



# Meridian Solar Farm

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Environmental Statement

6.3 ES Appendix 9-3:  
Breeding Bird Survey Report

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Infrastructure Planning (Applications:  
Prescribed Forms and Procedure)  
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March 2026

This report was issued with the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) (April 2025) and uses the Scheme terminology and extents defined at that stage. Since the preparation of the PEIR, there have been minor updates to the Scheme, however, these do not impact on the conclusions of this report.

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# Executive Summary

Temple was commissioned by Meridian Solar Farm Limited in September 2022 to carry out a suite of breeding bird surveys on land to the north-east of Crowland, Lincolnshire to provide baseline ecological data.

The aim of the breeding bird survey was to provide robust baseline data on the assemblage of breeding birds to inform the evolving design of the Scheme and to be incorporated into the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), to be submitted with the DCO application.

In line with current best practice, six survey visits were carried out between March 2023 and July 2023 on six transects to determine the breeding bird assemblage within the zone of influence of the Scheme, using a landscape sampling approach, targeting any key habitats likely to be of particular importance. Surveys were completed against the extent of the Scheme at the time of survey, the 'Study Area', as shown in Appendix 1, Figure 1. The main findings were as follows:

- Two Internationally Important Wildlife Sites (IIWS) designated for their ornithological importance are present within a 15km radius of the proposed survey site: the Nene Washes Ramsar site and the Nene Washes Special Protection Area (SPA).
- A total of 71 species were recorded during the survey, including 42 notable species. Five Schedule 1 breeding bird species were recorded, 18 species were Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red List, 22 BoCC Amber List and 15 Species of Principal Importance (SPI). Twelve Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species were recorded at the site during the surveys. Two qualifying species from the SPA/Ramsar sites were recorded.
- Of the 42 notable species, nine were recorded as possible breeders, 13 as probable breeders and a single species was confirmed as breeding. None of the qualifying species were recorded as breeding.

- The Study Area does not support greater than 10% of the county population of any individual species and as such does not qualify as being of county importance.
- Using the nature conservation evaluation for notable bird species assemblages (CIEEM, 2018), the breeding bird assemblage recorded within the Study Area during surveys is considered to be of **Local** importance, due to the presence of 42 notable bird species. The assemblage is typical of the habitats present within the Study Area,

Consideration therefore needs to be given to ensure that areas occupied by notable species are avoided or appropriate mitigation designed and implemented.

The information contained within this report will be used to inform the design of the Scheme and the subsequent mitigation strategy developed alongside the EIA.

# 1 Introduction

## BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Temple was commissioned by Meridian Solar Farm Limited in September 2022 to carry out a suite of breeding bird surveys on land to the north-east of Crowland, Lincolnshire to provide baseline ecological data
- 1.2 The Scheme consists of three elements, the 'PV Area', the 'Grid Connection', and the 'Inter-Array Connection'. The PV Area is the land proposed to contain the solar PV infrastructure, solar PV supporting infrastructure and On-Site Substation and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Compounds and is the subject of this report. The survey covered land within the extent of the PV Area at the time of survey, (referred to as the 'Study Area') to include the anticipated development area and adjacent land as shown in Appendix 1, Figure 1. The Grid Connection and Inter-Array Area were excluded from this study as they were not defined at the time of survey.

## SCOPE OF THE REPORT

- 1.3 This report details the methods and results of the breeding bird survey undertaken by Temple between March and July 2023. The aim of the survey was to identify and categorise the breeding bird assemblage within the Study Area and to map the distributions of notable bird populations, which includes:
  - qualifying species of local statutory and non-statutory nature conservation designations, and Internationally Important Wildlife Site (IIWS);
  - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 1 species;
  - Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC), Red Listed and Amber Listed Species of Principal Importance (SPI); and,
  - Species listed in Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership).

- 1.4 This report has been prepared with reference to best practice guidance published by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017 and 2018) and as detailed in British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Biodiversity and Development (BSI, 2013).
- 1.5 The Study Area reflects the extent of the PV Area at the time of survey. Surveys were undertaken to allow the results of this report to feed into the design and locations of infrastructure within the PV Area.
- 1.6 Further detailed mitigation advice will be prepared and issued upon completion of all bird surveys and is beyond the scope of this report.

### STUDY AREA CONTEXT AND STATUS

- 1.7 The Study Area is approximately 1,074ha in size and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid reference TF 30365 13425, approximately 1.7km north of Crowland and 9km south east of Spalding as shown in Appendix 1, Figure 1. As the survey was carried out to inform detailed designs, the Study Area covered the extent of the PV Area at the time of survey, plus a buffer of approximately 100m, to include the anticipated maximum extent of the Scheme.
- 1.8 The Study Area is predominantly low-lying agricultural land with ditch and hedgerow field boundaries, interspersed with minor roads.

### SCHEME CONTEXT

- 1.9 Surveys were conducted to provide information as part of a Development Consent Order (DCO) application for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) near Spalding, Lincolnshire. The NSIP concerns the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating facility with associated infrastructure including co-located battery storage and an approximately 12-13km Grid Connection, the 'Scheme'. The Scheme consists of three elements, the 'PV Area', the 'Grid Connection', and the 'Inter-Array Connection'. The PV Area is the land proposed to contain the solar PV infrastructure, solar PV supporting infrastructure and On-Site Substation and Battery Energy

Storage System (BESS) Compounds and is the subject of this appraisal. The Grid Connection and Inter-Array Connection will be the subject of separate appraisals to be undertaken once each element has been further refined.

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

1.10 The following key pieces of nature conservation legislation are relevant to this appraisal. A more detailed description of legislation is provided in Appendix 4:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); and,
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

1.11 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024) requires local authorities to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity and should provide net gains in biodiversity when taking planning decisions. The Environment Act, 2021 has strengthened the duty to conserve biodiversity within the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, such that all public authorities are required to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

1.12 The Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (EN-1), National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) and National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) set out the Government's energy policy, the need for new infrastructure and guidance for determining an application for a DCO. The NPSs include specific criteria and issues which should be covered by applicants' assessments of the effects of their scheme, and how the decision maker should consider these impacts. For example, NPS (EN-3), paragraph 2.4.2, which underlines the importance of good design for energy infrastructure in design of the project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology.

1.13 Other planning policies at the local level which are of relevance to this development include South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) and the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2011).

## 2 Methodology

### DESKTOP STUDY

2.1 A search was made using MAGIC Map application (Natural England, 2023) for statutory designated sites relating to birds within 15km of the Study Area. Adopting a precautionary approach to account for potentially functionally linked land, a 15km buffer was chosen in relation to Internationally Important Wildlife Sites (IIWS), including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites, given the scale and nature of the works and potential impact pathways for qualifying species of the IIWS. A search of up to 2km was made for other statutory designated sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR) designated for their ornithological value.

### FIELD SURVEY

2.2 The surveys were undertaken by two experienced field ecologists: an Ecologist with six years of ornithological survey experience; and a Senior Ecologist with 15 years ornithological survey experience. All surveyors are proficient in bird identification, survey techniques and the assessment of wintering bird populations.

2.3 The assessment was carried out by a Principal Ecologist and full member of CIEEM, with over 40 years experience in ornithological survey, assessment, and reporting. The report has been quality assured by two experienced professionals.

2.4 The Study Area is located within a broad area of relatively homogeneous arable habitat and landscape character. As the survey was commissioned to inform detailed development proposals, the survey programme was devised using a landscape sampling approach to provide a representative sample of the breeding bird assemblage associated with the typical habitats present across the Study Area, targeting any key habitats likely to be of particular importance to breeding birds.

- 2.5 Surveys were carried out using six pre-defined transects (as shown on Appendix 1, Figure 3). These utilised roads, areas where landowners had provided access and public rights of way and were designed to ensure that good views across the Study Area were achieved. The area is a very open, flat landscape and the scale and homogeneity of habitats made this proportional and representative.
- 2.6 Six survey visits were carried out on each of the six transects between March and July 2023, spread throughout the survey season, in line with best practice (Bird Survey Guidelines, 2023). Each transect route was walked slowly and methodically and all birds seen within or adjacent to the Study Area were recorded using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) species codes. Stopping points were also incorporated to record species that could flock in significantly large numbers such as starlings, waterfowl and waders, and to avoid double counting.
- 2.7 The surveyor used either 8x42 or 10x42 binoculars and a 20-60x zoom telescope to assist with bird identification and scaled field maps to record the registrations/numbers of each bird species observed. Details of the weather, any constraints and details of any disturbance were all recorded for each survey.
- 2.8 Details of weather are contained within Table 2.1. No disturbances or physical constraints were recorded during the surveys (see Constraints and Limitations section for general constraints and limitations due to survey timings).

### Survey Details

- 2.9 The times, dates and weather conditions of all survey visits are detailed in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1:** Breeding bird survey dates and times

Transect	Date	Start Time	Temp °C	Cloud Cover	Wind	Rain	Comment
T1	26/04/2023	05:20	4	5/8	2/12	0	Overcast, clearing
	15/05/2023	05:10	3	3/8	1/12	0	Overcast, clearing
	31/05/2023	04:50	3	8/8	2/12	2	Light rain, clearing
	14/06/2023	03.50	8	0/8	1/12	0	Clear. Cool
	28/06/2023	04.50	16	7/8	2/12	0	Overcast
	12/07/2023	04.40	11	4/8	4/12	0	Overcast, clearing
T2	27/04/2023	05:10	3	3/8	1/12	0	Overcast, clearing
	11/05/2023	04:55	8	7/8	2/12	0	Overcast, clearing
	30/05/2023	04:45	9	8/8	3/12	0	Dull, cool, overcast
	13/06/2023	04.00	10	0/8	1/12	0	Slight mist
	29/06/2023	04.42	11	7/8	3/12	0	Overcast
	14/07/2023	04.52	8	7/8	2/12	0	Overcast
T3	28/04/2026	05:30	8	8/8	2/12	1	Mist. Clearing. Occasional drizzle
	12/05/2023	04;40	8	8/8	4/12	0	Overnight rain. Overcast. Low cloud. Moderate cold breeze
	26/05/2023	05.20	8	0/8	1/12	0	n/a
	12/06/2023	04.15	14	2/8	2/12	0	Slight mist. Warm
	30/06/2023	04.39	9	6/8	2/12	0	Gentle breeze
	13/07/2023	04.50	11	6/8	3/12	0	n/a
T4	21/03/2023	05:35	2	7/8	3/12	0	72% humidity
	26/04/2023	05:30	4	7/8	3/12	0	80% humidity
	17/05/2023	05:30	10	5/8	3/12	0	80% humidity
	23/05/2023	05:15	9	4/8	3/12	0	70% humidity

Transect	Date	Start Time	Temp °C	Cloud Cover	Wind	Rain	Comment
	14/06/2023	05:00	11	3/8	3/12	0	75% humidity
	27/06/2023	05:00	11	1/8	3/12	0	60% humidity
T5	22/03/2023	05:30	2	8/8	3/12	0	80% humidity
	27/04/2023	5:30	2	6/8	2/12	0	60% humidity
	18/05/2023	05:15	9	4/8	3/12	0	80% humidity
	24/05/2023	05:00	10	3/8	3/12	0	90% humidity
	15/06/2023	05:00	11	3/8	3/12	0	85% humidity
	28/06/2023	04:30	16	2/8	3/12	0	80% humidity
T6	25/03/2023	05:30	1	1/8	3/12	0	85% humidity
	28/04/2023	05:30	5	2/8	2/12	No	80% humidity
	19/05/2023	05:15	8	4/8	2/12	No	75% humidity
	25/05/2023	05:00	10	3/8	3/12	No	80% humidity
	16/06/2023	04:30	10	2/8	2/12	No	85% humidity
	29/06/2023	04:30	11	1/8	3/12	No	85% humidity

2.10 Upon completion of the survey visits, information obtained from each visit was transferred to a separate map and digitised using ArcGIS software.

2.11 Once all surveys were completed, breeding territory analysis was conducted on the maps. Individual records of species within the same areas were grouped together and assessed for likelihood of breeding. For some species, the number of singing males was counted as a proxy for number of breeding territories where the number of registrations was too complex to map territories. A species list is provided in Appendix 5.

2.12 The assessment is made using the breeding evidence criteria adopted by the British Trust for Ornithology's Bird Atlas 2007 – 2011 (Balmer *et al.*, 2013), with each species being assigned to one of four categories:

Non-breeding:

- flying over and not using the resources on the survey site;
- species observed but suspected on migration; or
- observed, but expected to be a summering non-breeder.

Possible:

- observed in breeding season in possible nesting habitat; or
- singing male in breeding season.

Probable:

- permanent territory presumed from two registrations at least one week apart in the same place; one registration must either be a pair in suitable nesting habitat, or an individual exhibiting territorial behaviour (song, display, courtship);
- visiting probable nest site;
- agitated behaviour or anxiety calls; or
- building nest or excavating nest hole.

Confirmed:

- adult carrying food or faecal sack;
- recently fledged young (nidicolous species) or downy young (nidifugous species);
- adults entering/leaving nest site in circumstances indicating occupied nest;
- active nest;
- used nest or eggshells (occupied/laid within survey period); or
- distraction display/injury feigning.

## NATURE CONSERVATION EVALUATION RELATING TO BIRDS

### Assessment criteria

2.13 In line with CIEEM (2018), the overall evaluation of the breeding bird assemblage recorded within the site was assessed against criteria for international, national, county, local, site and negligible nature conservation importance (see Table 2.2).

2.14 Criteria for the BoCC (Stanbury *et al.*, 2021), which identifies the Red List and Amber List species, is provided in Appendix 3.

**Table 2.2: Nature Conservation Evaluation of Habitat for Birds**

Nature conservation importance	Definition
International	<p>Study Area meets SPA qualifying population criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site used regularly<sup>1</sup> by 1% of the national population of an Annex 1 species of the EC Birds Directive<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>• Site used regularly by 1% of the biogeographical (international) population of a regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I of the EC Birds Directive) in any season.</li> <li>• Site used regularly by over 20,000 waterfowl or 20,000 sea birds in any season.</li> </ul> <p>The regular occurrence of a globally rare species (International Union for Conservation of Nature).</p>
National	<p>Study Area used regularly by 1% of the national population (taken from Baker <i>et al.</i>, 2006 and Musgrove <i>et al.</i>, 2011) of a species (not listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive).</p> <p>The site meets SSSI or National Nature Reserve (NNR) designation criteria for birds (Joint Nature Conservation Committee JNCC).</p>
County	<p>Study Area used regularly by 10% of the county population of a species or the Site meets County Wildlife Site or SINC criteria, or based on professional judgement of the breeding bird assemblage where there are no published criteria (as is the case in Lincolnshire), taking account of the abundance, populations and nature conservation status of notable species recorded.</p>
Local	<p>Study Area used regularly by a species whose status is scarce within the county<sup>3</sup>.</p> <p>Site supports a population of a species, or a species assemblage of birds, notable for their protected or conservation concern status (Schedule 1 of Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) for breeding species, Annex 1 of EC Birds Directive, SPI as listed in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, Local BAP, Red-list BoCC (Stanbury <i>et al.</i>, 2021).</p>
Site	<p>Study Area used regularly by an assemblage of birds, or large numbers of an individual species whose status is common within the county<sup>4</sup>.</p>

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of classification of SPAs, 'regularly' is taken to mean Regularly is taken to mean that the site is used during a life stage of a bird population, such as breeding or migration, where (i) the mean of the maxima of that population over five years for the seasons in which the site is used meets the qualifying criteria or (ii) the requisite number of birds is known to have occurred in two thirds of the seasons for which adequate data area available (the total number of seasons being not less than three). In the absence of sufficient data to determine 'regular' use, a precautionary approach would be taken whereby a site where qualifying numbers of a species are recorded would be assessed as being of international importance, unless there is sound reason to judge that such numbers were only occasional.

<sup>2</sup> The Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) provides a framework for the conservation and management of, and human interactions with, wild birds in Europe

<sup>3</sup> Scarce as defined by the relevant county ornithological society/county bird recorder

<sup>4</sup> Common as defined by the relevant county ornithological society/county bird recorder

Nature conservation importance	Definition
Negligible	Study Area supports no notable species or assemblages of birds.

## NOMENCLATURE

2.15 Common names only are used throughout the text of this report, with scientific names for all species included in Appendix 5. The naming convention follows the Natural History Museum’s Species Dictionary (2023).

## LIMITATIONS AND SURVEY CONSTRAINTS

2.16 The desk study for this report has been restricted to publicly available data due to sensitivities regarding communicating details of the proposed scheme to biological recorders or other third parties at the early stages of project development. A more detailed review of data sources will be carried out at a later date to inform the EIA/DCO application.

2.17 Where possible surveys were spaced ten days apart however, on occasion a variety of factors contributed to slightly different spacing between surveys, this is not considered to be a limitation as sufficient data was collected during the visits for the purposes of the survey.

2.18 In some instances, (Visits 3 and 4 to Transects 4, 5 and 6) it was not feasible due to weather constraints or access restrictions to have a two-week gap between surveys. These visits were instead a week apart. This is not considered to be a limitation as the majority of visits were completed with two weeks between and sufficient data was collected on each of the six visits for the purposes of the survey.

2.19 Every effort has been made to provide robust and comprehensive data on the breeding bird assemblages on site. However, the following limitation applies:

- Individual birds and different bird species differ in their behaviour and detectability, and it is unlikely that registrations were detected for all birds during each survey visit. Nevertheless, it is considered that the majority of the

breeding bird assemblage was recorded over the course of the surveys and the data collected is therefore considered sufficiently robust for evaluating the breeding bird assemblage present within the Study Area.

## 3 Results

### DESKTOP STUDY

#### Statutory Designated Sites

3.1 The following IIWS, for which the qualifying species including breeding birds, lie within 15km of the Study Area (refer to Table 3.1 for details and Appendix 1, Figure 2 for the locations of these sites):

- The Nene Washes Ramsar site and SPA.

3.2 There are no SSSI or other statutory sites for nature conservation within a 2km buffer of the Indicative Site boundary.

**Table 3.1: IIWS within 15km of the Site**

Site Name	Distance from Study Area	Ornithological Qualifying features/Description
The Nene Washes Ramsar site	12km south	The site qualifies under Ramsar Criterion 2: Assemblage of breeding birds  Populations of black-tailed godwit have been identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration as qualifying species.
The Nene Washes SPA	12km south	Nene Washes qualifies under Article 4.2 by supporting, in summer, a nationally important breeding assemblage of migratory species including gadwall, garganey, shoveler and black tailed-godwit.

### STUDY AREA HABITATS

3.3 The Study Area predominantly comprised agricultural land, mainly used for crop production (cereal, root crop and brassicas); with field boundaries consisting of a network of ditches and hedgerows.

### FIELD SURVEY

3.4 A total of 71 species were recorded during the surveys, including 42 notable species. Five Schedule 1 breeding bird species were recorded, 18 species were BoCC Red List,

22 species were BoCC Amber List and 15 SPI. Twelve Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Lincolnshire BAP) species were recorded at the site during the surveys. Of the 42 notable species, nine were recorded as possible breeders, thirteen as probable breeders and a single species (mallard) was confirmed as breeding. These are listed in Table 3.3. Two species which are qualifying features of the IWS were recorded.

3.5 The breeding status of each notable species on the Site is detailed below in Table 3.2.

3.6 A list of the species recorded during the surveys is provided in Appendix 5, including the numbers for each transect and peak counts. Territory mapping is provided for probable and confirmed breeders in Appendix 7:

- Appendix 7 Figure 1 – corn bunting;
- Appendix 7 Figure 2 – dunnock;
- Appendix 7 Figure 3 – greenfinch;
- Appendix 7 Figure 4 – hobby;
- Appendix 7 Figure 5 – linnet;
- Appendix 7 Figure 6 – mallard;
- Appendix 7 Figure 7 – moorhen;
- Appendix 7 Figure 8 – reed bunting;
- Appendix 7 Figure 9 – sedge warbler;
- Appendix 7 Figure 10 – skylark;
- Appendix 7 Figure 11 – song thrush;
- Appendix 7 Figure 12 – turtle dove;
- Appendix 7 Figure 13 – whitethroat;
- Appendix 7 Figure 14 – wren; and
- Appendix 7 Figure 15 - yellowhammer.

**Table 3.2:** Notable species recorded during breeding bird survey visits of T1-T6

Possible, probable and confirmed breeding species are highlighted in bold.

Species	Sch 1 Species	BoCC	Qualifying feature of IIWS	SPI	Breeding Status for each Transect					
					T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
black-headed gull		Amber			Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder
common tern		Amber			Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
<b>corn bunting</b>		Red		Yes	Not recorded	Non-breeder	Probable breeder	Not recorded	Non-breeder	Not recorded
<b>cuckoo</b>		Red		Yes	Non-breeder	Possible breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder
<b>dunnock</b>		Amber		Yes	Possible breeder	Not recorded	Possible breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder
fieldfare	Yes	Red			Not recorded	Not recorded	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
gadwall		Amber	Yes		Not recorded	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
garganey	Yes	Amber	Yes		Not recorded	Not recorded	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
green sandpiper	Yes	Amber			Non-breeder	Not recorded	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded

Species	Sch 1 Species	BoCC	Qualifying feature of IWS	SPI	Breeding Status for each Transect					
					T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
<b>greenfinch</b>		Red			Non-breeder	Not recorded	Possible breeder	Not recorded	Possible breeder	Probable breeder
herring gull		Red		Yes	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
<b>hobby</b>	Yes				Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
house martin		Red			Not recorded	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
house sparrow		Red		Yes	Not recorded	Not recorded	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Non-breeder	Non-breeder
<b>kestrel</b>		Amber			Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Not recorded	Possible breeder	Not recorded
<b>lapwing</b>		Red		Yes	Possible breeder	Not recorded	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded
lesser black-backed gull		Amber			Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
<b>linnet</b>		Red		Yes	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder
<b>mallard</b>		Amber			Confirmed breeder	Probable breeder	Confirmed breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder
meadow pipit		Amber			Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder
<b>mistle thrush</b>		Red			Not recorded	Possible breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded

Species	Sch 1 Species	BoCC	Qualifying feature of IWS	SPI	Breeding Status for each Transect					
					T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
moorhen		Amber			Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Probable breeder	Not recorded	Possible breeder
oystercatcher		Amber			Not recorded	Not recorded	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
red kite	Yes				Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
reed bunting		Amber		Yes	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Not recorded	Possible breeder	Possible breeder
rook		Amber			Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder
sedge warbler		Amber			Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder
skylark		Red		Yes	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder
song thrush		Amber		Yes	Probable breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder
sparrowhawk		Amber			Not recorded	Possible breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
spotted flycatcher		Red		Yes	Not recorded	Possible breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
starling		Red		Yes	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder
stock dove		Amber			Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Non-breeder	Non-breeder

Species	Sch 1 Species	BoCC	Qualifying feature of IWS	SPI	Breeding Status for each Transect					
					T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
swift		Red			Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Non-breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
<b>turtle dove</b>		Red		Yes	Possible breeder	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
wheatear		Amber			Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Non breeder	Non breeder	Not recorded
<b>whitethroat</b>		Amber			Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder
<b>woodpigeon</b>		Amber			Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder
<b>wren</b>		Amber			Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder
<b>yellow wagtail</b>		Red			Probable breeder	Possible breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder	Probable breeder
<b>yellowhammer</b>		Red		Yes	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder	Possible breeder

## CONSERVATION STATUS OF NOTABLE SPECIES RECORDED WITHIN THE SITE

### QUALIFYING SPECIES FOR IIWS

- 3.7 Two qualifying species for the IIWS, gadwall and garganey were recorded during the surveys, with a single record of each species recorded in flight. Gadwall was recorded along Transect 2, and garganey along Transect 3. Both species are therefore assumed to be non-breeders as they were only seen in flight and not in any suitable breeding habitat.
- 3.8 Given the lack of records of any other records of qualifying species for the IIWS, the Site is not considered to form Functionally Linked Land (FLL) with the IIWS.

### BREEDING SPECIES

- 3.9 The following section provides more details on the conservation status of notable bird species recorded within the site during summer of 2023, which are considered as Confirmed, Probable or Possible breeders.
- 3.10 Background information on the status of species is quoted from the BTO Website (BTO, 2023) except where alternative references are cited. Details of BoCC status are taken from Stanbury *et al.* (2021). The Lincolnshire status for each species is taken from the Lincolnshire Bird Report for 2020 (Lincolnshire Bird Club, 2022).

### SCHEDULE 1 SPECIES

- 3.11 Schedule 1 species recorded, which could conceivably breed within the Study Area are detailed below.

Hobby

- 3.12 This species used to be too rare and secretive for wide-scale monitoring but, following population increase, BBS is now able to produce a trend. Many BBS sightings, however, are likely to refer to migrants, first-summer non-breeders, or to breeding birds from distant nests. Hobby is scarce passage migrant and summer

visitor to Lincolnshire, with, perhaps, as many as 50 pairs possible breeding. (Lincolnshire Bird Report 2020).

- 3.13 Hobby was recorded along Transect 1 and Transect 2, with territorial behaviour noted. It is therefore considered to be a probable breeder. The hobby population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

### RED LISTED BIRD SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

#### Corn bunting

- 3.14 Following an earlier, historical decrease, corn buntings declined very steeply between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, with local extinctions across large sections of their former range. Subsequently the decline has continued, but at a reduced rate. There has been widespread moderate decline across Europe since 1980 (BTO, 2018). Similar to skylark, changes in farming practice are believed to have been responsible for declines, through impacts on reduced seed and/or invertebrate abundance, most notably the lack of invertebrate food for chicks (Brickle *et al.*, 2000). Corn bunting is also an SPI. The species is fairly common in Lincolnshire but is declining and localised.

- 3.15 Three territories were recorded on Transect 3, where the bird was considered a probable breeder. The corn bunting population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

#### Cuckoo

- 3.16 The CBC/BBS trend shows cuckoo abundance to have been in decline since the early 1980s. The species was moved in 2002 from the green to the Amber List, and in the 2009 review met Red List criteria. The sensitivity of CBC to change in this species may have been relatively low, mainly because Cuckoo territories were typically larger than census plots (Marchant *et al.* 1990). BBS shows a continuing strong decline in England, but not in Scotland, where a moderate increase has occurred. In Wales, the species declined in the first 15 years of BBS but have been stable over

the most recent ten-year period. The BBS map of change in relative density between 1994-96 and 2007-09 indicates that decrease has been most severe in Northern Ireland and south-eastern England and that increase has occurred in north-western Scotland. Cuckoos increased significantly during 1994-2006 in lowland semi-natural grass, heath and bog but decreased in almost all other habitat types (Newson *et al.*, 2009). Results from analyses of data from two citizen science schemes, including BirdTrack, suggest regional differences in the UK may date back much earlier, with tentative comparisons made with data from 100 years ago (Sparks *et al.*, 2017). There has been a decline across Europe since 1980. Cuckoo is also an SPI.

3.17 The cuckoo is a fairly common, but declining summer visitor to Lincolnshire.

3.18 Cuckoos were heard calling on Transect 2, but only the 13 June. Cuckoo is therefore considered to be a possible breeder. The cuckoo population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **negligible** importance.

#### Greenfinch

3.19 Greenfinch abundance fluctuated up to the mid-1990s, but there was little change in either survival or breeding performance during this period. More recent CBC/BBS data indicate population increases widely across the UK, followed by a sudden sharp fall induced by a widespread and severe outbreak of trichomonosis disease. The BBS map of change in relative density between 1994-96 and 2007-09 indicates increases over that period, strongest in East Anglia and in western Britain, contrasted with decreases in eastern Northern Ireland, north-eastern Scotland and central southern England. The subsequent, disease-related decrease is ongoing in all parts of the UK. Numbers across Europe have been broadly stable since 1980, with early increases being followed by a decline starting in the 1990s.

3.20 The greenfinch is a common but declining resident in Lincolnshire.

3.21 Two territories were mapped along Transect 6, where the bird was considered a probable breeder. Greenfinch was also considered to be a possible breeder in

Transect 3 and Transect 5. The greenfinch population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

#### Lapwing

3.22 In Britain, wintering concentrations of lapwing are highest in the Somerset Levels, Fens, north-west England, the Uists, Caithness and Orkney. The former core area in central England is less dominant and Fenland and the east coast now more prominent than in the 1981–84 Winter Atlas. Densities of breeding lapwings are highest in northwest England, Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides; those in Ireland are low throughout. National surveys in England and Wales showed a 49% population decline between 1987 and 1998 (Wilson *et al.*, 2001). The 2009 review moved this species from amber to the UK Red List, for which it continues to qualify on the strength of its UK decline, which has been shown to be 59% (1967–2020) (Woodward *et al.*, 2020). Lapwing is also an SPI.

3.23 Lapwing is a very common breeder in Lincolnshire.

3.24 Birds were recorded on Transect 1, Transect 3 and Transect 4 with display noted but not further evidence of breeding. The species is considered to be a possible breeder. The lapwing population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

#### Linnet

3.25 Linnet abundance fell rapidly in the UK in the late 1960s, and again between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, but decrease has been followed by a long period of relative stability. Numbers have fallen further since the start of BBS in 1994. The BBS map of change in relative density between 1994-96 and 2007-09 indicates that, in both Britain and Northern Ireland, there was decrease over that period in eastern regions and increase in the west. The UK breeding population has shown a 20% decrease (1995–2020). Linnet is also an SPI.

3.26 Linnet is a very common resident in Lincolnshire with three figure counts recorded at several sites.

3.27 Two territories were mapped in each of Transect 5 and Transect 6 and a single territory on Transect 4 where the species was considered a probable breeder in these transects. One pair probably bred in Transect 3 and the species was a possible breeder in Transect 1 and Transect 2. The linnet population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

#### Mistle Thrush

3.28 Mistle thrush populations have declined significantly since the mid-1970s. The species was moved from the green to the Amber List of BoCC in 2002 because of its UK population decline and added to the Red List because its decrease had worsened (Eaton *et al.*, 2015), showing a 59% decrease.

3.29 Mistle thrush is a common resident in Lincolnshire.

3.30 A single mistle thrush was recorded along Transect 2 and is therefore considered to be a possible breeder. The mistle thrush population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **negligible** importance.

#### Skylark

3.31 Skylark declined rapidly from the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s, when the rate of decline slowed. BBS data show further decline, with fluctuations in Scotland and Wales. There has been a 15% decrease (1995–2020) in the UK population. Skylark is also an SPI.

3.32 Skylark is a very common resident in Lincolnshire with three figure counts recorded at several sites.

3.33 The maximum count of singing skylark recorded along Transect 1 was 15; along Transect 2 it was 20; Transect 3, 27; Transect 4, 11, Transect 5, 15, and Transect 6 it

was 7. The skylark population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

#### Spotted Flycatcher

3.34 Spotted Flycatcher has declined rapidly and consistently since the 1960s. It is among a suite of species that winter in the humid zone of West Africa and correspondingly are showing the strongest population declines among our migrant species. The Repeat Woodland Bird Survey, however, using a set of CBC woodland and RSPB sites, detected a significant increase between the 1980s and 2003-04 in south-west England, suggesting that change has not been uniform across Britain. Gaps are already starting to appear in the 10-km distribution map, especially in urban areas and close to the east coast. There has been a decline across Europe since 1980. Spotted flycatcher is an SPI.

3.35 Spotted flycatcher is a very local summer visitor, rare breeder and passage migrant in Lincolnshire.

3.36 A single spotted flycatcher was recorded along Transect 2 on one occasion, so is only considered to be a possible breeder. The spotted flycatcher population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

#### Starling

3.37 The abundance of breeding starling in the UK has fallen rapidly, particularly since the early 1980s and especially in woodland (Robinson *et al.*, 2002 and 2005a), and continues to be strongly downward. The BBS map of change in relative density between 1994-96 and 2007-09 indicates that decrease over that period was widespread across England and eastern Scotland but that some increase occurred in Northern Ireland, western Scotland and Cumbria. More recent BBS data suggest that populations are also now decreasing in Scotland and Wales and are broadly stable in Northern Ireland. The species' UK conservation listing has been upgraded

from amber to red as the decline has become more severe with the UK breeding population declining by 53%. Starling is an SPI.

3.38 Starling is a very common resident in Lincolnshire.

3.39 Starling was only recorded in small numbers in each transect and is considered a possible breeder as birds were seen in suitable habitat only. The starling population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

#### Turtle Dove

3.40 The CBC/BBS trend shows severe declines in Turtle Dove abundance, beginning in the late 1970s and continuing steeply to the present. Atlas data show that more than half the 10-km squares occupied in 1968-72 had been lost by 2008-11, with the population withdrawing towards East Anglia and Kent (Balmer *et al.* 2013). These trends, unless halted or reversed, would bring the species close to extinction in the UK within the next two decades and all breeding records since 2018 should be submitted to the RBBP, following the addition of Turtle Dove to the RBBP species list. There has been decline across Europe since 1980 and the species is now classed by IUCN as globally threatened (Vulnerable). Turtle Dove is an SPI.

