



The Sizewell C Project

9.23 Bird Survey Report - Green Rail Route

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1 SUMMARY

1.1 Receptor Status 2020/2021 Summary Overview

1.1.1 This report presents the findings of the 2020/2021 wintering bird surveys undertaken at the proposed green rail route one of the associated development sites of the proposed Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station project (hereafter referred to as ‘Sizewell C Project’).

1.1.2 The surveys are part of on-going ecological surveys of the green rail route site (the ‘site’), following previous extended Phase 1 habitat surveys undertaken on the site [[APP-555](#) and [APP-556](#)].

1.1.3 The site is located approximately 0.75km north west of the village of Leiston and comprised arable fields bordered by hedgerows, mature trees and bramble covered ditches. The site location is presented in **Figure 1** in **Appendix A**.

1.1.4 The 2020/2021 wintering bird surveys recorded two Schedule 1 species, seven red listed species, eight amber listed species, and a further 20 species of no conservation concern.

1.1.5 The main habitats within the site comprise arable fields, ditches covered with bramble scrub and hedgerows. The site was bordered by an area of broadleaved deciduous woodland to the west.

2 OVERVIEW

2.1 The Aims of the Survey

2.1.1 The aim of the surveys was to determine the wintering bird assemblage and to gather spatial data regarding numbers and distribution of birds within the green rail route area of the Sizewell C Project.

2.2 Wintering Bird Surveys 2020/2021

2.2.1 The surveys took place between 25th November 2020 and 17th March 2021, following a designated transect to record the wintering bird assemblages and spatial distribution. The surveys were undertaken within the green rail route area, located approximately 0.75km north west of the village of Leiston. The site intersected with the Sizewell C Estate at the North western corner of the Aldhurst Farm Mitigation Area.

2.2.2 The 2020/2021 surveys identified that the site supported predominantly passerine species commonly associated with habitats identified within the survey area.

2.2.3 The results show that the main areas supporting passerine wintering birds were field boundary hedgerows and the trees within them. Waterfowl were recorded commuting above the site and gulls were frequently observed foraging and loafing within the arable fields adjacent to the site. The habitats located within the site are widespread within the surrounding landscape.

3 METHODS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Desk study information is fully detailed within the **Volume 9, Chapter 7** and **Volume 9, Appendix 7A** of **Environmental Statement (ES)** [[APP-555](#) and [APP-556](#)].

3.2 Field Surveys

3.2.1 Transect surveys for wintering bird survey visits were undertaken monthly from November 2020 to March 2021 (inclusive), to record species observed or heard within the green rail route survey area and adjacent habitats. Surveyors walked a predefined transect route once per month. The location and transect route are detailed on **Figure 1** in **Appendix A**.

3.2.2 The surveys were undertaken by two teams of two surveyors, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] all of whom are competent ornithologists.

3.2.3 The surveyors were equipped with binoculars and telescopes to aid identification. Observations were entered onto iPads, with the focus of the surveys being wintering birds. Sightings of all species of importance were recorded and mapped, using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) species codes. Species of importance includes:

- Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) (Ref. 1).
- Red and Amber listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BOCC) (Ref. 2).
- Species of Principal Importance listed under Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 (Ref. 3).

3.2.4 Species of no special conservation concern/ green listed were also recorded but were not mapped.

3.2.5 See **Table 1** in **Appendix B** for the full survey details, including surveys dates and times, surveyors and weather conditions.

3.3 Limitations

3.3.1 No limitations were encountered during the surveys. Full access across the site was permitted and all areas within the site boundary were surveyed on each survey visit.

4 RESULTS

4.1.1 During the 2020/2021 wintering bird and waterfowl surveys, 36 bird species were recorded. Of these species recorded, two were listed as Schedule 1 (Ref. 1), seven species were included on the BoCC (Ref. 2) red list and eight on the amber list. Additionally, six species were listed under S41 of the NERC Act (Ref. 3) and 20 species of no conservation concern were recorded. Birds may fall into multiple categories of the above, and as such do not contribute to the total count of species recorded.

4.1.2 The results of the surveys are detailed in **Table 4.1** below, **Table 3** in **Appendix C** and in **Figure 2** to **Figure 6** in **Appendix A**.

Table 4.1: Notable species recorded at green rail route

Common Name	Scientific Name	Conser- -vation Status	Sch 1	S41 NERC	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021
Black-headed gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Amber			39	10	6	0	4
Common gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Amber			2	3	0	0	0
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber		✓	1	7	1	2	3
Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Amber			0	0	18	0	0
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Red		✓	0	7	0	3	8
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Amber			2	1	1	1	0

Common Name	Scientific Name	Conser- -vation Status	Sch 1	S41 NERC	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Amber			0	0	0	1	0
Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Amber			1	1	0	2	1
Red kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Green	✓		0	0	0	0	1
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Red	✓		0	1	0	1	0
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Red		✓	0	30	19	5	8
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Red		✓	1	1	1	1	1
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red		✓	0	0	0	30	0
Stock dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber			2	0	0	0	0
White-fronted goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Red			0	280	0	0	0
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red		✓	0	0	0	0	2

- 4.1.3 Gulls were primarily observed foraging and loafing within arable fields adjacent east and west of the site boundary.
- 4.1.4 One red kite was observed in March flying south west, hunting above the site. The location of this recording is presented in **Figure 6** in **Appendix A**.
- 4.1.5 White-fronted geese were seen commuting east above the survey area with 280 recorded in December (**Figure 3** in **Appendix A**). 18 Greylag geese were also observed in March commuting south west across the site (**Figure 4** in **Appendix A**).
- 4.1.6 Dunnocks were recorded feeding, calling, and singing (in February and March) within field boundary hedgerows.
- 4.1.7 House sparrows were heard calling from within hedgerows close to residential dwellings at the extreme north and south of the site.

