
Environmental Statement

Appendix 8.7: Breeding Bird Survey

Land at Lower Berse Farm, Wrexham

On behalf of Redrow Homes Ltd

July 2024





RUTHIN ROAD

WREXHAM

APPENDIX 8.7 - BREEDING BIRD SURVEY TECHNICAL REPORT TECHNICAL REPORT

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1.0	Dec 21	AW	MW	Report Issued	Superseded
2.0	Dec 22	DL	AP	Introduction updated following client's comments	Superseded
3.0	05/06/23	AP	PB	Updated housing numbers	Superseded
4.0	10/08/23	AP	PB	Change of housing numbers	Final

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G8745.013 Breeding Bird Survey Visit 1 – 19.04.2021
G8745.014 Breeding Bird Survey Visit 2 – 19.05.2021
G8745.015 Breeding Bird Survey Visit 3 – 17.06.2021

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) were commissioned, by Redrow Homes in April 2021, to complete breeding bird surveys on land known as Ruthin Road in Wrexham (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.2 This assessment is required to inform planning applications for the development for up to 1,520 homes, a primary school, local centre and potential WWTW.
- 1.3 The Site consists of mainly arable farmland and improved grassland bordered by native species rich, intact hedgerows. Within the Site there are small pockets of dense semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, continuous scrub and hardstanding/buildings. A wet ditch runs within the northern section and there is one pond within the Site.
- 1.4 The approximate National Grid References (NGR) of the Site is SJ 31500 49800.
- 1.5 Drawings G8745.013, G8745.014 & G8745.015 illustrate the Site boundary as well as the results of each survey visit.

2.0 Method

Desk Study

- 2.1 A desk study was undertaken to assess the presence of any protected or notable bird species recorded within a 2km radius of the Site (central grid reference SJ 31500 49800).
- 2.2 Data relating to records of notable bird species occurring within 2km of the Site were requested from the Local Environmental Records Centre for North Wales (Cofnod).
- 2.3 Bird species classed as notable are those listed on any of the following:
 - Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA1);
 - Species of principal importance under Section 7 of the Environment Wales Act 2016 (S7);
 - Red and Amber listed Bird of Conservation Concern (BoCC) in Wales (Bam/ BRd – Wales) (RSPB, 2016);
 - Red and Amber listed Bird of Conservation Concern (BoCC) species (Stanbury et al. 2021) (BRd/ BAm); and
 - Bird species listed on the Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) for Wrexham County Borough Council¹
- 2.4 Additionally, the locations of any statutory and non- statutory designated wildlife sites within 2km of the Site that have designations for breeding birds were requested from Cofnod and the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) record centres respectively.

Breeding Bird Surveys

- 2.5 Breeding bird surveys were undertaken applying methods based on the standard breeding bird survey and common bird census methods developed by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) (Gilbert et al. 1998).
- 2.6 Visits were carried out in the morning period, starting at least half an hour after dawn. Three evenly spaced survey visits were carried out between April and June 2021.
- 2.7 Bird species and activity patterns were recorded and mapped using standard BTO symbology.
- 2.8 Bird species within the 100m surrounding the Site boundary were also recorded during the survey, as a proportion of the bird's foraging or nesting habitat is likely to be within the Site.

¹ [ARCHIVED CONTENT] Wrexham Biodiversity Action Plan (nationalarchives.gov.uk) Accessed on 19/11/2021

3.0 Results

Desk Study

- 3.1 There are historical records of 55 notable bird species that have been recorded within 2km of the site. The birds identified within these records are included in Table 1.
- 3.2 Of the thirteen WCA1 species recorded within 2km of the site, quail, barn owl and hobby are the most likely species to breed in habitat within the Site or the 100m buffer. The other WCA1 species (see Table 1) are unlikely to breed on the Site due to the lack of suitable nesting habitat or the Site being situated outside of the geographic breeding range for this species.

