

# **Environmental Statement: Volume III**

## **Appendix 9C: Wintering Bird Survey**

Winter bird survey of designated land at North Killingholme  
January - March 2017

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Below boundary of survey area in red





Above one of the wet pools at the eastern end of the survey area

Below Common Snipe faeces in favoured wet grass in on of the eastern pools January 2017





Above and below general view of the survey site with mounds of concrete and soil covered in moss and vegetation  
January 2017



**Introduction:**

The site comprises an undulating roughly rectangular area 240m x 125m with dumped concrete and soil in heaps and mounds and intervening hollows some of which retained water through the survey period. The elevation of the site varies by up to 5m with mounds of soil and rubble raising parts of the site above sea level. At the eastern end of the site are two shallow water pools surrounded by sedge and with some greater reedmace. Most of the area was covered in a rich growth of various grasses, willow herb, thistles, bramble and other low growing vegetation. A few small trees, mainly Willow, Sallow, Sycamore and Hawthorn were scattered across the site. A selection of photographs produced in this report give an impression of the appearance of the site in the winter period.

**Methodology:**

A total of six survey visits were undertaken between January and March 2017 inclusive. All of the survey site was walked to within 10m of any one location and all birds located were recorded and their locations marked on a large scale map with behaviour, where relevant, also being noted. The locations of the individual birds on each survey were then plotted against each other to attempt to ascertain how many individuals were likely to have been present during the survey period. The maps from each survey visit are attached at the end of this report.

**Results:**

A total of 15 species was recorded on six survey visits between January and March 2017.

**January 17<sup>th</sup> 2017**

Wind south-west force 3 -4 with eight octas cloud cover and temperature of 5C.

Sunrise 08:09

The site was generally rather wet with two obvious permanent water pools at the east end that held a total of five Common Snipe. A single Woodcock was flushed from a clump of bramble at the western end of the site and six species of passerine were recorded, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Dunnock, Wren, Robin and Magpie. The location of each individual is shown on the attached map.

**January 26<sup>th</sup> 2017**

Wind south-east force three to four with eight octas cloud cover and some mist at 400m with a temperature of 1C and a light snow flurry at the start of the survey.

Sunrise 07:57

The site was in identical condition to the previous survey with standing water in some of the lower parts and particularly at the eastern end where the two pools again attracted a small group of Common Snipe. In addition two Common Snipe were flushed from another smaller wet area in the middle of the site. What is presumed to be the same Woodcock was again flushed from a bramble thicket the western end of the site. This is clearly its roost area and the bird presumably feeds at night in some of the permanent pasture fields to the east of the adjacent Rosper Road.

**February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017**

Wind force four from the south with eight octas cloud cover and an exceptionally mild temperature of 11C, most unseasonable for early February.

Sunrise 07:46

The site was in identical condition to the previous survey with standing water in some of the lower parts and particularly at the eastern end where the two pools again attracted a small group of Common Snipe. In addition two Common Snipe were flushed from another smaller wet area in the middle of the site.

**February 17<sup>th</sup> 2017**

Wind west force four with four octas cloud cover and a temperatures of 7C.

Sunrise 07:17

The site was even wetter than on previous surveys following two days of persistent rain over the previous weekend. The floodwater pools at the eastern end of the site were more extensive and deeper than in the previous surveys but held a similar number of Common Snipe.

**March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017**

Wind was a fresh westerly up to force four with occasional showers in the early morning but these cleared the area by 08:45 hrs. Cloud cover varied from four to seven octas and the temperatures rose gradually from 4C to 7C.

Sunrise 06:48

Following further periods of rain the site was probably even wetter than on the previous visit with the depth of water in the pools at the eastern end of the site being in places over 40 cms.

**March 9<sup>th</sup> 2017**

Wind fresh from the west at force four with an almost clear sky, just one octa cloud cover, and mild with temperatures of 10C.

Sunrise 06:32

The site remained very wet underfoot with the pools still flooded to depths recorded in the previous week.

<b>Species</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>2.03</b>	<b>9.03</b>
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	0	1	1	0	0	0
Common Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	6	8	7	7	6	7
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	1	1	0	0	0	0
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	1	1	0	0	0	0
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	1	2	2	1	1	2
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	6	5	4	2	0	2
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	3	3	2	1	2	2
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	4	3	2	4	1	3
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	2	2	0	1	1	1
Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	0	0	1	1	2	1
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0
Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	0	0	1	0	1	0
Chaffinch <i>Carduelis coelebs</i>	0	0	0	0	1	1
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	0	10	0	0	3	0
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0



## Species comments:

### Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

One was hunting the site on January 26<sup>th</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup> and on the latter date a second bird flew over the site. The species is known to nest on the pylons and buildings within the refinery area.

### Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Common Snipe were found in two parts of the survey area; the two open water pools at the eastern end of the site and in a series of wet hollows and ditches in the middle of the area. Birds clearly used the eastern pools regularly as there were several faeces on some of the favoured grass areas (see photo). Between six and eight birds were recorded on each survey suggesting that this was a stable wintering population. Common Snipe are opportunistic birds and will seek out suitable feeding and roosting areas in the winter months as the amount of seasonal rainfall will determine the areas that the species is able to exploit. Common Snipe is Amber listed in the most recent Birds of Conservation Concern due to declines in both the British breeding population and the wintering population but even so the latter is numbered at one million individuals and thus the number of birds recorded on this survey is particularly insignificant even on a regional basis.

### Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

A single bird was flushed from the bramble scrub at the south-west of the survey area on January 17<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and this was assumed to be the same bird using a daytime roost area. The survey area is not really suitable for feeding and it is assumed that this bird was feeding nocturnally in the permanent pasture fields to the east of Rosper Road. Woodcock has recently joined the list of Red Listed species due to dramatic declines in the British breeding population but it is thought that 1.4 million birds are found in Britain in the winter months. The fact that this particular bird was only recorded on two survey visits possibly suggest that it was relatively newly arrived in the area, as birds can cross the North Sea at any time during October – January, and that it probably moved on from its first resting location as the roost site was not typical for the species.

### Magpie *Pica pica*

Single birds were noted flying over the site and perching for short periods but there was no sign of actual feeding on the survey area during survey visits though birds were feeding on the mown grass on the north of the car park area.

### Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

There were two different Wrens on the survey area but only one was recorded on three of the visits as the bird at the western end of the site appeared to be holding a territory that also extended in to the compound beyond the survey area. Wren is a Green Listed species of least concern with an estimated British breeding population of 7.7 million occupied territories in 2009.

### Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Up to six Blackbirds were recorded around the survey area but with a British breeding population of 4.9 million pairs that is probably doubled with the addition of winter visitors from Scandinavia and the Baltic states the number of birds recorded is of no obvious significance.

### Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Song Thrush is a Red Listed species due to declines in the British breeding populations and also declines in wintering numbers but the maximum of three birds located during the survey work would not be considered of local or regional significance.

### Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Dunnock is another widespread but Amber Listed species due to declines breeding and wintering populations but there are still considered to be 2.3 million breeding pairs in Britain and the peak of four birds on the survey area would not merit local significance.

### Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Two Robins were holding winter territories on the survey area but by February one had moved across Rosper Road into the mature hedgerow to the east and it was not recorded again from the survey area though it was heard in song on March visits. There are considered to be in the region of 6 million occupies territories in summer in Britain with additional birds arriving from further east in winter.

### Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

One or two Blue Tits were recorded on the last four surveys. Blue Tit is a very widespread species with an increasing British breeding population estimated at 3.4 million pairs and is Green Listed of least conservation concern.

### Great Tit *Parus major*

A single Great Tit was noted on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Like Blue Tit it is a widespread and increasing Green Listed species.

#### Goldcrest *Regulus regulas*

One was present in the low scrub on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and one in the hedge by the side of the VPI site on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Wandering Goldcrests in winter may well be of continental origin and there was a notable arrival in autumn 2016, forming the most likely source of this individual, or could be local breeding birds from the woodlands in the area.

#### Chaffinch *Carduelis coelebs*

A singing male was located in the hawthorn hedge between the site and the VPI compound on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Chaffinch is a widespread and common breeding species of woodlands, parks, gardens and hedgerows within farmland with a British breeding population of 5.8 million pairs.

#### Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Charms of ten January 26<sup>th</sup> and three March 2<sup>nd</sup> were feeding on teasel seeds at the western end of the survey site. This is an increasingly common species in winter with a British breeding population of 1.2 million pairs. Birds are highly mobile in the autumn and winter moving over large areas of the countryside to exploit available rich seed bearing plants.

#### Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

There were no records of this species until March 2<sup>nd</sup> when a singing male had moved onto the site and set up a potential breeding territory in the wet area at the eastern end of the site. This is typical habitat for breeding Reed Bunting and the area as a whole is within the size of territory typically occupied by a single pair.

### **Summary:**

The limited number of bird species recorded in the survey area, 15 species, was fairly typical of the habitat and size of the survey area in the winter months. Clearly feeding and roosting opportunities are limited in this small area of habitat and its location on the edge of active industrial sites is not likely to attract large numbers of any species or those that are sensitive to human disturbance.

All of the passerine species recorded were in very low numbers and of no local significance. The most interesting species located on all survey counts was Common Snipe. Up to eight birds were located on each survey with six to eight birds clearly representing a regular wintering flock taking advantage of a small area of suitable roosting and feeding habitat represented by the flooded pools at the eastern end of the site. Common Snipe are particularly adaptable on passage and in winter taking advantage of temporal wetlands as well as permanently suitable sites. The 2016 – 2017 autumn and winter saw a major arrival of Common Snipe on the Humber relating to Scandinavian birds and it seems likely that the birds wintering on the site were from a similar location. As such the birds are not certain to return to the same area in future winters and the species is adapted to exploiting temporal wetlands throughout its winter range. There is no likelihood of the species breeding in this small area of habitat and it is likely that the birds will have departed by the first week in April.

A lone Woodcock that was roosting on the site in January was presumed to be day roosting and feeding in the wet grass fields to the east of the site. Again this is a wintering bird that would be unlikely to return to the same roost site in successive years.

