



Lime Down

Solar Park

Environmental Statement

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Appendix 9-7: Wintering Bird Survey Report

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Clarkson and Woods Limited has been commissioned by Lime Down Solar Park Limited (the Applicant) to conduct a suite of ecological surveys across the Lime Down Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor (CRC), including wintering bird surveys.
- 1.1.2 Wintering bird surveys have been undertaken within the Study Area, for the Solar PV Sites and immediately adjacent land, between November 2023 and February 2025. Surveys followed good practice guidelines (Ref 9-7-1). No wintering bird surveys have been completed of the CRC, however habitats within the CRC have been assessed for their potential to support wintering birds.
- 1.1.3 Information on the presence of species collected during the surveys will be passed to the county biological records centre in order to augment their records for the area. This is in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct (Ref 9-7-2).

Aims

- 1.1.4 Wintering bird surveys were undertaken to ascertain a baseline on the current presence, abundance and distribution of wintering birds within the Study Area for the Solar PV Sites. A habitat assessment was undertaken of those areas not subject to detailed wintering bird surveys, within the Study Area for the CRC, to assess the suitability of habitats for wintering birds.
- 1.1.5 The Study Area encompassed all land within the Solar PV Sites and CRC. The Study Area also includes all land at the Solar PV Sites identified within the Development Area at Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) stage, as well as Brickyard Scrub Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Chalkenhams LWS, which were included within the Study Area at the time of the surveys. The Order Limits has since been refined, but the survey data for these areas has been presented in this report to provide additional context to the evaluation of wintering birds within the Solar PV Sites and immediately adjacent land.
- 1.1.6 This report details the methods and results of the surveys undertaken between November 2023 and February 2025, and a brief evaluation of wintering birds in relation to the Scheme.
- 1.1.7 This information will be used within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity, EN010168/APP/6.1** to inform the detailed ecological evaluation of the wintering bird population and the habitats used within the

Study Area and to characterise the impacts on wintering birds considered likely to result from the Scheme.

Study Area

- 1.1.8 A detailed description of the Scheme is provided within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme, EN010168/APP/6.1** and in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity, EN010168/APP/6.1** in relation to the ecology of the Solar PV Sites and CRC, and the habitats present.

Solar PV Sites (Lime Down A–E)

- 1.1.9 Lime Down A-E predominantly comprise large, open and relatively flat arable fields of varying crop types; with some, generally smaller, fields of permanent pasture and/or grassland cut for hay/silage were also present. Fields within the Solar PV Sites are bounded by an extensive network of hedgerows, largely species-rich in composition, and agricultural drainage ditches with typically narrow field margins, where present. A large number of mature trees are present within hedgerows, as well as a small number of individual trees within fields. The habitats within the Solar PV Sites are generally contiguous with the surrounding landscape, which is agricultural in character. The land to the north and west of the Solar PV Sites rises gently to form the hills and valleys associated with the Cotswolds National Landscape, part of which lies adjacent to the Order Limits.
- 1.1.10 A small number of woodland parcels are present within the Solar PV Sites, forming part of a network of woodland habitat in the surrounding landscape, with several parcels located immediately adjacent to the Order Limits. Several ponds are present within the Solar PV Sites, constituting part of a wider pond network, with a relatively high number of ponds within the surrounding land. Ditches within the Solar PV Sites are largely dry, with wet ditch features generally concentrated within Lime Down D. The watercourses, known as Gauze Brook and Gabriel's Well, run through Lime Down D and E, respectively.

Cable Route Corridor

- 1.1.11 The CRC runs for approximately 22 km from the Solar PV Sites to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation. The CRC is of similar character to the Solar PV Sites; habitats generally comprise agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows and ditches, with occasional ponds and blocks of woodland. Several watercourses, railways and roads, including the M4, transect the route.

Quality Assurance

- 1.1.12 All ecologists employed directly by Clarkson and Woods are members, or pending members, of CIEEM and follow the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct when undertaking ecological work.
- 1.1.13 The competence of all field surveyors has been assessed by Clarkson and Woods with respect to the CIEEM Competencies for Species Survey (Ref 9-7-3).
- 1.1.14 This report has been prepared in accordance with the relevant British Standard: *BS42020: 2013 – Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development* (Ref 9-7-4). It has been prepared by an experienced ecologist who is a member of CIEEM. The report has also been subject to a two-stage quality assurance review by appropriately experienced ecologists who are members of CIEEM.

1.2 Methodology

- 1.2.1 The section below sets out the methodology that has been applied to inform the assessment of the Scheme in relation to wintering birds.

Desk Study

- 1.2.2 A comprehensive desk study and data search has been undertaken for the Scheme. The specific elements of the desk study, of relevance to wintering birds, are as follows:
- A search for 'International' designated sites for nature conservation within 30 km of the Study Area using the Multi-Agency Graphic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (Ref 9-7-5) for which wintering birds are a qualifying feature of designations. Internationally designated sites included Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites, as well as proposed or potential SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites;
 - A search for 'National' designated sites for nature conservation within 5 km of the Study Area (using the MAGIC website) for which wintering birds are a qualifying feature of designations. National designated sites included Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs);
 - Information on 'Local' designated sites which cite wintering birds as a reason for designation within 2 km of the Study Area was obtained from the Wiltshire and Swindon Biodiversity Records Centre (WSBRC). Relevant locally designated sites included LWSs;

- Information pertaining to existing records of wintering bird species within 2 km of the Solar PV Sites and within 500 m of the CRC was obtained from WSBRC;
- A British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Data Report utilising BTO's long-term ornithological datasets was commissioned to provide information on bird species recorded at a range of spatial scales, primarily from 1-10 km squares;
- BTO Priority Areas for Countryside Stewardship Measures for Priority Species were consulted in relation to the Study Area using the MAGIC website; and
- The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (Ref 9-7-6) was consulted for priority species and information relating to local conservation strategies relating to wintering birds.

1.2.3 The desk study also included a review of relevant national and local planning policy and legislation in relation to wintering birds.

1.2.4 The distances used in the search radii outlined above are considered proportionate to the scale of protection and likely sensitivity of the features listed, as well as typical dispersal distance of wintering birds associated with the features. It is considered unlikely that the Scheme would give rise to impacts on designated sites beyond these distances and as such are therefore considered to include the Zone of Influence of the Scheme.

1.2.5 The chosen, standard, search radii are considered to remain appropriate when considering the potential for cumulative impacts from other solar development proposals.

Survey Methods

Solar PV Sites (Lime Down A-E)

1.2.6 Each of the Sites Lime Down A-E have been surveyed on four separate occasions between November 2023 and February 2025, as detailed in **Table 9-7-2**.

1.2.7 Monthly survey visits were undertaken during the core winter season, from November to February, in line with non-breeding survey methodology set out within the Bird Survey Guidelines. Given the distance of the Solar PV Sites from the Severn Estuary SPA and limited suitability of habitats for wetland species associated with the SPA, the Solar PV Sites were considered highly unlikely to represent strategically important areas for passage species moving between breeding grounds and overwintering sites, and further surveys outside of the core winter months were therefore not considered necessary.

- 1.2.8 A naming system has been applied to the fields within the Solar PV Sites, as presented in **ES Volume 2, Figure 2-2: Field Boundaries and Numbering [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.
- 1.2.9 Across all visits, surveys covered the full extent of the Solar PV Sites. Given the size of each Site, and to enable coverage of the Solar PV Sites over the shortest feasible period by multiple surveyors, they were subdivided into separate areas, or Survey Zones, measuring approximately 60-80 ha. These Survey Zones are shown in **ES Volume 2, Figure 9-7-1: Wintering Bird Survey Zones, [EN010168/APP/6.2]**, which also show the Study Area and any deviation from the Order Limits, and it was ensured that no repetition of survey effort occurred between surveyors. Land within Survey Zones 13 and 14 were later additions to the Study Area, having not been included within the Order Limits at the time of the initial first four survey visits.
- 1.2.10 The majority of land within the Solar PV Sites was surveyed between November 2023 and February 2024. Additional land was subsequently added to the Order Limits at Lime Down C and D (specifically Fields C27, C28, and Fields D19 to D24 – Survey Zone 13) in February 2024 and further land was added to the Order Limits at Lime Down C in June 2024 (Fields C29 to C36 – Survey Zone 14). Both Survey Zones 13 and 14 were subject to surveys between November 2024 and February 2025.
- 1.2.11 The extensive suite of surveys was carried out by a total of 14 suitably experienced ecologist or ornithologists, each with relevant previous experience of winter bird surveys in agricultural landscapes. Surveyor details are provided in **Table 9-7-1**.
- 1.2.12 All surveys were conducted in favourable weather conditions, avoiding strong winds (excess of Beaufort 4/moderate breeze), rain more than a light drizzle or where visibility was compromised by low cloud or fog. Weather conditions for each survey have been included within **Table 9-7-3**.
- 1.2.13 Surveys typically commenced in the morning, approximately 60 minutes after sunrise, and were completed within four hours. Strict limits on these survey timings were not imposed due to the behaviour of wintering birds being less constrained by time of day, as opposed to breeding birds.
- 1.2.14 The surveys followed BTO Common Birds Census guidelines (Ref 9-7-7), where experienced bird surveyors systematically walked through each Survey Zone, ensuring that the majority of locations were visited to within 50 m. Surveyors would periodically stop to scan habitats of particular interest, such as open fields, trees and field boundaries.
- 1.2.15 The location and behaviour of all birds and flocks of birds seen or heard was noted on Ordnance Survey maps of the Solar PV Sites. Standard

BTO Common Birds Census symbology and species codes were used to create a survey map for each individual visit. All surveyors were equipped with binoculars to aid identification.

