

**St Mary's Lands  
Warwick  
CV34 6HW**

**Bird Report**

**February 2020**

**FINAL**

---

**Produced by**  
*Andrew Waller*  
*Ecology and Land Management*  
**For Plincke on behalf of**  
**Warwick Council**



# **BIRD SURVEY**

## **ST MARY'S LANDS, WARWICK, WARWICKSHIRE**



Commissioned by: **Ecology & Land Management  
for Warwick Council**

Report Number: ASW/ELM/073/23/2020  
February 2020



**ASW Ecology**

Office/Mobile: 07710 150590

London Euston Woburn Place, 16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0BS

E-mail: [andrew@aswecology.co.uk](mailto:andrew@aswecology.co.uk) Website: [www.aswecology.co.uk](http://www.aswecology.co.uk)

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Executive Summary</b>	3
<b>1. Introduction</b>	4
<b>2. Methodology</b>	5
2.1 Bird survey method	5
2.2 Survey constraints	5
<b>3. Bird survey results</b>	6
3.1 Bird survey visits 1-5 – April 2019 to January 2020	6
<b>4. Conclusions</b>	14
4.1 Significance of the bird survey results	14
4.2 Impact assessment	15
4.3 Summary of the legal protection of birds in the UK	16
<b>5. Recommendations</b>	17
5.1 Protection of skylark breeding territories at Lammas Field	17
5.2 Restrictions on model aircraft flying during bird breeding season	17
5.3 Future bird monitoring at St Mary's Lands	18
5.4 Best practice guidance – breeding birds and development works	18
5.5 Ecological enhancement options for birds at St Mary's Lands	19
<b>6. References</b>	21
<b>Appendix 1:</b> Photographs A-I	22
<b>Appendix 2:</b> Map A – Breeding bird territory summary map	31
<b>Appendix 3:</b> Map B – Breeding bird territory summary map	32

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A total of 50 bird species were recorded at St Mary's Lands during the survey period of April 2019 to January 2020. With 64 occupied bird territories shown during the period of the survey visits.
2. Breeding was confirmed for at least 13 bird species, these being woodpigeon, skylark, meadow pipit, pied wagtail, robin, blackbird, blue tit, magpie, carrion crow, house sparrow, starling, goldfinch and reed bunting.
3. Birds such as starling and house sparrow may have bred just outside of the site boundaries but this could not be proven either way so is included as a precaution.
4. A total of 8 occupied skylark territories were proven to be present during the breeding season at Lammas Field, along with 3 meadow pipit occupied territories.
5. During this survey, it was clear that ground nesting birds at Lammas Field, were being disturbed by some of the user groups at St Mary's Lands, but to varying degrees.
6. Dog walkers, especially those which permitted dogs to run off the lead, were the biggest disturbance to skylarks especially. Model aircraft flying did cause some disturbance too to the displaying male skylarks at Lammas Field, where song flight behaviour was curtailed on a number of occasions due to aircraft flying overhead.
7. Various measures are now recommended at the end of this report in regards to finding a balance between the key user groups at St Mary's Lands and the important bird populations present.
8. The main measures put forward include the fencing off of the key part of Lammas Field for the breeding skylarks from dog walkers and walkers alike. And restrictions on the model aircraft flying at the site so that the disturbance present from this pastime can be reduced.
9. Further bird monitoring is also recommended since it will need to be investigated if the above measures work or not, in protecting the ground nesting birds present.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- A combined Breeding Bird and Winter Survey was undertaken at St Mary's Lands, Warwick, Warwickshire, was undertaken during April 2019 to January 2020, for the client: Ecology & Land Management.
- This specialist assessment was required due to the need to protect the ground nesting birds, especially the skylark population, at Lamma Field. The stakeholders at St Mary's Lands were taken into consideration on how they can modify their activities to help ground nesting birds.
- The main method used for this bird survey, as well as the full results and the recommendations can be found within this report.
- Both this bird survey and the report were undertaken and compiled by Mr Andrew S. Waller, Consultant Ecologist, ASW Ecology.
- Mr Andrew S. Waller MSc BSc (Hons) MCIEEM - has been a Consultant Ecologist since 1997 and has very extensive experience/knowledge of protected wildlife species/issues including birds. He is also fully licensed to survey bats throughout England by Natural England for consultancy purposes (Bat Class 2 Licence Registration Number: 2015-15703-CLS-CLS). He also has Natural England survey licences for great crested newts and barn owls. He has been studying birds in Britain and in Europe for 38 years, especially birds of prey, and is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