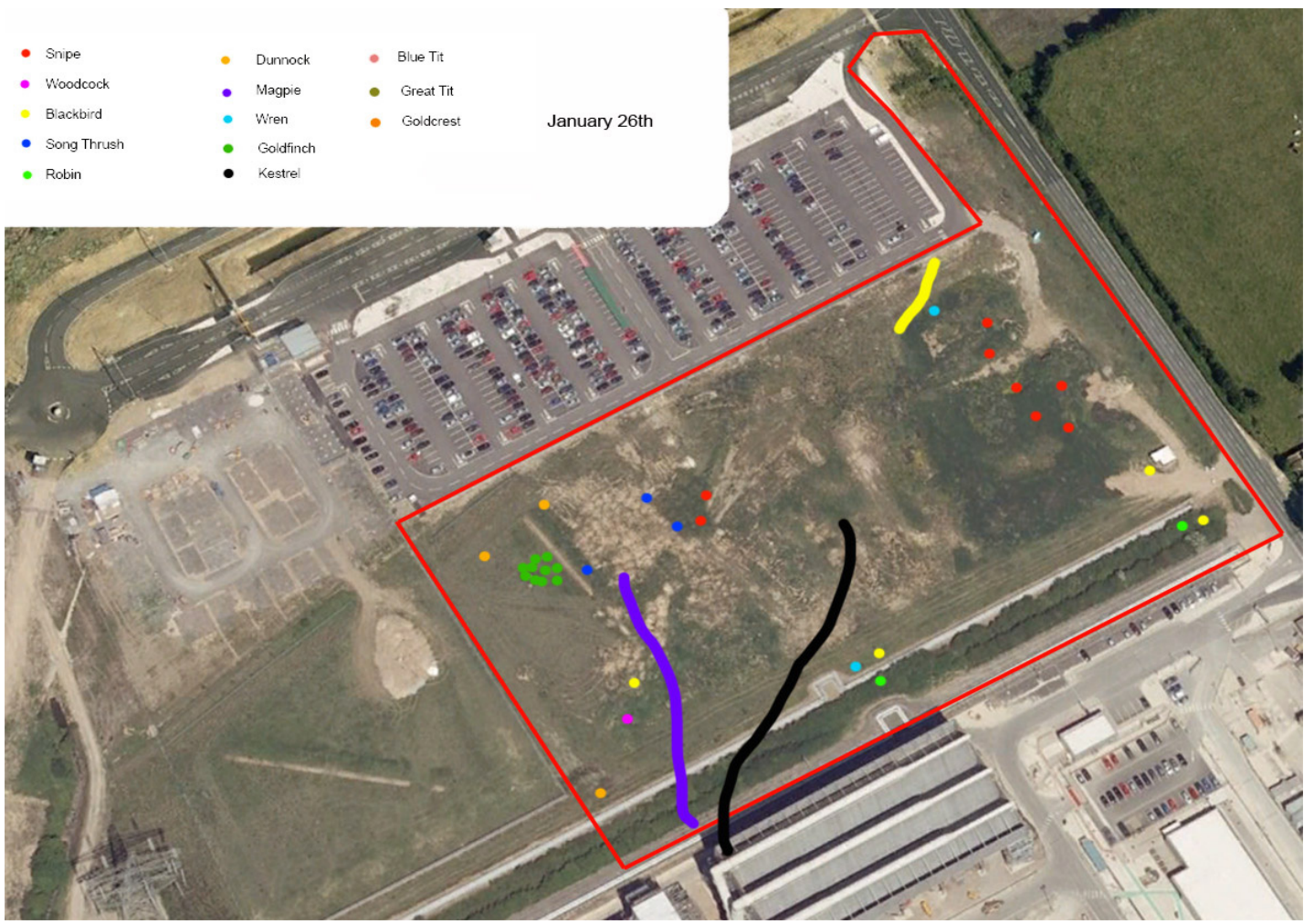
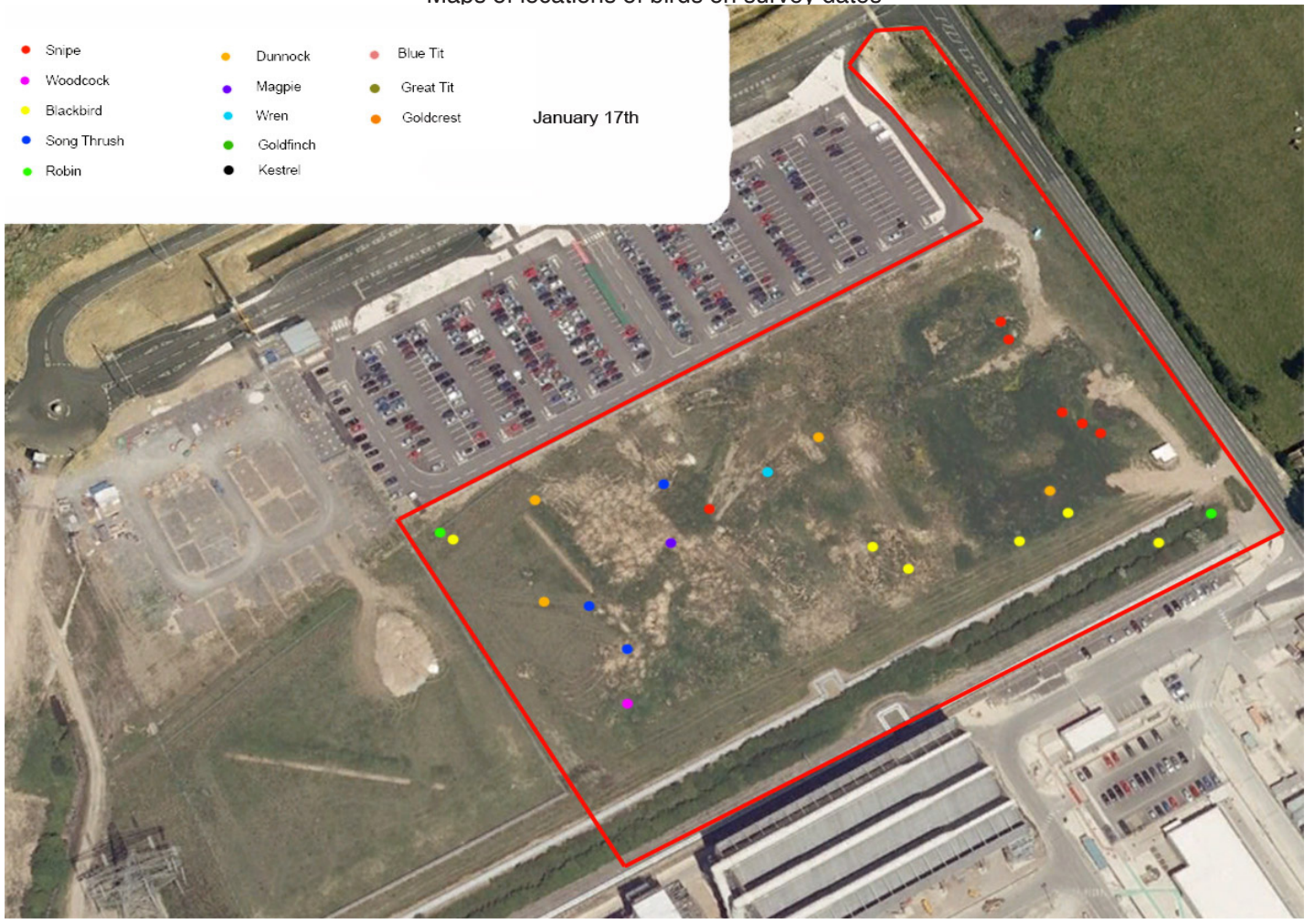
### **Conclusions:**

