



Breeding Bird Survey (2023)

11/06/2023

Church Commissioners (Projects)

Report reference	ER-9043-04 - 2023 Breeding Bird Survey
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Authorised	Christopher Shaw BSc (Hons), CEcol, MCIEEM Director
Date	11/06/2023
Report duration	This report presents information collected in 2023 and is helpful in presenting a robust baseline use of the Site by this faunal group.

Introduction

- 1. To support future Reserved Matters applications for mixed use development at the Hey Beck Lane site in Chidswell, an updated Breeding Bird Survey was undertaken in 2023.
- 2. The Site is situated between Dewsbury and Leeds. The area covered by the red-line boundary comprises large open areas of farmland, with field boundaries including fencelines and some fragmented species-poor hedgerows.
- 3. A single woodland borders the Site; this being Dum Wood. Due to proximity, the status of the woodland as mapped ancient replnted, and the potential for indirect impacts from disturbance, Dum Wood was included as part of the survey effort in 2023.
- 4. The Site is bordered by residential housing along the western and northern boundaries, with further open arable farmland to the south.

Figure 1 The Site



Method

- 5. Six breeding bird survey visits were undertaken between March and July 2023 (Table 1).

Table 1 Breeding Bird Survey, Visit & Weather Data

Visit	Date	Survey Times	Wind Force (Beaufort Scale)	Cloud Cover (Oktas)	Visibility	Temp (°C)	Precipitation
1	24/03/2023	05:55-09:35	1-4	1	Good	8	None
2	14/04/2023	06:15-10:25	1-2	2	Good	3-8	None
3	25/04/2023	05:30-09:55	1-2	0	Good	2-6	None
4	12/05/2023	05:00-09:15	2	8	Good	9	None
5	19/06/2023	05:20-10:30	1-2	0-3	Good	15	None
6	13/07/2023	19:45-22:25	1	3	Good	16	None

- 6. The six breeding bird survey visits incorporated amended visit Common Birds Census (CBC) territory mapping methodology to record breeding bird activity on site. Registrations of all bird species observed within the site red line boundary, overflying the site, and heard singing and/or calling were entered onto field survey maps using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) species and activity codes. Registrations of birds within 50m of the site red line boundary (where access allowed) were also recorded to ensure that any breeding territories overlapping the site boundary were included. The site was walked extensively and covered to within 50m of every point within the red line site boundary, the survey route reversed on each visit to alleviate recording bias.
- 7. The recently published Bird Survey Guidelines (www.birdsurveyguidelines.org) suggest that up to six survey visits, including one crepuscular/nocturnal visit, should be carried out for sites that contain complex habitats such as lowland deciduous woodland. At this site, with the adjacent woodland being surveyed alongside the open farmland within the red-line boundary, it was decided that six survey visits should be undertaken, spread across the main bird-breeding season, in order to encounter all bird species using the site and to provide robust data for analysis of how these species use the site.
- 8. Surveys were completed using 10x42 binoculars. The field surveys in 2023 were undertaken by Matthew Stone, an experienced ornithologist with 9 years professional experience undertaking ornithological surveys and monitoring, site and species evaluation and providing advice on mitigation and habitat enhancement for birds throughout the United Kingdom.
- 9. Data analysis was undertaken by David Lovett, an experienced ornithologist with 11 years' professional experience undertaking ornithological surveys and monitoring, site, and species evaluation, and providing advice on mitigation and habitat enhancement for birds throughout the United Kingdom.

Results

10. A total of 38 bird species were recorded within the site red line boundary and in adjacent habitats (Table 2). Of these, 29 species showed evidence of breeding behaviour, such as males displaying or singing within breeding territories, birds giving territorial calls, adults observed with food for young or adults observed with recently fledged young or in family groups.

Table 2 Number and Conservation Status of Bird Species Recorded March-July 2023

TOTAL NUMBER of BIRDS SPECIES RECORDED	37
BoCC4 Red Listed Species of Conservation Concern	6
BoCC4 Amber Listed Species of Conservation Concern	7
BoCC4 Green Listed Species (not currently considered of conservation concern)	22
Species Not Assessed by BoCC4	2
Protected Species Listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	0
Species considered by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) (UK) – R = Regular Breeding Birds, O = Occasional Breeding Birds, C = Colonising Species, P = Potential Breeding Birds	0
UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) Priority Species in England	5
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) European Red List (2015) VU = Vulnerable (Globally Threatened), NT = Near Threatened, (all other species = Least Concern)	2
IUCN Global Red List VU = Vulnerable (Globally Threatened), NT = Near Threatened, (all other species = Least Concern)	1
Species Listed in Annex 1 of the European Union (EU) Wild Birds Directive 2009 (A1)	2

11. Important breeding bird species recorded on site are those included as red-listed (severe population decline (> 50%) over 25 years/longer term) and amber-listed species of conservation concern (moderate population decline (> 25% but < 50%) over 25 years/longer term), in Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (BoCC5) (Stanbury *et al.* 2021). Further information on bird conservation status and bird legislation relative to the species recorded is given in Appendix One.

