

Gate Burton Energy Park Environmental Statement

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1. Introduction

1.1.1 This report on wintering birds forms a technical appendix to the Environmental Statement (ES), specifically to accompany **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010131/APP/3.1]**. Further information on the Scheme is included within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010131/APP/3.1]**.

1.2 Report objectives

1.2.1 The objective of the wintering bird surveys, reported in this document, is to determine the presence, assemblage and distribution of wintering bird species, within the Order limits and relevant zones of influence to determine any potential impacts of the Scheme on wintering birds.

1.2.2 This report includes the following information:

- relevant legislation and policy;
- methods for desk and field-based assessments undertaken in 2021 and 2022;
- limitations to the surveys undertaken and any assumptions made as a result of incomplete data;
- survey results;
- the approach for determining the nature conservation importance of breeding bird populations recorded during the assessments; and
- conclusions.

2. Legislation and Guidance

2.1 Legislative Context

Wildlife and Countryside Act

- 2.1.1 The legislative provisions for the protection of wild birds in the UK are contained primarily in Sections 1-7 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) (Ref 2). Under the WCA, a wild bird is defined as any bird of a species that occurs in a wild state as a resident or a visitor to the European Territory of any member state.
- 2.1.2 Reference is not made in this report to species afforded protection under Schedule 1 of the WCA (Ref 2) as the protection measures in this Act only apply to bird species within the breeding season.

Directive of the Conservation of Wild Birds

- 2.1.3 A number of bird species recorded within the UK (including those that are resident, overwintering and migratory) are protected under European legislation under the Directive of the Conservation of Wild Birds (EU Birds Directive) (Ref 3), which lists 193 species, or sub-species, of birds in Annex 1 which are:
- in danger of extinction;
 - are rare, or have restricted local distribution;
 - are vulnerable to specific changes in their habitat; or
 - require particular attention for reasons of the specific nature of habitat.
- 2.1.4 This Directive is reflected in English law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Ref 4). Although the UK is no longer a member state of the European Union, the 2019 amendments (Ref 5) to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 make it clear that provisions regarding the protection and designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are maintained. Species listed on Annex 1 are those for which the UK Government takes special conservation measures including the designation of land as SPAs to ensure the survival and reproduction of these species throughout their distributions. These sites are automatically included within the National Site Network; a network of core breeding and resting sites that are protected for rare and threatened species.

Priority species

- 2.1.5 In addition to the above legislation, 49 bird species are listed as being Species of Principal Importance for conservation in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (Ref 6). These species are of material consideration during the planning process. Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list has been drawn up in consultation with Natural

England, as required by the Act. The Section 41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions.

2.1.6 The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) (Ref 7) was launched in 1994 and identified UK BAP priority species of conservation concern that are the most threatened in the UK and requiring action under the UKBAP and for which action plans have been published. However, the work undertaken for the UKBAP is now focussed at a country level, rather than UK level, and the UKBAP has subsequently been succeeded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (July 2012) (Ref 8). However, the UK list of priority species remains an important reference source and has been used to help draw up statutory lists of priority species in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For the purpose of this assessment, the UKBAP is still used as one of the criteria to assist in assigning national value to any given ecological receptor.

2.2 Local Biodiversity Action Plan

2.2.1 The Scheme is located in two counties: Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. The Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (3rd edition) (Ref 9) and Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan (Ref 10) provide the local nature conservation strategy for identifying threats to species within each of the counties and set out the action plans necessary to conserve them. These action plans provide context to inform identification of threatened or uncommon species within the district and, or county. The plans also identify priorities for conservation and enhancement but confers no particular legislative or policy protection to the species identified, however in some cases this is provided through related legislation and local planning policy.

2.2.2 The Lincolnshire BAP lists 17 bird species for which action plans have been prepared and the Nottinghamshire BAP lists three bird species. These species are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Bird species for which action plans have been prepared in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire

Common Name	Scientific name	Lincolnshire LBAP Action Plan	Nottinghamshire LBAP Action Plan
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	-	✓
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	✓	-
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	✓	-
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	✓	-
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	✓	-

Common Name	Scientific name	Lincolnshire LBAP Action Plan	Nottinghamshire LBAP Action Plan
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	-
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	✓	-
Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	✓	✓
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓	-
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓	-
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓	-
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓	-
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	-
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	-
Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	✓	-
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>	✓	✓
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	✓	-
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	✓	-

2.2.3 The Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (Ref 9) identifies the following threats to farmland birds in Lincolnshire:

- The loss of permanent and relatively species-rich grassland;
- Increased chemical usage including fertilisers, pesticides and use of broad spectrum and persistent animal treatments;
- Uniformity within crops, offering fewer opportunities for birds to feed and nest;
- The decline of mixed farming;
- Loss of hedgerow trees through old age and removal for safety and other reasons;
- Hedgerow removal and poor management of remaining hedges;
- Drainage of arable land decreasing the potential for nesting Lapwing and reducing the ability of chicks to probe for food.
- A reduction in crop mosaic; and
- Nest destruction by agricultural machinery and non-replacement of old nest boxes for Barn Owls, reducing future availability of nesting sites.