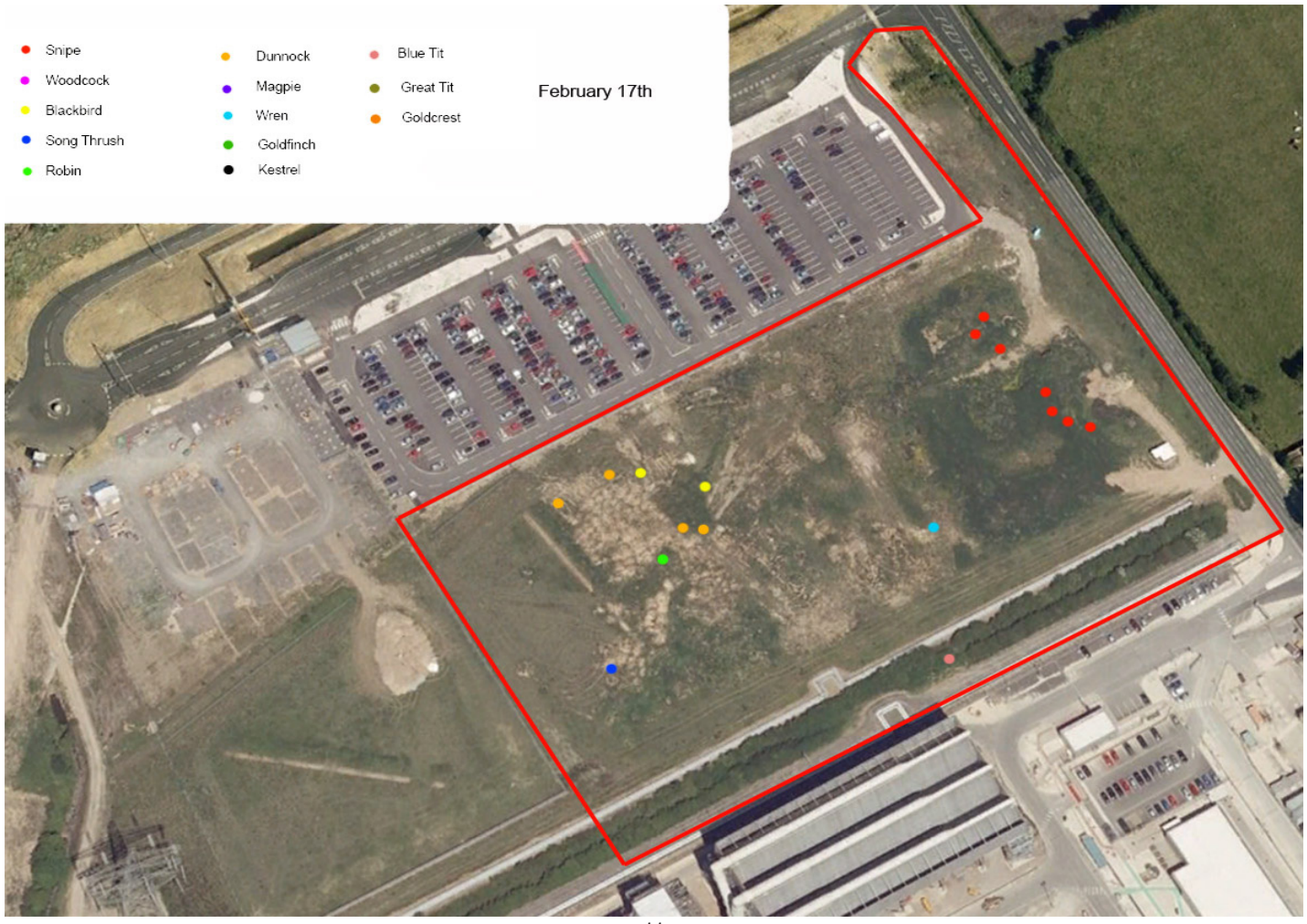
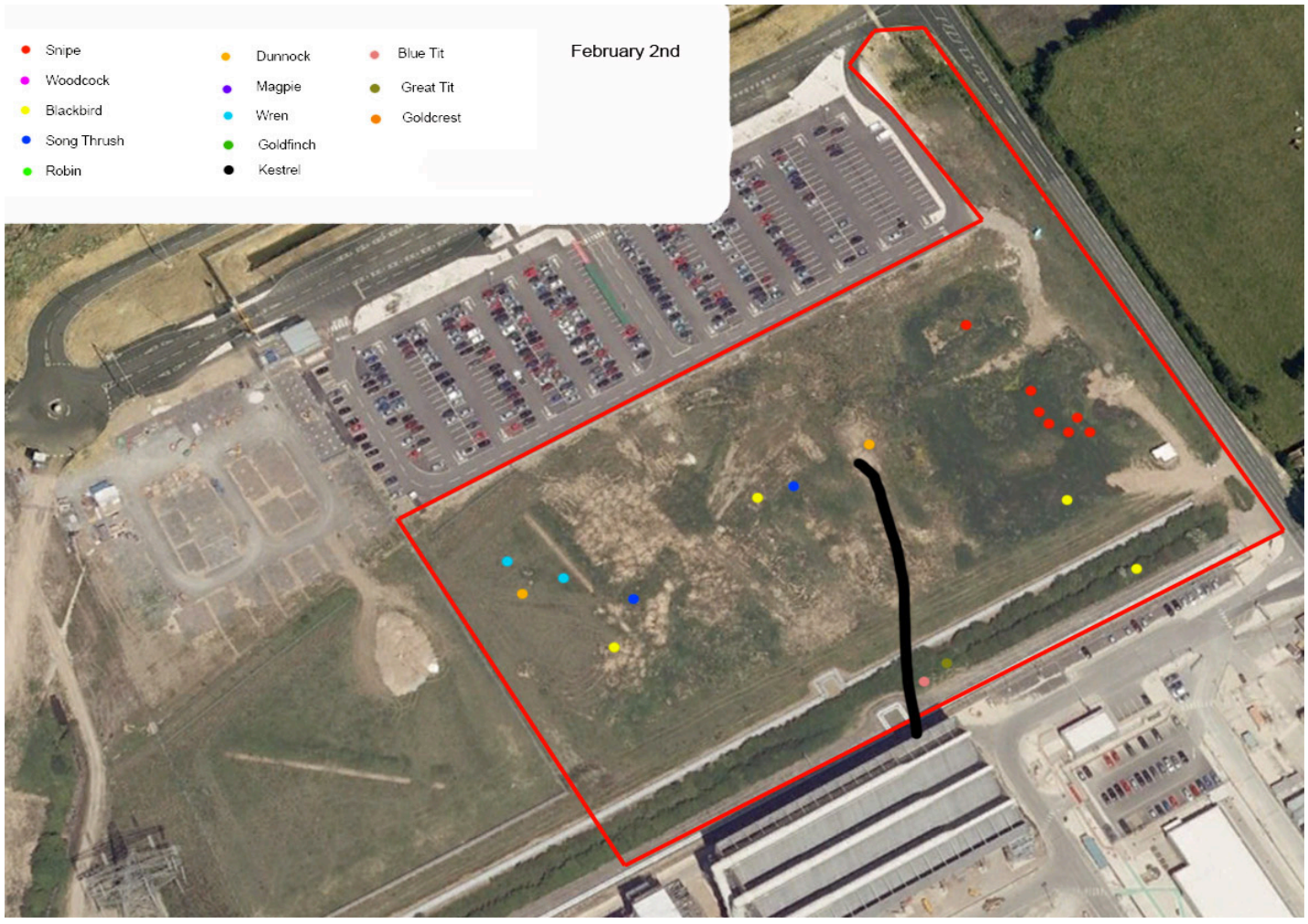
The species of bird located on the survey area and the low numbers involved would not be likely to be considered prohibitive to future development of the site and the permanent loss of the habitats, which are temporary in an ecological succession.