Table 3 Red-Listed Bird Species of Conservation Concern

Land at Chidswell	BTO Species Code	Schedule 1 Species	Rare Breeding Birds	UK BAP Species	European Red List	Global Red List	Annex 1 Species	Scientific Name	Estimate of Breeding Pairs or Territories	Locality
March - July 2023										
Bird Species (systematic order follows British Ornithologists Union (BOU) August 2019)										
Swift	SI				NT			<i>Apus apus</i>	0	Flying over east of Dum Wood
Skylark	S.			UK	LC			<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	1	Arable fields in red-line area
Starling	SG			UK	LC			<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	0	Along west edge of red-line area
House sparrow	HS			UK	LC			<i>Passer domesticus</i>	4	Along north edge of red-line area
Greenfinch	GR				LC			<i>Chloris chloris</i>	2	Within hedgerows of red-line area
Yellowhammer	Y.			UK	LC			<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	1	Along south edge of red-line area

12. Red-listed birds included species associated with open fields, hedgerows/scrub, and buildings.
13. A single skylark territory was recorded over the arable fields present on-site.
14. Territories of greenfinch (2 territories) and yellowhammer (1 territory) were found to occur around the red-line of the Site, where denser scrub and hedgerow cover is present.
15. House sparrow (4 territories) was typically recorded along the northern boundary, where buildings provide nesting opportunities for this species.
16. Two non-breeding red-list species, swift and starling, were recorded flying over the Site only. Whilst some buildings around the Site may have some suitability for use by nesting swifts, the fact that this species was recorded on only the final survey visit suggests that this species is not currently breeding in the area. Starling are also likely to breed in the area surrounding the Site, either in buildings or trees cavities.

Table 4 Amber-Listed Bird Species of Conservation Concern

Land at Chidswell	BTO Species Code	Schedule 1 Species	Rare Breeding Birds	UK BAP Species	European Red List	Global Red List	Annex 1 Species	Scientific Name	Estimate of Breeding Pairs or Territories	Locality
March - July 2023										
Bird Species (systematic order follows British Ornithologists Union (BOU) August 2019)										
Black-headed gull	BH				LC	LC		<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	0	Flying over survey area
Stock dove	SD				LC	LC		<i>Columba oenas</i>	2	In Dum Wood
Tawny owl	TO				LC	LC		<i>Strix aluco</i>	1	Juvenile in Dum Wood
Woodpigeon	WP				LC	LC		<i>Columba palumbus</i>	c.10	Across survey area
Wren	WR				LC	LC		<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	9	Across survey area
Song thrush	ST				LC	LC		<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1	In tree line to the south of red-line
Dunnock	D.				LC	LC		<i>Prunella modularis</i>	3	Within hedgerows of survey area

17. Amber-listed species were distributed across the Site, typically following the presence of more structured habitat, in the form of hedgerows, scrub or woodland.
18. Wren (9 territories), woodpigeon (10 territories) and dunnock (3 territories) were the most numerous species. These species are a good example of the value of

hedgerows and woodland, with the territories following the structured habitat exclusively around the Site.

19. Song thrush (1 territory) and stock dove (2 territories) were both mainly restricted to the woodland areas, requiring denser cover or more mature trees with cavities for nesting.
20. Similarly, tawny owl was recorded only in Dum Wood, with this species also requiring nest cavities.
21. Non-breeding species include black-headed gull were recorded flying over the Site, with suitable nesting habitat is present for this species on-site.