3.41 Turtle dove is a scarce and declining summer visitor and passage migrant in Lincolnshire.

3.42 A pair seen in suitable habitat along Transect 1 on a single date, so considered to be possible breeders. The turtle dove population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

#### Yellow Wagtail

3.43 Britain supports almost the entire world population of the distinctive race, *flavissima*, so population changes in the UK are of global conservation significance. Yellow wagtail has been in rapid decline since the early 1980s, according to CBC/BBS and, after a shift from the Green to the Amber List in 2002, the species was moved

to the Red List in 2009 (Eaton *et al.*, 2009). Gibbons *et al.*, (1993) identified a range contraction towards a core area in central England, concurrent with the early years of decline. Further range contraction has occurred extensively since then, especially in the west and south and in parts of East Anglia (Balmer *et al.*, 2013). The European trend, which comprises several races of the species, has shown a decline since 1980.

3.44 Yellow wagtail is a summer visitor and passage migrant in Lincolnshire, which holds around 20% of the world population. Five yellow wagtail territories were mapped along Transect 1; a single along Transect 3, Transect 4, Transect 5 and Transect 6. The species is therefore considered to be a probable breeder. The yellow wagtail population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

#### Yellowhammer

3.45 Yellowhammer abundance began to decline on farmland in the mid-1980s. The BBS map of change in relative density between 1994-96 and 2007-09 indicates that in Britain there was a sharp divide between decrease over that period in the east and south and limited increase in the north-west; the population in Northern Ireland has also declined. Recent BBS data confirm that the earlier downward trends have continued, with a moderate decrease since 1995 recorded in England and a steep decrease in Wales, contrasting with shallow increase in Scotland. The breeding population has declined by 62% (1967–2020) The species has been on the Red List since 2002. Yellowhammer is an SPI.

3.46 Yellowhammer is a very common resident in Lincolnshire with three figure counts recorded at some sites. No breeding activity recorded other than birds present in suitable habitat, therefore yellowhammer is considered to be a possible breeder. The yellowhammer population associated with the Site is therefore considered to be of **local** importance.

## AMBER LISTED BIRD SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

3.47 Amber Listed species are not considered individually in respect of the Study Area's nature conservation importance, but they are taken into account in evaluation of the overall breeding bird assemblage.

### Dunnock

3.48 Although numbers of this species are stable in the county, the UK population has suffered from recent declines (Balmer *et al.*, 2013). As a hedgerow specialist, habitat loss is again cited as the cause for the declines. The decline of the species between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s is likely to be due to several factors, but strong experimental evidence in farmland areas suggests that this may be linked to reduced winter food availability. This reflects similar results found for other species that suffer a 'hungry gap' in February and March (Woodward *et al.*, 2018). Dunnock is also a SPI.

3.49 Dunnock is a very common resident in Lincolnshire. Dunnock was recorded along all transects except for Transect 2. It was considered a possible breeder along Transect 1 and Transect 3, and a probable breeder along Transect 4, Transect 5 and Transect 6.

### Kestrel

3.50 Kestrel recovered from the lethal and sublethal effects of organochlorine pesticides by the mid-1970s, the recovery probably driven by improving nesting success, but subsequently entered a steep decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Since the mid-1980s, the English population has fluctuated without a long-term trend being apparent but there are significant declines over the BBS period in England and especially in Scotland. The UK breeding population has shown a 40% decrease (1995–2020) and the species is on the Amber List due to the moderate breeding population decline in the last 25 years.

3.51 Kestrel is a very common resident in Lincolnshire. Single kestrels were noted flying over Transect 1, Transect 2 and Transect 3, but no further evidence of breeding was recorded.

#### Mallard

3.52 The mallard increased steadily as a breeding bird in the UK from the 1960s to around 2000, especially in England, with the trend levelling off since then and a shallow decline has occurred over the last ten years. Winter populations have however, declined since at least the late 1980s (WeBS: Frost *et al.*, 2020) with a 37% decrease from 1995/96 to 2020/21. The species has recently been moved from the green to the Amber List on the strength of this decline in the UK wintering population.

3.53 Mallard is a very common resident in Lincolnshire with three figure counts recorded at several sites. Breeding was confirmed in Transect 1 and Transect 3 where family parties were recorded. The species probably bred along the other transects.

#### Moorhen

3.54 Trends for this species show wide fluctuations that are related to its high potential for reproduction and to its susceptibility to cold winter weather. The BBS map of change in relative density between 1994-96 and 2007-09 indicates that numbers have increased in England and Wales but decreased in Northern Ireland and possibly Scotland. Wintering numbers in Britain, which include many continental breeders, fell by 13% between 2008 and 2013 (WeBS: Frost *et al.*, 2020). Numbers across Europe have been broadly stable since 1980 (Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS): PECBMS 2020a>).

3.55 Moorhen is a very common resident and partial migrant in Lincolnshire. Birds were present in suitable nesting habitat in Transect 4 during the breeding season, so it is considered to be a probable breeder.

#### Reed bunting

3.56 Reed bunting abundance has fluctuated without a clear trend since the 1980s. The long-term WBS/WBBS trend shows a large decline and raises an alert, contrasting with the long-term CBC/BBS trend. However, the CBC/BBS trend shows a substantial increase in the first eight years until the mid-1970s followed by a substantial decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and therefore the trends would be consistent if they had both started in 1975. The initial decline placed reed bunting on the Red List but in 2009, with evidence from BBS of some recovery in numbers, the species was moved from the Red List to the Amber List. Reed bunting is also an SPI.

3.57 Reed bunting is a very common resident in Lincolnshire, with many sites recording double figure flocks. Ten territories were mapped in Transect 1; two in Transect 2 and three in Transect 3. The species was considered a probable breeder along these transects and a possible breeder along Transect 5 and Transect 6.

#### Sedge Warbler

3.58 Sedge warbler has shown a moderate decline, though it is uncertain whether the long-term changes are partly obscured by shorter fluctuations in numbers. Numbers across Europe have been broadly stable since 1980 (PECBMS: PECBMS 2020a).

3.59 In Lincolnshire, the sedge warbler is a common summer visitor. Sedge warbler was recorded as a probable breeder along all transects one pair along Transect 4 and Transect 6; two pairs along each of Transect 1, Transect 2 and Transect 5, and 18 along Transect 3.

#### Song thrush

3.60 CBC/BBS showed a steep decline in song thrush abundance that began in the mid-1970s. Short-term increases beginning around 2012 mean that the long-term UK decline is now classed as moderate rather than steep, but the population remains substantially lower than in the late 1960s. The UK breeding population has shown a 49% decrease between 1967 and 2020.

3.61 Song thrush is a common resident in Lincolnshire. Birds were recorded as probably breeding along Transect 1, Transect 4, Transect 5 and Transect 6, as possible breeders along Transect 2 and Transect 3.

#### Sparrowhawk

3.62 Between the 1970s and the mid 1990s, the CBC charted a steep increase in this species. Many former haunts especially in the Midlands and east of England were reoccupied between the first two atlas periods (Gibbons *et al.*, 1993). The population stabilised from the mid-1990s, though BBS figures suggest a moderate decline has occurred in England over the last ten years. The UK breeding population has shown a 25% decrease (1995–2020), meeting the criteria for the Amber List.

3.63 Sparrowhawk is a common resident in Lincolnshire. The maximum count of two sparrowhawks was recorded during the breeding bird surveys on Transect 2 in May 2023, and it is therefore considered to be a possible breeder.

#### Whitethroat

3.64 Whitethroat numbers had been stable for a few years up to 1968 but, despite a normal departure for their West African wintering grounds in autumn 1968, crashed by around 70% between the 1968 and 1969 breeding seasons (Winstanley *et al.*, 1974). They fluctuated around their lower level until the mid-1980s, since when the population has sustained a consistent shallow recovery. Recovery of the UK population has been most apparent along linear waterways. The BBS map of change in relative density between 1994-96 and 2007-09 indicates that increase over that period was strong in Scotland and parts of northern and southern England, contrasting with a decrease in parts of East Anglia. More recent BBS data show that, since 1995, a rapid increase has occurred in Scotland and a shallow increase in England, but this contrasts with a moderate decline in Wales over the same period. There has been an increase across Europe since 1980 (PECBMS: PECBMS 2020a>). After a spell on the UK Amber List during 2009-15, warranted by the limited extent

of its UK recovery, further population increase has returned Whitethroat to the green list at the latest review (Eaton *et al.*, 2015)

- 3.65 Whitethroat is a common summer visitor and passage migrant in Lincolnshire. The species is considered as a probable breeder along all the transects with a maximum of six singing males on Transect 1; 10 on Transect 2 and Transect 3; six on Transect 4 and 4 on Transect 5 and Transect 6.

#### Woodpigeon

- 3.66 The CBC/BBS trend for this species is of a steady, steep increase since at least the mid-1970s. This has only recently started to level off, with BBS showing a very shallow but statistically significant decline in England over the most recent five year period. Since 1995, BBS has recorded significantly upward trends in the UK, and in England and Northern Ireland separately, but stability in Scotland and Wales. The BBS map of change in relative density between 1994-96 and 2007-09 indicates that increase has been very widespread, with decreases only in parts of north-eastern Scotland. Breeding success was increasing strongly during the 1970s and 1980s but is currently stable or in shallow decline. The UK supports an internationally important breeding population of woodpigeon, hence its inclusion on the Amber List.

- 3.67 Woodpigeon is an abundant resident and winter visitor in Lincolnshire with three figure counts recorded at several sites. Small numbers of woodpigeon were recorded along each transect, but there was no evidence of breeding observed, so they are considered to be a possible breeder.

#### Wren

- 3.68 The wren's current UK population estimate is the highest for any species and, on the latest figures, one in eight of our breeding birds is a Wren (APEP4). Numbers can be depleted in hard winters, but the species shows a rapid recovery. The UK supports

an internationally important breeding population of wren, hence its inclusion on the Amber List.

3.69 Wren is an abundant resident in Lincolnshire. The maximum number of singing wrens recorded along each transects was six on Transect 1; seven on Transect 2, Transect 3 and Transect 5; nine on Transect 4 and four on Transect 6. The bird was considered as probable breeder.

## 4 Discussion And Conclusions

### OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The breeding bird assemblage recorded within the Study Area during surveys comprised mostly common and widespread species, typical of the habitats present and in densities consistent with published information sources.
- 4.2 The presence of notable species suggest that the assemblage associated with the Study Area is of **local** importance using the criteria stated in Table 2.3. The species recorded are generally typical of the habitats within the Study Area and in the wider geographic area, providing roosting and feeding opportunities for a variety of breeding passerine species.
- 4.3 Breeding species listed as qualifying features for the Nene Washes SPA/ Ramsar site, may, on occasion, occur within the Study Area. Of these, gadwall and garganey were each recorded once, given the low numbers recorded; given the distance from the Nene Washes, the few occasions on which they were recorded and limited extent of suitable habitat, it is unlikely to provide a significant resource for teal or other species associated with the SPA. The Study Area is, therefore, not considered to be functionally linked to the SPA/ Ramsar site for these species and no likely significant effects would be anticipated as a result of impacts on these birds within the Site for the purposes of Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). This will be further assessed during the HRA screening process. The implications for the Grid Connection in the context of the HRA will need to be explored further, following the required surveys on those areas.
- 4.4 The survey results provide an appropriate baseline of breeding bird assemblages within the PV Area for use in the Environmental Statement. Survey coverage of the Grid Connection and Inter-Array Areas will be reported separately once available.

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## Appendix 1: Site Maps

Figure 1: Scheme, Study Area and Breeding Bird Transects

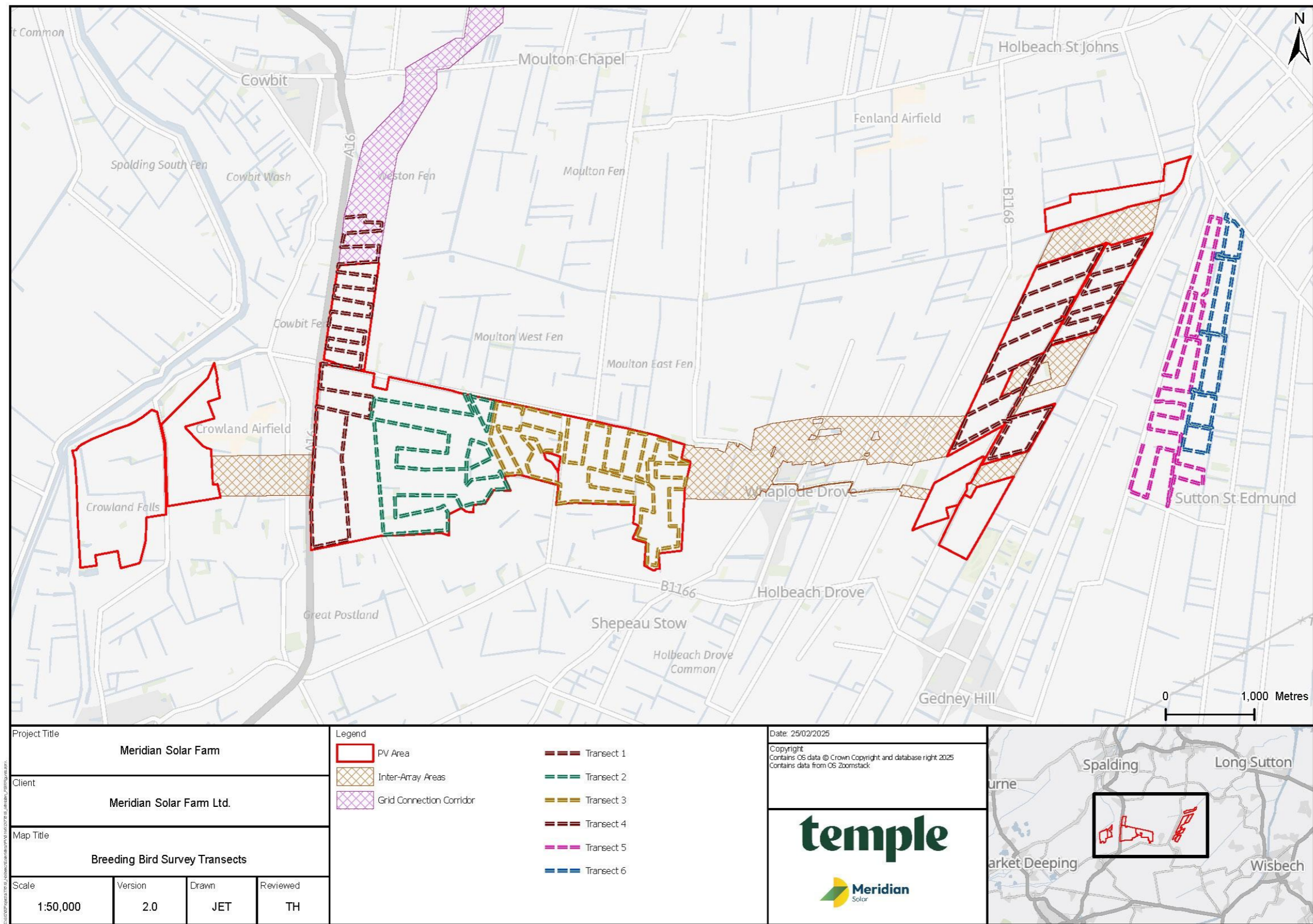
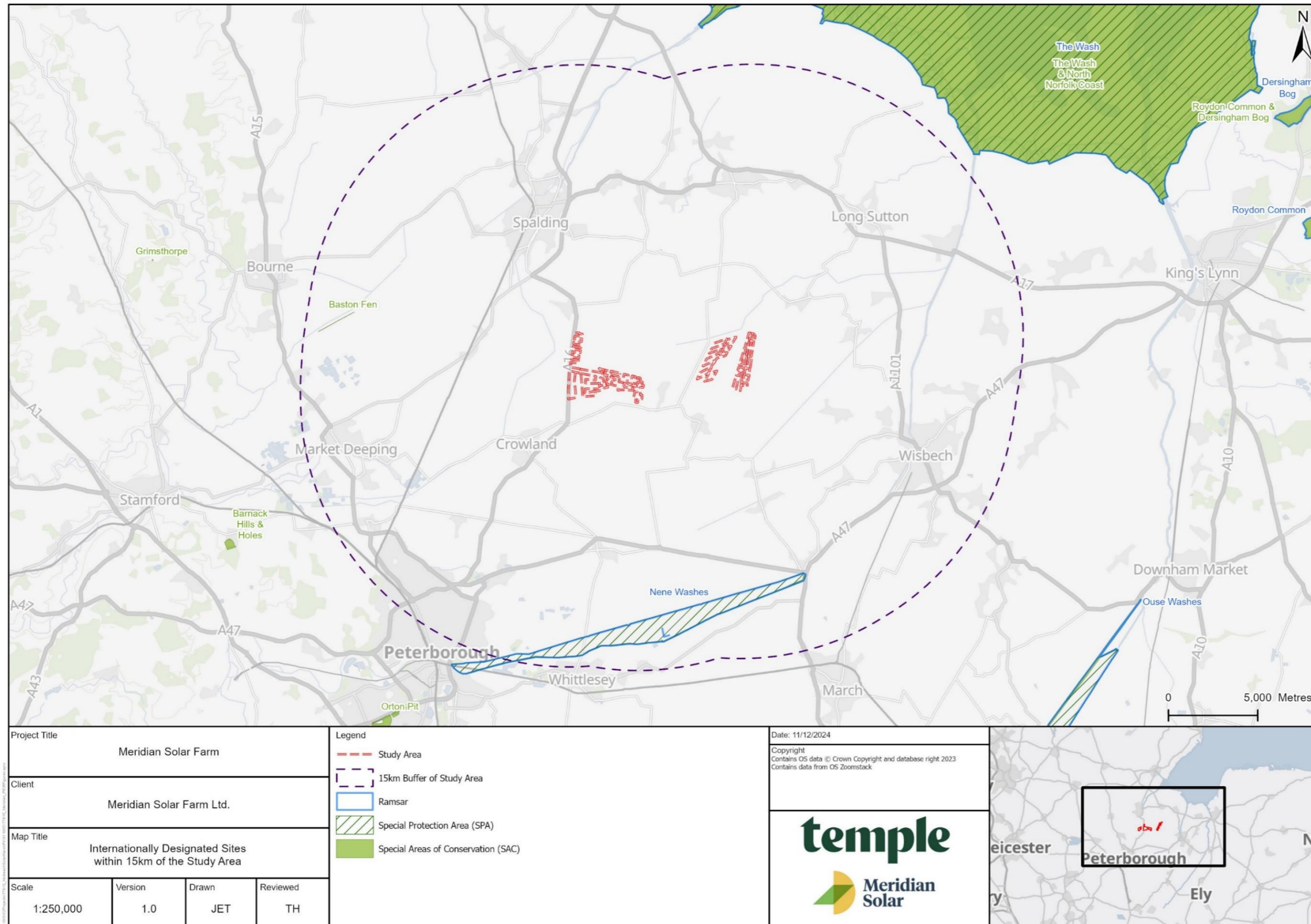


Figure 2: Internationally Designated Sites within 15km of the Study Area



## Appendix 2: Designated Sites Citations

## EC Directive 79/409 on the conservation of wild birds: Special Protection Area

### Nene Washes (Cambridgeshire)

The Nene Washes is an area of seasonally flooding grassland and grazing marsh in the lower reaches of the River Nene, Cambridgeshire. The boundaries of the site follows those of the Nene Washes (Whittlesey) SSSI.

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the EC Birds Directive by regularly supporting, in winter, an internationally important wintering population of Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbarius bewickii* (1,300 individuals: over 7% of the north-west European population wintering population: average of peak counts for the five year period 1987/88 to 1991/92).

Nene Washes qualifies also under Article 4.2 by supporting, in summer, in recent years, nationally important breeding populations of regularly occurring migratory species: 25 pairs of gadwall *Anas strepera* (5% of British); five pairs of garganey *Anas querquedula* (10% of British), 36 pairs of shoveler *A. clypeata* (3% of British), and 16 pairs of black-tailed godwits *Limosa limosa* (30% of British), as well as several other rare birds.

The site further qualifies under Article 4.2 by supporting, in winter, nationally important wintering populations of five migratory species (average peak counts for the most recent five year period for which data is available (1984/5 - 1985/86 and 1988/89 - 1990/91): 3,640 wigeon *Anas penelope* (over 1 % of the British wintering population); 980 teal *A. crecca* (1% of British), 95 gadwall *Anas strepera* (over 1% of British); 440 Pintail *Anas acuta* (over 1% of British) and 110 shoveler *Anas clypeata* (over 1% of British).

The Nene Washes is also of importance for a diverse assemblage of breeding birds of wet grasslands, including: redshank *Tringa totanus*, snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, mute swan *Cygnus olor*, sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* and yellow wagtail *Motacilla flava*. The site has an important role in maintaining the range of several of these species which have been affected by changes in habitat elsewhere in Britain.

Also notable is an assemblage of wintering waterfowl including, in addition to species listed above, mute swan, whooper swan *C. cygnus*, mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, pochard *Aythya ferina*, tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*, shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* and coot *Fulica atra*. A wide range of raptors occur through the year on the Nene Washes, including merlin *Falco columbarius*, hobby *F. subbuteo*, peregrine *F. peregrinus*, marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, hen harrier *C. cyaneus*, sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, short-eared owl *Asio flammeus*, long-eared owl *A. otus*, and barn owl *Tyto alba*.

During severe winter weather elsewhere, the Nene Washes can assume even greater national and international importance as wildfowl and waders from many other areas arrive, attracted by the relatively mild climate, compared with continental European areas, and the abundant food resources available. It can also assume greater importance at times on deep flooding on the nearby Ouse Washes when it holds displaced birds.

The continued international importance of this site is dependant on the maintenance of a winter flooding regime and a high, but controlled summer water table.

SPA Citation  
DAS June 1992

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

*Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 (1990), as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (2002) and Resolutions IX.1 Annex B, IX.6, IX.21 and IX.22 of the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (2005).*

Notes for compilers:

1. The RIS should be completed in accordance with the attached *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands*. Compilers are strongly advised to read this guidance before filling in the RIS.
2. Further information and guidance in support of Ramsar site designations are provided in the *Strategic Framework for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 7, 2nd edition, as amended by COP9 Resolution IX.1 Annex B). A 3rd edition of the Handbook, incorporating these amendments, is in preparation and will be available in 2006.
3. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat. Compilers should provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of all maps.

**1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:**

**Joint Nature Conservation Committee**  
 Monkstone House  
 City Road  
 Peterborough  
 Cambridgeshire PE1 1JY  
 UK  
 Telephone/Fax: +44 (0)1733 – 562 626 / +44 (0)1733 – 555 948  
 Email: [RIS@JNCC.gov.uk](mailto:RIS@JNCC.gov.uk)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

**2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:**

Designated: 05 March 1993

**3. Country:**

UK (England)

**4. Name of the Ramsar site:**

Nene Washes

**5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:**

This RIS is for: Updated information on an existing Ramsar site

**6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:**

**a) Site boundary and area:**

\*\* Important note: If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

**b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:**

Ramsar Information Sheet: UK11046	Page 1 of 8	Nene Washes
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Produced by JNCC: Version 3.0, 13/06/2008

**7. Map of site included:**

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps, including digital maps.

**a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:**

- i) **hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ☐;
- ii) **an electronic format** (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) *Yes*
- iii) **a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables** *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ☐;

**b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:**

e.g. the boundary is the same as an existing protected area (nature reserve, national park etc.), or follows a catchment boundary, or follows a geopolitical boundary such as a local government jurisdiction, follows physical boundaries such as roads, follows the shoreline of a waterbody, etc.

The site boundary is the same as, or falls within, an existing protected area.

For precise boundary details, please refer to paper map provided at designation

**8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):**

52 34 41 N                      00 04 33 W

**9. General location:**

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s), and the location of the nearest large town.

Nearest town/city: Peterborough

The site extends for 21 km east from Peterborough, in eastern England.

Administrative region: Cambridgeshire; City of Peterborough

**10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres):    11. Area (hectares): 1517.49**

Min.	1
Max.	6
Mean	2

**12. General overview of the site:**

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

This site is an extensive area of seasonally-flooding wet grassland (washland) of importance for national and international populations of breeding and wintering waders and wildfowl. During severe winter weather elsewhere, the site can attract waterfowl from other areas due to its relatively mild climate (compared with continental Europe) and abundant food resources available. The site is also notable for the diversity of plant and associated animal life within its network of dykes.

**13. Ramsar Criteria:**

Circle or underline each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11).

**2, 6**

**14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:**

Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

Ramsar criterion 2

The site supports an important assemblage of nationally rare breeding birds. In addition, a wide range of raptors occur through the year. The site also supports several nationally scarce plants, and two vulnerable and two rare British Red Data Book invertebrate species have been recorded.

**Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.**

**Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):**

**Species with peak counts in winter:**

Tundra swan , *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*, 694 individuals, representing an average of 2.3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)  
 NW Europe

**Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.**

**Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:**

Black-tailed godwit , *Limosa limosa islandica*, 482 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3 - spring peak)  
 Iceland/W Europe

**Species with peak counts in winter:**

Northern pintail , *Anas acuta*, NW Europe 1848 individuals, representing an average of 3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the Wetland Bird Survey report, which is updated annually. See [www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm](http://www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm).

**15. Biogeography (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):**

Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

**a) biogeographic region:**  
 Atlantic

**b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):**  
 Council Directive 92/43/EEC

**16. Physical features of the site:**

Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology, origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

Soil & geology	acidic, basic, neutral, clay, alluvium, peat
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, floodplain
Nutrient status	eutrophic
pH	circumneutral
Salinity	fresh
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually seasonal / intermittent

Summary of main climatic features	<p>Annual averages (Cambridge, 1971–2000)                  (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/cambridge.html)                  Max. daily temperature: 14.1° C                  Min. daily temperature: 6.1° C                  Days of air frost: 41.9                  Rainfall: 553.5 mm                  Hrs. of sunshine: 1501.2</p>
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**General description of the Physical Features:**

The Nene Washes are an extensive area of seasonally-flooding wet grassland ('washland') lying along the River Nene.

**17. Physical features of the catchment area:**

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, general land use, and climate (including climate type).

The Nene Washes are an extensive area of seasonally-flooding wet grassland ('washland') lying along the River Nene.

**18. Hydrological values:**

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

Flood water storage / desynchronisation of flood peaks

**19. Wetland types:**

Human-made wetland, Inland wetland

Code	Name	% Area
4	Seasonally flooded agricultural land	100

**20. General ecological features:**

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site, and the ecosystem services of the site and the benefits derived from them.

A mixture of largely arable land and agriculturally-improved, floristically-poor grassland. The latter being dominated by species such as *Elymus repens*, *Poa trivialis* and *Deschampsia cespitosa*. Areas of more structurally-diverse grassland exist containing a range of grasses, sedges and rushes. Species of frequent occurrence include *Eleocharis palustris*, *Glyceria fluitans*, *Glyceria maxima*, *Phalaris arundinacea*, *Alopecurus geniculatus* and *Juncus effusus*. A couple of small semi-natural grassland areas are also present. The washlands are used for the seasonal uptake of floodwaters and traditionally, cattle grazing in summer months. The mosaic of rough grassland and wet pasture provide a variety of habitats for breeding and feeding birds. Many of the ditches hold a rich flora and several nationally scarce plants including fringed water-lily *Nymphoides peltata*, hair-like pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides* and marsh dock *Rumex palustris*.

Ecosystem services

**21. Noteworthy flora:**

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g. which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.

**Nationally important species occurring on the site.**

**Higher Plants.**

*Nymphoides peltata, Potamogeton trichoides, Rumex palustris, Potamogeton friesii, Alisma lanceolatum, Hordeum marinum.*

**22. Noteworthy fauna:**

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g. which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

**Birds**

**Species currently occurring at levels of national importance:**

**Species with peak counts in winter:**

Whooper swan , <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> , Iceland/UK/Ireland	80 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Eurasian wigeon , <i>Anas penelope</i> , NW Europe	9651 individuals, representing an average of 2.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Eurasian teal , <i>Anas crecca</i> , NW Europe	2015 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Northern shoveler , <i>Anas clypeata</i> , NW & C Europe	343 individuals, representing an average of 2.3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Common pochard , <i>Aythya ferina</i> , NE & NW Europe	1795 individuals, representing an average of 3% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
European golden plover , <i>Pluvialis apricaria apricaria</i> , P. a. altifrons Iceland & Faroes/E Atlantic	2949 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Ruff , <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> , Europe/W Africa	98 individuals, representing an average of 14% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

**Species Information**

**Nationally important species occurring on the site.**

**Invertebrates.**

*Valvata macrostoma, Agabus undulatus, Libellula fulva, Anasimyia interpuncta.*

**23. Social and cultural values:**

Describe if the site has any general social and/or cultural values e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values.

- Aesthetic
- Livestock grazing
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Sport hunting

**b)** Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning? No

If Yes, describe this importance under one or more of the following categories:

- i) sites which provide a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland:
- ii) sites which have exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland:
- iii) sites where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples:
- iv) sites where relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland:

**24. Land tenure/ownership:**

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	+	
Private	+	+
Private	+	+

**25. Current land (including water) use:**

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Recreation	+	
Permanent arable agriculture	+	+
Permanent pastoral agriculture	+	+
Hay meadows	+	
Flood control	+	
Transport route		+

**26. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:**

*Explanation of reporting category:*

1. Those factors that are still operating, but it is unclear if they are under control, as there is a lag in showing the management or regulatory regime to be successful.
2. Those factors that are not currently being managed, or where the regulatory regime appears to have been ineffective so far.

*NA = Not Applicable because no factors have been reported.*

Adverse Factor Category	Reporting Category	Description of the problem (Newly reported Factors only)	On-Site	Off-Site	Major Impact?
No factors reported	NA				

For category 2 factors only.

What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?
Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? NO

**27. Conservation measures taken:**

List national category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it is being implemented.

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
Site/ Area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/ASSI)	+	
Special Protection Area (SPA)	+	
Land owned by a non-governmental organisation for nature conservation	+	
Management agreement	+	
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	+	

**b) Describe any other current management practices:**

The management of Ramsar sites in the UK is determined by either a formal management plan or through other management planning processes, and is overseen by the relevant statutory conservation agency. Details of the precise management practises are given in these documents.

**28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

No information available

**29. Current scientific research and facilities:**

e.g. details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

**Fauna.**

Numbers of migratory and wintering wildfowl and waders are monitored annually as part of the national Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS) organised by the British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Annual breeding bird survey.

**30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:**

e.g. visitor centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

Occasional guided walks are provided by RSPB warden.

**31. Current recreation and tourism:**

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

Wildfowling and sport hunting annually from September to February.

**32. Jurisdiction:**

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept. of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

Head, Natura 2000 and Ramsar Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs,  
European Wildlife Division, Zone 1/07, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol,  
BS1 6EB

**33. Management authority:**

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

Site Designations Manager, English Nature, Sites and Surveillance Team, Northminster House,  
Northminster Road, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, UK

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**34. Bibliographical references:**

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

**Site-relevant references**

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[www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/default.htm)

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Please return to: **Ramsar Secretariat, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland**

Telephone: +41 22 999 0170 • Fax: +41 22 999 0169 • email: [ramsar@ramsar.org](mailto:ramsar@ramsar.org)

## Appendix 3: Conservation Assessment Criteria

## Non-statutory conservation criteria

### Birds of Conservation Concern

The UK's leading bird conservation organisations have worked together on the fifth quantitative review of the status of the birds that occur regularly here published in 2021, updating the last review in 2015 (Stanbury *et al.*, 2021). A total of 245 species have been assessed against a set of objective criteria to place each on one of three lists – green, amber and red – indicating an increasing level of conservation concern. There are 70 species on the Red List, 103 on the Amber List and 72 on the Green list. The Red List has increased by three species since 2015. The Amber List has increased by seven since 2015.

The UK's birds can be split into three categories of conservation importance - red, amber and green.

Red is the highest conservation priority, with species needing urgent action. Amber is the next most critical group, followed by Green.

Birds in the Red and Amber Lists will be subject to at least one of the relevant factors listed below.

