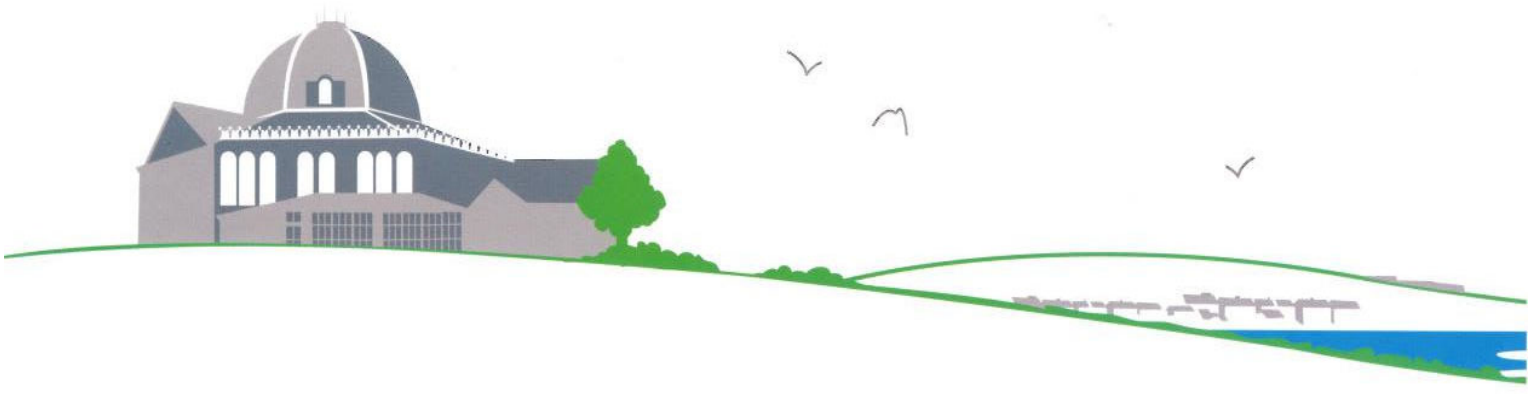
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BURO HAPPOLD

DEWSBURY

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY REPORT



BURO HAPPOLD

DEWSBURY

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY REPORT

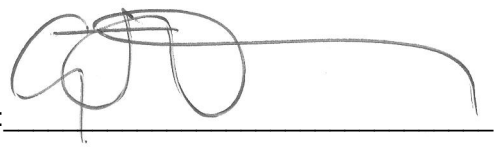
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This project has been undertaken in accordance with PAA policies and procedures on quality assurance.

Signed:

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1 Categories of Breeding Bird Evidence

2 Breeding Bird Survey Results

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Penny Anderson Associates (PAA) Ltd was commissioned by Buro Happold to carry out an ecological assessment at a site in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, where there is a proposal for development (hereafter referred to as the 'site').

1.2 The breeding bird survey is one of a number of surveys designed to establish the habitats and species present on site.

Site Description

1.3 The site is in Dewsbury, centred on grid reference SE 22882 19553. It is bordered to the north-east by residential housing and Wharfedale Road and to the north-west by a railway line and a waste recycling centre beyond. Open farmland borders the east and south and mature woodland to the west,

1.4 The survey area comprises large open fields under cereal and silage with hedgerows and banked field boundaries and plantation and mature natural woodland.

Aims

1.5 The breeding bird survey was undertaken to:

- describe and evaluate the site's breeding bird assemblage; and
- assess the potential effect of the development and the loss of breeding bird habitat.

Legislative and Policy Context

1.6 All wild species of breeding birds and their nests are protected under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, as amended by later legislation including the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. This legislation applies in England and Wales.

1.7 Part 1 (Section 1:1) of the WCA states that:

'If any person intentionally,

(a) kills, injures or takes any wild bird;

(b) takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or

(c) takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird,

he shall be guilty of an offence.'

1.8 Part 1 (Section 1:5) of the WCA (amended by the CRoW Act 2000) refers to specific birds listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA, and states that:

'If any person intentionally or recklessly,

(a) disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or

(b) disturbs dependent young of such a bird,

he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.'

1.9 Schedule 1 includes birds such as western barn owl (*Tyto alba*), black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), woodlark (*Lullula arborea*) and Cetti's warbler (*Cettia cetti*). Please refer to the WCA for a complete list of Schedule 1 species.