Table 5 Green-Listed Bird Species Recorded

Land at Chidswell March - July 2023	BTO Species Code	Schedule 1 Species	Rare Breeding Birds	UK BAP Species	European Red List	Global Red List	Annex 1 Species	Scientific Name	Estimate of Breeding Pairs or Territories	Locality
Bird Species (systematic order follows British Ornithologists Union (BOU) August 2019)										
Cormorant	CA				LC	LC		<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		0 Flying over red-line area
Buzzard	BZ				LC	LC		<i>Buteo buteo</i>		0 Flying over red-line area
Great spotted woodpecker	GS				LC	LC		<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		1 In Dum Wood
Jay	J				LC	LC		<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		2 Across Dum Wood
Magpie	MG				LC	LC		<i>Pica pica</i>		0 Across survey area
Jackdaw	JD				LC	LC		<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		1 In Dum Wood
Carriion crow	C				LC	LC		<i>Corvus corone</i>		1 In Dum Wood
Coal tit	CT				LC	LC		<i>Pariparus ater</i>		1 West edge of Dum Wood
Blue tit	BT				LC	LC		<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		9 Across survey area
Great tit	GT				LC	LC		<i>Parus major</i>		5 Across survey area
Swallow	SL				LC	LC		<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		0 Flying over red-line area
Long-tailed tit	LT				LC	LC		<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		2 Across survey area
Chiffchaff	CC				LC	LC		<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		5 Across south of survey area
Blackcap	BC				LC	LC		<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		4 Around Dum Wood
Garden warbler	GW				LC	LC		<i>Sylvia borin</i>		1 East edge of Dum Wood
Goldcrest	GC				LC	LC		<i>Regulus regulus</i>		2 North and West edge of Dum Wood
Nuthatch	NH				LC	LC		<i>Sitta europaea</i>		1 In Dum Wood
Treecreeper	TC				LC	LC		<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		2 In Dum Wood
Blackbird	B				LC	LC		<i>Turdus merula</i>		3 In hedgerows around survey area
Robin	R				LC	LC		<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		10 Across survey area
Chaffinch	CH				LC	LC		<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		3 Across south of survey area
Goldfinch	GO				LC	LC		<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		0 Across survey area

22. Green-listed bird species, not currently considered of conservation concern (Table 5.), were found to occupy much of the Site. Again, higher densities of species were found in association with hedgerows, scrub and in particular the woodland areas off-site.
23. Species such as blackbird (3 territories), robin (10 territories), chaffinch (3 territories) and chiffchaff (5 territories) were recorded making use of both hedgerows and the woodland understorey layer, whilst cavity nesting species such as blue tit (9 territories) and great tit (5 territories) were more common in the woodland.
24. Nuthatch and great spotted woodpecker (both 1 territory) and treecreeper (2 territories) were restricted to the woodland, with these species relying more on mature trees for foraging and nesting.
25. Non-breeding green-listed species noted at the Site included buzzard and cormorant, both of these species were recorded flying over the Site only. Some

passerines were also recorded but not thought to breed within the survey area, including swallow, goldfinch and magpie.

Table 6 Non-native bird species not assessed by BoCC5 recorded April-June 2023

Land at Chidswell March - July 2023	BTO Species Code	Schedule 1 Species	Rare Breeding Birds	UK BAP Species	European Red List	Global Red List	Annex 1 Species	Scientific Name	Estimate of Breeding Pairs or Territories	Locality
Bird Species (systematic order follows British Ornithologists Union (BOU) August 2019)										
Red-legged partridge	RL				NT	NT	A1	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		1 North-west edge of Dum Wood
Pheasant	PH				LC	LC		<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		3 Across survey area

26. Two non-native bird species not assessed by BoCC5 were recorded at the Site.
27. Red-legged partridge and pheasant, both quarry species for local shoots, were recorded in association with the open farmland present on-site.

