 interim version of the SWBGS, additional areas of the Site have been included within the strategy (H113, H106 and H125). However, from the number of records in Table 2 it is clear that H02A remains the most heavily used area of the site. The WYG surveys (which covered 24 separate occasions) showed that whilst on most surveys, flocks of brent geese and curlew were present within H02A, they did on occasion move into H125 and H113. No wading birds were recorded within H106 during any WYG survey. Although these sites qualify as Primary and Secondary support areas by

² WYG (2017). Land off College Road, Campdown Wintering Bird Report.

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virtue of the peak counts recorded, this is based on a small number of records when the birds associated with H02A were instead present within these fields.

As a result of the proposed development, H113 (c.7.2 ha), H106 (c.7.4 ha) and H125(c.3.5 ha) will be lost, and part of H02B (c.5.2 ha of a total area of 10.9 ha). However, as discussed above, these sites are not used simultaneously.

1.3 Mitigation Summary

H07A is listed as Core area and H07B as a Primary support area within the SWBGS. However, as discussed above, this is due to their location and function within the wider network, not because of the numbers of birds supported. This location makes it suitable for habitat creation and management works as there is minimal risk that the foraging habitat will not be found by birds within the adjacent SPA.

H07A measures c. 5.0 ha (minus 0.2 ha which comprises an existing car park) and H07B c.3.2 ha. The mitigation strategy is to secure this area in perpetuity and enhance its foraging habitat creating a mitigation area measuring approximately 8 ha. This is larger than the area of H02B to be lost. Although it is smaller than the total area of loss within the Site, the additional 18.1 ha are used infrequently by the same birds within H02B. Further benefits of the proposed mitigation include the security of the foraging area in perpetuity and the superior location (all four areas on site have a network score of 0). Finally, although H07A and H07B are currently unsuitable, there is evidence that they have been used by birds in the past and therefore are of sufficient size to be used again in sufficient numbers. According to HBIC data supplied in 2015, H07A once had a peak count of 100 waders and 200 brent geese, and H07B a peak count of 37 waders and 13 brent geese.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 A – Install Footpath

The mitigation area is currently used for informal recreation. It is proposed that a more formal, hard-wearing path is created around the periphery of the site. This will be secured by fencing and hedge planting. During the wintering period (October – March) access will be restricted to only this boundary path.

Installation of the boundary footpath along the northern edge of the mitigation will take place in Summer 2020 and will comprise a compacted gravel path, suitable for those with mobility problems. This area is shown in Figure 2. This will include the installation of fencing to prevent access into the mitigation area (timber post and rail fencing with wire stock-proof fencing attached), and the planting of a mixed native species hedgerow on the mitigation area side of the fence. Two lockable access gates into each field will be installed for maintenance access, and to allow recreation during the summer.

Interpretation boards will be installed at each access point to explain the purpose of the mitigation area and the reasons for restricted access over winter.

Note that footpath and fencing works must be completed by October 2021. Planting of hedgerow plants will take place during the suitable planting season (November – February) but will be preceded by a toolbox talk given by the developer's ecologist to minimise disturbance of wintering birds.

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Hedgerow planting will comprise the following native species mix:

- Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* – 30%
- Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* – 20%
- Bird cherry *Prunus padus* – 10%
- Elder *Sambucus nigra* – 10%
- Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* – 30%

The completion of these works will be signed off by the developer's ecologist along with the HCC Ecologist and/or Natural England.

2.2 B – Decoys

To maximise the likelihood of uptake by geese following the improvement works to the mitigation area, 6 no. brent goose decoys (based on available package size) will be installed within each field of the mitigation area. These will be placed by the developer's ecologist near the centre of the mitigation area with good sightlines. No maintenance requirement is anticipated but the decoys will be replaced if they are lost within the first three years following establishment.

2.3 C – Wader Scrapes

To improve the habitat suitability for other wading birds (either qualifying species for the SPA or part of the qualifying assemblage) three wader scrapes will be created within the mitigation area. These will be of irregular shape with an average area of 50m². To create a range of conditions and support different species the scrapes will be of variable depth with shallow margins and a deeper centre of 0.5m depth. Water supply for the scrapes will come from rainfall and surface water runoff.

