



**Halifax Road, Penistone**

**Interim Breeding Bird Survey**

***Barratt and David Wilson Homes Yorkshire West***

Report Reference: ER-4578-06-A

12/05/2021

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## Introduction

1. Further to a request from the local authority ecologist, a Breeding Bird Survey has been commissioned at the site in order to provide additional information on the bird assemblage present.
2. The target of the survey was the red line planning boundary shown in the figure below where the construction of houses is proposed.

**Figure 1** Site Boundary



3. Two diurnal breeding bird survey visits have been made so far, one on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and the second on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Weather conditions were bright with sun and dry during both survey visits. Wind speed was light, with a temperature of 1°C and 4°C respectively, with good visibility on both visits.
4. A survey method based on the Common Birds Census (CBC) territory mapping methodology was used to record breeding bird activity on site. Registrations of all bird species observed within or overflying the Site and heard singing and/or calling were entered onto field survey maps using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) species and activity codes. The site was walked to less than 50m of every point within the red-line boundary.

5. The survey was undertaken by David Lovett, an experienced ornithologist with over eight years professional experience undertaking ornithological surveys and monitoring, site and species evaluation, providing advice on mitigation and habitat enhancement for birds throughout the United Kingdom.

## Results

6. A summary of the first two surveys is presented in the table below.

**Table 1** Number and Conservation Status of Bird Species Recorded on Diurnal Visit – April 2021

Visit	Date	Species	Red Listed	Amber Listed	Green Listed	Not Assessed	Schedule 1	UK BAP
1	16/04/2021	15	3	2	10	0	0	4
2	11/05/2021	21	2	2	17	0	0	3

7. Whilst a full analysis of breeding behaviour is not yet possible due to only two out of the three survey visits having taken place, the range of species and number of birds recorded on each of the visits so far was similar, with the second visit including summer migrant species such as whitethroat, willow warbler and blackcap.
8. Of the species seen, long-tailed tits were confirmed to be breeding in scrub bordering the Site to the north, with house sparrows exhibiting behaviour that suggests breeding in houses bordering the Site to the east.
9. All species recorded were seen either within the red line boundary or in habitats directly adjacent to it (Tables 1 & 2).

**Table 2** List of Bird Species in Order of Conservation Concern, April 2021

<b>BBS – Land off Halifax Road, Penistone – April-May 2021</b>	<b>Species Code</b>	<b>Schedule 1</b>	<b>UK BAP</b>	Scientific Name	
Bird Species (systematic order follows British Ornithologists Union (BOU) August 2019)					
Starling	SG		UK	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	
House sparrow	HS		UK	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	
Curlew	CU		UK	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	
Willow warbler	WW			<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	
Dunnoch	D.		UK	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	
Woodpigeon	WP			<i>Columba palumbus</i>	
Collared dove	CD			<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	
Sparrowhawk	SH			<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	
Buzzard	BZ			<i>Buteo buteo</i>	
Jackdaw	JD			<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	
Rook	RO			<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	
Carrion crow	C.			<i>Corvus corone</i>	
Blue tit	BT			<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	
Great tit	GT			<i>Parus major</i>	
Long-tailed tit	LT			<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	
Chiffchaff	CC			<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	
Blackcap	BC			<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	
Whitethroat	WH			<i>Sylvia communis</i>	
Wren	WR			<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	
Blackbird	B.			<i>Turdus merula</i>	
Robin	R.			<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	
Pied wagtail	PW			<i>Motacilla alba</i>	
Chaffinch	CH			<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	
Greenfinch	GR			<i>Chloris chloris</i>	
Goldfinch	GO			<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	
TOTAL NUMBER of BIRD SPECIES RECORDED					25
BoCC 4 Red Listed Species of Conservation Concern					3
BoCC 4 Amber Listed Species of Conservation Concern					2
BoCC 4 Green Listed Species					20
Not assessed by BoCC					0
Schedule 1 bird species afforded special protection at all times					0
UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) Species					4
IUCN – Global Conservation Status (CR – Critically Endangered, VU – Vulnerable)					0

10. Important breeding bird species recorded on site are those included as red listed (severe population decline over 25 years/longer term) and amber listed species of conservation concern (moderate population decline over 25 years/longer term) in Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (BoCC4) (Eaton et al. 2015). Three red listed species (curlew, starling and house sparrow) were encountered, alongside two amber listed species, willow warbler and dunnock.
11. A single curlew was seen flying over the Site during visit 1, with no records of this species from visit 2. Starling and house sparrows were recorded foraging close to houses along Well House Lane, with numbers particularly high in relation to garden feeders during both visits.
12. Willow warbler was recorded singing in scrub neighbouring the Site along the railway embankment during both visits, as was dunnock, with this species also heard in proximity to housing along Well House Lane.



