

Dean Moor Solar Farm

Environmental Statement: Appendix 8.5 – Breeding Bird Survey Report

on behalf of FVS Dean Moor Limited

March 2025 Prepared by: Stantec UK Ltd PINS Ref: EN010155 Document Ref: 6.3 Revision: 1







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Breeding Bird Survey Report Appendix 8.5

March 2024



DEAN MOOR SOLAR FARM BREEDING BIRD SURVEY REPORT APPENDIX 8.5 PREPARED ON BEHALF OF FVS DEAN MOOR LIMITED

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of a breeding bird survey for the Dean Moor Solar Farm (the Proposed Development), commissioned by FVS Dean Moor Limited. This Breeding Bird Survey Report forms Appendix 8.5 of Chapter 8 – Biodiversity of the PEIR for the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.2 The Proposed Development is located on land between the villages of Gilgarran and Branthwaite in West Cumbria (the Site) which is situated within the administrative area of Cumberland Council (the Council).
- 1.1.3 The purpose of the breeding bird survey is to identify the species using the Site and determine which habitats may be important for breeding species. The results will be used to inform the ecological impact assessment, as well as the evolving design of the Proposed Development.

1.2 Site Location and Description

- 1.2.1 The Site is 279.50 hectares ('ha') in area and is located between the villages of Gilgarran and Branthwaite in West Cumbria (PEIR Figure 1.1). The Site is bisected by a minor road that runs between Gilgarran and Branthwaite Edge hereafter referred to as the "Gilgarran Road".
- 1.2.2 The Site is predominantly pasture that is grazed by sheep. It is generally drained by a series of unnamed minor watercourses which run broadly south to north and west to east in Area C. The watercourses coalesce near Branthwaite Rigg and flow north to ultimately join the River Derwent.
- 1.2.3 The land within the Site has a varied topography with steep-sided hills associated with Thief Gill in Area C; and flat land to the north, east and west around Areas A and B. Small areas of plantation woodland are present in and adjacent to Areas A and B.



1.2.4 Land surrounding the Site is dominated by grazing pasture and arable farmland, with large areas of plantation woodland also located north, east and west of the Site.

1.3 Proposed Development

- 1.3.1 The Proposed Development comprises the proposed construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a renewable energy generating project on 279.50ha of land between the villages of Gilgarran and Branthwaite in West Cumbria.
- 1.3.2 The Proposed Development will have the capacity to export up to 150MW of electricity at any time. The generating station would also involve the construction and operation of up to 100MW of BESS.
- 1.3.3 A conceptual layout of the Proposed Development is presented in the PEIR (Figure 3.1). Site areas are shown on PEIR Figure 3.3.

1.4 Report Objectives

- 1.4.1 The objectives of this report are to:
 - Outline survey methodologies and relevant survey guidance; and
 - Detail the results of the survey.



2 Methods

2.1 Field Survey

Habitat Survey

2.1.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Appendix 8.1) was undertaken on 26 April 2023. This survey identified the habitats across the Site which had the potential to support breeding birds.

2.2 Breeding Bird Characterisation Survey

- 2.2.1 Six breeding bird survey visits of the Site were undertaken from late March 2023 through early July 2023 (see Table 1). Surveys used a walkover technique where a constant search effort was employed during each visit with the same survey transect being walked on all occasions. All visits have been undertaken in line with survey guidance issued in 2022¹.
- 2.2.2 The surveyed area was split into two survey transect areas: Areas A and B combined, and Area C. Surveys and follow up territory mapping were carried out by suitably qualified and experienced individuals. A summary of the weather conditions during the surveys is presented below in Table 1.
- 2.2.3 During each visit the transect was walked at a slow, steady pace. Frequent stops were made to scan around and listen for singing and calling birds. During the survey, the location and activity of each bird detected (including those seen or heard) was recorded and mapped using standard two-letter British Trust for Ornithology ('BTO') species codes combined with activity symbols.

