

## Appendix 7.9

### Breeding Bird Surveys

## Legislation

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under subsection 1(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to kill or injure any wild bird, to take or destroy their eggs, or to take, damage or destroy their nests while in use or being built.

In addition, certain species of wild bird, listed within Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, receive additional protection under subsection 1(5) of the Act. This makes it an offence to disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young. It is also an offence to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Consideration is also taken of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC)<sup>1</sup>. These are species which are declining or appear to be in need of concentrated conservation actions. A traffic-light system based on the duration or severity of decline is used to place bird species on the Red, Amber or Green as summarised in Table 7.6.1 below.

**Table 7.9.1** Criteria for classifying birds of conservation concern

Red listed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• those that are globally threatened according to The World Conservation Union (IUCN) criteria;</li><li>• historical decline in breeding population and not shown substantial recent recovery</li><li>• those that have shown a severe breeding population decline (&gt;50%) over 25 years/longer term;</li><li>• those that have shown a severe breeding range decline of &gt;50% over 25 years/longer term;</li><li>• species whose non-breeding population has declined &gt;50% over 25 years/longer term.</li></ul>
Amber listed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• species of European Conservation Concern;</li><li>• those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery;</li><li>• those whose breeding population or breeding range has declined</li><li>• those whose non-breeding population or range has declined moderately (25-50%) over 25 years /longer term;</li><li>• rare breeders; or non-breeding rarity</li><li>• species with internationally important or localised populations.</li></ul>
Green listed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• species that fulfil none of the criteria above</li></ul>

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<sup>1</sup> Eaton, M., et al. 2015. Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British Birds, 108 pp. 708-746.

## Methods

Breeding bird surveys were carried out by Dr Fiona Sharpe, an experienced surveyor, between 16 May and 11 July 2013 to gain an understanding of the breeding bird assemblage at the site. Surveys were conducted with the following aims:

- To determine the confirmed, likely or possible breeding birds across the survey area;
- To review the rarity status and conservation of each species found, including levels of national protection, National (S41/UKBAP priority species), Local BAP and Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC)<sup>2,3</sup>;
- To assess the impacts of the proposed developments with regards to the species/ likely species determined; and
- To recommend appropriate mitigation and protection measures where necessary.

Common Birds Census (CBC)<sup>4</sup> uses registration mapping based on bird breeding behaviour, which allows the number and distribution of territories to be determined for each species. The survey area included all accessible areas of the site. On each survey visit the following objectives were met:

- Identification of likely breeding species within the habitats present;
- Identification of all birds seen and heard is required but territories are not mapped; and
- Total numbers of birds, including juveniles are recorded.

## Limitations

There were no limitations to the breeding bird survey at the Site.

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<sup>2</sup> Eaton M. A., Brown A. F., Noble D. G., Musgrove A. J., Hearn R., Aebischer N. J., Gibbons D. W., Evans A & Gregory R. D. (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

<sup>3</sup> **Amber Listed BoCC criteria**= SPEC European Conservation status. (Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC 1, 2 or 3)); Historical Decline – Recovery ( Previously decline, but more than doubled in the last 25 years); Breeding Population Decline (25%-50% decline in UK, over 25 years); Non-breeding Population Decline (25%-50% decline in UK, over 25 years); Rarity (<300 breeding pairs uk or <900 non-breeding individuals); Localisation (50% of the UK breeding or non-breeding population found in 10 or fewer sites); International Importance (>20% of the European breeding or non-breeding population in the UK).

**Red Listed BoCC criteria**= IUCN Global Conservation Status (Globally Threatened); Historical Decline (A severe decline in the UK); Breeding Population Decline (more than 50% decline in UK, in last 25 years); Non-breeding Population Decline (50% decline in UK, over 25 years); Breeding Range Decline (more than 50% decline in UK, by 10 km squares over 25 years or the longer-term)

**Green Listed BoCC criteria**= All regularly occurring species that do not qualify under any of the red or amber criteria.

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert, G., Gibbons, D.W. & Evans, J. (1998) *Bird Monitoring Methods: A Manual of Techniques for Key UK Species*. RSPB/ BTO/ JNCC/ WWT/ ITE/ The Seabird Group. RSPB/ BTO, Sandy

## Results

**Table 7.9.2** List of ornithological features of the site, their value within a geographic framework and the rationale for the evaluation.

Species	Geographic level of Importance	Rationale
Bullfinch	Site	One pair has been confirmed breeding at the site. A (former) S41/UK BAP and Amber List species. Widespread distribution across the UK, mostly in the south and midlands of England and in Wales <sup>5</sup> . The British population is currently estimated to be approximately 316,000 and recent trends suggest a plateau and possible increase in abundance. Given it's abundance in Britain a possible reversal in its national decline it is suggested that the bullfinch is of value at the site level.
Dunnock	Site	Dunnock were seen across several areas of the site in all habitats. It is estimated that there were around four to five pairs. They have a widespread distribution across the UK with highest densities in the southern half of England <sup>6</sup> . Dunnock are Amber listed and was recently added to the (former) S41/UKBAP priority list. This is an abundant species nationally (c.4.2 million) but has an unclear demographic trend. Therefore it is suggested that population at the site is valued at the Site level.
Song thrush	Site	A single pair of song thrush was noted at the site. The song thrush is an abundant and widespread species within the UK (c. 2 million birds) but it has undergone a steep decline and remains vulnerable. As a result of its abundance and the possible recent stabilisation of its decline we would suggest that this species is considered as being of value at the Site level.
Skylark	Local	Between four and six pairs were considered to be breeding within the grassland to the south of the site. The UK population is currently estimated around 1 million having undergone steep declines since 1970s. Skylark are a Red listed BoCC and listed as a S41/UKBAP priority species. Therefore given the number of breeding pairs at the site and its current UK status it is suggested that the population at the site is of value at the Local level.
Yellowhammer	Local	Two to three pairs of yellowhammer were considered to be breeding along hedgerows at the site. The UK population is currently estimated around 800,000 territories with rapid decline in UK since the 1980s. Yellowhammer are a Red listed BoCC and listed as a S41/UKBAP priority species. Therefore it is suggested that the population of yellowhammer is of value at the Local level.
Common whitethroat	Site	Three singing males were recorded at the site, indicating breeding may occur at the site. White throat

<sup>5</sup> Gibbons, D.W., Reid, J.B. & Chapman, R.A. (1994). *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991*. London: Poyser.

<sup>6</sup> Eaton, M.A., Brown, A.F., Noble, D.G., Musgrove, A.J., Hearn, R.D., Aebischer, N.J., Gibbons, D.W., Evans, A. & Gregory, R.D. (2009). *Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man*. *British Birds* 6: 296-341.

		are listed are an Amber listed BoCC. Given the small number of likely breeding pairs at the site and their UK status it is suggested that this species is of value at the Site level.
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See **Figure 7.9** for the Breeding Bird Survey Results.