



The British Model Flying Association

Wintering Wetland Bird & Breeding Bird Survey

Avon Model Aero Radio Club (A.M.A.R.C 2002 LTD)

Report by Devon Wildlife Consultants

November 2007

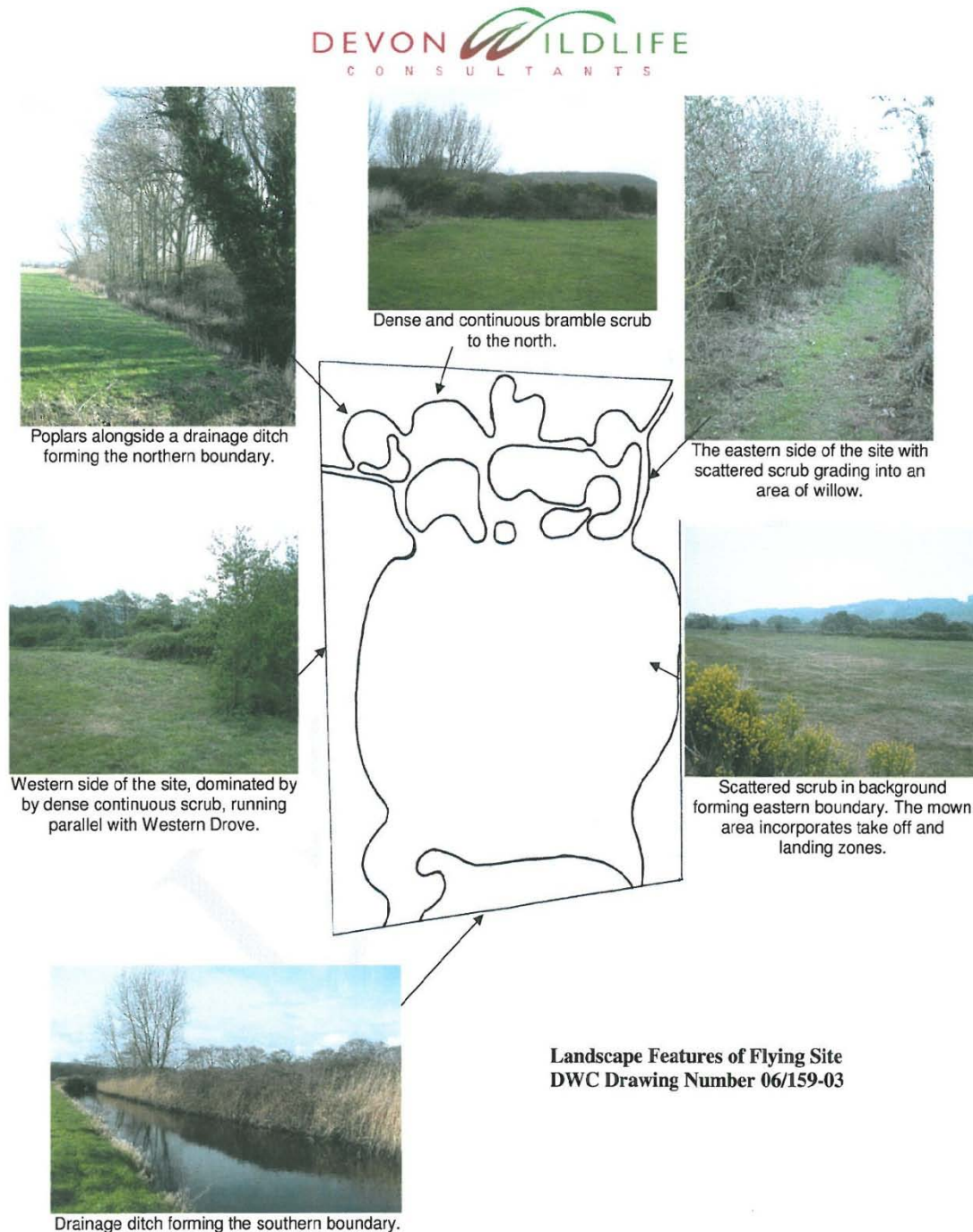
Copyright BMFA 2012

Introduction

This synopsis summarises the results of winter wetland bird and breeding bird surveys carried out at a site south of the village Weston in Gordano, in the County of Avon. The site is located at National Grid Reference ST 451 736.

The site is owned by the Avon Model Aero Radio Club (AMARC 2002 Ltd). The Club has full planning permission to fly model aircraft 365 days a year. Membership of the club is approximately 90 members.

The aim of the surveys was to provide an indication of the likely territories of breeding birds and the locations of wintering or breeding birds, together with species lists for all birds recorded in the study area during the survey. Additionally the survey established which habitats were present on the site itself and also within the wider study area.



Winter Wetland Bird Survey

The survey was undertaken to British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) standard methodology and was in the form of a Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS) WeBS is a joint scheme of the BTO, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), the RSPB, and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to monitor non breeding water birds in the UK. The survey aimed to determine if foraging and roosting wetland birds such as waders and wildfowl are using the wet grassland areas of and adjacent to the site.

