



Fosse Green Energy

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

VOLUME

3

Appendix 8-H: Non-Breeding birds

October 2024



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Fosse Green Energy Limited

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This report forms a technical appendix to the Preliminary Ecological Information (PEI) Report, specifically to accompany **PEI Report Volume 1, Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation**. This report provides information on the presence and distribution of non-breeding birds, relevant to the Fosse Green Energy project, hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development, including the results of surveys, undertaken within (and up to 200m from) the Site.
- 1.1.2 Further information on the Proposed Development is included within **PEI Report Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Proposed Development**.

1.2 Site Description

- 1.2.1 The Proposed Development is located 9 kilometres (km) south of Lincoln City Centre, Lincolnshire and lies within the administrative district of North Kesteven.
- 1.2.2 The Proposed Development comprises two distinct parcels, which are:
 - a. the Principal Site, which is the location where ground mounted solar PV panels, Solar Stations, Onsite Substation and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will be installed; and
 - b. the Cable Corridor, which will comprise the underground electrical infrastructure required to connect the Principal Site to the National Grid.
- 1.2.3 The location of the Proposed Development is centred at Ordnance Survey (OS) Grid Reference SK 90388 62514.
- 1.2.4 The Site covers an area of approximately 1,426 hectares (ha) and is dominated by arable fields (approximately 90% of the Site) with smaller areas of improved and semi-improved grassland, hedgerows and woodland.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

- 1.3.1 The aim of this report is to determine the presence, assemblage and distribution of non-breeding bird species within the Survey Area (see Section 3.1).
- 1.3.2 The objectives, therefore, are to:
 - a. review existing ecological data to identify any records of non-breeding birds occurring within the Study Area (see Section 3.1); and

- b. undertake surveys of non-breeding birds to confirm the presence, assemblage and distribution of non-breeding bird species within the Survey Area (see Section 3.1).

1.3.3 Combined, this is being used to:

- a. determine the biodiversity importance of the Site for non-breeding birds; and
- b. the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on non-breeding birds and any required mitigation (as presented in **PEI Report Volume 1, Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation**).

2. Relevant Legislation, Policy and Guidance

2.1 Legislation

Wildlife and Countryside Act

- 2.1.1 The legislative provisions for the protection of all wild birds in the United Kingdom (UK) are contained primarily in Sections 1-7 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) (Ref 1). Under the WCA, a wild bird is defined as any bird of a species that occurs in a wild state as a resident or a visitor to the European Territory of any member state but does not include poultry or (except in relation to the power to grant licences and prohibition on certain methods of killing) any game bird.
- 2.1.2 Reference is not made in this report to species afforded protection under Schedule 1 of the WCA, as the protection measures under the WCA only apply to bird species within the breeding season.

Directive of the Conservation of Wild Birds

- 2.1.3 A number of bird species recorded within the UK (including those that are resident, overwintering and migratory) are protected under European legislation through the Directive of the Conservation of Wild Birds (European Union (EU) Birds Directive) (Ref 2), which lists 193 species, or sub-species, of birds in Annex 1 which are:
- a. in danger of extinction;
 - b. are rare, or have restricted local distribution;
 - c. are vulnerable to specific changes in their habitat; or
 - d. require particular attention for reasons of the specific nature of habitat.
- 2.1.4 The Birds Directive was most recently transposed into English law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Ref 3). Although the UK is no longer a member state of the EU, the 2019 amendments (Ref 4) to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Ref 3) make it clear that provisions regarding the protection and designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are maintained. Species listed in Annex 1 are those for which the UK government takes special conservation measures, including the designation of land as SPAs to ensure the survival and reproduction of these species throughout their distributions. These sites are automatically included within the National Site Network which is a network of core breeding and resting sites that are protected for rare and threatened species.

2.2 Species of Principal Importance

- 2.2.1 In England, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (Ref 5) requires the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to publish and maintain a list of habitats and species that are of 'principal importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity and are regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Biodiversity Framework 2024 (Ref 6), which supersedes the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) (Ref 7). The UKBAP was launched in 1994 and established a framework and criteria for identifying species (and habitat types) of conservation concern.
- 2.2.2 There are 49 bird species listed as being Species of Principal Importance (SPI) for conservation in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act (Ref 5). These species are of material consideration during the planning process and are used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies (including local and regional authorities) in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act.

2.3 Local Priority Species

- 2.3.1 The Proposed Development is located within the county of Lincolnshire. Formerly, the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (3rd edition) (LBAP) (Ref 8) provided context to inform identification of threatened or uncommon species of local relevance, alongside priorities for conservation and enhancement targeted at a local level in Lincolnshire. However, under the Environment Act 2021 (Ref 9), these are being replaced by Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) (Ref 10), which are a system of spatial strategies for nature which will support delivery of biodiversity net gain (BNG) and provide more focussed action for nature recovery. Whilst this is still being developed for Lincolnshire and with no specific habitat or species plans currently in place, this report references those species formerly included on the LBAP, of which there are 17 priority bird species (see **Table 1**).

Table 1: Bird species listed on the LBAP

English (Vernacular) Name	Scientific Name
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>

English (Vernacular) Name	Scientific Name
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>

- 2.3.2 The following threats to farmland birds in Lincolnshire, relevant to non-breeding birds, were identified in the Lincolnshire BAP (Ref 8):
- the loss of permanent and relatively species-rich grassland;
 - increased chemical usage including fertilisers, pesticides and use of broad spectrum and persistent animal treatments;
 - uniformity within crops, offering fewer opportunities for birds to feed;
 - the decline of mixed farming;
 - loss of hedgerow trees through old age and removal for safety and other reasons;
 - hedgerow removal and poor management of remaining hedges; and
 - a reduction in crop mosaic.

2.4 Birds of Conservation Concern

- 2.4.1 The Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) is an assessment of the conservation status of all regularly occurring British birds. The lists (Red, Amber and Green) that indicate the level of conservation importance for each species are derived from quantitative assessments from standardised criteria and are drawn together by the UK's leading bird conservation organisations, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).
- 2.4.2 The most recent assessment, BoCC 5 (Ref 11), was published in December 2021 and is based on the most up-to-date evidence available and includes conservation status at global and European levels and, within the UK: historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. The BoCC list was further updated by BoCC 5a (Ref 12), which updates the assessment for seabirds. Collectively within this report, these are referred to as BoCC species.

2.4.3 The criteria for birds being included in the BoCC lists, relevant to the non-breeding season, are as follows:

Red List

- a. species that are globally threatened (Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable, but not Near Threatened) under International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List guidelines (Ref 13);
- b. species that have suffered a severe (>50%) non-breeding population decline within the UK in either the last 25 years or the longer-term (since 1969); or
- c. species whose UK range in the non-breeding season has declined by more than 50% between respective non-breeding atlases.