Conclusion

28. The six survey visits undertaken provided robust data for breeding birds, with 29 species (78%) showing evidence of breeding on site from a total of 37 species recorded within the site red line boundary.
29. The breeding bird assemblage recorded on site included 4 red-listed species and 6 amber-listed species, with 17 more common, green-listed bird species also recorded breeding on site.
30. Analysis of breeding bird distribution on site found that species were generally split into three groups: birds that breed in scrub and/or woodland, birds that breed in grassland and birds that breed in association with structures. The bird distribution followed the presence of habitats, which lead to bird density being highest around the off-site woodland, then along the denser and more mature hedgerows, in association with off-site buildings and the lowest breeding bird density was found within the large, open arable fields
31. The most important breeding bird species recorded at the Site are red-listed species of conservation concern.
32. Within the red-line arable fields, a single territory of skylark was recorded. Skylark prefer the centre of the fields, away from boundary features, with the presence of smaller fields in the red-line area likely the reason for a low number of territories.
33. Breeding red-listed species that rely on hedgerows recorded at the Site were greenfinch (2 territories) and yellowhammer (1 territory). Given the size of the Site, the numbers of these species are low, which reflects the poor condition of the hedgerows and the lack of cover and food available to these species.
34. Breeding territories house sparrow (4 territories) were recorded in association with residential buildings around the northern Site boundary. House sparrows make use of cavities in buildings and so sightings of this species was generally limited to around the suitable nesting habitat, with few records of foraging adults within the Site boundary. This also reflects the low-quality nature of the habitat on-site, with these species likely foraging elsewhere to provide food for chicks in the nest.
35. Breeding amber-listed species recorded at the Site again utilised three different habitat types, with hedgerows, woodland and ground-nesting species all present.
36. Dum Wood was included in the survey area, and some species were limited to breeding within or close to this more mature and structured habitat. This included stock dove (2 territories) and tawny owl (1 territory).
37. Hedgerow species found more widely distributed across the Site were woodpigeon (10 territories), wren (9 territories) and dunnoek (3 territories). As with red-list species, the number of territories held by these species is low given the total area of land available, reflecting the low-quality habitat present.
38. Long term declines of red-listed breeding bird species have been recorded in the U.K. during 1970-2018, with a decline of 56% seen for skylark, 65% for house sparrow, 64% for greenfinch and 60% for yellowhammer.
39. Declines of amber-listed species are also seen, including 33% for dunnoek, and 49% for song thrush.
40. Data is not available for changes to the tawny owl population between 1970 and 2018, but a decline of 8% between 2008 and 2018 has led to this species being amber-listed.
41. Whilst the UK wren and woodpigeon population long-term trend was still noted as increasing over the period of 1970-2018 (+65% and +121% respectively), the significance of the UK populations in a European context has seen this species moved to the amber list.
42. Declines have been attributed to loss of breeding and foraging habitat, which has driven reduced breeding success and increased mortality, mainly through major changes in farming practices and agricultural intensification.
43. Overall, the ornithological value of the site for breeding birds should be considered at a local level within the context of the surrounding habitat, which includes similar areas of farmland and woodland pockets, as well as suburban edge habitats of gardens, trees and hedgerows.

Appendix 1 Policy & legislation

United Kingdom Conservation Status of Birds

The fifth major review of the status of birds occurring in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man – Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (BoCC4) (Stanbury et al. 2021), presents lists of conservation concern based on assessments using objective listing criteria and most recent data. The listing criteria assess global conservation status, historical population decline, recent population decline (numbers and geographical range), European conservation status, rarity, localised distribution, and international importance of populations.

Lists are denoted Red, Amber and Green in a simple ‘traffic light’ system to provide a single, easily understood measure for each species to convey concern and hence to help set priorities for conservation action. Species are assigned to each list depending upon the scale of population decline and concern which includes breeding and non-breeding populations.

- Red list criteria – Severe population decline (> 50%) over 25 years or longer term.
- Amber list criteria – Moderate population decline (> 25% but < 50%) over 25 years or longer term.
- Green list criteria – Species not currently considered of conservation concern.

The review concerns native bird species only and not those introduced to the United Kingdom by humans, whether intentionally or accidentally. Populations of non-native bird species are not considered of conservation value, indeed introduced species can be harmful to the natural environment (Stanbury et al. 2021). These species are therefore not assessed for conservation attention and termed ‘not assessed’.

Summary of Relevant Legislation with Regard to Birds

The primary legislation affecting wild birds in England and Wales is the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) as amended. The basic principle of this act is that all wild birds, their nests, and eggs are protected by law and some rare species are afforded additional protection from disturbance during the breeding season (Schedule 1.). The term wild bird is defined as any bird of a species which is resident in, or a visitor to, the European territory of any Member State, in a wild state. Game birds are not included in this definition (except in certain sections of

the Act) but are covered by the Game Acts which give protection in the close season.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) states that ‘it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- have in one’s possession or control any wild bird (dead or alive), part of a wild bird or egg of a wild bird which has been taken in contravention of the Act, the Protection of Birds Act 1958 or the law of any EU Member State (which implements the EU Birds Directive 1979).
- intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building or is in, on or near a nest with eggs or young; or disturb the dependant young of such a bird.
- have in one’s possession or control any birds of a species listed on Schedule 4 of the Act, unless registered and ringed in accordance with the Secretary of State’s regulations.