© Report copyright – ASW Ecology

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Bird survey method**

- During April 2019 to January 2020, a total of five morning-based visits were undertaken at St Mary's Lands, with all bird species identified by sight or sound, by an experienced consultant ornithologist.
- The bird survey visits were undertaken on the following dates (with the weather conditions stated): 6/4/2019 (dry, cool, light wind present, mainly cloudy), 1/6/2019 (dry, warm, light breeze, sunny), 26/6/2019 (cloudy, dry, light wind present, mild), 5/12/2019 (light cloud, dry, cool, light wind present) and 15/1/2020 (clear, dry, sunny, cool).
- Additional visits were also made to the site during 2019 and 2020, for site meetings and for photography, and relevant bird records are included for those visits too. One of these extra visits did go into February 2020 and a record is stated for that month as is relevant to this study. Specific visits were made to observe bird reactions to model flying. This is described in a separate report.
- A slow standard walk of the stated site was undertaken, with all habitats and boundaries walked, so that the full range of birds could be detected on each survey visit.
- The presence of singing males and where they were located in their occupied territories were noted carefully, and follows the method outlined for territory mapping in Bibby et al, 2005.
- Where bird nests were recorded, these would also be plotted on the maps for each visit, as well as the above stated bird contacts and singing males.
- The winter-based visits focused on the species assemblages present and if any notable overwintering bird species were present at this time.

### **2.2 Survey constraints**

- The main constraint to the bird survey is that this investigation could not be undertaken during the very early Spring period, i.e early March although a preliminary visits were made on 9th and 16th March 2019.
- This survey was though undertaken to determine breeding bird status and the number of active territories at the application site, especially in regards to the skylarks and to meadow pipits. The survey was indeed conducted when birds were most active and all breeding territories would have been encountered during the appropriate visits at this peak time.
- As always though, without taking into account any further active surveying or monitoring, this study can only provide information on the presence of birds at this application site during the specific survey period.

### 3. BIRD SURVEY RESULTS

#### 3.1 Bird survey visits 1-5 – April 2019 to January 2020

**TABLES – Codes used below are in Map A at the end of this report**

<b>BIRD SPECIES/CODE</b>	<b>VISIT 1 – 6/4/2019</b>	<b>VISIT 2 – 1/6/2019</b>
<b>Canada goose (CG)</b>	2	
<b>Mallard (MA)</b>	1 male seen	
<b>Little grebe (LG)</b>	1 on reservoir	1 on reservoir
<b>Grey heron (H.)</b>		
<b>Red kite (KT)</b>	1 over Lammas Field	
<b>Sparrowhawk (SH)</b>		
<b>Buzzard (BZ)</b>	2 soaring over site edge	1 pair soaring over the site. Seen three times
<b>Kestrel (K.)</b>		1 male hunting over Lammas Field
<b>Peregrine Falcon (PE)</b>		
<b>Moorhen (MH)</b>	1 on reservoir	1 on reservoir
<b>Coot (CO)</b>		
<b>Common snipe (SN)</b>		
<b>Black-headed gull (BH)</b>		
<b>Lesser black-backed gull (LB)</b>	1	1
<b>Feral pigeon (FP)</b>	2	1
<b>Woodpigeon (WP)</b>	10 including 1 singing male	5 including 1 singing male
<b>Little owl (LO)</b>		1 next to western edge and flew towards brook
<b>Swift (SI)</b>		4
<b>Green woodpecker (G.)</b>	1 heard at site edge	1 seen
<b>Great spotted woodpecker (GS)</b>	1 male seen in Jubilee Wood	
<b>Skylark (S.)</b>	4 singing males	4 singing males
<b>Sand martin (SM)</b>	4 over site edge	