- 1.2.16 In some circumstances, a survey visit was completed across more than one day due to surveyor availability, weather conditions and to ensure that all surveys were completed during periods of optimal bird activity. Where split across days, the survey transects were completed on consecutive days wherever possible or as soon as both weather and surveyor capacity allowed.

Cable Route Corridor

- 1.2.17 No detailed wintering bird surveys have been carried out within the CRC given the temporary nature of the potential impacts and limited width (typically 25 m wide) of the area to be impacted by construction. As such, detailed wintering bird surveys were considered disproportionate. An assessment of habitat suitability for wintering birds was made during the Extended UKHabitat Survey of the CRC between March and July 2025, comprising classification of all habitat types present on site and considering their potential value for protected species. Full Extended UKHabitat Survey methodology is presented within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 9-1: Ecological Baseline Report, [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Survey Personnel

- 1.2.18 **Table 9-7-1** presents the survey details for the individuals involved in undertaking wintering bird surveys within the Study Area for the Solar PV Sites between November 2023 and February 2025, with dates and weather conditions for each survey provided in **Table 9-7-2** and **Table 9-7-3** below.

Table 9-7-1: Wintering Bird Survey Personnel

Surveyor Name and Relevant Qualifications	Surveyor Details and Experience
Adrian Woodhall BSc (Hons) MSc	MCIEEM, 39 years' survey experience
Anthony Blunden MSc CEnv	MCIEEM, 30 years' survey experience
Gareth Knass LLB (Hons) MSc	MCIEEM, 25 years' survey experience
Craig Brakes BSc MSc PhD	MRSB, 20 years' survey experience
Harry Fox BSc	MCIEEM, 12 years' survey experience
Joel Wright MSc	MCIEEM, 12 years' survey experience
Mark Baker BSc	MCIEEM, 13 years' survey experience
Mike Hockey BSc (Hons)	MCIEEM, 10 years' survey experience
Adèle Remazeilles MSc	ACIEEM, 6 years' survey experience

Surveyor Name and Relevant Qualifications	Surveyor Details and Experience
Rebecca Sandey MSc	ACIEEM, 5 years' survey experience
Richard Taylor	Experienced bird surveyor
Steve Miller	Experienced bird surveyor
<i>Surveyor name redacted.</i>	-
<i>Surveyor name redacted.</i>	-

Table 9-7-2: Wintering Bird Survey Dates

Visit	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Visit 7	Visit 8
Survey Zone								
1 - 6	08/11/2023	11/12/2023	11/01/2024	12/02/2024				
7	09/11/2023	12/12/2023	12/01/2024	12/02/2024				
8	09/11/2023	12/12/2023	12/01/2024	13/02/2024				
9	09/11/2023	14/12/2023	12/01/2024	13/02/2024				
10 - 11	09/11/2023	12/12/2023	12/01/2024	13/02/2024				
12	09/11/2023	12/12/2023	12/01/2024	11/02/2024				
13	-	-	-	-	12/11/2024	11/12/2024	15/01/2025	13/02/2025
14	-	-	-	-	27/11/2024	18/12/2024	15/01/2025	13/02/2025

Table 9-7-3: Wintering Bird Survey Weather Conditions

Survey Visit No.	Weather Conditions (Cloud 0-8, Wind 1-12, Precipitation, Temperature °C)
Lime Down A-E	
1	Cloud 8, Wind 3-5, Light rain at start, 10-12°C
2	Cloud 3-8, Wind 1-2, Short period of light rain, 9-10°C
3	Cloud 3-8, Wind 3-5, Dry, 2-5°C
4	Cloud 1-7, Wind 2, Some light drizzle, 2-6°C
5	Cloud 6-8, Wind 1-3, Dry, 4-10°C
6	Cloud 8, Wind 1-4, Dry, 10-12°C
7	Cloud 2, Wind 1, Dry some fog at the start of the survey but clear after delayed start, 7-10°C
8	Cloud 7-8, Wind 1-3, Dry, 2-6°C

Data Interpretation

- 1.2.19 Survey data were digitalised using QGIS to allow interpretation of the distribution of different species.
- 1.2.20 Data were collated in tables for interpretation, allowing the number of individuals of each species to be enumerated for each of Lime Down A-E and/or survey visit, and across different habitat types within each of Lime Down A-E.
- 1.2.21 Each species was categorised based on its primary ecological requirements and habitat use recorded within the Solar PV Sites during the wintering season, as follows:
- Open habitats, including use of open, arable, fallow or grassland/pasture fields, and arable field margins; and
 - Other habitats, including boundary habitats such as hedgerows/scrub, woodland edges etc., mature trees and waterbodies.
- 1.2.22 Species associated with a particular habitat type, e.g. pond or watercourse, or strongly associated with a particular area of the Solar PV Sites, have been described qualitatively in Section 1.3.
- 1.2.23 It is also acknowledged that many species are associated with more than one category of habitat. Such species were allocated to the primary habitat considered to have the greatest risk of being adversely impacted, to ensure appropriate ecological assessment.
- 1.2.24 Species not of conservation concern and non-notable species were not enumerated as they would not be included as Important Ecological Features in the impact assessment. A complete list of these species is provided in **Table 9-7-14**.

Limitations

Data Search

- 1.2.25 The desk study data presented within the report should not be seen as exhaustive. Data obtained from within the search radiiis highly unlikely to constitute a complete record of habitats and species within the search area. It is therefore possible that wintering bird species may occur within the vicinity of the Scheme that have not been identified within the desk study.
- 1.2.26 The data search for the Solar PV Sites was obtained in 2023 and for the CRC in 2024 and does not include records made subsequently. The datasets only provide records where information exists and should not be

relied upon as a complete listing of all wintering bird species which may occur within the search areas.

Field Surveys

- 1.2.27 It is possible that the presence of certain species has been missed due to their being present in low numbers, or due to their cryptic nature. However, the survey methodology ensures that all land within the Solar PV Sites is visited by a surveyor to within 50 m and so the likelihood of under-recording species has been reduced to a minimum, but notwithstanding that some may still have been missed in dense cover..
- 1.2.28 The surveys offer only 'snapshots' of wintering birds' usage of the Solar PV Sites, and it is possible that over the course of the winter period the abundance and species of birds using the Solar PV Sites varies slightly from that recorded during the surveys. However, four separate visits have been conducted, spread across the winter survey period, which allows for a representative baseline to be established.
- 1.2.29 Short periods of strong winds (above Beaufort 4) were recorded during the first survey visit at the Solar PV Sites, plus during the third survey visit at the Solar PV Sites. Occasional light rain was also recorded during these surveys. This may have reduced bird activity, where birds sought shelter, but with only intermittent periods of unfavourable weather conditions and typical levels of bird activity across the duration of the survey, the results are considered to be representative.
- 1.2.30 As of August 2025, approximately 17 ha of land within the CRC has not been accessed for ecological survey due to a lack of access permission. Habitats within these areas have therefore not been assessed for their potential to support wintering birds. An assumption of the likely habitats present has been made, based on available desk study information (using satellite imagery and open-source datasets, where relevant), and the context of other habitats present within the local landscape. The precautionary principle has been applied when considering the suitability of habitats for wintering birds. Access agreements are being sought for these areas, and it is intended for all currently un-surveyed areas of the CRC to be assessed for their suitability to support wintering birds. Following completion of the outstanding survey work, the results of the surveys will be submitted into the Examination and amendments to this appendix will be made, if required.

Data Interpretation

- 1.2.31 Bird data was collated for analysis across each of the Solar PV Sites. However, as some surveys of the Solar PV Sites took place on different dates for the same survey 'visit', the peak bird count recorded at each of

Lime Down A-E within a single survey visit may have been inflated slightly, should the same birds have moved to different areas between dates. This is acknowledged as a limitation, but in the event that numbers of birds have been slightly inflated, this will only serve to elevate their importance, and so the assessment will follow a precautionary approach. As such, there is no risk of undervaluing the importance of the Solar PV Sites to wintering birds.

1.3 Results

- 1.3.1 This section contains the desk study results, along with the results of wintering bird surveys completed between November 2023 and February 2025. A brief assessment of overall habitat quality for wintering birds within the Study Area is also provided.

Desk Study

- 1.3.1 A summary of desk study results relating to wintering birds is provided below. Refer to **ES Volume 3, Appendix 9-1: Ecological Baseline Report, [EN010168/APP/6.3]** for full data search results and associated figures.

Solar PV Sites (Lime Down A-E)

Designated Sites

- 1.3.2 No international designated sites were identified within 10 km of the Solar PV Sites. However, three international designated sites with migratory birds as a qualifying feature were identified within the wider search radius of 30 km. The search radius was extended for this feature due to the highly mobile nature of migratory bird species, which can extend beyond 10 km. The affected designated sites include the Severn Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, and Salisbury Plain SPA.

Table 9-7-4: International Designated Sites within 30 km of the Solar PV Sites

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features / Reason for Designation (% of UK population)	Distance from Order Limits
Severn Estuary SPA	24,487.91	Internationally important wintering populations of Annex 1 Bewick's swan (2.8%) and wader and waterfowl species including: greater white-fronted goose (35.8%); dunlin (1.8%); gadwall (1.4%); Eurasian teal (1.2%); northern pintail (1.2%); common shelduck (1%); common redshank (1%) and curlew (unknown). Also ringed plovers on passage (1.1%) and nationally important populations of a range of wintering, passage and breeding wetland bird species.	23.71 km north-west of Lime Down A.