Table 1: Notable bird species within 2km of the Site

Name of Species	Legislation	Number of Records Returned	Closest Record to Site
Barn Owl	WCA1, LBAP	17	300m northwest
Black-headed Gull	S7, BAm, BRd (Wales)	24	430m southeast
Brambling	WCA1	5	430m southeast
Bullfinch	S7, BAm, BRd (Wales)	20	0m (on site)
Common Crossbill	WCA1	1	1.77km southwest
Common Gull	BAm	10	0m (on site)
Cuckoo	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	3	480m southwest
Dipper	BAm, BAm (Wales)	19	0m (on site)
Dunlin	BRd, BRd (Wales)	1	1.42km southeast
Dunnock	S7, BAm	35	0m (on site)
Fieldfare	WCA1, BRd, BAm (Wales)	14	0m (on site)
Gadwall	BAm, BAm (Wales)	1	1.81km southeast
Grasshopper Warbler	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	1	480m southwest

Name of Species	Legislation	Number of Records Returned	Closest Record to Site
Hawfinch	S7, BRd, BAm (Wales)	2	1.65km southwest
Herring Gull	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	23	0m (on site)
Hobby	WCA1	8	1.32km southwest
House Martin	BRd	21	0m (on site)
House Sparrow	S7, BRd, BAm (Wales)	27	0m (on site)
Kestrel	S7, BAm, BRd (Wales)	23	0m (on site)
Kingfisher	WCA1, BAm (Wales)	9	760m east
Lapwing	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	14	0m (on site)
Lesser Black-backed Gull	BAm, BAm (Wales)	18	0m (on site)
Lesser Redpoll	S7, BRd, BAm (Wales)	5	760m east
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	6	480m southwest
Linnet	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	7	850m southwest
Mallard	BAm, BAm (Wales)	17	430m southeast
Marsh Tit	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	7	430m southeast
Meadow Pipit	BAm, BAm (Wales)	9	0m (on site)
Mediterranean Gull	WCA1, BAm	1	1.81km southeast
Osprey	WCA1, BAm, BAm (Wales)	1	1.42km southeast

Name of Species	Legislation	Number of Records Returned	Closest Record to Site
Peregrine	WCA1	11	760m east
Pied Flycatcher	S7, BAm, BRd (Wales)	3	1.42km southeast
Pochard	BRd, BRd (Wales)	1	1.81km southeast
Quail	WCA1, BAm, BAm (Wales)	1	1.42km southeast
Red Kite	WCA1, BAm (Wales)	5	1.30km northwest
Redstart	WCA1, BAm	1	760m east
Redwing	WCA1, BAm, BAm (Wales)	22	430m southeast
Reed Bunting	S7, BAm, BAm (Wales)	10	850m southwest
Shoveler	BAm, BAm (Wales)	3	1.20km southeast
Skylark	S7, BRd, BAm (Wales)	3	850m southwest
Snipe	BAm, BAm (Wales)	4	1.42km southeast
Song Thrush	S7, BAm, BAm (Wales), LBAP	25	0m (on site)
Spotted Flycatcher	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	8	1.20km southeast
Starling	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	22	0m (on site)
Swift	BRd, BAm (Wales)	35	0m (on site)
Teal	BAm, BAm (Wales)	2	1.20km southeast
Tree Sparrow	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	3	1.77km southwest

Name of Species	Legislation	Number of Records Returned	Closest Record to Site
Wigeon	BAm, BAm (Wales)	1	1.81km southeast
Willow Tit	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	5	430m southeast
Willow Warbler	BAm, BRd (Wales)	15	300m northwest
Woodcock	BRd, BRd (Wales)	5	40m west
Yellowhammer	S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	8	480m southwest

Status Key: WCA1 = Schedule 1, S7 = Section 7; BRd = BoCC Red List; BAm = BoCC Amber List; LBAP = Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

- 3.3 The data searches informed of no statutory or non- statutory designated wildlife sites within 2km of the Site that have designations for breeding birds.

Breeding Bird Survey

- 3.4 Details of the Breeding bird survey effort are presented in Table 2, the results of the Breeding Bird surveys are presented in Table 3.

Table 2. 2021 Breeding bird survey effort details

Dates	Visit 1 - 19/04/21 Visit 2 - 19/05/21 Visit 3 - 17/06/21
Surveyors	Visit 1 - Mike Walker Visit 2 - John Crowder Visit 3 - Richard Castell
Weather	Visit 1 - Dry and clear skies with a light south easterly breeze. Visit 2 - Dry with partial cloud and a light westerly breeze. Visit 3 - Dry and overcast with a gentle north westerly breeze.
Seasonal Constraints	The survey was undertaken during the optimum breeding bird survey period. There are no constraints associated with the survey.
Drawing References	G8745.013 Breeding Bird Survey Visit 1 G8745.014 Breeding Bird Survey Visit 2 G8745.015 Breeding Bird Survey Visit 3
Survey Periods	Visit 1 - 06:45 to 10:15 hrs Visit 2 - 07:10 to 10:45 hrs Visit 3 - 05:30 to 09:00 hrs

Table 3. Counts of bird species recorded during the 2021 breeding bird survey, including conservation and likely breeding status.