#### Red List criteria

- Globally threatened;
- Historical population decline in UK during 1800–1995;
- Severe (at least 50%) decline in UK breeding population over last 25 years, or longer-term period (the entire period used for assessments since the first BoCC review, starting in 1969); and/or,
- Severe (at least 50%) contraction of UK breeding range over last 25 years, or the longer-term period.

#### Amber List criteria

- Species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe (SPEC = Species of European Conservation Concern);
- Historical population decline during 1800–1995, but recovering; population size has more than doubled over last 25 years;
- Moderate (25-49%) decline in UK breeding population over last 25 years, or the longer-term period;
- Moderate (25-49%) contraction of UK breeding range over last 25 years, or the longer-term period;
- Moderate (25-49%) decline in UK non-breeding population over last 25 years, or the longer-term period;
- Rare breeder; 1–300 breeding pairs in UK;
- Rare non-breeders; less than 900 individuals;
- Localised; at least 50% of UK breeding or non-breeding population in 10 or fewer sites, but not applied to rare breeders or non-breeders; and/or,
- Internationally important; at least 20% of European breeding or non-breeding population in UK (NW European and East Atlantic Flyway populations used for non-breeding wildfowl and waders respectively).

### Green-list

Species that occur regularly in the UK but do not qualify under any or the above criteria.

## Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy

**Important Notice:** This section contains details of legislation applicable in England and Wales only (i.e. not including Scotland, the Isle of Man, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland or the Channel Islands) and is provided for general guidance only. While every effort has been made to represent the current (at the time of writing) situation with respect to the UK's position outside of the EU and to ensure accuracy throughout, this section should not be relied upon as a definitive statement of the law.

Over the past few years, three important bills have been published which are intended to shape how growing pressures on the environment post-Brexit (post-transition period) are tackled. Both the Agriculture Bill and Fisheries Bill gained Royal Assent in November 2020 and are now the Agriculture Act 2020 and Fisheries Act 2020 respectively; and, more recently, the Environment Bill was passed into law in November 2021, becoming the Environment Act 2021. *N.B. as environment policy is a devolved matter, most of this Act applies to England only.*

## **LEGISLATION AFFORDED TO SITES AND HABITATS**

Habitats and sites can be protected directly through the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and The 'Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) through the notification, classification or designation of various protected sites as detailed below. In addition, The Environment Act 2021 and the Water Framework Directive indirectly afford protection to non-designated habitats through the duties placed on public and private bodies to promote nature conservation and biodiversity, for example, the creation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and associated Species Conservation and Protected Site strategies, and to reduce or avoid harmful activities. Many of these duties and targets form the basis for national and local planning policy and wider conservation strategies and are not covered in detail here.

## STATUTORY SITE DESIGNATIONS: INTERNATIONAL

**Special Protection Areas (SPAs)**, together with **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** form the basis of the **National Site Network** (until recently, these were part of the Natura 2000 network whilst the UK was part of the EU). SPAs are identified and classified by the Government under the EC Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC (formerly 79/409/EEC)) on the Conservation of Wild Birds) via the mechanisms set out in the Habitats Regulations (as applicable at the time of classification). SPAs are areas of the most important habitat for rare (listed on Annex I of the Directive) and migratory birds within the European Union. Protection afforded SPAs in terrestrial areas and territorial marine waters out to 12 nautical miles (nm) is given by The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The 'Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provide a mechanism for the classification and protection of European Marine Sites or EMS (SPAs and SACs) in UK offshore waters (from 12-200nm). SACs are identified and designated under the EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) via the mechanisms set out in the Habitats Regulations (as applicable at the time of designation). These are areas which have been identified as best representing the range and variety of habitats and (non-bird) species listed on Annexes I and II to the Directive within the European Union. SACs in terrestrial areas and territorial marine waters out to 12 nautical miles are protected under The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The 'Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provide a mechanism for the designation and protection of European marine sites or EMS (SACs and SPAs) in UK offshore waters (from 12-200nm).

**Ramsar sites** are listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, agreed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. The Convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation and wise use, in particular recognizing wetlands as ecosystems that are globally important for biodiversity conservation. Wetlands can include areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water and may be natural or artificial, permanent or temporary. Wetlands may also incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands. Ramsar sites are underpinned through prior notification as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and

as such receive statutory protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) with further protection provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Policy statements have been issued by the Government highlighting the special status of Ramsar sites. This effectively extends the level of protection to that afforded to sites in England and Wales which have been designated under the EC Birds and Habitats Directives as part of the Natura 2000 network and now the National Site Network (e.g. SACs and SPAs)

### **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006 (NERC)**

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on the 1 October 2006. Section 40 of the Act requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act (Section 42 in Wales) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.' This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

### **PLANNING POLICY**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the need for sustainable development. The NPPF specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and priority species. An emphasis is also made for the need for ecological networks via preservation, restoration and re-creation (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021). The protection and recovery of priority species (widely taken to mean Species of Principal Importance (SPI) under S41 of the NERC Act) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy. In determining planning application, planning authorities have a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from adverse harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation

where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

### **REGIONAL AND LOCAL BAPS**

The Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)<sup>5</sup> identifies 17 species and as needing targeted action to secure their status. The Lincolnshire Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership, a partnership including 49 representatives, ensures the monitoring and implementation of the objectives associated with these plans.

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<sup>5</sup> [CHttpHandler.ashx \(southkesteven.gov.uk\)](#)

## Appendix 5: Bird Species List

English name	Scientific Name	BoCC	S41	Sch1	LBAP
blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>				
blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>				
<b>black-headed gull</b>	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Amber			
blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>				
buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>				
carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>				
chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>				
chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>				
collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>				
<b>common tern</b>	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Amber			
cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>				
<b>corn bunting</b>	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Red	Yes		
<b>cuckoo</b>	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Red	Yes		
<b>dunnock</b>	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber	Yes		Yes
<b>fieldfare</b>	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Red		Yes	
<b>gadwall</b>	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	Amber			
<b>garganey</b>	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>	Amber		Yes	
goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>				
great tit	<i>Parus major</i>				
<b>green sandpiper</b>	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Amber		Yes	

English name	Scientific Name	BoCC	S41	Sch1	LBAP
green woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>				
<b>greenfinch</b>	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Red			
grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>				
<b>grey partridge</b>	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Red	Yes		Yes
<b>herring gull</b>	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Red	Yes		
<b>hobby</b>	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>			Yes	
<b>house martin</b>	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Red			
<b>house sparrow</b>	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Red	Yes		
jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>				
jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>				
<b>kestrel</b>	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Amber			
<b>lapwing</b>	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Red	Yes		Yes
<b>lesser black-backed gull</b>	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Amber			
lesser whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>				
<b>linnet</b>	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Red	Yes		Yes
long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>				
magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>				
<b>mallard</b>	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Amber			
<b>meadow pipit</b>	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Amber			
<b>mistle thrush</b>	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Red			

English name	Scientific Name	BoCC	S41	Sch1	LBAP
<b>moorhen</b>	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Amber			
mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>				
<b>oystercatcher</b>	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Amber			
pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>				
pied wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>				
raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>				
<b>red kite</b>	<i>Milvus milvus</i>			Yes	
red-legged partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>				
<b>reed bunting</b>	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Amber	Yes		Yes
reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>				
robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>				
<b>rook</b>	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Amber			
<b>sedge warbler</b>	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	Amber			
<b>skylark</b>	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Red	Yes		Yes
<b>song thrush</b>	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Amber	Yes		Yes
<b>sparrowhawk</b>	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Amber			
<b>spotted flycatcher</b>	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Red	Yes		
<b>starling</b>	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red	Yes		Yes
<b>stock dove</b>	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber			
stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>				
swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>				

English name	Scientific Name	BoCC	S41	Sch1	LBAP
<b>swift</b>	<i>Apus apus</i>	Red			
tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>				
<b>turtle dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Red	Yes		Yes
water rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>				
<b>wheatear</b>	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Amber			
<b>whitethroat</b>	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Amber			
<b>woodpigeon</b>	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber			
<b>wren</b>	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber			
<b>yellow wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Red			Yes
<b>yellowhammer</b>	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red	Yes		Yes

## Appendix 6: Transect Results

The figures in the table refer to number of registrations per visit.

Species	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Peak Count
<b>blackbird</b>							
T1	2		2	1	1	2	2
T2	3			5			5
T3	2	1	3	5	1	1	5
T4				2	1	2	2
T5	4	4	4	1	2	1	4
T6	2	5	5	2	3	2	5
<b>blackcap</b>							
T1	1	1	1		3		3
T2		2	2		1		2
T3	5	3	1	1		2	5
T5			2	1	1	1	2
<b>black-headed gull</b>							
T4		1					1
T5						1	1
T6	1			1			1
<b>blue tit</b>							
T1	2					1	2
T2	1	1			2		2
T3	3				3	2	3
T4	3	3	1	2		1	3
T5	3	2	3	1			3
T6	2	1	1			1	2
<b>buzzard</b>							
T2				1			1
T3						2	2
<b>carrion crow</b>							
T1					1	1	1
T2	1		2				2
T3	3	1	1	2	4	5	5
T4	3	1			1	1	3
T5						1	1
T6	2	1	1	1	1		2
<b>chaffinch</b>							
T1	2			1	2	2	2
T2	3	2	1	1	2		3
T3	8	5	6	5	2	2	8
<b>chiffchaff</b>							
T1						2	2
T3						1	1
<b>collared dove</b>							
T5			1	2	2	3	3
<b>cormorant</b>							
T1	1		1				1
T2			1				1
<b>corn bunting</b>							

Species	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Peak Count
T2	3						3
T3		3	6	3	7	13	13
T5					1		1
<b>cuckoo</b>							
T2					2		2
<b>dunnock</b>							
T1					1		1
T3					3		3
T4	1	4	10	8	4	5	10
T5	2	4	2	1	5	2	5
T6		1		1	1	1	1
<b>fieldfare</b>							
T3	1						1
<b>gadwall</b>							
T2	1						1
<b>goldfinch</b>							
T1						2	2
T3			2		1	1	2
T4				1			1
T5	2				1		2
T6			1	1			1
<b>great tit</b>							
T1	2		1	1			2
T2	2	1	1	3			3
T3	1	2			1		2
T4				1			1
T5			1				1
<b>green sandpiper</b>							
T3	1					1	1
<b>green woodpecker</b>							
T1			1				1
T2	1						1
T3					3		3
<b>greenfinch</b>							
T3		1			1	1	1
T5	1	1		1	2		2
T6		1	1		1		1
<b>grey heron</b>							
T6						1	1
<b>grey partridge</b>							
T5		1	1	1	1		1
<b>herring gull</b>							
T3	1						1
<b>hobby</b>							
T1				1		1	1
T2				1			1
<b>house martin</b>							
T3						1	1
<b>house sparrow</b>							

Species	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Peak Count
T3					1		1
T5	2	3	1	3	4	3	4
T6			1	2	2	2	2
<b>jackdaw</b>							
T1				1		1	1
T2		1					1
T3		1		1	1		1
<b>kestrel</b>							
T1		1	1				1
T2	1	1					1
T3	1						1
T5			1	1			1
<b>lesser black-backed gull</b>							
T3	1	1					1
<b>lesser whitethroat</b>							
T6				1	2	1	2
<b>linnet</b>							
T2	1						1
T3					3	2	3
T4			1	1	2	1	2
T5		1	1	3	3	1	3
T6				2	2	1	2
<b>long-tailed tit</b>							
T1	1						1
T2					1		1
<b>magpie</b>							
T1				1	1	1	1
T3	1	1			1		1
T4		1					1
T5				1	1	1	1
<b>mallard</b>							
T1		3				1	3
T2		1					1
T3	2				1		2
T4				1	2	1	2
T5				1		1	1
T6	1	1				1	1
<b>meadow pipit</b>							
T1	3	1					3
T2				1			1
T3	1		1				1
<b>mistle thrush</b>							
T2		1					1
<b>moorhen</b>							
T4	1	4	4	3		1	4
T6		1					1
<b>mute swan</b>							
T1						2	2
T3					1		1

Species	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Peak Count
<b>pheasant</b>							
T1	3	1	1	1		1	3
T2	2	3			2		3
T3	1	3	1	2		1	3
T4	5	4	4	3	1	1	5
T5	5	3		1	2	3	5
T6	2	2	1	2	1	1	2
<b>pieb wagtail</b>							
T1		1			2		2
T2	1						1
<b>raven</b>							
T1						1	1
T2					1		1
<b>red-legged partridge</b>							
T1					<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
T4	1	3	3	3	1		3
T5	5	2	2	1	1	2	5
T6	1	2	2	1	2	1	2
<b>reed bunting</b>							
T1	5	3	4	8	9	17	17
T2	3	3	2		9		9
T3	10	2	6	7	14	14	14
T5						1	1
T6	2		1	1			2
<b>reed warbler</b>							
T1	1		5	11	5	9	11
T2			5	10	5		10
T3	11		2	14	7	13	14
<b>robin</b>							
T1					1		1
T3	1	2	1		2	2	2
T4	1	3	3	5	1	2	5
T5	2	2	3	2	3	2	3
<b>rook</b>							
T2	2	1					2
T3		3		3	5		5
T4		1					1
T5						1	1
T6	1						1
<b>sedge warbler</b>							
T1	1	6	6	9	6	2	9
T2	3	12	4	4	3		12
T3	4	16	32	23	11	4	32
T4			7	7	7	8	8
T5			6	3	2	2	6
T6			3	4	5	5	5
<b>skylark</b>							
T1	8	15	9	12	13	15	15
T2	23	9	10	9	17		23

Species	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Peak Count
T3	29	19	16	26	21	18	29
T4	11	11	9	10	11	9	11
T5	15	8	11	11	12	6	15
T6	2	5	7	4	5	5	7
<b>song thrush</b>							
T1	1				1	1	1
T2		1					1
T3	2				1		2
T4	1	2	2	4	2	1	4
T5	1	3	3	2	2		3
T6	1	2	1	2	1	1	2
<b>spotted flycatcher</b>							
T2				1			1
<b>starling</b>							
T3				1		1	1
T4			1				1
T5					1		1
<b>stock dove</b>							
T2					1		1
T3					4		4
T5		1	1	1			1
T6		2	1			2	2
<b>stonechat</b>							
T5				1			1
<b>tufted duck</b>							
T3	1						1
<b>turtle dove</b>							
T1		1					1
<b>water rail</b>							
T3			2				2
<b>wheatear</b>							
T4		1					1
T5	1		1				1
<b>whitethroat</b>							
T1	7	4	2	5	2	5	7
T2	10	5	6	4	11		11
T3	7	12	7	13	13	12	13
T4			2	3	4	6	6
T5			4	3	4	1	4
T6			4	1	4	1	4
<b>woodpigeon</b>							
T1					2	2	2
T2					1		1
T3	3	1		5	7	5	7
T5	2	1	1	1	2		2
T6				1	2	1	2
<b>wren</b>							
T1	6	4	5	6	6	4	6
T2	8	4	4	7	3		8

Species	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Peak Count
T3	9	6	5	4	7	9	9
T4	8	9	7	7	3	4	9
T5	5	7	2	4	2	2	7
T6	2	4	2	4	3	3	4
<b>yellow wagtail</b>							
T1		7	1	12	1	3	12
T2		1	3	2			3
T3	1	1	3	2	1		3
T4			1	2	2	3	3
T5				1	1	1	1
T6			1	1		1	1
<b>yellowhammer</b>							
T1	1		2	3	2	1	3
T2	1			1			1
T3		3	2	2	1	2	3
T4				1	3	2	3
T5			1	1	1		1
T6				2	1		2

# Appendix 7: Survey Results Maps

Figure 1: Corn Bunting

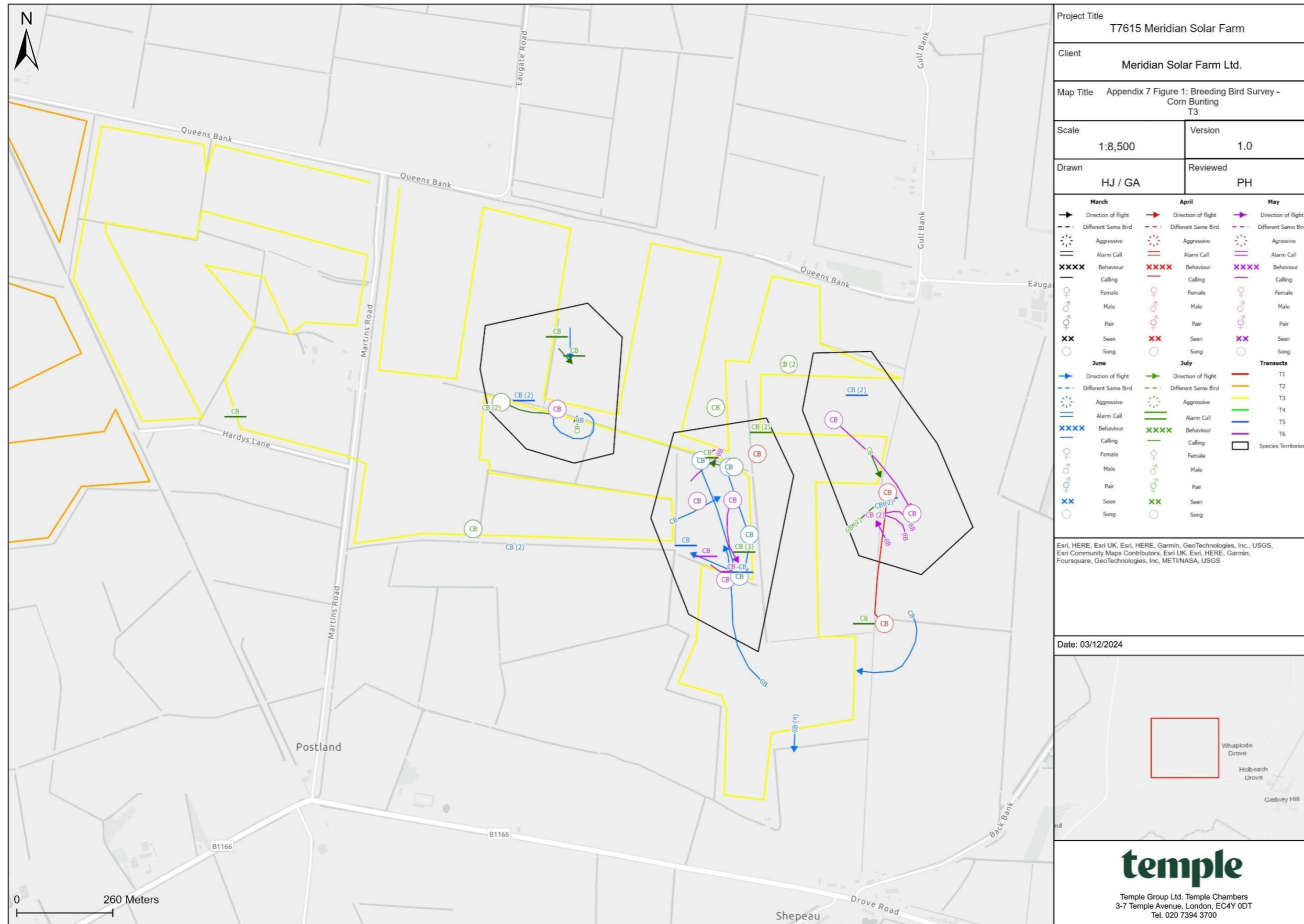
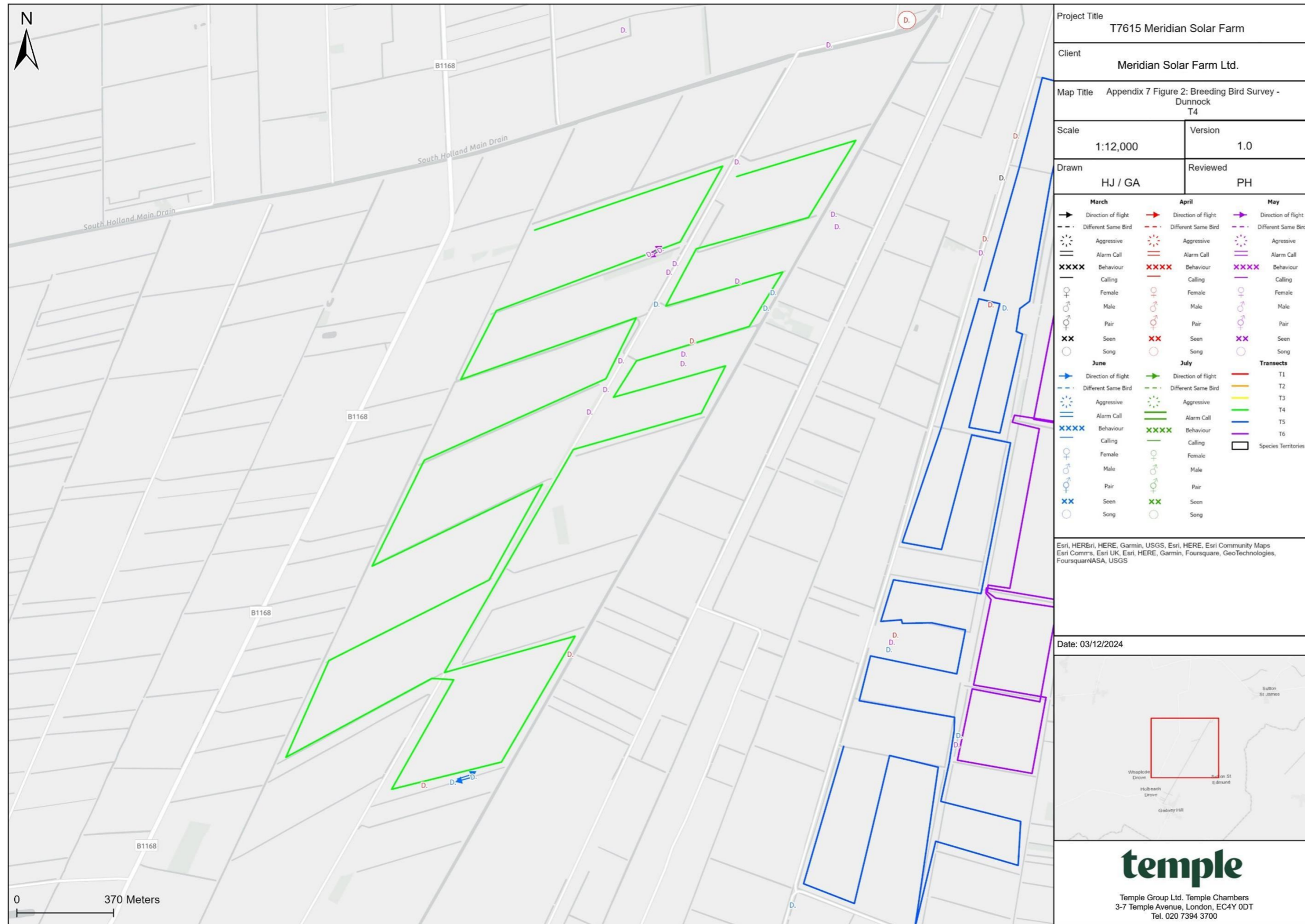
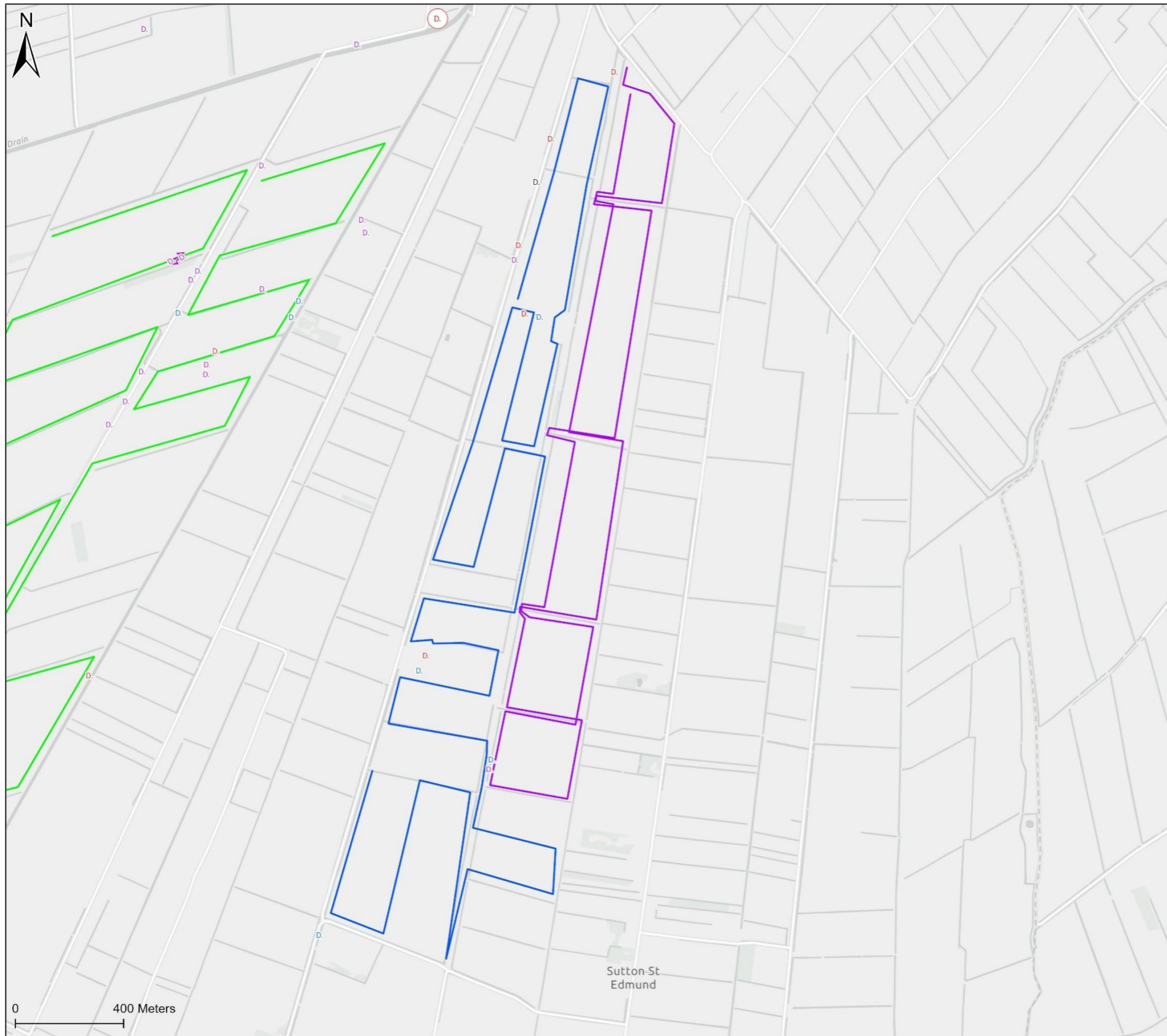
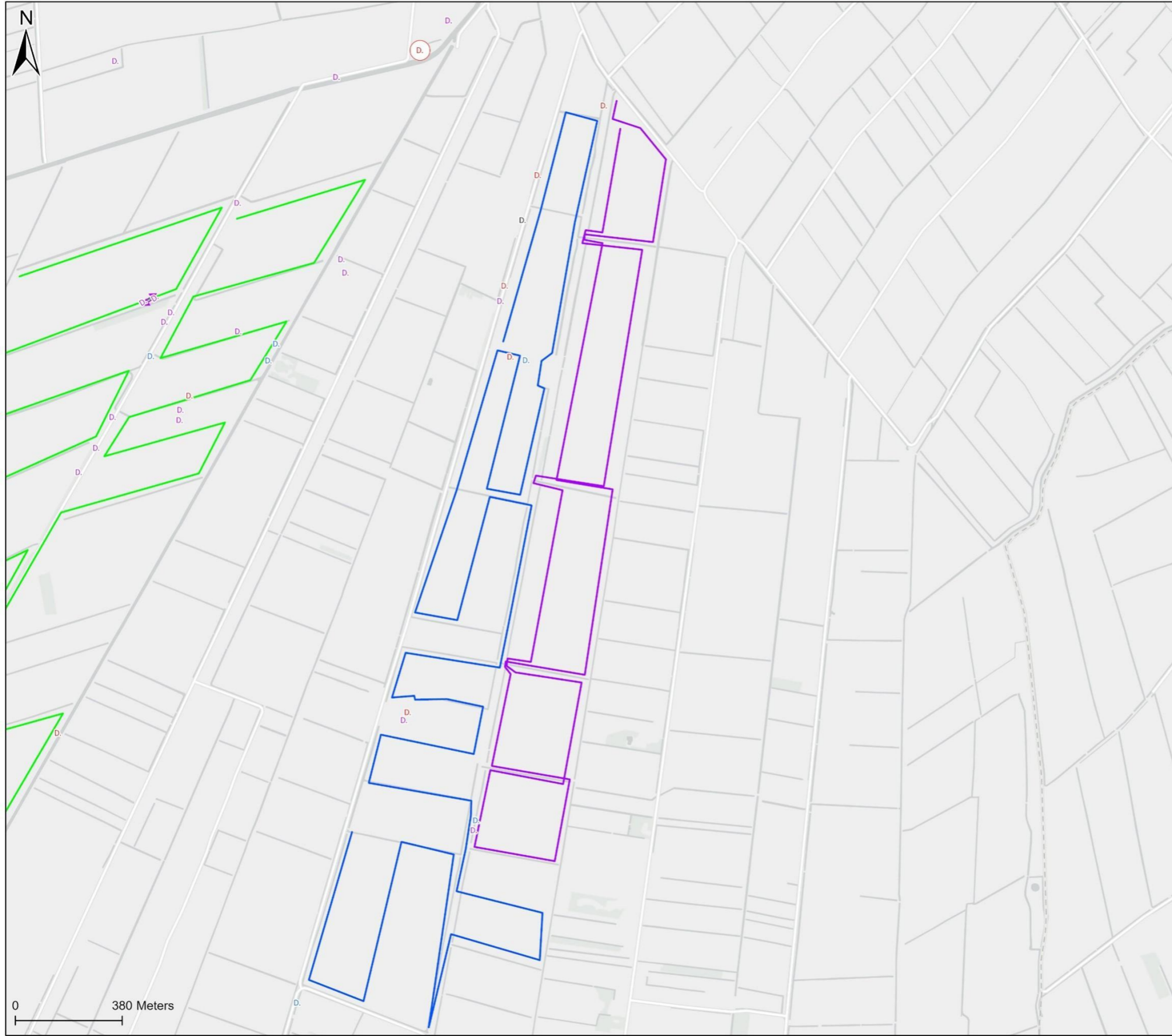


Figure 2: Dunnock





Project Title <b>T7615 Meridian Solar Farm</b>																																																																									
Client <b>Meridian Solar Farm Ltd.</b>																																																																									
Map Title <b>Appendix 7 Figure 2: Breeding Bird Survey - Dunnocks T5</b>																																																																									
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Drawn <b>HJ / GA</b>	Reviewed <b>PH</b>																																																																								
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Figure 3: Greenfinch