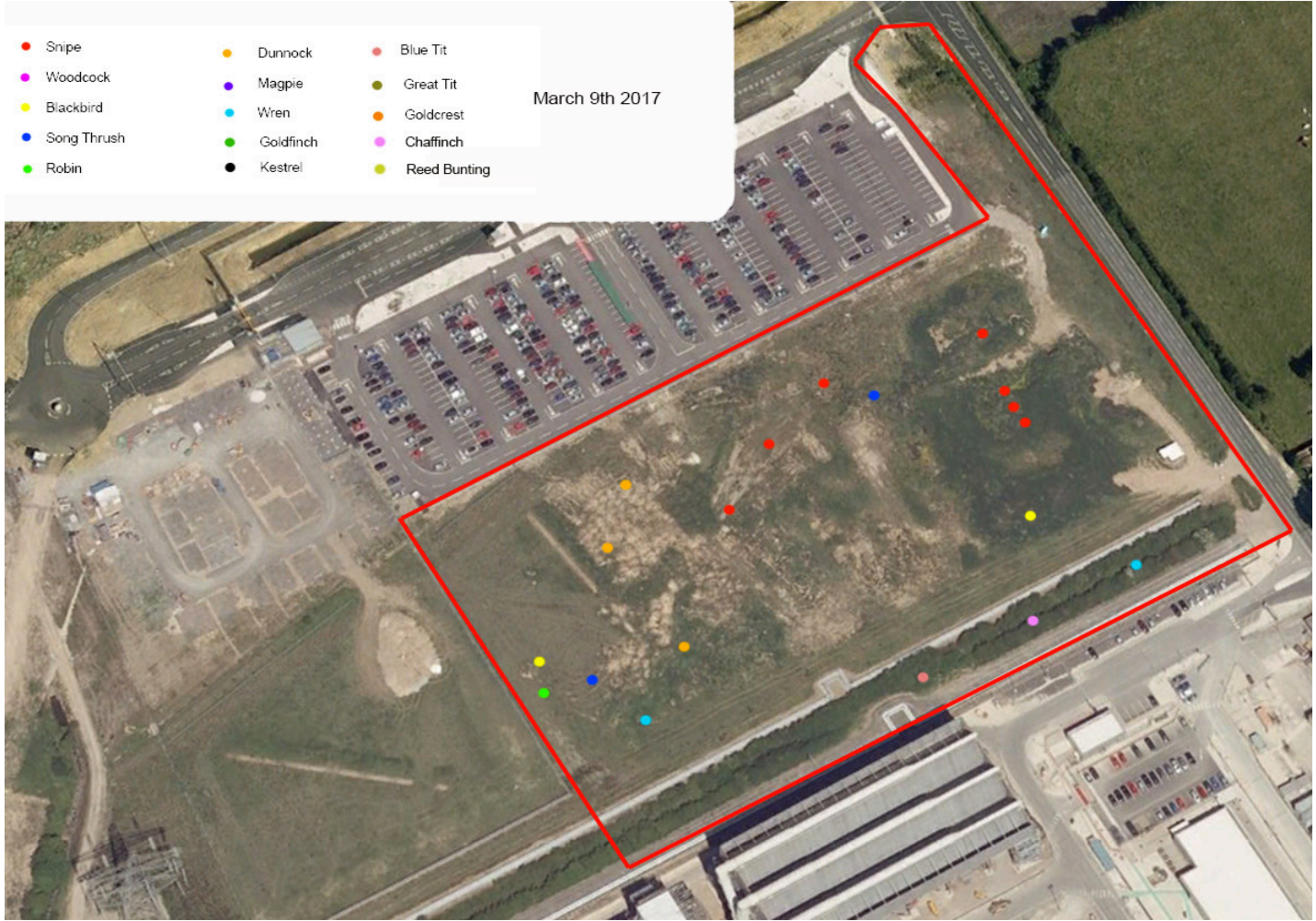
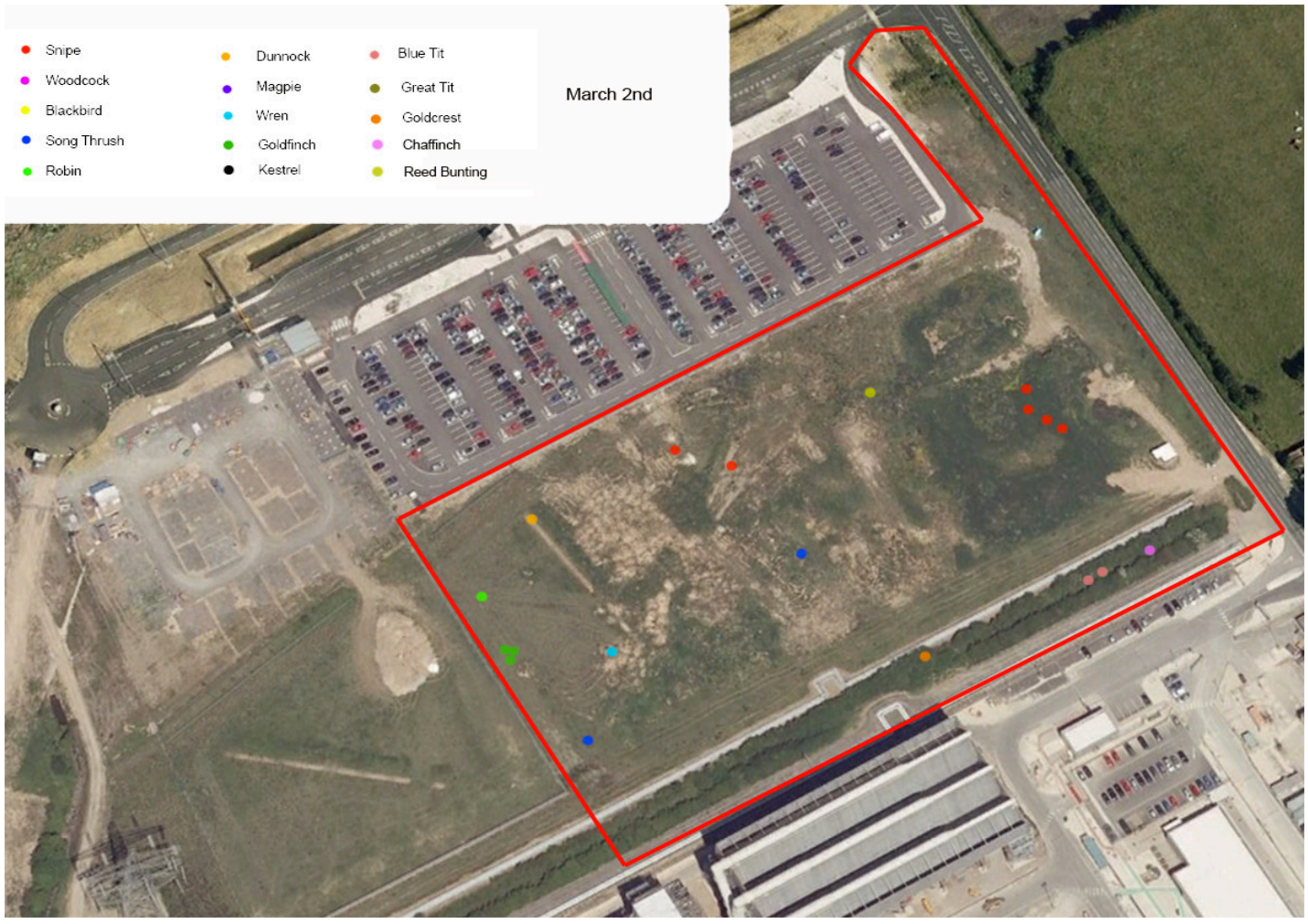
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March 2017