Amber List

- a. species that are threatened in Europe (Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable, but not Near Threatened as per IUCN Red List Guidelines (Ref 13));
- b. species that were previously red-listed for historical population decline, followed by an increase of at least 100% over 25 years or the longer-term period;
- c. species that have suffered a moderate (>25% but <50%) non-breeding population decline within the UK in either the last 25 years or the longer-term (since 1969);
- d. species whose UK range in the non-breeding season has declined by more than 25% but less than 50% between respective non-breeding atlases;
- e. non-breeding rarities (UK population <900 non-breeding individuals);
- f. non-breeding localisation whereby more than 50% of the UK population was found at ten or fewer sites in the non-breeding season; or
- g. non-breeding international importance whereby the UK holds at least 20% of the European population in the non-breeding season of a particular species.

Green List

- a. species that are not showing moderate or severe declines and do not qualify under any of the above criteria.

2.4.4 Although the BoCC lists confer no legal status in themselves, they are useful in evaluating the conservation significance of bird assemblages, and for assessing the potential significance of impacts and informing appropriate levels of mitigation with respect to bird populations that may be affected by a plan or project.

3. Methods

3.1 Characterising the Baseline

3.1.1 Within this report, the following terminology is used when referring to the geographic areas within which assessments were made:

- a. Study Area – the area within the Site and a 2km radius which was subject to collection of background information e.g. desk study records for birds to supplement the findings of the survey work;
- b. Zone of Influence (Zol) – the area over which non-breeding birds may be affected by the Proposed Development which, using the criteria below and proportionate to the Proposed Development's impacts, is up to 200m from the Site (dependent on the sensitivity of the species). Through review of likely impacts of the Proposed Development and results of the desk study, the scope of field surveys was then defined; and
- c. Survey Area – the area within which survey work was undertaken. The Survey Area to record the non-breeding bird assemblage included all habitats within the Site and a survey zone of a minimum of 50m wide around the Site. For species of greater conservation value and/ or higher sensitivity, e.g. those listed on Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive (Ref 2) and sensitive to potential noise or visual disturbance, where any such species were recorded, the Survey Area was extended up to 200m from the Site.

3.1.2 The Zol is based on:

- a. the nature of the project (a solar farm), project activities and the potential for effects at all development stages (construction, operation and decommissioning);
- b. the nature of the land use, their connectivity within and outside of the Site and how they may be used by non-breeding birds;
- c. the presence and assemblages of non-breeding bird species in the wider area, based on the location of the Site and desk study data; and
- d. the habits, behaviours and preferences of different bird species during the non-breeding season and whether these could be affected both spatially and temporally.

3.1.3 Whilst standardised survey zones for assessing the impacts of development on bird populations do not exist, the geographic areas described above provide information on non-breeding birds both within the Site and the area immediately surrounding the Site, including areas contiguous with the Site, where birds may potentially be adversely affected. Therefore, these are sufficient to determine the likely impacts of the Proposed Development on non-breeding bird species occurring or likely to occur within the vicinity of the Site.

3.2 Desk Study

- 3.2.1 A desk study was undertaken as part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in March 2024 (**PEI Report Volume 3, Appendix 8-B: PEA**). Records of protected and notable bird species within a 2 km radius of the Site were obtained through Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP). Only records up to ten years old were considered within the assessment, as any records older than ten years are unlikely to be still representative of bird species in the local area.

3.3 Field Survey

- 3.3.1 A series of walkover surveys were undertaken between 2022 and 2023 based on a transect methodology as detailed in Gilbert, et al. (1998) (Ref 14) and Bibby, et al. (2000) (Ref 15). The method is similar to that used in the breeding bird surveys (as presented in **PEI Report Volume 3, Appendix 8-G: Breeding Birds**) as birds encountered visually or by sound, either within the Survey Area or flying over the Survey Area, were recorded. The survey method allowed all species to be recorded, including waders, wildfowl and SPI.
- 3.3.2 Survey routes followed the majority of hedgerows, fence lines and field margins (including paths, tracks and roads). Deviations into areas of set-aside, stubble fields, scrub, woodland and other uncultivated habitats were made, where possible. The routes did not include walking through ploughed or cultivated fields, due to the possibility of trampling and damaging crops. Fields containing livestock were avoided for safety reasons but could be surveyed from the field boundary for any large non-breeding bird assemblages.
- 3.3.3 Regular stopping points were included at various locations around the Survey Area to record any species that may be passing through the Survey Area and to survey birds that were audible or visible within any inaccessible areas. Survey routes were mapped, and the direction walked alternated on each visit, to ensure that all areas were covered at various times of day (ranging from just before sunrise to just after sunset) across the duration of the survey but also including coverage of the period up to two hours after dusk.
- 3.3.4 On each survey visit, the route was walked at a slow pace with start and finish times noted. Prior to approaching a field, the observer undertook an initial scan to determine the presence of any species already present.
- 3.3.5 All birds seen and heard were recorded directly onto paper maps and then later digitised onto a 1:10,000 scale Ordnance Survey base map of the Survey Area or recorded onto an ArcGIS base map using 'Field Maps' software on hand-held Samsung Tablet devices, with a 1:10,000 scale Ordnance Survey base map of the Survey Area. Registrations of birds were recorded using standard BTO two letter species codes.

- 3.3.6 Surveys for non-breeding birds within the Site were undertaken between November 2023 and March 2024. Owing to the size of the Site, each survey was undertaken over a period of two–three days. Survey Metadata is presented in Annex A.

3.4 Assessment of Biodiversity Importance

- 3.4.1 The biodiversity importance of the Survey Area for non-breeding birds was assessed by evaluating any species afforded special statutory protection or those included on one, or more, of the lists of species of conservation interest, as detailed in Section 2 of this report. These include:
- a. species listed on Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive (Ref 2);
 - b. SPI in the UK (Ref 5) or Lincolnshire (see **Table 1**); or
 - c. species included in the BoCC Red and Amber Lists (Ref 11, Ref 12).

Species Abundance

- 3.4.2 In addition to evaluating a site based on its populations of non-breeding birds in relation to legal status, rarity and biodiversity importance, consideration has to be given to the value of the Survey Area for the population of individual species that it supports. This can be done by comparing the population present within the Survey Area with the national and county non-breeding population for certain species. National estimates for non-breeding birds are published in a paper: 'Population estimates of birds in Great Britain and the United Kingdom' (Ref 16). The BTO Bird Atlas 2007–2011 (Ref 17) was also reviewed for species information on a national level.
- 3.4.3 County-level estimates on the non-breeding bird populations of the majority of species in Lincolnshire were obtained from online resources and county avifauna publications, where this information was available. However, professional judgement was applied when determining the geographic importance of species where population estimates were not available.