2.2.4 The Nottinghamshire BAP (Ref 10) lists specific action plan for Barn Owl and identifies the following threats to this species:

- Loss of habitats such as rough grassland and hedgerows to development and agricultural intensification, with a consequent decline in prey species populations;

- Lack of long grass in field margins and roadside verges as a habitat for small mammals;
- A lack of old trees for nesting and roosting sites;
- Demolition or conversion of old agricultural buildings;
- Poisoning by rodenticides and insecticides;
- Road deaths;
- Disturbance to nesting and roosting sites (often unintentionally) by people; and
- Hard winters leading to Barn Owls dying of starvation.

2.2.5 The Nottinghamshire BAP action plans for Willow Tit and Nightjar have not been included within this report as neither species was recorded during the surveys for wintering birds and therefore the action plans are not relevant in the context of the Scheme.

2.3 Birds of conservation concern

2.3.1 The Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) (Ref 11) is an assessment of the conservation status of all regularly occurring British birds. The lists (Red, Amber and Green), that indicate the level of conservation importance for each species, are derived from quantitative assessments from standardised criteria. The assessment is based on the most up-to-date evidence available and criteria include conservation status at global and European levels and, within the UK: historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. The lists are drawn together by the UKs leading bird conservation organisations, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

2.3.2 Red list species are of the most conservation concern and are those that:

- are globally threatened (Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable, but not Near Threatened) under International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) guidelines;
- have shown a historical population decline between 1800 and 1995 and have not recovered;
- have suffered a severe non-breeding population decline of more than 50%; and
- whose UK range in the non-breeding season has declined by more than 50% between respective breeding and non-breeding atlases.

2.3.3 Amber list species include:

- those that are threatened in Europe (Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable, but not Near Threatened as per IUCN Red List Guidelines);
- those that were previously red-listed for historical population decline, followed by an increase of at least 100% over 25 years or the longer-term period;
- those that have suffered a moderate non-breeding population decline of between 25% and 50%;

- whose UK range in the non-breeding season has declined by more than 50% between respective breeding and non-breeding atlases;
- non-breeding rarities (UK population <900 non-breeding individuals);
- non-breeding localisation whereby more than 50% of the UK population was found at ten or fewer sites in the non-breeding season; and
- non-breeding international importance whereby the UK holds at least 20% of the European population in the non-breeding (WI) season of a particular species.

2.3.4 Green list species are not of conservation concern and include all other commonly occurring birds in the UK.

2.3.5 The BoCC lists confer no legal status, however where any BoCC Red or Amber-listed species are present at a site, their conservation status should be taken into account when determining the likely impacts (and significance) of proposed plans and projects and in determining the level of mitigation that may be required when birds are to be affected by plans or projects.

3. Methods

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 A desk study was undertaken in October 2021 through Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) and Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Records Centre (NBGRC) to obtain records of protected and notable bird species within a 2 km radius of the Order limits.
- 3.1.2 Only records up to ten years old from the request date were considered within the assessment, as any records older than ten years are unlikely to be still representative of bird species in the local area.

3.2 Field Survey

Survey area

- 3.2.1 The survey area included all habitat within the Order limits and a minimum 50 m survey buffer. Standardised survey buffers for assessing the impacts of development on bird populations do not exist, however, the survey area used provides information on the non-breeding birds within the area immediately surrounding the Scheme and includes areas contiguous with the Order limits, where birds may potentially be adversely affected. Depending on the sensitivity of the species, birds occurring outside of the survey area may also be adversely affected, however the 50m survey buffer is sufficient to determine the likely impacts of the Scheme on the majority of wintering bird species occurring or likely to occur in the area.
- 3.2.2 Modifications to the Scheme extent through the survey period resulted in minor modifications to the survey area used during the course of the wintering bird survey and therefore, the methods that were used reflected the extent of access at the time. However, the survey covered the Order limits and provides an accurate representation of the baseline wintering bird community presence within the Order limits and allows determination of the presence of any protected or sensitive ornithological receptors.

Walkover survey

- 3.2.3 The walkover survey was undertaken based on a transect methodology as detailed in Bibby *et al.* (2000) (Ref 12) and Gilbert *et al.* (1998) (Ref 13).
- 3.2.4 Fixed routes were walked around the Solar and Energy Storage Park and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the Grid Connection Corridor, surveying the habitat for wintering birds. Regular stopping points were included within the route to allow survey of birds that were audible or visible within any inaccessible areas.
- 3.2.5 Surveys for wintering birds were undertaken between November 2021 and March 2022; and in October 2022, with a total of six survey visits taking place.