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features / Reason for Designation (% of UK population)	Distance from Order Limits
Severn Estuary Ramsar	24,662.98	The Severn Estuary Ramsar site's qualifying interest features overlap with those of the Severn Estuary SPA. The site is of particular importance for hosting internationally important populations of several species of waterbird.	23.71 km north-west of Lime Down A.
Salisbury Plain SPA	19,714.54	Nationally important populations of Annex 1 species including breeding stone curlew (10%), and wintering hen harrier (1%). Further Annex 1 species are supported in small numbers. Nationally important breeding populations of quail (20%) and hobby (1%).	27.89 km south-east of Lime Down E.

Protected Species Records

- 1.3.3 Records of a total of 41 bird species were returned by WSBRC during the desk study, using the search parameters set out within Paragraph 1.2.2. A total of 109 wintering bird species were identified in the BTO Data Report for the Scheme.
- 1.3.4 The majority of land at the Solar PV Sites is identified within BTO Priority Areas for Countryside Stewardship measures targeting lapwing, with the exception of the northern half of Lime Down E.

Cable Route Search Corridor

Designated Sites

- 1.3.5 The three international designated sites identified in relation to the Solar PV Sites are also of relevance to the CRC, namely Salisbury Plain SPA, located 14.72 km south, and Severn Estuary SPA and Ramsar, located 27.48 km north-west (**Table 9-7-4** above refers).

Protected Species Records

- 1.3.6 Records of a total of 104 bird species were returned by WSBRC during the desk study, using the search parameters set out within Paragraph 1.2.2.
- 1.3.7 Much of the northern area of the CRC is identified within BTO Priority Areas for Countryside Stewardship measures for lapwing, with two small sections in the centre and to the south of the CRC also identified.

Overview of Habitat Suitability for Wintering Birds

- 1.3.1 This section provides a brief summary of the habitat suitability for wintering birds within the Study Area.

Solar PV Sites (Lime Down A-E)

- 1.3.2 The Solar PV Sites largely comprise arable fields with frequent arable margins, and pasture fields predominantly of limited botanical diversity. The fields are bounded by an extensive network of species-rich hedgerows containing mature, standard trees, plus agricultural drainage ditches. The Solar PV Sites are bounded in several places by blocks of ancient and broadleaved woodland, which are present throughout the local landscape. Occasional patches of scrub and numerous ponds are also present within the Solar PV Sites, with a small number of agricultural buildings.
- 1.3.3 The mosaic of habitats present across the Solar PV Sites, including interconnecting hedgerows, is likely to support a diverse assemblage of wintering bird species, particularly those associated with agricultural habitats. The large open fields provide suitable foraging habitat for farmland waders such as woodcock, snipe, geese and gulls, as well as passerines such as skylark and meadow pipits. Field boundaries (including arable margins, hedgerows) are suitable habitat for flocks of passerines. In particular winter thrushes, finches and buntings. Margins and standard trees are also likely to be important in supporting prey species for raptors and owls, as well as offering suitable hunting locations for these predators. Woodlands comprise valuable habitat for a range of species, both generalist and woodland specialists, such as treecreeper, nuthatch and woodcock. Where sufficient in size, watercourse features, such as streams, ditches and ponds, provide areas of suitable habitat for waterfowl and some waders, for example ducks and green sandpiper.

Cable Route Search Corridor

- 1.3.4 Habitats within the CRC are of similar character to the Solar PV Sites, as described above. Habitats generally comprise mixed-use agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows and ditches, with occasional ponds, streams and blocks of woodland. The CRC is therefore considered to be of similar suitability for wintering birds, as described within Paragraph 1.3.3 above.

Wintering Bird Surveys

Solar PV Sites Overview

- 1.3.1 Survey data for notable species are set out in **Table 9-7-9** to **Table 9-7-13**, which detail the number of individuals recorded during each survey visit, the number of surveys (out of four (or out of eight where surveys of additional land have been completed)) in which they were recorded, the peak abundance of each species and their conservation status. Species diversity data is presented for each of Lime Down A-E, followed by species analysis focused on the primary habitat that each species is typically

associated with to facilitate assessment of potential impacts (completed fully within **Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity, EN010168/APP/6.1**. Additional non-notable species are listed in **Table 9-7-14**.

Table 9-7-5: Key to Conservation Status Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
Amber BoCC	Amber-listed on the BTO Birds of Conservation Concern List
Red BoCC	Red-listed on the BTO Birds of Conservation Concern List
S41	Listed as a Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006
<u>Sch 1</u>	Schedule 1 species under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
Annex 1	Annex 1 species under the Birds Directive (under the European Council Directive 2009/147/EC)
UKFBI	UK Farmland Bird Indicator
WBAP	Listed under the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan
PJ	Included on the basis of professional judgement due to numbers observed

1.3.2 In order to allow for comparison between Lime Down A-E, their relative areas should be considered and are provided in **Table 9-7-6** below.

Table 9-7-6: Area (ha) of Lime Down A-E

Site	Area (ha)
Lime Down A	94
Lime Down B	82
Lime Down C	269
Lime Down D	213
Lime Down E	132

Species Diversity

Lime Down A-E

1.3.3 The wintering bird surveys completed between November 2023 and February 2025 identified 65 species in total, including 36 notable species/species of conservation concern within the Study Area at the Solar PV Sites (**Table 9-7-8** refers). The number of notable species/species of conservation was relatively consistent across the Solar PV Sites, although Lime Down A had a markedly lower total number of notable species largely attributable to fewer amber-listed birds of conservation concern, as well as a lower diversity of total species.

- 1.3.4 Of the notable species/species of conservation concern, 12 were red-listed birds of conservation concern and 20 were amber-listed birds of conservation concern.
- 1.3.5 Of the red and amber-listed species, 11 were also Species of Principle Importance (SPIs). These are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and so are capable of being material considerations within the planning process.
- 1.3.6 A total of 15 notable species/species of conservation concern were listed under the Wiltshire BAP.
- 1.3.7 In addition, six species were also listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This confers species protection when breeding. However, whilst this designation is therefore not directly relevant to wintering birds, it is given to species which, in the main, are nationally scarce and therefore notable. Furthermore, some of these species are residents and therefore may also be present during the breeding season.
- 1.3.8 Golden plover were also recorded within the Solar PV Sites and are listed as an Annex 1 species under the Birds Directive (under the European Council Directive 2009/147/EC). Merlin, red kite and short-eared owl are also listed under Annex 1.
- 1.3.9 The diversity of species recorded at each of Lime Down A-E is summarised in **Table 9-7-7**, including the number of notable species/species of conservation concern.
- 1.3.10 **Table 9-7-9** to **Table 9-7-13** show the number of each species recorded at each of Lime Down A-E during the surveys.

Table 9-7-7: Summary of Wintering Bird Species Diversity Across All Visits – Solar PV Sites

Site	Total No. of Species	SoCC or Notable	Red BoCC	Amber BoCC	SPIs	Sch 1	Annex 1	UKFBI	WBAP
A	36	19	8	8	6	3	2	8	7
B	47	27	7	16	8	4	2	10	12
C	50	29	11	13	11	5	3	13	13
D	49	28	9	16	10	3	1	11	11
E	52	30	10	15	10	5	1	12	12

Table 9-7-8: Overview of All Notable Bird Species – Solar PV Sites

Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status
Birds Predominantly Associated with Open Arable/Grassland Habitats, including Field Margins		
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Sch1, WBAP
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Amber BoCC
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Amber BoCC
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Red BoCC, Sch1
Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	PJ, Annex I
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	UKFBI
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Red BoCC, S41, UKFBI, WBAP
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Red BoCC, S41, WBAP
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	UKFBI
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Amber BoCC, UKFBI
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Red BoCC, S41, UKFBI, WBAP
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Amber BoCC
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Red BoCC, S41, UKFBI, WBAP
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Amber BoCC
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Amber BoCC
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	Red BoCC, Sch1, Annex 1, WBAP
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Sch1
Red Kite	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Sch1, Annex 1
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Amber BoCC, S41, WBAP
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Amber BoCC, UKFBI
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Amber BoCC, Annex 1, WBAP
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Red BoCC, S41, UKFBI, WBAP
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Amber BoCC, WBAP
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red BoCC, S41, UKFBI, WBAP
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber BoCC, UKFBI
Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	Red BoCC
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber BoCC, UKFBI, WBAP
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red BoCC, S41, UKFBI, WBAP
Birds Predominantly Associated with Other Habitats including Boundary Habitats and Watercourses		
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Amber BoCC, S41, WBAP
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber BoCC, S41
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Red BoCC, UKFBI
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Amber BoCC

Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Red BoCC
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Amber BoCC, <u>Sch1</u>
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Amber BoCC, S41, WBAP
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Amber BoCC
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Amber BoCC
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber BoCC

Table 9-7-9: Summary of Wintering Bird Survey Results for Notable Species at Lime Down A (November 2023 – February 2024)