Species Diversity

- 3.4.4 The number of species recorded in an area is a simple measure of diversity that can indicate its importance at each season of the year.
- 3.4.5 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) (or County Wildlife Sites (CWS)) are amongst the most important places for wildlife in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, together with legally protected land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- 3.4.6 In Lincolnshire, CWSs are selected for their habitats and subsequently has no specific criteria for birds. Therefore, species diversity in Lincolnshire has been measured using professional judgement, considering species presence within distinct habitat types within the Site, e.g. farmland passerines, with reference to GLNP 'Local Wildlife Site Guidelines for Greater Lincolnshire' (Ref 18).

3.5 Importance of the non-breeding bird population

- 3.5.1 An essential prerequisite step to allow ecological impact assessment of the Proposed Development was an evaluation of the relative biodiversity importance of the Survey Area for breeding birds. This is necessary to set the terms of reference for the subsequent ecological impact assessment (as presented in **PEI Report Volume 1, Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation**).
- 3.5.2 The method of evaluation that was utilised has been developed with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines (Ref 19). This gives guidance on scoping and carrying out environmental assessments and places appraisal in the context of relevant policies and at a geographical scale at which feature matters (i.e. international, national, regional, county, district, local or site). Data received through desk study and field-based surveys were used and evaluated on species rarity, abundance and diversity within the Survey Area to assess the biodiversity importance of the breeding bird populations recorded during the field surveys. Professional judgement was also applied where necessary. Relevant published national and local guidance and criteria can be used, where available, to inform the assessment of biodiversity importance and to assist consistency in evaluation.

3.6 Assumptions and Limitations

- 3.6.1 There were a number of modifications to the Site, which in turn resulted in minor modifications to the Survey Area used during the course of the surveys for non-breeding birds. The survey zone of minimum 50m around the Site, forming part of the Survey Area was such that it allowed for minor modifications to the Proposed Development without reducing efficacy of the survey. Whilst it is acknowledged that individuals of some species may have been missed, due to small areas of the Site not being surveyed (<1%), any modifications to the Proposed Development are not considered to have significantly altered the conclusions drawn within this report. Sufficient representatives of all habitat types have been covered within the entirety of the optimal survey period for non-breeding birds, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of bird species and assemblages present.
- 3.6.2 Therefore, sufficient information has been gathered during the assessment to provide a representative sample of the non-breeding bird population present within the Site.

4. Results

4.1 Desk Study

- 4.1.1 The data search, undertaken through GLNP, returned records of 50 bird species, including specially protected or notable bird species (see Section 2) from within the Study Area and from the preceding ten years from the request date. A list of the 50 species recorded during the desk study is included in **PEI Report Volume 3, Appendix 8-G: Breeding Birds (Confidential Annex A)** as the list contains details of specially protected bird species.
- 4.1.2 Of the 50 bird species (some of which are on more than one list):
- 20 are specially protected species that are listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive (Ref 2);
 - six are SPI in the UK (Ref 5);
 - ten species are included in the BoCC Red List (Ref 11, Ref 12);
 - 17 species are included in the BoCC Amber List (Ref 11, Ref 12); and
 - no species are listed as LBAP species in Lincolnshire (see **Table 1**).

4.2 Field Survey

- 4.2.1 Eighty-four species were recorded during surveys of non-breeding birds. A summary of the species, peak count data and conservation designations of the 84 non-breeding bird species recorded is provided in **Table 2**.
- 4.2.2 For species which are widespread throughout the Survey Area (e.g., Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*), are common within the county and the UK and are not of conservation concern (i.e., not listed on one or more of the lists of conservation concern as detailed in Section 2 of this appendix), the peak count of individuals of these species have not been calculated and these are referred to in **Table 2** as being present (P).
- 4.2.3 From the non-breeding assemblage of 84 species, the following were recorded during field surveys (some of which are on more than one list):
- ten specially protected species that are listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive (Ref 2);
 - 16 species are listed as a SPI in the UK (Ref 5);
 - 26 species are included on the BoCC Red List (Ref 11, Ref 12);
 - 31 species are included on the BoCC Amber List (Ref 11, Ref 12); and
 - 11 species are listed as LBAP species in Lincolnshire (see **Table 1**).

Table 2: Peak count data and conservation designation of non-breeding bird species recorded utilising the Survey Area (the order of birds is according to the British List (10th edition))

Species (English Name) and Scientific Name	Conservation Designation (where applicable)	Visit 1 (Nov 2023)	Visit 2 (Dec 2023)	Visit 3 (Jan 2024)	Visit 4 (Jan 2024)	Visit 5 (Feb 2024)	Visit 6 (Mar 2024)	Supporting Notes
Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	-	3	-	14	-	-	-	-
Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus</i>	Annex 1, SPI, BoCC Red	5	-	-	-	-	-	A small group of five birds was recorded flying over the Site, to the south east of the Principal Site in November 2023.
Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Annex 1, BoCC Amber	-	-	43	36	-	-	Up to 43 birds recorded on flooded fields east of the River Brant, but outside of the Site.
Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>	BoCC Amber	347	-	2	-	-	6	Naturalised residential population present in wider area, recorded flying over.
Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	BoCC Amber	85	-	175	1	-	-	Recorded flying over the Site, with single birds recorded in January near the River Brant.
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	-	-	23	15	4	-	2	-
Gadwall <i>Mareca strepera</i>	BoCC Amber	2	-	-	-	-	-	Recorded close to water bodies.
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	BoCC Amber	1	1	-	3	-	-	Recorded close to water bodies.
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	BoCC Amber	-	-	-	11	15	34	Recorded close to water bodies.

Species (English Name) and Scientific Name	Conservation Designation (where applicable)	Visit 1 (Nov 2023)	Visit 2 (Dec 2023)	Visit 3 (Jan 2024)	Visit 4 (Jan 2024)	Visit 5 (Feb 2024)	Visit 6 (Mar 2024)	Supporting Notes
Goosander <i>Mergus merganser</i>	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
Red-legged Partridge <i>Alectoris rufa</i>	-	37	30	26	-	38	7	-
Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	SPI, BoCC Red, LBAP	27	35	36	33	28	27	Coveys (groups) recorded across the Survey Area
Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	-
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	-
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Annex 1	-	-	-	3	-	-	Recorded close to water bodies and wet ditches on a single occasion in January 2024.
Great White Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>	Annex 1, BoCC Amber	-	1	1	-	-	-	Recorded close to the River Brant and associated wet ditches.
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	-	2	1	5	4	6	3	-
Red Kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>	Annex 1	-	1	-	-	-	1	Single birds recorded flying over the Site.
Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Annex 1, BoCC Amber	-	-	-	1	-	-	Single bird recorded on a single occasion flying over the Site.
Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	BoCC Amber	1	2	2	2	1	2	Regularly recorded hunting over the Site.