- 4.1.8 Kestrels were regularly observed hunting from tree perches within field boundary hedgerows.
- 4.1.9 Two redwings were heard calling from within woodland areas on the boundary of the southernmost field of the site.
- 4.1.10 Three skylarks were recorded singing above the site. One skylark was singing above an arable field adjacent east of the site. All other recordings were made of foraging and singing (in February and March) within a large arable field adjacent west of the site.
- 4.1.11 Song thrushes were recorded consistently calling from within field boundary hedgerows within and adjacent to the site.
- 4.1.12 A flock of 30 starlings was observed commuting south above the site in February (as detailed in **Figure 5** in **Appendix A**).
- 4.1.13 Two yellowhammers were heard singing from within field boundary hedgerows to the east and west of the site in March.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 The majority of wintering birds observed on the site were passerine species feeding, calling and singing (in February and March) in field boundary hedgerows. Skylarks were predominantly recorded foraging and singing (in February and March) within an arable field adjacent west of the site.
- 5.1.2 Gulls were frequently recorded feeding and loafing in arable fields adjacent to the site, however these birds may also use areas within the site boundary.
- 5.1.3 White-fronted and greylag geese were observed commuting over, but not using the site. These recordings are presented in **Figure 3** and **Figure 6** in **Appendix A**, respectively.
- 5.1.4 One red kite was observed using the site for hunting. The location of this recording is presented in **Figure 6** in **Appendix A**.
- 5.1.5 Overall, two Schedule 1 species, seven red listed species and eight amber listed species were identified over the course of the surveys, with 20 species of no special conservation value recorded (as presented in **Appendix C**).

The results of the 2020/2021 surveys are largely consistent with those identified in the desk study results set out in **Volume 9, Chapter 7** and consistent with **Volume 9, Appendix 7A of the ES** [[APP-555](#) and [APP-556](#)] do not affect the conclusions of the ES.

REFERENCES

1. Wildlife and Countryside Act, as amended. 1981. (Online) Available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents> (Accessed 22 March 2021).
2. Eaton, M.A., Aebisher, N., Brown, A., Hearn, R., Lock, L., Musgrove, A., Noble, D., Stroud, D., and Gregory, R. 2015. BoCC 4: Population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British birds 108:708-746.
3. Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. 2006. Section 41: Species of Principal Importance in England. (Online) Available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/section/41> (Accessed 22 March 2021).



SIZEWELL C PROJECT –
GRR WINTERING BIRD SURVEYS 2020/2021

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APPENDIX A: DRAWINGS

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APPENDIX B: SURVEY DETAILS AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

B.1.1. **Table 1** below details the survey timings and weather conditions during each survey at the green rail route. Temperature (T) is measured in Celsius, cloud cover (CC) is measured in Oktas and wind speed (WS) is measured using the Beaufort Scale.

B.1.2. The surveys were undertaken by lead surveyors [REDACTED].

Table 1: Survey details for wintering bird surveys at green rail route (2020/2021)

Survey Details	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021
Date	25/11/2020	15/12/2020	20/01/2021	17/02/2021	17/03/2021
Survey timings	08:28 – 11:15	11:11 – 12:40	08:28 – 09:40	10:16 – 11:34	07:45 – 09:10
Surveyors	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Weather conditions	T: 10°C, CC: 8, WS/direction: 3 S, no rain, good visibility	T: 9°C, CC: 0, WS/direction: 0, no rain, excellent visibility	T: 8°C, CC: 8, WS/direction: 5 SE, no rain, good visibility	T: 10°C, CC: 6, WS/direction: 5 SW, no rain, excellent visibility	T: 7°C, CC: 8, WS/direction: 2 W, no rain, good visibility

APPENDIX C: SPECIES LIST – BIRDS WITH NO SPECIAL CONSERVATION CONCERN

Table 2: Peak counts of species of no special conservation concern recorded across the survey areas.

Species	Scientific Name	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	3	4	1	2	4
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	21	2	18	7	12
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	1	1	2	0	0
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	5	9	7	5	11
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	0	2	2	1	5
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	2	2	0	0	0
Egyptian goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	0	0	0	0	4
Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>	5	5	1	0	2
Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	2	1	0	0	0
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	14	1	2	1	8
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	4	2	5	0	5
Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	0	1	0	0	0
Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	10	0	0	2	0
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	1	0	2	0	0
Pied wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	0	2	0	0	1
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	8	3	6	0	9
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	30	0	0	0	7
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	0	0	0	1	0
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	10	2	19	20	3
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	1	1	2	0	1