<b>Swallow (SL)</b>		
<b>House martin (HM)</b>		7
<b>Meadow pipit (MP)</b>	3 singing males	1 seen
<b>Pied wagtail (PW)</b>		
<b>Wren (WR)</b>	7 singing males	5 singing males
<b>Dunnock (D.)</b>	4 singing males	1 at reservoir edge
<b>Robin (R.)</b>	7 including 6 singing males	3 singing males
<b>Blackbird (B.)</b>	4 singing males	5 including 2 males. 1 male was singing next to reservoir
<b>Song thrush (ST)</b>	1 singing male	1 singing male
<b>Redwing (RE)</b>		
<b>Blackcap (BC)</b>	4 singing males	2 singing males
<b>Common whitethroat (WH)</b>		
<b>Common chiffchaff (CC)</b>	3 singing males	
<b>Long-tailed tit (LT)</b>	2	1
<b>Blue tit (BT)</b>	8 including 3 singing males and 1 occupied nest site found	
<b>Great tit (GT)</b>	8 including 4 singing males	1
<b>Coal tit (CT)</b>		
<b>Treecreeper (TC)</b>		
<b>Magpie (MG)</b>	8	2
<b>Jackdaw (JD)</b>	1	2
<b>Carrion crow (C.)</b>	4	2
<b>Raven (RN)</b>	1 displaying over race course area	
<b>Starling (SG)</b>	1	6 including 1 juvenile seen
<b>House sparrow</b>	2 on golf course	5 at golf course bushes
<b>Chaffinch (CH)</b>	1 female	1 male seen



<b>Greenfinch (GR)</b>	1 singing male	1 singing male at golf course
<b>Goldfinch (GO)</b>	4 including 1 singing male	5
<b>Reed bunting (RB)</b>	1 singing male	3 males including 2 singing males seen in wetland area at Lammas Field

<b>BIRD SPECIES/CODE</b>	<b>VISIT 3 – 26/6/2019</b>	<b>VISIT 4 – 5/12/2019</b>
Canada goose (CG)		
Mallard (MA)		
Little grebe (LG)		
Grey heron (H.)		
Red kite (KT)		
Sparrowhawk (SH)		1 hunting along site edge
Buzzard (BZ)		
Kestrel (K.)	1 over site	1 male hunting over golf course
Peregrine Falcon (PE)		
Moorhen (MH)	1 on reservoir	
Coot (CO)		
Common snipe (SN)		
Black-headed gull (BH)	1	21
Lesser black-backed gull (LB)	1	
Feral pigeon (FP)	3	2
Woodpigeon (WP)	10	15
Little owl (LO)	1 on nest site tree just outside of western site boundary. Heard too	
Swift (SI)	6	
Green woodpecker (G.)	2	1
Great spotted woodpecker (GS)		1 foraging on tree along Gog Brook corridor
Skylark (S.)	8 singing males	
Sand martin (SM)		
Swallow (SL)	2	
House martin (HM)		
Meadow pipit (MP)		
Pied wagtail (PW)	1 seen	1 seen

<b>Wren (WR)</b>	4 singing males	1 seen
<b>Dunnock (D.)</b>	1 seen	
<b>Robin (R.)</b>	1 singing male	1 singing male
<b>Blackbird (B.)</b>	3 including 2 singing males. 1 female seen in Jubilee Wood	3 females
<b>Song thrush (ST)</b>	2 singing males	
<b>Redwing (RE)</b>		5
<b>Blackcap (BC)</b>	4 singing males	
<b>Common whitethroat (WH)</b>		
<b>Common chiffchaff (CC)</b>	2 singing males	
<b>Long-tailed tit (LT)</b>	1	2
<b>Blue tit (BT)</b>	2	2
<b>Great tit (GT)</b>		2
<b>Coal tit (CT)</b>		1
<b>Treecreeper (TC)</b>		1 in mixed small bird flock in Jubilee Wood
<b>Magpie (MG)</b>	3	12
<b>Jackdaw (JD)</b>	1	4
<b>Carrion crow (C.)</b>	2	11
<b>Raven (RN)</b>		
<b>Starling (SG)</b>	37 including 10 juveniles. 1 adult starling seen flying with food in beak	3
<b>House sparrow</b>	5 including 2 juveniles	19 in bushes and hedge at golf course
<b>Chaffinch (CH)</b>	1 male seen	
<b>Greenfinch (GR)</b>	1 singing male	1 seen
<b>Goldfinch (GO)</b>	3	2
<b>Reed bunting (RB)</b>	2 males seen including 1 singing male in reeds at Lammas Field wetland area	

