



Candwr Solar Farm

Pre Application Consultation

Environmental Statement

Appendix 6.7 Wintering Bird Survey Report

2 July 2026



Candwr Solar Farm

Appendix 6.7: Wintering Bird Survey Report



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Avian Ecology Limited (AEL) was commissioned by Pegasus Planning Group, on behalf of the Applicant, to undertake baseline wintering bird surveys in relation to the proposed construction and operation of a solar farm and associated infrastructure (the 'Proposed Development') on land at Court Farm, which lies north of Ponthir, Newport, Monmouthshire (the 'Site').
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this report is to present details of the field surveys undertaken, as well as associated desk study data gathering (methods and results), in relation to wintering (non-breeding) birds, and which inform the Development of National Significance (DNS) submission, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and any required mitigation and enhancement measures.
- 1.1.3 Only common bird species names are referred to within the main text of this report. A summary of all bird species recorded during the surveys, or referenced within the text, are presented alongside their scientific names and conservation status in **Annex 1**.
- 1.1.4 For details of breeding birds see **Appendix 6.3**.

1.2 Site description

- 1.2.1 The Site is dominated by cattle and sheep grazed pasture within a rolling pastoral farmland landscape, with hedgerows along field boundaries linking pockets of broadleaved woodland. The Afon Lwyd water course flows between the field boundaries that comprise the Site, before flowing into the River Usk, which joins the Severn Estuary approximately 9 km south of the Site.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Zone of Influence

- 2.1.1 Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance (CIEEM, 2018 (updated 2024))¹ on Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), recommends that all ecological (and ornithological) features that occur within a 'Zone of Influence' (Zol) for a proposed development are investigated. The ornithological features for investigation comprise relevant designated protected areas that would be subject to direct or indirect impacts (including temporarily), and bird species present within the vicinity of the Site or that have potential connectivity to the Site. The applicable Zol is dependent on the ornithological feature affected.
- 2.1.2 This guidance has informed the data gathering study areas used to inform the impact assessment. The size of the study areas that have been used for the Proposed Development in relation to wintering birds are summarised in **Table 2.1**.

¹ CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.3. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester. Available online at: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/EclA-Guidelines-v1.3-Sept-2024.pdf> (Accessed December 2025)

Table 2.1: Study areas used to inform the impact assessment

Ornithological receptor/ data source	Study area
Statutory designated sites for nature conservation with non-breeding bird qualifying interests/reasons for designation.	The Site and within 10 km of the Site
Non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation with non-breeding bird qualifying interests/reasons for designation.	The Site and within 2 km of the Site
Desk study records	Within the Site and 2 km of the Site during the last ten years (since 2015)
Wintering bird surveys (field survey)	The Site and a 600 m buffer

2.2 Desk study

- 2.2.1 A desk study was undertaken to determine the presence of any designated nature conservation sites with qualifying interests that include non-breeding (wintering and passage) populations of birds, and records of protected or priority bird species (non-breeding), within the study areas set out in **Table 2.1**.
- 2.2.2 In June 2025, data were obtained following a request to the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) for relevant species records and details of locally designated sites. Note that the species records returned included all ornithological records on the database and were not specific to non-breeding birds, nor to records from the last 10 years only. The data have been filtered for presentation in this report.
- 2.2.3 In addition, a data search was undertaken of relevant publicly available data and online databases to identify statutory designated sites and additional non-statutory sites within the appropriate study areas (**Table 2.1**). These data sources included:
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)²;
 - The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website³;
 - DataMap Wales⁴;
 - Monmouthshire and Torfaen Local Nature Recovery Action Plan⁵; and
 - Newport City Council Biodiversity List⁶.

2.3 Wintering bird surveys

- 2.3.1 Wintering bird surveys (WBS) were undertaken in 2025 during all calendar months considered as representing the non-breeding season, and covered January to mid-March and September to December. For the purposes of this report, these survey periods are collectively referred to as 'winter', but it also encompasses passage periods for some species (spring and autumn migration), where relevant, and so represents a broad generic season that allows for a review of non-breeding birds.

² Available online at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/> (Accessed December 2025)

³ Available online at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Magic_redirect.htm?aspxerrorpath=/MagicMap.aspx (Accessed: December 2025)

⁴ Available online at: <https://datamap.gov.wales/> (Accessed December 2025)

⁵ Available online at: <https://bgtorfaenlnp.wales/assets/FINAL-designed-version-ENG-03-01-24.pdf> (Accessed December 2025)

⁶ Available online at: <https://live.newport.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity> (Accessed December 2025)

- 2.3.2 The surveys were undertaken in accordance with guidance from the Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group (2025)⁷ (most specifically in reference to their guidance regarding Non-breeding Walkover Surveys) and Gilbert *et al.* (1998)⁸.
- 2.3.3 The WBS involved the surveyor undertaking a walkover of the survey area following a route that allowed observation of all fields. The survey adopted a 'look-see' methodology whereby the surveyor made regular stops to scan for 'Priority Species' (see below) which were recorded and mapped.
- 2.3.4 The survey area for the WBS comprised the Site (as defined at the time of survey completion) plus a surrounding 600 m buffer. The WBS survey area is illustrated on **Figure 1** (January to March 2025) and **Figure 2** (September to December 2025). Note that the Site boundary experienced changes as a result of project evolution during the course of the baseline survey programme, with some changes between the late winter and early winter survey periods, as well as minor alterations since survey completion. Further discussion on this issue is provided in **Section 2.4**.
- 2.3.5 Where surveyors did not have permitted access outside the Site, the surrounding 600 m buffer was scanned from appropriate locations within the Site or from public highways.
- 2.3.6 All fields within the survey area were given a unique identification number to aid in the recording and mapping of locations of birds encountered during survey, as illustrated on **Figures 2b-2e**.
- 2.3.7 The WBS comprised a total of 14 survey visits across the non-breeding season, with these completed mostly as twice monthly visits. Six survey visits were made in the late winter period (January to mid-March 2025), and eight visits were made in the early winter period (September to December 2025). Each survey visit comprised two days of survey, with these completed as much as possible on consecutive days.
- 2.3.8 Survey effort is presented in **Table 2.2**. All visits were completed during daylight hours. Details of weather conditions during each visit are presented in **Annex 2**. As much as possible, surveys were scheduled to be carried out in conditions suitable for detecting and recording birds (e.g. avoiding persistent heavy rain and strong winds).

