global environmental solutions

Micheldever

Appendix 12-5 - Bird Survey and Assessment

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CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Legislative Background 1
1.2 Survey Aims 1
2.0 SURVEY METHODOLOGY 2
2.1 Survey Area 2
2.2 Existing Data Collection 2
2.3 Field Survey Methods 2
2.4 Survey Constraints 2
2.5 Data Analysis and Presentation 2
3.0 SURVEY RESULTS 4
3.1 Contextual Survey: Local Distribution of Birds 4
3.2 Field Survey Climatic Data 4
3.3 Common Bird Census Survey Results 4
4.0 DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION 6

APPENDICES

Appendix A CBC Survey Results

DRAWINGS

Drawing 1 Bird Survey Location and Significant Results

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a bird survey undertaken at the application site at Micheldever in 2012.

It has been prepared by SLR Consulting Limited (SLR) on behalf of Clean Power Properties Limited to provide further information in support of a planning application and environmental impact assessment.

1.1 Legislative Background

The European Community Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (commonly known as the 'Birds Directive') provides a framework for the conservation and management of wild birds in member states. Species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive are subject to special conservation measures through the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPA) to safeguard important sites and habitats within their area of distribution.

The Birds Directive is transposed into English law by the Wildlife & Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

The WCA offers legal protection to all wild birds, their nests and eggs. It is an offence, with certain exceptions, to intentionally kill or injure any wild bird, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built, or destroy the egg of any wild bird. Species listed in Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the WCA are protected by special penalties at all times from reckless or intentional actions, including disturbance whilst nest building or at (or near) a nest with eggs or young; or disturbance to dependent young of such a species.

1.2 Survey Aims

The aims of survey work undertaken in 2012 were to:

- identify the assemblage of bird present within and around the application site and estimate their distribution and abundance;
- to establish whether any rare or 'conservation priority' species use and/or are dependent on the site; and
- evaluate populations of birds recorded in a local, regional and national context, using published guidelines where available.

The results of the study are presented in this report.

2.0 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Survey Area

The application site boundary is marked by a red line on Drawing 1. The survey area comprised the entire application site, as well as grassland to the south, cliff-faces to the north and woodland and scrub to the north-west, as marked on Drawing 1.

2.2 Existing Data Collection

Records of birds within 2km of the application site were sought from Hampshire Biological Information Centre (HBI). These records are contained within Appendix 12-1 in the main ES chapter 12.

2.3 Field Survey Methods

Walkover surveys based on *Common Bird Census* (CBC) methodology (Gilbert *et al.*, 1998)[1] were undertaken by an experienced ornithologist on 20th April 2012, 17th May 2012 and 1st June 2012. Each survey session was undertaken in suitable weather conditions (i.e. light winds with no precipitation) during the mornings; each session lasted for between three and found hours.

During each session, the surveyor walked a repeatable transect route across the survey area. This was designed so as to approach within approximately 100m of all points to ensure adequate coverage, but at the same time being careful to avoid double-counting birds. Bird registrations were recorded onto field maps using British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) activity recording codes and two-letter species codes.

2.4 Survey Constraints

Surveys during April to June are suitable for recording presence of resident species and early summer migrants, however, such timing would not have recorded any winter migrants which may utilise the application site.

2.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

2.5.1 Abundance and Status

Assessment of national conservation status follows Birds of Conservation Concern 3 (Eaton et al., 2009)[2]. This document lists all species categorised as red or amber listed and explains the rationale for these listings.

Local abundance and status is assessed using the Hampshire Bird Report 2010[3]. Hampshire Ornithological Society (HOS) uses certain terms that have an approximate numerical range attached to them, as shown in Table 1.

[1] Gilbert, G., Gibbons, D.W & Evans, J. *'Bird Monitoring Methods: A manual of techniques for key UK species'* 1998. RSPB

[2] Eaton, M.A., Brown, A.F., Noble, D.G., Musgrove, A.J., Hearn, R.D., Aebisher, 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 102: 296-341

[3] Cox, A. (2011) *Hampshire Bird Report 2010*. Hampshire Ornithological Society

Table 1 – Definition of status of bird species in Hampshire

	Breeding Pairs	Winter/Passage
Very Rare	Fewer than 5 records	Fewer than 10 records
Rare	Less than annual	Less than annual
Very Scarce	1-10 per year	1-20 per year
Scarce	11-100	21-200
Moderately common	101-1000	201-2000
Common	1001-5000	2001-10,000
Numerous	5001-30,000	10,001-60,000
Abundant	30,000 +	60,000 +

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Contextual Survey: Local Distribution of Birds

Numerous records for birds were provided by HBIC as part of the background data search. The closest records comprise those from Micheldever Station, which is located 0.5km south of the application site. Of these records, three Schedule 1 bird species were recorded in this location; namely brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*). In this same location, seven species listed on the RSPB species of conservation concern red list were also recorded; namely lesser redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), linnet (Carduelis cannabina), yellow wagtail (*Motacilla flava*), spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), marsh tit (*Parus palustris*) and turtle dove (*Streptopelier turtur*). Some 1.5km to the east of the application site, in Black Wood, goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), red kite (*Milvus milvus*) and firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*), all of which are Schedule 1 species were recorded.