Rare Breeding Birds in the United Kingdom

The U.K. Rare Breeding Bird Panel (RBBP) (www.rbbp.org.uk) collates data on over 160 species of rare breeding birds and scarcer non-native breeding species, and ensures data are archived properly and are used for conservation. This informs understanding of the status, distribution and population trends of the rarest breeding birds, too rare to monitor in any other way, and also species introduced to the U.K. Archived records form the definitive historical record of rare breeding birds in the U.K. Breeding species are categorised as – regular breeder, occasional breeder, colonising and potential breeder.

United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan Bird (UK BAP) Species

United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan (U.K. BAP) Bird Species (jncc.defra.gov.uk/uk_bap_priority_bird_species) are those identified by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the U.K. Biodiversity Action Plan and included on a list of priority bird species, initially created between 1995 and 1999, and subsequently updated in response to the Species and Habitats Review Report published in 2007. Original species on the U.K. BAP list (1995-

1999) have a Species Action Plan (SAP) which provides details of relevant conservation information and action. Following devolution, the U.K. BAP has recently (July 2012) been succeeded by the U.K. Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework which is focused at a country-level (England, Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland) rather than at a U.K. level, with the list of priority bird species remaining an important reference source for conservation of individual bird species and also for conservation of bird biodiversity within a specified area or site. U.K. BAP species are identified in order to guide decision-makers, such as local planning authorities and regional authorities, in their duty to have regard to the conservation of bird biodiversity.

IUCN Red List Status (European Red List & Global Red List)

Birdlife International (the official International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List authority for birds) determines the global conservation status of birds (www.iucn.org/theme/species/birds). The IUCN red list is used by government agencies, wildlife departments, conservation-related non-governmental organisations (NGOs), natural resource planners, educational organisations, students, and the business community. It is crucial to identify bird species requiring targeted recovery efforts, but also for focusing on conservation to identify key sites and habitats that need conserving.

EU Biodiversity Legislation

Additional protection for birds is also provided to species listed within the European Union (EU) Wild Birds Directive 2009/147/EC. Further information may be found at;

ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective jncc.defra.gov.uk

This imposes strict legal obligations on EU member states to maintain populations of naturally occurring wild birds at levels corresponding to ecological requirements and to preserve a sufficient diversity and areas of habitats for their conservation. Bird species mentioned in Annex I (194 species and sub-species (races)) are particularly threatened and form the subject of special conservation measures concerning their habitat in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution.