Table 2.2: Wintering bird survey effort

Month	Survey Visit	Date	Start Time (24hrs)	End Time (24hrs)
January	1	23/01/2025	09:45	16:15
		24/01/2025	09:15	16:15
	2	29/01/2025	08:05	14:15
		30/01/2025	08:10	14:35
February	3	06/02/2025	08:20	14:35
		07/02/2025	08:00	14:10
	4	14/02/2025	07:50	13:55
		17/02/2025	08:15	14:10
	5	24/02/2025	07:50	14:05
		25/02/2025	07:15	13:20
March	6	13/03/2025	07:15	13:25
		14/03/2025	08:00	14:05

⁷ Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group. (2025) *Bird Survey Guidelines for assessing ecological impacts*. Available online at: <https://birdsurveyguidelines.org> (Last accessed December 2025)

⁸ Gilbert G, Gibbons D.W. and Evans J. (1998) *Bird Monitoring Methods*. RSPB, Sandy.

Month	Survey Visit	Date	Start Time (24hrs)	End Time (24hrs)
September	7	09/09/2025	07:40	14:50
		10/09/2025	07:30	13:45
	8	29/09/2025	07:10	15:30
		30/09/2025	12:15	17:50
October	9	06/10/2025	07:15	16:00
		07/10/2025	13:45	18:35
	10	21/10/2025	12:00	17:40
		22/10/2025	08:05	14:45
November	11	03/11/2025	10:50	16:55
		04/11/2025	07:50	14:00
	12	17/11/2025	07:55	13:40
		18/11/2025	10:20	16:20
December	13	01/12/2025	10:40	16:15
		02/12/2025	07:55	14:15
	14	11/12/2025	07:50	13:55
		12/12/2025	11:10	16:20

- 2.3.9 The bird species recorded during the WBS were those considered to be 'Priority Species' relevant to the Proposed Development. These comprised Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Amber and Red List Species for Wales (Johnstone *et al.* 2022)⁹; birds listed under Section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (list applicable at the time of survey¹⁰/ updated list applicable at time of reporting¹¹), Annex 1¹² species and species listed in the Monmouthshire Local Nature Recovery Plan (LNRP)¹³.
- 2.3.10 During the WBS, all Priority Species were noted on to survey specific recording forms using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) species codes¹⁴. Details were recorded of species, number of birds, field number, field type (e.g. pasture (stocked or unstocked), stubble, cereal, etc), and relevant notes (e.g. if only recorded in flight).
- 2.3.11 Presence of common and widespread species that were not classified as Priority Species, for example BoCC Green listed species (hereafter referred to as 'Secondary Species') were also recorded during each survey visit for completeness but detailed reporting of these species has not been included (except where these species appear on the 2026 list of S7 priority species, as updated after the completion of surveys¹¹).

⁹ Johnstone, I. G., Hughes, J., Balmer, D., Brenchley, A., Facey, R. J., Lindley, P. J., Noble, D. G. and Taylor, R. C. (2022) Birds of Conservation Concern Wales 4: the population status of birds in Wales. *Birds in Wales*, 13, pp. 3-31

¹⁰ Welsh Government (2016) Environment (Wales) Act (2016) Section 7. Previously available online at: <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/en/legislation-guidance/section-7/> (Accessed December 2025)

¹¹ Available online at: <https://www.gov.wales/section-7-list-species-and-habitats-principal-importance-wales> (Accessed May 2026)

¹² Annex 1 – species listed on Annex 1 of the EC Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament on the conservation of wild birds. Available online at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/threatened/index_en.htm (Accessed December 2025).

¹³ Available online at: <https://moderngov.microshadeapplications.co.uk/MonmouthTC/documents/s3910/Local%20NRAP%20Part%201%20Draft%20for%20Consultation.pdf> (Accessed December 2025).

¹⁴ Available online at: https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u10/downloads/taking-part/species_codes.pdf (Last accessed December 2025)