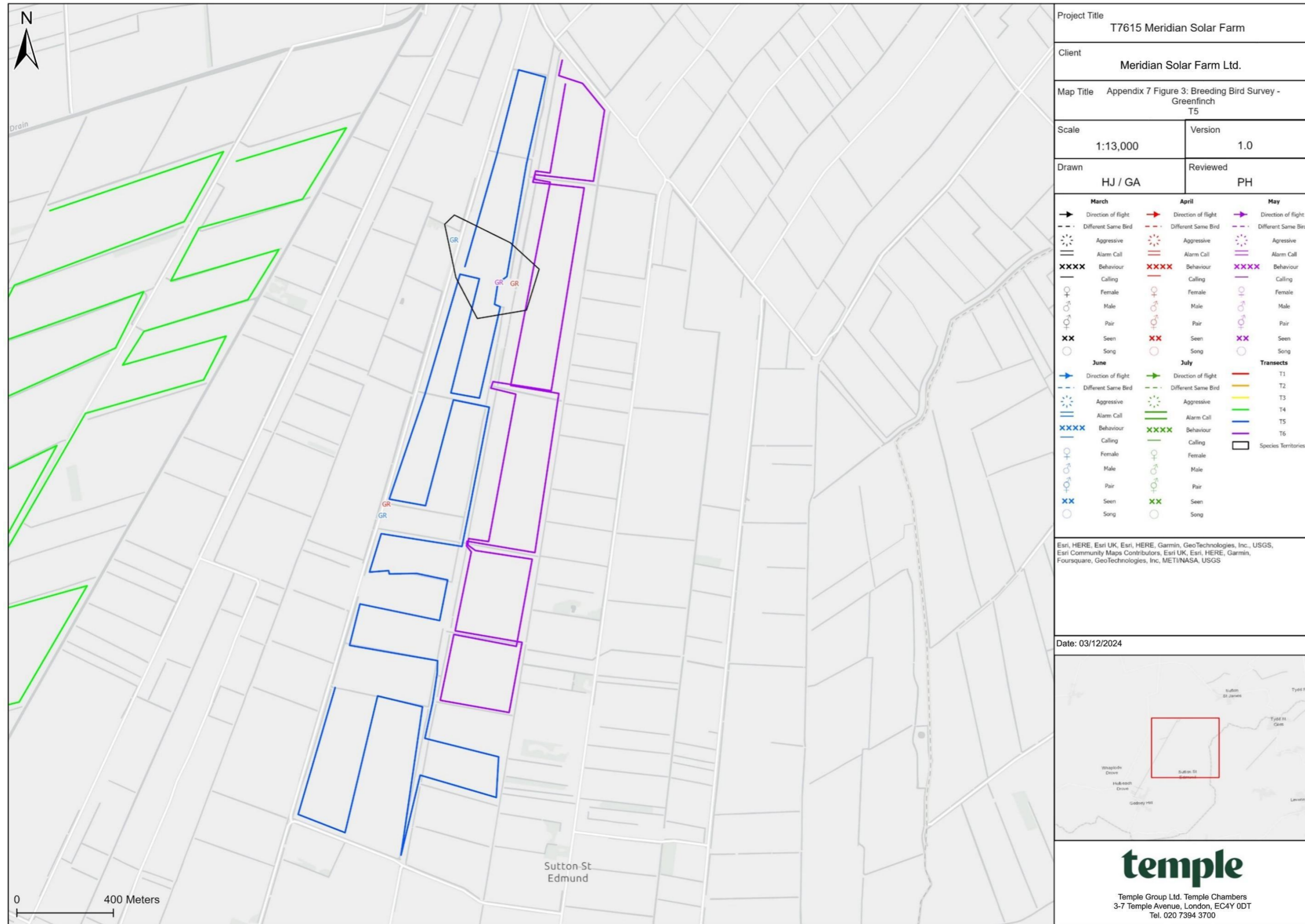


Figure 4: Hobby

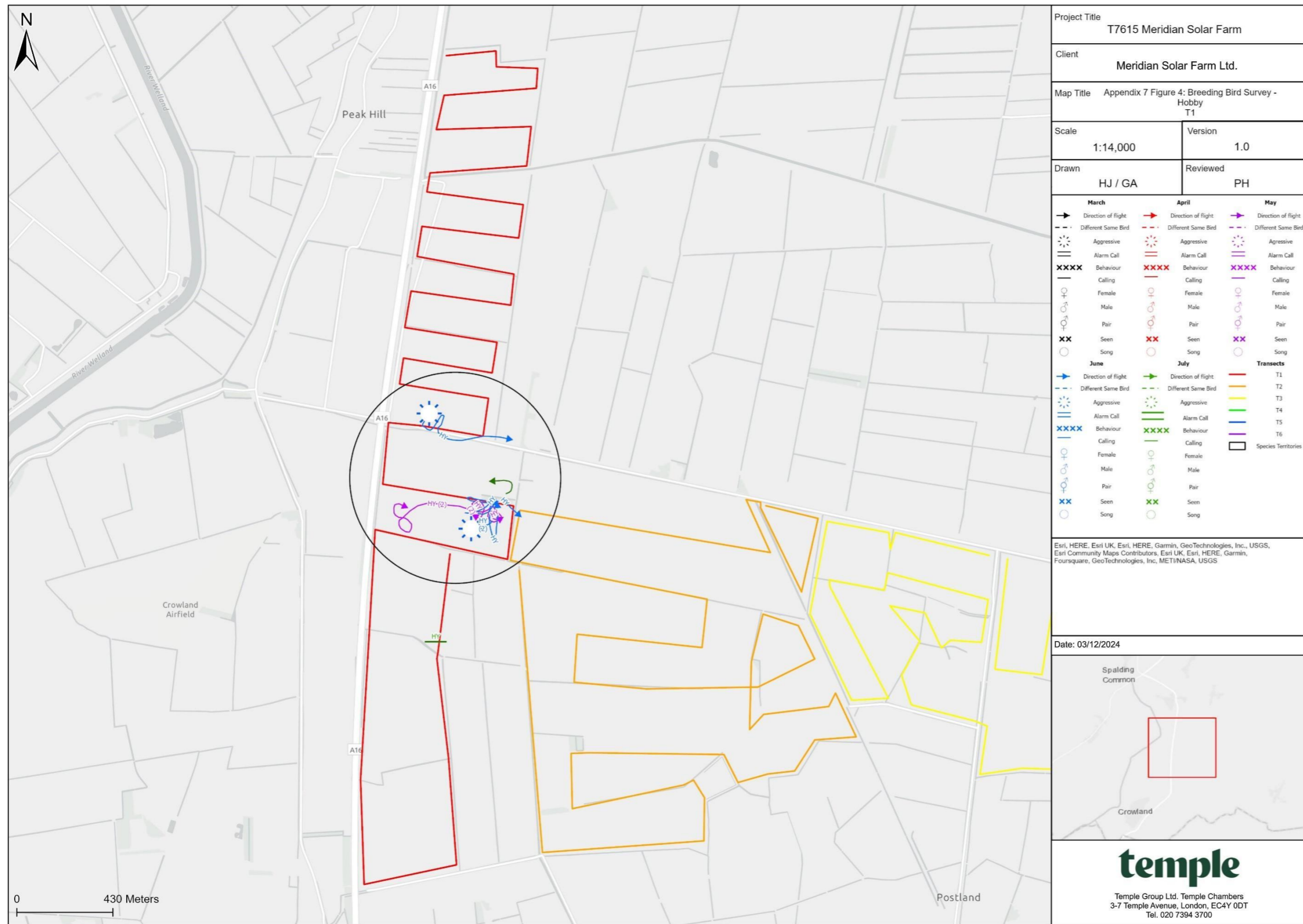
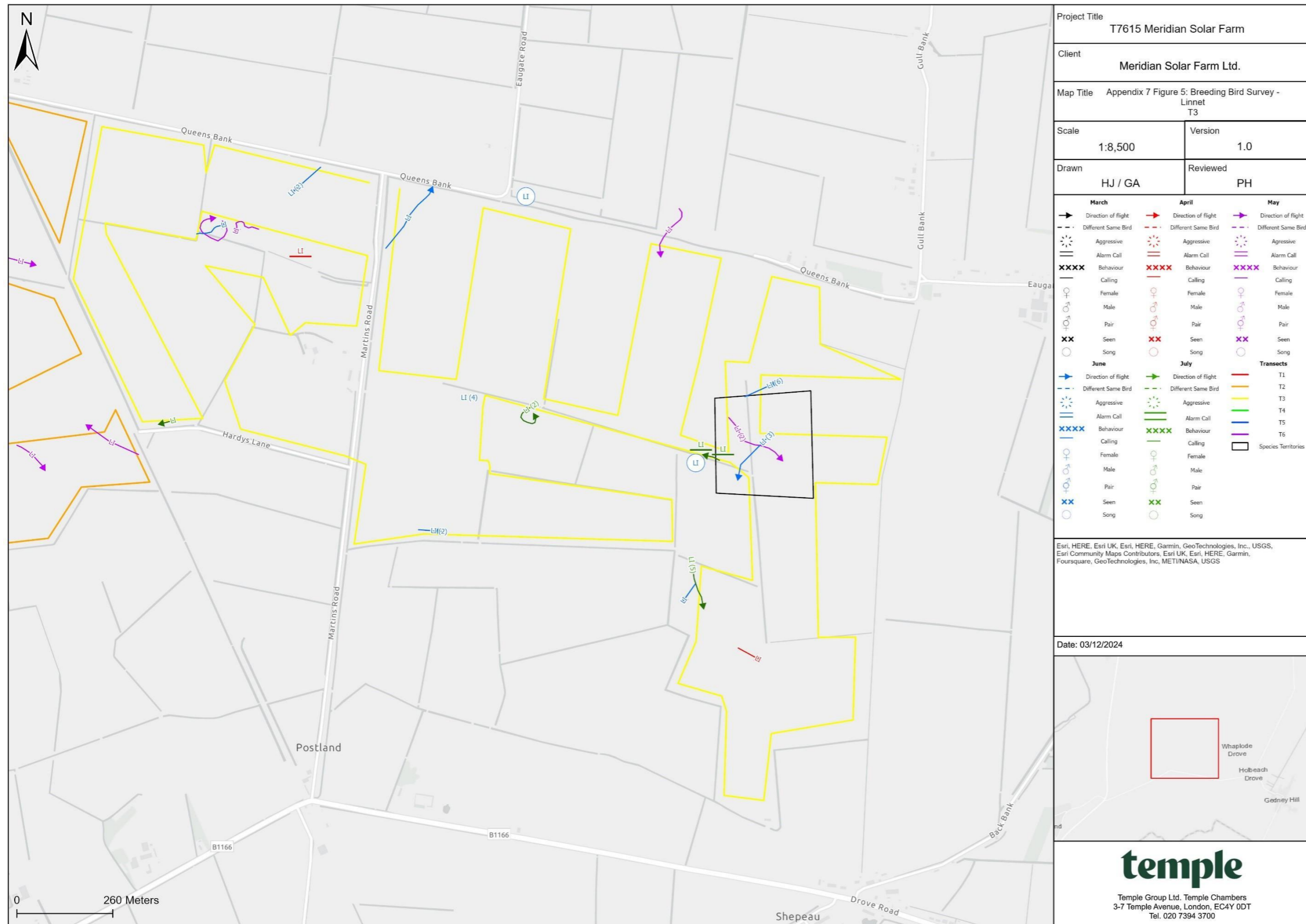
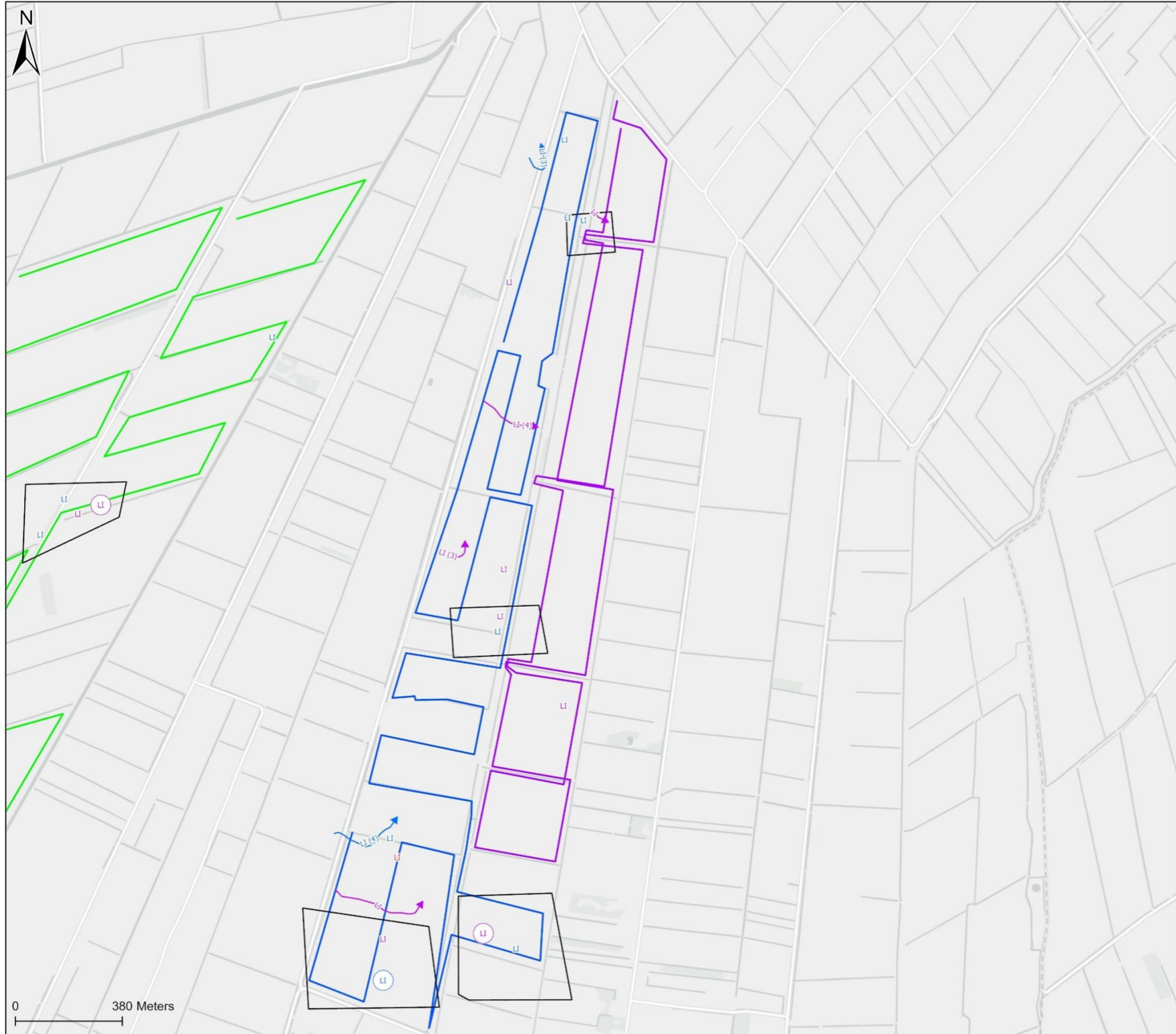


Figure 5: Linnet





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Project Title  
T7615 Meridian Solar Farm

Client  
Meridian Solar Farm Ltd.

Map Title  
Appendix 7 Figure 5: Breeding Bird Survey - Linnets T6

Scale  
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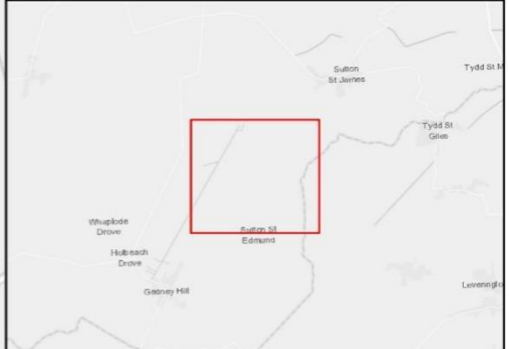
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⊖ Alarm Call	⊖ Alarm Call	⊖ Alarm Call
XXXX Behaviour	XXXX Behaviour	XXXX Behaviour
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⊖ Male	⊖ Male	⊖ Male
⊖ Pair	⊖ Pair	⊖ Pair
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⊖ Female	⊖ Female	Species Territories
⊖ Male	⊖ Male	
⊖ Pair	⊖ Pair	
XX Seen	XX Seen	
○ Song	○ Song	

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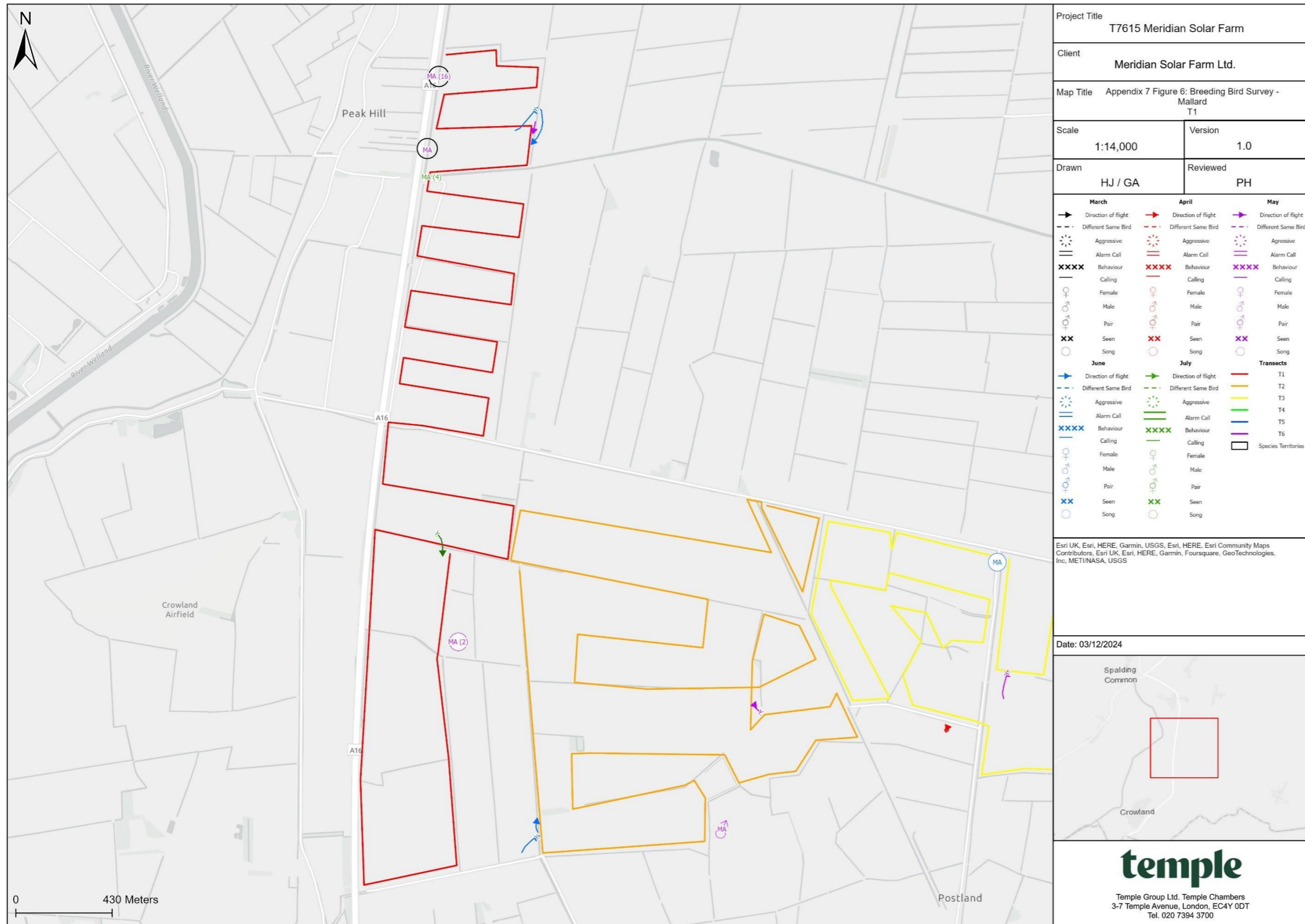
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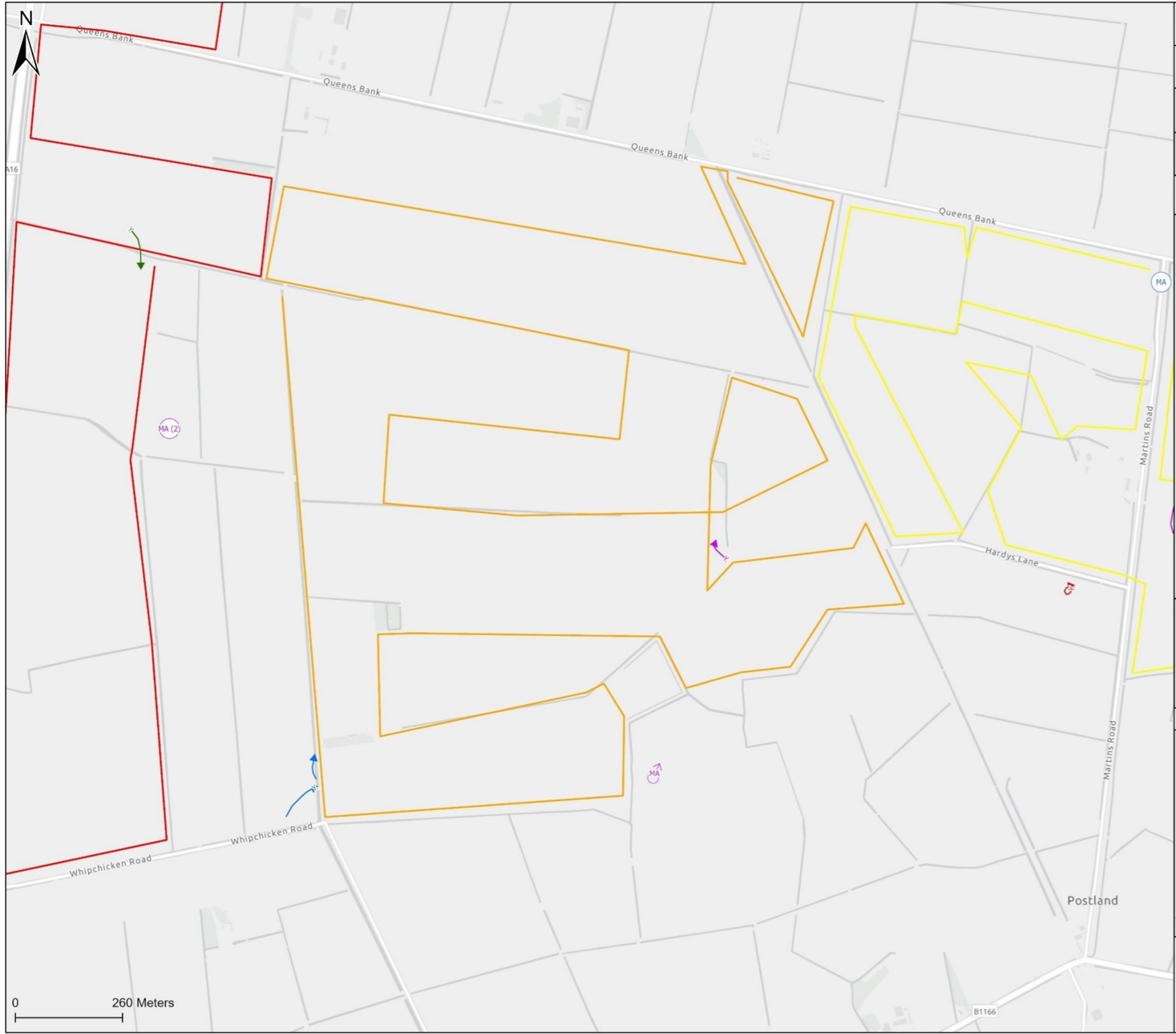


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Figure 6: Mallard





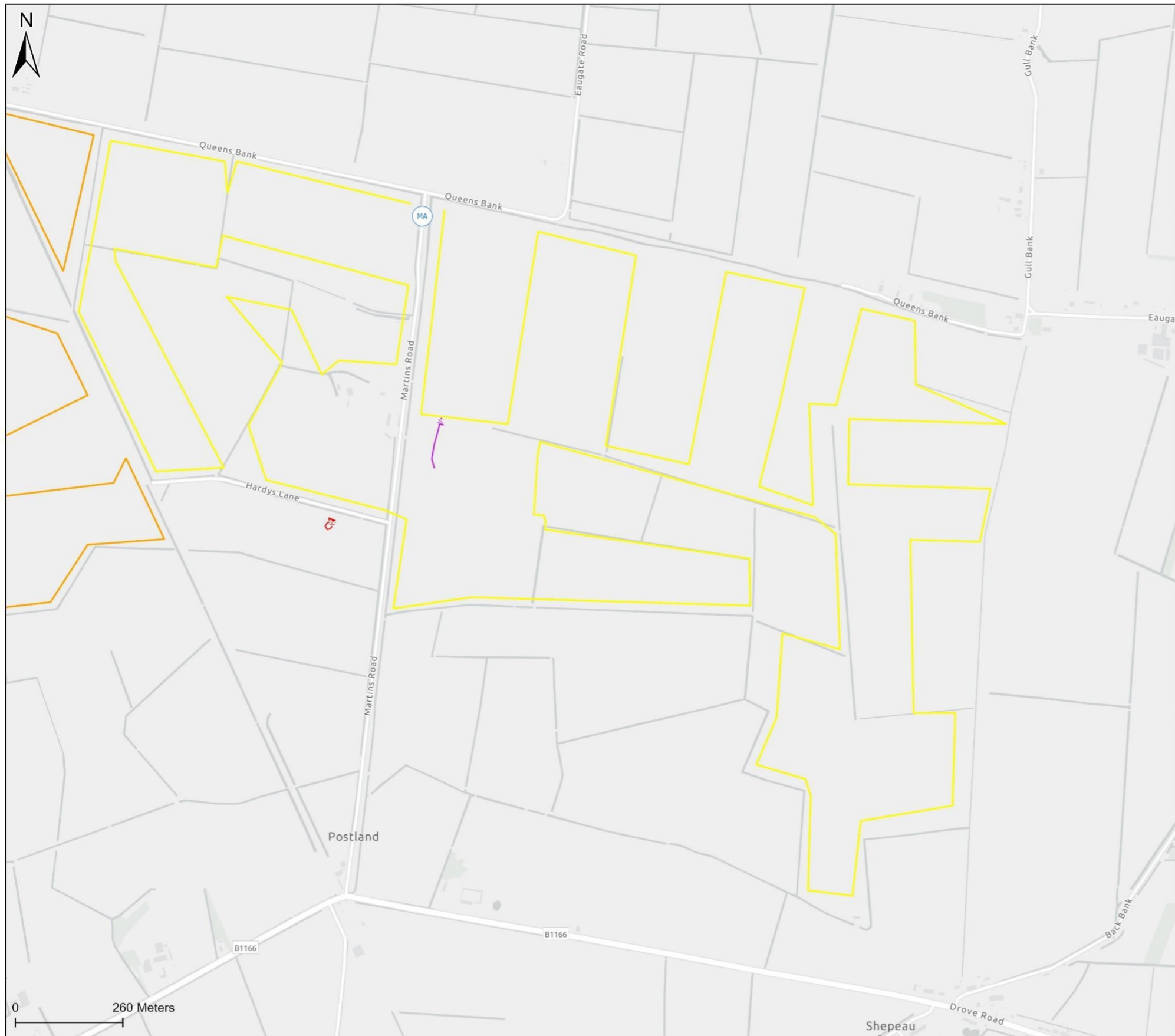
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Client Meridian Solar Farm Ltd.		
Map Title Appendix 7 Figure 6: Breeding Bird Survey - Mallard T2		
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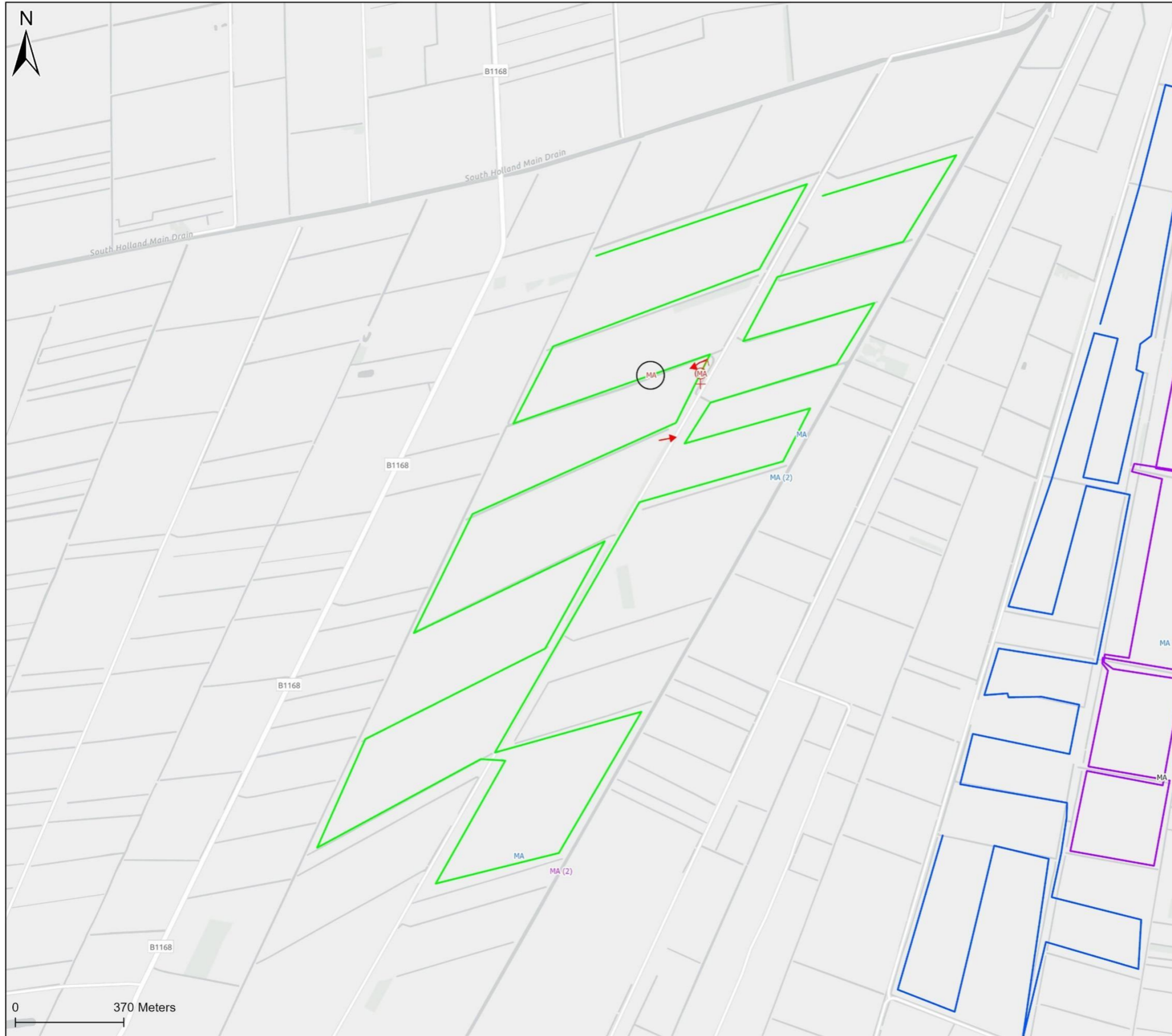
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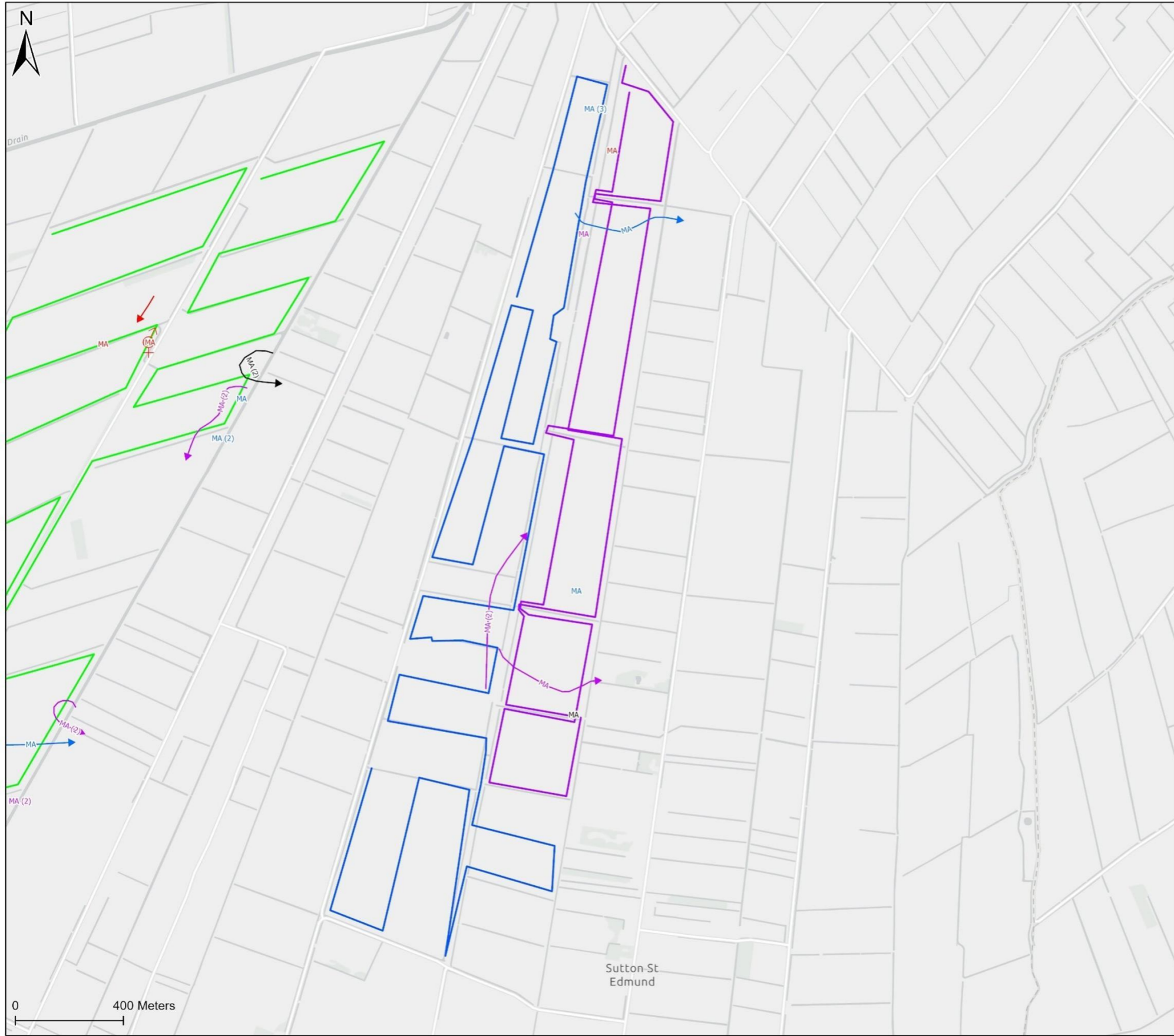
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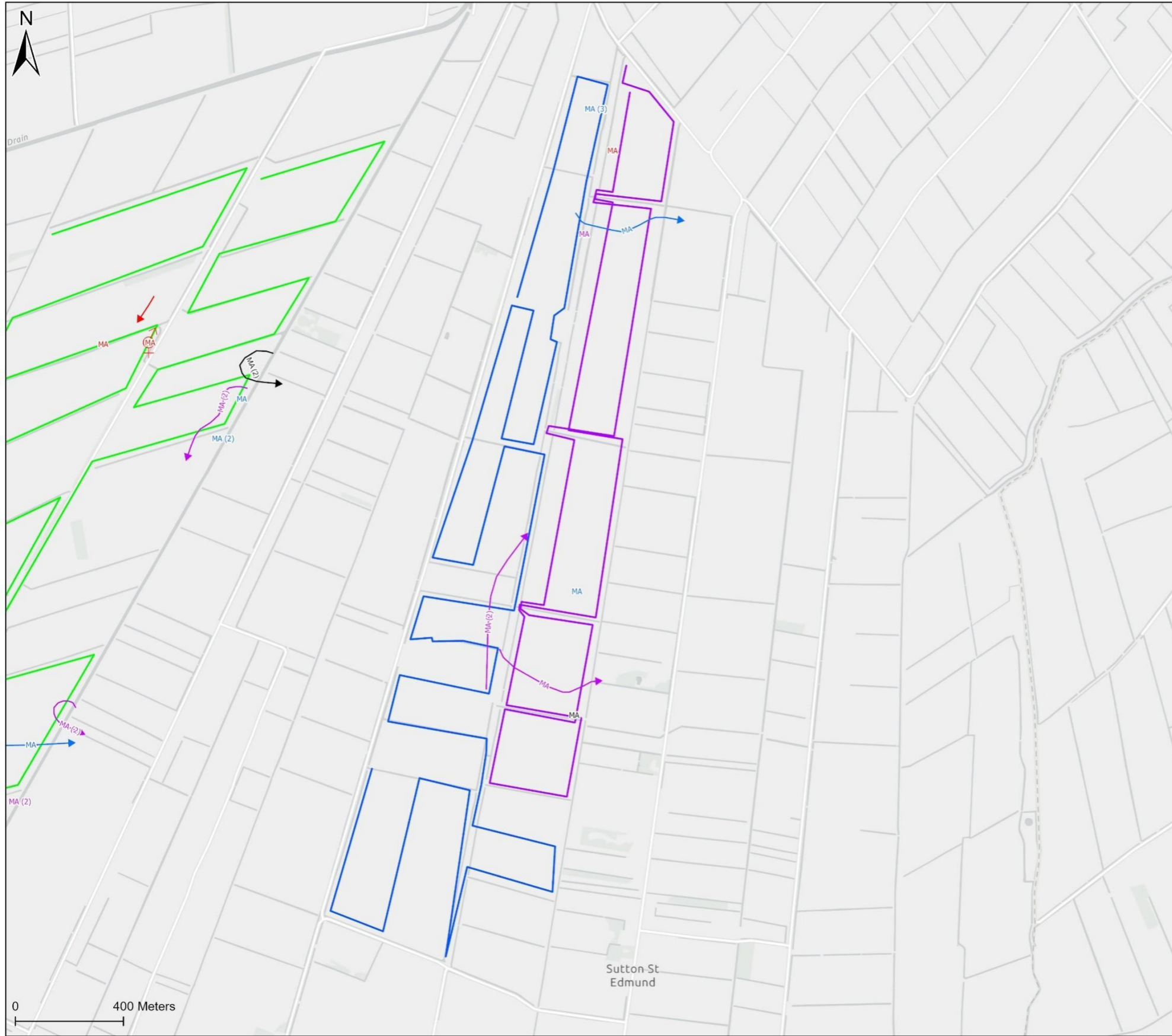
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Figure 7: Moorhen