Species	Visit 1		Visit 2		Visit 3		Status	Likely Breeding Status (No. of pairs)	
	S	SBU	S	SBU	S	SBU		S	SBU
Blackbird	22	29	8	9	12	15		Pr (5)	Pr (5)
Blackcap	6	7	1	1	5	5		Pr (4)	Pr (4)
Blue Tit	20	24	3	4	8	8		C (1) Pr (4)	C (1) Pr (6)
Bullfinch				1	3	3	S7, BAm, BRd (Wales)	Pr (1)	Pr (1)
Buzzard	1	2			2	3		N	N
Carrion crow	7	10	1	1	4	4		Pr (1)	Pr (1)
Chaffinch	5	5	2	2	5	6		Pr (5)	Pr (5)
Chiffchaff	8	10	13	14	9	9		Pr (5)	Pr (6)
Coal tit	2	2	1	1				Pr (1)	Pr (1)
Dunnock	25	31	2	2	11	11	S7, BAm	C (2), Pr (4)	C (2), Pr (5)
Goldcrest	1	1				1	BAm (Wales)	Po	Po
Goldfinch	7	10	2	2	1	4		Pr (1)	Pr (1)
Great spotted woodpecker	1	2						Po	Po
Great tit	17	22	1	1	3	3		Pr (2)	Pr (3)
Greenfinch						3	BRd, BAm (Wales)	Po	Pr (1)
Heron	1	1					BAm (Wales)	N	N
Herring gull			1	1			S7, BRd, BRd (Wales)	N	N
Hobby					1	1	WCA1	Po	Po
House sparrow	11	19	1	1	25	27	S7, BRd, BAm (Wales)	Pr (2 Colonies)	Pr (3 colonies)
Jackdaw	1	7	1	1	3	3		Pr (1)	Pr (1)

Species	Visit 1		Visit 2		Visit 3		Status	Likely Breeding Status (No. of pairs)	
	S	SBU	S	SBU	S	SBU		S	SBU
Lesser black-backed gull	1	1					BAm, BAm (Wales)	N	N
Long-tailed tit	3	3			2	2		Pr (1)	Pr (1)
Magpie	3	4	2	2	2	2		Pr (1)	Pr (1)
Mallard			1	1	2	2	BAm, BAm (Wales)	N	N
Mistle thrush		2			1	2	BRd, BAm (Wales)	N	Pr (1)
Moorhen	1	2					BAm	N	Po
Pheasant	1	1	1	1	1	2		Po	Po
Pied wagtail	1	1	2	2				Pr (1)	Pr (1)
Robin	22	25	5	6	4	6		Pr (5)	C (1), Pr (7)
Rook			9	9			BAm	N	N
Song thrush			2	2	5	5	S7, BAm, BAm (Wales), LBAP	Pr (2)	Pr (3)
Stock dove					1	1	BAm	N	N
Swallow					13	13		Po	Po
Whitethroat	1	2	2	2	2	2	BAm	Pr (2)	Pr (2)
Willow warbler	3	3					BAm, BAm (Wales)	Po	Po
Woodpigeon	25	83	14	15	20	27	BAm	Pr (1)	Pr (2)
Wren	19	21	14	15	17	21	BAm	Pr (15)	Pr (17)
Total Species	27	28	23	24	26	28			

S: Site; SBU: Site including 100m buffer

Status Key: WCA1 = Schedule 1, S7 = Section 7; BRd = BoCC Red List; BAm = BoCC Amber List; LBAP = Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Likely Breeding Status Key: C = Confirmed, Pr = probable breeding within site, Po = possible breeding within Site, N = not breeding within Site.