2.3.12 Field surveys were undertaken by S. Cunningham; an experienced ornithological surveyor.

2.4 Limitations

- 2.4.1 The Site boundary experienced changes as a result of project evolution during, and after, the course of the baseline survey programme. This has affected the field surveys, which were based on the current (at that time) Site boundary, plus appropriate survey buffer. During January to March 2025 a previous Site layout was used (see **Figure 1**), which had changed by the time of the September to December 2025 surveys, although much of the core Site remained little changed. The Site used for determining the survey area during September to December 2025 (see **Figure 2**) has only undergone relatively minor alterations since completion of those surveys. Given the large 600 m buffer that was utilised, the (current) Site received full coverage during the WBS during the September to December survey period, whilst during January to March there was just a small part in the southwest of the Site, bordering the village of Ponthir, that was outside the surveyed area (with this area surveyed in the early winter period). It is only the outermost parts of a contemporaneous survey buffer in which there are some small areas without coverage. Given the community of non-breeding birds recorded in the vicinity of the Site this is not considered to be a substantive limitation, as there would be expected to be a negligible impact on these ornithological features in the farthest parts of the 600 m buffer, as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 2.4.2 The Site boundary at the time of the data request (June 2025) was that used during the September to December 2025 WBS (**Figure 2**). Therefore, the data obtained from SEWBRc, were compiled for the Site current at that time, and a surrounding 2 km buffer. This is considered as having had a minimal impact on the desk study data gathered, as the (current) Site lies fully within the search area. Any excluded species records, that may have been included if the current Site boundary had been used, would be at the far edge of the 2 km buffer, where the Proposed Development would not be expected to have a detectable impact.
- 2.4.3 The data provided by SEWBRc included a list of non-statutory designated sites (wildlife sites and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)) within the 2 km search area, some of which do not have a citation. Only those locally designated sites that have ornithological features listed in an accompanying citation are presented in the results. It can be expected that all locally designated sites would support at least some non-breeding bird species but their importance for ornithological features is unknown and this approach prevents the inclusion of sites that have primarily been identified for their habitat interests.
- 2.4.4 The species data returned by SEWBRc included sets of records where a number of sightings were recorded over a period of time (i.e. x number of records between year a and year b) as opposed to a specific date. As such, some sets of records span a date range that only partly includes the time period that is the focus of the data search (2015-2025). These records cannot be separated into pre- and post-2015 and so a precautionary approach has been used, with all such records included in the search results.
- 2.4.5 During the field surveys, there were occasional days when weather conditions were outside those considered optimal for bird recording (see **Annex 2**). For example, on a date in February the wind speed was recorded as a force 6 ('strong breeze') and a survey in January was completed in heavy showers. However, such conditions are to be expected for surveys completed during the winter season. The large amount of time spent on Site overall (in mostly suitable weather conditions), means that the WBS results have not been substantively impacted by poor weather and the data are suitable for informing the impact assessment.
- 2.4.6 Surveyors did not have access outside the Site, which meant that parts of the outer survey area were not fully visible. However, this applies to the 600 m buffer only, with the Site itself having been well covered. Representative habitats within the survey area were adequately sampled by the WBS and it

is considered highly unlikely that important populations of Priority Species within the wider survey area would have gone undetected. The species recorded during the surveys were mostly passerine species which would not be expected to be disturbed or displaced by the Proposed Development within the outer part of the 600 m buffer, especially where hedgerows and trees provide screening from the Site. Overlooking small numbers of birds from these areas would not alter the conclusions of the impact assessment.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk study

Statutory designated sites of ornithological importance (non-breeding birds)

- 3.1.1 Several internationally and nationally designated sites that are of ornithological importance for birds in the non-breeding season are located within proximity to the Site. Within 10 km of the Site lies the internationally designated area of the Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, which is situated 8.5 km to the south of the Site. The closest nationally designated site with ornithological interests is the River Usk (Lower Usk) / Afon Wysg (Wysg Isaf) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located 1.4 km to the south-east of the Site.
- 3.1.2 **Table 3.1** provides a summary of statutory designated sites that are located within 10 km of the Site boundary and which have non-breeding ornithological features as a primary interest. The site descriptions come from the relevant citation. The locations of designated areas in relation to the Site are included on **Figure 3**.

Table 3.1: Statutory designated sites with qualifying ornithology interests (non-breeding, wintering and passage populations)

LNR: Local Nature Reserve; SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest; SPA: Special Protection Area.

Designated area name	Designation	Approximate distance from Site	Description (ornithological features only)
River Usk (Lower Usk) / Afon Wysg (Wysg Isaf)	SSSI ¹⁵	1.4 km south-east	Within the SSSI, the cut-off meander at Llanfihangel Gobion is an important area for wintering and passage migrants including teal, greenshank and green sandpiper. (Note this geographical feature is located more than 10 km from the Site and lies upstream). (Breeding species not listed).
Llandegfedd Reservoir	SSSI ¹⁶	3.8 km to north	This reservoir is the largest inland open water habitat in the County and since its formation has developed into one of the three regionally important overwintering wildfowl refuges in Wales. The site is particularly important for the overall numbers and variety of wintering wildfowl, with large numbers of wigeon, pochard and mallard. Other notable species include goosander, teal and goldeneye.

¹⁵ Citation available online at: https://cdn.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/663716/SSSI_1425_Citation_EN0016492.pdf (Accessed December 2025)

¹⁶ Citation available online at: https://cdn.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/633717/SSSI_0036_Citation_EN001a13d.pdf (Accessed January 2026)

Designated area name	Designation	Approximate distance from Site	Description (ornithological features only)
Allt-Yr-Tn	LNR	4.9 km south-west	Ninety-four bird species ¹⁷ have been recorded within the site. (Note this list includes summer migrant species and occasional visitors).
Severn Estuary	SSSI ¹⁸	8.4 km south	The SSSI holds most of the estuary's internationally important curlew and redshank populations, and most of its nationally important ringed plover and grey plover populations. The SSSI is also internationally important for dunlin. Other waders which occur in significant numbers within the SSSI are snipe, knot, whimbrel and turnstone. In late winter and early spring the SSSI supports nationally important numbers of shelduck and there are also significant numbers of wigeon.
Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren	SPA ¹⁹	8.5 km south	Qualifying features of the SPA: • Bewick's swan; • European white-fronted goose; • Dunlin; • Redshank; • Shelduck; • Gadwall; • Curlew; • Pintail; and • Ringed plover. Listed components of the 'waterfowl assemblage': • Bewick's swan; • European white-fronted goose; • Dunlin; • Redshank; • Shelduck; • Gadwall; • Wigeon; • Teal; • Pintail; • Pochard; • Tufted duck; • Ringed plover; • Grey plover; • Curlew; • Whimbrel; • Spotted redshank; • Lapwing;