¹ Bird Survey Guidelines for Assessing Ecological Impacts v1.1.0 (2022) Bird Survey and Assessment Steering Group <u>www.https://birdsurveyguidelines.org</u>. Accessed 16.11.23



Table 1: Breeding	bird survey details
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Date	Timing	Sunrise /Sunset	Temp	Wind speed (Beaufort Force)	Cloud cover (Oktas)	Precipit -ation	Visibility
23/03/ 2023*	07:30- 12:00	06:30	9°C	6	4	Dry	>2 km
24/03/ 2023*	06:30- 12:00	06:30	~7°C	3 - 4	8	Light rain	<2 km
26/04/ 2023	06:30- 11:00	05:43	5 - 9ºC	2	5	Dry	>2 km
24/05/ 2023	05:45- 9:45	04:52	9 - 10ºC	2	4 - 6	Dry	>2 km
13/06/ 2023	19:00- 21:30	21:50	28ºC	2	6	Dry	>2 km
28/06/ 2023	6:00- 9:00	04:45	14ºC	2	8	Light intermitt ent rain	>2 km
06/07/ 2023	6:00- 9:00	04:42	15ºC	6	7	Light intermitt ent rain	<2 km

*Surveys conducted on 23 and 24 March 2023 are part of the same survey split into two visits

- 2.2.4 Birds exhibiting breeding behaviour were assigned to one of two categories:
 - Non-breeding/possible breeding: birds heard singing, alarm calling, displaying courtship behaviour in suitable breeding habitat, or evidence of nest building (including excavation of a hole) on one or more of the survey visits;
 - Probable/confirmed breeding: one or more adults undertaking a distraction display; the presence of a used nest or eggshells; the presence of recently fledged or downy young (that are clearly of local origin); apparently incubating adults or adults commuting to and from a nest / hole; adult birds carrying faecal sacs or food for young; or a nest with eggs or young present.
- 2.2.5 On a precautionary basis, probable breeding species have been treated as confirmed breeding species for the purposes of bird territory mapping on Figures 1 and 2.



2.3 Limitations

2.3.1 No survey limitations have been identified. The breeding bird survey visits were undertaken at an appropriate time of the year in suitable weather conditions. All parts of the Site were accessible during all survey visits.



3 Results

3.1 Habitat Description

- 3.1.1 The dominant habitat overall is grazed pasture. The pasture in Areas A and B have hedgerows along most field boundaries, and there are areas of dense scrub habitat, broadleaved woodland plantation, marshy grassland, and ponds.
- 3.1.2 Area C contains several watercourses within the pastoral area, one ephemeral pond, patches of plantation woodland (coniferous, mixed, and broadleaved), hedgerows, a line of trees (with some mature specimens) and a steep gorge associated with Thief Gill.

3.2 Breeding Birds

- 3.2.1 In total, 66 species were recorded within the Site during the breeding bird surveys undertaken between March and July 2023. This includes pheasant which is introduced and does not have an assigned BoCC status.
- 3.2.2 Three were listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)² (fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, and redwing *Turdus iliacus*).
- 3.2.3 Seventeen were listed on Section 41 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006³ (bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, curlew *Numenius arquata*, dunnock *Prunella modularis*, grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevia*, herring gull *Larus argentatus*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, linnet *Linaria cannabina*, lesser redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*, reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, skylark *Alauda arvensis*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, tree pipit *Anthus trivialis*, wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*, and yellow wagtail *Motacilla flava*).

² Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents Accessed January 2024

³ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents Accessed January 2024



- 3.2.4 Sixteen were BoCC Red List species⁴: curlew, fieldfare, grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevia,* greenfinch *Chloris chloris*, herring gull, house sparrow, lapwing, lesser redpoll *Acanthis cabaret,* linnet, skylark, starling, swift *Apus apus*, tree pipit, wood warbler, yellowhammer, and yellow wagtail.
- 3.2.5 Twenty-four were BoCC Amber List species: bullfinch, dunnock, great blackbacked gull *Larus marinus*, grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*, greylag goose *Anser anser*, kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*, lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*, mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*, meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*, oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, redwing, reed bunting, rook *Corvus frugilegus*, stock dove *Columba oenas*, sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, song thrush, sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*, wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, whitethroat *Curruca communis*, woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, and wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*.
- 3.2.6 Twenty-five were BoCC Green list species: blackbird *Turdus merula*, blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, buzzard *Buteo buteo*, carrion crow *Corvus corone*, Canada goose *Branta canadensis*, chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*, goldcrest *Regulus regulus*, great spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*, great tit *Parus major*, garden warbler *Sylvia borin*, goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*, jackdaw *Motacilla cinerea*, jay *Garrulus glandarius*, long-tailed tit *Aegithalos caudatus*, magpie *Pica pica*, mute swan *Cygnus olor*, peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, pied wagtail *Motacilla alba*, raven *Corvus corax*, robin *Erithacus rubecula*, sand martin *Riparia riparia*, stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*, and swallow *Hirundo rustica*.
- 3.2.7 The BTO has provided four standardised categories for birds recorded during a breeding bird survey⁵, these include:
 - Non-breeder birds passing through a site or in unsuitable habitat;
 - Possible breeding birds in suitable habitat potentially displaying breeding behaviour, but recorded on too few occasions to justify being considered