<b>BIRD SPECIES/CODE</b>	<b>VISIT 5 – 15/1/2020</b>
Canada goose (CG)	
Mallard (MA)	
Little grebe (LG)	1 on reservoir
Grey heron (H.)	
Red kite (KT)	
Sparrowhawk (SH)	
Buzzard (BZ)	1 soaring over Jubilee Wood
Kestrel (K.)	1 male hunting over golf course
Peregrine Falcon (PE)	
Moorhen (MH)	
Coot (CO)	1 on reservoir
Common snipe (SN)	
Black-headed gull (BH)	23
Lesser black-backed gull (LB)	1
Feral pigeon (FP)	2
Woodpigeon (WP)	9
Little owl (LO)	
Swift (SI)	
Green woodpecker (G.)	1
Great spotted woodpecker (GS)	
Skylark (S.)	
Sand martin (SM)	
Swallow (SL)	
House martin (HM)	
Meadow pipit (MP)	
Pied wagtail (PW)	1
Wren (WR)	

<b>Dunnock (D.)</b>	1 seen
<b>Robin (R.)</b>	5 including 4 singing males
<b>Blackbird (B.)</b>	4 males and 1 female
<b>Song thrush (ST)</b>	1 seen
<b>Redwing (RE)</b>	3 seen
<b>Blackcap (BC)</b>	
<b>Common whitethroat (WH)</b>	
<b>Common Chiffchaff (CC)</b>	
<b>Long-tailed tit (LT)</b>	1 seen
<b>Blue tit (BT)</b>	9 including some calls
<b>Great tit (GT)</b>	2
<b>Coal tit (CT)</b>	
<b>Treecreeper (TC)</b>	
<b>Magpie (MG)</b>	8
<b>Jackdaw (JD)</b>	1
<b>Carrion crow (C.)</b>	4
<b>Raven (RN)</b>	
<b>Starling (SG)</b>	7
<b>House sparrow</b>	10
<b>Chaffinch (CH)</b>	
<b>Greenfinch (GR)</b>	1 seen
<b>Goldfinch (GO)</b>	2 seen
<b>Reed bunting (RB)</b>	

**Note 1** – On an extra site meeting visit on 9/3/2019, 1 pied wagtail was seen near to the golf course, 1 buzzard was soaring over the site as well as 3 skylarks noted on Lammas Field. On the same date, 3 long-tailed tits were noted in Jubilee Wood and a pair of displaying dunnocks on the reservoir fence. Also, on the same date, 1 little grebe was present on the reservoir and 1 female chaffinch was seen in Jubilee Wood.

**Note 2** – At an extra site meeting on 17/4/2019, a pair of kestrels were seen hunting over the site and would have been expected to be nesting nearby. Also, on the same date, a pair of peregrines were noted soaring with 3 buzzards over the site, of which

the peregrines were short staying at the nearby St Mary's Church. 3 singing male skylarks and 3 singing male meadow pipits noted on same date over Lammas Field.

**Note 3** – On an extra site meeting visit on 24/5/2019, 3 house martins were seen over the Hill Close Gardens entrance to the site. On the same date, one blackbird was also seen at the site near the Spinney with food in beak so would have been feeding chicks.

**Note 4** – On an extra site visit on 22/6/2019, 1 grey heron was seen over the fields and also 1 male whitethroat was singing at the golf course edge.

**Note 5** – At an extra site visit on 12/1/2020, 1 snipe was seen flying to and from the wetland area at the southern end of Lammas Field. Also, on that same date, 17 house sparrows were seen in bushes and the hedge at the golf course. 3 goldfinches and 2 blue tits were additionally seen on the bird feeders installed next to the golf course clubhouse.