¹⁷ Species list available online at: <https://www.landscapebritain.co.uk/nature-reserves/newport-casnewydd/allt-yr-yn-local-nature-reserve/> (Accessed December 2025)

¹⁸ Citation available online at: https://naturalresources.wales/media/643756/SSSI_0461_Citation_EN001f09c.pdf (Accessed December 2025)

¹⁹ Details available online at: <https://naturalresources.wales/media/673887/severn-estuary-sac-spa-and-ramsar-reg-33-advice-from-ne-and-cw-june-09.pdf> (Accessed December 2025)

Designated area name	Designation	Approximate distance from Site	Description (ornithological features only)
			• Mallard; and • Shoveler.
Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren	Ramsar site ²⁰	8.5 km south	Species found at levels of international importance: • Bewick's swan; • European white-fronted goose; • Dunlin; • Redshank; • Shelduck; and • Gadwall. Species found at levels of national importance: • Ringed plover; • Whimbrel; • Dunlin; and • Redshank. Listed components of 'waterfowl assemblage': • Bewick's swan; • European white-fronted goose; • Shelduck; • Dunlin; • Redshank; • Gadwall; • Ringed plover; • Whimbrel; • Teal; • Pintail; • Wigeon; • Pochard; • Tufted duck; • Grey plover; • Curlew; and • Spotted redshank.
Newport Wetlands	SSSI ²¹	8.6 km south	In winter, supports nationally important numbers of shoveler and black-tailed godwit. Other over-wintering species include gadwall, wigeon, shelduck, dunlin, redshank, whimbrel and curlew. (Breeding species not listed).

²⁰ Citation available online at: <https://cdn.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/673887/severn-estuary-sac-spa-and-ramsar-reg-33-advice-from-ne-and-ccw-june-09.pdf> (Accessed December 2025)

²¹ Citation available online at: <https://gat04-live-1517c8a4486c41609369c68f30c8-aa81074.divio-media.org/M4-Newport/C%20-%20Core%20Documents/11.%20Ecology%20and%20Nature%20Conservation/11.4.7.pdf> (Accessed December 2025)

Non-statutory designated sites of ornithological importance – SEWBrEC data

- 3.1.3 **Table 3.2** provides a summary of non-statutory designated sites with non-breeding ornithological interests, located within 2 km of the Site boundary (where this information is available). Where the season (breeding or non-breeding) of qualifying interest is unspecified, the site has been included in the search results if the listed feature is a wintering or resident species. The locations of these designated areas in relation to the Site are included on **Figure 4**.
- 3.1.4 Two non-statutory designated sites with ornithological interests lie within 2 km of the Site. Ponthir Sewage Works SINC is located directly adjacent to the Site's southern boundary.

Table 3.2: Non-statutory designated sites with qualifying ornithology interests (non-breeding)
SINC: Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Site	Designation(s)	Approximate distance from the Site	Description
Ponthir Sewage Works	SINC	Directly adjacent to the southern Site boundary	Supports owls ²² , snipe, blackcap, linnet, goldeneye, sandpiper ²² , green woodpecker, goshawk, goosander and kingfisher.
Llantarnam Ponds	SINC	1.6 km south-west	Supports kingfisher, goosander and cormorant.

Ornithological records - SEWBrEC data

- 3.1.5 The data returned from SEWBrEC is summarised below for non-breeding ornithological species of interest. Note, however, that most records do not specify the date (and therefore season) to which the record relates.
- 3.1.6 The SEWBrEC data search returned records for 11 species of waterfowl (taken here as comprising swans, geese, ducks and rails, but excluding feral species) within the search area (Site plus 2 km) during the last ten years. Most records were returned for mallard, tufted duck and coot, which is to be expected given these are abundant and widespread species. Three of the waterfowl species with data returned are Red listed on BoCC Wales: white-fronted goose²³ (two records of the same bird on consecutive dates), pochard (six records, 14 birds) and shelduck (six records, 29 birds); and five species are BoCC Wales Amber listed (coot, pintail, shoveler, teal and wigeon). All these species are also S7 listed. One waterfowl species was recorded from Ponthir Waterworks (tufted duck) and seven species (barnacle goose, coot, mallard, pochard, teal, tufted duck and white-fronted goose) had records from Ponthir Reservoir, with both these locations found adjacent to the Site. Most records of waterfowl were returned from Llantarnam, Cwmbran and the River Usk, within the 2 km buffer.
- 3.1.7 The data search returned records from the last ten years for seven wader species within the search area. The species with the most records were lapwing, redshank and common sandpiper. These three species are S7 listed, with both lapwing and redshank BOCC Wales Red listed. The lapwing records comprised 26 records (171 birds; of which a flock of 120 birds was at Cwmbran) and for redshank there were 34 records returned (of 42 birds). Four of the wader species in the data are Amber listed on BoCC Wales: common sandpiper, plus green sandpiper, oystercatcher and snipe. Three species had records

²² Actual species is not specified.

²³ The 'white-fronted goose' record is not identified to sub-species. Only Greenland white-fronted goose is Section 7 listed. However, the nearest regular wintering population to the Site is of the European race which winters close to the upper Severn Estuary.

from Ponthir Reservoir, adjacent to the Site (avocet, common sandpiper and lapwing) but most sightings were obtained from the Newport area.