⁴ Stanbury, A., Eaton, M. Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch., Noble, D. and Win, I. (2021) The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. British Birds 114. 723-747(BoCC)

⁵ Breeding Status Codes (BTO) Undated <u>https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u36/downloads/breedingcodes.pdf</u>, accessed 16 January 2024



to have made a serious breeding attempt (in other words, treated as not breeding);

- Probable breeder consisting of birds that have made a determined attempt to establish a breeding territory e.g., pairs present in suitable habitat, singing males on territory recorded on more than one occasion; and
- Confirmed breeder instances where evidence of nest building and/or chick rearing has been observed. Including distraction displays, observation of nests, adults carrying egg shells or faecal sacks and fledged juveniles.
- 3.2.8 For the purposes of this assessment, birds that are confirmed or probable breeders have been treated as confirmed breeders.
- 3.2.9 A total of twenty-five species were considered to be breeding, either as confirmed breeders or probable breeders, and this included three BoCC Red List species (grasshopper warbler, linnet, and skylark) and eleven BoCC Amber List species (dunnock, moorhen, reed bunting, sedge warbler, stock dove, song thrush, whitethroat, wheatear, willow warbler, wood pigeon and wren). Six are Section 41 species (dunnock, grasshopper warbler, linnet, reed bunting, skylark, and song thrush).
- 3.2.10 Estimated breeding bird territories are shown on Figures 1 and 2. Details of non-breeding species are presented in Appendix 1. Probable/confirmed breeding bird species are summarised in Table 2 below, along with BTO code, number of territories, and BoCC status, and an indication of S.41 status.



Table 2: Classification of birds recorded on Site

BTO code	Common name	Scientific name	Probable / Confirmed breeding territories	BoCC status	Protection
В.	Blackbird	Turdus merula	15	Green	
вс	Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	2 Green		
вт	Blue tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	10	Green	
C.	Carrion crow	Corvus corone	5	Green	
СН	Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	20	Green	
сс	Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	4	Green	
D.	Dunnock	Prunella modularis	9	Amber	Section 41
GH	Grasshopper warbler	Locustella naevia	1	Red	Section 41
GS	Great spotted woodpecker	Dendrocopos major	1	Green	
GT	Great tit	Parus major	4	Green	
LI	Linnet	net Carduelis cannabina 2 Red		Section 41	
LT	Long-tailed tit Aegithalos caudatus rosaceus		1	Green	
MG	Magpie Pica pica 18 Gi		Green		
МН	MH Moorhen Gallinula chloropus		1	Amber	
R.	R. Robin Erithacus rubecula		14	Green	
RB	Reed bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	1	Amber	Section 41
SW	Sedge warbler	Acrocephalus schoenobaenus	4	Amber	
S.	Skylark	Alauda arvensis	18	Red	Section 41
SD	Stock dove	Columba oenas	6	Amber	
ST	Song thrush	Turdus philomelos	7	Amber	Section 41
₩Н	Whitethroat	Sylvia communis	1	Amber	
W.	Wheatear	Oenanthe oenanthe	1	Amber	
ww	Willow warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus	51	Amber	
WP	Wood pigeon	Columba palumbus	6	Amber	
WR	Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	57	Amber	

3.3.1 Accounts of the activities and behaviours of species considered to be breeding on Site are provided below in Table 3.



