

## **St Mary's Lands, Warwick - Non-Technical Summary of Study of Ground Nesting Birds and Potential Effects of User Activities, e.g. Model Plane Flying/Dog Walking etc.**

### **BIRD SURVEY RESULT**

A total of 50 bird species with 64 territories were recorded during the 2019/20 bird survey. The site is assessed as being of high value for breeding and nesting bird interest. Specifically related to skylark the bird survey found 8 breeding skylark and 3 breeding meadow pipit were recorded in 2019/20.

### **CONCLUSION**

The report concludes there is a cumulative impact on breeding skylark and meadow pipit at this site. The main causes observed were impact from dogs walkers going through areas of nesting and impact from model plane flying. There may be other activities that affect ground nesting birds and these could be identified during future monitoring.

### **IMPACT**

High impact from dogs getting into sensitive nesting area, which leads to disturbance of nests and potential predation of eggs, young and adult birds

Low/Medium impact from model planes by causing temporary disturbance to skylark display/song flights. The skylarks are generally doing lower display/song flights when planes are flying.

Records of past flying hours show that summer months are usually the busiest flying months and this is also the most sensitive period for ground nesting birds.

The impact from model planes on skylark behaviour affects mainly their ability to perform high song/display flights when planes are in the air.

Disturbance to ground nesting skylark is a cumulative effect and it is tackling each and every effect that will minimise disturbance to nesting and rearing of chicks and therefore provide increased opportunity for these species to succeed and increase in numbers.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### *Flying Area*

Option 1 – Flying area remains in situ and flying hours are adjusted.

Option 2 – Flying area is moved to western side of golf course

#### *Flying times Option 1*

**1<sup>st</sup> April to 15<sup>th</sup> August (Main breeding season and before grass is cut):**

**Every day: 11am until 7pm.**

**16<sup>th</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> March (after grass has been cut):**

**Every day: 10am until 1 hour before sunset.**

#### *Flying times Option 2*

**Every day throughout the year: 10am to sunset. (Precautionary recommendation).**

*Fencing* – It is essential that fencing is strengthened to ensure dogs cannot get through to bird breeding area.

*Dog walking Survey* - evidence based and used as a baseline for further discussions relating to impact/benefits from dog walkers.

*Further Bird Monitoring* – to monitor breeding bird population and its response to activities.

*Communication* - establish effective communication between dog owners and the management team to ensure everyone feels engaged and welcome.

*Signage* – use effective and explanatory signage to encourage involvement and positive behaviour.

*Dog litter* – provide dog litter bins to make dog walkers feel welcome and ensure waste is cleared.

*Creating access* – ensure different types of access route are available.

*Other activities* – careful control of all activities on the site to ensure potential impacts are understood and minimised.