- 3.1.8 The returned data also included records of six gull species, all of which are now S7 species; with three on the BoCC Wales Red list (black-headed gull, herring gull and lesser black-backed gull) and three on the Amber list (common gull, great black-backed gull and little gull). Raptor and owl species in the data search (excluding summer migrants) included records of S7 listed kestrel (BoCC Wales Red listed) and goshawk and marsh harrier (both Amber listed).
- 3.1.9 Other resident and winter migrant species in the SEWBReC dataset include the following species that are both S7 listed and BoCC Wales Red listed: bullfinch, dunnock, goldcrest, greenfinch, hawfinch, house sparrow, linnet, marsh tit, meadow pipit, redpoll, skylark, song thrush and starling.

3.2 Wintering bird surveys

- 3.2.1 A total of 30 Priority Species were recorded during the WBS. The survey results are summarised in **Table 3.3**. Note that the number of records (individuals) may include the same bird(s) seen more than once on the same date or on subsequent visits.

Table 3.3: Priority Species recorded during the Winter Bird Surveys

Species	Number of Survey Visits Recorded (#14)	Total Number of Records (Individuals)	Peak Count	Comments
Black-headed gull	10	22 (177)	22	One record from pasture field, with all other records being birds passing overhead.
Bullfinch	13	25 (50)	6	Recorded in hedges and mature trees.
Dunnock	14	98 (119)	4	Recorded in hedges and on adjacent ground close by.
Fieldfare	8	40 (232)	32	Recorded in pasture fields and in adjacent trees.
Goshawk	5	8 (8)	1	All but one record were of birds in flight, either hunting passerines or flying at height towards woodland.
Greenfinch	12	39 (102)	10	Recorded mostly in hedges and mature trees.
Green woodpecker	2	5 (5)	1	Recorded in pasture field and in trees.
Grey heron	1	1 (1)	1	Recorded in pasture field close to watercourse.
Grey wagtail	12	20 (24)	2	Recorded along watercourses and feeding on manure piles.
Hawfinch	1	1 (1)	1	Recorded flying overhead towards wooded area.
Herring gull	14	134 (684)	35	Six records (80 birds) from pasture fields. All other records were birds passing overhead, often towards the sewage works.
House martin	2	4 (19)	13	Recorded in flight, both feeding and passing overhead.

Species	Number of Survey Visits Recorded (#14)	Total Number of Records (Individuals)	Peak Count	Comments
House sparrow	13	28 (173)	22	Recorded in and around hedges close to residential areas and farmyards.
Kingfisher	4	4 (4)	1	Recorded along larger watercourses.
Lesser black-backed gull	11	33 (88)	21	Occasional records from pasture fields, with most records being of birds passing overhead.
Linnet	10	38 (608)	85	Recorded on ground (most commonly in stubble fields), as well as in hedges and in flight.
Magpie	1	1 (7)	7	Recorded passing overhead.
Mallard	2	9 (21)	5	Recorded mostly passing overhead, in flights to/ from the reservoir.
Marsh tit	1	3 (5)	2	Recorded in trees.
Meadow pipit	7	44 (449)	69	Recorded in pasture and stubble fields as well as passing overhead.
Mistle thrush	13	51 (101)	23	Occasionally recorded on ground but mostly recorded in trees or passing overhead.
Peregrine	2	2 (2)	1	Recorded passing overhead.
Red kite	12	26 (33)	2	Occasionally recorded on ground (e.g. on sheep carcass) but mostly recorded circling overhead.
Rook	6	10 (77)	26	Recorded mostly in pasture fields as well as in trees and passing overhead.
Skylark	13	38 (93)	12	Recorded on ground (mostly stubble and pasture) as well as passing overhead.
Snipe	4	4 (4)	1	Recorded on ground, mostly in pasture.
Song thrush	13	83 (128)	28	Occasionally recorded on ground but mostly recorded in trees and hedges or passing overhead.
Starling	14	89 (771)	62	Recorded in pasture but mostly recorded in trees or on wires, as well as passing overhead.
Whinchat	1	1 (1)	1	Recorded in hedge.
Yellow wagtail	2	3 (3)	1	Recorded perched on wire and passing overhead.

3.2.2 The WBS survey area was shown to support a community of non-breeding species typical of the habitats and location. The Priority Species recorded in greatest numbers within the fields of the WBS survey area included fieldfare, linnet, meadow pipit and starling. Species such as dunnoek, greenfinch and house sparrow were recorded frequently but were mostly associated with surrounding hedgerows and trees. Black-headed, herring and lesser black-backed gulls were recorded but most birds were seen only in flight as they passed over the WBS survey area.

3.2.3 Secondary species recorded during the WBS comprised: blue tit, common buzzard, Canada goose, dipper, hobby, jackdaw, redwing, sparrowhawk, stock dove, stonechat, tawny owl, woodpigeon and wren.

3.2.4 The numbered fields (see **Figures 2b-2e**) from which Priority Species bird records were obtained are listed in **Table 3.4**. Only records of birds on the ground within the numbered fields are included and so records from adjacent hedges or trees, or of birds flying overhead, are not included in the table, unless the birds were noted as having flown from/to the interior of the field. Fields from which Priority Species numbers totalled fewer than ten individuals across all 14 survey visits, are not included in the table as these fields are considered to be of negligible importance for ornithological features.