Owing to the size of the Order limits, each survey was split over four to five days, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Survey dates for each site visit

Visit number	Survey Dates
1	22 nd to 26 th November 2021
2	13 th to 17 th December 2021
3	11 th to 14 th January 2022
4	7 th to 10 th February 2022
5	1 st to 4 th March 2022
6	10 th to 14 th October 2022

3.2.6 All surveys were undertaken during appropriate weather conditions for detecting birds. These were dry conditions with winds of 15mph or less.

3.2.7 Survey routes followed the length of all hedgerows, fence-lines and field margins (including paths, tracks and roads). Deviations into areas of set-aside, stubble fields, scrub, woodland and other uncultivated habitats were made, where possible. The routes did not include ploughed or cultivated fields, due to the possibility of trampling and damaging crops. Fields containing livestock were avoided for safety reasons.

3.2.8 Regular stopping points were included along the survey route to record any species that may be passing through the survey area. Survey routes were mapped, and the direction walked alternated on each visit, to ensure that all areas were covered at various times of day across the duration of the survey. Surveys were undertaken early in the morning during a range of daylight hours, between sunrise and sunset.

3.2.9 On each survey visit, the route was walked at a slow pace with start and finish times noted. All birds seen and heard were recorded directly onto paper maps or an ArcGIS base map using Collector software on hand-held Samsung Tablet devices, with a 1:10,000 scale Ordnance Survey base map of the survey area. All bird species were recorded and mapped across the entire survey area.

3.3 Assessment of ornithological importance

3.3.1 The assessment of the ornithological importance of the Order limits during the non-breeding (wintering) season was made by evaluating any species afforded special statutory protection or those included on one, or more, of the lists of species of conservation interest, as detailed in section 2 of this report. These include:

- species listed on Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive (Ref 3);

- priority bird species in the UK (Ref 6), Lincolnshire (Ref 9) or Nottinghamshire (Ref 10); and
- species included in the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red or Amber Lists (Ref 11).

Species abundance

- 3.3.2 In addition to evaluating a site based on its populations of wintering birds in relation to legal status, rarity and biodiversity importance, consideration has to be given to the value of the survey area for the population of individual species that it supports. This can be done by comparing the population present within the survey area with the national and county non-breeding population for certain species. National estimates for non-breeding birds are published in a paper: '*Population estimates of birds in Great Britain and the United Kingdom*' (Ref 14). The BTO '*Bird Atlas 2007-2011*' (Ref 15) was also reviewed for species information on a national level.
- 3.3.3 County-level estimates on the wintering bird populations of the majority of species in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire were also obtained from county avifauna reports, where this information was available.

Species diversity

- 3.3.4 The number of species recorded in an area is a simple measure of diversity that can indicate its importance at each season of the year.
- 3.3.5 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) (or County Wildlife Sites (CWS)) are amongst the most important places for wildlife in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, together with legally protected land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- 3.3.6 In Lincolnshire, CWS's are selected for their habitats and subsequently has no specific criteria for birds. Therefore, species diversity in Lincolnshire has been measured using professional judgement, considering species presence within distinct habitat types within the Site, e.g. farmland passerines, with reference to GLNP '*Local Wildlife Site Guidelines for Greater Lincolnshire*' (Ref 16).
- 3.3.7 As stated in the Nottinghamshire LWS Handbook (Ref 17), a LWS in Nottinghamshire can be selected based on the following specific criteria for birds (Ref 17):
- "*Criterion 5: Any site that has a regular wintering bird assemblage with a score that is equal to or exceeds the Threshold Value for the site's habitat; and*
 - *Criterion 6: Any site that regularly supports 0.5% or more of the UK wintering population of a water bird or wading bird species*".

Importance of the wintering bird population

- 3.3.8 To support a focussed assessment of the population of wintering birds within the Order limits, their biodiversity value has been defined with reference to the

geographical level at which it matters. The frames of reference used in this report were made using the values presented in the ‘*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*’ (CIEEM, 2018) (hereafter referred to as the CIEEM Guidelines) (Ref 18); and professional judgement

3.3.9 The CIEEM guidelines use a framework, linked to a geographical scale at which the receptor has been valued (*i.e.* international, national, regional, county, local or site) and this method represents best practice guidance. This assessment criteria, set out in Table 3, has been used in conjunction with species rarity, abundance and diversity within the survey area to assess the biodiversity importance of the non-breeding bird populations recorded during the field surveys.

