

NNB Genco

Sizewell C

Coronation Wood bird report

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## Coronation Wood bird report

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# 1 Summary

This report presents the findings of the following survey work undertaken within Coronation Wood located within the EDF Sizewell Estate:

- 2014 breeding bird survey undertaken between April and June 2014
- Wintering bird survey undertaken between November 2014 and March 2015, using designated transects to determine the both the breeding and wintering bird assemblage within the development site.
- A Phase 1 Walkover survey conducted in July 2014

The 2014 breeding bird survey identified that Coronation Wood supported a typical assemblage of breeding bird species totalling 16 species. No species of conservation concern were recorded.

The 2014-15 wintering bird survey identified that Coronation Wood supported a typical wintering bird assemblage with 15 species recorded; 14 of which were birds of no conservation concern, and 1 species of amber conservation concern (Ref 1).

The walkover survey identified a number of factors that could be a potential constraint to development proposals including breeding birds, reptiles and badgers, and a number of measures are recommended to minimise the impact on these species.

## 2 Introduction

This study has been carried out by Hyder Consulting UK Ltd on behalf of NNB Genco. The purpose of this bird report is to provide details of both the breeding bird assemblage in 2014 and the wintering bird assemblage over the winter 2014-15 and the results of an ecological walkover survey in 2014, in order to clarify the baseline ecological conditions within the proposed site and its surroundings.

## 3 Methodology

An extended phase 1 habitat survey was carried out to not only identify the habitats present within the site but also the extent of any use by protected species of the site, such as any potential for reptiles, nesting bird potential and the presence of any badgers on the site.

### 3.1 Extended Phase 1 Walkover

The extended Phase 1 survey took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014.

The Phase 1 habitat survey involved identifying and mapping the dominant habitat types following the Phase 1 habitat survey methodology recommended by Natural England (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2010 (Ref 1)). Dominant plant species were noted, as were any uncommon species or species indicative of particular habitat types. Botanical names follow '*New Flora of the British Isles*' (2nd edition, Stace 1997 (Ref 2)). Particular attention was paid to the any hedgerows, and the status of each hedge (if present) with regard to the Hedgerows Regulations (1997) was also assessed using the Wildlife and Landscape Criteria.

In addition, any non-native invasive species present within and adjacent to the site (for example Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)) were also recorded, if present.

The Phase 1 habitat survey was extended, to involve a critical assessment of the value of the habitats present for their use by protected species, or species of conservation concern, as outlined below:

Surveys were further extended from 19<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> January 2015 when a badger survey was carried out, to update survey information collected by Amec. The badger survey entailed specifically looking for badger setts and general activity (including latrines, dung pits and evidence of foraging) within the main site, and as part of this survey Coronation Wood was surveyed in more detail.

## 3.2 Breeding Bird Surveys

In accordance with best practice survey guidance (Ref 3), a series of transect-based surveys were carried through the woodland (2-3 parallel transects) on a monthly basis between April and June 2014 (inclusive) to record the breeding bird assemblages and between November 2014 and March 2015 (inclusive) for the wintering bird assemblage.

During each survey, particular focus was placed upon species of local and/or national nature conservation importance (Ref 4), with these species being mapped and recorded using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) species and behaviour codes (Ref 5).

An inventory of all other bird species was produced. The surveys were timed to take place during the morning, commencing approximately one hour after sunrise, with each transect lasting for approximately two hours. The surveys were aimed to avoid poor weather conditions (i.e. heavy rain, mist/fog and strong winds), wherever possible. Further details regarding the timing and frequency of transect surveys, as well as the associated weather conditions, are presented in Appendix A.

The three breeding bird survey visits in 2014 took place on 29/4, 15/5 and 5/6.

The three wintering bird survey visits were: 13/11/14, 6/1/15 and 4/3/15.



## 4 Results

### 4.1 Extended Phase 1 Walkover

#### 4.1.1 Habitats

The walkover survey identified that Coronation Wood was an area of mixed plantation approximately 30 years old dominated by Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) with a mixture of broadleaves including Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Oak , ( *Quercus robur*)The woodland ground flora was dominated by patches of Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*) .

#### 4.1.2 Legally Protected Species

Coronation Wood was considered likely to support a small breeding bird assemblage supporting common and widespread species typical of woodland habitat, such as blackbird and coal tit.