Table 3.4: Fields with greatest number of Priority Species bird records

Field Number	Within Site or Buffer?	Habitat Type	Species Recorded		
			Species	Number of Visits Recorded	Peak Count
1	Site	Pasture	Meadow pipit	1	14
3	Site	Pasture	Skylark	1	4
			Starling	1	7
5	Site	Pasture	Starling	1	48
6	Site	Pasture	Fieldfare	1	4
			Mistle thrush	1	9
			Song thrush	1	11
			Starling	2	5
8	Buffer	Pasture	Black-headed gull	1	7
			Herring gull	1	11
			Lesser black-backed gull	1	2
13	Site	Stubble/ Winter cereal	Grey wagtail	1	2
			Linnet	2	27
			Meadow pipit	3	64
14	Site	Stubble/ Winter cereal	Fieldfare	2	6
			Linnet	3	85
			Meadow pipit	1	17
			Mistle thrush	1	2
			Skylark	1	1
			Song thrush	1	2
16	Site	Pasture/ Stubble/ Winter cereal	Greenfinch	1	1
			Linnet	2	19
			Meadow pipit	5	69

Field Number	Within Site or Buffer?	Habitat Type	Species Recorded		
			Species	Number of Visits Recorded	Peak Count
			Skylark	8	12
			Snipe	1	1
18	Site	Stubble	Linnet	1	28
			Meadow pipit	1	4
19	Site	Pasture	Fieldfare	1	5
			Linnet	2	7
			Meadow pipit	1	1
			Skylark	1	1
20	Site	Pasture	Meadow pipit	1	11
21	Site	Pasture	Fieldfare	2	3
			Linnet	3	2
			Meadow pipit	2	2
			Skylark	2	3
			Snipe	1	1
			Starling	1	7
27	Buffer	Pasture	Fieldfare	1	7
			Skylark	1	1
			Song thrush	1	3
29	Buffer	Pasture	Starling	1	17
34	Buffer	Pasture	Meadow pipit	1	62
46	Buffer	Pasture	Rook	1	26
72	Buffer	Pasture	Herring gull	1	32
			Red kite	1	1
73	Buffer	Pasture	Starling	1	18
76	Buffer	Pasture	Fieldfare	3	32
			Goshawk	1	1
			Herring gull	1	25
			Lesser black-backed gull	1	6
			Meadow pipit	1	7
			Starling	2	18

Field Number	Within Site or Buffer?	Habitat Type	Species Recorded		
			Species	Number of Visits Recorded	Peak Count
82	Buffer	Pasture	Fieldfare	2	6
			Starling	1	32
111	Buffer	Pasture	Fieldfare	1	13
			Mistle thrush	1	1
			Song thrush	1	1
			Starling	1	5
123	Buffer	Pasture	Meadow pipit	1	1
148	Buffer	Pasture	Starling	1	34
169	Site	Pasture	Meadow pipit	1	21
170	Buffer	Pasture	Starling	1	41
194	Site	Pasture	Meadow pipit	2	7
			Song thrush	1	1
			Starling	2	15
212	Buffer	Stubble	Linnet	1	67
225	Site	Pasture	Mallard	1	3
234	Site	Pasture	House sparrow	1	22
248	Buffer	Pasture	Linnet	1	5
254	Buffer	Pasture	Rook	1	12

3.2.5 The fields highlighted in **Table 3.4** comprise 15 fields within the Site and 16 fields in the surrounding 600 m buffer. In most cases, Priority Species were only recorded in a field on one survey visit, which is evidence of the sporadic presence of mobile flocks of wintering birds and indicates that the fields are not of high importance.

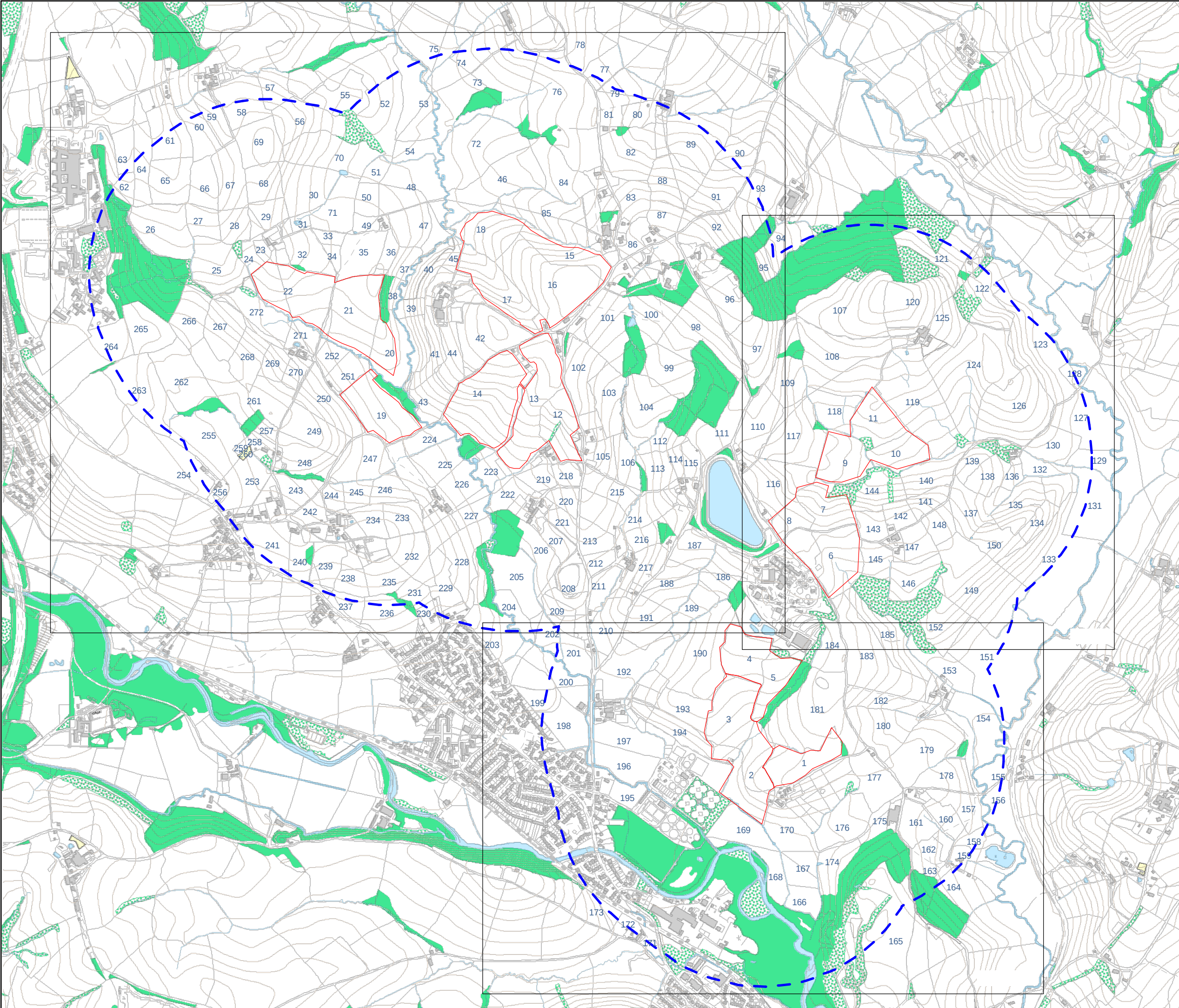
3.2.6 The most regularly used field (based on the number of visits in which Priority Species were recorded) was 'field 16', which is located in the north of the Site. The large majority of fields on Site did not hold Priority Species on any visit.