Results Summary

Desk Study

- 3.5 The results of the data search returned records of 55 notable species that have been recorded within 2km of the Site. Eight of these species; bullfinch, dunnock, herring gull, hobby, house sparrow, lesser black-backed gull, song thrush and willow warbler were recorded at the Site and/or 100m survey buffer during the 2021 breeding bird survey.

Breeding Bird Survey

- 3.6 A total of 37 bird species were recorded within the Site boundary and 100m survey buffer during the 2021 breeding bird survey. Thirty-six of these species were recorded at least once within the Site itself.
- 3.7 Two bird species were confirmed as nesting within the Site, namely blue tit and notable species dunnock. Additionally, robin was confirmed as nesting within the 100m survey buffer.
- 3.8 Twenty bird species were assessed as probable breeding species within the Site and 100m survey buffer. Of these, notable species house sparrow, song thrush, whitethroat, woodpigeon and wren likely nested within the Site and bullfinch, greenfinch and mistle thrush likely nested in the 100m survey buffer.

4.0 Discussion and Recommendations

Evaluation of Site Value for Breeding Birds

- 4.1 The 37 bird species recorded within the Site boundary and 100m survey buffer represent a moderate species diversity with many of the species recorded being commonplace and widespread.
- 4.2 Fuller (1980) devised a method of classifying the ornithological interest of sites for conservation based on three site attributes: population size, rarity and diversity.
- 4.3 No significant breeding bird concentrations (i.e. 1% or more of the national breeding population) were recorded during the survey.
- 4.4 The total number of confirmed, probable and possible breeding bird species recorded within a site also indicates its significance. Table 4 includes the breeding diversity criteria devised by Fuller.

Table 4: Significance of the total number of breeding species recorded at a site

Local	County	Regional	National
25-49	50-69	70-84	85+

- 4.5 Based on the Fuller assessment criteria alone, the 30 confirmed, probable and possible breeding bird species recorded within the site and 100m survey buffer and 27 species recorded in the Site itself indicates it is of local significance for breeding birds.
- 4.6 A moderate number of BoCC (18 species) were recorded on the survey, with most BoCC species recorded at low abundances.
- 4.7 An all-encompassing assessment of the value of the Site must be based on all of the following factors (Table 5). It is concluded that the Site is of below local significance for breeding birds.

Table 5: Assessment of the value of the site for breeding birds

Evaluation Factor	Result
Result of the Fuller species richness assessment	27 species - of local importance.
Proportion of birds that were only possible breeders	7 out of 30 species were only possible breeders.
The extent and quality of nesting habitat	Site dominated by arable farmland and improved grassland, limited cover and habitat complexity.

Evaluation Factor	Result
Range of BoCC species recorded	Eighteen BoCC species recorded within the Site.
Abundance of BoCC species	The abundance of each BoCC species was generally low.

Individual Species Assessment

- 4.8 Dunnock were confirmed breeders with one pair in the central region of the Site and one pair in the north east of the Site. It was judged that both pairs likely used the hedgerows to nest in. In addition it was estimated that a further five pairs of dunnock probably breed within the Site and 100m buffer. Any removal of scrub and species-poor hedgerow may displace this species. Sufficient hedgerow planting and habitat retention should be planned to avoid any loss of current habitat features.
- 4.9 Moderate numbers of house sparrows were repeatedly seen at the two locations within the Site, namely the buildings around Lower Burse Farm and the hedgerows and buildings at the north east of the Site boundary. House sparrow were also repeatedly seen using the buildings around Bersham Hall in the southern region of the 100m buffer. Any demolition of the buildings or hedgerows would directly impact the breeding opportunities of this species and they are likely to disperse to suitable habitat in the surrounding area. All the house sparrow colonies may be using the Site for foraging so the impact of the loss of potential foraging habitat should be considered.
- 4.10 Woodpigeon were considered to be a probable breeding species within the Site and 100m buffer. This species may nest in trees, shrubs and dense hedgerows and require open habitats close by to forage. Retention of trees and hedgerows should be implemented to provide nesting habitat for woodpigeon.
- 4.11 Wren were considered probable breeders with 17 pairs of wren estimated to be breeding within the Site and 100m buffer. It is expected that this species would nest within the hedgerows located around the Site. Any removal of the hedgerows may displace this species. Sufficient hedgerow planting and habitat retention should be planned to avoid any loss of current habitat features.
- 4.12 Whitethroat were judged to be probable breeders with two pairs estimated to be breeding within the Site. Both pairs were likely to have bred close to the building in the northern section of the Site close to Lower Berse Farm. This species typically breeds in dense scrub and removal of this habitat type would result in the displacement of this species from the Site.
- 4.13 Song thrush were judged to be a probable breeding species within the Site. Three pairs were judged to have bred in habitat around the south eastern Site boundary. This species may nest in trees, shrubs and dense hedgerows and requires open habitats close by to forage. Retention of woodland and planting of species rich hedgerows should help to retain nesting habitat for song thrush.

