

7.10 BIRD SURVEY

Introduction

7.10.1 A breeding bird survey was undertaken between March and June 2013. The survey method agreed with CCW and NCC involved a total of 5 morning survey visits spread through the breeding season.

Survey method

7.10.2 During each of the 5 survey visits, the development area and the adjacent part of the river Usk was visited by an experienced bird surveyor. The visits were timed during mornings, when levels of bird activity are usually highest. Every bird seen or heard during each visit was recorded, together with any territorial behaviour such as calling, singing, nest-building or carrying food for young. This information was written onto a map base using standard recording symbols. Birds observed incidentally during other surveys have not been shown in the maps, but have been included on the site species list and in the discussion of survey findings.

7.10.3 The dates of the surveys and the weather conditions each time are summarised in Table 7.10.1 below.

Table 7.10.1. Bird survey dates, times and conditions

Date	Time	Weather	Tide
18/3/2013	9:00 – 11:15am	50% cloud, calm, 5°C	High tide (HT = 10:32am).
20/4/2013	8:05 – 10:30am	5% cloud, calm, 6°C	Low / rising tide (LT = 07:54am)
1/5/2013	8:40 – 11:00am	Sunny, 10% light cloud, calm, 9°C start, 12.5°C later	Rising/ high tide (HT = 11:56am).
22/5/2013	6:30 – 8:40am	Mostly overcast with light breeze, 80% cloud, 12°C.	High/ falling tide (HT = 5:07am)
19/6/2013	5:40 – 8:30am	10% cloud, sunny, calm, humid, 14.5 to 18.5°C.	Low/ falling tide (LT = 9:34am)

Survey findings

7.10.4 The observations to date are presented in map format in Figures 7.10.1 to 7.10.5. The species recorded during the surveys and their likely breeding status are summarised below in Table 7.10.2. The standard symbols and species codes used in the maps are summarised in Tables 7.10.3 and 7.10.4.

Table 7.10.2. Summary of bird survey observations up to June 2013.

Species	Likely status within proposed development site
Blackbird	One of the most frequently seen species, with several pairs probably breeding in scrub habitats at the site boundary.
Blackcap	At least 2 territories in dense riverside scrub beyond northern boundary, and 1 at the eastern boundary near the cadet centre.
Black-headed Gull	Regularly seen in flight and on river, and roosting on nearby sports ground during high tide.
Blue Tit	Often seen feeding in scrub, but unlikely to nest on site due to lack of suitable cavities. Likely to nest in larger trees north of boundary.
Bullfinch	Only seen in small numbers. Possibly breeding in riverside scrub beyond northern boundary.
Buzzard	Observed in flight high overhead during some late spring surveys, but not using habitats within site.
Canada Goose	Only seen in flight, high over site, possibly following river.
Carrion Crow	Occasionally seen in flight and feeding beside river.
Chaffinch	Only seen occasionally in small numbers, possibly breeding in riverside scrub beyond northern boundary.
Chiffchaff	One bird seen overwintering near ditch, but few sightings in spring. Possibly nesting in small numbers near site margins.
Coal Tit	Possibly nesting in tall conifer hedge outside south-eastern boundary.
Collared Dove	Only seen rarely, probably nesting nearby but apparently not within site boundary.
Cormorant	Occasionally seen on river, or following it in flight.
Dunnock	Several probably nesting in scrub habitats.
Garden Warbler	Possibly 1 territory, with male singing from mature Willow tree at eastern boundary on 22 May.
Goldfinch	Regularly seen in flight, possibly breeding in small numbers in marginal scrub.
Great Tit	Regular sightings, but unlikely to nest on site due to lack of suitable cavities. Probably nesting in large trees north of site boundary.
Greenfinch	Regularly observed, with likely territories in central scrub area, beside railway and scrub near school north of boundary.
Grey Heron	Occasionally seen in flight or feeding in river.
Herring Gull	Occasionally seen on river, in low numbers.
House Martin	Occasionally seen in flight in small numbers over grassland habitats
House Sparrow	Frequently observed in scrubby parts of the site, often in noisy groups, or feeding in ruderal and grassland areas. Likely to nest in nearby houses, but potentially also in dense scrub.
Jackdaw	Regularly seen in flight or feeding. Probably nesting in nearby houses, but no suitable nesting habitat on site.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Regularly seen on river, but only in small numbers.
Linnet	Seen in flight beside river during the winter, but no records during the breeding season.
Long-tailed Tit	Occasionally seen feeding in scrub. Probably nesting in dense scrub beyond northern boundary and beside railway line.
Magpie	Regularly seen on all surveys. One pair nested in tall Poplars adjacent to eastern margin.
Mallard	Regularly seen on river in small numbers. One pair was seen briefly on Lottery's Reen, but there was no indication of breeding on site.