BTO code	Common name	Territory details
В.	Blackbird	Breeding territories were primarily associated with hedgerows, broadleaved woodland, mixed woodland plantation and scrub habitats on Site. One record is from grassland habitat surrounding a large pond in Area A. Species recorded on all survey visits.
вс	Blackcap	Breeding territories were associated with woodland habitats surrounding Area C (just beyond the Site boundary). Species recorded on all survey visits.
вт	Blue tit	Breeding territories were primarily associated with woodland habitats on Site. One record is from grassland habitat surrounding a large pond Area A. Species recorded on all survey visits.
C.	Carrion crow	Breeding territories were associated with broadleaved woodland habitats on Site. Species recorded on all survey visits.
СН	Chaffinch	Breeding territories were primarily associated with woodland habitat, one record is from grassland habitat surrounding a large pond in Area A. Species recorded on all survey visits.
сс	Chiffchaff	Breeding territories were associated with woodland habitat in Area C, two records are from woodland habitat surrounding the Site (just beyond the Site boundary). Species recorded on all survey visits.
D.	Dunnock	Breeding territories were primarily associated with woodland habitat; one record is from grassland habitat within Thief Gill in Area C. Species recorded on all survey visits.
GH	Grasshopper warbler	A single breeding territory is associated with dense scrub habitat in Area B around Potato Pot Windfarm. Species recorded on all survey visits apart from the first survey visit.
GS	Great spotted woodpecker	A single breeding territory was recorded within a line of trees along Gilgarran Road. Species recorded on all survey visits apart from the first survey visit.
GT	Great tit	Breeding territories were primarily associated with woodland habitat. One record is from scrub habitat and one record is from grassland habitat surrounding a large pond in Area A. Species recorded on all survey visits.
LI	Linnet	Breeding territories were associated with scrub and grassland habitats in Area C. One record is from scrub within Thief Gill in Area C, the other within grassland dominated by soft rush Juncus effusus. Species recorded on all survey visits apart from the first survey visit.
LT	Long-tailed tit	A single breeding territory was from grassland habitat surrounding a large pond in Area A. Species recorded during the second, third and fourth survey visit.
MG	Magpie	Breeding territories associated with open grassland and hedgerows. Species recorded during the second, fourth and fifth survey visit.
МН	Moorhen	A single breeding territory was recorded within swamp habitat surrounding a large pond in Area A. Species recorded during survey visits apart from the first and fifth survey visit.
R.	Robin	Breeding territories all associated with woodland. A single record is from woodland habitat in land surrounding Area C (just beyond the Site boundary). Species recorded on all survey visits.
RB	Reed bunting	A single breeding territory was recorded within grassland habitat surrounding a large pond in Area A. Species recorded on all survey visits excluding the first and fourth survey visit.
SW	Sedge warbler	Four breeding territories were located on Site and associated with grassland, scrub, and woodland habitats. Two territories were present in Area A near ponds (one in grassland the other in scrub) and two in Area B within broadleaved woodland immediately north of Gilgarran Road. Species recorded during all survey visits excluding the first two survey visits.