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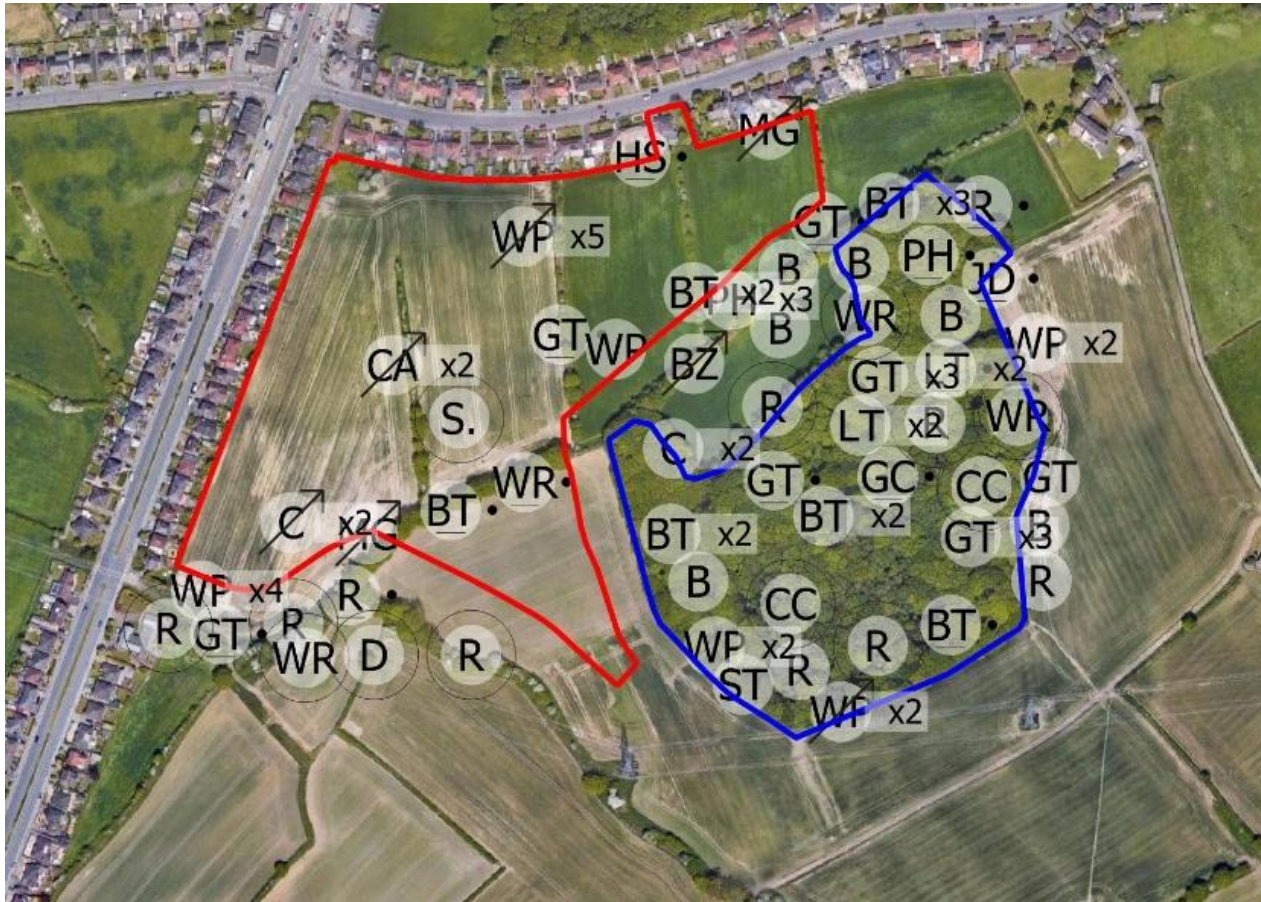
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