**Note 6** – On an extra site visit on 24/2/2020, a pair of ravens were seen displaying and chasing each other over Lammas Field. It is not known where this pair may be nesting but it will be outside of St Mary's Lands.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Significance of the bird survey results

- A total of 50 bird species were recorded at St Mary's Lands during the survey period of April 2019 to January 2020. With 64 occupied bird territories shown during the period of the survey visits. This is clearly an important and noteworthy site for birds in this part of Warwickshire.
- Breeding was confirmed for at least 13 bird species, these being woodpigeon, skylark, meadow pipit, pied wagtail, robin, blackbird, blue tit, magpie, carrion crow, house sparrow, starling, goldfinch and reed bunting. This was by the presence of food being brought to nests by adults or by the presence of juvenile birds being feed by adults on site. Birds such as starling and house sparrow may have bred just outside of the site boundaries but this could not be proven either way so is included as a precaution.
- A total of 8 occupied skylark territories were proven to be present during the breeding season at Lammas Field, along with 3 meadow pipit occupied territories. Additionally, overwintering bird species included snipe, redwing and fieldfare at St Mary's Lands, as well as roving groups of small passerines within Jubilee Wood.
- During this survey, it was clear that ground nesting birds at Lammas Field, were being disturbed by some of the user groups at St Mary's Lands, but to varying degrees.
- Dog walkers, especially those which permitted dogs to run off the lead, were the biggest disturbance to skylarks especially. Since dogs should be kept on a lead at all times within Lammas Field, as dogs would be seen as a potential predator of chicks by adult skylarks. Model aircraft flying did cause some disturbance too to the displaying male skylarks at Lammas Field, where song flight behaviour was curtailed on a number of occasions due to aircraft flying overhead.
- Skylarks would be used to this habitual disturbance to a degree however, although it is difficult to quantify the long-term impacts of all user groups on the historically declining skylark population at Lammas Field. The fact that skylarks numbers have declined hugely at Lammas Field over the decades is a major concern, with 60-70 pairs known to be present in the 1960s (pers. comm, ornithologist, Phil Robbins). Breeding lapwing were also present at Lammas field during the 1960s.
- From this bird survey of the stated site, it can be concluded that the key high value bird habitats in regards to breeding territories and nests, were the Gog Brook tree lined corridor, hedgerows, Jubilee Wood, the reservoir, all other wetland areas including reedbeds and Lammas Field itself.
- Within the ornithological document, Birds of Conservation Concern 4, Amber List bird species present at St Mary's Lands included kestrel, snipe, black-headed gull, lesser black-backed gull, house martin, swift, dunnock, meadow pipit and reed bunting. Red List bird species were also present during this survey and included skylark, redwing, song thrush, house sparrow and starling. In regards to Schedule 1 bird species (under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) present at the site. These included red kite, peregrine falcon and redwing.

## 4.2 Impact assessment

In the absence of any mitigation measures or precautions, the following impacts from the key user groups at St Mary's Lands on the ground nesting birds are now considered to be, based on the observations from this professional ornithological investigation:

- 4.2.1 Dog walkers:** This use group is considered to have the main negative impact on nesting skylarks, given that some dog walkers at least are not using the existing paths at Lammas field, and that they will walk through skylark territories. Also, that dogs will investigate skylark territories and will scare adult skylarks as well as chicks, given that dogs will be seen as predators. It was also noted that some dogs are allowed to run off the leash through Lammas Field and therefore are not controlled if a ground nesting bird nest is found. **IMPACT MAGNITUDE: MODERATE/HIGH**
- 4.2.2 Model aircraft flying:** The model aircraft flyers are having a varied impact on the ground nesting birds, given that the skylarks will be used to the disturbance to some extent and that planes will not be seen as predators to the bird, eggs or chicks. However, since skylarks did modify their behaviour sometimes with reduced song flight activity whilst planes were in use, there is still a negative impact present at Lammas Field. Additionally, on one occasion, a model aircraft did come close to colliding with a skylark in flight at Lammas Field. This may be a rare occurrence but shows the differing impacts that have been shown to be present during this investigation. **IMPACT MAGNITUDE: LOW/MODERATE**
- 4.2.3 Walkers and joggers:** The impact from this user group is considered to be low to moderate, given that ground nesting birds will be disturbed still by people walking or jogging through Lammas Field. Such people are probably seen as a threat still by the skylarks and disturbance will be caused when visitors walk through the occupied skylark territories present. **IMPACT MAGNITUDE: LOW/MODERATE**



### **4.3 Summary of the legal protection of birds in the UK (Simplified summary only of the legislation – please see other texts for full details)**

#### **4.3.1 THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF BIRDS IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

All birds have the following legal protection (although there are exceptions for game birds, some waterfowl and designated pest species). This is listed below.