Table 3: Importance of Ornithological Features

Importance of ornithological features	Descriptors and examples of criteria
International or European	Resident or regularly occurring populations of species which may be considered of value at an international or European level ¹ where: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the loss of these populations would adversely affect the conservation status or distribution of the species at this geographic scale; the population forms a critical part² of a wider population at this scale; or the species is at a critical phase³ of its life cycle at this scale.
UK or National	Areas of habitats with priority species identified in the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework <i>i.e.</i> UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), including those published in accordance with Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) and those considered to be of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. Resident or regularly occurring populations of species which may be considered of value at a UK or a national level ⁴ where: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the loss of these populations would adversely affect the conservation status or distribution of the species at this geographic scale; the population forms a critical part of a wider population at this scale; or the species is at a critical phase of its life cycle at this scale.
Regional	Populations of species of value at a regional level (<i>i.e.</i> East Midlands). Resident or regularly occurring populations of species which may be considered of value at a regional level ⁵ where: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the loss of these populations would adversely affect the conservation status or distribution of the species at this geographic scale; the population forms a critical part of a wider population at this scale; or the species is at a critical phase of its life cycle at this scale.
County or Unitary Authority or District	Populations of species of value at a County (Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire) level or District (West Lindsey and Bassetlaw).

Importance of ornithological features

Descriptors and examples of criteria

	Resident or regularly occurring populations of species which may be considered of value at a County (or District) ⁶ level where: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the loss of these populations would adversely affect the conservation status or distribution of the species at this geographic scale; the population forms a critical part of a wider population at this scale; or, the species is at a critical phase of its life cycle at this scale.
Local	Species populations of value in a local (<i>i.e.</i> within ~ 2 km of the site) context. Populations and, or communities of species considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource within the local context (such as veteran trees), including features of value for migration, dispersal or genetic exchange.
Site**	Habitats and associated species that is of value in the context of the site only. Populations of common and widespread species.

¹ Such species include those listed within the Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (*i.e.* EC Birds Directive) (codified version of Council Directive 79/409/EEC as amended)

² Such populations include sub-populations that are essential to maintenance of metapopulation dynamics, e.g. critical emigration and, or immigration links between otherwise discrete populations.

³ Seasonal activity or behaviour upon which survival or reproduction depends.

⁴ Species which may be considered at the UK or national level mean: birds which receive legal protection on the basis of their conservation interest (those listed within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 1); species listed for their principal importance for biodiversity (in accordance with the Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006 Section 41 England), priority species listed within the UK Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework (*i.e.* UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP)), or species listed within the Red Data Book.

⁵ A geographical area for Regional importance has not been defined. A feature is of Regional importance when it is of greater geographical importance than within the county of Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire but does not reach the threshold to be of National importance.

⁶ Such species include those at county level (Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire) including unitary authority area *i.e.* District level (*i.e.* West Lindsey and Bassetlaw); as listed on the LBAPs.

** Site is not included within the CIEEM guidelines, but is included hereafter in this report

3.4 Assumptions and limitations

Desk Study

3.4.1 The aim of a desk study was to help characterise the baseline context of the Scheme and provide valuable background information that would not be captured by site surveys alone. Information obtained during the course of the desk study was dependent upon people and organisations having made and submitted records for the area of interest. As such, a lack of records for a particular species does not necessarily mean that the species does not occur in the study area. Likewise, the presence of records of species does not automatically mean that these still occur within the area of interest or are relevant in the context of the Scheme.

Field survey

Solar and Energy Storage Park

- 3.4.2 Data for the wintering bird were collected on mobile mappers, using Collector software stored onto Samsung Galaxy Tablets (see Section 3.2.9). After collection in the field, these data are synced to a central server ready for processing. Despite data syncing from the device after each survey visit, interrogation of the datasets to evaluate the wintering bird data identified that some of the datasets had not fully synced and that data recorded in October 2021 (all data) and December 2021 (20% of the data) had been lost. Therefore, to ensure a comprehensive baseline with representative counts of bird species in each month of the wintering period, a walkover survey was undertaken across the Order limits in October 2022.
- 3.4.3 A 20% data loss from the Solar and Energy Storage Park in December 2021 is not a significant limitation on the evaluation reported within this document as the weather conditions between October and December 2021 were relatively mild for the winter period, with no prolonged or sudden spells of cold weather (where the temperature dropped below 0°C) that would trigger sudden movements of birds (that move around in response to weather conditions) and therefore influence the species and peak counts of birds recorded on the Order limits. Therefore, the peak counts of all species recorded during the survey period does reflect the number of individuals that would be expected to be recorded on a site of this size and within predominantly arable farmland habitat.
- 3.4.4 It is considered that sufficient representatives of all habitat types have been covered within the entirety of the survey period, to allow for a comprehensive assessment of bird species and assemblages present.