Species (English Name) and Scientific Name	Conservation Designation (where applicable)	Visit 1 (Nov 2023)	Visit 2 (Dec 2023)	Visit 3 (Jan 2024)	Visit 4 (Jan 2024)	Visit 5 (Feb 2024)	Visit 6 (Mar 2024)	Supporting Notes
Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	-	8	16	19	19	10	10	-
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	BoCC Amber	1	1	-	1	-	1	Associated with watercourses.
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	-	-	-	-	-	37	-	-
Common Crane <i>Grus grus</i>	Annex 1	2	-	-	-	-	-	Recorded flying over the Principal Site in November 2023.
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	Annex 1, BoCC Amber	-	-	-	-	1	-	Recorded flying over the Principal Site in November 2023.
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Annex 1	6	42	28	1	-	1	Small numbers recorded across the Principal Site.
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	SPI, BoCC Red, LBAP	48	60	-	6	200	28	Small numbers recorded across the Survey Area, predominantly in the north of the Site.
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	BoCC Red	2	-	-	-	-	-	Recorded flying over the Principal Site in November 2023.
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	SPI, BoCC Amber	3	-	-	-	1	1	Associated with wet ditches and watercourses.
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	BoCC Red	-	1	1	1	3	-	Small numbers recorded near woodland and field margins.
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	BoCC Amber, LBAP	1	2	6	2	-	34	Small numbers recorded foraging in arable fields.

Species (English Name) and Scientific Name	Conservation Designation (where applicable)	Visit 1 (Nov 2023)	Visit 2 (Dec 2023)	Visit 3 (Jan 2024)	Visit 4 (Jan 2024)	Visit 5 (Feb 2024)	Visit 6 (Mar 2024)	Supporting Notes
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	BoCC Amber	64	470	24	141	48	283	Associated with fields and wetland areas.
Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i>	BoCC Red	11	11	60	74	6	6	Associated with fields and wetland areas.
Great Black-backed Gull <i>Larus marinus</i>	BoCC Red	-	-	12	-	-	-	Associated with fields and wetland areas.
Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	SPI, BoCC Red	31	3	30	3	105	-	Associated with fields and wetland areas.
Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	BoCC Amber	201	-	2	-	4	2	Passage birds in November 2023, mostly recorded flying over and with 2-4 birds seen sporadically.
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	BoCC Amber	23	62	85	95	6	39	Flocks of birds foraging in arable fields across the Site.
Wood Pigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	BoCC Amber	536	193	208	673	354	253	Flocks of birds foraging in arable fields across the Site.
Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Green Woodpecker <i>Picus viridis</i>	-	2	1	1	3	-	6	Associated with mature trees
Great Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i>	-	3	-	4	2	8	5	-

Species (English Name) and Scientific Name	Conservation Designation (where applicable)	Visit 1 (Nov 2023)	Visit 2 (Dec 2023)	Visit 3 (Jan 2024)	Visit 4 (Jan 2024)	Visit 5 (Feb 2024)	Visit 6 (Mar 2024)	Supporting Notes
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	BoCC Amber	1	6	14	9	10	5	Single birds recorded across the Survey Area, swelled by passage and over-wintering birds in January and February 2024.
Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Annex 1	-	-	-	1	-	-	Single bird recorded flying over in January 2024.
Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	-	13	1	6	3	12	4	-
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	-
Jackdaw <i>Coloeus monedula</i>	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	-
Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	BoCC Amber	719	417	741	575	100	49	Present throughout, with flocks foraging in arable farmland and utilising trees for resting.
Carrion Crow <i>Corvus corone</i>	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	-
Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>	-	2	-	4	-	2	3	-
Coal Tit <i>Periparus ater</i>	-	-	-	2	7	2	2	-
Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	-
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	-
Marsh Tit <i>Poecile palustris</i>	BoCC Red	-	-	-	-	1	-	Single bird recorded in scrub in the Principal Site.

Species (English Name) and Scientific Name	Conservation Designation (where applicable)	Visit 1 (Nov 2023)	Visit 2 (Dec 2023)	Visit 3 (Jan 2024)	Visit 4 (Jan 2024)	Visit 5 (Feb 2024)	Visit 6 (Mar 2024)	Supporting Notes
Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	SPI, BoCC Red, LBAP	68	37	55	81	107	141	Associated with arable farmland across the Site.
Long-tailed Tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	-	26	36	38	12	23	41	-
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	-
Nuthatch <i>Sitta europea</i>	-	1	1	1	2	1	2	-
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	BoCC Amber	29	25	25	2917	37	63	Associated with scrub and hedgerows across the Site.
Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	-	-	-	3	2	1	-	Associated with trees, scrub and hedgerows.
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	SPI, BoCC Red, LBAP	547	951	1,687	1,392	1,120	385	Associated with most habitat types and numbers swelled by migratory overwintering birds in January and February 2024.
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	-	45	114	134	119	96	91	-
Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	BoCC Red	622	886	878	627	438	1,288	Associated with scrub and hedgerows bearing fruit.
Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	BoCC Amber	38	65	155	375	139	73	Associated with scrub and hedgerows bearing fruit.
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	SPI, BoCC Amber	17	27	29	18	22	16	Associated with scrub and hedgerows across the Site.

Species (English Name) and Scientific Name	Conservation Designation (where applicable)	Visit 1 (Nov 2023)	Visit 2 (Dec 2023)	Visit 3 (Jan 2024)	Visit 4 (Jan 2024)	Visit 5 (Feb 2024)	Visit 6 (Mar 2024)	Supporting Notes
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	BoCC Red	1	3	1	1	22	1	Unusually large increase of 22 birds in February 2024 are likely to have been on passage.
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	-
Stonechat <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	-	1	-	-	2	5	-	-
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	SPI, BoCC Red	-	-	-	-	25	6	Associated with scrub, hedgerows near residential properties and agricultural buildings.
Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	SPI, BoCC Red, LBAP	-	-	7	-	-	-	Small group associated with hedgerow in the southern end of the Cable Corridor.
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	SPI, BoCC Amber	27	30	48	36	35	60	Associated with scrub and hedgerows.
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	BoCC Amber	1	3	1	1	-	1	Associated with wetland areas.
Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	-	13	55	20	31	25	19	-
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	BoCC Amber	62	203	225	32	35	93	Groups recorded feeding within grassland and arable fields, numbers swelled by passage birds overhead.
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	-