Species	Likely status within proposed development site
Meadow Pipit	One individual observed on river bank during February.
Moorhen	One individual seen on Lottery's Reen in March, but there were no further sightings.
Mute Swan	One seen in flight over river on 22 May.
Oystercatcher	2 birds seen on riverside mud on 5 June.
Pied Wagtail	Occasionally seen on riverbank and around Glan Usk school.
Red-breasted Merganser	One pair seen feeding in river on 18 March.
Redshank	Regularly seen in small numbers on river bank during the winter, but very rarely during breeding season.
Reed Bunting	One bird observed near ditch during November survey. None were seen during any spring surveys, although one local recorder reported a singing male at Lottery's Reen during early June.
Reed Warbler	Heard singing from Lottery's Reen and dense stands of riverside reeds. Possibly 1 territory within site and up to 3 in riverside reeds, (especially to the north of the site).
Raven	One individual seen beside the river in March, in flight, being mobbed by crows.
Robin	Seen regularly but only in small numbers. Probably nesting in scrub at site boundary and dense scrub beyond northern boundary.
Sedge Warbler	One singing at eastern end of Lottery's Reen during April survey. Probably just singing on passage as there were no further records.
Snipe	Seen on river-bank in winter. Up to 4 birds within site during February and March, feeding in damp ground cleared and rutted by ground investigation work.
Song Thrush	Regularly seen during breeding season, with 3 likely territories in central and marginal scrub areas. Also probably breeding in riverside scrub beyond northern boundary.
Starling	Feeding in amenity grassland in north of site, and on nearby sports pitches. Probably breeding in nearby houses, but not within site.
Swallow	Occasionally seen feeding over grassland and river habitats.
Swift	Occasionally seen in flight, mainly in southern part near houses.
Wood Pigeon	Regularly seen. Probable breeding in scrub beside railway line and in riverside scrub north of site boundary.
Whitethroat	One probable territory in dense Bramble at western side of post industrial area.
Wren	Possible territories in dense scrub areas within site and in riverside scrub north of boundary.

Table 7.10.3. Species codes used in bird survey maps

Species	Species code	Species	Species code
Blackbird	B	Lesser Black-backed Gull	LB
Blackcap	BC	Linnet	LI
Black-headed Gull	BH	Long-tailed Tit	LT
Blue Tit	BT	Magpie	MG
Bullfinch	BF	Mallard	MA
Canada Goose	CG	Meadow Pipit	MP
Carrion Crow	C	Moorhen	MH
Chaffinch	CH	Mistle Thrush	MT
Chiffchaff	CC	Mute Swan	MS
Coal Tit	CT	Pied Wagtail	PW
Collared Dove	CD	Redshank	RS
Cormorant	CA	Reed Warbler	RW
Dunnock	D	Robin	R
Feral Pigeon	FP	Sedge Warbler	SW
Garden Warbler	GW	Snipe	SN
Goldfinch	GO	Song Thrush	ST
Great Tit	GT	Starling	SG
Greenfinch	GR	Swallow	SL
Grey Heron	H	Swift	SI
Herring Gull	HG	Whitethroat	WH
House Martin	HM	Wood Pigeon	WP
House Sparrow	HS	Wren	WR
Jackdaw	JD		

Table 7.10.4. Symbols used in bird survey maps.

Map symbol	Explanation
CH	Chaffinch sight record.
CH*	Chaffinch nest.
2CH	2 Chaffinches.
CH _{juv}	Juvenile Chaffinch.
R _{mat}	Robin with nest material.
(R)	A singing Robin.
R	A calling Robin.
<u>R</u>	A Robin repeatedly giving alarm calls or other vocalisations (not song) thought to have strong territorial significance.
B _{food}	Blackbird carrying food.
B	Blackbird singing.
R _{fam}	Juvenile robins with parents in attendance.
→GR	A calling Greenfinch seen only in flight.
(D) →	A singing Dunnock flying away from perch, not seen to land.
→B	A Blackbird flying in and landing (first seen in flight).
WR → WR	Wren moving between two perches. The solid line indicates that it was definitely the same bird.
(B) - - - (B)	Two Blackbirds singing simultaneously. Dotted line indicates that birds are definitely different (useful in identifying territories).
WR WR	No line joining registrations: the birds are probably different.

Figure 7.10.4. Bird survey 22 May 2013