Grid Connection Corridor

- 3.4.5 Similarly, as reported in Section 3.4.2 of this report, data from December 2021 within the Grid Connection Corridor were lost. However, surveys were undertaken within representative habitat types between October and November 2021, between January and March 2022 and again in October 2022. Sufficient representatives of all habitat types and species have been covered within the entirety of the wintering bird survey period (on a minimum of five survey visits), to allow for a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts on bird species and assemblages present and in consideration of the temporary nature of construction for the Grid Connection Corridor.

4. Results

4.1 Desk study

- 4.1.1 Records of 75 bird species were returned from GLNP and NGBRC from within 2 km of the Order limits and within the last ten years. A list of the 75 species returned during the data search is included in Annex B.

4.2 Field survey

- 4.2.1 The following sections present the wintering bird data collected for the Scheme and then broken down into the respective Scheme areas (Solar and Energy Storage Park and Grid Connection Corridor. Species lists in Table 4-4 are listed in taxonomic order, as defined by the British Ornithologists Union (BOU) British List.
- 4.2.2 A total of 62 species were recorded within the survey area during the wintering bird surveys undertaken for the Scheme in 2021/2022. The 62 species, along with their respective peak counts and conservation status are presented in Table 4-4.

Table 4-4: Peak count data and conservation status of wintering birds recorded

Species (English name) and scientific name	Conservation status (where applicable)	Peak count within the Solar and Energy Storage Park	Peak Count within the Grid Connection Corridor	Summed Peak Count
Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>	BoCC Amber	2	3	5
Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	BoCC Amber	57	-	57
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	BoCC Amber	11	-	11
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	BoCC Amber	1	-	1
Red-legged Partridge <i>Alectoris rufa</i>	-	2	2	4
Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	BoCC Red, Priority Species	19	-	19
Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	-	21	1	22
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	-	1	1	2
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Annex 1	1	1	2
Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	BoCC Amber	1	-	1
Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	-	4	-	4
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	-	1	-	1
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Red	1	-	1
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Annex 1	350	1	351
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	BoCC Amber	1	-	1
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	BoCC Amber	12	6	18

Species (English name) and scientific name	Conservation status (where applicable)	Peak count within the Solar and Energy Storage Park	Peak Count within the Grid Connection Corridor	Summed Peak Count
Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i>	BoCC Amber	1	-	1
Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Red	10	-	10
Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	BoCC Amber	-	1	1
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	BoCC Amber	12	2	14
Wood Pigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	BoCC Amber	286	36	322
Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	-	2	-	2
Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	-	2	-	2
Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Annex 1	1	1	2
Great Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i>	-	2	-	2
Green Woodpecker <i>Picus viridus</i>	-	1	-	1
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	BoCC Amber	4	2	6
Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	-	5	-	5
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	-	7	3	10
Jackdaw <i>Coloeus monedula</i>	-	52	9	61
Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	BoCC Amber	133	25	158
Carrion Crow <i>Corvus corone</i>	-	54	5	59
Coal Tit <i>Periparus ater</i>	-	1	-	1
Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	-	19	3	22
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	-	16	1	17

Species (English name) and scientific name	Conservation status (where applicable)	Peak count within the Solar and Energy Storage Park	Peak Count within the Grid Connection Corridor	Summed Peak Count
Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Red	59	13	72
Long-tailed Tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	-	10	17	27
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	-	1	1	2
Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	-	1	1	2
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	BoCC Amber	24	6	30
Nuthatch <i>Sitta europea</i>	-	1	-	1
Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	-	3	1	4
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Red	1,080	48	1,128
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	-	28	6	34
Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	BoCC Red	85	6	91
Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	BoCC Amber	118	1	119
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Amber	3	2	5
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	BoCC Red	-	1	1
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	-	20	6	26
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Red	15	1	16
Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Red	2	-	2

Species (English name) and scientific name	Conservation status (where applicable)	Peak count within the Solar and Energy Storage Park	Peak Count within the Grid Connection Corridor	Summed Peak Count
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Amber	7	4	11
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	BoCC Red	1	-	1
Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	-	7	6	13
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	BoCC Amber	17	8	25
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	-	80	3	83
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Amber	4	1	5
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	BoCC Red	44	2	46
Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Red	85	30	115
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	-	43	20	63
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Red	50	7	57
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Priority Species, BoCC Amber	10	2	12

5. Evaluation

5.1 Desk study

- 5.1.1 Records of 75 bird species, including specially protected or notable bird species (see section 2) were returned from the last ten years of the request date and from within 2 km of the Order limits through GLNP and NGBRC.