All birds, their eggs and nests are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or to take or destroy their eggs. It is also illegal to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built (RSPB, 2001). No provisions can be made for the destruction of occupied bird nests, eggs, or young for development purposes, and no licences are available for this purpose.

Certain rare and/or vulnerable bird species such red kite, hobby, peregrine falcon, barn owl, kingfisher and black redstart are specially protected under Schedule 1, and have the following additional legal protection:

- It is an offence to intentionally (or recklessly, in England and Wales only) disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 whilst it is nest building or is at (or near) a nest with eggs or young; or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Protection of skylark breeding territories at Lammas Field**

- It is recommended that during the entire skylark breeding season period eg March to late August, that the key part of Lammas Field, where the skylarks are nesting, is fenced off completely with appropriate temporary fencing.
- The exact date for this fencing then to be carefully removed after the end of the nesting season for skylarks will depend on when the final broods are considered to be fully fledged.
- Such fencing has been used at other sensitive sites in Britain, where dog walkers especially must keep out during the nesting season for notable bird species, which are highly sensitive to human disturbance.
- Such fenced off protected zones will allow ground nesting bird species such as skylark and meadow pipit to breed normally within Lammas Field, with no disturbance from dogs.
- There must be high quality signage at regular intervals around the fencing perimeter, explaining to the general public, why such fencing is needed, which bird species are being protected and that all dog walkers must keep out of the fenced area at all times.
- It will be vital that such fences are maintained at all times by Warwick District Council, that any damage to fencing is repaired promptly and that targeted monitoring is allowed to ensure that dog walkers are keeping out of the fenced protection zone for birds.
- The stated fencing will allow skylarks to rear two to three broods at the site, which are required to maintain population levels.

### **5.2 Restrictions on model aircraft flying during bird breeding season**

- Since Lammas Field has been shown to be of conservation importance to ground nesting birds and to overwintering waders, from the evidence collated in this study and from local observers, the following model aircraft flying hours are now recommended:

Every day: 11 am until 7pm (end March to early August) - produce signs and advice for the website so these dates would need to be specific – i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> April to the 15<sup>th</sup> August

Every day: 10am until sunset (early August to end March) 16<sup>th</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> March

The 11am start during the breeding season is based on evidence that the birds are very actively feeding chicks during the morning and evening periods as well as displaying during the breeding season.

Option:

New flying strip precautionary hours depending on circuit:  
Every day throughout the year: 10am to sunset.

### **5.3 Future breeding bird monitoring at St Mary's Lands**

- It is also recommended that there should be further bird monitoring at St Mary's Lands, so to monitor if the reduced dog walking pressure due to the fencing installation is benefitting the skylarks and meadow pipits.
- And to monitor the changes to the model aircraft flying at the site and to recommend any tweaks to improve things further for all ground nesting birds.
- The above would rely though on if resources are available for such further targeted and specific monitoring.

### **5.4 Best practice guidance – breeding birds and development works**

- In general, no trees, shrubs, bushes, hedges, bramble scrub or dense ivy cover should be removed during the bird nesting season as all bird nests are fully protected by law, and this includes whilst a nest is being built by the adult birds. This is applicable to buildings and nest boxes too, where bird nests have been shown to be present.
- If any nests are present within any of the above stated features to be removed, then these must be left alone until the young birds have left the nest and no further breeding attempts are to take place.
- The bird nesting season in the UK, currently runs mainly from late January to September, but sometimes birds can start breeding before or after this period.
- Therefore, September to January can be the best months for such clearance works, but there is some flexibility available.
- If any vegetation is to be removed out of this stated period, then this may be allowed if all of the vegetation for example can be searched thoroughly for the complete absence of bird nests e.g. by an experienced ecological consultant.
- **This standard advice is given, as a precautionary measure, should any tree management works or building works be undertaken in the future at this site.**

## **5.5 Ecological enhancement options for birds at St Mary's Lands**

### **5.5.1 Nest boxes**

- Bird boxes can be installed at St Mary's Lands in the future to enhance biodiversity for birds and suitable bird box models can be found below. Where there is any loss of trees in the future this would be essential.
- The 1B Schwegler Nest Box would be a good model to have installed at the site, especially within Jubilee Wood, since a range of birds are present already. This model would benefit blue and great tits especially.
- New bird nesting boxes should be installed as widely spaced apart as possible. The exact number of boxes will need to be appropriate for the site size as nest boxes should not be located too close together and away from existing nest boxes. But such nest boxes should only supplement the natural cavities already present within the adjacent woodlands.
- The NHBS is a good ecological equipment supplier and this nest box model can be purchased from them. The web link for this nest box is:  
  
