

Abigail Upton
Planner
Keepmoat Homes Ltd.
Abigail.Upton@keepmoat.com

Our ref: 23645/IS

3rd May 2024

Dear Abi,

RE: Passage (Spring) Bird Surveys: 23rd March to 27th April Report

Background

Ecus UK Ltd (Ecus) were commissioned by Keepmoat Homes to undertake bird surveys at land associated with the 'Lincs Lakes' development, Burringham Road, Lincolnshire, DN17 2AL, (central National Grid Reference: SE 86183 08609), hereafter termed as the 'Site'.

This was to inform proposals for 599 dwellings and a new lake, along with associated infrastructure, as recommended by Natural England on the 27th February 2024.

Spring passage, autumn passage and wintering bird surveys are required to assess the assemblage of birds using the Site and assess any relationship between the bird assemblage on the nearby Humber Estuary SSSI/SPA/Ramsar and the Site. This report discusses the survey results thus far, from 23rd March to 27th April.

Legislation & Conservation Interest

SSSI legislation

Public bodies must take reasonable steps to conserve and enhance the special features of SSSI's when carrying out statutory duties and giving others permission for works, such as reviewing planning applications.

This includes land that could be damaged or affected by off-site works.

The Site should be assessed to decipher if and how the proposal will affect the designated species.

SPA and SAC Legislation

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, if a plan or project is unconnected with SAC or SPA site management and is likely to significantly affect a 'European site', the statutory regulator (the 'Competent Authority') of the proposed works must undertake an 'appropriate assessment' (Regulation 63(1)). This takes the form of a Habitat Regulations Assessment in which these bird surveys will inform. Changes to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) have been implemented by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The key changes are the creation of a 'National Site Network' (NSN) (which no longer forms part of the EU Natura 2000 network) and the establishment of management objectives for the NSN. The network objectives are to:

- Maintain or, where appropriate, restore habitats and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive to a favourable conservation status; and,

- Contribute to ensuring, in their area of distribution, the survival and reproduction of wild birds and securing compliance with the overarching aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

Although Ramsar Sites are not part of the NSN, they are subject to the same protections as SACs and SPAs. Collectively NSN and Ramsar Sites are referred to as 'Habitats Sites'.

Wild Birds

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Section 1 of the Act makes it an offence to:

- (a) kill, injure, or take any wild bird;
- (b) take, damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird included in Schedule ZA1;
- (c) take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- (d) take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Methodology

Six spring passage bird surveys along with two nocturnal visits are to take place over the period of March to May to capture species across the season. As the Humber Estuary Ramsar/SPA is tidal and associated with waders and waterfowl, there are to be six surveys at high tide when these species are most likely to utilise arable fields and two at low tide to check for variation.

Five surveys have been undertaken thus far. Survey methods used were based on industry best practice and the recommendations from Natural England. The Site was surveyed from a static vantage point at the centre eastern side of the Site: (NGR: SE 86477 08565) to allow a good view across the entire site.

Species were recorded using BTO codes along with counts and flight lines. Please see **Appendix 1** for species counts and status.

Results

Survey 1: 23th March 2024
5:40-7:40am; high tide

Surveyor: Ornithologist Andy Hirst
Weather Conditions: 3-5 mph wind, cloud cover 80%, dry.

Shelduck, greylag and pink-footed goose are all listed under the SPA, however were all flying over the Site only and did not interact with it directly.

Table 1: Species recorded in Survey 1

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Common Name | Scientific Name |
|---------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Blackbird | <i>Turdus merula</i> | Kestrel | <i>Flaco tinnunculus</i> |
| Blue tit | <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i> | Linnet | <i>Linaria cannabina</i> |
| Buzzard | <i>Buteo buteo</i> | Magpie | <i>Corvus pica</i> |
| Carrion crow | <i>Corvus corone</i> | Pied wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> |
| Collared dove | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> | Pheasant | <i>Phasianus colchicus</i> |
| Chaffinch | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> | Pink-footed goose | <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> |
| Dunnock | <i>Prunella modularis</i> | Redwing | <i>Turdus iliacus</i> |
| Fieldfare | <i>Turdus pilaris</i> | Robin | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> |
| Goldfinch | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> | Shelduck | <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> |
| Great tit | <i>Parus major</i> | Starling | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> |
| Greylag goose | <i>Anser anser</i> | Skylark | <i>Alauda arvensis</i> |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Grey heron | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> | Stock dove | <i>Columba oenas</i> |
| Grey Partridge | <i>Pedix perdix</i> | Song thrush | <i>Turdus philomelos</i> |
| House sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | Woodpigeon | <i>Columba palumbus</i> |
| Jackdaw | <i>Corvus monedula</i> | | |

