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Tees CCPP Project

The Tees Combined Cycle Power Plant Project
Land at the Wilton International Site, Teesside

Volume 2 - Annex G3

Regulations – 6(1)(b) and 8(1)

Applicant: Sembcorp Utilities UK
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Annex G3

Breeding Bird Survey

Report ID: INCA 201732

**Breeding Bird Survey
TPL2, Wilton**

**Ian Bond
July 2017**



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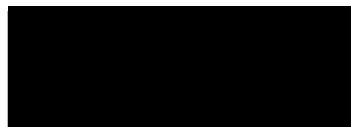
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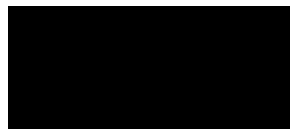
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1. Introduction

INCA was commissioned by Sembcorp to carry out breeding bird surveys on the site of the former GDF/TPL Power Plant on the Wilton Industrial Complex. It is proposed to redevelop the site to accommodate a new gas turbine based power station.

This report is confined to describing the results of the breeding bird surveys. An assessment of potential impacts and how they would be mitigated are described in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal submitted as part of this application.

2. Site Description

The Project site is situated on the south west corner of the Wilton Industrial Complex, close to the A1053 Greystones Road, within National Grid Reference one kilometre square, NZ5620. The majority of the Project site consists of the deconstructed GDF/ TPL power plant. The habitats in this area are principally former concrete roads and areas of crushed concrete or gravel, with minimal vegetation cover. There are some narrow strips of soil on the perimeters, which have a small amount of ruderal vegetation. The main site is bounded on the southern side by a high, solid fence. To the south of that fence but within the Project site are a tarmac surfaced car park and an area of sparse grass. There is a small amount of bramble scrub in this area and a few young trees of around 1-1.5m in height. There is a further car park on the western boundary, which contains a number of relatively young standard trees of around 3m in height. Within the former power plant site there are two remaining operational plants.

The land to the east and north of the Project site comprises extensive areas of operational or former industry, mainly on areas of hard standing. The land immediately to the south of the Project site is arable land which is divided by hedges that run south, away from the Project site. Immediately to the west there is the Kettle Beck, which is covered by scrub where it passes the Project site and beyond that there is approximately a 100m width of grass and scrub.

3. Background Information

There are no previous records of breeding birds on the Project site.

A data search of records of bird species within a 2km radius of the Project site was obtained from the Environmental Records Information Centre North East. A total of 16 records of birds that were notable in a conservation context were provided; none were from the wider Wilton Industrial Complex. A table listing the records obtained is shown in Appendix 1.

4. Survey Methodology

Breeding bird surveys of the Project site were undertaken on 12th April 2017 and 12th June 2017. The times and dates of the surveys and the weather conditions are given in Table 2. Weather conditions at the time of the survey were not a constraint on the results of the survey. The surveys were carried out by Ian Bond CEnv MCIEEM who is an experienced bird surveyor.

On each occasion the entire site was walked to within 20m and all birds that were present on the site were recorded. Binoculars were used to look ahead of the route so that birds could be identified without disturbance. In areas of the site where birds were noted as potentially breeding, a more detailed search was undertaken.

The location of each bird was marked on a plan of the site and any nesting or territorial behaviour was noted.

Table 2. Dates and weather conditions of bird surveys

Date	Start Time	Finish Time	Temp°C	Wind	Precipitation
12 April 2017	08:30	10:00	8	Moderate breeze	Dry
12 June 2017	08:30	10:00	14	Strong breeze	Dry

5. Survey Results

The locations of birds seen on each survey are shown in Figures 1 and 2 using standard BTO Species Codes notation.



Figure 1. Location of bird species recorded on 12 April 2017



Figure 2. Location of birds recorded on 12 June 2017

Key to Bird Codes in Figures 1 & 2:

BF = Bullfinch; BT = Blue Tit; C = Carrion Crow; HG = Herring Gull; JD = Jackdaw; LB = Lesser Black-backed Gull; L = Lapwing; MG = Magpie; PH = Pheasant; RP = Ringed Plover; WP = Wood Pigeon; WR = Wren.

A total of 10 bird species were recorded on the Project site, with a further two species in bushes immediately outside of the south-west corner of the Project site.

