



**Breeding Bird Survey
on land south of Alma Street, Llanarth, Ceredigion**

May 2017

*******DRAFT REPORT, NOT FOR SUBMISSION*******

Client: Mr A Evans
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DRAFT

1. Introduction

Matt Sutton Ecology carried out a Preliminary Ecological Assessment in support of an application to Ceredigion County Council for housing development on land adjoining Alma Street, Llanarth, Ceredigion. This is centred on grid reference SN 42385 57438 (see figure 1 below).

Ceredigion County Council subsequently requested a breeding bird survey of the site, believing that birds could be nesting in the marshy grassland on the site.



Figure 1. Proposed Development Site at Llanarth with field numbers used

2. Survey Methodology

Two visits were made to the site, both starting around dawn and carrying on for at least 2 hours. A slow walk was made around the site, with frequent stops to observe bird activity.

The survey area was visited on 23rd May 2016 and 8th June by Matt Sutton. Both days were dry and calm, and surveys were conducted from first light for at least two hours. During this time, all field boundaries within the survey area were walked, and frequent stops were made to observe bird activity.

For territorial and semi-colonial species, the method used in this survey was based on a territory mapping technique, similar to that used in the British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) Common Bird Census (CBC) (Marchant 1983; Bibby et al, 1992). However, the paucity of birds using the site meant that only two visits were made, instead of the five survey visits required to collect the spatial data necessary for plotting territory boundaries.

Instead, approximate point locations of probable breeding birds, representing potential territories, were mapped. These were represented by singing birds, birds carrying food, or visiting nests.

Following the final visit, the records of birds made were collated to determine the approximate location and numbers of breeding pairs for each species. Maps were then produced to display the approximate centre of territories for bird species across the site. Non-breeding species observed within the survey area were not mapped.

3. Results

Only 3 species were found breeding within the survey area during the two visits (see table below). A further 17 species were breeding or holding territory in wooded areas directly adjoining the site.

A single species of conservation concern – stock dove - was found to be breeding on the site. This species is Amber listed in Eaton et al (2015).

Minimum counts for the survey area have been based on the highest number of singing birds recorded during any single visit. Species noted outside the proposed development site in adjoining woodland have been included in italics – no attempts have been made to record numbers of territories.

Locations of territories are mapped in Appendix 1 below.



The hole in this mature ash tree was used by stock dove, an amber listed species

Species	Status within survey area	Number of Probable Territories	Welsh Conservation Status ¹	Uk Conservation Status ²
Robin	Breeding	3		
Stock Dove	Probable Breeding	1	Green	Amber
Blue Tit	Breeding	1		
<i>Red Kite</i>	<i>Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	1	<i>Amber</i>	
<i>Raven</i>	<i>Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	1		
<i>Chiffchaff</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>		
<i>Collared Dove</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining gardens</i>	<i>n/a</i>		
<i>Wood Pigeon</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>		
<i>Jackdaw</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Amber</i>	

<i>Jay</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>		
<i>Great Spotted Woodpecker</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>		
<i>Great Tit</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>		
<i>Goldcrest</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Amber</i>	
<i>House Sparrow</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining gardens</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Amber</i>	<i>Red</i>
<i>Chaffinch</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>		
<i>Bullfinch</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Amber</i>
<i>Lesser Redpoll</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Red</i>
<i>Long-tailed Tit</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Amber</i>	
<i>Song Thrush</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Amber</i>	<i>Red</i>
<i>Treecreeper</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>		
<i>Wren</i>	<i>Probable Breeding in Adjoining woodland</i>	<i>n/a</i>		

¹The Population Status of Birds in Wales (2009) RSPB

²Eaton et al (2015) Birds of Conservation Concern 4. British Birds.

4. Conservation Assessment

The only confirmed breeding birds on site were two common birds, robin and blue tit. A single stock dove appeared to be associated with a hole in a mature ash tree, where it was presumed that a second bird was incubating eggs. This is a widespread bird of woodland edge and parkland; amber-listed as a result of the significance of the UK population within Europe, but removed from the amber list in Wales as a result of the increasing population.

All breeding birds on the site were associated with trees on or near the boundaries; no ground nesting birds were present, and no birds were associated with the marshy grassland.

Red kite was described by Ceredigion County Council as breeding on site. The present survey located a nest in an alder tree in the wooded dingle outside of the survey area. A raven nest was present in a conifer tree a short distance to the south-east. Given the proximity of these nests to existing housing, they may be able to tolerate the development. If they are displaced by disturbance, there are other mature trees further to the south-east that they could utilise instead.

5. Recommendations

Stock dove was the only species of conservation concern breeding within the site. The mature ash tree where it was found should be retained, along with the accompanying oak trees (one of which supported a bat roost, described in a separate bat survey report). A buffer zone between these trees and the proposed development should be created, and this would make a suitable location for a reptile mitigation area as well. An additional measure to support breeding stock doves in the area would be the erection of specifically designed stock dove nest boxes on suitable trees in surrounding farmland.

Although few birds were using the site, clearance of any woody vegetation should take place outside of the bird breeding season (March – September) to avoid possible unintentional damage to nests.

The woodland area in the dingle alongside the site should be excluded from any development. Trees here should be retained, in particular the alder tree which currently supports a red kite nest.

6. Summary and Conclusions

Only three species were found nesting on the site. The single bird of conservation concern – stock dove - would not suffer significant impacts at the population level. However, the mature tree where it nests should be retained, and accommodated within an 'ecological buffer zone' also protecting a bat tree roost and displaced reptiles.

7. References

Eaton, M. et al (1995) Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British Birds 108.

Appendix 1: Map of Bird Nests / Territories on or adjacent to the Site