- 4.14 Mistle thrush were judged to be a probable breeding species within the 100m buffer. One pair was judged to have bred in habitat outside of the eastern Site boundary. This species may nest in trees and dense hedgerows and requires open habitats close by to forage. Retention of woodland and planting of species rich hedgerows should help to retain nesting habitat for mistle thrush.
- 4.15 There was one record of a willow warbler and one record of a bullfinch within the strip of broad-leaved woodland located in the south west region of the Site. This woodland also held territories of more common species including chiffchaff and robin. Retaining woodland within the Site boundary is important to maintain the bird diversity of the Site.
- 4.16 Retention of the few habitat features on Site is important to maintain the observed bird diversity. The broadleaved woodland should be retained, as well as the double hedgerow (green lane) that runs through the centre of the site and any other mature trees and hedgerow where possible. Habitat features such as the pond, scrub and any wet ditches should be protected to maintain habitat complexity and connectivity.
- 4.17 Any hedgerow lost to development should be replaced with species rich native hedgerow. Lost scrub and vegetation should be replaced using a range of native species creating a varied structure to suit a wide range of breeding bird species. Fruiting tree and shrub species that are attractive to insects will also provide additional foraging resources for numerous bird species. Some open grassland habitat should also be retained within the plans to provide foraging habitat for ground nesting and foraging birds.
- 4.18 An extensive nest box scheme should be included in the development proposals. This should include a range of nest box types suitable for bird species using land within the Site and the wider area including house sparrow.
- 4.19 An individual hobby was observed during survey visit three on 17th June 2021, carrying food within the south eastern part of the Site. There was no other evidence to suggest this species nested within the site or 100m survey buffer during the 2021 breeding season, although suitable nesting habitat for hobby is present within the Site and 100m survey buffer.
- 4.20 Hobby is listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it a criminal offence to disturb this species while nesting, including the dependant young once they have left the nest. The species breeding season is typically May to August inclusive, but this can extend to mid-October for the dispersal of fledged young. Hobby nest within existing former nests of other species (typically carrion crow nests). They will nest within both urban and suburban habitats, using single trees, clumps of trees, lines of trees and small woodlands within 300m of an open space.

- 4.21 Prior to any works being undertaken during the hobby breeding season, a walkover survey should be carried out by an experienced ornithologist to determine if hobby are nesting at the site. If no nests are identified by mid-June it can be assumed that nesting has not taken place at the site. If hobby nesting is noted at the site, any works within the vicinity will be subject to an ornithological watching brief to monitor breeding success and confirm that the hobby nest has not been disturbed because of the works. It will also be necessary to implement a buffer zone between the nest and the works, the buffer distance will be at least 100m but will be more if the works being undertaken have the potential to cause greater disturbance (e.g. piling). An experienced ornithologist will confirm the buffer distance and decide if visual and/or acoustic screening would need to be deployed to further minimise disturbance.
- 4.22 All wild birds and their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is recommended that all tree, vegetation and built structure clearance across Site avoids the core breeding bird season, March to August inclusive; although bird nesting can take place outside this period. If clearance works are necessary during the core breeding bird season, or at any time when bird nesting is suspected, a nesting bird check of the affected area by an ecologist is required immediately prior to the clearance works taking place. Extensive clearance of potential bird nesting habitat is not always practical and development programmes should take this constraint into account.

