

Welsh Government

M4 Corridor around Newport

August 2017 Environmental Statement
Supplement
Appendix ESS5 2.6

**2017 Breeding Season Ornithological
Survey: Newport Docks**

M4CaN-DJV-EBD-ZG_GEN-AX-EN-0059

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Summary

- S.1** RPS was instructed to undertake an ornithological survey of land within the Newport Docks that is proposed as a relocation site for commercial buildings located elsewhere within the docks that would be affected by the M4CaN Scheme.
- S.2** A single visit to the survey area was made during the 2017 bird breeding season. A walkover survey was carried out on 25th July 2017. The timing of this visit meant that confirming territory numbers was generally not possible, but the survey visit enabled the key species present to be identified, and also verify whether species identified during a breeding bird survey programme in 2015 were still using the site.
- S.3** Three species named in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were recorded; little ringed plover, green sandpiper and Cetti's warbler. A single record of each species was made. In addition, seven species of Principal Importance (Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016) were recorded. These were lapwing, herring gull, song thrush, dunnoek, bullfinch, linnet and reed bunting. A range of other bird species were also noted.
- S.4** Three species named in citations for the Severn Estuary Special Protected Area (SPA) or Ramsar site (redshank, herring gull and lesser black-backed gull) were recorded during breeding bird surveys. Redshank were not recorded on the site, but were observed on an area of salt marsh on the east bank of the River Usk. Herring gull and lesser black-backed gull were recorded on the site.

1 Introduction

1.1 Development Background

1.1.1 The Welsh Government proposes to build a new section of motorway to the south of Newport, Gwent (the M4 Corridor around Newport (M4CaN) Scheme).

1.1.2 RPS were instructed to undertake an ornithological survey of land within the Newport Docks that is proposed as a relocation site for commercial buildings located elsewhere within the docks that would be affected by the M4CaN Scheme.

1.2 Survey Context and Overview

1.2.1 A single visit to record the ornithological interests of the site was carried out on 25th July 2017.

1.3 Survey Team

1.3.1 The surveyors who carried out the site visit were Alan Bull (AB) and Andrew Seth (AS), both of whom are highly experienced and competent field ornithologists.

2 Survey Method

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 The site has recently been the subject of a planning application for a wind turbine, which is now operational; one of two operational wind turbines at the site. The Environmental Assessment for the wind turbine application included a breeding bird survey undertaken by Thomson Ecology (2015). This was consulted to identify the species that were expected to be recorded on site.

2.1.2 In addition, the data search for the wider M4CaN Scheme (Appendix 10.17 of the March 2016 ES) was consulted to inform the location of any designated sites of ornithological importance such as Special Protected Areas (SPAs), Ramsar Sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Field Survey

2.1.3 A single survey visit was undertaken on 25th July 2017. The survey area is shown on Figure 1.

2.1.4 A walkover survey methodology was employed based on the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) methodology as set out in the standard guidance (Gilbert *et al.*, 1998). All locations within the survey area were approached to within approximately 100 metres where practicable.

2.1.5 The survey was conducted between the hours of 08:00 and 11:00. Weather conditions were warm (19°C), fine and dry, with light winds and 1/8 cloud cover, appropriate for this type of survey.

2.1.6 The surveyor(s) walked at a slow pace recording all bird activity. The surveyors also stopped approximately every 100-200 metres to scan for and count the birds present, following the guidelines in Bibby *et al.* (2000).

2.1.7 The location and species of all birds encountered (observed and/or heard) were recorded on field sheets using standard recording nomenclature from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). Additional information was recorded to further inform their breeding status, such as whether or not males were singing, adults were carrying food, or the presence of nests with eggs.

Limitations

2.1.8 The timing of the single visit to the dock (in the 2017 bird breeding season on 25th July 2017) meant that confirming territory numbers was generally not possible, but the survey visit enabled surveyors to identify key species present and verify whether species identified in the Thomson Ecology report (2015) were still using the site.

3 Results

3.1.1 The bird species recorded during the site visit, along with their distribution and behaviour is presented on Figure 1 and Figure 2. Figure 1 contains species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, red or amber listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) species, UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) species and species listed in Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Other species are included on Figure 2.

3.1.2 A summary of the bird species recorded in each survey area during the survey visit, along with details of their conservation status, is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 – Species Recorded at Site During Breeding Bird Survey Visit, 25th July 2017