Species (English Name) and Scientific Name	Conservation Designation (where applicable)	Visit 1 (Nov 2023)	Visit 2 (Dec 2023)	Visit 3 (Jan 2024)	Visit 4 (Jan 2024)	Visit 5 (Feb 2024)	Visit 6 (Mar 2024)	Supporting Notes
Brambling <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	-	5	1	-	-	-	-	-
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	SPI, BoCC Amber, LBAP	4	3	2	4	3	2	Associated with scrub and hedgerows.
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	BoCC Red	40	30	87	5	13	2	Small groups recorded close to scrub, hedgerows and trees.
Siskin <i>Spinus spinus</i>	-	14	-	20	2	4	3	-
Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>	SPI, BoCC Red, LBAP	229	324	180	132	534	233	Flocks of Linnet recorded within arable farmland across the Site.
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	-	175	65	96	36	59	26	-
Redpoll <i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	SPI, BoCC Red	11	2	1	-	-	-	Birds recorded predominantly on passage in small groups.
Corn Bunting <i>Emberiza calandra</i>	SPI, BoCC Red, LBAP	-	1	1	3	42	34	Recorded in small groups near arable fields.
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	SPI, BoCC Red, LBAP	25	119	201	122	186	229	Recorded in scrub and hedgerows within arable farmland.
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	SPI, BoCC Amber, LBAP	3	55	43	8	35	41	Recorded close to watercourses and within arable farmland.

5. Evaluation

- 5.1.1 The desk study and field surveys were used to determine the importance of the Site for non-breeding birds and this is presented in the following sections.

5.2 Specially Protected Species

- 5.2.1 The data search returned records of 20 bird species (see **PEI Report Volume 3, Appendix 8-G: Breeding Birds – Confidential Annex A**) listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive (Ref 2). Fourteen of these species are absent from the Site during the non-breeding season, as confirmed by field surveys.
- 5.2.2 Six Annex 1 species (Ref 2) were identified through the desk study as occurring within the Study Area and identified as non-breeding species within the Survey Area (Whooper Swan, Little Egret, Marsh Harrier, Avocet, Peregrine, Red Kite). Additionally, Bewick's Swan, Great White Egret, Crane and Golden Plover (Annex 1 species), although not recorded during the desk study, were also recorded during field surveys. Further details of all of these are presented below:
- a. Bewick's Swan – five birds were recorded flying over the Principal Site in November 2023.
 - b. Whooper Swan – up to 43 birds were recorded on flooded fields, east of the River Brant (Cable Corridor), but outside of the Site and within the 200 m Survey Area.
 - c. Little Egret – recorded close to water bodies and wet ditches on a single occasion in January 2024.
 - d. Great White Egret – recorded close to the River Brant (Cable Corridor) in December 2023 and January 2024.
 - e. Red Kite – single birds recorded flying over the Cable Corridor and Principal Site.
 - f. Marsh Harrier – single bird recorded flying over the Principal Site.
 - g. Crane – two birds were recorded flying high over the Principal Site in November 2023.
 - h. Avocet – single bird flying over the Principal Site in November 2023.
 - i. Golden Plover - small numbers recorded within arable habitats across the Principal Site, often associated with Lapwing.
 - j. Peregrine – a single bird flew over the Cable Corridor in January 2024.

5.3 Species of Conservation Importance

Species of Principal Importance (SPI)

- 5.3.1 The desk study identified six SPI (as detailed in **PEI Report Volume 3, Appendix 8-G: Breeding Birds – Confidential Annex A**), none of which were recorded within the Site during field surveys, either because they are summer visitors in the UK or because the habitat within the Site is not suitable to support these species during the non-breeding period.
- 5.3.2 Field surveys identified 16 non-breeding bird SPI (Bewick's Swan, Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Herring Gull, Skylark, Starling, Song Thrush, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Dunnock, Bullfinch, Linnet, Redpoll, Corn Bunting, Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting) within the Survey Area during field surveys.
- 5.3.3 Bewick's Swan were not recorded as utilising the Site and were recorded flying over the Survey Area. The other 15 SPI were all utilising the Site for foraging or resting.

Birds of Conservation Concern

- 5.3.4 Inclusion on the BoCC Red or Amber list (Ref 11, Ref 12) does not confer any statutory protection. However, the species reported below are all of conservation importance and considered to be under varying levels of threat in a UK context.

Red List species

- 5.3.5 The desk study identified ten bird species (as listed in **PEI Report Volume 3, Appendix 8-G: Breeding Birds – Confidential Annex A**) that are listed on the BoCC Red List, nine of which were not recorded within the Site during field surveys, either because they are summer visitors in the UK or because the habitat within the Site is not suitable to support these species during the non-breeding period. Fieldfare, a BoCC Red-listed species, was identified as occurring within the Study Area and was recorded using the Site during field surveys.
- 5.3.6 Field surveys identified 20 non-breeding BoCC Red-listed bird species (Ref 11, Ref 12) (Bewick's Swan, Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Dunlin, Woodcock, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Marsh Tit, Skylark, Starling, Fieldfare, Mistle Thrush, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Greenfinch, Linnet, Redpoll, Corn Bunting and Yellowhammer) that were recorded within the Survey Area.
- 5.3.7 Bewick's Swan and Dunlin were not recorded utilising the Site and were flying over the Survey Area. The other 18 BoCC Red-listed species were all utilising the Site for foraging or resting.

Amber list species

- 5.3.8 The desk study identified 17 bird species (as listed in **PEI Report Volume 3, Appendix 8-G: Breeding Birds – Confidential Annex A**) that are listed on the BoCC Amber list (Ref 11, Ref 12), eleven of which are absent from the Site, as confirmed by field surveys, either because they are summer visitors in the UK or because the habitat within the Site is not suitable to support these species during the non-breeding period.
- 5.3.9 Field surveys identified 26 non-breeding BoCC Amber-listed bird species (Ref 11, Ref 12) (Whooper Swan, Greylag Goose, Pink-footed Goose, Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Great White Egret, Marsh Harrier, Sparrowhawk, Moorhen, Avocet, Green Sandpiper, Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Stock Dove, Wood Pigeon, Kestrel, Rook, Wren, Redwing, Song Thrush, Dunnock, Meadow Pipit, Bullfinch and Reed Bunting) that were recorded within the Survey Area.
- 5.3.10 Whooper Swan, Pink-footed Goose, Great White Egret, Marsh Harrier, Avocet were not recorded utilising the Site and were either flying over the Survey Area or using habitats outside of the Site, but within the Survey Area. The other 21 BoCC Amber-listed species were all utilising the Site for foraging or resting.