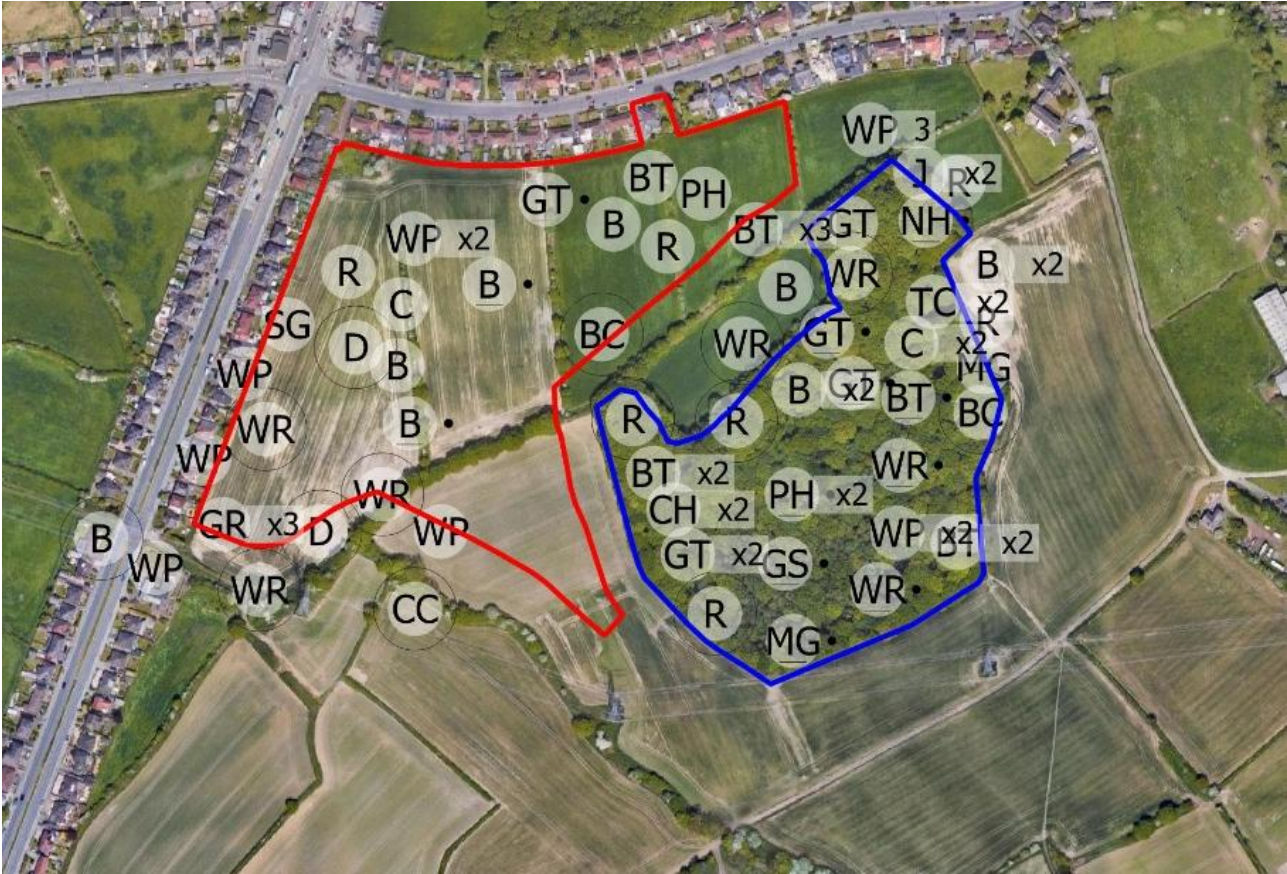
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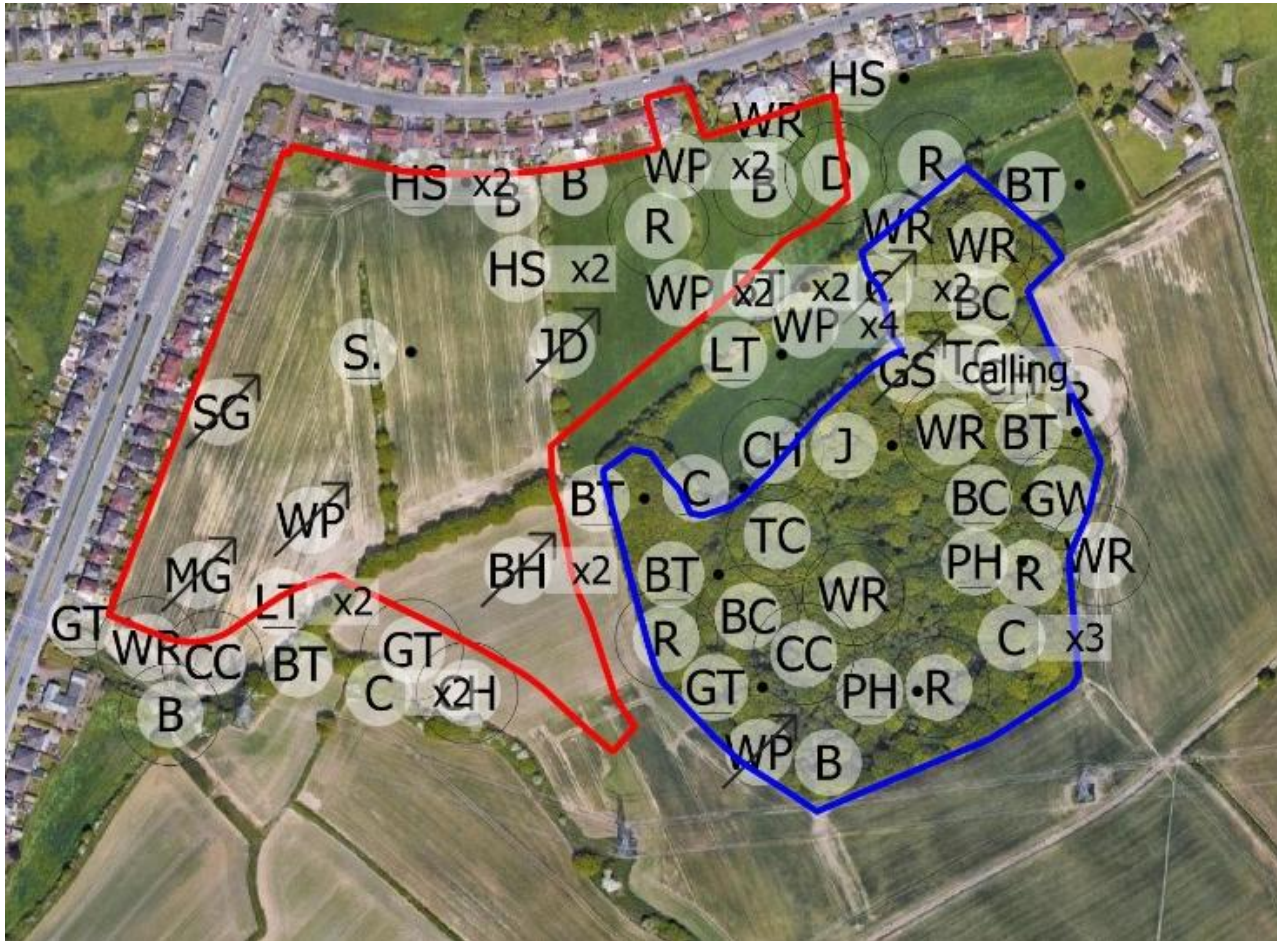