BTO Code	Species	Annex I EU Birds Directive	Schedule 1 W&CA 1981	BoCC List	UK BAP	Section 7 Environment (Wales) Act 2016	Breeding Status
CA	Cormorant						Non-breeding
BZ	Buzzard						Possible
MH	Moorhen						Confirmed
LP	Little Ringed Plover		X				Probable
L	Lapwing			Red	X	X	Probable
GE	Green Sandpiper		X	Amber			Non-breeding
RK	Redshank			Amber			Non-breeding
LB	Lesser Black-backed Gull			Amber			Confirmed
HG	Herring Gull			Red	X	X	Confirmed
WP	Woodpigeon						Confirmed
CD	Collared Dove						Confirmed
GS	Great Spotted Woodpecker						Confirmed
MG	Magpie						Confirmed
C	Carrion Crow						Confirmed
BT	Blue Tit						Confirmed
GT	Great Tit						Confirmed
SL	Swallow						Non-breeding
CW	Cetti's Warbler		X				Confirmed
CC	Chiffchaff						Non-breeding
BC	Blackcap						Confirmed
WH	Whitethroat						Confirmed
RW	Reed Warbler						Confirmed
WR	Wren						Confirmed
B	Blackbird						Confirmed
ST	Song Thrush			Red	X	X	Confirmed
M	Mistle Thrush			Red			Non-breeding
PW	Pied Wagtail						Confirmed
CH	Chaffinch						Confirmed
BF	Bullfinch			Amber	X	X	Confirmed
LI	Linnet			Red	X	X	Confirmed
RB	Reed Bunting			Amber	X	X	Confirmed

4 Conclusion

- 4.1.1** A range of birds exhibiting behaviour indicating breeding were recorded during the site visit on 25th July 2017.
- 4.1.2** The bird assemblage encountered, and the abundance of the species recorded is considered to be fairly typical for the habitats present, and largely reflect the information collected by Thomson Ecology (2015).
- 4.1.3** Of the 31 bird species encountered, none are listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive. Three species named on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were recorded; little ringed plover, Cetti's warbler and green sandpiper. The little ringed plover record was a single juvenile bird, which could be the product of a successful breeding attempt at the site, or an early passage bird. Given Thomson Ecology (2015) recorded this species at the site as a probable breeder, it is assumed that a breeding attempt occurred at the site. Cetti's warbler was only heard on this visit to the survey area, but the presence of suitable habitat, and the fact that three territories were confirmed by Thomson Ecology (2015) means that it is assumed that breeding occurred during the 2017 season. Green sandpiper is a bird associated with passage or wintering periods in the UK; this, combined with the lack of breeding behaviour, and its absence during 2015 surveys has led to this record being classified as non-breeding.
- 4.1.4** The only species recorded that is named in the Severn Estuary SPA and Ramsar site citations is redshank. A flock of 47 birds was recorded on salt marsh on the eastern bank of the River Usk, in excess of 300 metres from the docks. These observations, coupled with the fact that the species was not detected by Thomson Ecology (2015) have led to redshank being classified as non-breeding. Lapwing, which is named as a component of the Severn Estuary SPA assemblage, was recorded around the pool at the western end of the survey area. Six individuals were recorded. It is assumed that this species breeds on the site; site staff confirmed this.
- 4.1.5** Herring gull was recorded during the survey (10 individuals), and is named on the Severn Estuary Ramsar site citation as a species currently occurring at levels of national importance during the breeding season. A mixture of adult and juvenile birds were present, all in association with existing buildings. Given the timing of the survey visit it is difficult to assess whether they actually bred in this location but it is assumed they did. The same applies to lesser black-backed gull (14 individuals), which is named on the Severn Estuary Ramsar site citation as a species identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration.
- 4.1.6** Several other species that were recorded are on the UKBAP and Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act. Single territories of song thrush, bullfinch and reed bunting were recorded, and it was estimated that four linnet territories were present.