References

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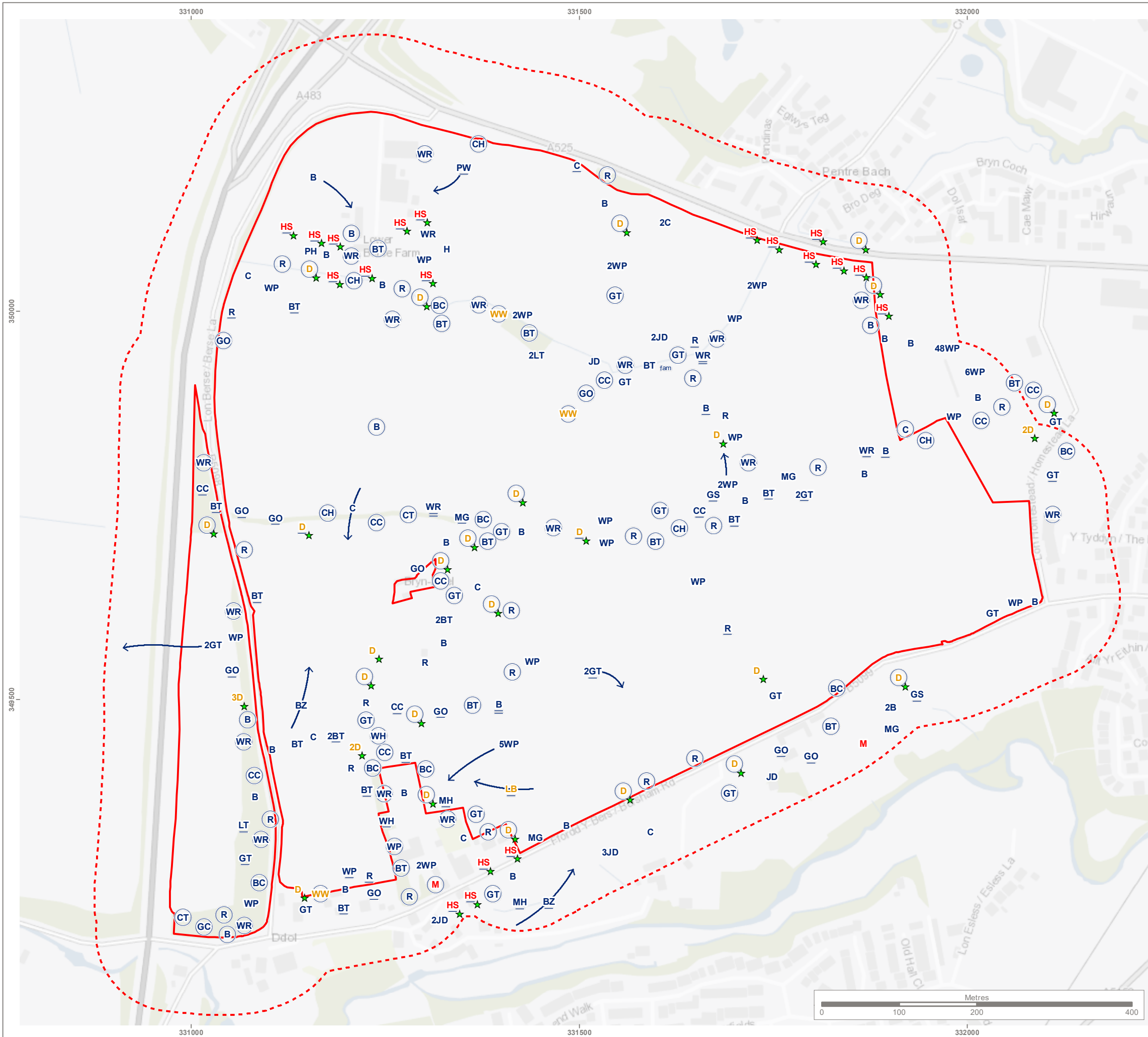
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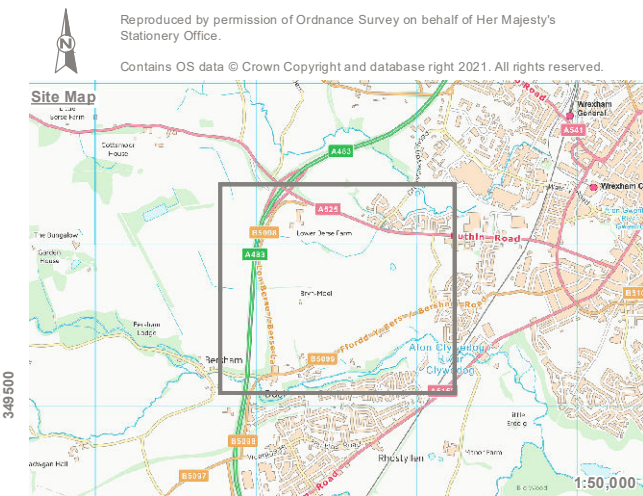
DRAWINGS