The primary objective is to hold perched water during the winter, but it is anticipated that deeper areas will also hold water for part of the summer and provide an enhancement for breeding birds. The deeper central section of the scrape will occupy approximately 50% of the total area to maximise the likelihood of water retention. Scrapes will be created using an excavator with arisings piled adjacent to the margins to improve water retention and provide bare ground areas suitable for invertebrates.

Locations of scrapes will be chosen by the developers ecologist by observing ground conditions during the winter of 2020/21. The developers ecologist will then supervise the scrape construction.

2.4 D – Site Preparation

Vegetation Clearance

The mitigation area will be cleared of encroaching scrub, under the supervision of an ecologist to check for nesting birds. Given the area of scrub to be removed, it is proposed that this take place using a tractor-mounted flail, with hand tools used where necessary (for example dense areas that cannot easily be checked for birds). This will take place as early as possible in 2021 once the local brent goose population has migrated.

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Soil Preparation

Areas cleared of vegetation These areas will then be prepared for seeding using a disc harrow to a maximum of 150 mm depth to prevent fertile soil being moved below root depth. If necessary, a chain harrow will be used to remove arisings from flailing and prevent smothering of seedlings (this will also help seed-to-soil contact).

Sowing

The seed mix to be sown will be a suitable grazing mix dominated by hard-wearing grasses (e.g. perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne*) and a minimum of 10% white clover *Trifolium repens*.

Seeding will take place by broadcast at a density of approximately 18 kg/ha. Seed should be sown within 10 mm of the soil surface.

Due to the inclusion of a high density of white clover in the seed mix, it is not considered necessary to include artificial fertiliser application.

Consolidation

Following sowing, the seed bed will be rolled. This will improve seed-to-soil contact, moisture retention and will minimise establishment of pest species.

Cutting

The grassland will be left to establish through the year and prior to the winter of 2021/22 the established grassland will be cut to a height of 60 mm ready for grazing by geese.

2.5 E – Monitoring

The mitigation area will be monitored in the winter of 2021/22 by the developer's ecologist. This will comprise twice-monthly vantage point surveys during suitable conditions between October and March by a suitably experienced ornithologist. Each visit will commence two hours before high tide and continue for four hours.

2.6 F – Overseeding

If bare areas are identified in Spring 2022, overseeding using the same seed mix as 2.4 will take place to fill these areas. Overseeding will be preceded by a light harrow, or chain harrow, to prepare the seedbed without causing significant damage to the established grassland.

2.7 G – Disposal of Mitigation Area

Once the mitigation area is fully established and all works to the footpath, fencing etc. are complete, responsibility for management will pass to Havant Borough Council or other agreed management body. A final sign off visit will take place by the developers ecologist, HCC Ecologist, Natural England and management body. If all are satisfied the transfer will take place in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement. If any issues are identified, an amendment will be made to this strategy and issued to all parties setting out the corrective actions required.

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2.8 H – Long-term Monitoring

The long-term mitigation area monitoring will commence in the winter of 2022/23 and comprise two stages.

Stage 1 will comprise annual winter bird surveys as per Section 2.5 and continue for 10 years until the winter of 2030/31. Twice-monthly vantage point surveys during suitable conditions between October and March by a suitably experienced ornithologist. Each visit will commence two hours before high tide and continue for four hours. Results will be reported to the Owner and LPA.

Stage 2 will comprise remote camera surveys every 5 years for a further 70 years. Two cameras will be deployed for a period of five days each month from October to March, one in H07A and one in H07B. Cameras will be set to take photographs at 30 minute intervals. These will subsequently be checked by an ornithologist to confirm the presence or absence of brent geese. Results will be reported to the Owner and LPA. Should remote camera monitoring determine that birds are no longer using the mitigation area, corrective action will be undertaken and a further period of manual monitoring may be required to monitor its effectiveness. This will be agreed with the LPA.

2.9 I – Long-term Management

Cutting

The grassland will be cut twice per year. The first cut will take place in late July / early August to a height of 150 mm with arisings left to allow nutrients to re-enter the soil. The second will take place in late September to a height of 60mm with arisings removed to leave a short sward for foraging geese.