Survey 2: 30th March 2024
9:05- 11:05am; high tide

Surveyor: Ornithologist Andy Hirst
Weather Conditions: 1-6 mph wind, cloud cover 20%, dry.

The common gull which could be associated with estuary habitats, was flying over the Site and within an adjacent field.

Table 2: Species recorded in Survey 2

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Common Name | Scientific Name |
|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Blue tit | <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i> | Kestrel | <i>Flaco tinnunculus</i> |
| Buzzard | <i>Buteo buteo</i> | Magpie | <i>Corvus pica</i> |
| Carrion crow | <i>Corvus corone</i> | Pied wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> |
| Chiffchaff | <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> | Pheasant | <i>Phasianus colchicus</i> |
| Common gull | <i>Larus canus</i> | Robin | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> |
| Chaffinch | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> | Rook | <i>Corvus frugilegus</i> |
| Dunnock | <i>Prunella modularis</i> | Starling | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> |
| Goldfinch | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> | Skylark | <i>Alauda arvensis</i> |
| Great tit | <i>Parus major</i> | Stock dove | <i>Columba oenas</i> |
| Grey Partridge | <i>Perdix perdix</i> | Woodpigeon | <i>Columba palumbus</i> |
| House sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | Wren | <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> |
| Jackdaw | <i>Corvus monedula</i> | | |

Survey 3: 6th April 2024
03:27-05:27; nocturnal; high tide

Surveyor: Ornithologist Andy Hirst
Weather Conditions: 1-2 mph wind, cloud cover 100%, drizzle.

Lapwing (1 individual calling) are associated with estuary habitats and listed as a non-breeding SPA species, however they are not specifically mentioned in the Ramsar criterion. Lapwing breed from March to July and the individual was noted to be calling.

Table 3: Species recorded in Survey 3

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Common Name | Scientific Name |
|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Blackbird | <i>Turdus merula</i> | Pheasant | <i>Phasianus colchicus</i> |
| Great tit | <i>Parus major</i> | Robin | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> |
| Lapwing | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> | Starling | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> |
| Mallard | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> | Skylark | <i>Alauda arvensis</i> |

Survey 4: 13th April 2024
17:00-19:00pm; low tide

Surveyor: Ornithologist Andy Hirst
Weather Conditions: 10-17mph wind, cloud cover 80%, short shower.

The black-headed gull which could be associated with estuary habitats, was flying over the Site but did not interact with it directly.

Table 4: Species recorded in Survey 4

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Common Name | Scientific Name |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| Black-headed gull | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> | Pheasant | <i>Phasianus colchicus</i> |
| Carrion crow | <i>Corvus corone</i> | Rook | <i>Corvus frugilegus</i> |
| Collared dove | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> | Starling | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> |
| Goldfinch | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> | Skylark | <i>Alauda arvensis</i> |
| Grey Partridge | <i>Perdix perdix</i> | Stock dove | <i>Columba oenas</i> |
| Kestrel | <i>Flaco tinnunculus</i> | Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> |
| Lesser black backed gull | <i>Larus fuscus</i> | Woodpigeon | <i>Columba palumbus</i> |
| Magpie | <i>Corvus pica</i> | Wren | <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> |
| Mistle thrush | <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> | | |

Survey 5: 27th April 2024
9:12-11:12am; high tide

Surveyor: Ornithologist Andy Hirst
Weather Conditions: 1-5 mph wind, cloud cover 80%, dry.

Greylag which are listed under the SPA and lesser blacked-back gull which could be associated with estuary habitats, were flying over the Site but did not interact with it directly.