1.10 Please note: the above text provides a summary of the legislation in relation to birds and the original Acts and amendments should be referred to for complete details.

2. METHODS

Desk Study

2.1 The West Yorkshire Ecology Service (WYES), which is the local environmental record centre, provided bird records for the site and a 1km radius.

Field Survey

2.2 The breeding bird survey was undertaken by Consultant Ecologist Paul Fisher. Paul is an experienced and highly competent ornithologist who has carried out numerous breeding bird surveys in many different habitats over the last 18 years.

2.3 The survey methodology is based on the breeding bird survey methodology devised jointly by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Joint Nature Conservancy Council (JNCC) (Gilbert *et al.* 1998). This methodology requires three visits to be made between late March and early July, with each visit being at least four weeks apart. The start and finish dates for a particular site will vary depending upon latitude and altitude. The first of these visits is required to scope the site, record the habitats and set up a route and survey approach. This was completed as part of an earlier scoping exercise, which established the distribution of habitat types and identified their potential function for breeding birds, allowing an appropriate survey methodology to be applied.

2.4 On each of the survey visits the following details were recorded:

- bird numbers, species, age and sex;
- habitats being used; and
- bird behaviour, e.g. singing, feeding, paying particular attention to evidence of breeding.

2.5 In keeping with the methodology, surveys began early in the morning and avoided poor weather conditions, which reduce visibility and can suppress bird activity.

2.6 The survey area was surveyed using a combination of transects and point observations. This involved following a pre-determined route at a slow walking pace, and longer periods of observations were made at strategic points. Sightings were registered on a basemap using standard BTO codes.

Table 1 Survey Visit Dates

Visit No.	Date	Start Time	Finish Time	Weather Conditions
1	18th May 2021	07.00	10.30	Overcast with sunny spells - calm
2	1st June 2021	06.15	09.15	Sunny, clear and warm – gentle breeze
3	14th June 2021	06.15	09.00	Overcast, becoming sunny and warm

Limitations

2.7 There were no limitations to the survey. All parts of the site were accessible. The dates of the visits were chosen to avoid unsuitable conditions such as heavy rain and high winds.

Evaluation Methodology

2.8 Evaluation of the breeding bird survey results was undertaken in accordance with the following criteria.

Determination of Breeding Status

2.9 The breeding status of each species can be classified into four categories: confirmed breeder; probable breeder; possible breeder; and non-breeder. The behaviour, sex, age and location of individual birds allow conclusions to be drawn about breeding status, based on categories devised by the European Ornithology Atlas Committee (EOAC 1979) and the BTO (see Appendix 1). The four categories: confirmed; probable; possible; and non-breeders are used to indicate the likely breeding status within the survey area.

Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (Eaton et al. 2015)

2.10 Under this approach bird populations are assessed using quantitative criteria to determine the population status of each species, and then placed on one of three lists: red; amber; or green. Red list species are of high conservation concern, having declined by 50% or more in population or breeding range in the last 25 years. Amber listed species are of medium conservation concern, having suffered between 25% and 49% reduction in breeding or non-breeding populations, breeding or wintering ranges. Green list species have a favourable conservation status.

Section 41 Species of Principal Importance (Priority Species)

2.11 Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists certain species, also referred to as Priority Species, for which actions and targets have been devised to help safeguard the most threatened species, including bird species.

Schedule 1 Species

2.12 Schedule 1 species are protected under the WCA (1981 as amended) by the Environmental Protection Act 1990. It is an offence to intentionally disturb any of these species during the breeding season without a valid licence.

3. RESULTS

Desk Study

Table 2 Bird Species of Principal Importance Records from WYES

Common Name	Scientific Name	Number Recorded	Amber	Red	Sch 1
Barn owl	*Tyto alba*	1			X
Black-headed gull	*Larus ridibundus*	1	X		
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	4	X		
Curlew	*Numenius arquata*	1		X	
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	5	X		
Fieldfare	*Turdus pilaris*	2		X	X
Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*	2			
Green woodpecker	*Picus viridis*	1			
Greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*	8	X		
Grey partridge	*Perdix perdix*	1		X	
House martin	*Delichon urbica*	1	X		
House sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	7		X	
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	2	X		
Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	2	X		X
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	1		X	
Linnet	*Carduelis cannabina*	1		X	
Meadow pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	1	X		
Mew gull (Common)	*Larus canus*	1	X		
Mistle thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*	1		X	
Redpoll	*Carduelis flammea*	1	X		
Redwing	*Turdus iliacus*	2		X	X
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	2		X	
Song thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	4		X	
Spotted redshank	*Tringa erythropus*	3	X		
Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	1		X	
Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	4			
Swift	*Apus apus*	2	X		
Tawny owl	*Strix aluco*	1	X		
Water rail	*Rallus aquaticus*	2			
Whitethroat	*Sylvia communis*	1			
Willow tit	*Parus montanus*	1		X	
Willow warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	3	X		
Woodcock	*Scolopax rusticola*	1		X	
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	1		X	