4 SUMMARY

4.1.1 The Site is located within 10 km of the Severn Estuary SPA and Ramsar site but no qualifying species of the SPA were recorded during the WBS, with the exception of a small number of mallard (named as being a component species of the waterfowl assemblage). Records of wader and waterfowl were returned in the desk study but most referred to records from the 2 km buffer (not the Site) and no indication of regular use of the Site by such species was identified.

- 4.1.2 Ponthir Sewage Works SINC is located adjacent to the Site. Species recorded during the WBS and which are included in the SINC description were tawny owl, snipe, green woodpecker, goshawk and kingfisher, although all were recorded infrequently and in low numbers.
- 4.1.3 The WBS recorded a total of 30 Priority Species however the surveys confirmed the Site is of low importance for wintering birds with most species recorded infrequently or in relatively low numbers. Wintering flocks of species such as meadow pipit, skylark, fieldfare and starling are transitory and, where recorded, most fields recorded these species on one survey visit only. Most records referred to birds overflying the Site (e.g. gull species and red kite) or referred to birds associated with hedges, trees and scrub along field margins and in adjacent woodland (e.g. bullfinch, dunnock and greenfinch).

Figure 1: Winter bird survey plan - January to March 2025



Legend

Site Boundary

600m Buffer

00	14/01/2025		HD	HD
Rev	Date	Description	De	App

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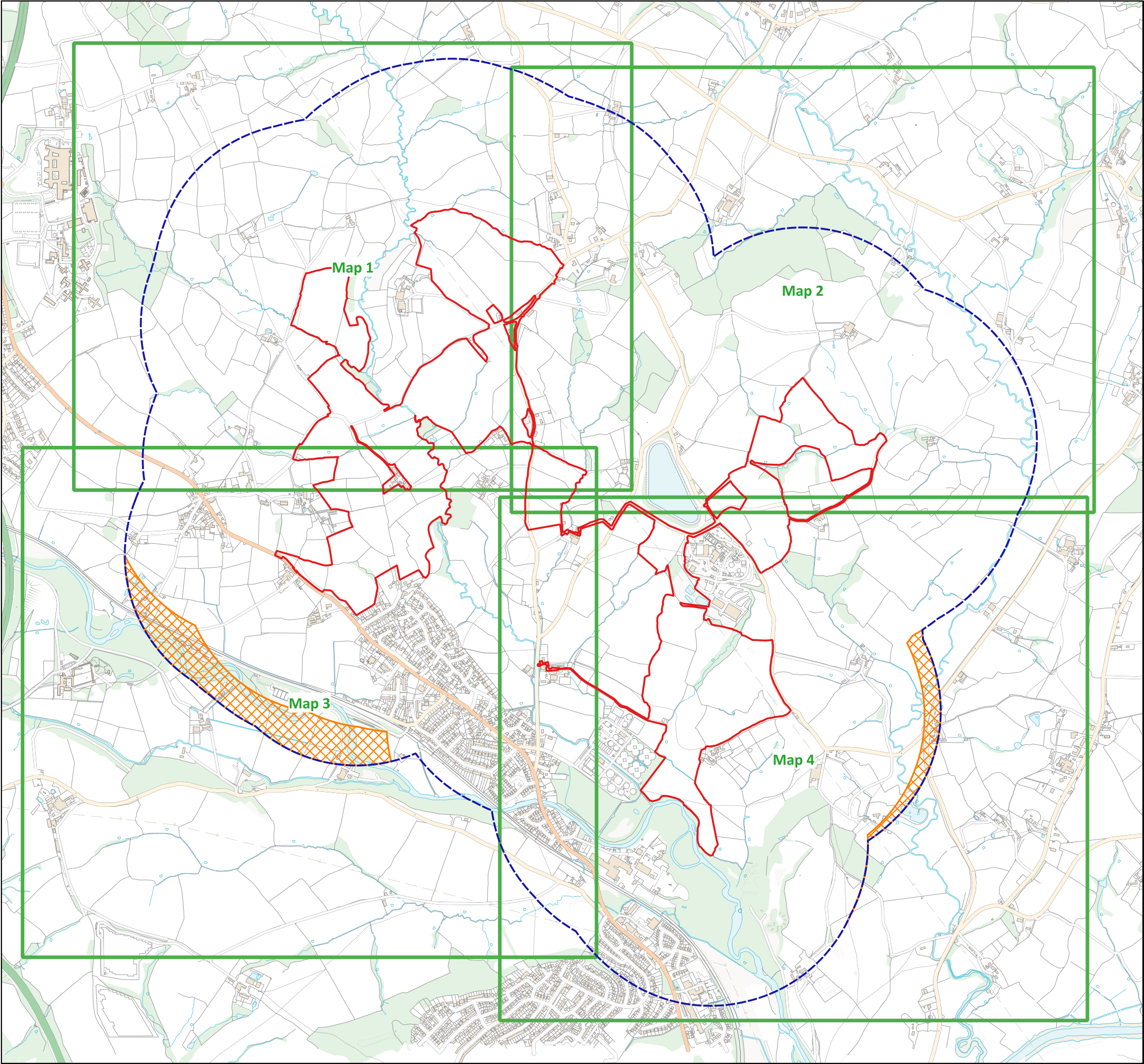
CANDWR SOLAR FARM