Hedgerow Management

Hedgerows will be cut annually in early October to maintain a height of 1.5 m and width of 1.0 m. Each year only one side or the top will be cut to maintain structure and fruit production for birds and mammals.

Scrape Management

Scrape banks will be strimmed to ground level every three years in late September / early October to prevent scrub or ruderal species from becoming established.

Overseeding

Every 10 years, the grassland will be supplemented by additional overseeding using the same seed mix as 2.4. Overseeding will be preceded by a light harrow, or chain harrow, to prepare the seedbed without causing significant damage to the established grassland. This will refresh the seed bank and make sure that perennial rye grass and white clover remain the dominant species within the sward.

Furniture

Furniture, including fences, footpaths and interpretation boards will be inspected at minimum on an annual basis in early September, with repairs or corrective action completed prior to October.

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Establishment Operations

Table 1 sets out the actions to be taken, timings and responsibilities for establishing the mitigation area.

	Timescale	Operation	Undertaken By	Additional Supervision
A	March 21	Install boundary footpath, fencing (post & rail with livestock fencing) and hedgerow.	Developer's contractor	Sign-off by developer's ecologist, agreed by LPA / NE
B	March 21	Install goose decoy (x 6) within southern section of mitigation area.	Developer's contractor	Sign-off by developer's ecologist, agreed by LPA / NE
C	March / April 21 (1 week)	Create wader scrapes (x 3) within southern section of mitigation area using medium-sized excavator.	Developer's contractor	Guided by developer's ecologist.
D	March / April 21 (1 week)	Remove scrub growth.	Developer's contractor	n/a
	March / April 21 (1 week)	Prepare areas using disc harrow (or similar) to maximum of 150 mm with chain harrow (if necessary) to remove arisings.		n/a
	April 21 (1 week)	Sow seed mix (perennial rye grass & white clover) using broadcast seeding at c.18 kg/ha.		n/a
	N/A	Fertiliser application is not considered necessary due to the inclusion of nitrate-fixing clover within the mix.		n/a
	April 21 (1 week)	Consolidate seed bed via rolling.		Sign-off by developer's ecologist, agreed by LPA / NE
	September 21	Cut grassland to 60 mm in height.		Sign-off by developer's ecologist, agreed by LPA / NE
E	October 21 – March 22	Monitoring of mitigation area for use and establishment.	Developer's ecologist	In consultation with LPA / NE
F	April 22	Over-seed bare areas if necessary.	Developer's contractor	n/a

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G	September 22	Hand over mitigation land responsibility to future owner / manager.	Developer / Management Body	n/a
H	October 22 – March 32	Stage 1 long-term monitoring.	Developer's ecologist	LPA
	October 32 – March 2102	Stage 2 long-term monitoring.	Management Body	LPA
I	Late July / early August 23 then Annually	Cut grassland to 150 mm in height.	Management Body	n/a
	September 23 then Annually	Cut grassland to 60 mm in height.		
	October 23 then Annually	Cut hedgerows – each year only one side or the top.		
	Late September / early October 24 then Every 3 Years	Strim scrape banks to ground level		
	April 32 then Every 10 Years	Over-seed grassland.		
	September 23 then Annually	Inspect furniture and carry out corrective action / repairs.		

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Quality Control		
Version:	1	FINAL
Prepared by:		Ben Cooke GradCIEEM Project Ecologist
Checked and Verified By:		David West CEnv MCIEEM Associate Ecologist

Version:	Date:	Updated by:	Verified by:	Description of changes:

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Figure 1 Mitigation Area Plan



Rev	Date	Notes
A	25/03/20	Initial map production

Legend

- Access route
- Fencing
- Hedgerow
- Gates and interpretative media
- Wader scrapes
- Scrub removal / grassland creation

0 25 50 100 Metres



Winter Bird Mitigation Area Plan

**Campdown
Persimmon Homes**

Scale at A3:	Project No:	Drawing No:	Revision:
1:2,100	A100376	Figure 1	A
Drawn by:	Drawn date:	Approved by:	
Ben Blowers	25/03/2020	David West	

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