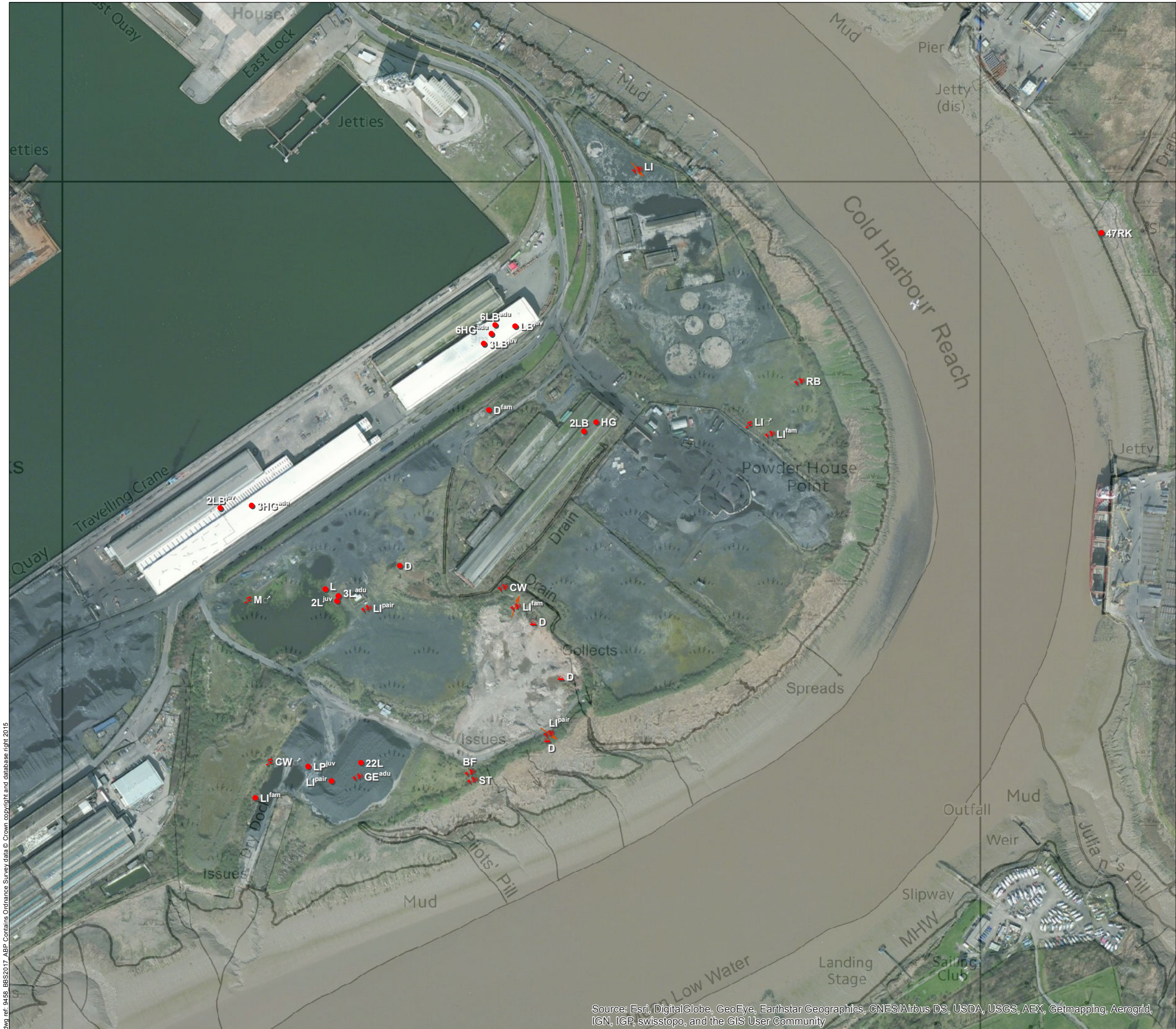
References

Bibby C.J., Burgess N.D., Hill D.A. & Mustoe S.H. (2000) Bird Census Techniques, 2nd Edition. Academic Press, London.

Gilbert G., Gibbons D.W. & Evans, J. (1998) Bird Monitoring Methods: A Manual of Techniques for Key UK Species. RSPB, Sandy.

Thomson Ecology (2015) Breeding Bird and Breeding Wader Surveys, M4 Corridor around Newport. Project Number MRPS 108/003 Figure 1: Survey Locations

Figure 1 – Breeding Bird Survey 25/07/2017 Species of conservation concern (Schedule 1, red/amber list, UK BAP)



Legend

Breeding Bird Survey

Activity

- Registration
- 🔊 Calling
- 🔊 Territorial/Alarm Call
- 🔊 Song
- ➡ Indicative flight path

Bird Species:

- LP Little Ringed Plover
- L Lapwing
- GE Green Sandpiper
- RK Redshank
- LB Lesser Black-backed Gull
- HG Herring Gull
- CW Cetti's Warbler
- ST Song Thrush
- M Mistle Thrush
- D Dunnock
- BF Bullfinch
- LI Linnet
- RB Reed Bunting

Registration record:

- ♂ Male
- ♀ Female
- pair Pair
- juv Juvenile
- adu Adult
- fam Family group

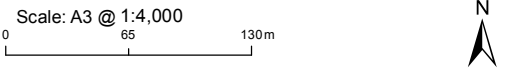


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Breeding Bird Survey 25/07/2017
Species of conservation concern
(Schedule 1, red/amber list, UK BAP or NERC)

Figure: 1	Revision: 1
Date: August 2017	Status: AT ISSUE
Drawn: BF	Checked: AB



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

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dwg ref: 9458_BBS2017_ABP

Figure 2 – Breeding Bird Survey 25/07/2017 Species of least conservation concern



Legend

Breeding Bird Survey

Activity

- Registration
- 📡 Calling
- 🔥 Territorial/Alarm Call
- 🎵 Song
- ➡ Indicative flight path

Bird Species:

- | | |
|----|--------------------------|
| CA | Cormorant |
| BZ | Buzzard |
| MH | Moorhen |
| WP | Woodpigeon |
| CD | Collared Dove |
| GS | Great Spotted Woodpecker |
| MG | Magpie |
| C | Carrion Crow |
| GC | Goldcrest |
| BT | Blue Tit |
| GT | Great Tit |
| SL | Swallow |
| CC | Chiffchaff |
| BC | Blackcap |
| WH | Whitethroat |
| RW | Reed Warbler |
| WR | Wren |
| B | Blackbird |
| R | Robin |
| PW | Pied Wagtail |
| CH | Chaffinch |
| GO | Goldfinch |

Registration record:

- ♂ Male
♀ Female
pair Pair
juv Juvenile
adu Adult
fam Family group



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Breeding Bird Survey 25/07/2017
Species of least conservation
concern

Figure: 2

Revision: 1

Date: August 2017

Status:	AT ISSUE
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Drawn: BF

Checked: AB

Scale: A3 @ 1:4,000



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

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