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	No. Times Recorded (/4)	Peak Count
Birds Predominantly Associated with Open Arable/Grassland Habitats, including Field Margins						
Fieldfare	5	16		33	3	33
Golden Plover			8		1	8
Goldfinch	4		3	3	3	4
Kestrel		1	1	1	3	1
Linnet	1		60		2	60
Meadow Pipit	4	1		1	3	4
Red Kite			2		1	2
Skylark	1	8	8	12	4	12
Snipe				1	1	1
Starling			20	261	2	261
Woodcock	1				1	1
Woodpigeon			7	3	2	7
Yellowhammer		2	1	3	3	3
Birds Predominantly Associated with Other Habitats including Boundary Habitats and Watercourses						
Dunnock		3	1	4	3	4
Greenfinch			2	1	2	2
Mistle Thrush	1				1	1

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	No. Times Recorded (/4)	Peak Count
Redwing		5	33	1	3	33
Song Thrush		1		3	2	3
Wren	5	1	1	3	4	5

Table 9-7-10: Summary of Wintering Bird Survey Results for Notable Species at Lime Down B (November 2023 – February 2024)

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	No. Times Recorded (/4)	Peak Count
Birds Predominantly Associated with Open Arable/Grassland Habitats, including Field Margins						
Barn Owl	1		1		2	1
Common Gull	4		4		2	4
Fieldfare	100	145	147	42	4	147
Goldfinch	2	2		4	3	4
Herring Gull	40				1	40
Jackdaw	10		38	1	3	38
Kestrel	4	1		1	3	4
Lesser Black-backed Gull	4	43			2	43
Linnet	2	1	1	1	4	2
Meadow Pipit	27	12	9	4	4	27
Red Kite		1	2		2	2
Reed Bunting		1			1	1
Rook	4		102	8	3	102
Short-eared Owl				1	1	1
Skylark	29	29	23	100	4	100
Snipe		2	1	4	3	4
Starling	22	166	17	70	4	116
Stock Dove	43	14	10	2	4	43

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	No. Times Recorded (/4)	Peak Count
Woodpigeon		134	71	5	3	134
Yellowhammer	1	2	1	8	4	8
Birds Predominantly Associated with Other Habitats including Boundary Habitats and Watercourses						
Dunnock	1	1	1	10	4	10
Grey Wagtail	1				1	1
Mistle Thrush		2			1	2
Redwing	6	6	25	1	4	25
Song Thrush		4	5	4	3	5
Sparrowhawk			1		1	1
Wren	5	8	8	5	4	8

Table 9-7-11: Summary of Wintering Bird Survey Results for Notable Species at Lime Down C (November 2023 – February 2025)

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Visit 7	Visit 8	No. Times Recorded (/8)	Peak Count
Birds Predominantly Associated with Open Arable/Grassland Habitats, including Field Margins										
Fieldfare	1194	261	147	20	18	1	2	52	4	1194
Golden Plover			15	2					2	15
Goldfinch	6	4	27	6	15	12	6		7	27
Grey Partridge	1							1	2	1
Herring Gull		4		1	3				3	4
Jackdaw	14	34	15	35	214	82	8	200	8	214
Kestrel	1	2	3	3	1				5	3
Lapwing			3						1	3
Linnet	275	723	1327	896	261	30	250	136	8	1327
Meadow Pipit	80	30	27	42	5	7	8		7	80
Merlin	1								1	1
Peregrine		1							1	1
Red Kite	3	2	8	2	1	1			6	8
Reed Bunting	25	61	65	49		1			5	65
Rook		30	20			80	50		4	80
Skylark	173	330	287	224	23	36	29	40	8	330
Snipe	2	8	8	16	54	16	66	12	8	66
Starling	8	222	26	476	46	6	1	25	8	496

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Visit 7	Visit 8	No. Times Recorded (/8)	Peak Count
Stock Dove	204	34	82	73		4	15		6	204
Woodpigeon	410	1011	249	306	718	157	815	150	8	1011
Yellowhammer	124	96	106	56	2	2	9	10	8	124
Birds Predominantly Associated with Other Habitats including Boundary Habitats and Watercourses										
Bullfinch	1	1	3			7			4	7
Dunnock	3	13	8	26	2		2	2	7	26
Greenfinch		3	4	1	1		5		5	4
Mistle Thrush	4				1		2		3	4
Redwing	392	292	242	40	155	112	220	53	8	392
Song Thrush	14	29	11	28			1		5	29
Sparrowhawk	2	1	2	3					4	3
Wren	2	11	32	17	3	3	3		7	32

Table 9-7-12: Summary of Wintering Bird Survey Results for Notable Species at Lime Down D (November 2023 – February 2025)

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Visit 7	Visit 8	No. Times Recorded (/4)	Peak Count
Birds Predominantly Associated with Open Arable/Grassland Habitats, including Field Margins										
Common Gull	22	15							2	22
Fieldfare	156	173	137	30	86	42	54	3	8	173
Goldfinch	20	23	60		14	9	1	1	7	60
Grey Partridge			1		1				2	1
Herring Gull	14				3		2		3	14
Jackdaw	156	22	15		18		20	6	6	156
Lesser Black-backed Gull	11								1	11
Linnet	171	3	416	167	139	10	317	64	8	416
Mallard	3			4					2	4
Meadow Pipit	33	22	15	7			5		5	33
Red Kite	1	1	3		1	2		1	6	3
Reed Bunting	3	2	1	3	1				5	3
Rook	100	133	1		3	4			5	133
Skylark	250	88	135	129	35	36	10	32	8	250
Snipe	2	2		3				1	3	3
Starling	30	82	323	37	20		258	150	7	323
Stock Dove		37	29	504	1				4	504
Woodpigeon	3	22	22	96	63	2	21		7	96

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Visit 7	Visit 8	No. Times Recorded (/4)	Peak Count
Yellowhammer	6	16	32	12	1				5	32
Birds Predominantly Associated with Other Habitats including Boundary Habitats and Watercourses										
Bullfinch	2	1					1		3	2
Dunnock	1	5	7	7	2	1	2	3	8	7
Greenfinch	22		25		1				3	25
Mistle Thrush			1						1	1
Redwing	63	15	152	3	46	14	23	3	8	152
Song Thrush	1	22	22	13					4	22
Sparrowhawk		1							1	1
Teal				2					1	2
Wren	5	10	7	12	8	1	5		7	12

Table 9-7-13: Summary of Wintering Bird Survey Results for Notable Species at Lime Down E (November 2023 – February 2025)

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Visit 7	Visit 8	No. Times Recorded (/4)	Peak Count
Birds Predominantly Associated with Open Arable/Grassland Habitats, including Field Margins										
Barn Owl				1					1	1
Black-headed Gull	1								1	1
Fieldfare	140	325	111	144	50				5	325
Goldfinch	2	21	14	1	2		1	1	7	21
Grey Partridge			1						1	1
Herring Gull			3	1		1			3	3
Jackdaw		15	52	32	1		5	4	7	52
Kestrel	2								1	2
Linnet	20	89	63	428					4	428
Mallard				2					1	2
Meadow Pipit	1	2	3	1				1	5	3
Peregrine				1					1	1
Red Kite	3	1		1					3	3
Reed Bunting	4	18	68	2					4	68
Rook			1	88					2	88
Skylark	14	3		11					3	14
Snipe			1	3					2	3
Starling		53	158	71		2			4	158

Common Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Visit 7	Visit 8	No. Times Recorded (/4)	Peak Count
Stock Dove	14	13	14	2		2			5	14
Woodcock			2	1					2	2
Woodpigeon	75	18	113	82	2	10			6	113
Yellowhammer	12	16	27	16					4	27
Birds Predominantly Associated with Other Habitats including Boundary Habitats and Watercourses										
Bullfinch	2	10							2	10
Dunnock	4	4	11	14	1			1	6	14
Greenfinch			4						1	4
Grey Wagtail			1						1	1
Mistle Thrush			1		1				2	1
Redwing	73	124	169	162	1			14	6	169
Song Thrush	21	1	6	14					4	21
Wren	8	4	10	18		1		1	6	18

Distribution and Abundance by Primary Habitat Type

- 1.3.11 The primary habitat types utilised by wintering birds across the Solar PV Sites included:
- Open habitats, including use of open, arable, fallow or grassland/pasture fields, and arable field margins; and
 - Other habitats, including boundary habitats such as hedgerows/scrub, woodland edges etc., mature trees and waterbodies.
- 1.3.12 Species associated with each of these broad habitat types are discussed in turn within the text below under the relevant subheadings.
- 1.3.13 A general summary of the findings across the Solar PV Sites is given, followed by a discussion of the findings for each of Lime Down A-E. The abundance and distribution of key species is discussed in detail.
- 1.3.14 It is important to note that many species range widely to forage in the winter and use different locations sporadically. Both the frequency of recording and the abundance of each species must be considered, and this data reviewed within the context of local and national populations and the availability of similar habitats present within the surrounding landscape.
- 1.3.15 Where data shows a species to have been recorded rarely or in low numbers, this could imply that the habitats at Lime Down A-E are not significant contributors to their survival over the winter. However, the detectability of such species should be considered alongside, as some species are elusive/ cryptic and may have been missed by the survey. The rarity of certain species should also be considered, as a few individuals may potentially be of significance.
- 1.3.16 Conversely, where a species was recorded regularly and in significant numbers at a particular area at Lime Down A-E, this could imply a greater level of importance of the area to this species. However, again this must be contextualised.

