

Environmental Statement: Chapter 7

Technical Appendix 7.9: Breeding Bird Survey and Desk Study

Land East of Blackmore Farm, Melksham

Gleeson Land Ltd

March 2026

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1 Desk Study

1.1.1 Records of notable breeding birds within 2km of the Site were obtained from Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) in November 2023 and updated in November 2025. The results of the desk study are presented in Table A7.9.1 below.

Table A7.9.1: Notable Bird Records from the 2 km Study Area

Species	BoCC Status ¹	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP Priority Species	WCA Schedule 1 ²	Annex 1 ³
Barn owl			Wiltshire BAP	Schedule 1	
Black redstart	Amber		Wiltshire BAP	Schedule 1	
Brambling				Schedule 1	
Bullfinch	Amber				
Cettis warbler				Schedule 1	
Common gull	Amber				
Crane	Amber				
Cuckoo	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Dipper	Amber				
Dunlin	Red				Annex 1*ssp schinizzii
Dunnock	Amber				
Fieldfare	Red			Schedule 1	
Firecrest			Wiltshire BAP	Schedule 1	
Grasshopper warbler	Red	Priority Species			
Greenfinch	Red				
Greylag goose	Amber				
Grey wagtail	Amber				
Hen harrier	Red			Schedule 1	
Herring gull	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Hobby				Schedule 1	
House martin	Red		Wiltshire BAP		
House sparrow	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Kestrel	Amber				
Kingfisher			Wiltshire BAP	Schedule 1	Annex 1
Lapwing	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Lesser black backed gull	Amber				
Lesser redpoll	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Linnet	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Mallard	Amber				
Marsh tit	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Meadow pipit	Amber				
Mediterranean gull	Amber				
Mistle thrush	Red				
Peregrine				Schedule 1	Annex 1
Red Kite				Schedule 1	Annex 1

Redwing	Amber			Schedule 1	
Reed Bunting	Amber	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Sedge warbler	Amber				
Skylark	Red				
Snipe	Amber				
Song thrush	Amber				
Sparrowhawk	Amber				
Spotted flycatcher	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Starling	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Stock dove	Amber				
Swift	Red		Wiltshire BAP		
Tawny owl	Amber				
Teal	Amber				
Turtle dove	Red	Priority Species			
Wheatear	Amber				
Whitethroat	Amber				
Willow warbler	Amber				
Wood warbler	Red	Priority Species			
Wood pigeon	Amber				
Wren	Amber				
Yellow wagtail	Red				
Yellowhammer	Red	Priority Species	Wiltshire BAP		
Yellow legged gull	Amber				

Conservation status: ¹Listed on 'Birds of Conservation Concern (Stanbury et al., 2021)' Red/Amber Lists; ²Listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); ³Listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

2 Survey Methodology

- 2.1.1 A breeding bird survey was undertaken based on an adapted Common Bird Census (CBC) methodology (Gilbert *et al.*, 1998) and in accordance with the Bird Survey Guidelines (Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group, 2025). Survey effort was considered consistent with Bird Survey Guidelines, based on factors including suitability of on-site habitats related to relevant nearby designated sites, presence of on-site habitats of high value for breeding birds and size of the Site.
- 2.1.2 Five survey visits were carried out between April and June 2025 by experienced ornithologists, following a transect route that allowed full coverage of the Site. Visits were made during the morning in suitable weather conditions (avoiding rain and strong winds, although showery days were acceptable). The locations of all birds seen and/or heard during each visit were mapped and any breeding-related behaviour was recorded (such as singing, displaying or carrying food).

3 Survey Limitations

- 3.1.1 There were no limitations to the survey.

4 Survey Results

- 4.1.1 Survey dates, times and weather conditions are presented in Table A7.9.2.