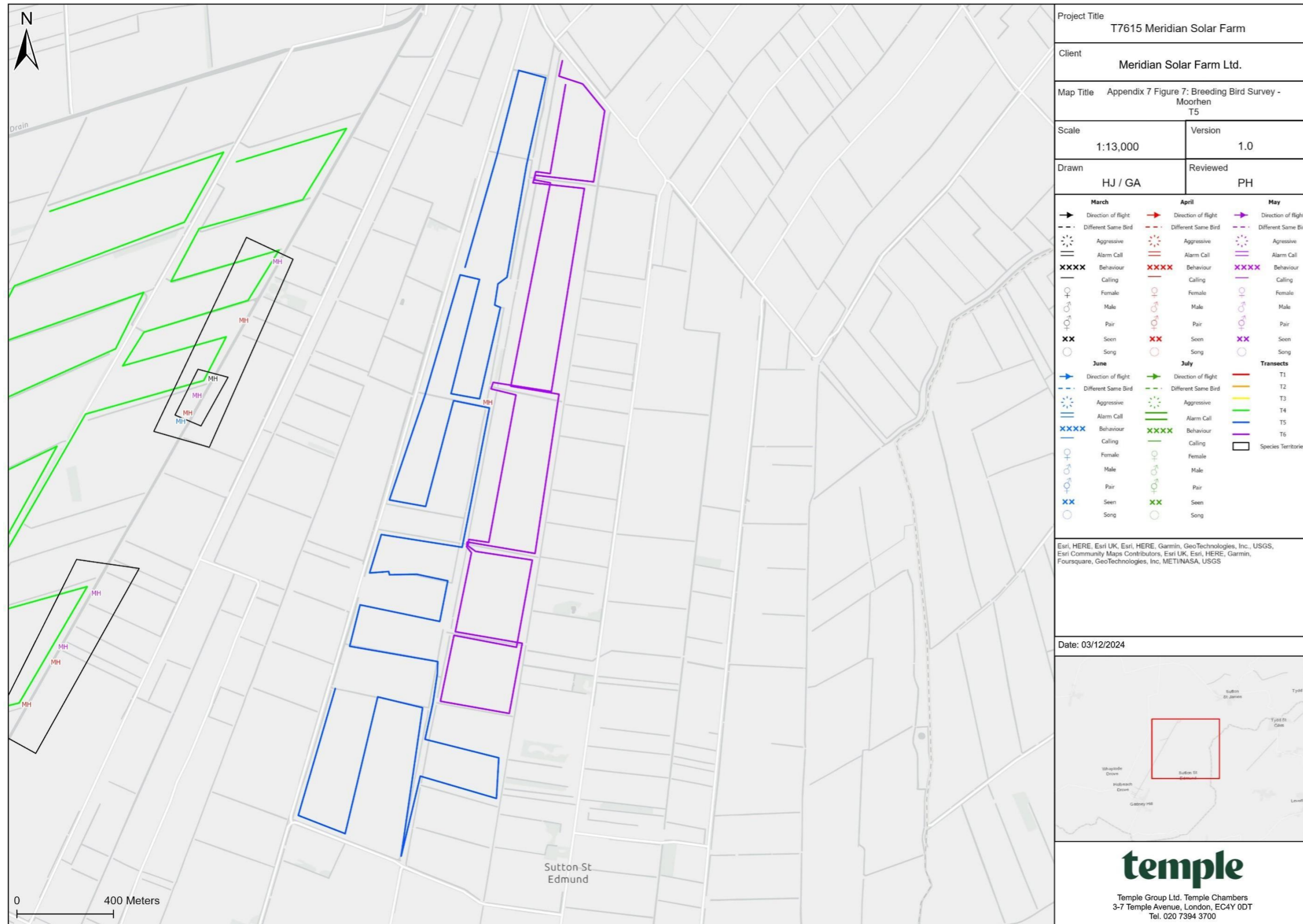
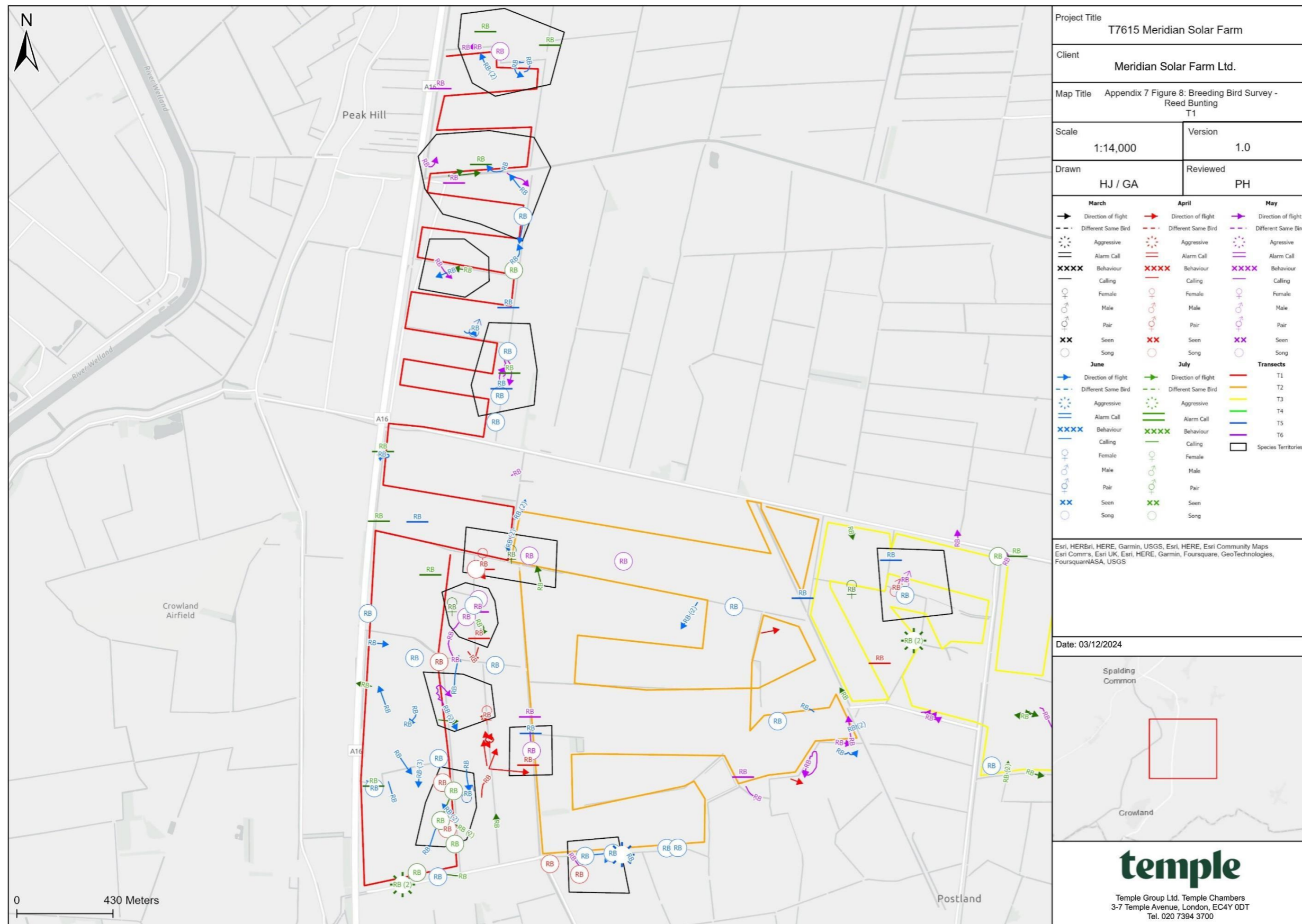
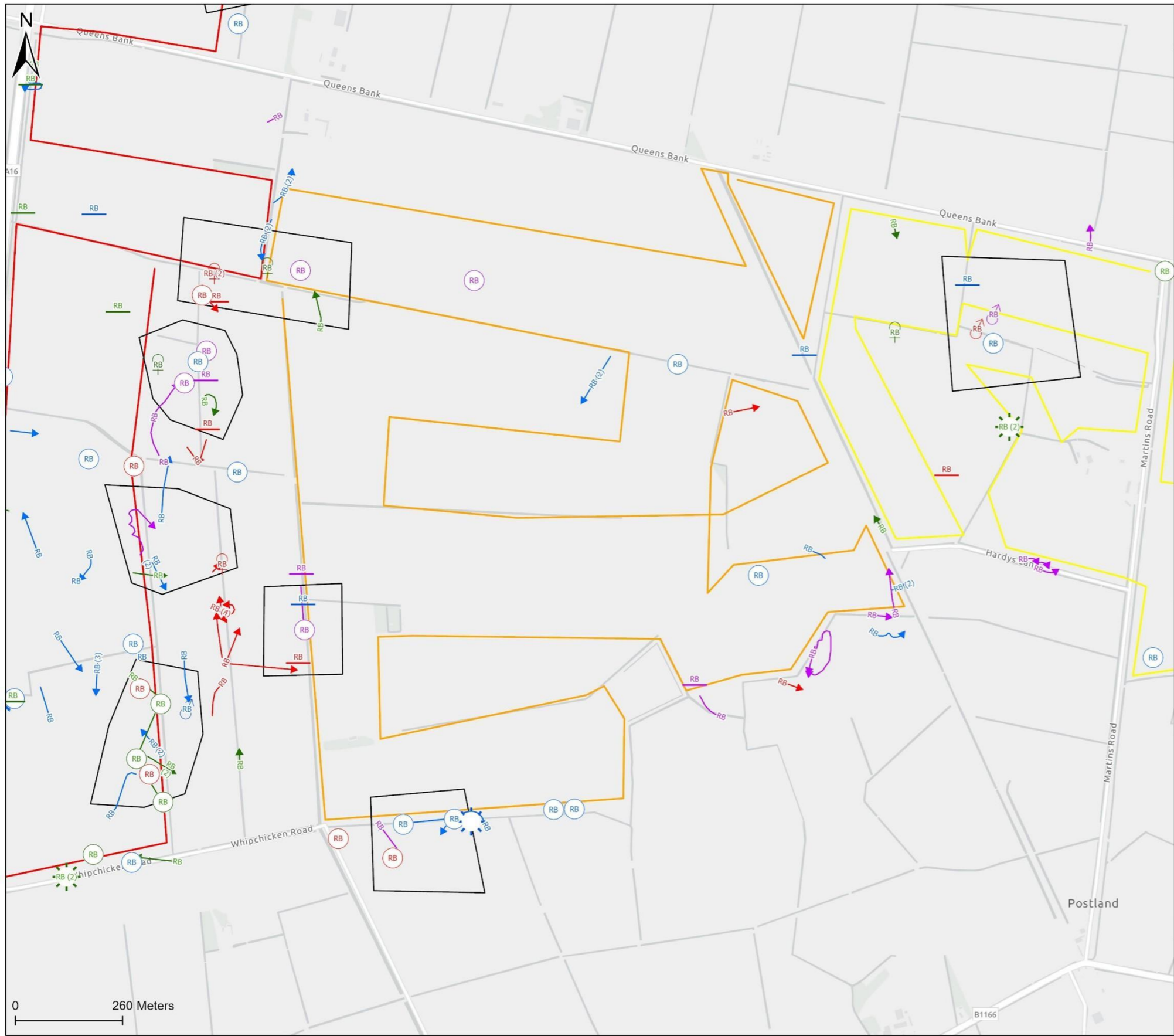


Figure 8: Reed Bunting



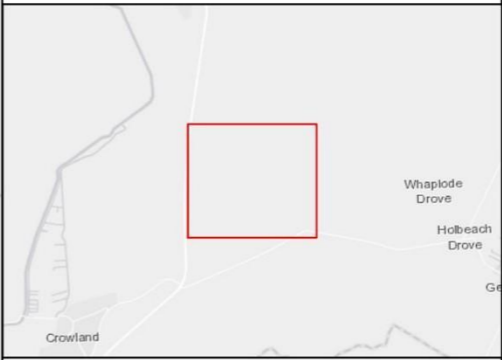


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Scale 1:8,500	Version 1.0
Drawn HJ / GA	Reviewed PH

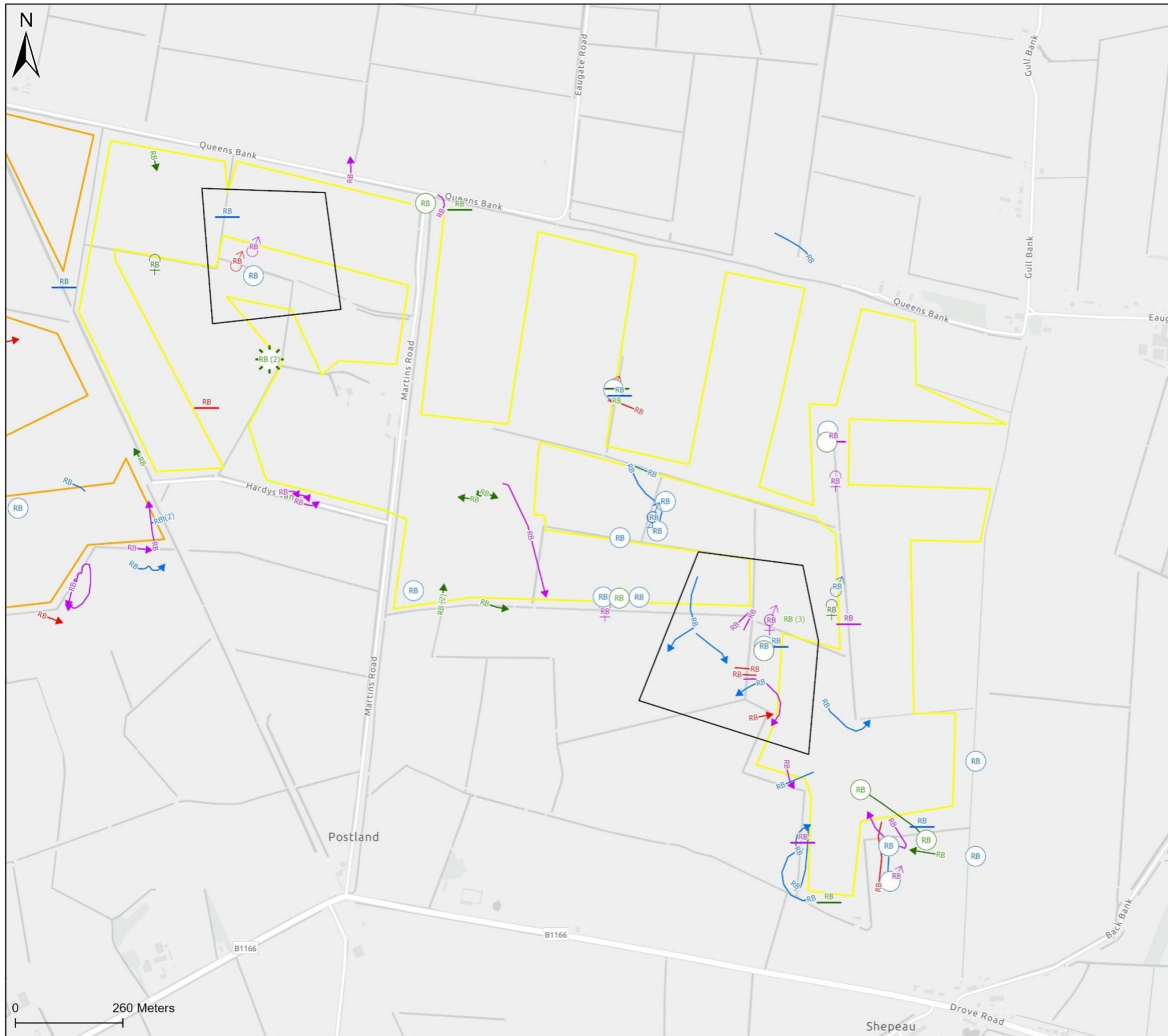
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Alarm Call	Alarm Call	Alarm Call
XXXX Behaviour	XXXX Behaviour	XXXX Behaviour
~ Calling	~ Calling	~ Calling
♀ Female	♀ Female	♀ Female
♂ Male	♂ Male	♂ Male
+♂♂ Pair	+♂♂ Pair	+♂♂ Pair
XX Seen	XX Seen	XX Seen
○ Song	○ Song	○ Song
June	July	Transects
→ Direction of flight	→ Direction of flight	T1
- - - Different Same Bird	- - - Different Same Bird	T2
☀ Aggressive	☀ Aggressive	T3
Alarm Call	Alarm Call	T4
XXXX Behaviour	XXXX Behaviour	T5
~ Calling	~ Calling	T6
♀ Female	♀ Female	Species Territories
♂ Male	♂ Male	
+♂♂ Pair	+♂♂ Pair	
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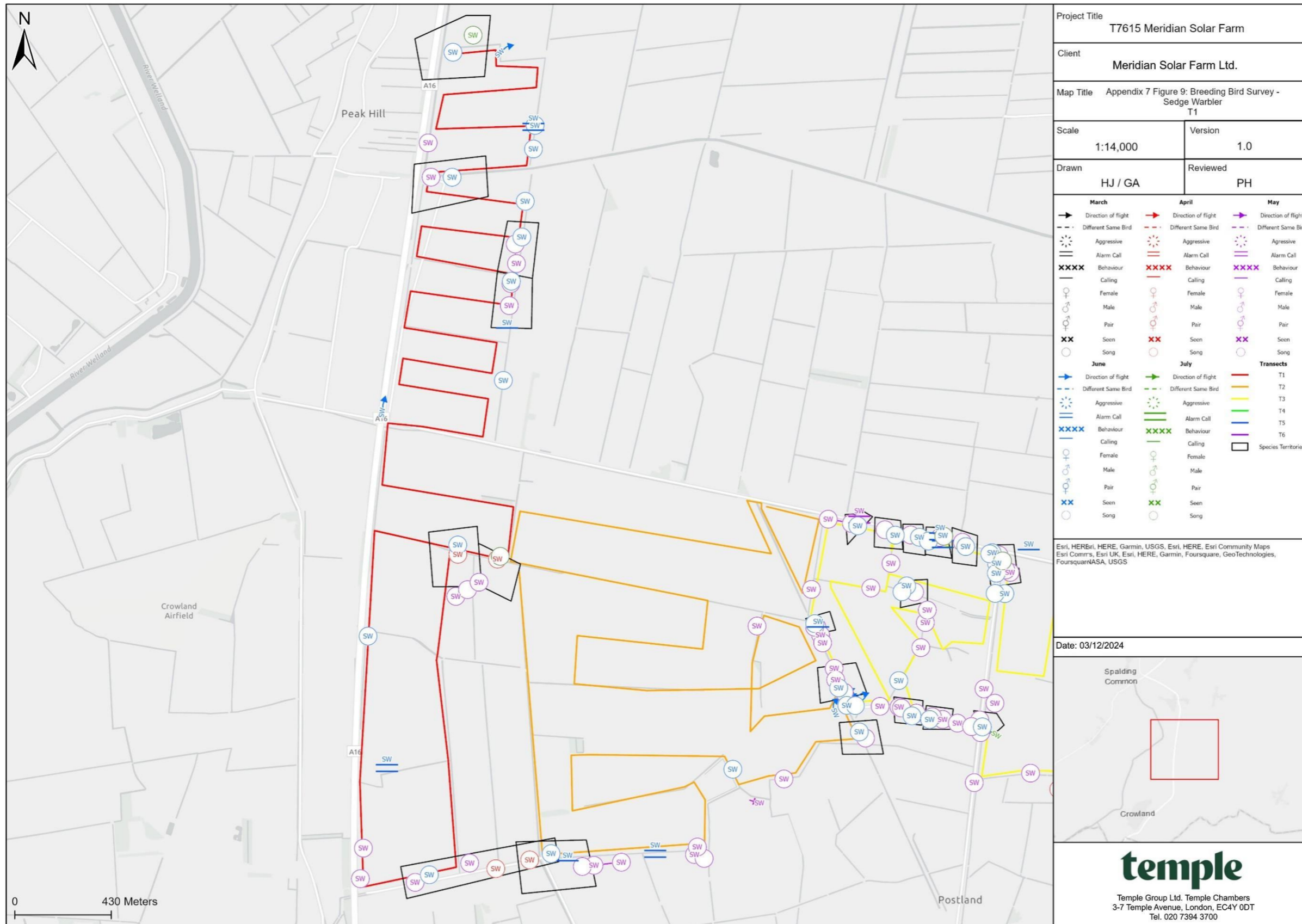


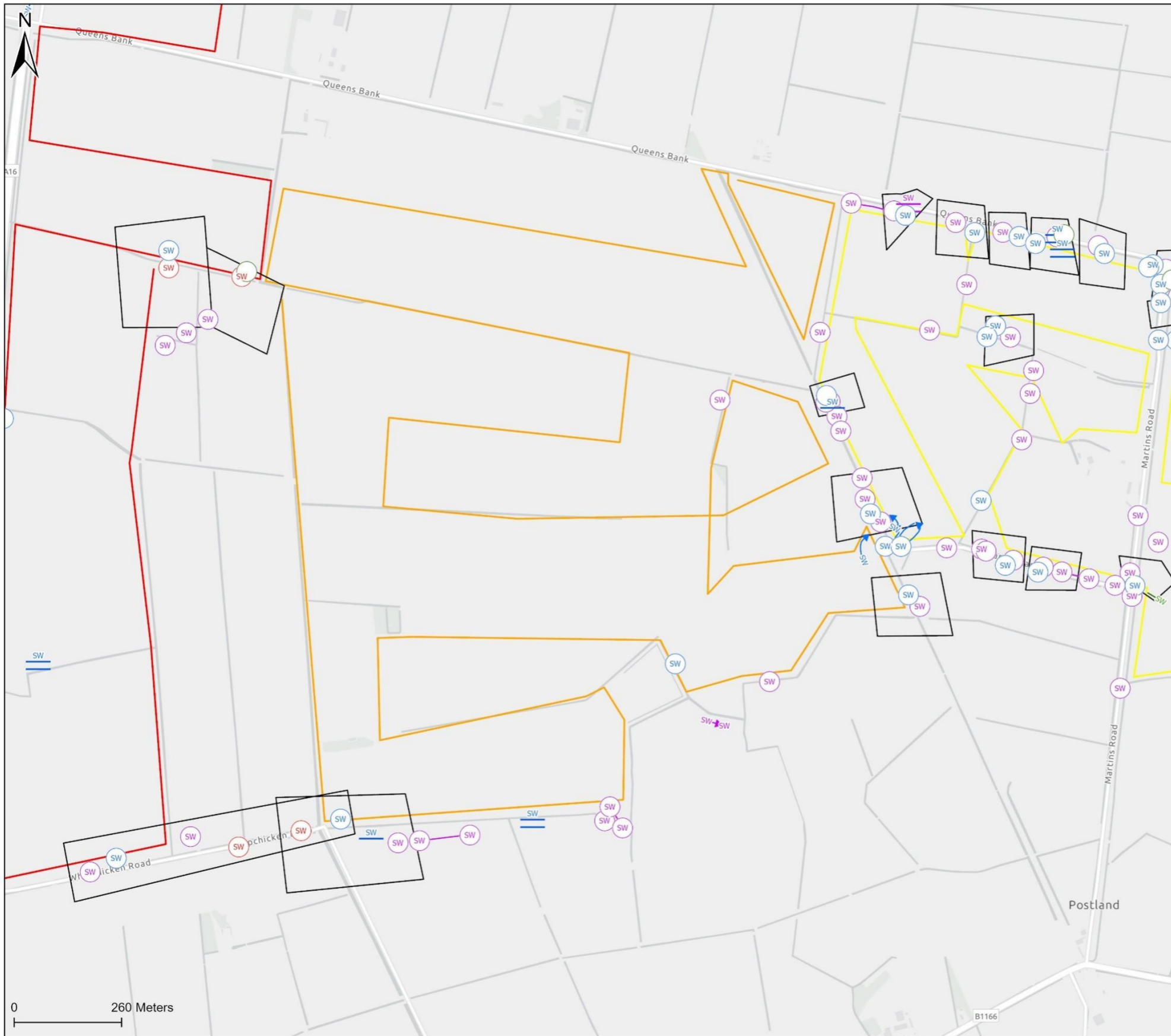
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Figure 9: Sedge Warbler