5.4 Species Abundance

- 5.4.1 In addition to evaluating a site based on its populations of non-breeding birds in relation to legal status, rarity and conservation value, consideration has to be given to the value of the Site for the population of individual species that it supports. This can be done by comparing the population present within the Site with the national and county non-breeding population for certain species.
- 5.4.2 No peak counts of any species form a significant proportion (i.e. 1% or more) of the national non-breeding population estimates as detailed in Woodward, et al. (2020) (Ref 16).
- 5.4.3 Current county population estimates for some of the species afforded special statutory protection and/or, of conservation importance are not available. However, whilst the majority of species of conservation importance that were recorded within the Site are declining in the UK, most remain widespread in Lincolnshire.
- 5.4.4 Therefore, using professional judgement, the majority of individuals of species recorded were all relatively low and are unlikely to represent significant proportions (i.e. 1 % or more) of the county populations in Lincolnshire.
- 5.4.5 Some species, including Avocet, Crane and Bewick's Swan, are localised species in Lincolnshire and would represent a notable record in both North Kesteven and Lincolnshire. However, all species were recorded flying over the Survey Area and not utilising the Site and therefore the Site does not represent any importance for these species.

- 5.4.6 The peak count of non-breeding farmland bird species, including Grey Partridge (36), Skylark (141), Linnet (534), Yellowhammer (229) and Corn Bunting (42) are of District importance in North Kesteven. The peak count of Whooper Swan (43) is also likely to be of District importance in North Kesteven. The farmland bird species were recorded throughout the Site in arable habitats and the group of Whooper Swans were recorded outside of the Site, but within the 200 m Survey Area, using flooded habitats around the River Brant. The remaining species populations occurring within the Survey Area are considered to be of no more than Local importance.
- 5.4.7 All other species recorded during field surveys of the Survey Area are not present in numbers important at a county scale in Lincolnshire or District scale in North Kesteven and are of Local importance only.

5.5 Species Diversity

- 5.5.1 Professional judgement was used to evaluate the number of species recorded within the Survey Area and in each discrete habitat type to assess species diversity.
- 5.5.2 The number of non-breeding bird species recorded across the Site was 84 and would place the importance of the Site for species diversity as being of County importance. When factoring non-breeding species that were actually utilising the Site, i.e. not including birds flying over, the number of non-breeding species recorded was 77. This would still be of County importance.
- 5.5.3 There are no specific criteria for evaluation of the breeding species assemblage and numbers recorded during surveys, with respect to criteria for selection of Local Wildlife Sites (of County value) in Lincolnshire. Therefore, using professional judgement, the Site and the species (and assemblages) that this area supports are unlikely to qualify as a LWS.

5.6 Species Distribution

- 5.6.1 The location of Annex 1 species and farmland bird species (Grey Partridge, , Skylark, Linnet, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting recorded within the Survey Area (see **Table 2**) are presented in **Figures 8-H-1 to 8-H-2**. In general, concentrations of species were found within the most suitable habitats to support each individual species' needs (e.g., species reliant on woodland habitat were found within woodland habitat).

6. Conclusions

- 6.1.1 Eighty-four bird species were recorded during non-breeding bird surveys for the Proposed Development. Of these 84 bird species, 52 species meet at least one of a range of criteria relating to conservation importance (see **Table 2**) as detailed in Section 2 of this report.
- 6.1.2 The majority of species populations within the Site are of Local importance as they do not meet the thresholds as being significant (i.e. 1% or more) of the county or national populations when evaluated against published data. However, the peak counts of farmland bird species (including Grey Partridge, Skylark, Linnet, Corn Bunting and Yellowhammer) and Whooper Swan are likely to be of District importance.
- 6.1.3 Species diversity across the Site is of County importance, based on the number of species recorded utilising the Site.

7. References

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- Ref 3 HMSO (2018). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. [online] Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made>. [Accessed August 2024]
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- Ref 5 HMSO (2006). The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. [online] Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>. [Accessed August 2024]
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- Ref 8 Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership (2011). Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2020 (3rd edition). [online] Available at: <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/201110-LincolnshireBAP-3rd-edition.pdf> [Accessed August 2024]
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- Ref 10 Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2024). [online – in progress] Available at: <https://www.glinclnrs.org.uk/>. [Accessed August 2024]
- Ref 11 Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D and Win, I. (2021) The status of our

- bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *British Birds* 114: 723-747.
- Ref 12 Stanbury, A., Burns, F., Aebischer, N., Baker, H., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Dunn, T., Lindley, P., Murphy, M., Noble, D., Owens, R. and Quinn, L. (2024) The status of the UK's breeding seabirds: an addendum to the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *British Birds* 117: 471-487.
- Ref 13 The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (2024). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. [online] Available at: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/en>. [Accessed August 2024]
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- Ref 15 Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D., Hill, D.A. & Mustoe, S.H. (2000). *Bird Census Techniques*: 2nd edition. Academic Press, London.
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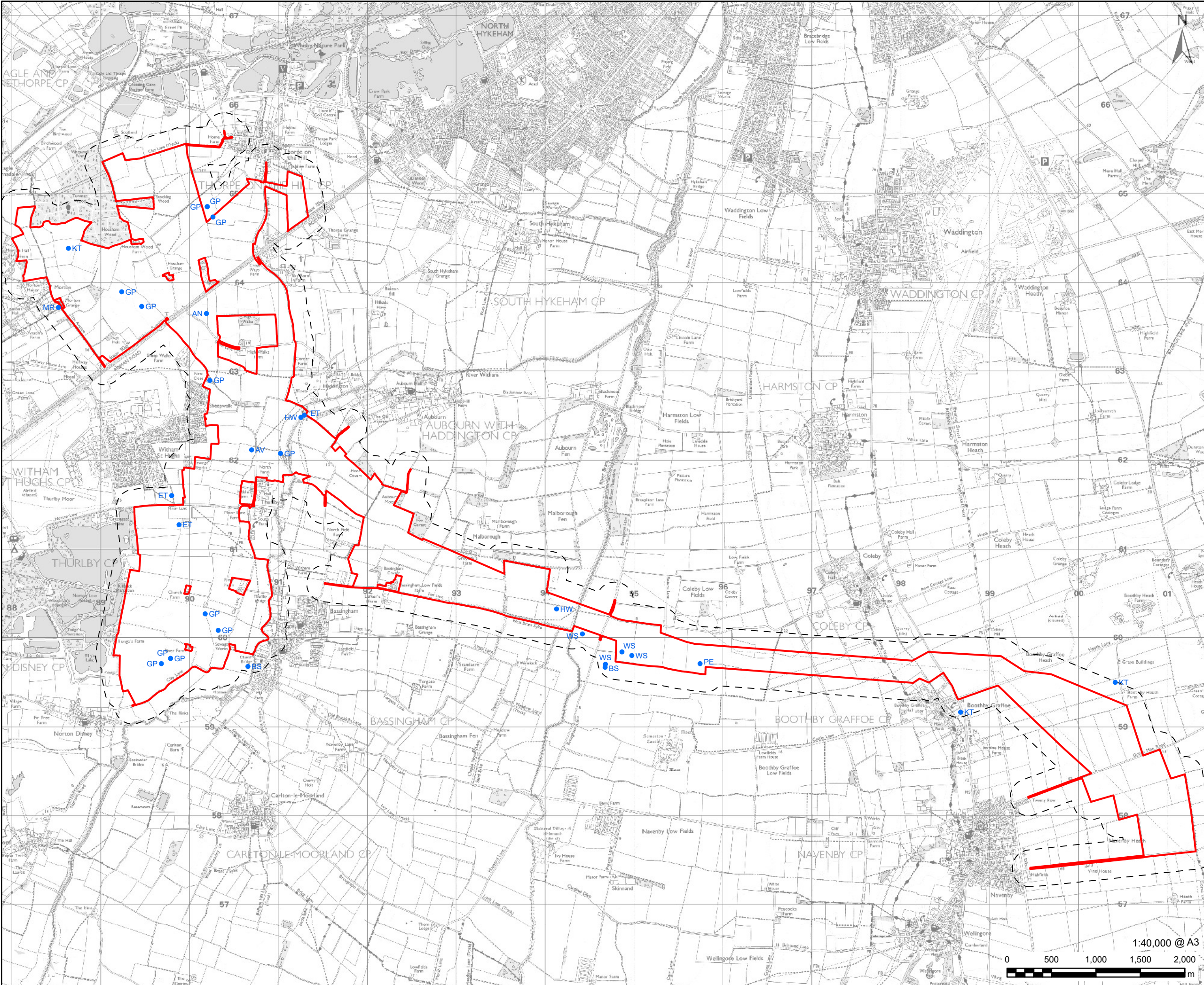
Annex A Survey Metadata