<http://www.nhbs.com/1b-schwegler-nest-box>
- In general, bird boxes should be spaced widely apart, away from bird feeders, quite high up a tree or building (ideally at least four metres up from ground level but higher in urban areas ideally), facing North to South-east only and away from cats.
- Further nest box models are also available for house martins, house sparrows, starlings, wrens and robins and more advice can be given on this if requested and suitable locations are present for such boxes.

### **5.5.2 No use of pesticides, herbicides or other chemicals at the new scheme**

- There should be no use of chemicals at St Mary's Lands or it should be completely minimised eg no herbicides or pesticides. Ideally, there should be no formal use of pesticides that will inhibit invertebrate populations that many birds rely on for food. Declining insect numbers is one of the main reasons for the serious decline in certain bird species.

### **5.5.3 New habitat creation and enhancements for birds**

- The following new features and actions are put forward as additional options for the Council to consider at St Mary's Lands:
  - Further expansion of tall grass meadow at the site for ground nesting birds and other wildlife
  - Treatment and eradication of Japanese knotweed on channel opposite the Racecourse entrance, on east side of Bread and Meat Close
  - No planting at any time of non-native invasive plant species within the site especially at any future development scheme

- Conservation management of the Gog Brook, including rubbish and debris removal plus sensitive management of overhanging trees
- Suitable woodland management at Jubilee Wood and retention of deadwood for invertebrate populations
- Protection of all notable trees on site especially any veteran trees for their wildlife and nature conservation value
- Ensuring there is no new light pollution on the woodland boundaries or along linear corridors, so that birds can maintain their natural behaviour, especially with their singing patterns and timing

## 6. REFERENCES

- (1) Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D., Hill, D.A., Mustoe, S.H. (2005) Bird Census Techniques. Elsevier Academic Press, UK. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.
- (2) Carter, I. (2001) The Red Kite. Arlequin Press, Essex.
- (3) RSPB (2001) Wild Birds and the Law. RSPB, Sandy. UK.
- (4) Eaton, M. et al (2015) Birds of Conservation Concern 4. British Birds 108. Pages 708-746. UK.
- (5) Ruddock, M. & Whitfield, D.P. (2007) A Review of Disturbance Distances in Selected Bird Species. Scottish Natural Heritage.
- (6) Treweek, J. (1999) Ecological Impact Assessment. Blackwell Science Ltd, UK.

## APPENDIX 1

### Photographs A-I



#### **Photograph A**

Lammas Field – showing the model aircraft flying strip, with the taller grass in the background with the nesting skylarks and meadow pipits. Other bird species would also fly over here including starling, swift, buzzard, kestrel, woodpigeon and gulls



**Photograph B**

Short mown grass with the golf course boundary in the background. Birds such as kestrel, buzzard, house martin and gulls would fly over this section





**Photograph C**

Gog Brook – showing the tree lined channel at the western edge of St Mary's Lands. The trees along the brook had various occupied bird territories including those of robin, wren, dunnock, blackcap, blue tit, song thrush, greenfinch



**Photograph D**

The western boundary of the site, showing the model aircraft landing strip and also part of the Gog Brook linear tree lined corridor





**Photograph E**

The Spinney was used by both crows and blue tits for nesting



**Photograph F**

The hedges around the golf course proved vital for good numbers of house sparrows, especially for shelter and possibly for roosting





**Photograph G**

The reservoir, of which is present at the other side of the bank in the above photograph, had both little grebe and coot present during this bird survey



**Photograph H**

The wetland area at the south section of Lammas Field, was used by breeding reed bunting and also noted for snipe in the winter period





**Photograph I**

Jubilee Wood, despite being a young woodland, had a good number of bird territories present. These included blackcap, chiffchaff, blue tit, great tit, robin, wren and blackbird

## Map A – Breeding bird territory summary map



### Map B – Breeding bird territory summary map