Birds Predominantly Associated with Open Arable/Grassland Habitats, including Field Margins

Overview Lime Down A-E

- 1.3.17 The greatest diversity of notable species (28) was associated primarily with open habitats, and these species also constituted the greatest abundance of birds recorded by the surveys, between November 2023 and February 2025.
- 1.3.18 A total of 10 species associated with open habitats were recorded at each of Lime Down A-E with the majority of these species red or amber BoCC

and largely comprising UK Farmland Bird Indicators. Species associated with foraging in open fields include fieldfare, goldfinch, linnet, skylark, snipe, starling, meadow pipit, and yellowhammer, plus woodpigeon. Red kite was also recorded travelling overhead at each of Lime Down A-E, potentially foraging across the local landscape.

- 1.3.19 Arable and open field habitats provide an important foraging resource in winter for species associated with open fields, such as skylark, snipe and meadow pipits. These habitats are also of some importance for winter migrants, such as fieldfare, although these tend to favour boundary features which provide more valuable foraging resources. Snipe will forage across open farmland, as well as utilising wetter areas of the Solar PV Sites year-round. Inflated snipe overwintering numbers may be reflected in the distribution of this species throughout the Solar PV Sites, notably Lime Down C, and particularly Zone 14, although were not recorded in substantial numbers across all of the Solar PV Sites. Red kite has been recorded at each of Lime Down A-E and it is likely that they hold permanent territories across the Solar PV Sites due to their wide-ranging nature.
- 1.3.20 Species recorded in large numbers at respective areas of the Solar PV Sites included: linnet; winter thrushes, in particular fieldfares; skylark; starling; woodpigeon and stock dove. Reed bunting and meadow pipits were also recorded in moderate numbers. Goldfinch and yellowhammer were also occasionally recorded in larger flocks with each species discussed below within the subheadings for each of Lime Down A-E.
- 1.3.21 Less frequently recorded but notable species typical of open habitats included: golden plover, lapwing, and woodcock. Also, notable bird of prey species recorded occasionally included: merlin, peregrine and short-eared owl (one bird on single occasion). The infrequency and lower abundance of these species could have been due to species being recorded on migratory passage or where ranging more widely to forage over winter. Therefore, the Solar PV Sites are considered unlikely to comprise a fundamental resource during winter; however, some of these species are more elusive and may have been missed by the survey on other visits. Other notable species such as grey partridge and lapwing were also recorded infrequently but are considered likely to be associated with small populations present within the local landscape and may use the Solar PV Sites at other times of year, such as for breeding.

Schedule 1 Species

Barn Owl

- 1.3.22 A single barn owl was recorded on two occasions at Lime Down B, observed in the same location associated with a disused farm building

immediately adjacent the Study Area to the south of Field B5. This building was identified as a barn owl roost, with pellets also noted by the surveyors.

- 1.3.23 A single barn owl was recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down E, in February 2024, within a mature hedgerow tree to the west of Lime Down E.

Fieldfare

- 1.3.24 Low to moderate numbers of fieldfare were recorded across three visits at Lime Down A. Records were fairly evenly distributed throughout Lime Down A, with small groups of 10 and 30 birds recorded at the field boundaries in the centre of Lime Down A.
- 1.3.25 Consistently moderate to high numbers of fieldfare were recorded across all four surveys visits at Lime Down B, with a peak count of 147 recorded in January 2024. Fieldfare were typically recorded in groups, including larger flocks of 50-100 individuals, and were recorded foraging within both the grassland and arable fields at Lime Down B.
- 1.3.26 Abundance of fieldfare varied across the survey visits at Lime Down C, beginning with a large peak of 1,194 individuals in November 2023 but typically smaller flocks on other visits and only 20 birds in February 2024. Moderate flocks were recorded throughout Lime Down C at other times, ranging from 147 (January 2024) and 261 (December 2023). Small to moderate flocks of fieldfare were recorded at the additional land at Zone 14 with a peak count of 52 in February 2025.
- 1.3.27 Relatively moderate to high numbers of fieldfare were recorded throughout Lime Down D over the first three surveys, with a peak count of 173, but dropping to 30 individuals in February 2024. Small to moderate flocks of fieldfare were recorded at Zone 13 with a peak count of 86 in November 2024.
- 1.3.28 Consistently high numbers of fieldfare were recorded over the first four survey visits at Lime Down E, with a peak count of 325 recorded in December 2023. Fieldfare were typically recorded in moderately sized flocks, most frequently within the large arable fields to the south-east of Lime Down E. Fieldfare were only recorded during one of the four surveys of Field E8 within the Study Area at Lime Down E with a count of 50 during the November 2024 survey.

Merlin

- 1.3.29 A single merlin was recorded flying over the Study Area at Lime Down C in November 2023.

Peregrine

1.3.30 A single peregrine was recorded flying over the Study Area at Lime Down C in December 2023.

1.3.31 A single peregrine was also recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down E, in February 2024, in Field E33.

Red Kite

1.3.32 Red kite were recorded at Lime Down A during the January 2024 survey visit only, during which and individuals were recorded flying over the Study Area.

1.3.33 Low numbers of red kite were recorded at Lime Down B during two survey visits, with a peak count of two birds in January 2024.

1.3.34 Red kite were recorded in low numbers at Lime Down C during six survey visits, with several recorded flying over the Study Area to the south and east. A single red kite was recorded during two of the four surveys in Zone 14 in at Lime Down C during November 2024 and December 2024.

1.3.35 Red kites were recorded in low numbers at Lime Down D over the first three survey visits, within the fields and flying over. No more than three were seen on a single visit. Low numbers of red kite were recorded in Zone 13 at Lime Down D with a peak count of 2 during the December 2024 survey.

1.3.36 Low numbers of red kite were recorded flying over Lime Down E during three survey visits.

Annex I Species

Golden Plover

1.3.37 Golden plover were recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down A in January 2024 with two small flocks of four birds within Field A7 and A11.

1.3.38 Golden plover were recorded on two occasions at Lime Down C; a flock of 15 individuals were recorded foraging in Field C24 in January 2024, and two individuals were recorded in February 2024.

Red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern

Grey Partridge

1.3.39 A single grey partridge was recorded on two separate a single occasions at Lime Down C, once in November 2023 and again in, in February 2025.

1.3.40 A single grey partridge was recorded on two separate occasions at Lime Down D, once in January 2024 and again in November 2024.

1.3.41 A single grey partridge was recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down E, in January 2024.

Herring Gull

- 1.3.42 A flock of 40 herring gull was recorded at Lime Down B in November 2023, flying over the south of the Study Area.
- 1.3.43 Herring gull were recorded flying over Lime Down C in small numbers (one to four) in December 2023 and February 2024. A small flock of three herring gull was also recorded on one occasion at Zone 14 in November 2024.
- 1.3.44 14 herring gull were recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down D, in November 2023, foraging in arable fields. Small flocks of herring gull (less than three individuals) were recorded on two of four surveys at the additional land in Zone 13 at Lime Down D.
- 1.3.45 Low numbers of herring gull (less than five individuals) were recorded flying over Lime Down E in December January and February 2024.

Lapwing

- 1.3.46 Three lapwing were recorded flying over the Study Area at Lime Down C in January 2024.

Linnet

- 1.3.47 At Lime Down A, linnet numbers peaked with a flock of 60 recorded in January 2024 in Field A8 to the south of Lime Down A. A single linnet was recorded in November 2023, but no other records.
- 1.3.48 At Lime Down B, very low numbers of linnet were recorded across all four survey visits.
- 1.3.49 Large numbers of linnet were recorded at Lime Down C over the first four surveys, with a peak count of 1,327 in January 2024. Observations of large flocks were concentrated in the arable fields to the north-west of the Lime Down C, which were managed as stubble and clover leys over winter. Large flocks of linnet were also recorded at the additional land in Zone 14 at Lime Down C with a peak count of 261 during the November 2024 survey.
- 1.3.50 At Lime Down D, linnet counts were generally moderate to high, with the exception of December 2023 with a count of three individuals. Moderate numbers were recorded in November 2023 and also in late winter, with a peak count of 416 individuals. Small flocks were typically recorded across the Lime Down D, however the largest flock of 400 linnet recorded in Field D16 in January 2024. The abundance of linnet varied across the surveys of the additional land with a peak count of 317 in January 2025, but low numbers recorded in December 2024.

- 1.3.51 Moderate numbers of linnet were recorded at Lime Down E during the first three survey visits, with an increased peak count of 428 individuals recorded in February 2024.

Skylark

- 1.3.52 Skylark were recorded across all four survey visits at Lime Down A in varying numbers, with a peak count of 12 in February 2024. Records were generally concentrated in the central and southern fields of Lime Down A.
- 1.3.53 At Lime Down B, moderate numbers of skylark were recorded in the first three survey visits and typically recorded in small groups of approximately 2-25 individuals, but with an increased peak count of 100 recorded in February 2024. A small number of individuals were recorded in the grassland fields within the Study Area at Lime Down B, but the species favoured the arable fields to the east of the Site (for example, Fields B9 and B12).
- 1.3.54 High numbers of skylark were recorded throughout the survey visits at Lime Down C, with a peak of 330 individuals recorded in December 2023, and with records evenly distributed over the arable fields in Lime Down C. Skylark were recorded in moderate numbers at the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14 with a peak count of 40 recorded in February 2025.
- 1.3.55 Moderate to high numbers of skylark were recorded across the surveys at Lime Down D, with a peak count of 250 individuals in November 2023. The species were noted most frequently within the larger arable fields at Lime Down D. Skylark were recorded in moderate numbers at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13 with a peak count of 36 recorded in December 2024.
- 1.3.56 At Lime Down E skylark abundance varied over the surveys, with a peak count of 14 recorded in December 2023. Skylark were only recorded in the southern half of Lime Down E.

