
Bold Forest Park
on behalf of Saint Helens Council
Non-Breeding Bird Survey Report



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Avian Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by St Helens Council to undertake non-breeding bird surveys in relation to a development located north of Gorsey lane, Saint Helens (the 'Site'), at central grid reference SJ53479183.
- 1.1.2 The report aims to provide baseline information regarding the presence and distribution of non-breeding ornithological interests within the Site.
- 1.1.3 Only common bird species names are referred to within the main text of this report. **Annex 1** provides a summary of all bird species recorded during survey visits, including both common and scientific species names, together with a summary of their conservation status as relevant.

1.2 Site Context

- 1.2.1 The Site is not located within any statutory designated sites. However, there are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within 10 km of the Site including, Stanley Bank Meadow SSSI (the closest site; within approximately 5.0 km), Highfield Moss SSSI, and Mersey Estuary SSSI. The Mersey Estuary is also designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site.
- 1.2.2 These sites referred to above include ornithological features that contribute to, or are the primary reason for, their designation.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Field Survey

- 2.1.1 Non-breeding bird surveys were undertaken monthly between February 2025 and March 2025 (**Table 2.1**).

Table 2.1. Survey visits

Survey Number	Date	Start Time	End time
1	24/02/2025	10:15	15:00
2	11/03/2025	10:15	14:45
3	28/03/2025	05:45	11:45

Survey Area

- 2.1.2 The Survey Area comprised of the habitats within the Site boundary as presented in **Figure 1**.

Walkover Surveys

- 2.1.3 A total of three survey visits were undertaken to the Survey Area, comprising 'walk-over' surveys and adopting the 'look-see' methodology as detailed in Gilbert *et al.* (1998¹).

¹ Gilbert G, Gibbons D.W. and Evans J. (1998) *Bird Monitoring Methods*. RSPB Sandy.

- 2.1.4 During each survey visit a route was walked through the Survey Area, observing each field using public rights of way (PRoWs) and roads and where possible, walking the boundaries and stopping at intervals and scanning the fields for Priority Species, with binoculars.
- 2.1.5 All surveys were undertaken during daylight hours in weather conditions conducive for bird surveys and were undertaken by suitably experienced ornithologists.
- 2.1.6 All Species heard or seen were recorded onto base maps, there was a particular focus on waterbird species due to the proximity of the Mersey Estuary Ramsar which is within approximately 8.0 km.
- 2.1.7 Priority Species relevant to the Proposed Development that were recorded during the non-breeding bird surveys, comprised Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Amber and Red List Species (Stanbury et al., 2021²), birds listed under Section 41 (S41) of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC³), species and Annex 1 /Schedule 1 species.
- 2.1.8 Priority Species also included all those which represent non-breeding qualifying features of designated sites within European sites (Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site).
- 2.1.9 Species which do not fall under the above criteria are referred to as 'Secondary Species'

Limitations of survey

- 2.1.10 No significant disturbance events were recorded during the surveys (with the exception of usual events such as agricultural work, traffic and pedestrians along roads/PRoWs) and as such are not considered significant in terms of having a potential influence on the presence and distribution of species within the Survey Area during the survey period.
- 2.1.11 A full suite of non-breeding bird surveys could not be achieved at the time of survey due to the date of commissioning and therefore, the results presented in this document are a snapshot of species which utilise the Site during the non-breeding period (February and March).

² Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. (2021) The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *British Birds*, **114**, pp. 723-747. Available online at <https://britishbirds.co.uk/content/status-our-bird-populations>

³ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4958719460769792> (Accessed: 31st July 2025)

3 RESULTS

3.1.1 No qualifying species of the Mersey Estuary SPA and/or Ramsar were observed during the field surveys. **Table 3.1** and text below presents the results of the surveys.

Table 3.1. Field survey results (Priority and waterbird species); peak counts

Field Number (refer to Figure. 1 for location)	Species	Survey number		
		1	2	3
2	Lapwing			1
	Mallard			2
	Snipe		1	
3	Lapwing			1
	Mallard			1
9	Black-headed Gull	21		
12	Black-headed Gull		140	
13	Black-headed Gull		19	
14	Black-headed Gull		200	
	Herring Gull	1	4	7
	Lapwing		13	

Other Priority Species recorded using the Site included:

- Bullfinch
- Greenfinch
- House Sparrow
- Linnet
- Skylark
- Song Thrush
- Starling
- Woodpigeon
- Wren
- Yellowhammer

Secondary Species:

- Chiffchaff
- Collared Dove
- Long-tailed Tit
- Reed Warbler

Flyover species included:

- Buzzard
- Canada goose
- Crow
- Common gull
- Great black-backed gull
- Kestrel

ANNEX 1

Common name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Amber
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Green
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	NT; Red; Sec41
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Amber
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Amber
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Amber
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Amber
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Red; Sec41
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Green
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Amber
Carriion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Green
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Red; Sec41
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Green
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Green
Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	Green
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red; Sec41
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Amber; Sec41
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Red; Sec41
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Amber; Sec41
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Red
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Red; Sec41
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red; Sec41
KEY EX/CR/EN/VU/NT Extinct, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened on the Global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Red/Amber/Green Red, Amber or Green listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern 5 List Sec41 Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Species of principal importance for conserving biodiversity in England)		