Table 5: Species recorded in Survey 5

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Common Name | Scientific Name |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Carrion crow | <i>Corvus corone</i> | Linnet | <i>Linaria cannabina</i> |
| Collared dove | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> | Magpie | <i>Corvus pica</i> |
| Chaffinch | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> | Mistle thrush | <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> |
| Goldfinch | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> | Pied wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> |
| Great tit | <i>Parus major</i> | Pheasant | <i>Phasianus colchicus</i> |
| Greylag goose | <i>Anser anser</i> | Rook | <i>Corvus frugilegus</i> |
| House sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | Starling | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> |
| Jackdaw | <i>Corvus monedula</i> | Stock dove | <i>Columba oenas</i> |
| Kestrel | <i>Flaco tinnunculus</i> | Song thrush | <i>Turdus philomelos</i> |
| Lesser black backed gull | <i>Larus fuscus</i> | Woodpigeon | <i>Columba palumbus</i> |

Summary

Only one species listed under the nearby SPA designation was recorded interacting with the Site, which was a single lapwing. Non-breeding lapwing are associated with the Humber Estuary SPA, but not the Ramsar. The SPA is over 10 km from the Site and this individual may not be associated with the Humber Estuary directly. As the individual was recorded calling in April, it is also likely this individual is at some stage of its breeding/nesting process.

Seven red listed species have been recorded on Site, primarily in a small numbers. There were however a relatively high number of skylark associated with the Site and as all were seen displaying, they are likely to be nesting by now. This species is associated with arable fields and are likely to also use the surrounding habitat.

References

British Trust of Ornithology and Natural England (2018). English Winter Bird Survey Instructions.

Natural England (2023). Consultation letter Lincolnshire Lakes, PA/2023/1124.

Natural England. (2010). 'List of habitats and species of principal importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006'. Natural England, Peterborough.

Stanbury, A., et al (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, 723-747. BTO, Thetford.

Thank you for asking Ecus to provide this service. If you have any queries on the above or require any ecological support for future projects, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01256 224588.

Yours sincerely,



Isabel Soane MSc
Consultant Ecologist



Appendix 1: Species Counts

| Species | Peak count | Total number | Status |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Blackbird | 2 | 3 | Green |
| Black-headed gull | 1 | 1 | Amber |
| Blue tit | 1 | 2 | Green |
| Buzzard | 4 | 5 | Green |
| Carrion crow | 13 | 29 | Green |
| Chaffinch | 2 | 5 | Green |
| Chiffchaff | 1 | 1 | Green |
| Collared dove | 2 | 4 | Green |
| Common gull | 9 | 9 | Amber |
| Dunnock | 1 | 2 | Amber, NERC S.41 SPI |
| Fieldfare | 13 | 13 | Red, WCA 1981 Schedule 1 |
| Goldfinch | 3 | 6 | Green |
| Great tit | 6 | 16 | Green |
| Grey heron | 1 | 1 | Green |
| Grey Partridge | 2 | 4 | Red, NERC S.41 SPI |
| Greylag goose | 2 | 3 | Amber |
| House sparrow | 1 | 3 | Red, NERC S.41 SPI |
| Jackdaw | 20 | 25 | Green |
| Kestrel | 5 | 14 | Amber |
| Lapwing | 1 | 1 | Red, NERC S.41 SPI |
| Lesser black backed gull | 2 | 3 | Amber |
| Linnet | 20+ | 25+ | Red, NERC S.41 SPI |
| Magpie | 3 | 8 | Green |
| Mallard | 1 | 1 | Amber |
| Mistle thrush | 1 | 2 | Red |
| Pheasant | 8 | 30 | N/A |
| Pied wagtail | 2 | 5 | Green |
| Pink-footed goose | 2 | 2 | Amber |
| Redwing | 58 | 58 | Amber, WCA 1981 Schedule 1 |
| Robin | 5 | 9 | Green |
| Rook | 5 | 7 | Amber |
| Shelduck | 2 | 2 | Amber |
| Skylark | 7 | 23 | Red NERC S.41 SPI |
| Song thrush | 2 | 3 | Amber, NERC S.41 |
| Starling | 7 | 18 | Red, NERC S.41 SPI |
| Stock dove | 9 | 20 | Amber |
| Swallow | 3 | 3 | N/A |
| Woodpigeon | 6 | 12 | Amber |
| Wren | 1 | 2 | Amber |