Starling

- 1.3.57 Within Lime Down A, starlings were only recorded in late winter. A modest number (20) were recorded in January 2024, but a larger flock of 261 individuals was recorded in February 2024. Two large flocks of 100 birds were recorded at field boundaries, of which one was located just off-site, with smaller flocks of 30 birds recorded flying over Lime Down A.
- 1.3.58 At Lime Down B, moderate numbers of starling were recorded across the survey visits, with a peak count of 166 individuals recorded in December 2023. Starlings were typically recorded flying over the Study Area or within the arable fields, in flocks of up to 100 individuals.

- 1.3.59 The abundance of starling varied throughout the survey visits at Lime Down C, from eight in November 2023 to 476 individuals in February 2024. The species was generally distributed evenly across Lime Down C, with a notably large flock of 300 individuals recorded in Field C24 in February 2024. The abundance of starling also varied throughout the survey period of the additional land of Lime Down C in Zone 14, from a single individual in January 2025 to 46 in November 2024.
- 1.3.60 Starling were recorded in moderate to high numbers at Lime Down D over the first four survey visits, with a peak count of 323 individuals in January 2024 and with flocks recorded across Lime Down D. The abundance of starling varied throughout the survey period of the additional land at Lime Down D from no individuals recorded in December 2024 to 258 recorded in January 2025.
- 1.3.61 At Lime Down E, moderate to high numbers of starling were recorded in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th survey visits, with a peak count of 158 recorded in January 2024. The species were typically associated with the large arable fields in the south-east of Lime Down E.

Woodcock

- 1.3.62 A single woodcock was recorded at Lime Down A in November 2023 at the northern boundary.
- 1.3.63 At Lime Down E, Woodcock was recorded on two occasions in early 2024; two individuals were recorded in January 2024 and a single woodcock recorded in February 2024.

Yellowhammer

- 1.3.64 Low numbers of yellowhammer were recorded on three separate survey visits at Lime Down A, with a peak count of three in February 2024.
- 1.3.65 Yellowhammer were recorded in low numbers across all four survey visits at Lime Down B, with a peak count of eight in February 2024.
- 1.3.66 Relatively high numbers of yellowhammer were recorded at Lime Down C over the first four survey visits, with a peak count of 124 in November 2023. Records of the species were typically concentrated at the boundaries of the north-western fields. Lime Down C also represented the greatest number of yellowhammer records of Lime Down A-E. Yellowhammer were recorded in low numbers at the additional land in Zone 14 at Lime Down C, with a peak count of 10 in February 2025.
- 1.3.67 Yellowhammer were recorded in modest numbers at Lime Down D over the first four survey visits, with a peak count of 32 in January 2024. A single yellow hammer was recorded on a single occasion at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13, during November 2024.

- 1.3.68 Modest numbers of yellowhammer were recorded at Lime Down E consistently across the first four survey visits, with a peak count of 27.

Amber-listed Birds of Conservation Concern

Black-headed Gull

- 1.3.69 A single black-headed gull was recorded flying over Lime Down E on a single occasion, in February 2024.

Common Gull

- 1.3.70 Small numbers of common gull (peak count of four individuals on single visit) were recorded flying over Lime Down B on two occasions, in November 2023 and January 2024.

- 1.3.71 Two flocks of common gull were recorded within Lime Down D during the first two survey visits, with a peak count of 22, both foraging within Field D11.

Kestrel

- 1.3.72 A single kestrel was recorded on three occasions, observed in the smaller parcel at Lime Down A comprising two northern fields (Field A11 and A12).

- 1.3.73 Low numbers of kestrel were recorded during three of the four survey visits at Lime Down B, with a peak count of four individuals in November 2023. Kestrels were recorded only within the large arable fields to the east of Lime Down B, with all but one of the records noted within Field B9.

- 1.3.74 Low numbers of kestrel were recorded across the first four survey visits at Lime Down C, with most individuals recorded in arable fields to the north-west of the Study Area. A single kestrel was recorded on one occasion at the additional land of Lime Down C in Zone 14, during the November 2024 survey.

- 1.3.75 Two kestrels were recorded in November 2023 at Lime Down E, foraging alongside the track running through the centre of Lime Down E.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

- 1.3.76 Lesser black-backed gulls were recorded during early winter at Lime Down B, with a peak count of 43 in December 2023 comprising small flocks of up to 21 individuals foraging in Field B2.

- 1.3.77 Two small groups of lesser black-backed gull were recorded in Field D11 on a single occasion at Lime Down D, in November 2023, including roosting individuals.

Mallard

- 1.3.78 Low numbers of mallard were recorded at Lime Down D in November 2023 and February 2024, including a pair noted in proximity to a pond in Field D7 and a pair associated with the Gauze Brook.
- 1.3.79 Two mallards were recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down E in February 2024, associated with a watercourse within Field E13.

Meadow Pipit

- 1.3.80 Meadow pipit were recorded on three occasions at Lime Down A; a single record on two visits (December 2023 and February 2024) with a peak count of four in November 2023. The majority of records were sighted flying over the Study Area.
- 1.3.81 Low to moderate numbers of meadow pipit were recorded across the surveys at Lime Down B, with a peak count of 27 in November 2023. Meadow pipits were recorded throughout the Study Area at the Lime Down B in both grassland and arable fields, although a particular density was noted within Field B1.
- 1.3.82 Meadow pipits were recorded in high numbers across the first four survey visits at Lime Down C, with a peak count of 80 individuals in November 2023. The species was recorded throughout Lime Down C within arable fields, with the exception of the south-eastern parcel. Meadow pipit were recorded in low number in three of the four surveys of the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14 with a peak count of eight in January 2025.
- 1.3.83 Meadow pipits were recorded in low (seven individuals) to moderate numbers across the first four survey visits at Lime Down D, with a peak count of 33 in November 2023. Meadow pipits were typically recorded in western and central fields at Lime Down D. A flock of five meadow pipit were recorded on a single occasion at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13 during the survey in January 2025.
- 1.3.84 Low numbers of meadow pipit were recorded across five survey visits at Lime Down E, with a peak count of three individuals in January 2024.

Reed Bunting

- 1.3.85 A single reed bunting was recorded flying over the Study Area at Lime Down B in December 2023.
- 1.3.86 High numbers of reed bunting were recorded at Lime Down C during the first four survey visits, with a peak count of 65 in January 2024. The majority of reed bunting records were centred on Field C5. A single reed bunting was recorded on a single occasion at the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14, in December 2024.
- 1.3.87 Low numbers of reed bunting were recorded at Lime Down D over the first four surveys, in proximity to the watercourse bisecting Fields B9 and B10.

A single reed bunting was recorded on a single occasion at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13, in November 2024.

- 1.3.88 At Lime Down E, abundance of reed bunting varied over the four surveys, with low numbers (less than five individuals) recorded in the first and final visits, and a peak count of 68 individuals recorded in January 2024. The overall abundance of reed bunting at Lime Down E was comparable to Lime Down C, with both having notably higher abundance compared with other Lime Down A, B, and D. Reed buntings were generally recorded in the southern, central fields at Lime Down E.

Rook

- 1.3.89 Rook were recorded in modest numbers at Lime Down B in November 2023 and February 2024, including a peak count of 102 individuals recorded in January 2024 and comprising a large flock of 100 in Field B5.
- 1.3.90 At Lime Down C, a flock of 30 rooks were recorded in Field C1 during the second survey, with a further 20 individuals flying over the Study Area in January 2024. At the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14, rook were recorded on two occasions with a flock of 80 recorded in December 2024 and a flock of 50 recorded in January 2025.
- 1.3.91 Rook were recorded in moderate to high numbers at Lime Down D in early winter, with flocks of over 100 birds noted in the larger arable fields to the east of the Study Area. Low numbers of rook were recorded at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13 during November 2024 and December 2024.
- 1.3.92 Rook were recorded in the 3rd and 4th survey visits at Lime Down E; a single individual was recorded in January 2024, but a peak count of 88 individuals was recorded in February 2024, largely comprising a flock of 65 in Field E25.

Short-eared Owl

- 1.3.93 A short-eared owl was recorded at Lime Down B roosting in the centre of Field B9 in February 2024. No other observations of the species were made within the Study Area during the surveys.

Snipe

- 1.3.94 A single snipe was recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down A, in February 2024 in the centre of the Field A10.
- 1.3.95 Low numbers of snipe were recorded at Lime Down B across the last three survey visits, with a peak count of four in February 2024. Individuals were generally recorded flushed from the centre of fields.

- 1.3.96 Snipe were consistently recorded across the first four surveys at Lime Down C, ranging between two and a peak count of 16 individuals recorded in February 2024. The number of snipe recorded was notably higher at Lime Down C than in the rest of the Solar PV Sites with birds generally recorded in the smaller arable fields, including Field C5 and Field C23. High numbers of snipe were also recorded at the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14 in all four later surveys with a peak count of 66 in January 2025.
- 1.3.97 Low numbers of snipe were recorded at Lime Down D during three of the first four survey visits, with a peak count of three recorded in February 2024. Snipe were noted within the north-western fields. A single snipe was recorded on one occasion at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13, in February 2025.
- 1.3.98 At Lime Down E, snipe were recorded only during the 3rd and 4th survey visits, with a peak count of three in February 2024. Snipe were recorded in the wetter fields at Lime Down E, in close proximity to watercourses.

