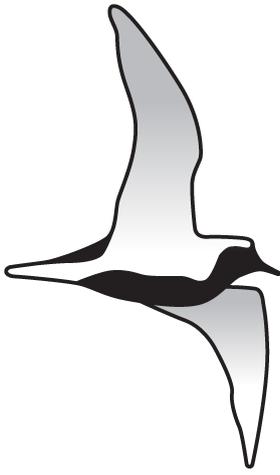


Appendix 7.6

Wintering Bird Survey



WILD FRONTIER ECOLOGY

Land East of Wootton, Northamptonshire



Golden Plover Survey Report

February 2017

Report produced by	Submitted to
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The data which we have prepared and provided is accurate, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the CIEEM’s Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that any opinions expressed are our best and professional bona fide opinions.

This report conforms to the British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development.



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1. Non-technical Summary

Surveys for wintering golden plover were undertaken on arable land immediately to the east of Wootton, Northamptonshire from November 2016 to February 2017. Six visits were undertaken (two in November and December, and one in both January and February) covering periods two hours either side of either sunrise or sunset.

Habitat within the proposed development boundary was largely unsuitable, consisting mainly of rank grassland in the southern section, and cereal stubble to the north of the road. No flocks of golden plover or lapwing were recorded within this area.

Golden plover flocks were noted within the eastern buffer zone of the proposed development site (Figure 1) on two occasions (possibility of a third). Golden plover numbers peaked at 380 on 20th December 2016, in a mixed flock with 330 lapwing.

Other birds of note recorded during the surveys included Birds of Conservation Concern species yellowhammer, skylark, linnets and song thrush, (red list) and dunnock, bullfinch, and reed bunting (amber list).

2. Background

Targeted surveys for golden plover were requested by CSA Environmental for a proposed housing development site immediately to the east of Wootton, Northamptonshire (see Figure 1).

The most proximate point of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA lies approximately 9.5km to the north-east of the proposed development site, and is designated for wintering wildfowl and waders, including a sizeable roosting population of golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*.

3. Methods

The site was surveyed for golden plover on the dates and times given in Table 1.

Table 1. Golden plover survey dates and weather conditions

Date	Time	Weather
8 th November 2016	14:20 - 18:20	cloud 80%, precipitation 0, temperature 5, wind SW 3
30 th November 2016	05:45 - 09:45	cloud 0%, precipitation 0, temperature -5, wind still
7 th December 2016	13:50 - 17:50	cloud 60%, precipitation 0, temperature 5-8, wind SW 1
20 th December 2016	06:00 - 10:00	cloud 100%, precipitation 0, temperature 4-6, wind E 1-2
31 st January 2017	14:54 - 18:54	cloud 80%, precipitation 80%, temperature 6-8, wind still
13 th February 2017	05:20 - 09:20	cloud 100%, precipitation 0, temperature 15, wind SE 3

The survey area (Figure 1) and buffer was scanned from various (eight) vantage points using a Pulsar Quantum thermal imaging scope (pre-dawn, post dusk), binoculars (Zeiss 10x42) and telescope (Swarowski 30-50x zoom). The land within the red-line boundary could be explored on foot, but all observations within the buffer (blue line) were undertaken from the road.