The site was surveyed on 27th January 2007, 24th February 2007 and 24th March 2007 for wintering birds.

The survey recorded eight wetland and wildfowl species within the study area, Canada Goose, Coot, Grey Heron, Lesser Black-Backed Gull, Mallard, Moorhen, Shelduck and Teal, of those Teal recorded the highest numbers (72) Mallard recorded the second highest (50).

Of the species recorded 3 are RSPB amber listed species considered to have a higher level of conservation concern, they are Lesser Black-backed Gull, Shelduck, and Teal.

Most water birds are readily visible, however there are a number of species which are more secretive in nature (Snipe for example). Only birds seen and heard could be recorded as part of the surveys and any secretive species may have been under recorded.

WeBS visit 1 – 27th January 2007 (Time of Arrival – 9:00am)		
Cloud cover: 66-100% Rain: None Wind: Calm Visibility: Good		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Number
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	2
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	3
Lesser Black Backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	5
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	24
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	3
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	72

WeBS visit 24th February 2007 (Time of Arrival – 8:30am)		
Cloud cover: 33-66% Rain: None Wind: Light Visibility: Good		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Number
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	10
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	22
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	3
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	9

WeBS visit 24th March 2007 (Time of Arrival – 8:00am)		
Cloud cover: 66-100% Rain: None Wind: Light Visibility: Moderate		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Number
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	1
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	4
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	3
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	2

Breeding Bird Survey

The survey consisted of 2 dawn visits which were undertaken four weeks apart on 5th May 2007 and 2nd June 2007. Prior to the survey visits a transect route was identified to provide the optimum coverage of all habitats present within the study area. All species seen or heard and their locations and behaviour were marked on site to help determine where possible breeding territories occur. Potential breeding territories were confirmed by behavioural observations such as male territorial song and displays, courtship displays, mating and carrying of nesting materials and food and also the presence of nests with chicks/fledglings seen or heard.

25 species were recorded within the study area, 16 were identified as breeding within the wider study area with 9 species identified as foraging or flying over the study area.

The species recorded were, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Cetti's Warbler, Chiff Chaff, Dunnock, Garden Warbler, Goldfinch, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Linnet, Magpie, Mallard, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail, Reed Bunting, Robin, Sedge Warbler, Skylark, Song Thrush, Swift, Woodpigeon and Wren.

Five RSPB Red listed species were recorded, Bullfinch, Linnet, Reed Bunting, Song Thrush and Skylark. The RSPB Amber listed species Dunnock was also identified. Cetti's Warbler is also afforded further protection as listed within Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).

Breeding Bird Survey Visit 1 – 5th May 2007		
Cloud cover: 0-33% Rain: None Wind: Light Visibility: Good		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Number
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	7
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	1
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	2
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone corone</i>	5
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	2
Chiff Chaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	2
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	2
Garden warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	2
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	6
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis Chloris</i>	9
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	5
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	1
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	2
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	5
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	2
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	9
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba oenas</i>	2
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	7

Breeding Bird Survey Visit 2 – 2nd June 2007		
Cloud cover: 0-33% Rain: None Wind: None Visibility: Good		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Number
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	11
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	4
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone corone</i>	4
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	1
Chiff Chaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	3
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	1
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	1
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	1
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis Chloris</i>	12
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	5
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	2
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	1
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	2
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	2
Sedge warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	2
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	2
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba oenas</i>	3
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	11

Implications and Conclusions.

Wintering Wetland Bird Survey

With regards to wintering birds the actual flying site was utilised by a low number of species which were recorded in low numbers, the areas adjacent to the flying site were utilised by a higher number of species including the additional species of Shelduck and Lesser Black-backed Gull.

Due to the relatively low numbers of species recorded within the flying site and wider area, providing flying is restricted to the flying area, it was not anticipated that model flying would cause an adverse disturbance to the wintering wetland bird population and any disturbance by flying model aircraft would be limited to relatively common species such as Coot and Mallard, which are considered to be more tolerable to such activities.

Breeding Bird Survey

Within the flying site the species identified were predominantly “ passerines” associated with the field edge habitats or areas of scrubland, all breeding territories were located within the edge and scrub habitats, species occurring within the mown central area of the flying field were recorded in flight or were species associated with open grassland. Within these habitats these species are relatively tolerant of disturbance and it was considered that model flying would not cause an adverse impact to these species.

Skylark were recorded breeding within the northern extent of the flying site, it was considered that their hovering display flights could be susceptible to disturbance however the continuation of mowing associated with the takeoff and landing area would discourage the species from nesting below the actual flying site which is the area most affected by any disturbance.

Mallard and Magpies were identified and as higher flying species could be more susceptible to disturbance from flying models, however due to their common status, high toleration of human activity and use of water features or dense vegetation for nesting it was anticipated that any impact would not be significant.