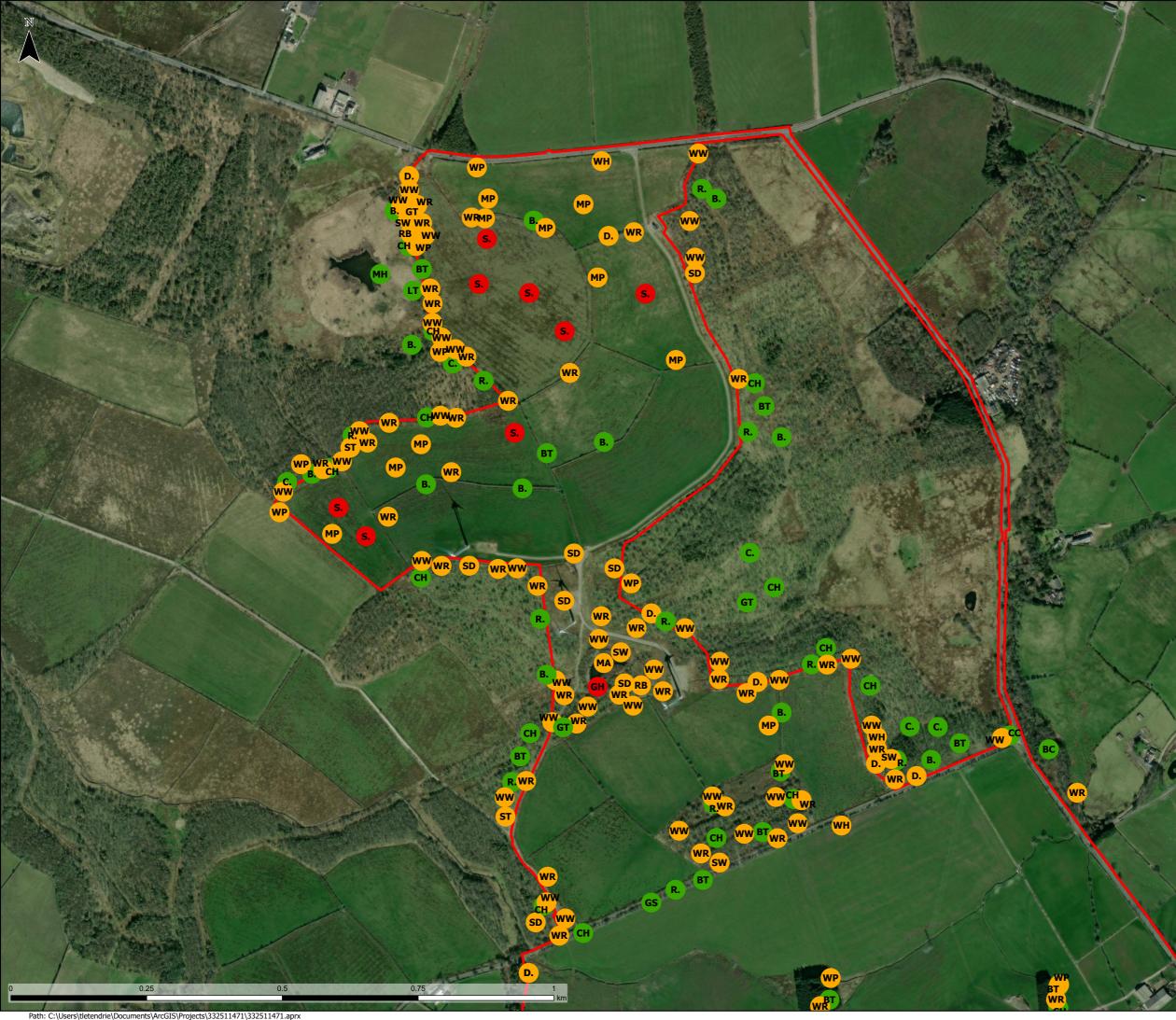
Table 3: Territories locations of birds recorded on Site.



S.	Skylark	Eighteen breeding territories were recorded on Site and associated with open grassland habitat. Eight were recorded in Area A and B and ten were recorded in Area C. Species recorded on all survey visits.	
SD	Stock dove	Six breeding territories were located, all in Area B, and associated with woodland and grassland habitat. Two were recorded in grassland and four within woodland. Species recorded during all survey visits apart from the second survey visit.	
ST	Song thrush	Seven breeding territories were recorded, all located in woodland except one which was recorded within grassland dominated by soft rush near the southeast boundary of Area C. Species recorded during all survey visits.	
WH	Whitethroat	A single breeding territory was recorded in Area A within a hedgerow along the north boundary of the Site. Species recorded during all survey visits excluding the first and second survey visit.	
W.	Wheatear	A single breeding territory was recorded in in Area C in grassland habitat just east of Thief Gill. Species recorded during the second visit.	
ww	Willow warbler	Breeding territories were associated with woodland, scrub, and hedgerows on Site. Species recorded during all survey visits.	
WP	Wood pigeon	Breeding territories associated with woodland and hedgerows. Species recorded during all survey visits.	
WR	Wren	Breeding territories located in woodland, scrub, and hedgerow habitats on Site. Species recorded during all survey visits.	