Figure 1. Survey area



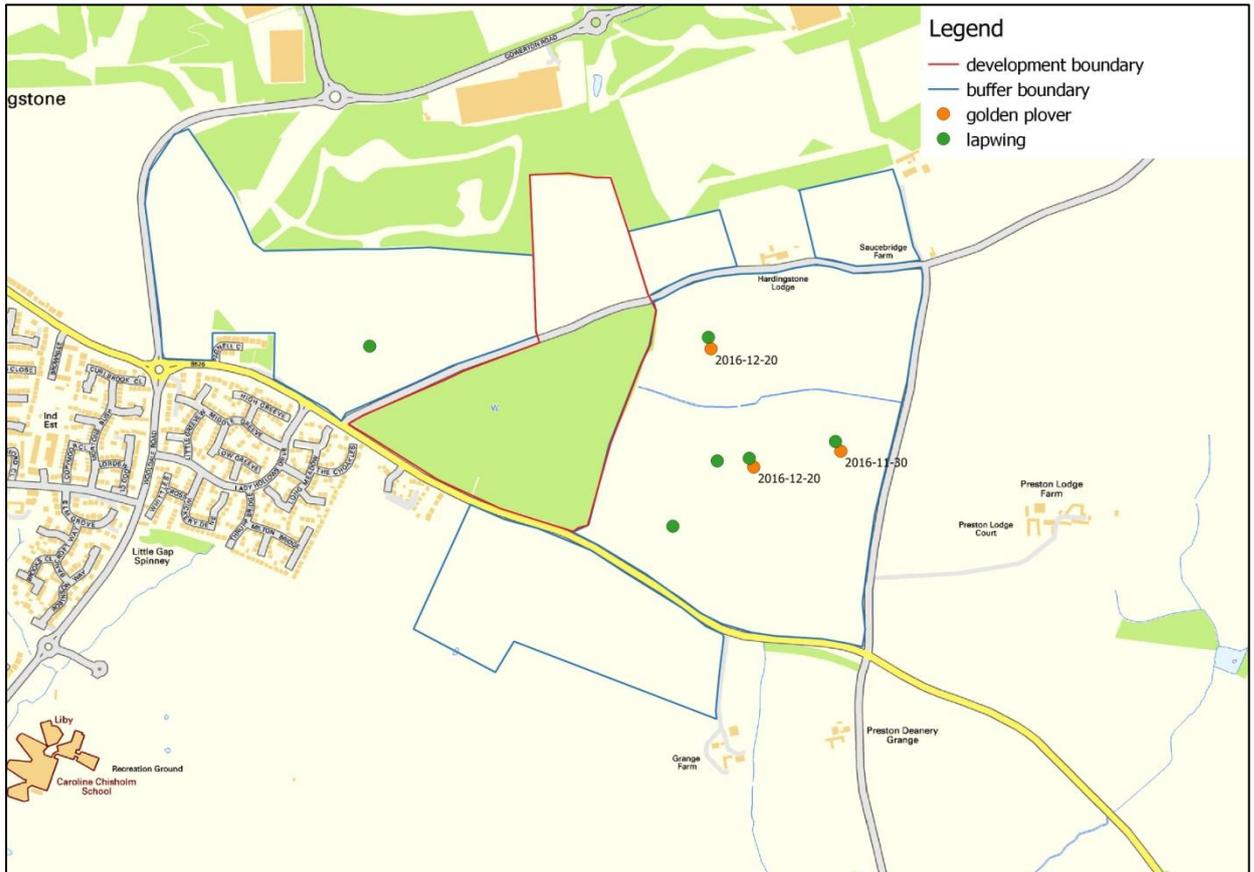
4. Results

The survey findings are detailed in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 2.

Table 2. Survey Results

Survey Date	Golden Plover Records	Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> Records	Species of Conservation Concern
8 th November 2016	-	-	yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i> 10, reed bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> 2
30 th November 2016	15 foraging birds (eastern buffer) see Figure 2	12 (eastern buffer)	yellowhammer 4, reed bunting 8, dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i> 1
7 th December 2016	-	-	skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i> 4, reed bunting 10, yellowhammer 18
20 th December 2016	380 birds (eastern buffer) mobile mixed flock with lapwing, initially roosting in northern location, then spent much time wheeling over the site before finally settling in the more southerly location see Figure 2	330 (eastern buffer), 1 (western buffer)	-
31 st January 2017	*	101 (eastern buffer)* in 2 separate flocks	-
13 th February 2017	-	-	yellowhammer 60, linnet <i>Carduelis cannabina</i> 35, bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i> 4, song thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i> 1

* Only seen through thermal camera. Attributed to lapwing based on calling heard, but there is a possibility that golden plover may have also been present.

Figure 2. Golden plover and lapwing observations

5.2 Constraints

There were no significant constraints to the survey.

5. Conclusion

Six winter 2016-17 surveys at a proposed development site east of Wootton, Northamptonshire recorded no golden plover or lapwings within the development boundary itself, with the habitat being largely unsuitable rank grassland and cereal stubble. Two flocks of golden plover, along with five gatherings of lapwing, were observed in stubble turnip fields along the eastern buffer adjoining the proposed development site.