Table A7.9.2: Survey dates, times and conditions

Visit number	Date	Time	Weather
1	11 April 2025	06:20 – 10:30	Cloud 0/8, wind F0-1, temperature 4-13°C
2	9 May 2025	06:15 – 09:45	Cloud 2/8, wind F1, temperature 8°C
3	30 May 2025	05:30 – 08:30	Cloud 6/8, wind F1, temperature 14°C
4	6 June 2025	07:15 – 10:00	Cloud 6/8, wind F1, temperature 13°C
5	30 June 2025	07:30 - 10:30	Cloud 6/8, wind F2-3, temperature 17-26°C

4.1.2 Table A7.9.3 provides a summary of the survey results and categorises each species' breeding status within the survey area based on the BTO's categories of breeding evidence:

- Confirmed breeding (e.g. recently fledged young, adult carrying food to nest);
- Probable breeding (e.g. permanent territory, courtship display);
- Possible breeding; (e.g. singing male in suitable nesting habitat); or
- Non-breeding (e.g. flying over only).

4.1.3 A total of 45 species were recorded during the course of the survey, of which 34 species were confirmed, probably or possibly breeding within the survey area. These included:

- Yellowhammer, linnet and skylark, which possibly bred. These are Priority Species and Red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern (Stanbury *et al.*, 2021).
- Dunnock and song thrush, which probably bred. These are Amber-listed Birds of Conservation Concern and Priority Species.
- Greenfinch, which probably bred, and mistle thrush, which possibly bred. These are Red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern.
- Rook, which was confirmed breeding, woodpigeon, wren and whitethroat, which probably bred, and stock dove, which possibly bred. These are Amber-listed Birds of Conservation Concern.
- Herring gull, mallard, meadow pipit, swift, willow warbler, house martin and red kite, which are all Red or Amber Birds of Conservation Concern, Priority Species and/or Schedule 1 WCA 1981 (as amended); however, none of these species were considered to be breeding within the survey area.

4.1.4 Habitats on site that provided the greatest value for breeding birds were hedgerows, mature trees and woodland. Hedgerows on site, some of which contained mature trees, provided nesting habitat for species including dunnock, whitethroat, greenfinch, wren and yellowhammer. A woodland parcel adjacent to the south of the Site provided potential nesting habitat for song thrush and stock dove. An additional woodland parcel adjacent to the southwest boundary of the Site supported an active rookery. Grassland on site also provided potential nesting habitat for skylark, although evidence of breeding was not recorded.

4.1.5 The estimated locations of breeding pairs / territories are shown in Figure A7.9.1.

5 References

Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group. (2025). Bird Survey Guidelines for assessing ecological impacts. <https://birdsurveyguidelines.org>

Gilbert, G., Gibbons, D.W. & Evans, J. (1998). *Bird Monitoring Methods*. RSPB, Sandy, Bedfordshire.

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.

Table A7.9.3: Breeding bird survey results

Common name	BTO species code	Legal & Conservation Status (standard protection and Green/unlisted (Stanbury et al 2021) unless stated)	Date & no. recorded						Breeding status				Notes
			11 April 2025	9 May 2025	30 May 2025	6 June 2025	30 June 2025		Confirmed	Probable	Possible	Non-breeding	
Blackbird	B.		5	6	11	4	6				✓		Suitable nesting habitat (hedgerows, trees, scrub) present on site.
Blackcap	BC			13	7	5	4		✓				Recently fledged juveniles recorded. Singing males recorded in suitable nesting habitat (scrub, hedgerows).
Blue tit	BT		9	32	42	45	22		✓				Recently fledged juveniles recorded.
Buzzard	BZ		1		1	1	1				✓		Suitable nesting habitat (trees, woodland) present on site.
Carrion crow	C.		11	7	4	1	5				✓		Suitable nesting habitat (trees, woodland) present on site.
Chaffinch	CH		4	11	3	1	1			✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (scrub, woodland).
Chiffchaff	CC		8	16	13	15	5			✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (scrub, woodland).
Dunnock	D	Priority, Amber	4	5	1	4	1			✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (hedgerows).
Garden warbler	GW			1							✓		Suitable nesting habitat (scrub, trees, woodland edge) present on site. Bird recorded on the second survey possibly using the site on migration.
Goldcrest	GC		1	1			3			✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (woodland).
Goldfinch	GO		4	14	18	10	15			✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (trees, hedgerows).