5.2 Field survey

- 5.2.1 Sixty-two bird species were recorded during wintering bird surveys across the Order limits, of which 36 species (see Table 4-4) met at least one of a range of criteria relating to conservation importance, as listed in Section 2 of this report.
- 5.2.2 Three species (Little Egret, Golden Plover and Kingfisher) listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive (2009) were recorded within the survey area. Single Little Egrets were recorded flying over the Order limits and Kingfisher was recorded infrequently along the River Trent.
- 5.2.3 Whilst surveys between November 2021 and March 2022 did not record the presence of flocks of Golden Plover within the Order limits (although this species was recorded outside of the Order limits during that period), a flock of 350 Golden Plover were recorded settled in fields in the eastern end of the Order limits on a single date in October 2022. A count of 350 Golden Plover does not form a significant proportion of the national population or county population in Lincolnshire, which often exceeds 15,000 birds during winter on wetland sites, such as the Humber Estuary and The Wash (with many additional flocks of Golden Plover likely on inland, unobserved sites). Given the nomadic status of Golden Plover flocks, in response to annual variations in crop rotations and weather conditions during winter months, and the limited observations of this species utilising the fields within the Order limits (such as <5 birds between November 2021 and March 2022 and only recorded on a single date (from four survey dates) in October 2022), the habitat within the Order limits is considered to be of local importance only to Golden Plover, particularly in consideration of similar habitats in the surrounding arable landscape.
- 5.2.4 A total of 13 priority species were recorded within the survey area. These were: Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Herring Gull, Skylark, Starling, Song Thrush, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Dunnock, Bullfinch, Linnet, Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting.
- 5.2.5 Thirteen species, included on the BoCC Red List and 20 species, included on the BoCC Amber list, were recorded within the survey area. The remaining species are all included on the Green list and are of least conservation concern.

- 5.2.6 Thirteen species, listed as Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan species, were recorded within the survey area.
- 5.2.7 One species, listed as Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan species, was recorded within the survey area.

Species Abundance

- 5.2.8 In addition to evaluating a site based on its populations of wintering birds in relation to legal status, rarity and conservation value, consideration has to be given to the value of the site for the population of individual species that it supports. This can be done by comparing the population present on site with the national and county wintering population for certain species.
- 5.2.9 No peak counts of any species form a significant proportion (*i.e.* 1% or more) of the national wintering population estimates as detailed in Woodward et al. (2020) (Ref 14).
- 5.2.10 The peak count of Starling on the Solar and Energy Park Storage Park was 1,080 birds recorded outside of the site boundary in December 2021 and January 2022. Whilst no population estimate for wintering Starling is proved in the Birds of Lincolnshire (Ref 7-20), the peak count of Starling is likely to be that approaching (or exceeding) 1% of the county level. These birds were recorded in farmland and improved grassland areas to the immediate north of the Order limits and therefore the Scheme will not impact Starling utilising this area.
- 5.2.11 The numbers of individuals of the other species recorded were all relatively low (although see Section 5.2.3) and did not represent significant proportions (*i.e.* 1 % or more) of the county populations in Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire. Therefore, the majority of species populations occurring within the Order limits are considered to be of no more than local importance.

Species Diversity

- 5.2.12 Professional judgement was used to evaluate the number of species recorded within the survey area and in each discrete habitat type to assess species diversity.
- 5.2.13 The number of species recorded across the survey area was 66 and would place the importance of the species diversity occurring within the Order limits as being of county importance.
- 5.2.14 Evaluation was also made of the species assemblage and numbers recorded during surveys of the Scheme that are located in Nottinghamshire (the Grid Connection Corridor), with respect to criteria for selection of County Wildlife Sites (as detailed in Section 3.3.7 of this report). None of the criterion for selection are met by the Order limits.
- 5.2.15 In Lincolnshire, there is no specific criteria for birds, with regards to CWS selection, and none of the criteria is likely to be met when individually evaluating each discrete habitat by the species it supports.

Species Distribution

5.2.16 The location of Annex 1 species, Priority species and/ or BoCC red and amber-listed bird species, (see Table 4-4) are presented in Figure 8I-1. In general, concentrations of species were found within the most suitable habitats to support each individual species' needs (*i.e.* species reliant on woodland habitat were found within woodland habitat on the Site, etc.).

5.3 Evaluation of key habitat types for non-breeding birds

5.3.1 A summary of the broad habitat types present in the survey area and their key ornithological features, are presented in Table 5-5.