G8745.013 Breeding Bird Survey Visit 1 – 19.04.2021
G8745.014 Breeding Bird Survey Visit 2 – 19.05.2021
G8745.015 Breeding Bird Survey Visit 3 – 17.06.2021



- KEY**
- Site boundary
 - Site boundary 100m offset
 - Section 41 species
 - A bird repeatedly giving alarm-calls/other vocalisations
 - A bird calling
 - A bird in song
 - Family group of birds
 - Directional flight line
- Species Codes**
- | | | | |
|----|--------------|----|--------------------------|
| B | Blackbird | D | Dunnock |
| BC | Blackcap | GC | Goldcrest |
| BT | Blue tit | GO | Goldfinch |
| BZ | Buzzard | GS | Great spotted woodpecker |
| C | Carrion crow | GT | Great tit |
| CC | Chiffchaff | H | Grey heron |
| CH | Chaffinch | HS | House sparrow |
| CT | Coal tit | JD | Jackdaw |
| | | LB | Lesser black-backed gull |
| | | LT | Long-tailed tit |
| | | M | Mistle thrush |
| | | MG | Magpie |
| | | MH | Moorhen |
| | | PH | Pheasant |
| | | PW | Pied wagtail |
| | | R | Robin |
| | | WH | Whitethroat |
| | | WP | Woodpigeon |
| | | WR | Wren |
| | | WW | Willow warbler |

Note
Red Red List Species **Amber** Amber List Species



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

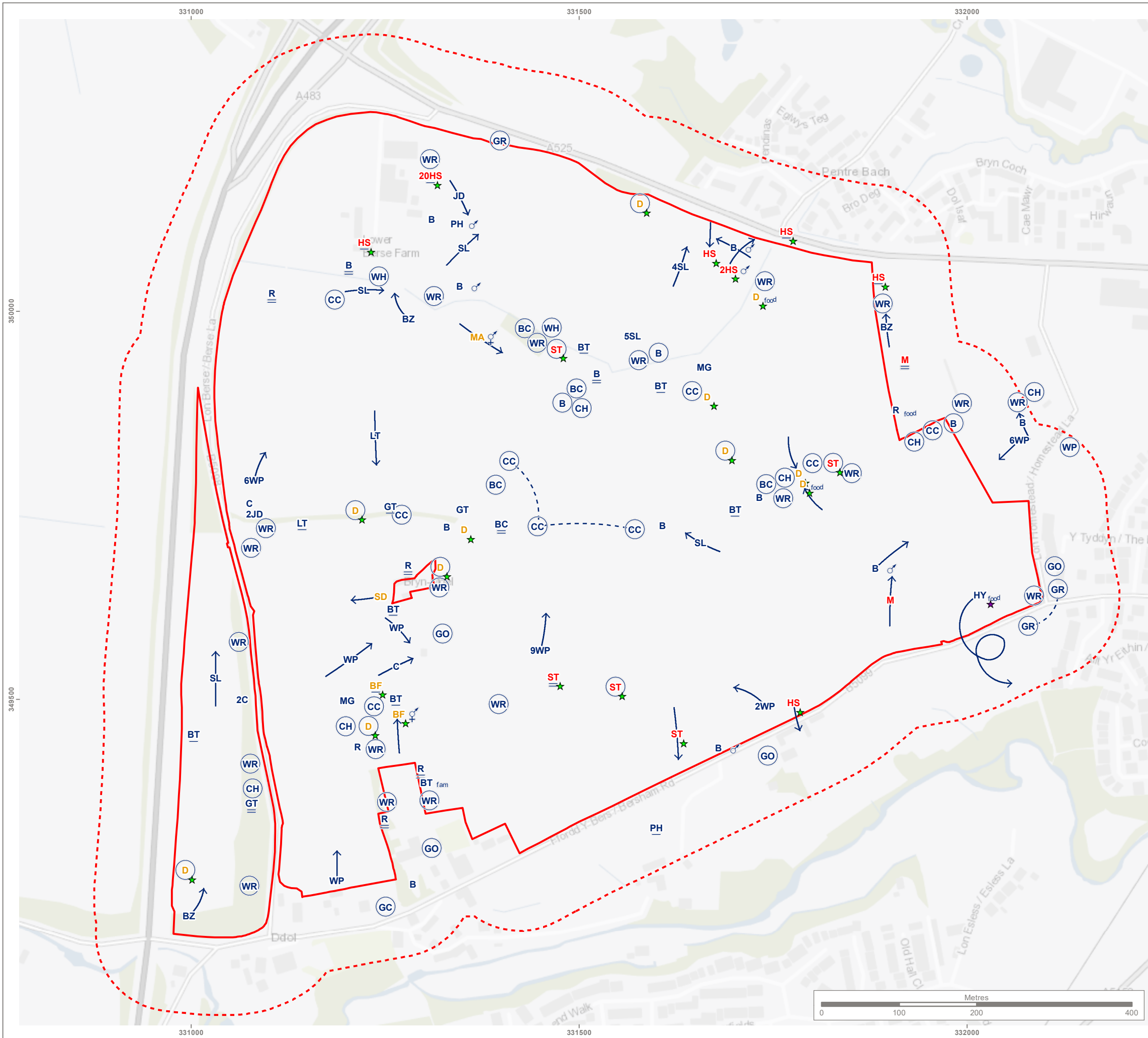
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Project
Ruthin Road, Wrexham