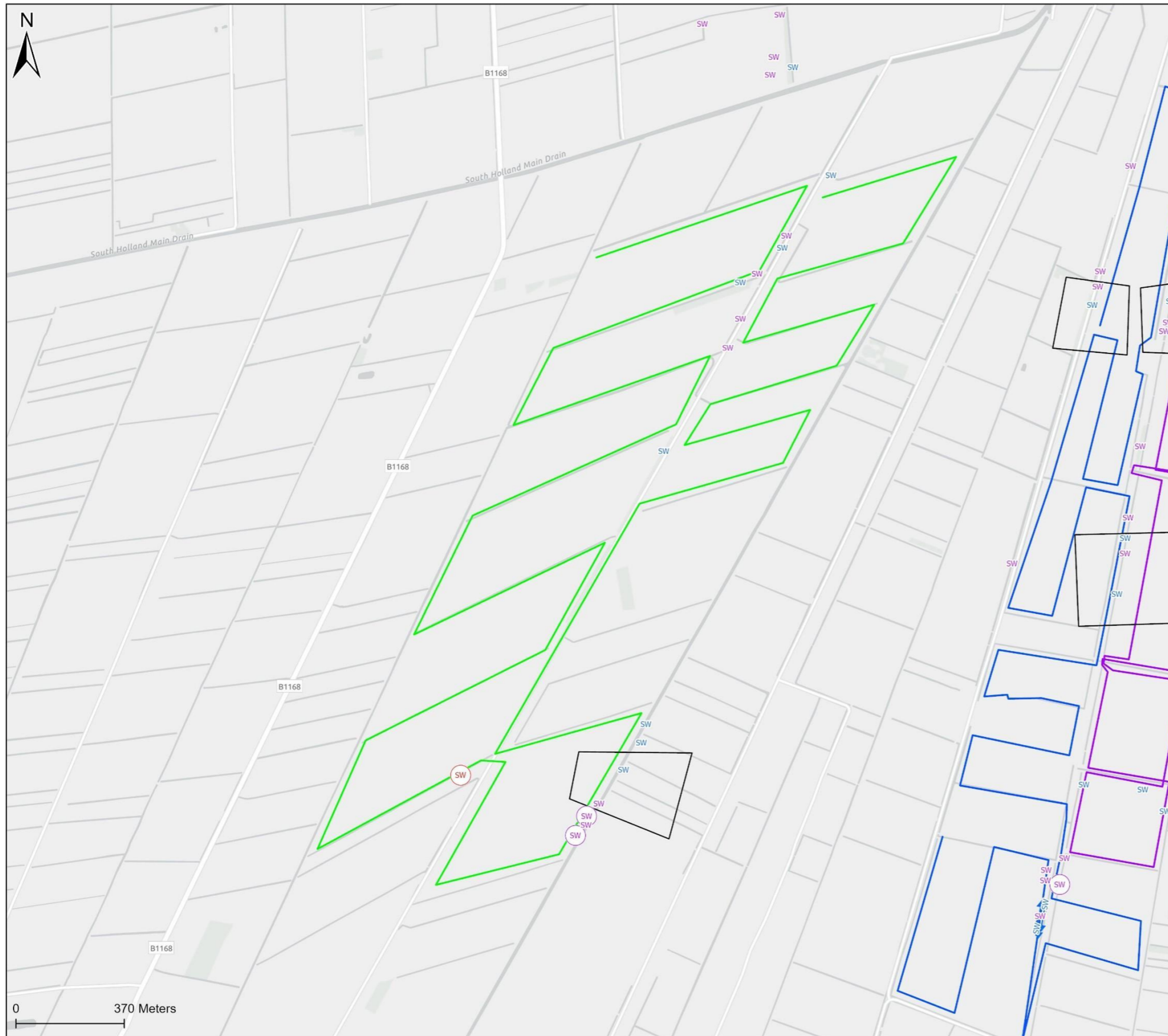




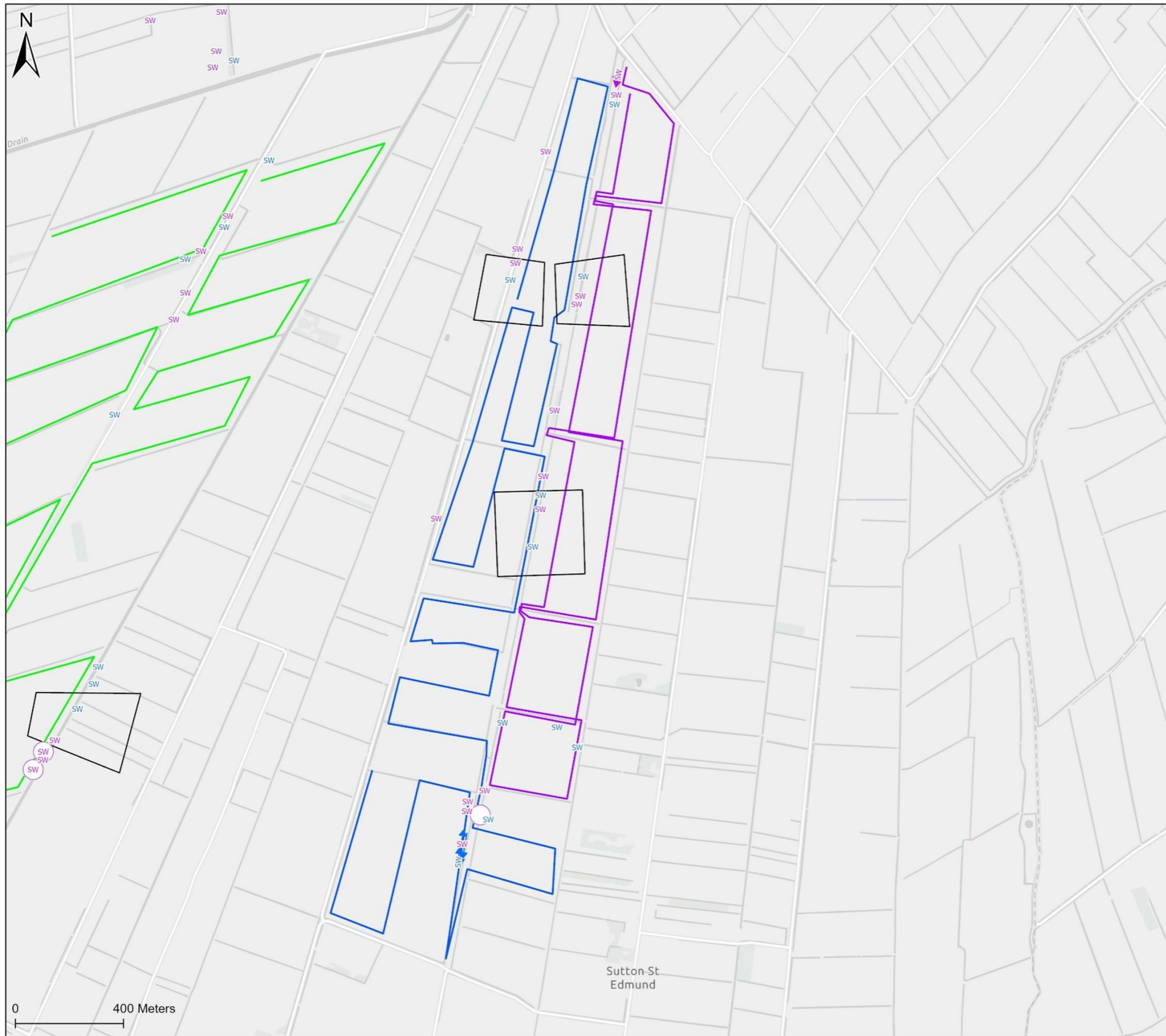
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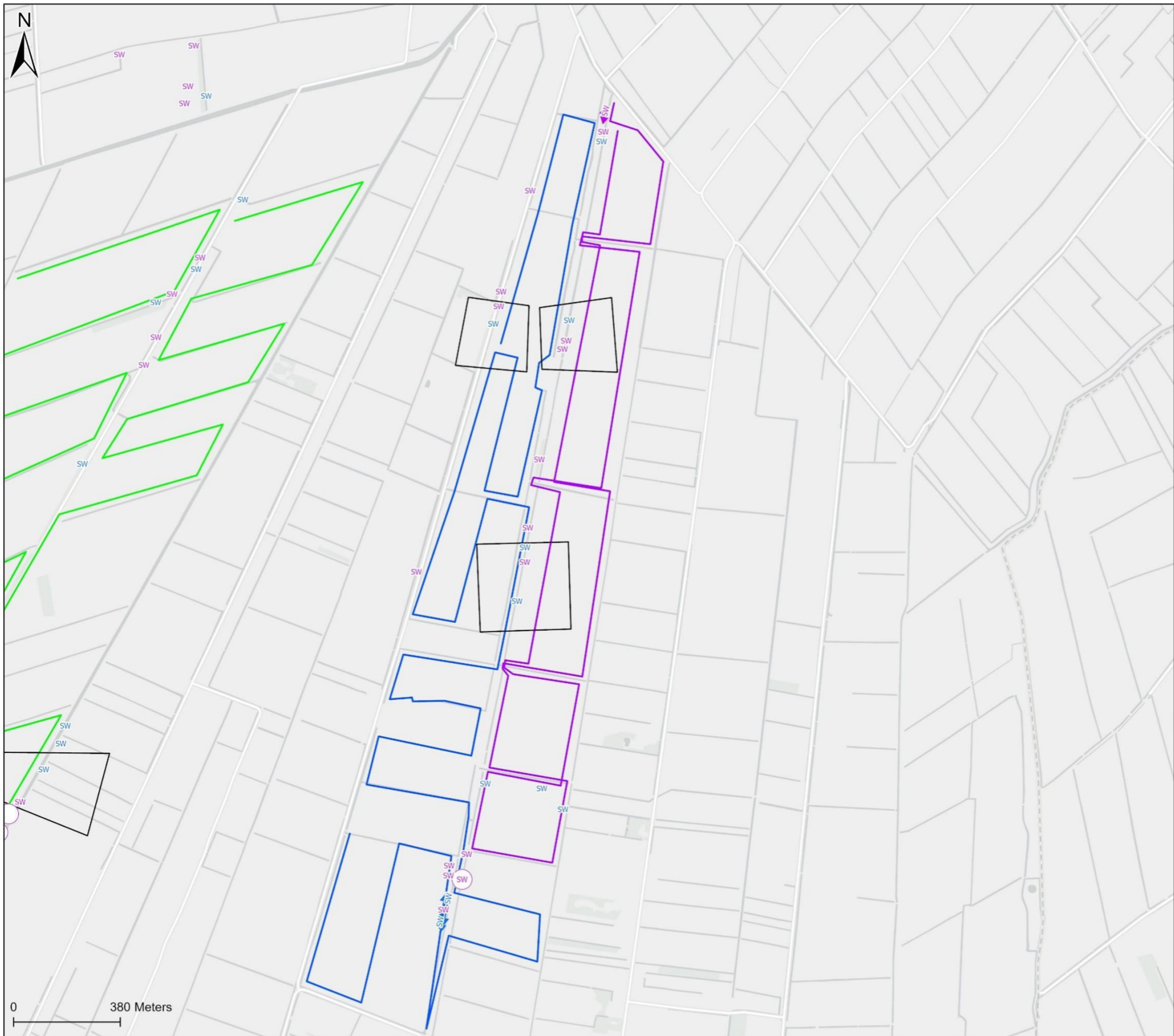
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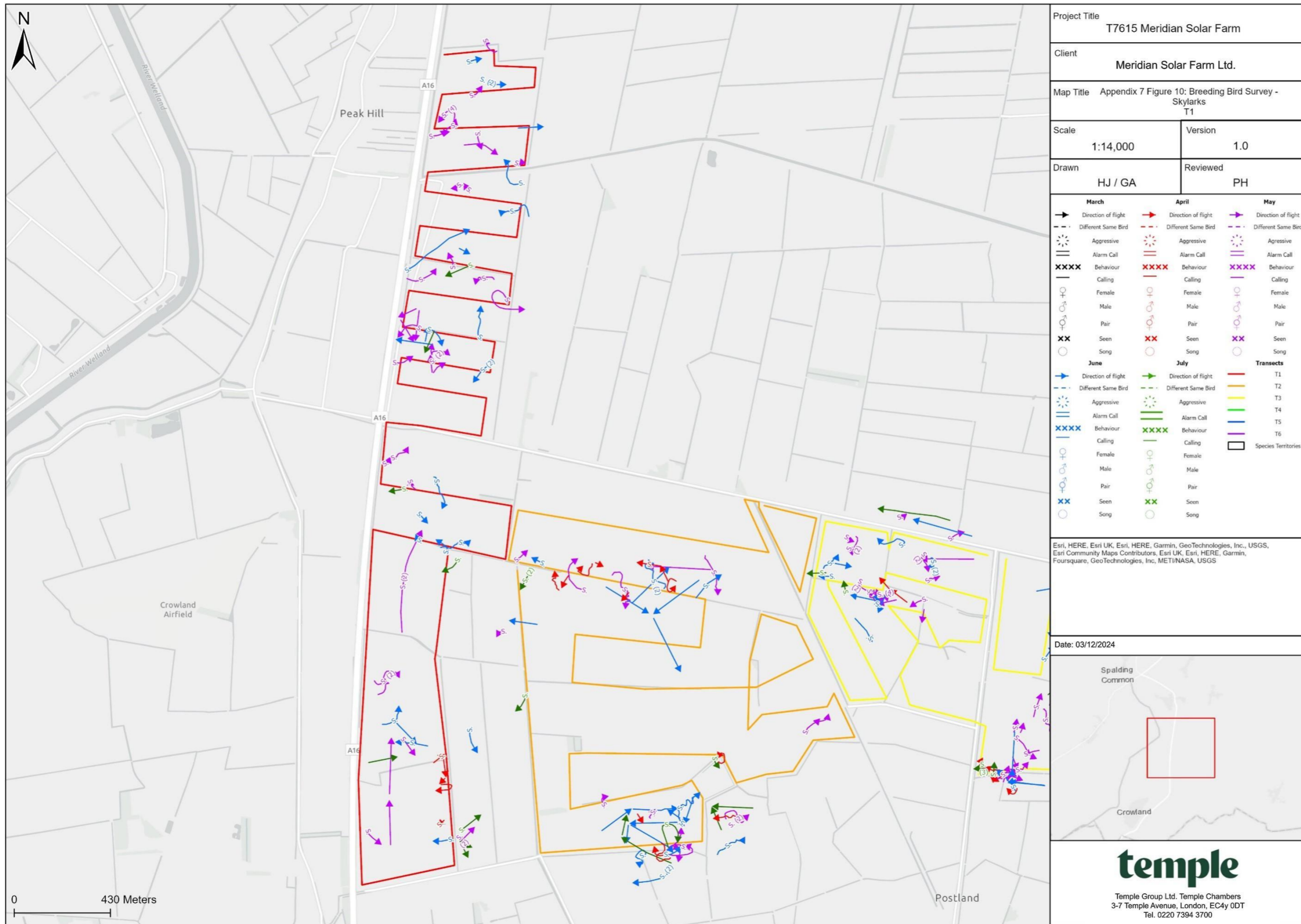


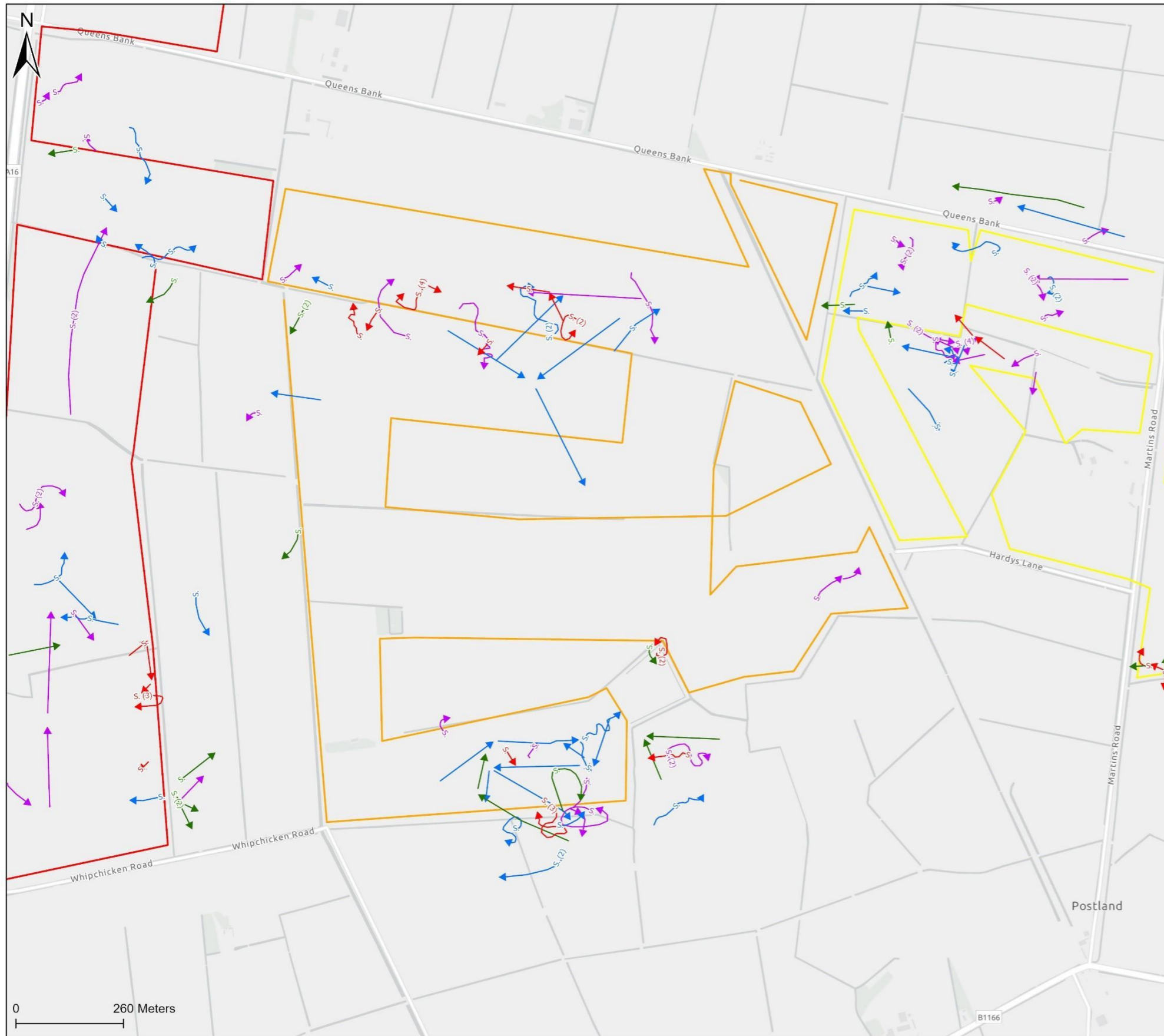
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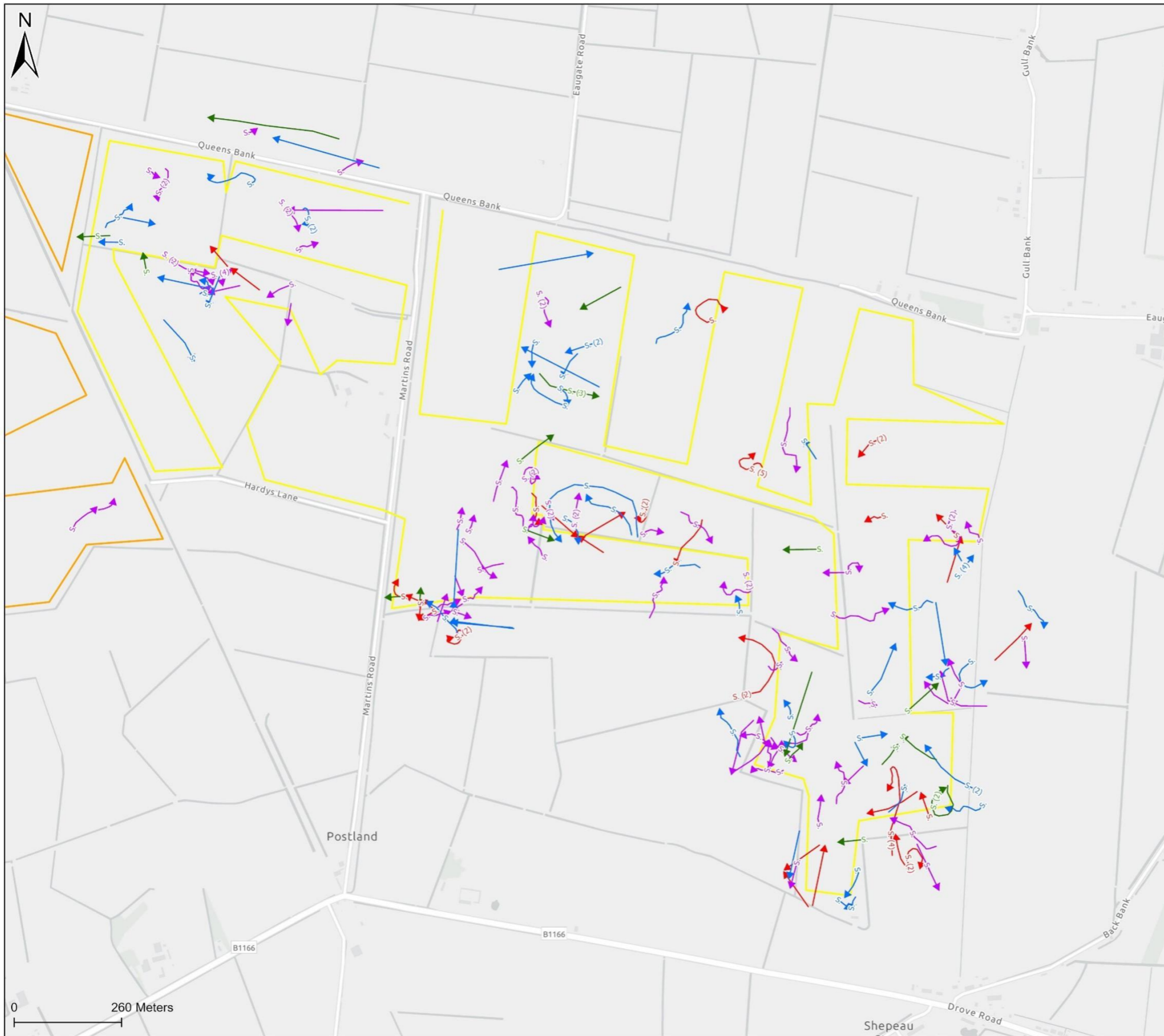
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Figure 10: Skylark