Stock Dove

- 1.3.99 Stock dove were recorded in low to moderate number at Lime Down B across the survey visits, with a peak count of 43 in November 2023. Stock doves were generally recorded in small groups and flying over the Study Area.
- 1.3.100 Stock doves were recorded in moderate to high numbers at Lime Down C across the surveys, with a peak count of 204 individuals in November 2023. Stock doves were typically recorded in small groups throughout the Study Area, but with large groups noted in the arable fields to the north-west. Stock dove were recorded on two of four surveys at the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14 with a peak count of 15 in January 2025.
- 1.3.101 At Lime Down D, stock dove were recorded in moderate (approximately 30) to high numbers in December 2023 and January 2024 to the east, with a peak count of 504 individuals in February 2024 comprising a large flock of 500 birds. A single stock dove was recorded on a single occasion at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13, in November 2024.
- 1.3.102 Stock dove were recorded in modest numbers across the first four survey visits at Lime Down E, with a peak count of 14 recorded in both November 2023 and January 2024. Two stock dove were recorded on a single occasion in Field E8 within the Study Area during December 2025.

Woodpigeon

- 1.3.103 Woodpigeon were recorded in low numbers across two survey visits at Lime Down A, with a peak count of seven in January 2024, including a small group of six.

- 1.3.104 Woodpigeon were recorded in low to moderate numbers at Lime Down B over the final three survey visits, with a peak count of 134 individuals in December 2023.
- 1.3.105 High numbers of woodpigeon were recorded across the first four survey visits at Lime Down C, with a peak count of 1,011 individuals recorded in December 2023. The species was recorded throughout the Study Area at Lime Down C, with large flocks of up to 400 woodpigeons noted in Fields C2-C5. Woodpigeon were notably more abundant at Lime Down C compared with Lime Down A, B, D, and E. High numbers of woodpigeon were recorded at the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14 with a peak count of 815 in January 2025.
- 1.3.106 At Lime Down D, the abundance of woodpigeon varied across the surveys, from three individuals recorded in November 2023 to a peak count of 96 in February 2024. At the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13, abundance of woodpigeon also varied across the surveys, from no individuals recorded in February 2025 to 63 woodpigeon in November 2024.
- 1.3.107 Relatively moderate numbers of woodpigeon were recorded at Lime Down E during the surveys, with a peak count of 113 individuals recorded in January 2024. Woodpigeon were generally associated with larger arable fields to the north and south, and with woodland blocks adjacent Lime Down E. Low numbers of woodpigeon were recorded in two of four surveys of Field E8 within the Study Area, with a peak of 10 in December 2024.

UK Farmland Bird Indicators

Goldfinch

- 1.3.108 Goldfinch were recorded in low numbers at Lime Down A on three occasions, with a peak count of four individuals recorded in November 2023.
- 1.3.109 Goldfinch were recorded in low numbers at Lime Down B on three occasions, with a peak count of four individuals recorded in February 2024.
- 1.3.110 Goldfinch were recorded during the first four survey visits at Lime Down C, with relatively low numbers recorded on three occasions and a peak count of 27 individuals recorded in January 2024. Low numbers of goldfinch were recorded in three of four surveys at the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14 with a peak count of 15 in November 2024.
- 1.3.111 Moderate numbers of goldfinch were recorded over the first three survey visits at Lime Down D compared with Lime Down A, B, C, and E, with a peak count of 60 recorded in January 2024. Small flocks of goldfinch were

otherwise recorded throughout the Lime Down D. Low numbers of goldfinch were recorded in each of the surveys at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13, with a peak count of 14 in November 2024.

- 1.3.112 Goldfinch were recorded in varying numbers during seven survey visits at Lime Down E, with highest numbers recorded in December 2023 and January 2024 and a peak count of 21 individuals.

Jackdaw

- 1.3.113 Modest numbers of jackdaw were recorded on three occasions at Lime Down B, with a peak count of 38 individuals recorded in January 2024, and typically recorded in small flocks.
- 1.3.114 Jackdaw were recorded in moderate numbers at Lime Down C during the first four survey visits, with small flocks recorded throughout Lime Down C and ranging between 14 – 35 birds. High numbers of jackdaw were recorded at the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14 with a peak count of 261 in November 2024.
- 1.3.115 At Lime Down D, a peak count of 156 jackdaw was recorded in November 2023, with low numbers (less than 25 individuals per visit) recorded between December 2023 and February 2024. Low numbers of jackdaw were recorded in three of four surveys of the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13 with a peak count of 20 in January 2025.
- 1.3.116 At Lime Down E, moderate numbers of jackdaw were recorded throughout during six survey visits, with a peak count of 52 individuals recorded in January 2024.

Birds Predominantly Associated with Other Habitats, including Boundary Habitats and Watercourses

Lime Down A-E

- 1.3.117 Fewer bird species were predominantly associated with boundary habitats (10) in comparison to the open field habitats, and a lower abundance of individuals recorded. Only five species were recorded across each of Lime Down A-E: dunnock, mistle thrush, redwing, song thrush, and wren. Of these, dunnock, redwing, wren and song thrush were widespread.
- 1.3.118 Relatively high numbers of greenfinch were recorded at Lime Down D, and the greatest abundance of bullfinch and marsh tit were recorded at Lime Down E.
- 1.3.119 Two species were recorded rarely during the surveys, including: grey wagtail (one bird on two occasions); and teal (two birds on one occasion).

Schedule 1 Species

Redwing

- 1.3.120 Consistent, moderate number of redwings were recorded at Lime Down A from December 2023 onwards, with a peak count of 33 recorded in January 2024, largely comprising a flock of 30 individuals recorded in the centre of the Lime Down A.
- 1.3.121 Modest numbers of redwing were recorded at Lime Down B over the final three survey visits, with a peak count of 25 in January 2024. The majority of individuals were recorded using the large arable fields in the eastern portion of the Lime Down B.
- 1.3.122 Redwing were recorded in moderate to high numbers at Lime Down C over the first three survey visits, with a peak of 392 individuals, but a lower count of 40 individuals during the fourth survey. Flocks of redwing were distributed throughout the Site. At the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14, abundance followed a similar pattern, with high to moderate numbers recorded during the first three surveys, with a peak of 220 individuals, and lower numbers recorded during the last survey in February 2025.
- 1.3.123 The abundance of redwing varied across the first four survey visits at Lime Down D, with numbers generally low to moderate and a peak count of 152 individuals in January 2024. Redwing were generally recorded in the eastern half of the Lime Down D. At the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13, redwing numbers were also low to moderate in each of the surveys with a peak of 46 in November 2024.
- 1.3.124 Redwing were recorded in consistently moderate to high numbers at Lime Down E across six of the survey visits, with a peak count of 169 in February 2024. The species were recorded in small flocks throughout Lime Down E.

Red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern

Greenfinch

- 1.3.125 Greenfinch were recorded in low numbers at Lime Down A in January 2024 and February 2024 only (less than two birds per visit).
- 1.3.126 At Lime Down C, low numbers of greenfinch were recorded over five of the survey visits.
- 1.3.127 Greenfinch were recorded in modest numbers at Lime Down D in November 2023 and January 2024, with 22 and 25 individuals recorded respectively in single flocks. A single greenfinch was recorded on one occasion at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13, in November 2024.
- 1.3.128 Four greenfinches were recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down E in January 2024, associated with Gabriel's Well Brook.

Mistle Thrush

- 1.3.129 A single mistle thrush was recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down A, in early winter (November 2023).
- 1.3.130 Two mistle thrush were recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down B, in December 2023.
- 1.3.131 Four mistle thrush were recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down C, in November 2023. Mistle thrush were recorded on two occasions in low numbers at the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14.
- 1.3.132 A single mistle thrush was recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down D, in January 2024. Mistle thrush were not recorded at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13.
- 1.3.133 A single mistle thrush was recorded on a two occasion at Lime Down E, in January 2024 and November 2024.

Amber-listed Birds of Conservation Concern

Bullfinch

- 1.3.134 Bullfinch were recorded in low numbers for the first three survey visits at Lime Down C, with a peak count of three in January 2024. Seven bullfinch were recorded in December 2025 within the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14 and were otherwise absent from the area.
- 1.3.135 Low numbers of bullfinch were recorded during the first two survey visits at Lime Down D, with two individuals in November 2023 and a single bird in December 2023. A single bullfinch was recorded on a single occasion at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13, in January 2025.
- 1.3.136 Low numbers of bullfinch were recorded during the first three survey visits at Lime Down E, largely in the centre, with a peak count of 10 in December 2023.

Dunnock

- 1.3.137 Low numbers of dunnock were recorded across three survey visits at Lime Down A, with a peak count of four birds in February 2024.
- 1.3.138 Dunnock were recorded in low numbers at Lime Down B for the first three survey visits, with an increased peak count of 10 recorded in February 2024. Individuals were generally recorded in the eastern parcel of the Lime Down B.
- 1.3.139 Moderate numbers of dunnock were recorded at Lime Down C across the first four survey visits, with a peak count of 26 in February 2024. Low numbers of dunnock were recorded during three out of four surveys at the

additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14, with a peak count of two individuals.

- 1.3.140 Dunnock were recorded in relatively low numbers across at Lime Down D over the first four survey visits (seven or fewer individuals). Dunnock were also recorded in low numbers during all four visits at the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13 (three or fewer individuals).
- 1.3.141 Relatively low numbers of dunnock were recorded across six survey visits throughout Lime Down E, with a peak count of 14 in February 2024.