3.2 Field Survey Climatic Data

Table 2 below shows prevailing weather conditions during each survey session in 2012. During all visits, weather conditions were appropriate for conducting bird survey.

Table 2 - Survey Weather Conditions

Date	Temperature	Cloud	Wind	Precipitation
20/04/12	3-4°C	None	Light	None
17/05/12	11°C	40%	Light	None
01/06/12	15°C	100%	None	None

3.3 Common Bird Census Survey Results

During the course of the Common Bird Census survey, a total of 20 species were recorded, four of which are either specially protected and/or of conservation concern. These four species are listed in Table 3, along with their conservation status.

Table 3 - Specially protected species and species of conservation concern recorded during the CBC survey

Species	Conservation Status	Status During CBC Survey
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*	Schedule 1[4]	Pair recorded breeding on cliff face on northern site boundary
Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*	Red List[2], UK BAP[5]	Recorded flying across site and holding territory in land to the south of the site
Song Thrush *Turdus philomenos*	Red List, UK BAP, Hampshire BAP[6]	Recorded holding territory along eastern boundary of site
Dunnock *Prunella modularis*	UK BAP, Amber List[2]	Recorded holding territory in a number of locations across the site

[4] Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
[5] Priority species listed on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan – www.ukbap.org.uk
[6] Priority species listed on the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan - http://www.hampshirebiodiversity.org.uk/hampshire%20BAP.html

No winter bird surveys were undertaken at the application site. The habitats present, notably the scrub species have the potential to support winter migrant bird species such as fieldfare and redwing (*Turdus iliacus*).

4.0 DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION

Evaluation of species and assemblages follows those guidelines set out by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006)[7].

In total twenty species of bird were recorded from in an around the application site at Micheldever. Of these, a single Schedule 1 species; peregrine falcon was recorded during all three surveys. A single pair was recorded commuting around the site and on the final survey visit, they were confirmed as nesting on the cliff face located on the northern boundary of the site, above and to the east of the railway tunnel.

Approximately 1400 breeding pairs of Peregrine falcon are present in the UK. HOS defines this species as 'Scarce', with only seven breeding attempts, of which five were successful, in Hampshire in 2010. The presence of breeding peregrine falcon at the application site is considered to be and ecological receptor of National value. The cliff face on which the peregrines are nesting is outside of the application site.

Three UK BAP species were also recorded during the surveys, of which yellowhammer and song thrush are also red listed and dunnock is amber listed. Yellowhammer was recorded holding territory in grassland / scrub habitat, outside and to the south of the application site. Song thrush and dunnock were recorded holding territory within the application site. HOS lists yellowhammer and song thrush as numerous and dunnock as abundant in Hampshire.

The remaining sixteen species are considered common and widespread, both within Hampshire and Nationally. Overall the assemblage of breeding birds as an ecological receptor (with the exception of peregrine, which is of National value) is considered of Parish value.

Whilst potential exists for the application site to be used by winter migrants such as field fare and redwing (both of which are red listed), particularly where the scrub provides foraging, it is not unlikely that the ecological value of the application site would alter in the event they were found to be present. The bulk of the development would be in open ground and would not result in extensive loss of the scrub / woodland belt to the north / east in which such species would be expected to feed.

[7] Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom*

Appendix 1 – Species recorded during CBC survey

Species		20/04/12	17/05/12	01/06/12	Status in
Common name	Latin Name				Hampshire
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*	/	/	N	Scare
Goldcrest	*Regulus regulus*	O			Numerous
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	O	O	O	Abundant
Blackcap	*Sylvia atricapilla*	O	O	O	Numerous
Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita*	O	O	O	Numerous
Great Tit	*Parus major*	/	/		Abundant
Long-tailed Tit	*Aegithalos caudatus*	#		#	Numerous
Greenfinch	*Carduelis chloris*	O	#		Numerous
Blackbird	*Turdus merula*	O	O		Abundant
Blue Tit	*Cyanistes caeruleus*	/	/	/	Abundant
Magpie	*Pica pica*	#			Numerous
Jay	*Garrulus glandarius*	#			Numerous
Jackdaw	*Corvus monedula*	#	//		Numerous
Robin	*Erithacus rubecula*		O	O	Abundant
Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*		O	O	Abundant
Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*		O		Numerous
Song Thrush	*Turdus philomenos*		O		Numerous
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	#		O	Numerous
Wood pigeon	*Columba palumbus*			#	Abundant
Chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs*			O	Abundant

Key

O – Recorded singing and assumed holding territory

/ - Recorded calling and assumed holding territory

N – Recorded nesting

- commuting overhead – no calls or song

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