Maps of locations of birds on survey dates



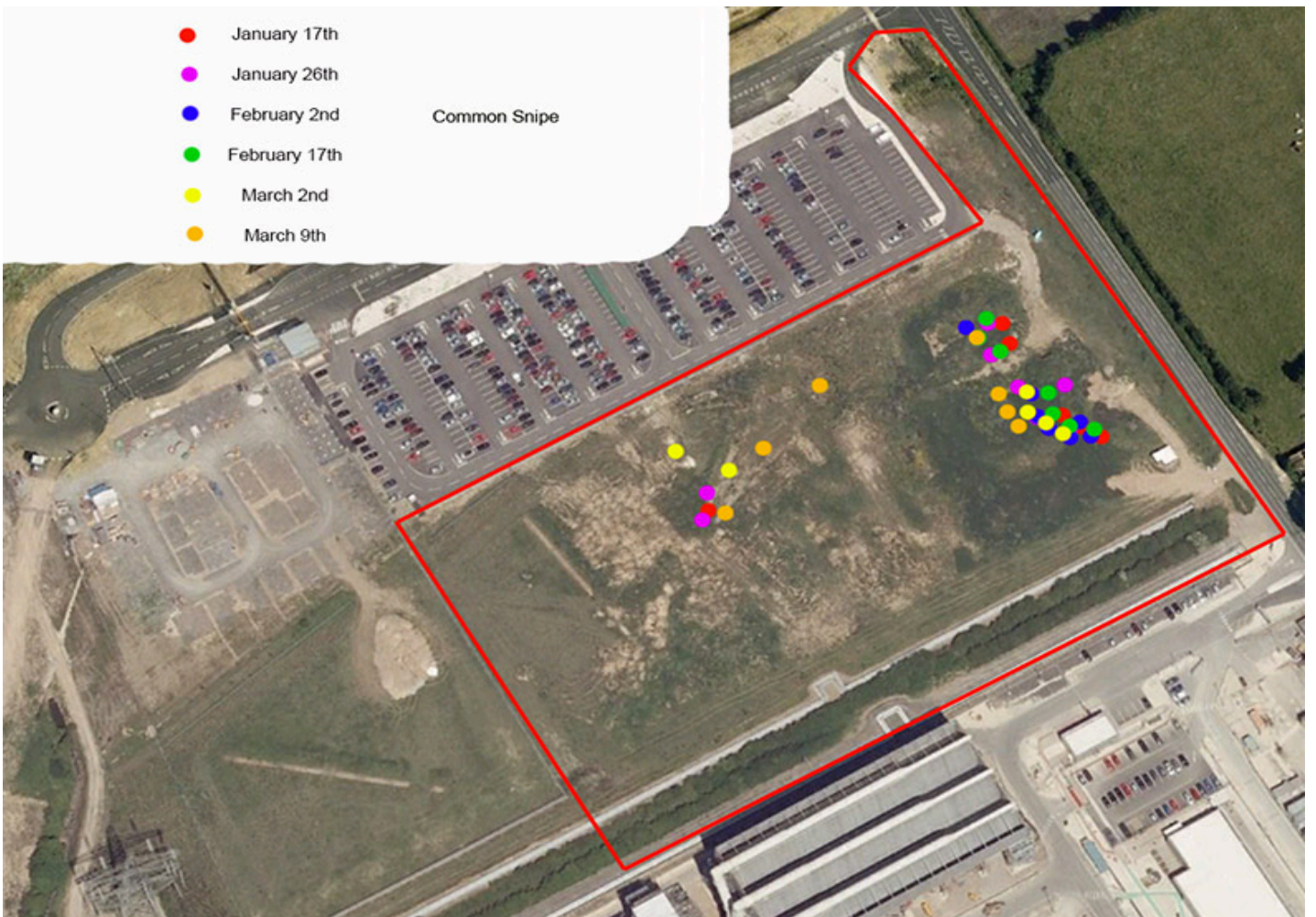




- January 17th
  - January 26th
  - February 2nd
  - February 17th
  - March 2nd
  - March 9th
- Kestrel



- January 17th
  - January 26th
  - February 2nd
  - February 17th
  - March 2nd
  - March 9th
- Common Snipe



- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Woodcock



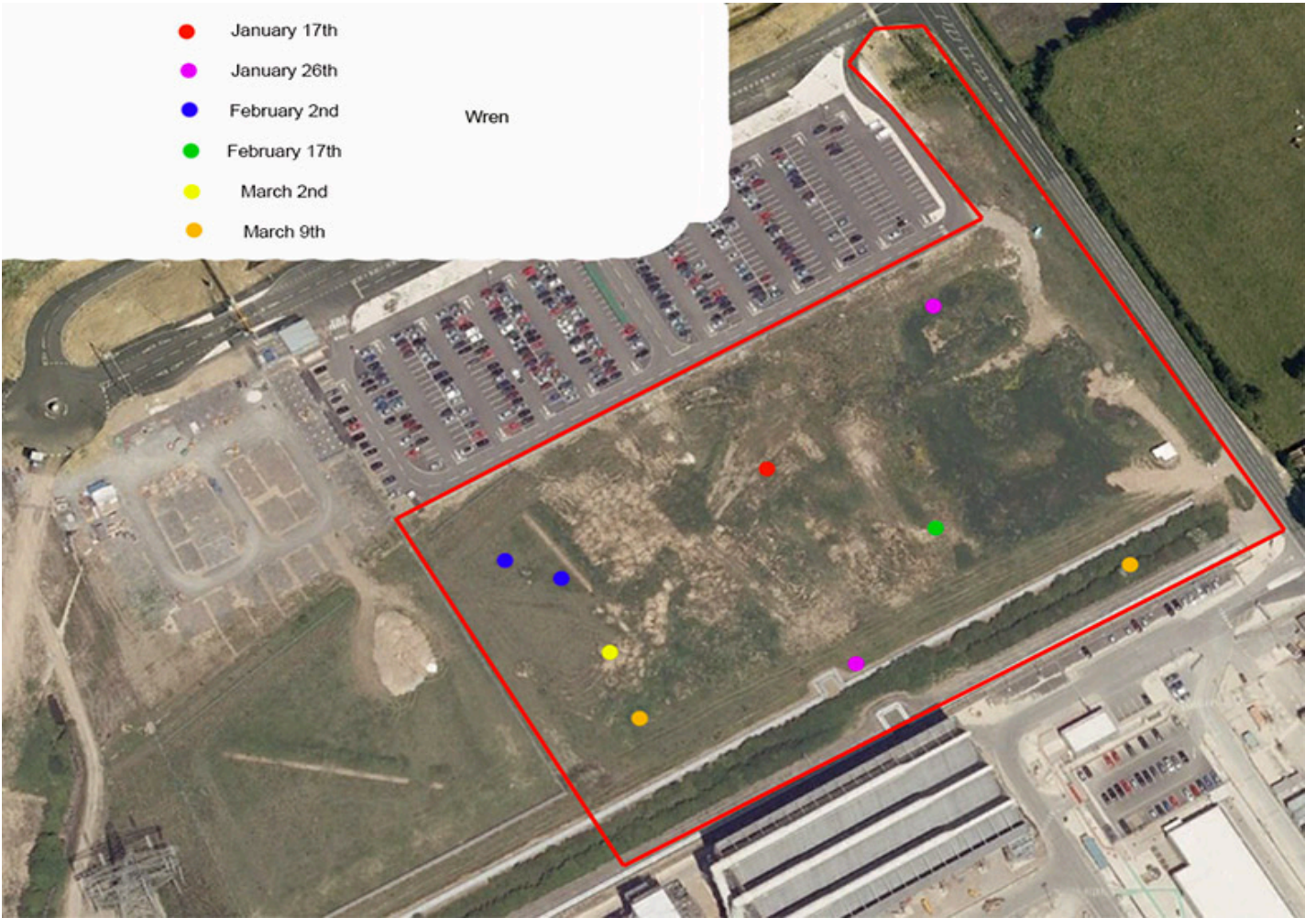
- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Magpie