3.1 A total of 34 bird species records was returned as part of the desk study.

3.2 It should be noted that the number of species recorded does not necessarily indicate the population size. Less common species may be recorded more frequently because of their rarity and more common species may be recorded less often.

Field Survey

Breeding Bird Assemblage

3.3 The full survey results are presented in Appendix 2[1] and the location of all bird registrations is presented in Figure 1.

3.4 An assemblage of 42 species was recorded from within or immediately adjacent to the site over the three survey visits.

Breeding Status

3.5 Eleven species displayed behaviour which confirmed breeding within the site's habitats. They are common blackbird, starling, Eurasian skylark, goldfinch, robin, great spotted woodpecker, grey partridge, pied wagtail, song thrush, willow warbler and yellowhammer.

3.6 Twenty species displayed behaviour indicative of probable breeding, which included Eurasian blackcap, blue tit, common chaffinch, Eurasian bullfinch, buzzard, chiffchaff, kestrel, common linnet, whitethroat, woodpigeon, collared dove, jay, Eurasian magpie, Eurasian nuthatch, treecreeper, greenfinch, great tit, dunnock, spotted flycatcher and Eurasian wren.

3.7 A further eight species were recorded as possible breeders, which included carrion crow, western jackdaw, sparrowhawk, garden warbler, house sparrow, long-tailed tit, mistle thrush and stock dove.

3.8 Three species, barn swallow, swift and European herring gull were categorised non-breeders as the breeding requirements of these species are not found on site.

3.9 Confirmed and probable breeding species account for 74% of the total assemblage.

3.10 Determination of breeding status is dependent upon particular behaviour being observed. It is likely that a greater proportion of the recorded assemblage are breeding within the site, but that the behaviour was not displayed or recorded during the survey period and thus cannot be confirmed.

Conservation Status

3.11 Of the 42 species recorded, 17 (40%) are in general decline and listed as Red or Amber Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC).

3.12 Appendix 2 summarises the conservations status of the bird species recorded.

3.13 The red listed species are European herring gull, house sparrow, common linnet, grey partridge, song thrush, Eurasian skylark, starling, mistle thrush, spotted flycatcher and yellowhammer.

3.14 Grey partridge, Eurasian skylark, starling, song thrush and yellowhammer are confirmed breeders and common linnet and spotted flycatcher are probable breeding species. House

[1] *Bird species recorded on site follow British Ornithologists' Union, 2017; common names are used in the text, see Appendix 2 for scientific names.*

sparrow is categorised as a possible breeder but is most likely to be breeding within the houses and residential gardens immediately adjacent to the site.

3.15 The Amber listed species are, Eurasian bullfinch, kestrel, dunnock, stock dove, willow warbler and swift. Of these, willow warbler is the only confirmed breeder; dunnock, European bullfinch and kestrel are probable breeders and stock dove is a possible breeder.

3.16 Barn swallow, swift and European herring gull are non-breeding species, using the habitats on site to feed.

3.17 Common linnet, house sparrow, song thrush, Eurasian skylark, spotted flycatcher, yellowhammer, dunnock and European bullfinch are also S41 species.

3.18 There were no Schedule 1 listed birds recorded from the site.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The survey area comprises open farmland with fields under cereal production and silage, as well as mature woodland and younger plantation woodland. The assemblage recorded is relatively large and diverse and reflects the close association of open farmland, mature and plantation woodland, residential gardens and dwellings. The assemblage comprises species that are typical of these habitats, including a number of farmland specialists such as common linnet, grey partridge, Eurasian skylark and yellowhammer and also woodland specialists such as spotted flycatcher, all red listed species that are recognised as being in decline due to habitat loss. These species would require careful mitigation, designed to avoid negative impacts on local populations through habitat loss and degradation.