Table 5-5: Key ornithological features of habitat within the survey area

Broad habitat type	Key ornithological features
Small waterbodies / ponds	Supports species associated with wetland features, such as Mallard.
Arable farmland	The predominant habitat type occurring within the Site and wider landscape beyond the survey area. Supports seed-eating passerines, including Skylark, Yellowhammer and Linnet, found throughout.
Scrub / hedgerows	Frequently occurring habitat within the Site of varying quality. Supports species such as Yellowhammer, Dunnock, Song Thrush and Bullfinch.
Mature trees / woodland	Parcels of woodland and individual trees scattered within the Site. Supports species such as Sing Thrush, as well as species often found in scrub / hedgerows. Individual species of conservation interest, but limited species abundance and diversity.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1.1 A total of 62 bird species were recorded during wintering bird surveys for the Scheme. Of these 62 bird species, 36 species meet at least one of a range of criteria relating to conservation importance (see Table 4-4), as detailed in Section 2 of this report.
- 6.1.2 The majority of species populations within the Order limits are of local importance as they do not meet the thresholds as being significant (*i.e.* 1% or more) of the county or national populations when evaluated against published data.
- 6.1.3 With the exception of Starling, species populations are of local importance within the survey area. However, species diversity is of county importance, based on the number of species recorded.

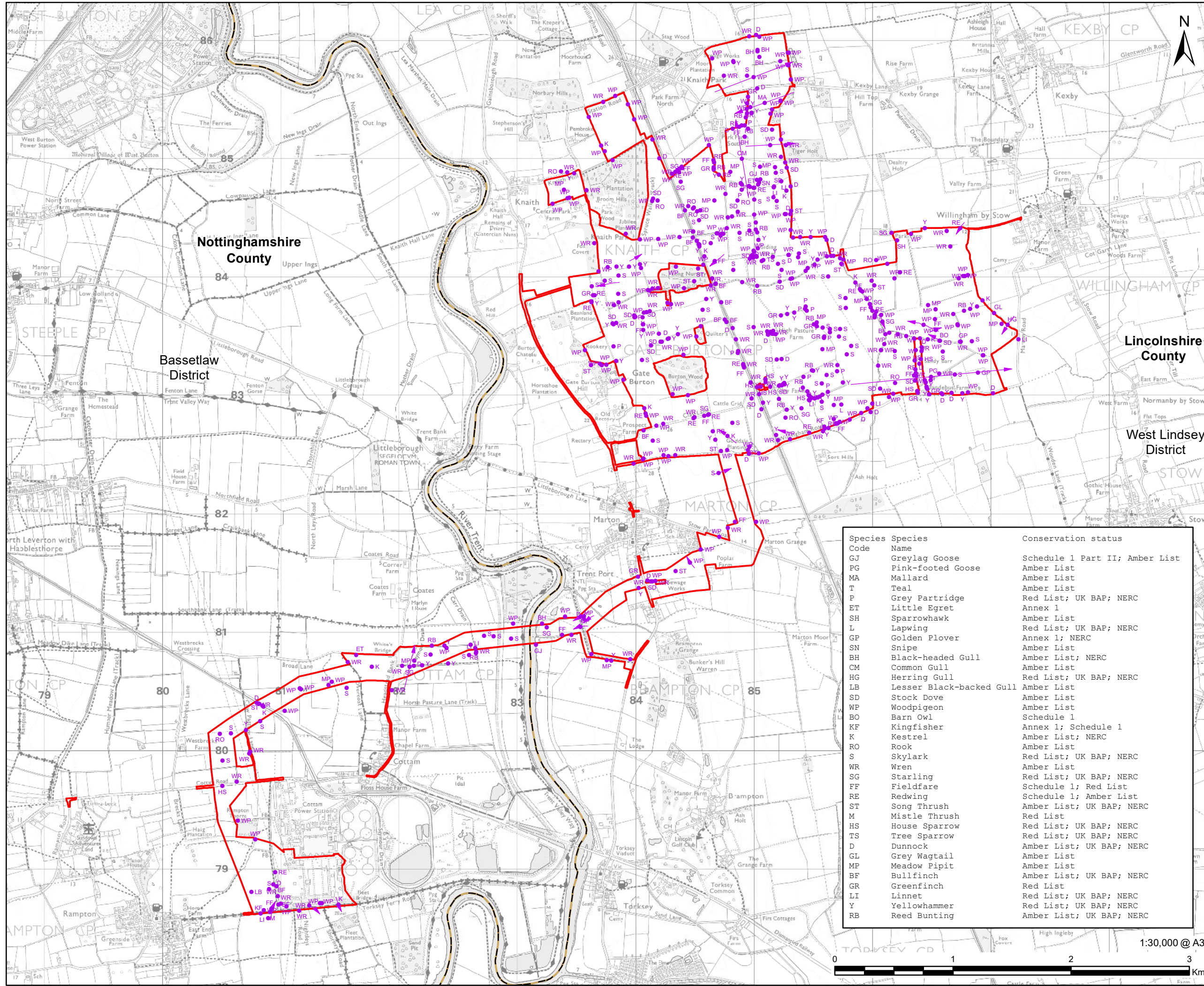
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8. Annexes