Table A7.9.3: Breeding bird survey results

Common name	BTO species code	Legal & Conservation Status (standard protection and Green/unlisted (Stanbury et al 2021) unless stated)	Date & no. recorded						Breeding status				Notes
			11 April 2025	9 May 2025	30 May 2025	6 June 2025	30 June 2025		Confirmed	Probable	Possible	Non-breeding	
Great spotted woodpecker	GS		1	2		2	4				✓		Suitable nesting habitat (trees) present on site.
Great tit	GT		6	5	15	4	16		✓				Recently fledged juveniles recorded.
Green woodpecker	G.			2	1		3		✓				Recently fledged juveniles recorded.
Greenfinch	GR	Red	3	8	2	4	3			✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (trees, hedgerows).
Heron	H.				1							✓	Recorded flying over the site only.
Herring gull	HG	Priority, Red					2					✓	Recorded flying over the site only.
House martin	HM	Red					3					✓	Recorded flying over the site only.
Jackdaw	JD		4	10	3	8					✓		Suitable nesting habitat (trees) present on site.
Jay	J.		1		1						✓		Suitable nesting habitat (woodland, trees) present on site.
Kestrel	K.				1							✓	
Lesser black-backed gull	LB	Amber					3					✓	Recorded flying over the site only.
Lesser whitethroat	LW			1							✓		Suitable nesting habitat (scrub) present on site. Bird recorded on the second survey possibly using the site on migration.
Linnet	LI	Priority, Red	2								✓		No breeding evidence recorded. Suitable nesting habitat (hedgerows, scrub) present on site.
Long-tailed tit	LT			9	15	4	28		✓				Recently fledged juveniles recorded.

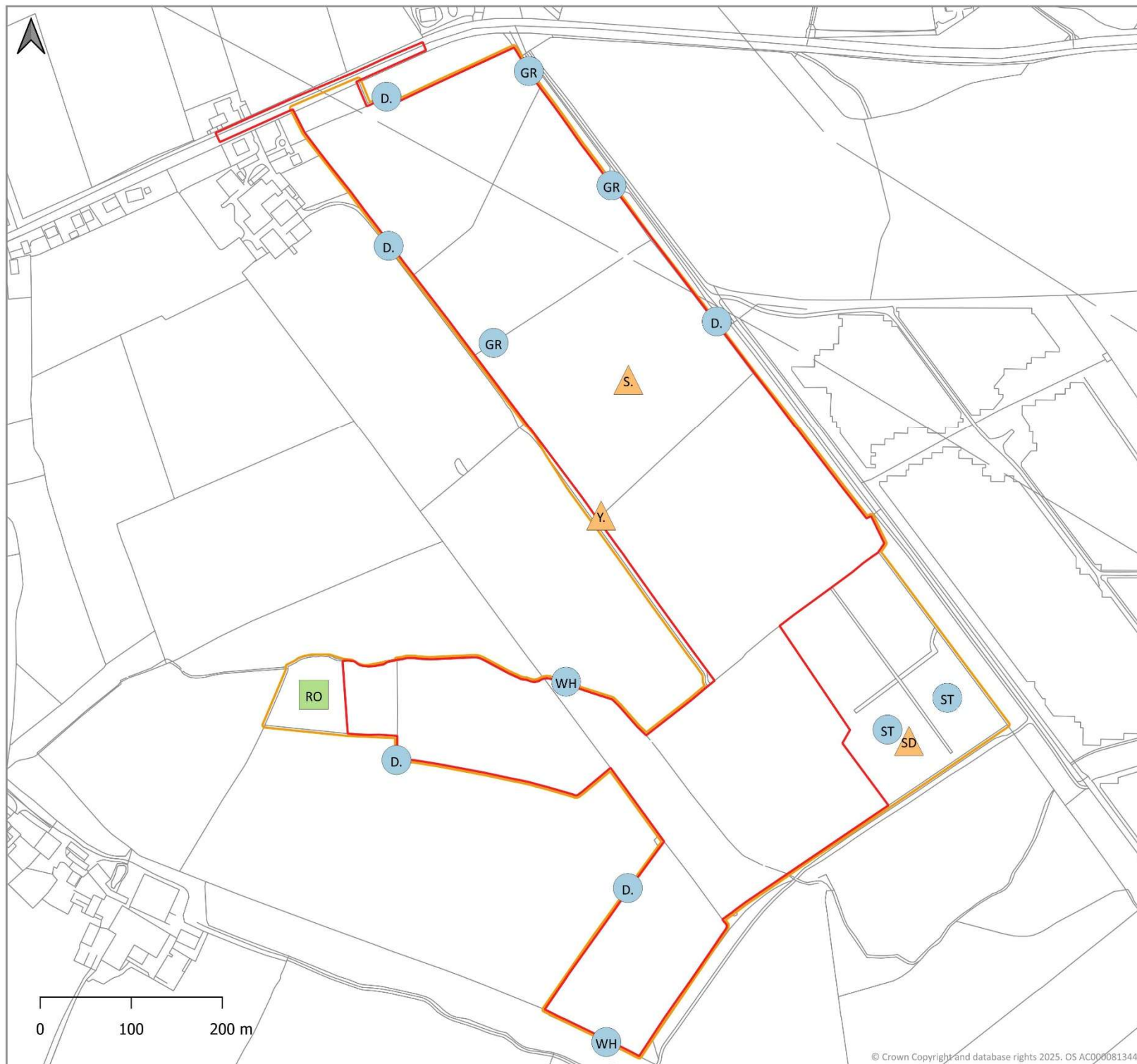
Table A7.9.3: Breeding bird survey results