4.2 The close association of residential housing, school and industry introduces additional species of conservation concern such as swift, house sparrow and starling, all species that are more generally associated with human dwellings/buildings for nest sites. Starlings often travel long distances between nest sites and foraging areas and the proximity of extensive grassland areas and housing provide ideal breeding conditions. These species adapt well to or are tolerant of urban and suburban development and suitable mitigation to maintain or enhance local breeding populations can readily be provided for these species.

Recommendations

4.3 All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is, therefore, recommended that for potential breeding bird habitats within the site, vegetation is removed outside the breeding season, which runs from March to September (inclusive).

4.4 If this is not possible then a suitably experienced ecologist must check the vegetation no more than 48 hours prior to site clearance to ensure no active nests are present. If clearance is delayed for more than 48 hours after a check then a further check is required. If nesting birds are confirmed to be present then works within the wider vicinity of the nest would need to be postponed and the area cordoned off until young have fledged and/or nesting has been completed. A further check would then be necessary to ensure that no further nests are present before vegetation clearance could continue. This approach is recommended to minimise the risk of destroying active nests and, therefore, any infringement of legislation.

4.5 The majority of designated species recorded during the survey are species typical of open country, woodland and woody vegetation such as hedgerows and scrub that tend to avoid urban and suburban development. Species in this group recorded during the surveys include common linnet, Eurasian skylark, spotted flycatcher, stock dove and yellowhammer. These species would require mitigation to avoid negative impacts on the local population.

4.6 There were also a number of designated species recorded during the survey that are able to adapt well to, or be tolerant of, urban and suburban development. Species such as house sparrow, starling and dunnock would require lower levels of mitigation in order to maintain or enhance local breeding populations.

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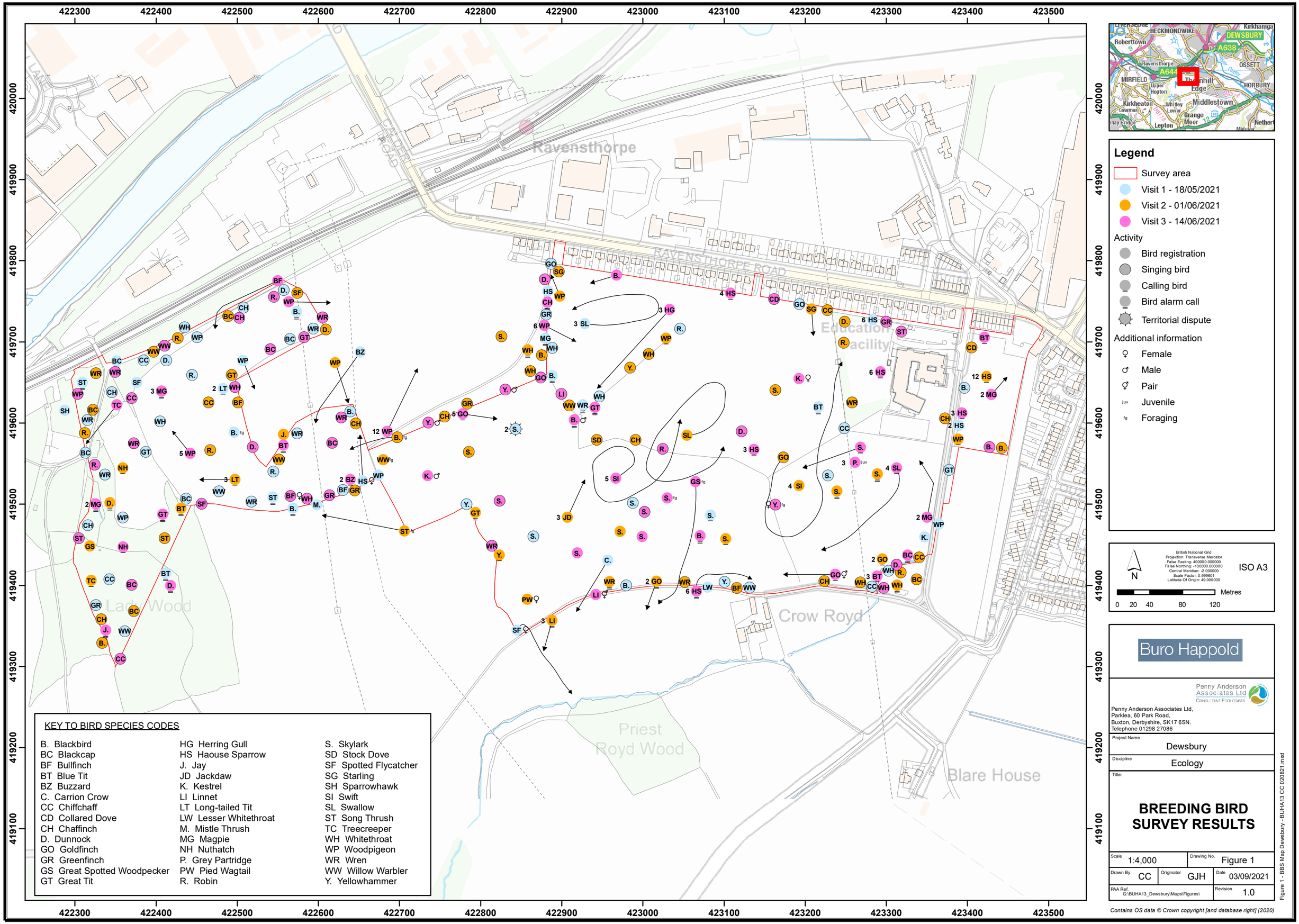
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6. ABBREVIATIONS