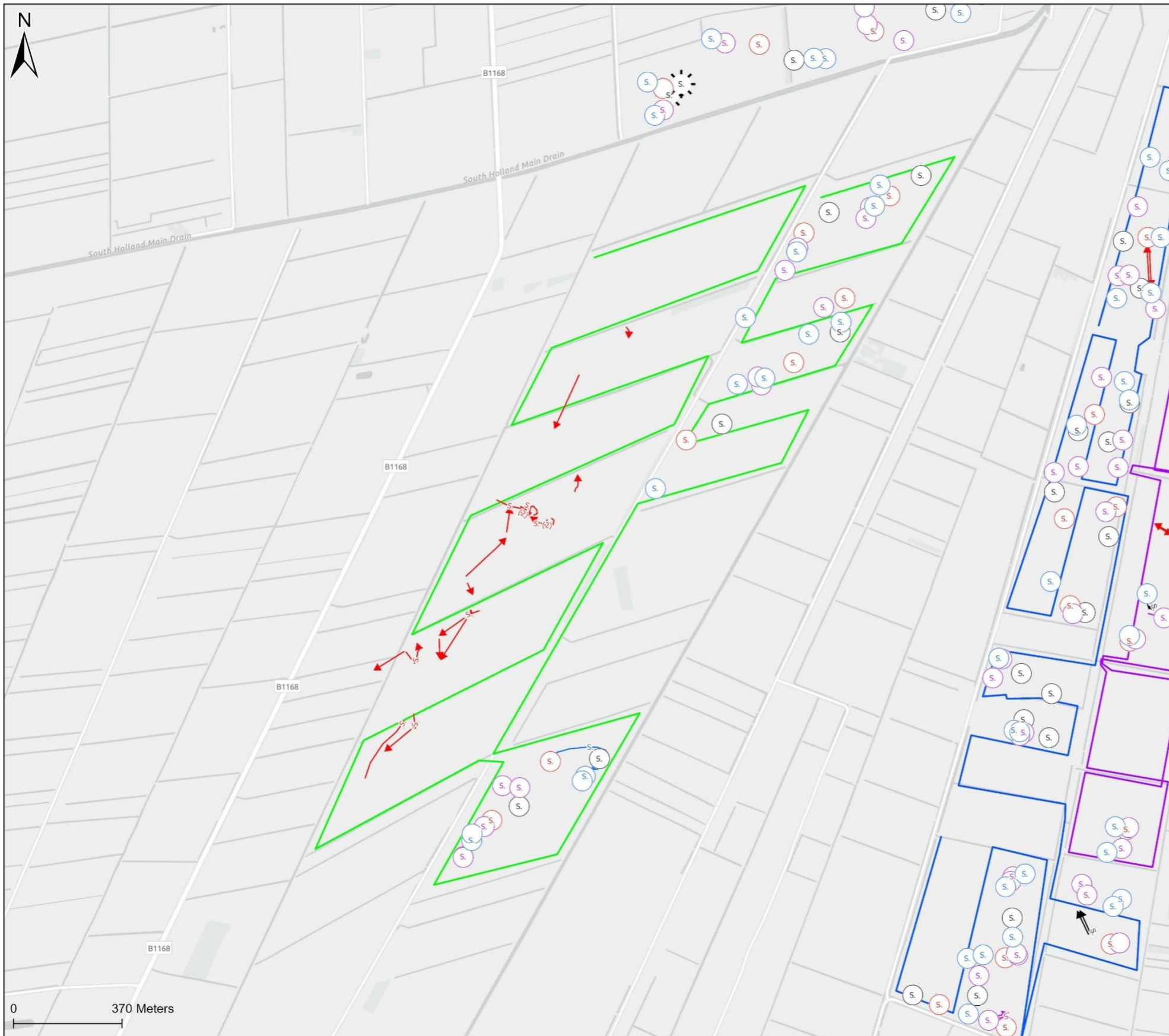




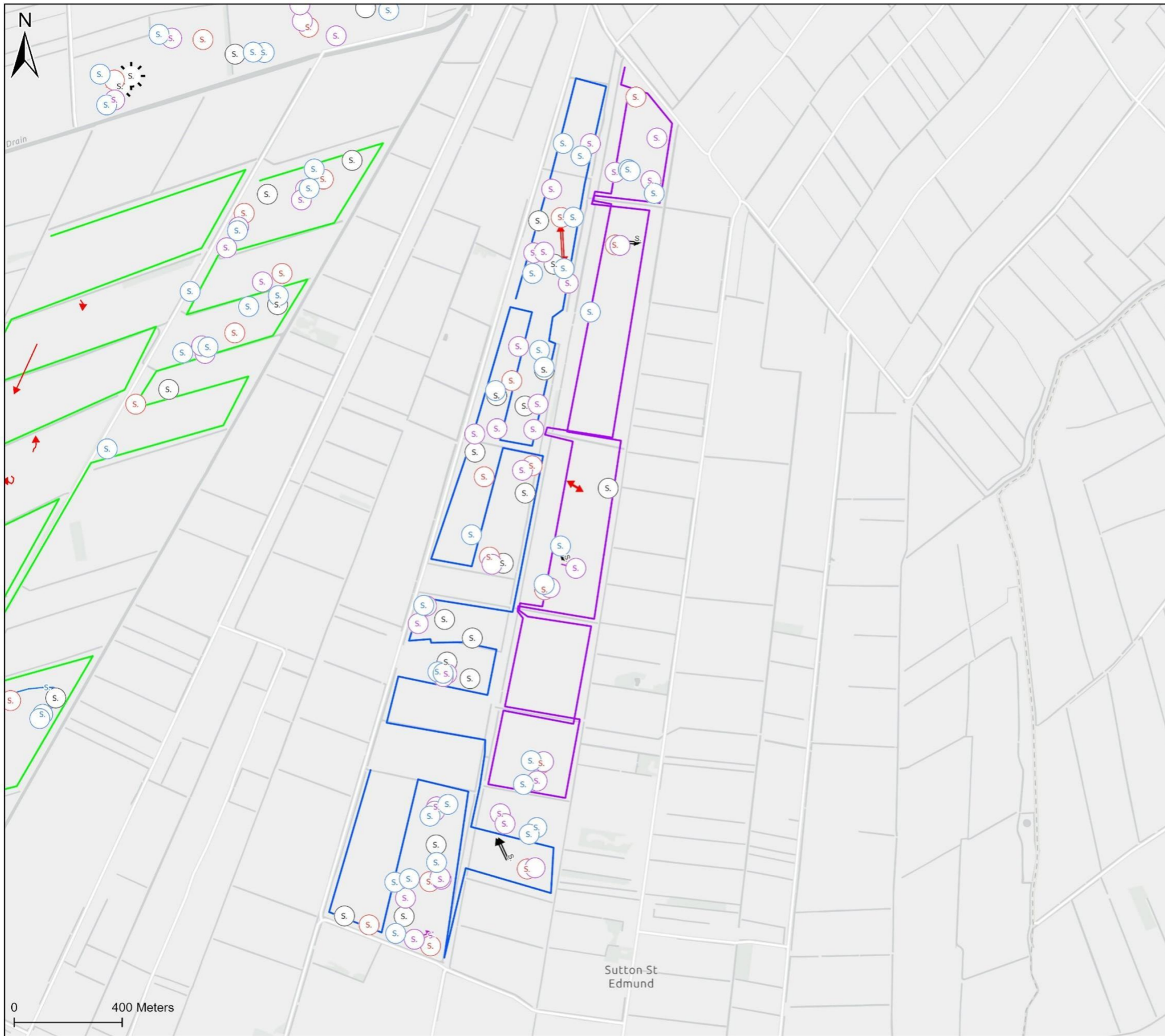
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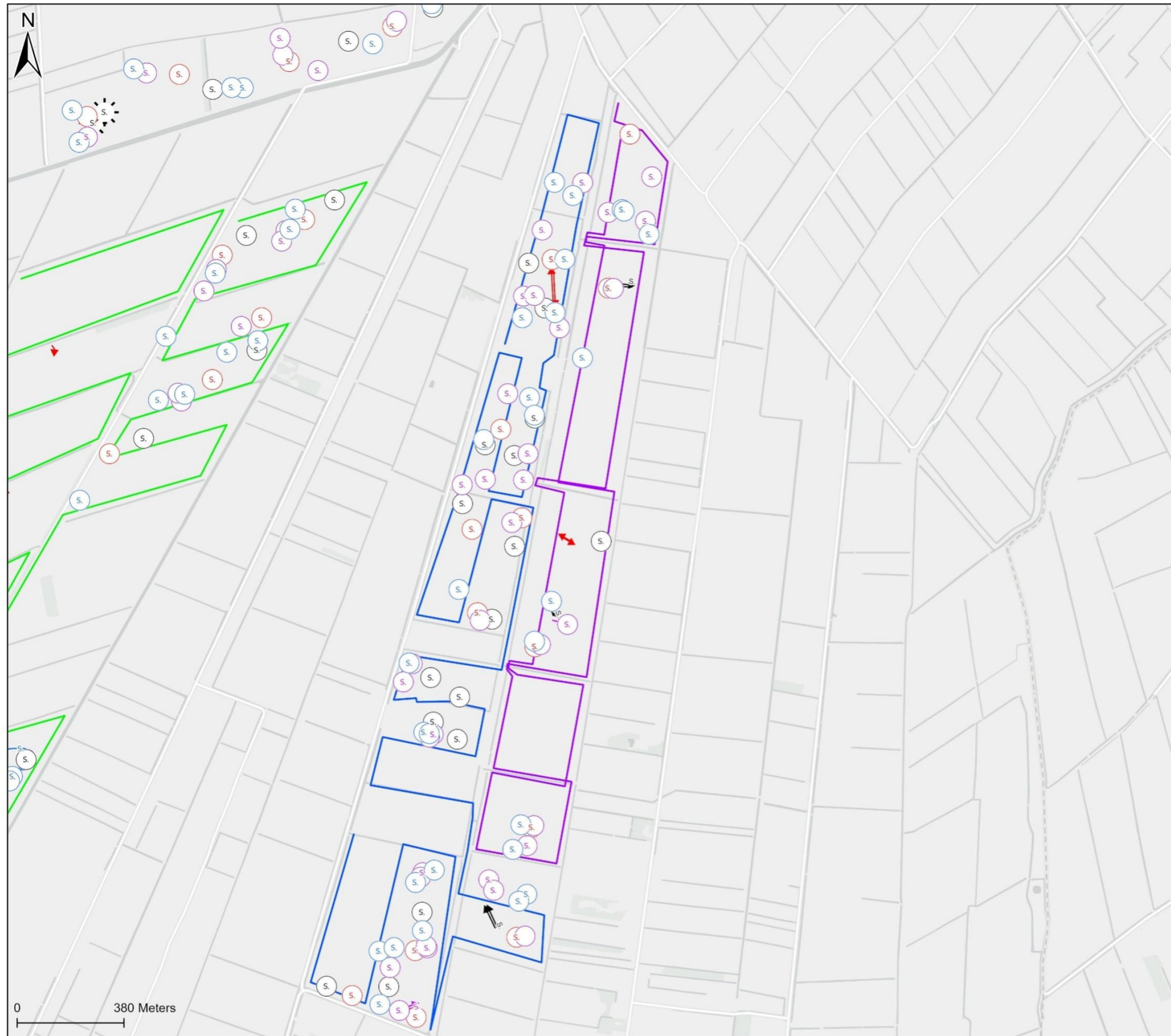
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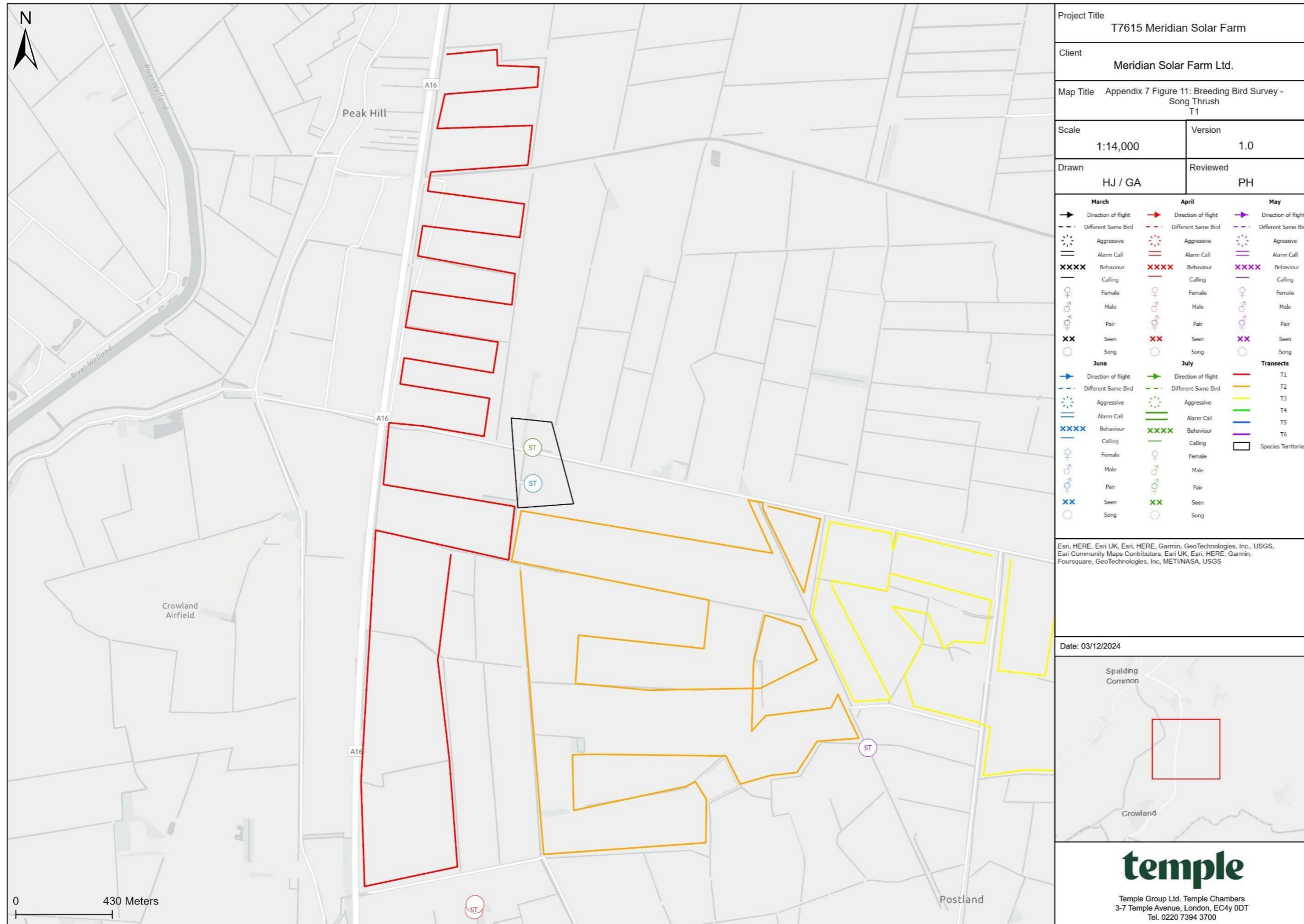
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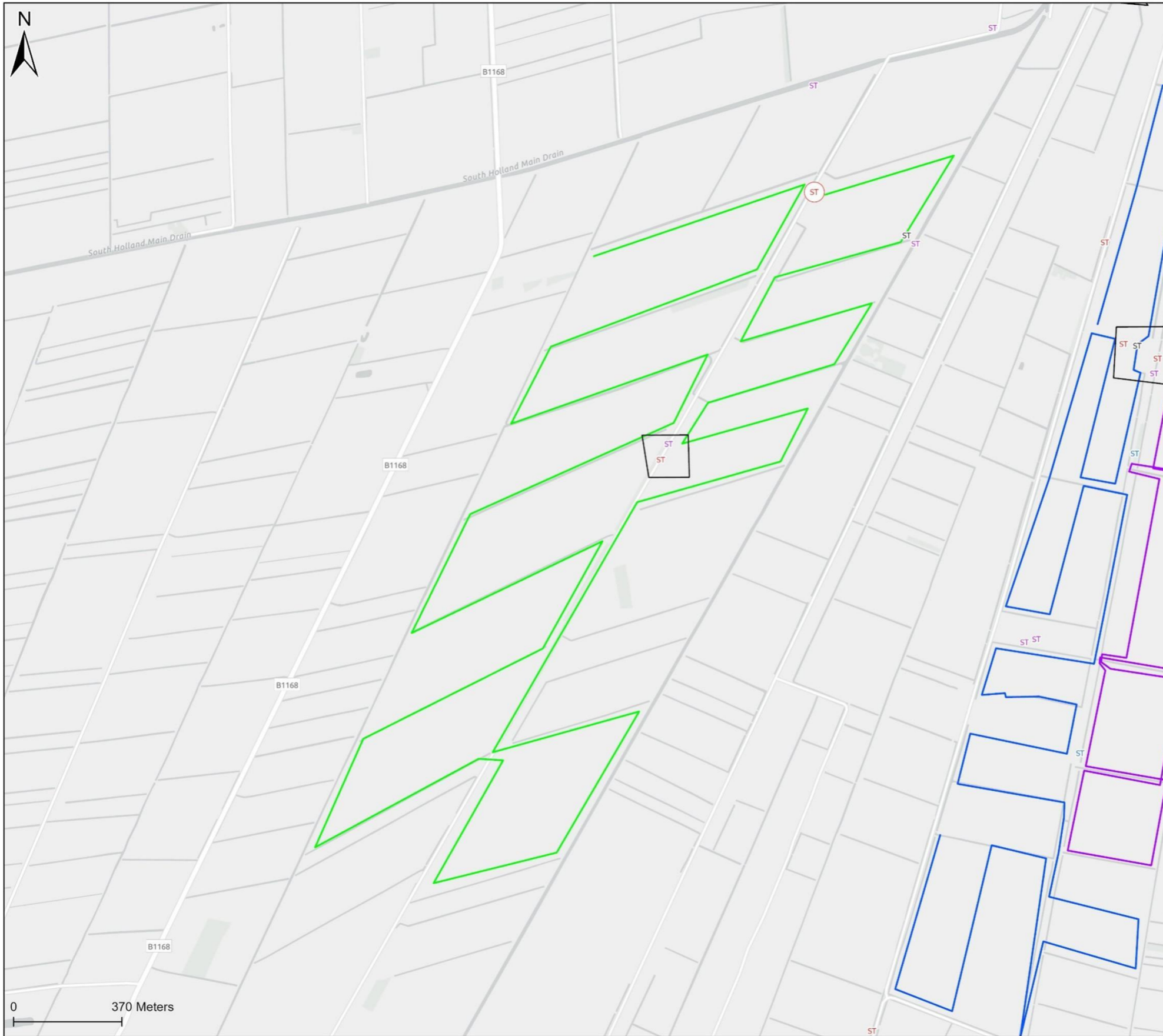
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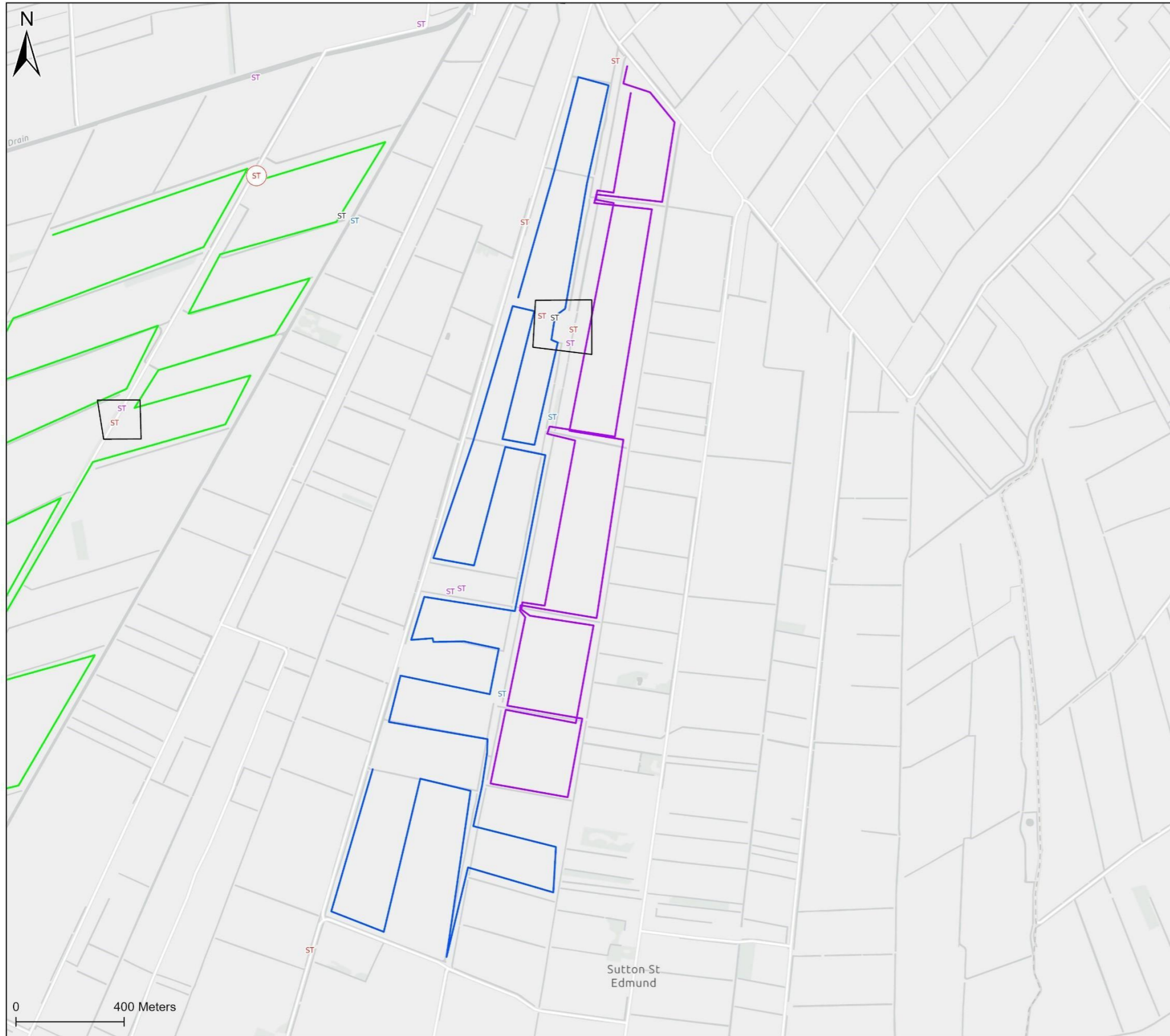
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 Tel. 0220 7394 3700

Figure 11: Song Thrush

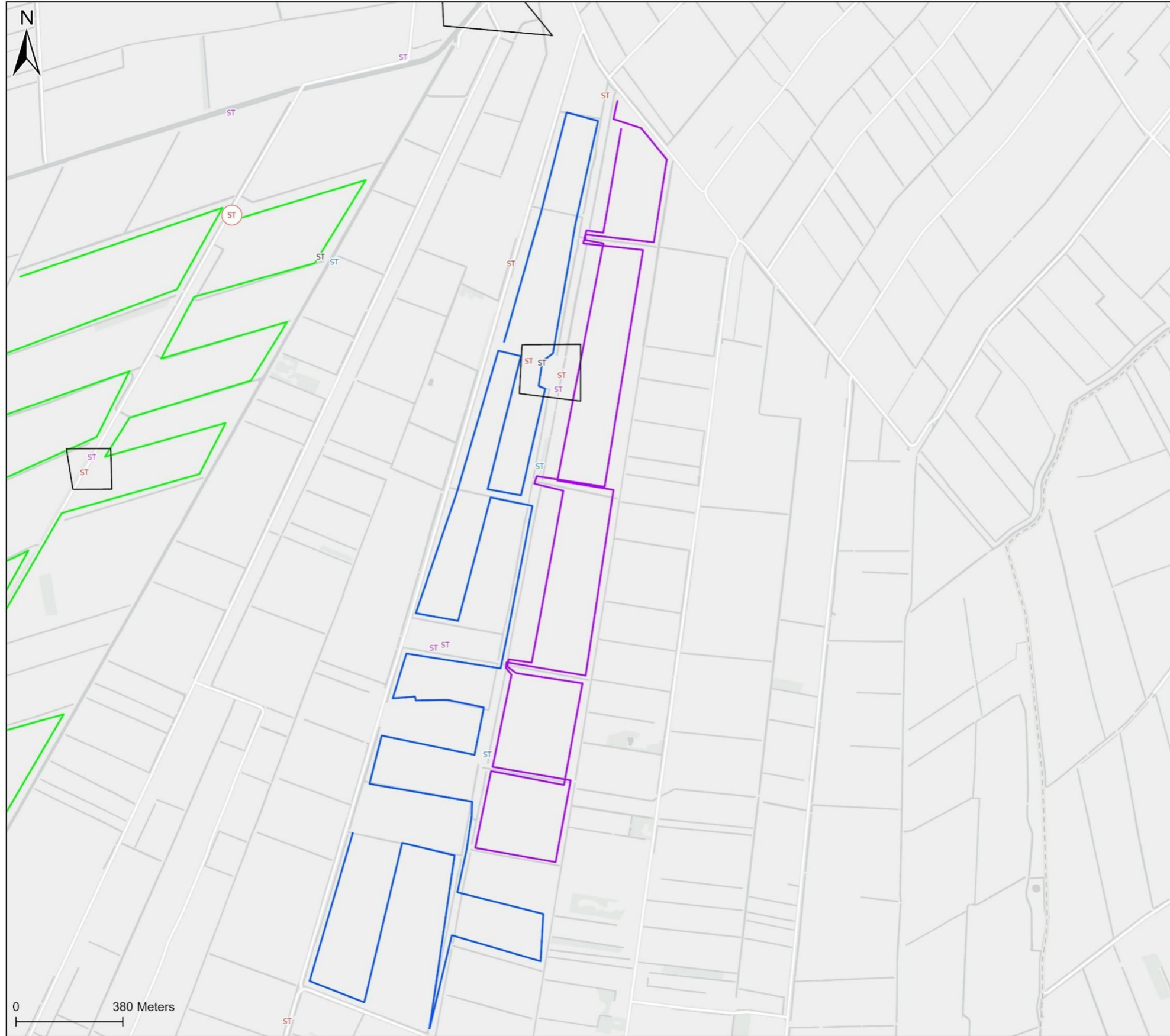




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Drawn HJ / GA	Reviewed PH

March	April	May
→ Direction of flight	→ Direction of flight	→ Direction of flight
- - - Different Same Bird	- - - Different Same Bird	- - - Different Same Bird
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≡ Alarm Call	≡ Alarm Call	≡ Alarm Call
XXXX Behaviour	XXXX Behaviour	XXXX Behaviour
— Calling	— Calling	— Calling
+○ Female	+○ Female	+○ Female
+○ Male	+○ Male	+○ Male
+○ Pair	+○ Pair	+○ Pair
XX Seen	XX Seen	XX Seen
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+○ Pair	+○ Pair	
XX Seen	XX Seen	
○ Song	○ Song	

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Figure 12: Turtle Dove

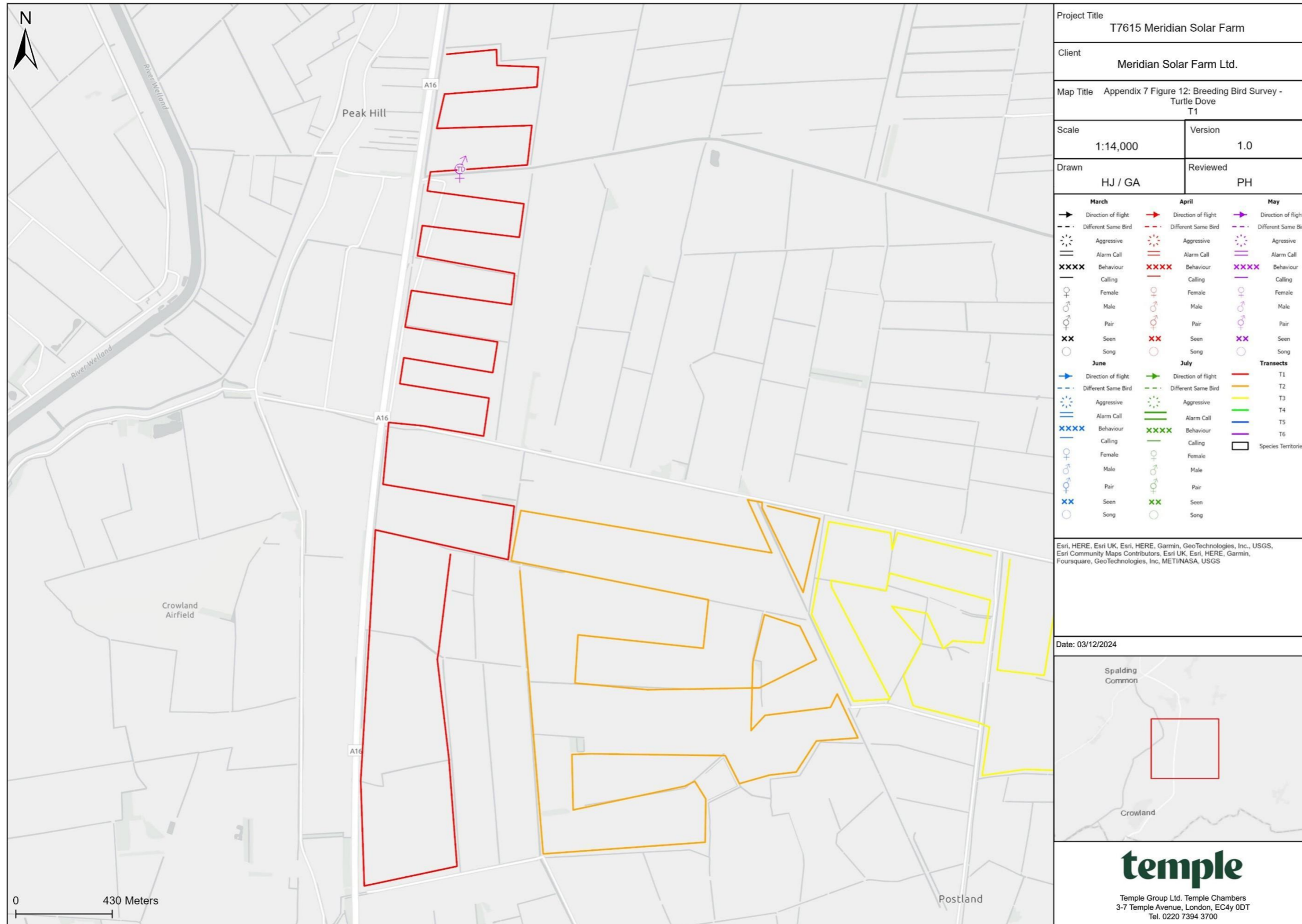
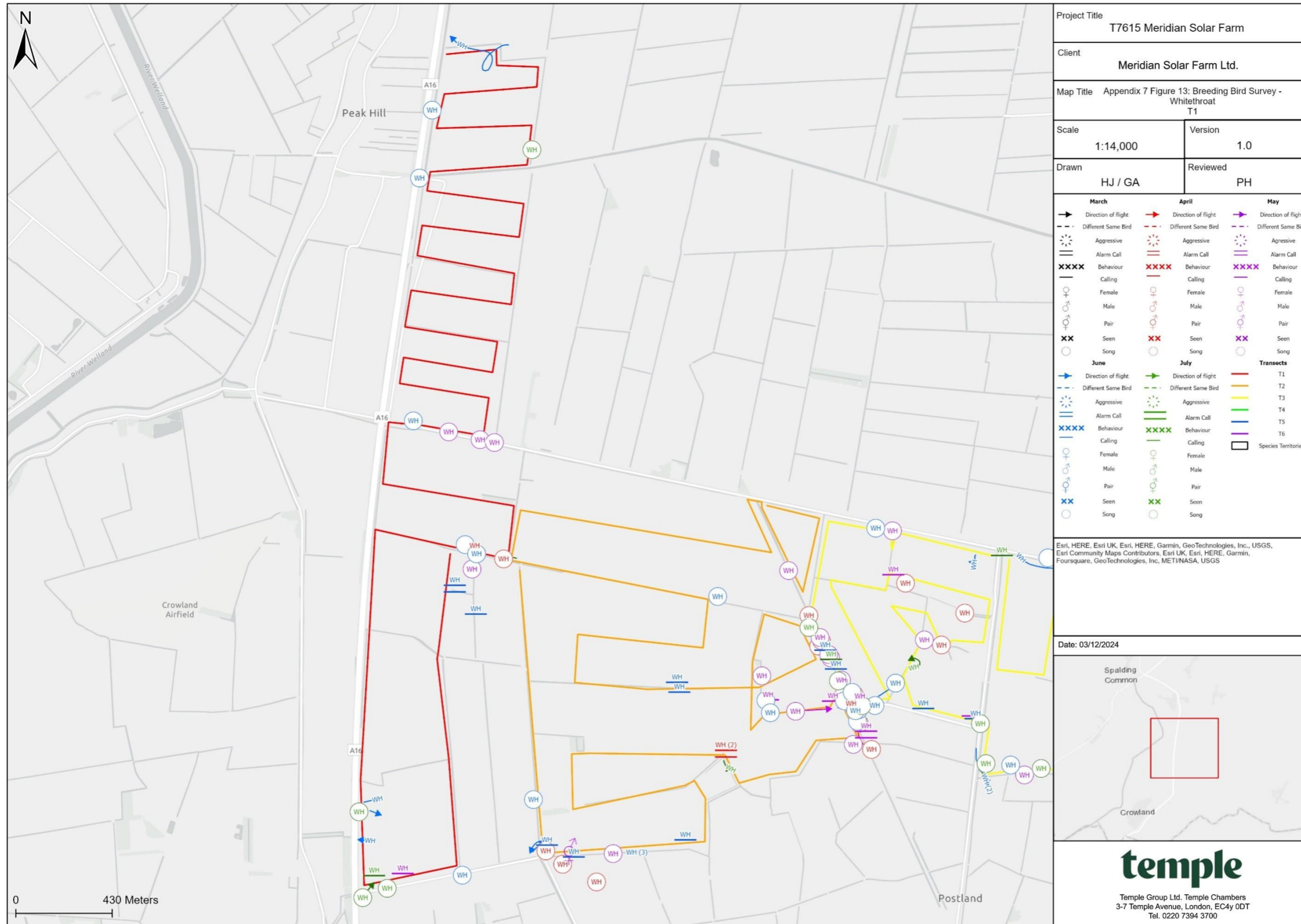
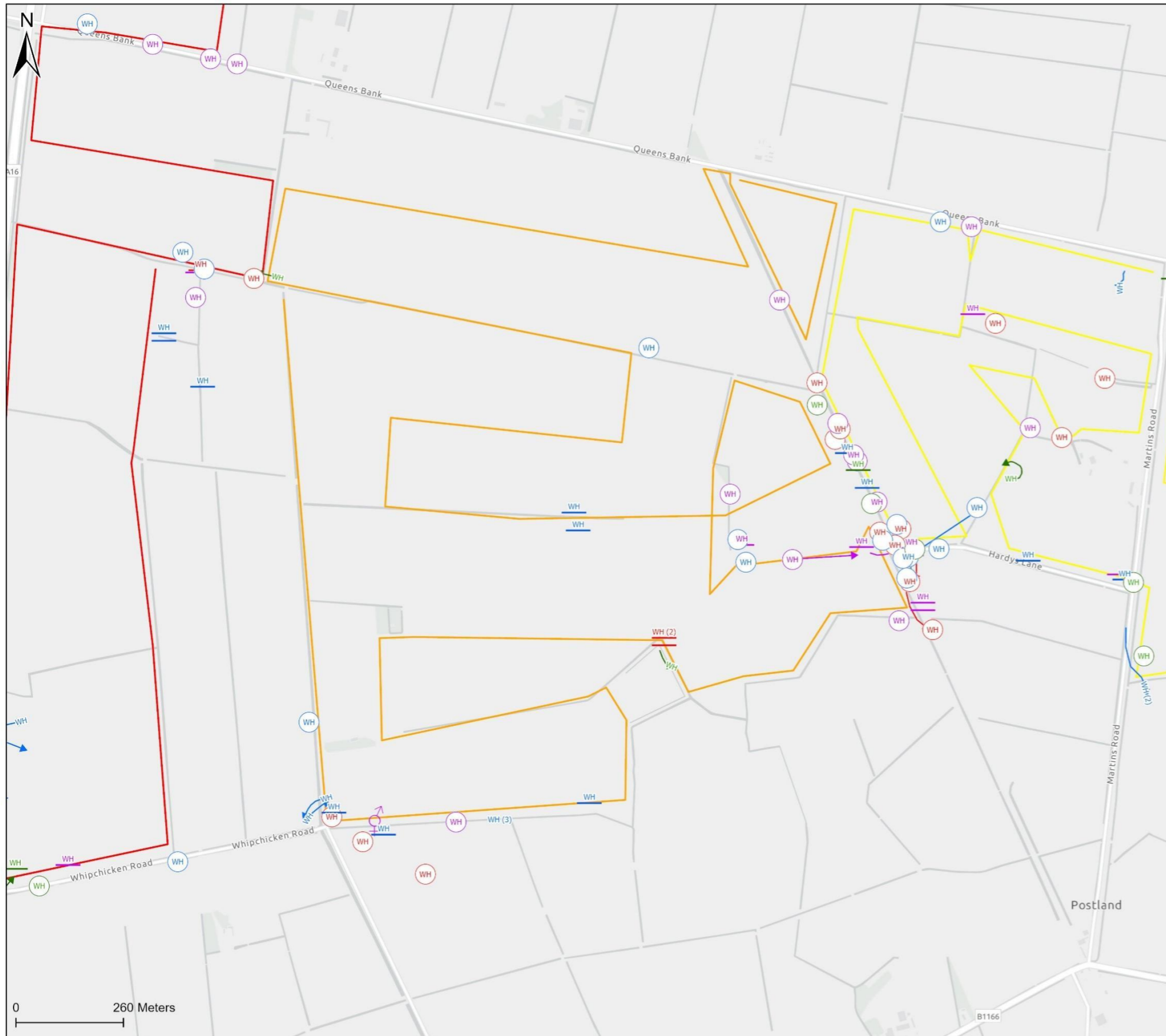


Figure 13: Whitethroat





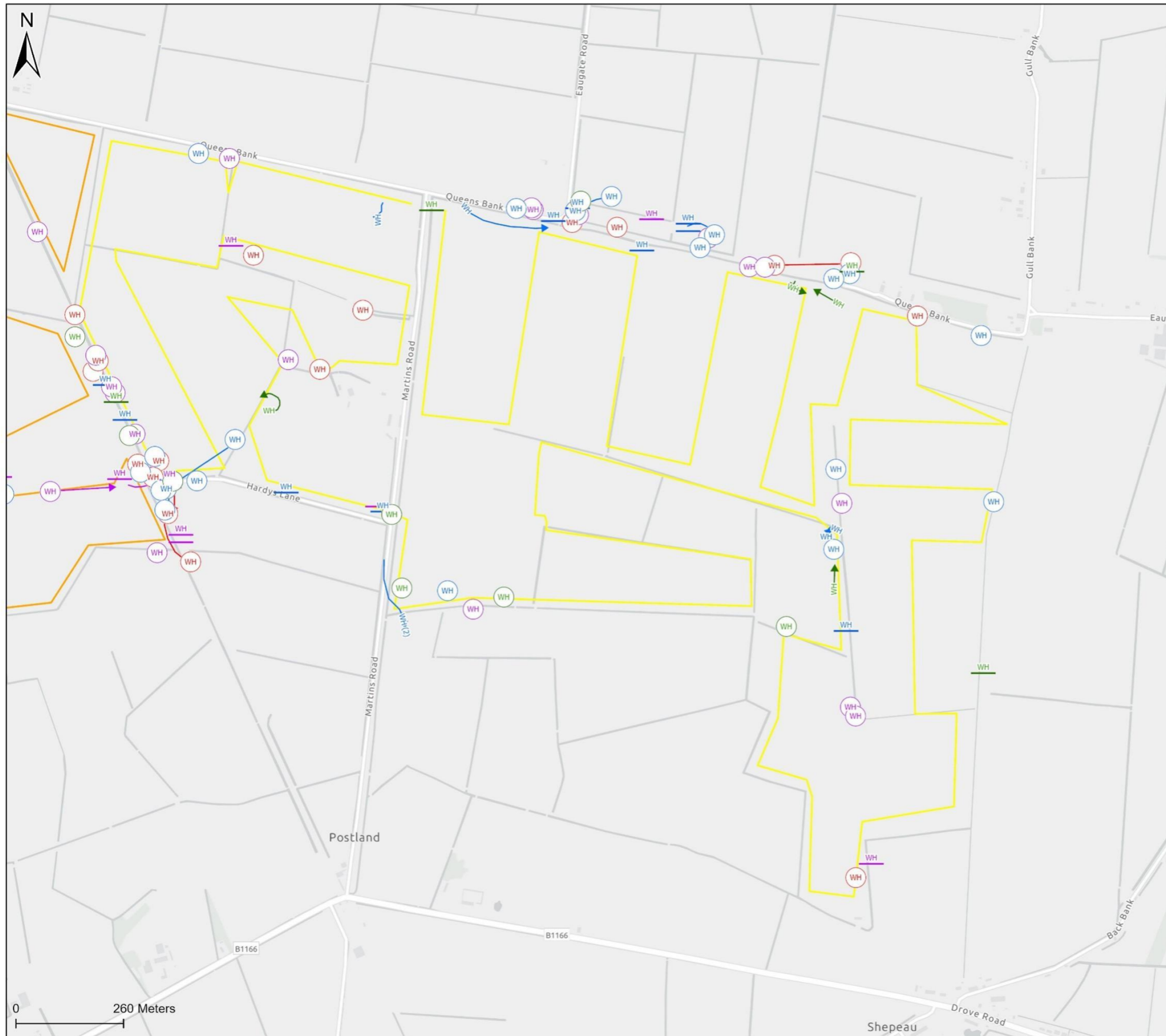
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Scale <b>1:8,500</b>	Version <b>1.0</b>	
Drawn <b>HJ / GA</b>	Reviewed <b>PH</b>	
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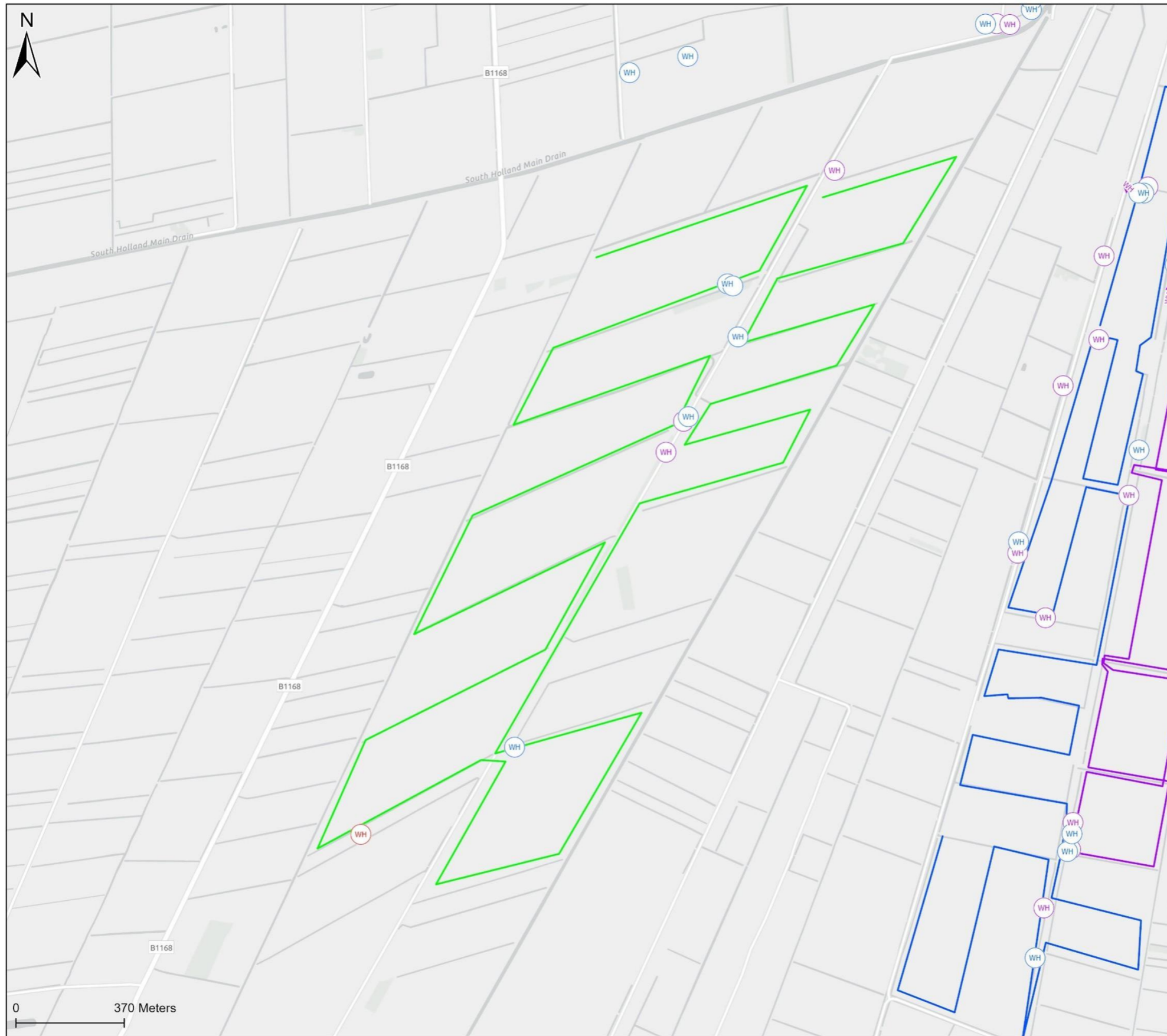