Annex A Figures

Figure 8I-1 Distribution of Species of Conservation Concern, 2021-2022



PROJECT
Gate Burton Energy Park

CLIENT
 Gate Burton ENERGY PARK

CONSULTANT
AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
www.aecom.com

- LEGEND**
- Order Limits
 - County Boundary
 - District Boundary
 - Bird Survey Record, Conservation Species
 - Flight Path (approximate)

Species Code	Species Name	Conservation status
GJ	Greylag Goose	Schedule 1 Part II; Amber List
PG	Pink-footed Goose	Amber List
MA	Mallard	Amber List
T	Teal	Amber List
P	Grey Partridge	Red List; UK BAP; NERC
ET	Little Egret	Annex 1
SH	Sparrowhawk	Amber List
L	Lapwing	Red List; UK BAP; NERC
GP	Golden Plover	Annex 1; NERC
SN	Snipe	Amber List
BH	Black-headed Gull	Amber List; NERC
CM	Common Gull	Amber List
HG	Herring Gull	Red List; UK BAP; NERC
LB	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Amber List
SD	Stock Dove	Amber List
WP	Woodpigeon	Amber List
BO	Barn Owl	Schedule 1
KF	Kingfisher	Annex 1; Schedule 1
K	Kestrel	Amber List; NERC
RO	Rook	Amber List
S	Skylark	Red List; UK BAP; NERC
WR	Wren	Amber List
SG	Starling	Red List; UK BAP; NERC
FF	Fieldfare	Schedule 1; Red List
RE	Redwing	Schedule 1; Amber List
ST	Song Thrush	Amber List; UK BAP; NERC
M	Mistle Thrush	Red List
HS	House Sparrow	Red List; UK BAP; NERC
TS	Tree Sparrow	Red List; UK BAP; NERC
D	Duncock	Amber List; UK BAP; NERC
GL	Grey Wagtail	Amber List
MP	Meadow Pipit	Amber List
BF	Bullfinch	Amber List; UK BAP; NERC
GR	Greenfinch	Red List
LI	Linnet	Red List; UK BAP; NERC
Y	Yellowhammer	Red List; UK BAP; NERC
RB	Reed Bunting	Amber List; UK BAP; NERC

NOTES
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Ordnance Survey 0100031673.

ISSUE PURPOSE
Environmental Statement

PROJECT NUMBER
60664324

FIGURE TITLE
Distribution of Species of Conservation Concern 2021-22

FIGURE NUMBER
Figure 8I-1

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Annex B Records of Bird Species Returned through GLNP and NBGRC

Table 8C-1: Records of protected or notable species returned from the desk study

Common name	Scientific name	GLNP	NBGRC	Designation
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, Nottinghamshire BAP
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	✓	-	BoCC Amber, Annex 1
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	✓	-	BoCC Amber, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓	-	-
Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	-	✓	BoCC Amber
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	-	BoCC Amber
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	-	-
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	-	✓	BoCC Amber
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Red, Priority Species
Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	-	✓	BoCC Amber
Corncrake	<i>Crex crex</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Red, Priority Species, Annex 1
Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	✓	-	-
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	✓	✓	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	-	✓	BoCC Red
Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	-	✓	BoCC Amber

Common name	Scientific name	GLNP	NBGR	Designation
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	✓	-	
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Red
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	-	✓	BoCC Amber
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>	-	✓	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber
Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	-	✓	Annex 1
Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	✓	✓	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	✓	✓	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	-	BoCC Amber
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	✓	✓	WCA Sch. 1
Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber, Annex 1
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, Annex 1
Lapland Bunting	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	✓	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	✓	-	Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Priority Species
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	✓	✓	-
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber, Annex 1
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	-	✓	BoCC Amber

Common name	Scientific name	GLNP	NBGR	Designation
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Red, Annex 1
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	✓	✓	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber, Annex 1
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, Annex 1
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	✓	-	-
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	✓	-	BoCC Amber
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	✓	-	BoCC Amber
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	✓	✓	BoCC Red
Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, Annex 1
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	✓	-	-
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓	-	BoCC Amber
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓	-	BoCC Amber, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	✓	✓	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Red, Annex 1
Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Lincolnshire BAP
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓	✓	BoCC Amber
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓	-	BoCC Amber, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP

Common name	Scientific name	GLNP	NBGR	Designation
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	-	✓	-
Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Lincolnshire BAP
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Red
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	-	✓	BoCC Red
White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Annex 1
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	✓	✓	WCA Sch. 1, BoCC Amber, Annex 1
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	✓	-	WCA Sch. 1, Annex 1, Lincolnshire BAP
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	✓	✓	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	✓	-	BoCC Red, Priority Species, Lincolnshire BAP