Common name	BTO species code	Legal & Conservation Status (standard protection and Green/unlisted (Stanbury et al 2021) unless stated)	Date & no. recorded					Breeding status				Notes
			11 April 2025	9 May 2025	30 May 2025	6 June 2025	30 June 2025	Confirmed	Probable	Possible	Non-breeding	
Magpie	MG				1	2	3			✓		Suitable nesting habitat (trees, woodland) present on site.
Mallard	MA	Amber	2								✓	No evidence of breeding recorded. No suitable nesting habitat (waterbodies) present on site.
Meadow pipit	MP	Amber	3	1							✓	Birds recorded on the first and second survey visit were using the site on migration.
Mistle thrush	M.	Red	1							✓		Suitable nesting habitat (trees, woodland) present on site.
Pheasant	PH		1	1	1	1				✓		Suitable nesting habitat (woodland, scrub) present on site.
Red kite	KT	Schedule 1 WCA 1981 (as amended)				1	1				✓	Recorded flying over the site only.
Robin	R.		12	29	18	20	15	✓				Recently fledged juveniles recorded.
Rook	RO	Amber	1	51	5	10		✓				Active rookery present on site.
Skylark	S.	Priority, Red	3							✓		No breeding evidence recorded. Suitable nesting habitat present on site (grassland).
Song thrush	ST	Priority, Amber	1	1	3		3		✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (woodland).
Stock dove	SD	Amber	5	1		3	5			✓		Suitable nesting habitat (trees, woodland) present on site.
Stonechat	SC					1				✓		Suitable nesting habitat (scrub) present on site.
Swallow	SL			2	1		3				✓	Recorded flying over the site only.

Table A7.9.3: Breeding bird survey results

Common name	BTO species code	Legal & Conservation Status (standard protection and Green/unlisted (Stanbury et al 2021) unless stated)	Date & no. recorded						Breeding status				Notes
			11 April 2025	9 May 2025	30 May 2025	6 June 2025	30 June 2025		Confirmed	Probable	Possible	Non-breeding	
Swift	SI	Red		2								✓	Recorded flying over the site only.
Treecreeper	TC				1	1	1			✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (woodland).
Whitethroat	WH	Amber		3		2	2			✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (hedgerows).
Willow warbler	WW	Amber	1									✓	Single bird recorded on the first survey visit was using the site on migration.
Woodpigeon	WP	Amber	18	11	12	12	8				✓		Suitable nesting habitat (trees, woodland) present on site.
Wren	WR	Amber	20	27	25	24	11			✓			Singing males recorded holding territories in suitable nesting habitat (hedgerows, scrub).
Yellowhammer	Y.	Priority, Red	2								✓		Pair recorded in suitable nesting habitat (hedgerows).

Figure A7.9.1: Breeding Bird Survey Plan



Key

- Site boundary
- Survey boundary
- D. Dunnock
- S. Skylark
- GR Greenfinch
- RO Rook
- ST Song Thrush
- SD Stock Dove
- WH Whitethroat
- Y. Yellowhammer
- Confirmed breeding
- Probable breeding
- Possible breeding



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