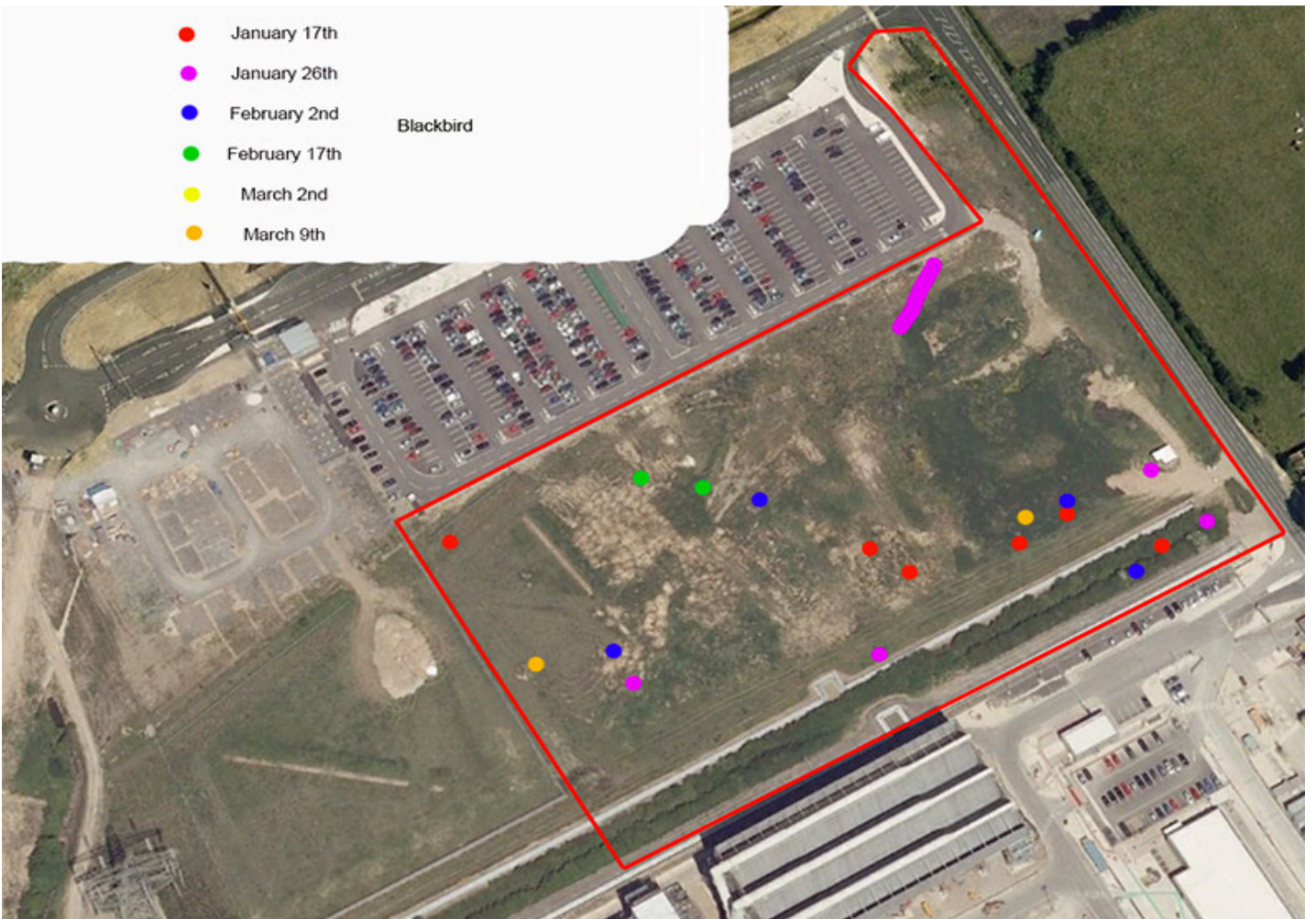
- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Wren