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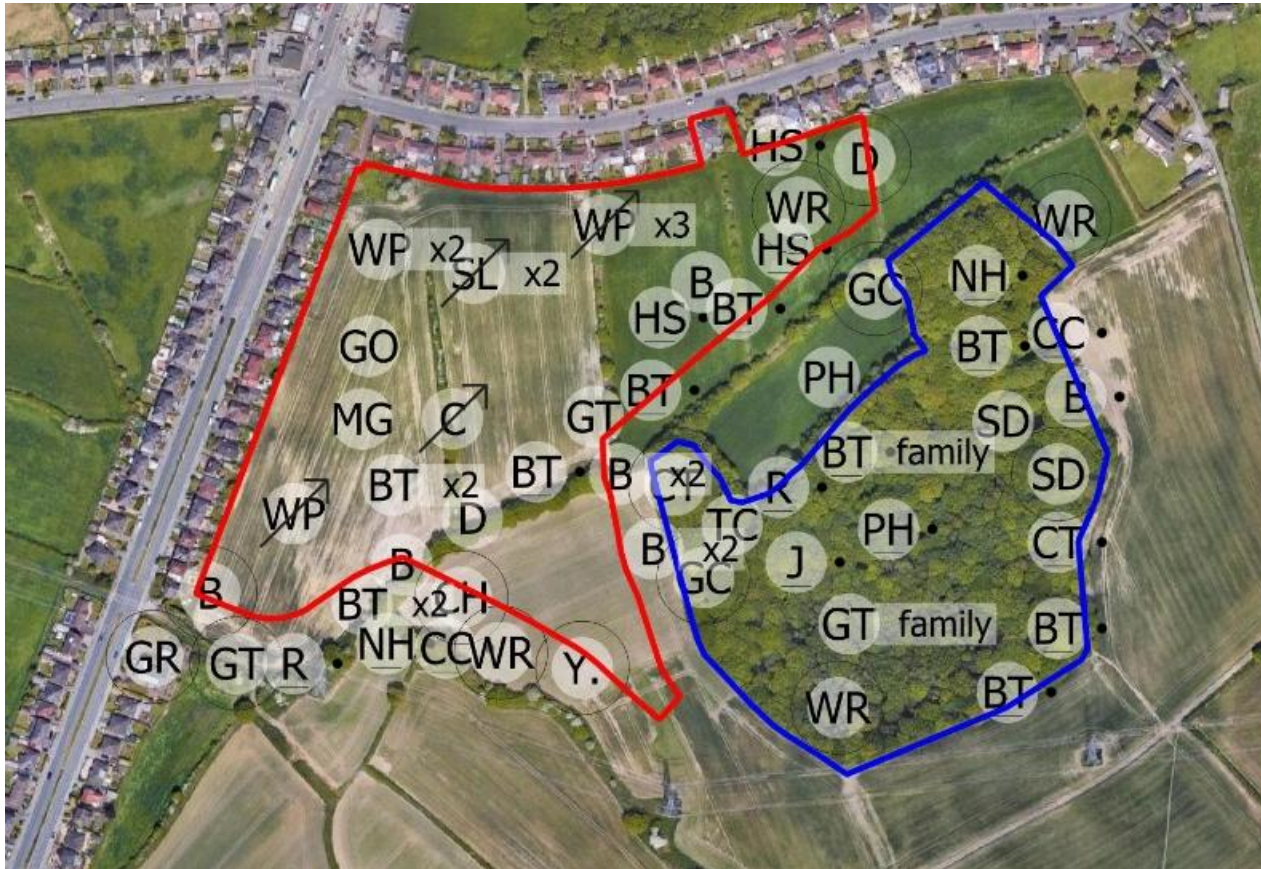
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Visit 6