Survey Date	Weather conditions (c = °C)
10/10/2023	Temp. 12-19c, thin cloud, wind 10 mph, South-west, Dry.
12/10/2023	Temp. 16-18c, 100% cloud, wind 5 mph South-west, light drizzle.
13/10/2023	Temp. 14-16c, 100% cloud, wind 5 mph South-west, Dry.
13/11/2023	Temp. 12c, 100% cloud, wind 10 mph South-east, Dry.
14/11/2023	Temp. 14c, 80% cloud, wind 10 mph South-east, Dry.
12/12/2023	Temp. 8c, 50% cloud, wind 6mph South-east, Dry.
11/12/2023	Temp. 9c, 100%, cloud, wind 5mph West, Dry.
12/12/2023	Temp. 8c, 50%, cloud, wind 6mph South-east, Dry.
13/12/2023	Temp. 6c, 100%, cloud, wind 6mph North, Dry.
14/12/2023	Temp. 7c, 80% cloud, wind 10mph South-west, Dry.
08/01/2024	Temp. 6c, 2% cloud, wind 5mph North-east, Dry.
09/01/2024	Temp. 1-4c, 2% cloud, wind 15mph North-east, Dry.
10/01/2024	Temp. 6c, 20% cloud, wind 8mph North-east, Dry.
11/01/2024	Temp. 5c, 100% cloud, wind 10mph North, Dry.
29/01/2024	Temp. 11c, 90% cloud, wind 10mph South, Dry.
30/01/2024	Temp. 8c, 100% cloud, wind 10mph North-west, Dry.
01/02/2024	Temp. 9c, 30% cloud, wind 10mph South-east, Dry.
02/02/2024	Temp. 10-13c, 50% cloud, wind 10mph South-west, Dry.
19/02/2024	Temp. 6-9c, 100% cloud, wind 8mph South, occasional drizzle.
20/02/2024	Temp. 8-11c, 50% cloud, wind 15mph South-west, Dry.
22/02/2024	Temp. 11c, 20% cloud, wind 15mph North-west, Dry.
23/02/2024	Temp. 3-8c, 50% cloud, wind 12mph South-west, Dry.
18/03/2024	Temp. 13c, 80% cloud, wind 5mph South-east, Dry.
19/03/2024	Temp. 13c, 50% cloud, wind 5mph South-east, Dry.
20/03/2024	Temp. 10c, 100% cloud, wind 5mph South-east, Dry.
21/03/2024	Temp. 12c, 100% cloud, wind 5mph South-west, Dry.

Annex B Figures

PEI Report Volume 3, Figure 8-H-1 Distribution of Birds Directive Annex 1 species recorded within 200m of the Site

PEI Report Volume 3, Figure 8-H-2 Distribution of farmland bird species of conservation concern within 50m of the Site



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LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 200m Study Area
- Annex 1 Species

Species List

- BS Bewick's Swan
- WS Whooper Swan
- ET Little Egret
- HW Great White Egret
- KT Red Kite
- MR Marsh Harrier
- AN Crane
- AV Avocet
- GP Golden Plover
- PE Peregrine