Title
Breeding Bird Survey - Visit 1
19th April 2021

Drawing Number
G8745.013

Drawn MK	Checked SA	Approved LJ	Scale 1:4,900 @ A3	Date 23/12/2021
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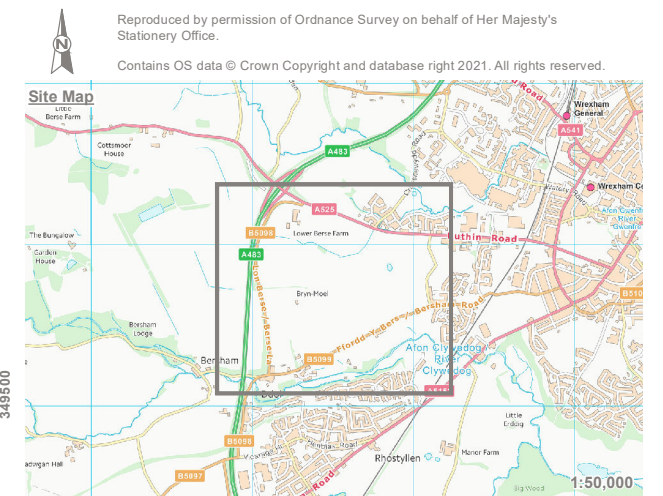


KEY

- Site boundary
 - Site boundary 100m offset
 - Section 41 species
 - Schedule 1 species
 - A bird repeatedly giving alarm-calls/other vocalisations
 - A bird calling
 - A bird carrying food
 - A bird in song
 - A male
 - Family group of birds
 - Male and female pair
 - Directional flight line
 - Simultaneous registration (different birds)
- Species Codes**
- | | | | |
|----|-----------|----|-----------------|
| B | Blackbird | C | Carrion crow |
| BC | Blackcap | CC | Chiffchaff |
| BF | Bullfinch | CH | Chaffinch |
| BT | Blue tit | D | Duncock |
| BZ | Buzzard | GC | Goldcrest |
| | | GO | Goldfinch |
| | | GR | Greenfinch |
| | | GT | Great tit |
| | | HS | House sparrow |
| | | HY | Hobby |
| | | JD | Jackdaw |
| | | LT | Long-tailed tit |
| | | M | Mistle thrush |
| | | MA | Mallard |
| | | MG | Magpie |
| | | PH | Pheasant |
| | | R | Robin |
| | | SD | Stock dove |
| | | SL | Swallow |
| | | ST | Song thrush |
| | | WH | Whitethroat |
| | | WP | Woodpigeon |
| | | WR | Wren |

Note

Red Red List Species **Amber** Amber List Species



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

TEP | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

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Title
Breeding Bird Survey - Visit 3
17th June 2021

Drawing Number
G8745.015

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SA	MK	LJ	1:4,900 @ A3	12/11/2021



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