Of the birds on the Project site itself, three species were exhibiting behaviour associated with breeding.

During the April survey, a pair of Yellowhammers, *Emberiza citronella*, was present on the vegetated area on the south of the Project site, with the male occasionally singing from the tall, interior fence. The same bird also sang from a hedgerow just outside the southern boundary of the Project site. During the June survey, a male Yellowhammer was singing from the southern boundary fence and also from the tall, interior fence. There was very little vegetation on the Project site that would be suitable to support nesting Yellowhammer but all vegetation with the potential to do so was inspected and no nests were found. While part of the Project site forms part of the breeding territory of one pair of Yellowhammer, it is likely that the nest itself will be outside of the Project site, probably in the adjacent hedgerow.

A Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus*, was engaged in display flights which included the north-east corner of the Project site on both the April and the June surveys. A second Lapwing was on the ground in the extreme north-east corner at one point in the June survey but it subsequently left. The north-east corner of the Project site was thoroughly inspected but no nests were found. Based on the repeated display behaviour of the bird, it is considered that the Project site forms part of the breeding territory of one pair of Lapwing but any nest would appear to be outside of the Project site. During the April survey a pair of Ringed Plover, *Charadrius hiaticula*, was present on one of the areas of crushed concrete in the centre of the Project site. No nest was seen and it was assumed that the birds were not actively nesting at that time as both birds were evident. During the June survey a single Ringed Plover appeared close to the surveyor and then repeatedly walked slowly away without taking flight, in what was clearly a distraction display. Due to the cryptic nature of Ringed Plover nests and the unobtrusive appearance of the birds themselves on this type of substrate, the nest was not searched for so as to avoid disturbance or damage; however, given the behaviour of the bird it is assumed that nesting was taking place on the Project site.

The only other birds of note on the site was a flock comprising 49 Herring Gulls, *Larus argentatus*, and a single Lesser Black-backed Gull, *Larus fuscus*. These were resting or bathing around a shallow pool of water that had formed on the concrete. It is worth noting that a flock of around 150 Herring Gulls had been observed exhibiting similar behaviour during the site visit for the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in October 2016.

Conclusion

The only birds that were recorded as breeding on the Project site in 2017 were a single pair of Ringed Plovers.

The Project site may form part of the wider breeding territory of a very small number of other pairs of birds but there is very limited potential for any bird species other than ground-nesting plovers to

actually nest on the Project site itself. What additional potential there may be would be for one or two pairs of small passerine birds to nest in the young trees in the car park or in the very small amount of bramble scrub on the southern perimeter.

The Project site would appear to be used as a resting place by a flock of Herring Gulls on a regular basis with their presence being likely to be related to the presence of an area of shallow water for bathing.

Appendix 1. Notable bird records from the Environmental Records Information Centre North East

Species	Location Name	Date	Grid Reference	Abundances
Linnet	Mannion Park	April 2008 - June 2008	NZ557205	1 Count
Goldfinch	Mannion Park	April 2008 - June 2008	NZ557205	1 Count
Greenfinch	Mannion Park	April 2008 - June 2008	NZ557205	1 Count
Siskin	Mannion Park	April 2008 - June 2008	NZ557205	2 Count
House Martin	Mannion Park	April 2008 - June 2008	NZ557205	6 Count
Yellowhammer	Corfu Way, Redcar	28/01/2009	NZ5822	
Kestrel	Mannion Park	April 2008 - June 2008	NZ557205	1 Count
Swallow	Wilton Centre	2004	NZ58082035	
Swallow		29/06/2009	NZ5747319844	1 Count
Swallow		29/06/2009	NZ5748619891	2 Count
Herring Gull	Corfu Way, Redcar	28/01/2009	NZ5822	
Grey Partridge	Corfu Way, Redcar	28/01/2009	NZ5822	
Dunnock	Mannion Park	April 2008 - June 2008	NZ557205	3 Count
Bullfinch	Mannion Park	April 2008 - June 2008	NZ557205	3 Count
Whitethroat	Mannion Park	April 2008 - June 2008	NZ557205	1 Count
Barn Owl	Corfu Way, Redcar	28/01/2009	NZ5822	