BoCC	Birds of Conservation Concern
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CRoW	Countryside and Rights of Way
EOAC	European Ornithology Atlas Committee
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities
PAA	Penny Anderson Associates Ltd
RSPB	Royal Society for Protection of Birds
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act
WYES	West Yorkshire Ecology Service

FIGURE



Legend

- Survey area
- Visit 1 - 18/05/2021
- Visit 2 - 01/06/2021
- Visit 3 - 14/06/2021

Activity

- Bird registration
- Singing bird
- Calling bird
- Bird alarm call
- Territorial dispute

Additional information

- ♀ Female
- ♂ Male
- ♀♂ Pair
- juv Juvenile
- fg Foraging

N

British National Grid
Projection: Transverse Mercator
False Easting: 400000.000000
False Northing: -100000.000000
Central Meridian: -2.000000
Scale Factor: 0.999601
Latitude Of Origin: 49.000000

ISO A3

Metres

0 20 40 80 120

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Title:

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS

Scale	1:4,000	Drawing No.	Figure 1
Drawn By	CC	Originator GJH	Date 03/09/2021
PAA Ref. G:\BUHA13_Dewsbury\Maps\Figures\		Revision	1.0

Figure 1 - BBS Map Dewsbury - BUHA13 CC 020821.mxd

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Categories of Breeding Bird Evidence

Appendix 1 Categories of Breeding Bird Evidence

Class	Category of Evidence
Non-breeding	Flying over
	Species observed but suspected to be still on migration
	Species observed but suspected to be summering non-breeder
Possible Breeding	Species observed in breeding season in possible nesting habitat
	Singing male present (or breeding calls heard) in breeding season in suitable breeding habitat
Probable Breeding	Pairs observed in suitable nesting habitat in breeding season
	Permanent territory presumed through registration of territorial behaviour (song etc) on at least two different days, a week apart, at the same place, or many individuals on one day.
	Display and courtship (judged to be near potential breeding habitat).
	Visiting probable nest site
	Agitated behaviour or anxiety calls from adults, suggesting probably presence of nest or young nearby
	Brood patch on adult examined in the hand, suggesting incubation
	Building nest or excavating nest-hole
Confirmed Breeding	Distraction display or injury feigning
	Used nest or egg shells found (occupied or laid within the survey period)
	Recently fledged young (nidicolous species) or downy young (nidifugous species). Careful consideration should be given to the likely provenance of any fledged juvenile capable of significant geographical movement. Evidence of dependency on adults (e.g. feeding) is helpful.
	Adults entering or leaving nest site in circumstances indicating occupied nest or adult sitting on nest
	Adults carrying food for young or faecal sacs
	Nests containing eggs
	Nest with young seen or heard

EOAC and BTO Guidelines (combined)