Grey Wagtail

- 1.3.142 A single grey wagtail was recorded flying over the Study Area at Lime Down B on a single occasion, in November 2023.
- 1.3.143 A single grey wagtail was recorded on a single occasion at Lime Down E, in January 2024 associated with a stream running through the centre of Field E18.

Song Thrush

- 1.3.144 Low numbers of song thrush were recorded on two survey visits at Lime Down A, with a peak count of three in February 2024.
- 1.3.145 At Lime Down B, song thrush were recorded in low numbers across the last three survey visits, although with a peak count of five in January 2024. Song thrushes were recorded almost exclusively at vegetated boundaries within the Study Area.
- 1.3.146 Song thrush were consistently recorded throughout the first four surveys at Lime Down C in moderate to high numbers, with a peak count of 29 individuals in December 2023. A single song thrush was recorded on a single occasion at the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14.
- 1.3.147 A single song thrush was recorded during the first survey visit at Lime Down D, with moderate numbers recorded between December 2023 and February 2024.
- 1.3.148 The abundance of song thrush varied over the first four surveys at Lime Down E, from a peak count of 21 individuals in November 2023 to a single individual in December 2023, and moderate numbers in early 2024.

Sparrowhawk

- 1.3.149 A single female sparrowhawk was recorded within the Study Area on a single occasion at Lime Down B, in January 2024.
- 1.3.150 Sparrowhawk were consistently recorded in low numbers across the first four survey visits at Lime Down C, to the west of the Study Area, peaking at three birds on a single visit.

- 1.3.151 A single male sparrowhawk was recorded flying over the Study Area at Lime Down D in December 2023.

Teal

- 1.3.152 A pair of teal were recorded in February 2024 at Lime Down D, associated with a pond in Field D7.

Wren

- 1.3.153 Wren were consistently recorded across all four survey visits at Lime Down A, with a peak count of five in November 2023.
- 1.3.154 Wren were recorded in low numbers across all four survey visits at Lime Down B, with a peak count of eight in December 2023 and January 2024.
- 1.3.155 Wren were recorded in moderate numbers during the surveys at Lime Down C, with a peak count of 32 in January 2024. Three wren were recorded in each of the first three surveys of the additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14.
- 1.3.156 Low to moderate numbers of wren were recorded across the surveys at Lime Down D, with a peak count of 12 recorded in February 2024. Low numbers of wren were recorded in three of the four surveys of the additional land at Lime Down D in Zone 13.
- 1.3.157 Modest numbers of wren were recorded consistently across the first four survey visits at Lime Down E, with a peak count of 18 individuals. A single wren was recorded on two further occasions in Field E8 within the Study Area.

Summary of Distribution of Key Species

- 1.3.158 Considering all species of conservation concern together, the key areas of each Site are discussed below.

Lime Down A

- 1.3.159 The north-eastern parcel appeared to form part of a kestrel territory, and buzzards were frequently recorded in the centre of Lime Down A.
- 1.3.160 The open and boundary habitats of Fields A5 and A6 were of some importance to winter thrushes.
- 1.3.161 Golden plover were recorded, however on a single visit only.
- 1.3.162 Fields A7 and A9 to the south of Lime Down A were particularly important for skylark.

Lime Down B

- 1.3.163 A barn owl roost is present within a disused barn, immediately adjacent to the Study Area to the south of Lime Down B.
- 1.3.164 Winter thrushes were widespread throughout Lime Down B in moderate to large flocks.
- 1.3.165 Wetland species, including snipe and mallard were recorded in the centre of Lime Down B, associated with ditches and smaller, sheltered fields providing suitable habitat.
- 1.3.166 The large arable fields to the east of Lime Down B recorded good numbers of skylark, as well as roosting short-eared owl and other raptors flying overhead and foraging starling and rooks.

Lime Down C

- 1.3.167 Farmland species such as skylark and meadow pipit, and winter thrushes were generally evenly distributed throughout Lime Down C with fieldfare recorded in large flocks (of greater than 1,000).
- 1.3.168 The north-western fields within the Study Area at Lime Down C (Fields C1-C6) appeared to be of particular importance for a range of species, with notable numbers of linnet, reed bunting, stock dove, woodpigeon, and yellowhammer.
- 1.3.169 Snipe were consistently recorded in moderate numbers, with a peak of 16 individuals in late winter. The additional land at Lime Down C in Zone 14 had a particularly high abundance of snipe with a peak count of 66.
- 1.3.170 Numerous raptor species were recorded flying over the Study Area at Lime Down C, including merlin, peregrine, red kite, kestrel, and sparrowhawk.

Lime Down D

- 1.3.171 Goldfinch were recorded across Lime Down D, which supported good numbers of the species relative to Lime Down A, B, C, and E. Linnets were also recorded in moderate to high numbers.
- 1.3.172 Larger arable fields to the east of Lime Down D were important for skylark, redwing and corvids.
- 1.3.173 Wetland species were well distributed throughout Lime Down D, including mallard, reed bunting and snipe, likely reflecting the extensive ditch network in proximity to Gauze Brook. A pair of teal were also recorded on the pond associated with Field D7, however on a single occasion only.

Lime Down E

- 1.3.174 A single barn owl was recorded, however on a single occasion.

- 1.3.175 The large arable fields to the south-east of Lime Down E supported the high numbers of winter thrushes, with moderate abundance of buntings and finches also associated with boundary habitats.
- 1.3.176 Notably high numbers of reed bunting were recorded at Lime Down E, in the southern, central fields.
- 1.3.177 Gabriel's Well Brook and Field E18 were important for wetland species within Lime Down E, such as mallard and snipe.

Non-notable Species and Species Not of Conservation Concern

- 1.3.178 Additional non-notable species were generally common and widespread resident species, the majority of which comprised small passerines associated with hedgerows and woodland. Farmland species included introduced gamebirds, such as pheasant and red-legged partridge; woodland specialist such as nuthatch, siskin and treecreeper; and wetland species included grey heron and water rail.
- 1.3.179 The assemblage of non-notable species recorded between November 2023 and February 2025, across the Solar PV Sites are generally considered to be typical of the range of habitats present.

Table 9-7-14: Additional Non-Notable Species Recorded at the Solar PV Sites (November 2023 – February 2025)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		

1.4 Evaluation and Conclusion

1.4.1 This section sets out a summary of survey results between November 2023 and February 2025 and provides an evaluation of the importance of the wintering bird assemblage within the Order Limits and surrounding area, with the potential to be impacted by the Scheme.

Evaluation

Solar PV Sites (Lime Down A-E)

1.4.2 Wintering bird surveys of Lime Down A-E completed between November 2023 and February 2025 have recorded a diverse assemblage of wintering bird species across the Solar PV Sites and immediately surrounding land. The mosaic of habitats present within the Solar PV Sites provide opportunities for a variety of species, including farmland, woodland and wetland specialists, including a relatively high number of UK Farmland Bird Indicators. The Solar PV Sites likely constitute important habitat within the local landscape, particularly considering the large extent of the Study Area.

1.4.3 Teal were the only recorded species associated with internationally designated sites situated within the broader landscape, with two

individuals recorded at Lime Down D during a single visit. Teal are a qualifying species of Severn Estuary SPA. However, the infrequency and low abundance of the single species is considered to negate the overall importance of the Solar PV Sites to supporting populations associated with the SPA.

- 1.4.4 The wintering bird assemblage recorded associated with open arable and grassland fields and field margins at the Solar PV Sites is considered to be of **District Importance**, given the diversity of notable species and abundance of bird records.
- 1.4.5 Other habitats, such as hedgerows, woodland, watercourses and boundary habitats generally supported a lower diversity and abundance of wintering bird species predominantly recorded at these habitats. The associated assemblage is considered to be of **Local Importance**. However, notwithstanding that large flocks of birds, including winter visitors, were associated with boundary features, which form a valuable resource within the local landscape.
- 1.4.6 When combined as a whole, the wintering bird assemblage recorded across all habitats at the Solar PV Sites is considered to be of **District Importance**

Cable Route Corridor

- 1.4.7 Whilst no wintering bird surveys have been undertaken within the CRC, the assessment of habitats for wintering birds concluded that habitats within the CRC are likely of similar value for wintering birds and a similar assemblage of wintering bird species are likely supported within the CRC.
- 1.4.8 The wintering bird assemblage within the CRC is therefore also considered to be of **District Importance**.

Conclusion

- 1.4.9 A diverse assemblage of wintering bird species has been recorded within the Survey Area between November 2023 and February 2025, including a range of notable species and species of conservation concern. Overall, Lime Down C and E consistently supported higher abundance of notable species, however such variation between Solar PV Sites may be attributable to land management practices at the time of survey, rather than notable difference in the ecological value between each of Lime Down A-E.
- 1.4.10 Open field habitats supported the greatest diversity of species and abundance of wintering birds including several migrant species, with resident species typical of hedgerows and woodlands generally recorded at the boundaries. Given the homogeneity of habitats between the Solar

PV Sites and CRC, it has been assumed that these habitats are also of greatest value for wintering birds within the CRC.

- 1.4.11 Appropriate avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures relating to wintering birds are detailed within **Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity, EN010168/APP/6.1.**

1.5 References

- Ref 9-7-1 Bird Survey and Assessment Steering Group (2021) Bird Survey Guidelines for assessing ecological impacts. Available at: [REDACTED] [Accessed 19 August 2025]
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- Ref 9-7-5 Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> [Accessed 19 August 2025]
- Ref 9-7-6 Wiltshire Biodiversity Partnership (2008) Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan.
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