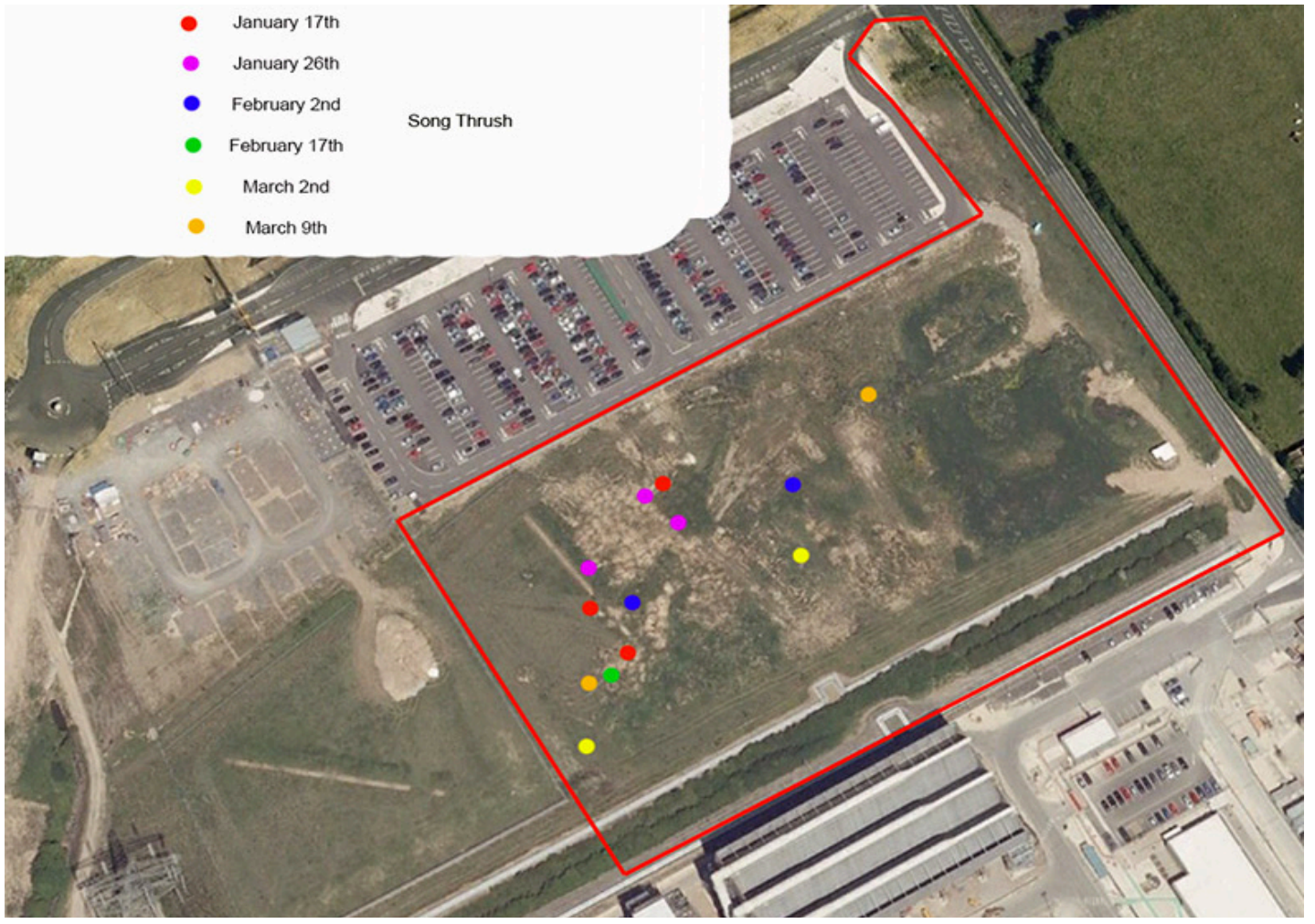
- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Blackbird

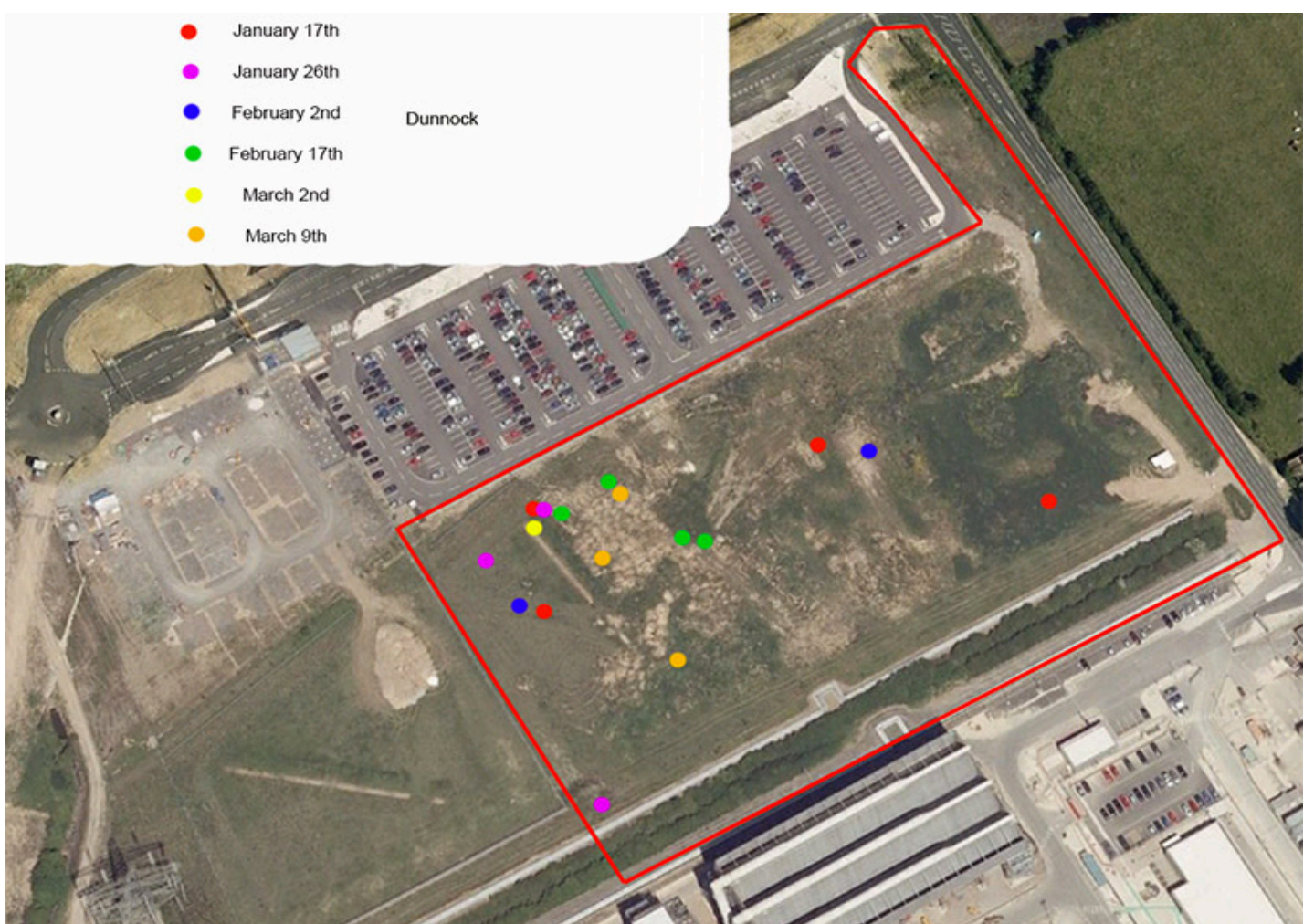




- January 17th
  - January 26th
  - February 2nd
  - February 17th
  - March 2nd
  - March 9th
- Song Thrush



- January 17th
  - January 26th
  - February 2nd
  - February 17th
  - March 2nd
  - March 9th
- Dunnock



- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Robin



- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Blue Tit



- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Great Tit



- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Goldcrest



- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Chaffinch



- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Goldfinch



- January 17th
- January 26th
- February 2nd
- February 17th
- March 2nd
- March 9th

Reed Bunting