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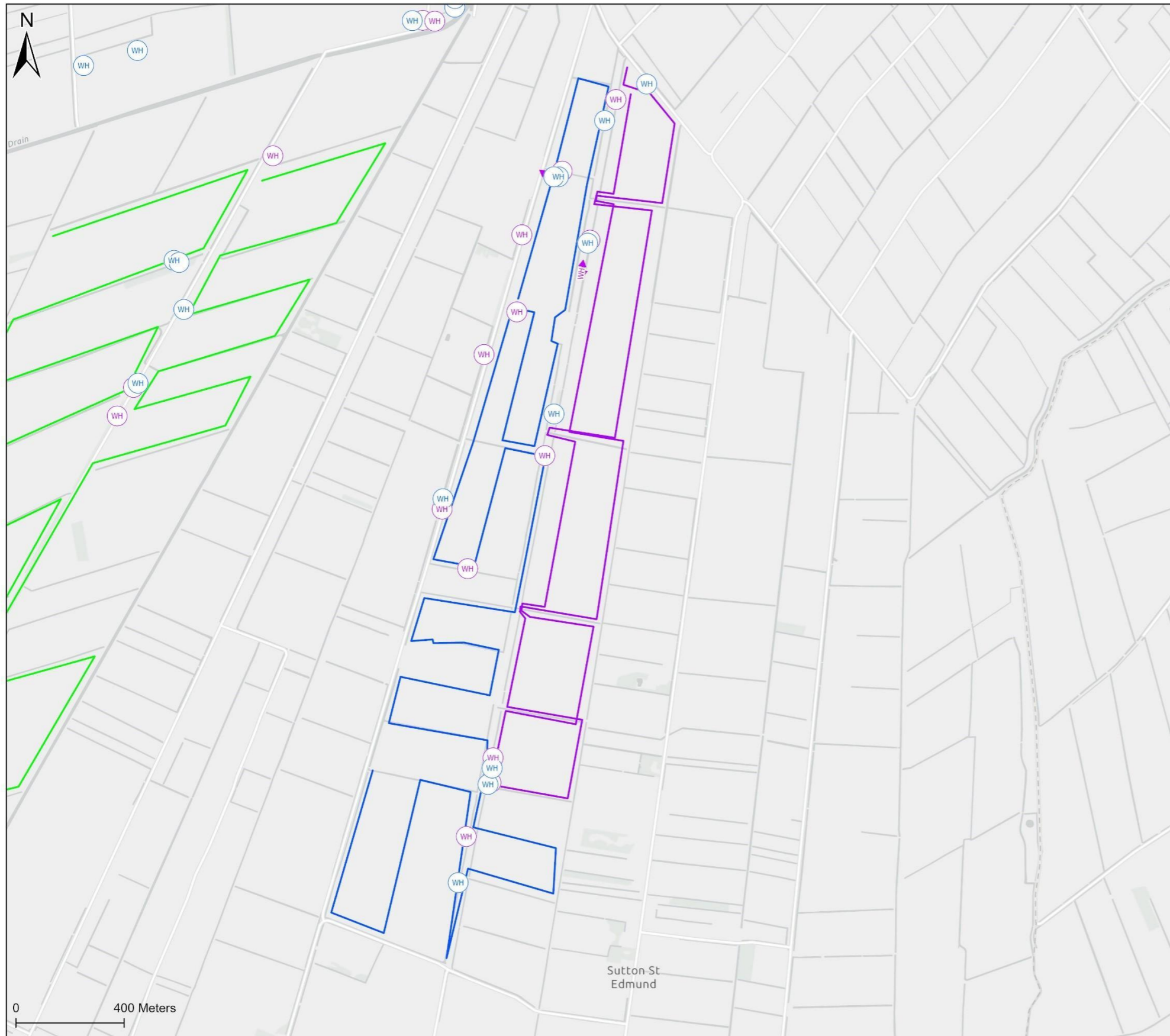


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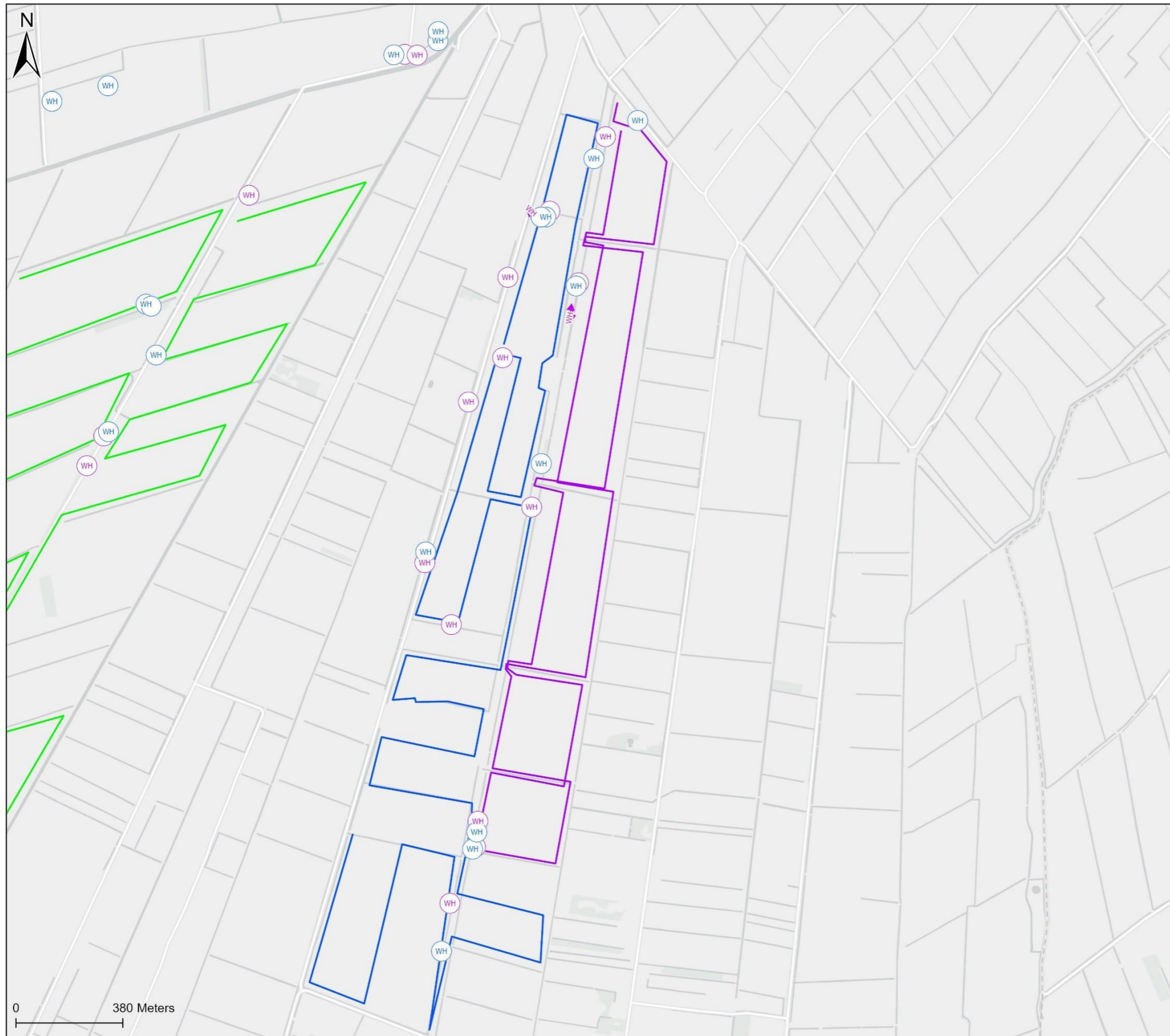
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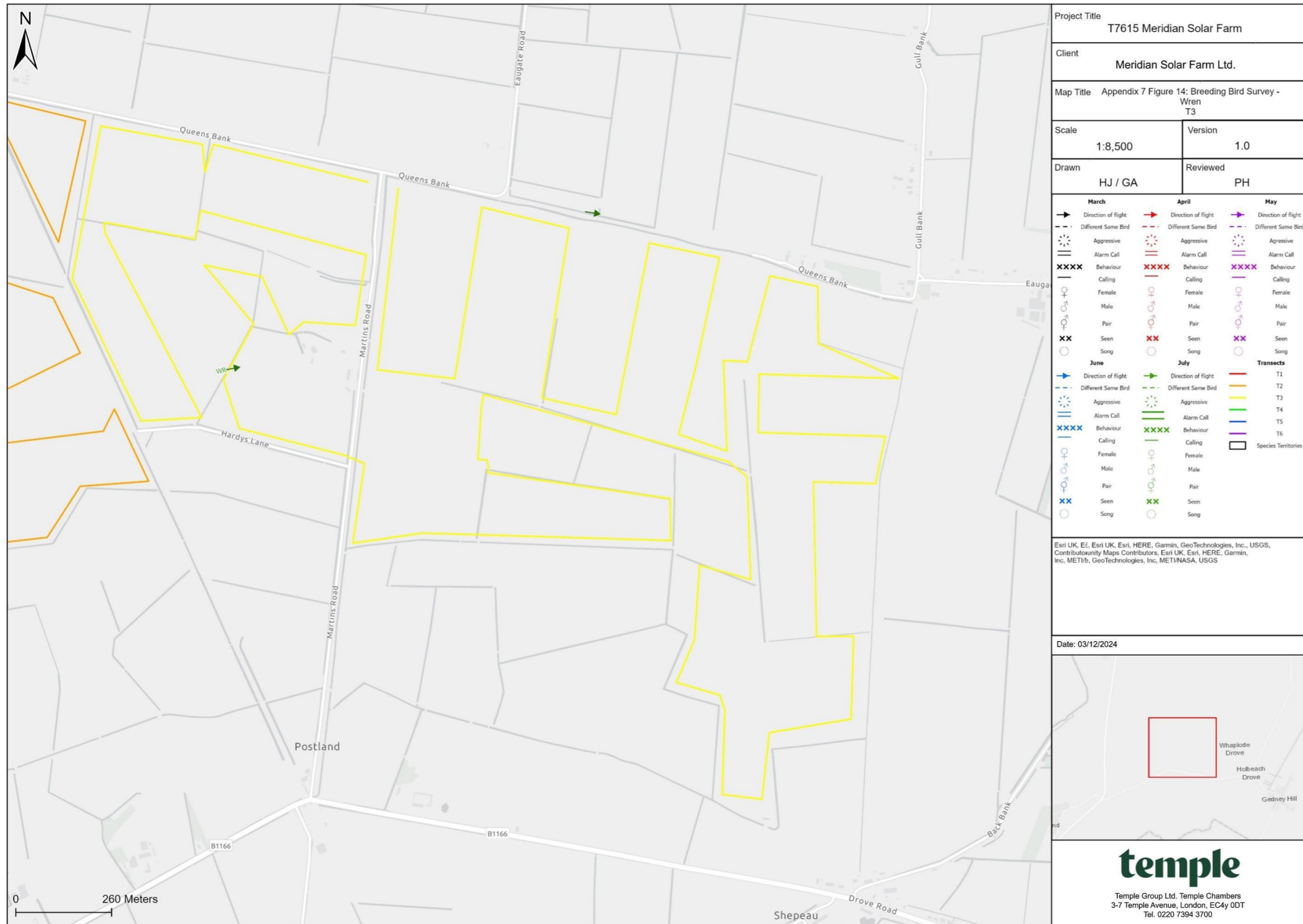


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Figure 14: Wren



Project Title  
T7615 Meridian Solar Farm

Client  
Meridian Solar Farm Ltd.

Map Title  
Appendix 7 Figure 14: Breeding Bird Survey - Wren T3

Scale  
1:8,500

Version  
1.0

Drawn  
HJ / GA

Reviewed  
PH

March	April	May
→ Direction of flight	→ Direction of flight	→ Direction of flight
- - - Different Same Bird	- - - Different Same Bird	- - - Different Same Bird
☼ Aggressive	☼ Aggressive	☼ Aggressive
≡ Alarm Call	≡ Alarm Call	≡ Alarm Call
XXXX Behaviour	XXXX Behaviour	XXXX Behaviour
— Calling	— Calling	— Calling
♀ Female	♀ Female	♀ Female
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○ Song	○ Song	○ Song

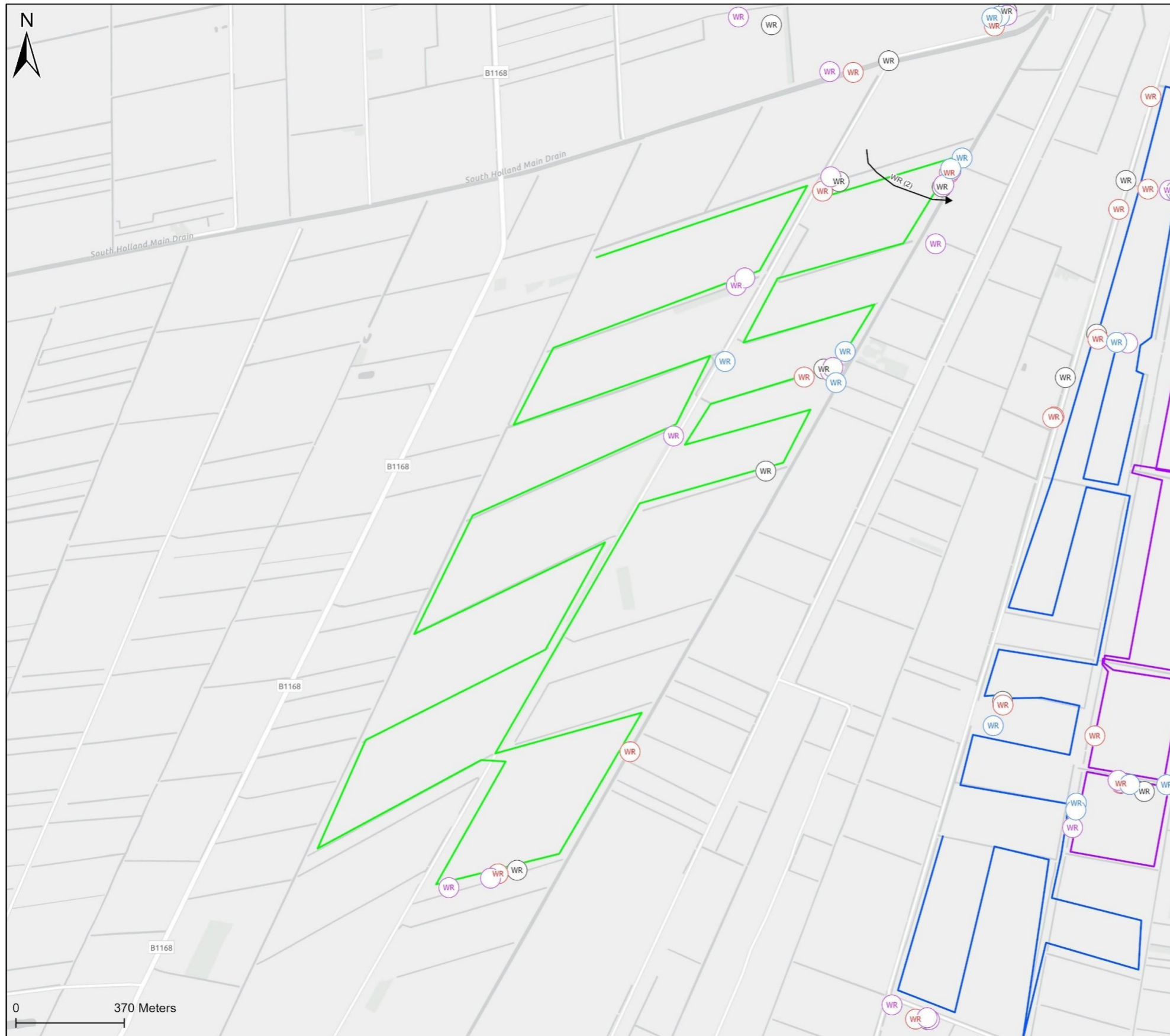
  

June	July	Transects
→ Direction of flight	→ Direction of flight	T1
- - - Different Same Bird	- - - Different Same Bird	T2
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≡ Alarm Call	≡ Alarm Call	T4
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♀ Female	♀ Female	Species Territories
♂ Male	♂ Male	
♀♂ Pair	♀♂ Pair	
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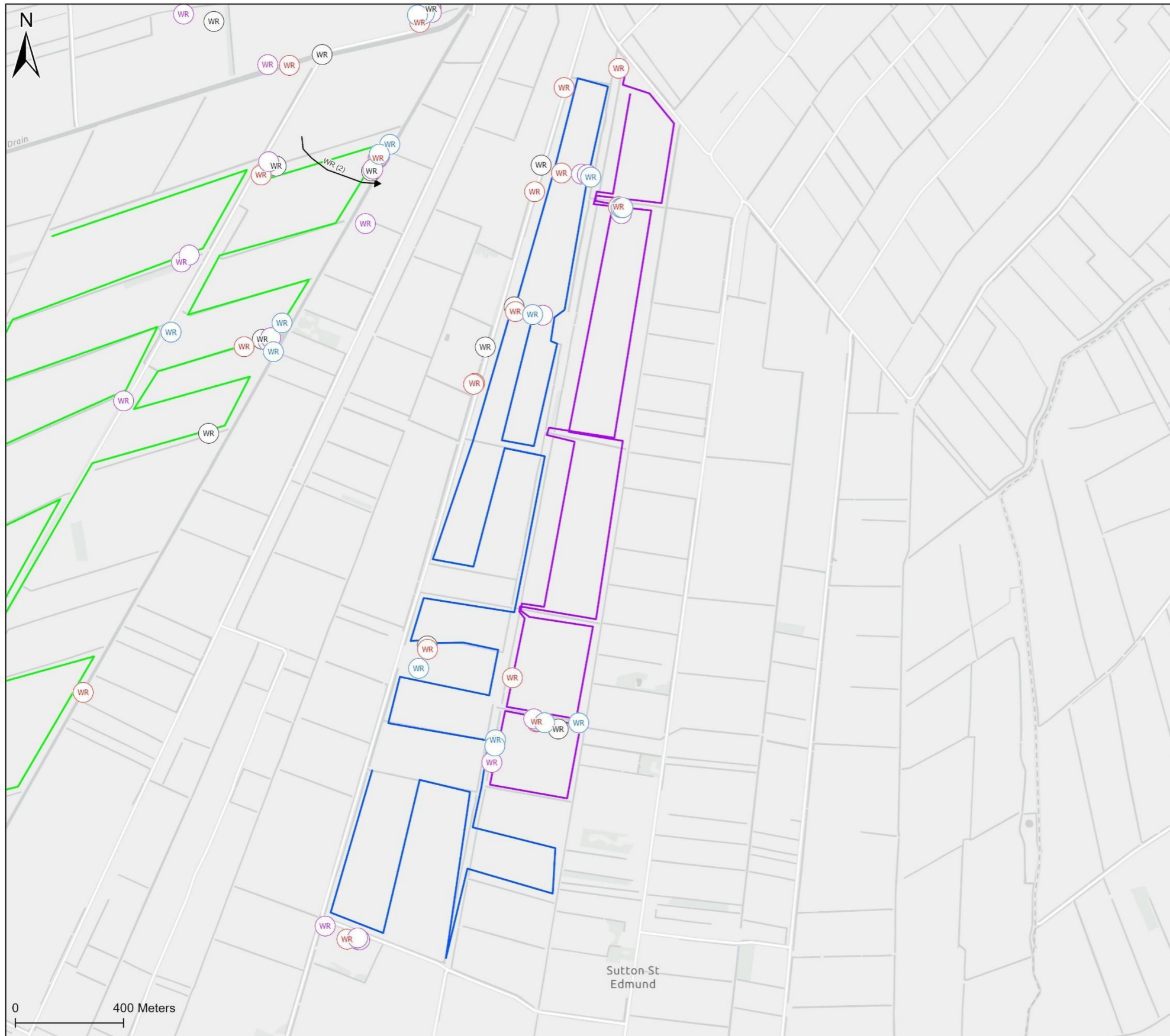
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Date: 03/12/2024

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Tel. 0220 7394 3700

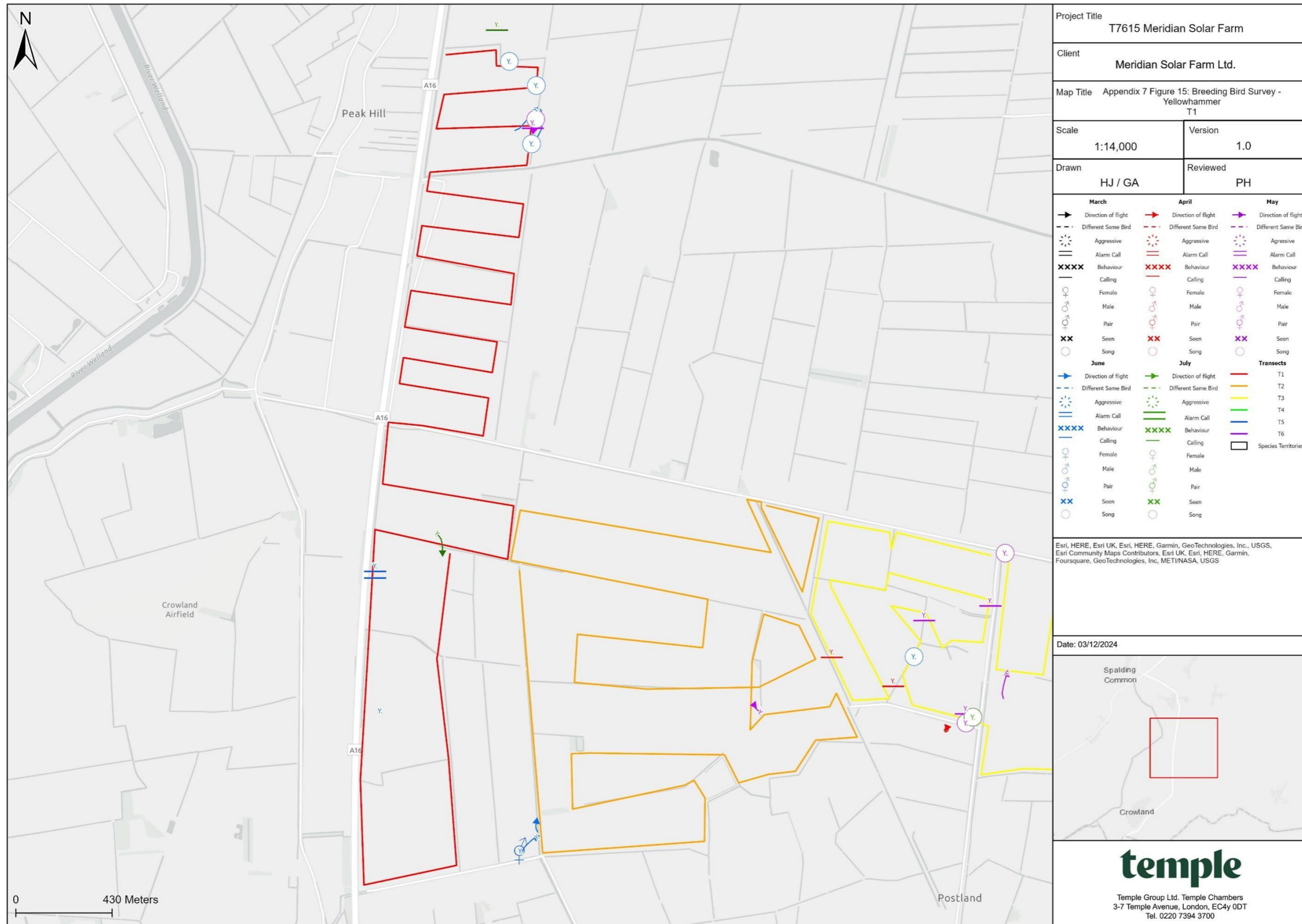


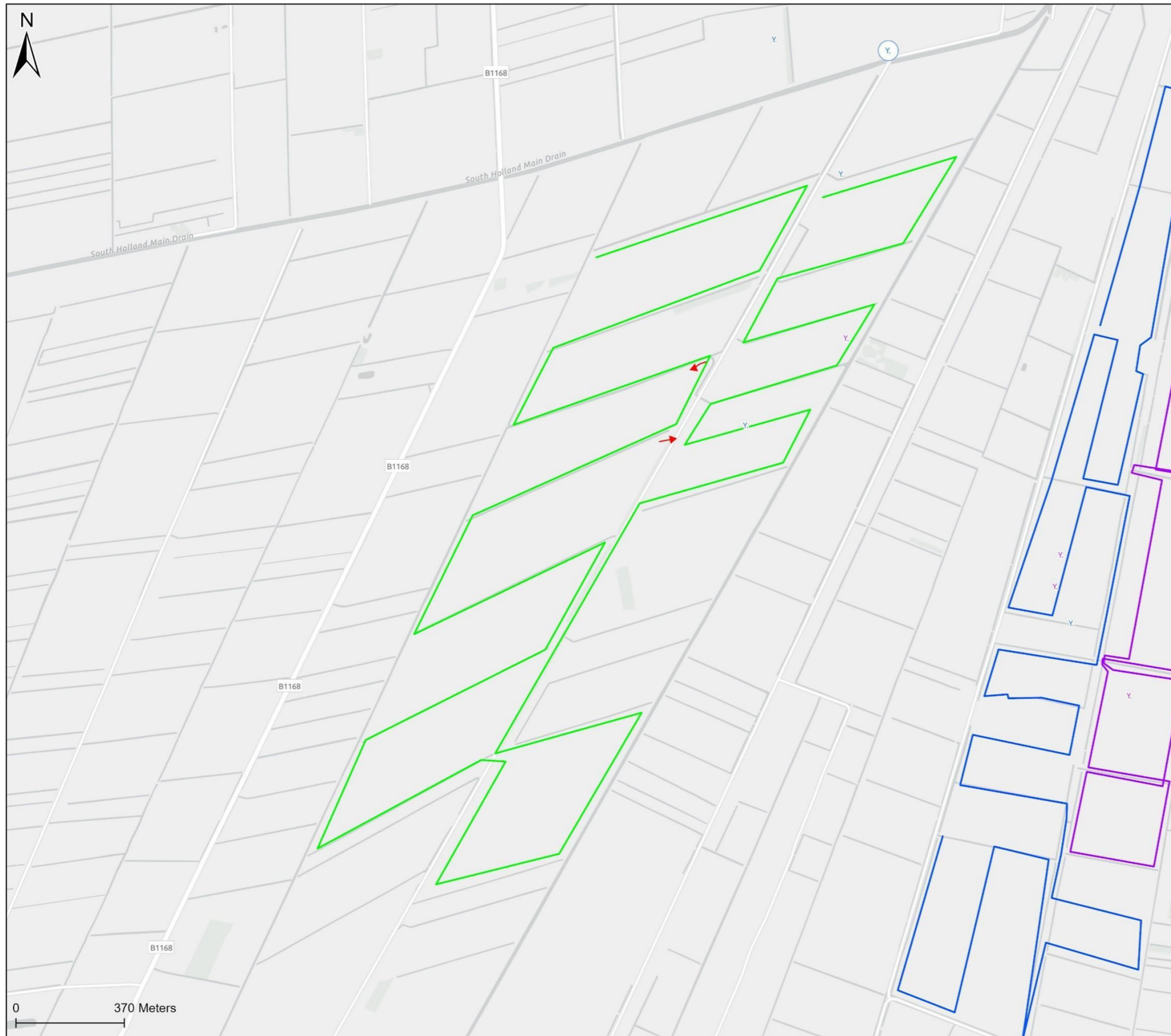
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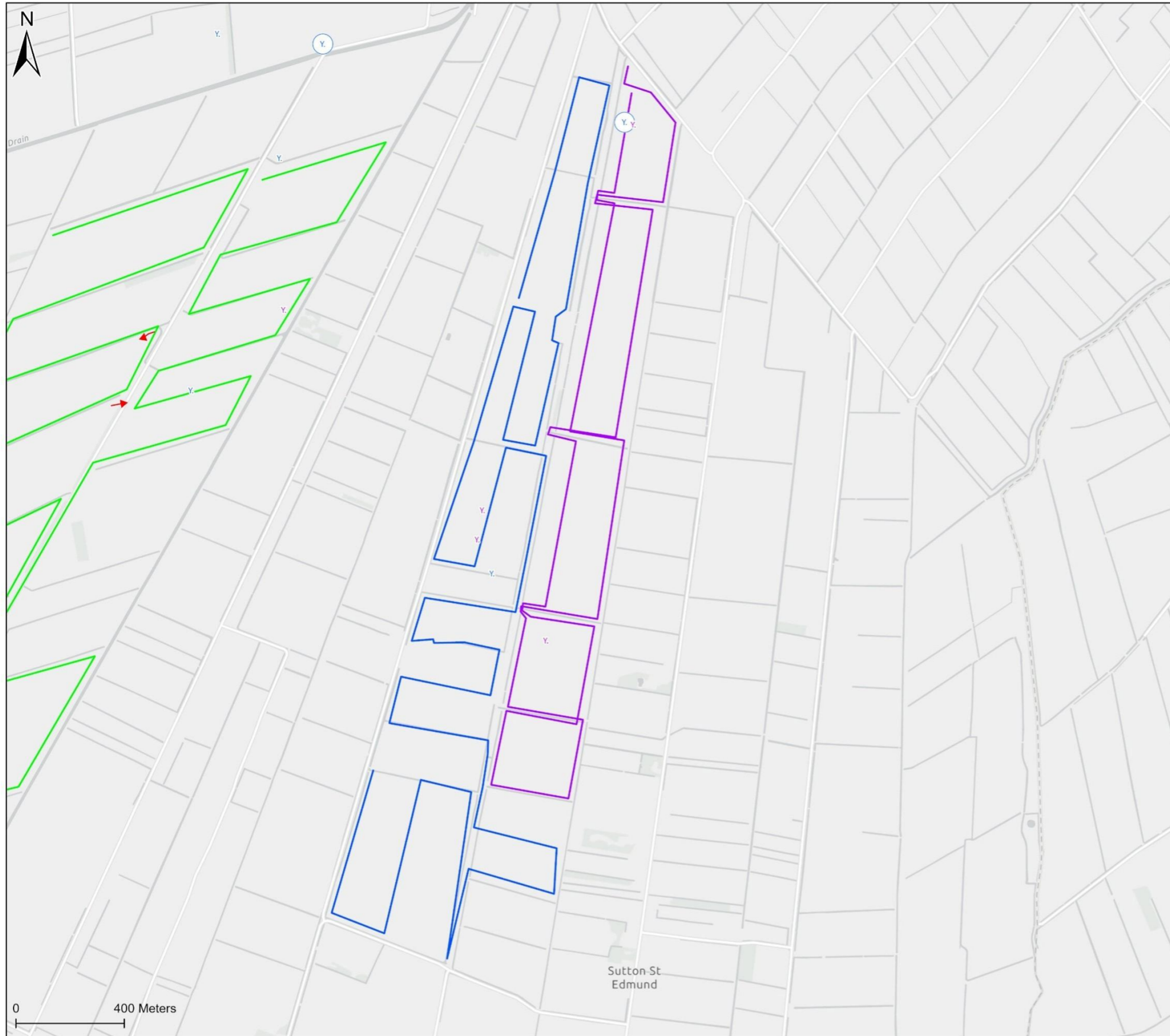
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Figure 15: Yellowhammer





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- **Lewes: 3 Upper Stalls, Iford, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 3EJ. T: +44 (0) 1273 813739**
- **Lichfield: 1-2 Trent Park, Eastern Avenue, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 6RN. T: +44 (0)1543 229049**
- **Manchester: Express Building, 3 George Leigh Street, Manchester, M4 5AD. T: +44 (0)161 509 4900**
- **Norwich: 60 Thorpe Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 1RY. T: +44 (0)1603 628408**
- **Wakefield: The Paine Suite, Nostell Business Park, Doncaster Road, Wakefield, WF4 1AB. T: +44 (0)1924 921900**