None of the trees within Coronation Wood appeared to be particularly suitable for roosting bats, being even aged with a no obvious holes, cracks or other features that could potentially be used by roosting bats species.

There were some areas of grass verges to the north and east of the wood and these areas had potential to be used by reptiles. The wood itself had limited potential to support reptiles

The wood itself was found to contain no badger setts, tracks or latrines however there were a number of enlarged rabbit holes that suggests badgers could be using the wood as a foraging resource.

During the dedicated badger survey, an active subsidiary sett comprising 3 active entrances and 3 disused entrances as well as a number of long-disused entrances was found on a bank to the south of Coronation wood. This was a very active badger sett and contained high levels of badger activity including evidence of fresh bedding trails, active dung pits and a large latrine consisting of 6-8 dung pits. As well as this subsidiary sett, 2 outlier setts were also recorded in the vicinity,

1 to the south and 1 of the west of Coronation Wood. Both of these setts consisted of a single active hole, and there was evidence of recent badger activity.

Figure 1 shows the location of the setts identified.



Coronation wood was considered to be of minimal nature conservation value for legally protected species.

## 4.2 Bird Survey Results

The results of the 2014 breeding bird survey and the 2014-14 wintering bird survey in relation to target species and other birds of nature conservation importance are described in the following sections.

### 4.2.1 Breeding bird survey results

In total 16 species of breeding bird were recorded within Coronation Wood. No legally protected or species of conservation concern were identified, all species recorded being common and widespread species. The species recorded on each of the three survey visits are listed in Table 4.1 below:

**Table 4.1 Breeding Bird Species Recorded**

Species		Survey Date		
		29/4/14	15/5/14	5/6/14
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>			1
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	1		
Blue tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	2		3
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone corone</i>			4
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	5	3	6
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	1	1	
Coal tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	3		
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	1		
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	1		2
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		1	

Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		3	
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		1	
Pied wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>			1
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		2	
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	5	7	3
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	2	1	1

## 4.2.2 Wintering bird survey results

During the winter a total of 14 bird species were recorded within Coronation Wood. A single species of conservation concern was recorded, this being Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) An amber listed species. Dunnock is regarded as being of medium conservation importance in the UK following its inclusion on the “amber list” of bird species of conservation concern (BoCC). This is due to a long-term decline of between 25 and 50% in the UK population since the first BoCC review. Dunnock is also listed as a priority species in Section 41 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (Ref 6).

Table 4.2 lists the wintering bird species recorded

As well as the “amber list” species, 14 species with no special conservation concern in the UK were also recorded during the 2014-15 wintering bird survey and these are listed in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2 Wintering Bird Species**

Species		Survey Date		
		13/11/14	6/1/15	4/3/15
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	1	2	1
Blue tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	3	3	10
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	1		1
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	1		13
Coal tit	<i>Parus ater</i>		2	3
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	4		
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	10		
Greater spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			2
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>		2	
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	1		
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	2		2
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	2		
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	12		10
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	4	1	

Coronation wood supported a similar assemblage of bird species during both the breeding season and winter months. All bird species recorded are common and widespread and the breeding and wintering bird assemblage are considered to be of no particular nature conservation importance.

## 5 Conclusion

Survey work has identified the following constraints to development proposals:

1. Coronation wood supports a small number of common and widespread breeding bird species.
2. There were some areas of grass verges to the north and east of the wood and these areas had potential to be used by reptiles.
3. An active badger sett is located to the south of the wood.

None of the constraints identified above is considered to be a major constraint and mitigation measures could be put in place to prevent any adverse effects from occurring.

## 6 References

Ref 1 Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010) *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: a technique for environmental audit*

Ref 2 Stace, C. (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

Ref 3 Gilbert, G., Gibbons, D.W., & Evans, J. (1998). *Bird Monitoring Methods*. RSPB: Sandy.

Ref 4 Eaton M.A, Brown A.F, Noble D.G, Musgrove A.J, Aebischer N. J, Gibbons D.W, Evans A, and Gregory R.D (2009). Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. *British Birds* 102, pp296-341

Ref 5

[http://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u16/downloads/forms\\_instructions/bto\\_bird\\_species\\_codes.pdf](http://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u16/downloads/forms_instructions/bto_bird_species_codes.pdf)

Ref 6 NERC Act (2006), <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>