**Figure 2** Bird species encountered during survey visit 1 – April 2021.



**Figure 3** Bird species encountered during survey visit 2 – May 2021.



13. The species assemblage recorded on site is typical of the habitat present and could be expected to occur on sites with similar habitat locally.
14. As the survey effort was limited to two visits, it is not yet possible to assess whether the birds seen are using the site for breeding or not. However, the likelihood can be considered in relation to each species nesting requirements, and the presence or absence of this habitat within the site.
15. Three red-listed species were recorded during the survey visit. A single curlew was recorded flying over the Site. There is no suitable nesting habitat for this species present on Site and there is limited potential for foraging given the tightly grazed sward and compacted earth.
16. House sparrow and starlings were recorded in association with buildings to the east and north of the Site, during both survey visits. Both these species are cavity nesters,

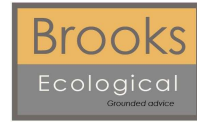


likely making use of the buildings (house sparrow and starling) and trees (starling) surrounding the Site. There is limited foraging potential for both species present on the Site, with the birds observed utilising a feeder in a neighbouring garden.

17. The amber-listed species dunnock and willow warbler were recorded close to the Site boundary during both survey visits. There is no suitable breeding habitat for these species present within the Site, and the Site is of low foraging value for these species due to the absence of hedgerows. These species are unlikely to rely on the Site, though are utilising habitats directly adjacent to the Site.
18. The site supports small numbers of more common, green-listed bird species not currently considered of conservation concern, for example Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* and Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*. These species were generally encountered around the edges of the Site, where more diverse habitats of scrub and woodland are present. Long-tailed tits *Aegithalos caudatus* were recorded breeding in hawthorn scrub on the railway embankment, close to the north-east boundary of the Site. Only a group of four rooks *Corvus frugilegus* were observed within the Site boundary.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

19. A preliminary assessment of the breeding bird assemblage present on site found that the range of species is typical of the habitats found on site and its position in the wider area. While it is not possible to provide a full list of breeding birds at this time, due to only two survey visits taking place, the range and number of species was generally similar between the two visits with a similar assemblage expected to be found during the third visit, planned for June.
20. None of the birds recorded during these first two visits are likely to nest within the Site boundary due to the lack of suitable habitat. With large areas of similar or higher value habitat in the surrounding area, none of the species recorded are expected to be dependent on the Site.
21. There is a clear opportunity available to enhance local bird biodiversity. It is important that mitigation should be incorporated into any development within the site. Preliminary works on site, such as groundworks, landscaping and clearing areas of scrub and vegetation in advance of any proposed development should be completed during the period September to February to avoid any disturbance to breeding birds between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> August.
22. Where clearance or demolition on Site does take place during the bird breeding season, a pre-clearance check of the area should be carried out by a suitability qualified ecologist.
23. During construction, efforts should be made to minimise disturbance to the wider Site and landscape, particularly areas of scrub to the north-east of the Site and woodland to the west. This could be achieved by installing visual and acoustic screening around the construction area.
24. Specific mitigation for the red-listed house sparrow and starling which are likely to breed close to the Site would include the provision of nesting terrace boxes for sparrows and a deep nest box with 45mm entrance hole for starlings. Both these nest boxes can be attached to newly constructed buildings. Other nest boxes could be provided both for species recorded during the scoping survey and others not seen. Nesting structures for swifts and cavity nesting species such as blue and great tit can be incorporated into the walls of new houses.
25. Any planting of vegetation as part of the development should make use of native species e.g. hedgerows on Site should include Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Hazel *Corylus avellana* which would assist in improving breeding and foraging habitat for a variety of bird species, including the two amber listed species recorded, dunnock and willow warbler. Planting to create a buffer area along the railway embankment would be of particular value to these and other species.



26. Details for the different nesting boxes and planting could be specified in the Site's Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP).

## References

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