4 Figures





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1	Breeding Bird Conservation Status					
	BoCC Red List Species					
	BoCC Amb	oer List	Species			
-	BoCC Gre	en List	Species			
	<u>BTO Code</u> B.	<u>Comm</u> Blackb	on Name			
1	BC	Blackc	ap			
	BT C.	Blue T Carrio	it n Crow			
	СН	Chaffir	nch			
	CC MH	Chiffch	naff Ion Moorhe	n		
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Legend

Draft Order Limits

Breeding Bird Conservation Status

BoCC Red List Species

BoCC Amber List Species

BoCC Green List Species

BTO Code	Common Name
B.	Blackbird
BC	Blackcap
BT	Blue Tit
C.	Carrion Crow
CH	Chaffinch
CC	Chiffchaff
MH	Common Moorhen
WH	Common Whitethroat
D.	Dunnock
GH	Grasshopper Warbler
GS	Great Spotted Woodpecker
GT	Great Tit
LI	Linnet
LT	Long-tailed Tit
MA	Mallard
MP	Meadow Pipit
W.	Northern Wheatear
RB	Reed Bunting
R.	Robin
SW	Sedge Warbler
S.	Skylark
ST	Song Thrush
SD	Stock Dove
WW	Willow Warbler
WR	Woodpigeon
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Project Title



Client

FVS Dean Moor Limited

Title DEAN MOOR SOLAR FARM DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER Breeding Bird Territory Results -Area C Scale: 1:6,500 @ A3 Date: 08/03/2024

Drawn: TL

Figure: 2

Rev: A



Checked: IA



Appendix A Non-Breeding Species

Forty-two bird species were recorded during the survey visits for which no evidence of breeding was noted. These included:

- Individuals flying over the Site;
- Species which may breed locally but for which suitable nesting habitat does not occur within the Site;
- Species where no behaviour was observed that suggested breeding was taking place.

Non-breeding/possible breeding species are summarised in Table A1 below, along with BTO code, number of territories, and BoCC status, and an indication of S.41 status.

BTO code	Common name	Scientific name	BoCC status	Protection
BF	Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	Amber	Section 41
BZ	Buzzard	Buteo buteo	Green	
CG	Canada goose	Branta canadensis	Green	
CU	Curlew	Numenius arquata	Red	Section 41
FF	Fieldfare	Turdus pilaris	Red	Schedule 1
GB	Great black-backed gull	Larus marinus	Amber	
GC	Goldcrest	Regulus regulus	Green	
GO	Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	Green	
GL	Grey wagtail	Motacilla cinerea	Amber	
GR	Greenfinch	Chloris chloris	Red	
GW	Garden warbler	Sylvia borin	Green	
GJ	Greylag goose	Anser anser	Amber	
HS	House sparrow	Passer domesticus	Red	Section 41
HG	Herring gull	Larus argentatus	Red	Section 41
J.	Jay	Garrulus glandarius	Green	
JD	Jackdaw	Corvus monedula	Green	
К.	Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	Amber	
L.	Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus	Red	Section 41
LB	Lesser black-backed gull	Larus fuscus	Amber	

Table A1: Non-breeding/possible breeding bird species recorded during the survey.

LR	Lesser redpoll	Acanthis cabaret	Red	Section 41
GR	Greenfinch	Chloris chloris	Red	
MA	Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	Amber	
MP	Meadow pipit	Anthus pratensis	Amber	
MS	Mute swan	Cygnus olor	Green	
OC	Oystercatcher	Haematopus ostralegus	Amber	
PE	Peregrine	Falco peregrinus	Green	Schedule 1
PH	Pheasant	Phasianus colchicus	Introduced	
PW	Pied wagtail	Motacilla alba	Green	
RE	Redwing	Turdus iliacus	Amber	Schedule 1
RN	Raven	Corvus corax	Green	
RO	Rook	Corvus frugilegus	Amber	
SN	Snipe	Gallinago gallinago	Amber	
SC	Stonechat	Saxicola rubicola	Green	
SG	Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	Red	Section 41
SH	Sparrowhawk	Accipiter nisus	Amber	
SI	Swift	Apus apus	Red	
SL	Swallow	Hirundo rustica	Green	
SM	Sand martin	Riparia riparia	Green	
ТР	Tree pipit	Anthus trivialis	Red	Section 41
WO	Wood warbler	Phylloscopus sibilatrix	Red	Section 41
Υ.	Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella	Red	Section 41
YW	Yellow wagtail	Motacilla flava	Red	Section 41

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