NOTES

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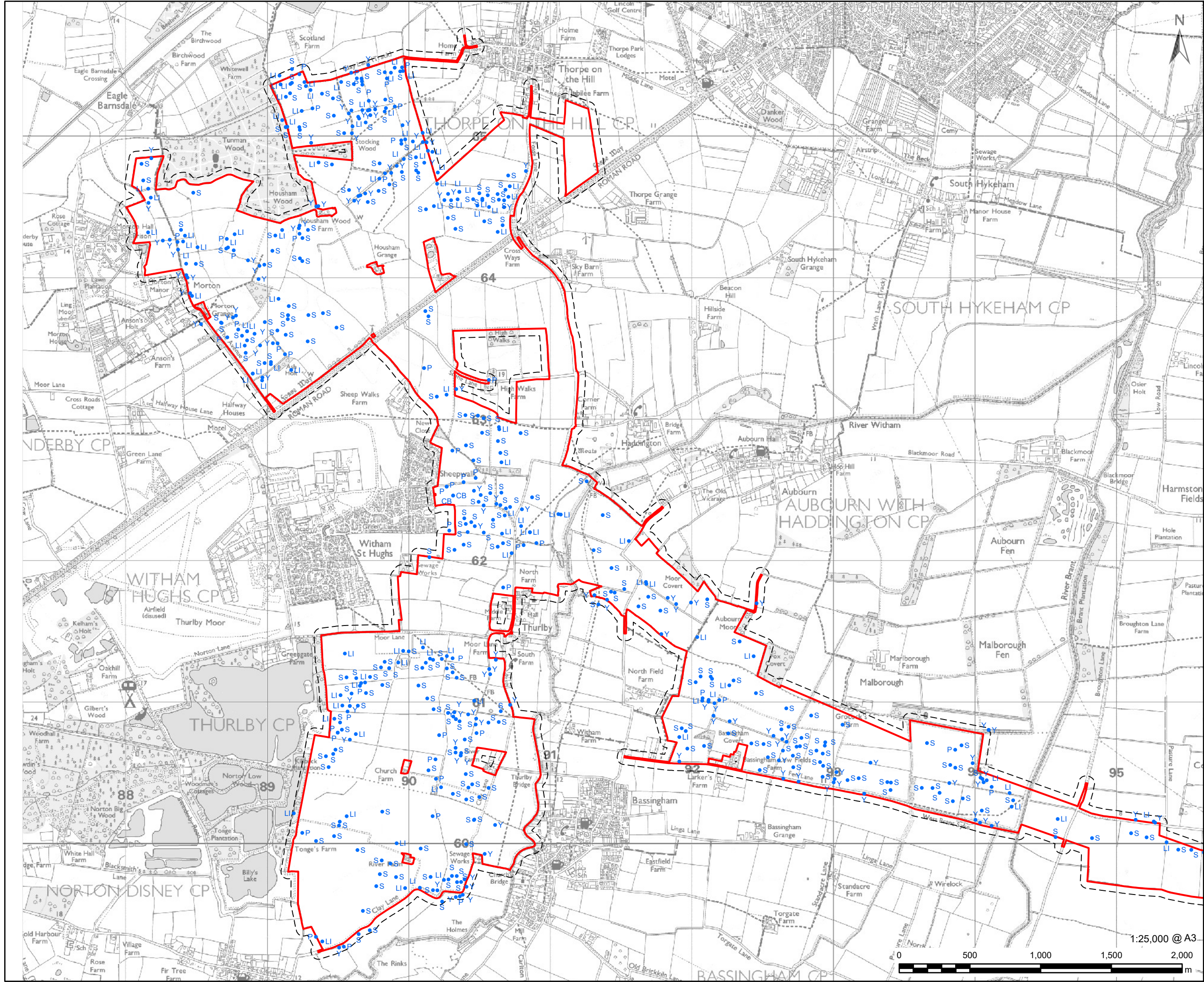
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FIGURE TITLE

Distribution of Birds Directive Annex 1 species recorded within 200 m of the site

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 8-H-1



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LEGEND
Site Boundary
50m Study Area
Farmland Species

Species List
P Grey Partridge
S Skylark
LI Linnet
Y Yellowhammer
CB Corn Bunting

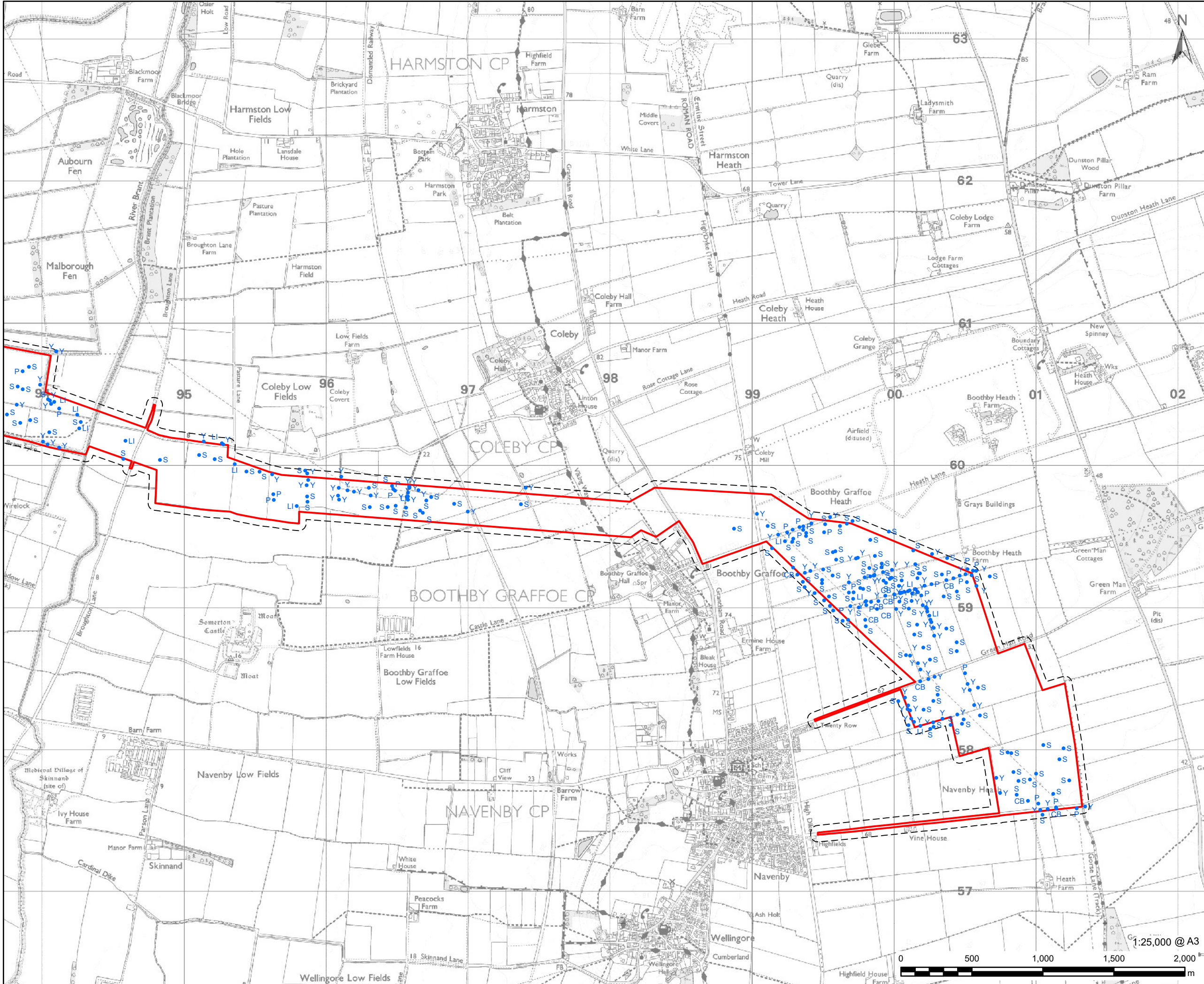
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FIGURE TITLE
Distribution of farmland bird species of conservation concern within 50 m of the site

FIGURE NUMBER
Figure 8-H-2



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LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 50m Study Area
- Farmland Species

Species List

- P Grey Partridge
- S Skylark
- LI Linnet
- Y Yellowhammer
- CB Corn Bunting

NOTES

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FIGURE TITLE
Distribution of farmland bird species of conservation concern within 50 m of the site

FIGURE NUMBER
Figure 8-H-2