APPENDIX 2

Breeding Bird Survey Results

Appendix 2 Breeding Bird Survey Results

Common Name	Scientific Name	Visit 1 18/05/21	Visit 2 01/06/21	Visit 3 14/06/21	Breeding Status	Notes
Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*			4 adults foraging above the site	NB	Breeding requirements not found within site
Buzzard	*Buteo buteo*	Calling adult		2 adults calling above woodland	PR	
Carrion crow	*Corvus corone*	1 foraging adult			PO	
Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita*	3 singing males	2 singing males	2 singing males	PR	
Collared dove	*Streptopelia decaocta*		1 singing male	1 singing male	PR	
Common blackbird	*Turdus merula*	5 singing males & 5 alarming adults	4 singing males & 2 females with food	1 singing male, 2 alarming & calling adults & male with food	C	
Common chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs*	3 singing males	5 singing males	Male alarm calling	PR	
Common linnet	*Carduelis cannabina*		3 adults calling in flight	2 singing males and pair alarming	PR	
Dunnock*	*Prunella modularis*	2 singing males	2 singing males & alarming adult	3 singing males & alarming adult	PR	
Eurasian blackcap	*Sylvia atricapilla*	3 singing males	4 singing males	3 singing males & alarming adult	PR	
Eurasian blue tit	*Cyanistes caeruleus*	1 alarming adult		4 alarming adults and calling adult	PR	
Eurasian bullfinch*	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	1 singing male	2 singing males	1 singing male & calling adult	PR	
Eurasian magpie	*Pica pica*	1 calling adult	4 foraging adults & 5 alarm calling adults		PR	
Eurasian nuthatch	*Sitta europaea*		1 singing adult	1 calling adult	PR	
Eurasian skylark*	*Alauda arvensis*	3 singing males & 3 calling adults	4 singing males & 2 adults	2 singing adults & 2 adults in territorial aggression & adult with food	C	
Eurasian wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	5 singing males	3 singing males & 2 alarming adults	4 singing males & 2 alarming adults	PR	
European herring gull	*Larus argentatus*			3 adults quartering the site	NB	
Garden warbler	*Sylvia borin*		1 singing male		PO	
Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*	1 singing male	1 singing male & 4 birds in flight	2 calling adults and family group of 5	C	
Great spotted woodpecker	*Dendrocopos major*		1 calling adult	Adult with food	C	
Great tit	*Parus major*	2 singing males	1 singing male & 1 alarming adult	3 alarming adults & singing male	PR	
Greenfinch	*Carduelis chloris*	2 singing males	2 singing males	2 singing males	PR	
Grey partridge	*Perdix perdix*			3 juveniles in barley field	C	
House sparrow*	*Passer domesticus*	7 calling adults	12 adults	22 birds including juveniles across the site feeding	PO	All associated with residential housing/gardens where breeding is most likely
Jay	*Garrulus glanarius*		1 calling adult	1 alarming adult	PR	

Common Name	Scientific Name	Visit 1 18/05/21	Visit 2 01/06/21	Visit 3 14/06/21	Breeding Status	Notes
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	1 female hunting above site		Male & female hunting above site	PR	
Long-tailed tit	*Aegithalos caudatus*	2 calling adults	3 adults		PO	
Mistle thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*		1 foraging adult		PO	
Pied wagtail	*Motacilla alba*		Adult with food		C	
Robin	*Erithacus rubecula*	4 singing males	4 singing males & adult with food	3 singing males	C	
Song thrush*	*Turdus philomelos*	1 singing male & 1 calling adult	1 singing adult & adult with food	2 singing males	C	
Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*	1 female			PO	
Spotted flycatcher*	*Muscicapa striata*	1 singing male & an adult female foraging	1 singing male	1 singing male	PR	
Starling*	*Sturnus vulgaris*		1 singing adult, 3 adults in flight with food		C	
Stock dove	*Columba oenas*		1 singing male		PO	
Swift	*Apus apus*	3 feeding above site		5 adults feeding above site	NB	
Treecreeper	*Certhia familiaris*		1 calling adult	1 foraging adult	PR	
Western jackdaw	*Corvus monedula*		3 adults		PO	
Whitethroat	*Sylvia communis*	6 singing males	2 singing males & alarming adult	3 singing males	PR	
Willow warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	4 singing males	3 singing males & adult with food	1 singing male	C	
Woodpigeon	*Columba palumbus*	1 singing male & 3 adults	3 adults calling & feeding	c. 23 birds feeding in groups & singing male	PR	
Yellowhammer*	*Emberiza citrinella*	2 singing males & a calling female	2 singing males & a calling adult	2 singing males, calling adult & 1 adult with food	C	Observed on all visits - territorial singing.

KEY:

Amber text = Amber List
Red Text - Red List
* = UKBAP
PO = possible
PR = probable
C = confirmed
NB = non-breeder

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