WINTERING BIRD SURVEY PLAN (JANUARY TO MARCH 2025) -OVERVIEW

Avian Ecology, Suite 3c Walnut Tree Farm, Northwich Road, Lower Stretton
WA4 4PG
Tel: 0945 506 5116
www.avianecology.co.uk

0 500 metres

Figures 2a-e: Winter bird survey plans - September to December 2025



- Site
- 600m Survey Buffer
- Map Page
- Unsurveyed Areas

CANDWR SOLAR FARM

Non-breeding Bird Survey Plan -
September to December 2025
Overview

Version: 01

Date: 19/06/2026



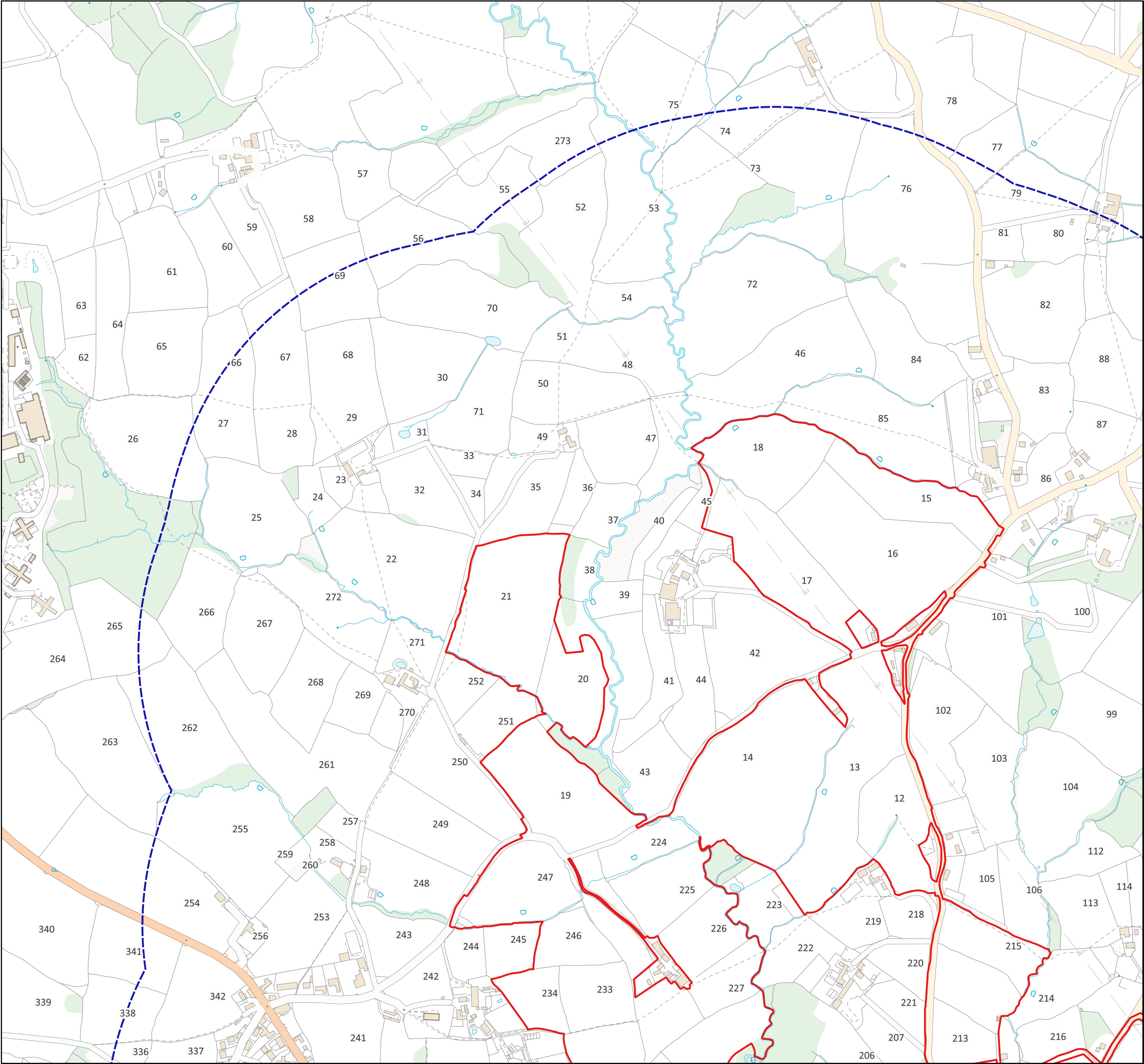
Avian Ecology, Suite 3c Walnut Tree Farm, Northwich Road, Lower Stretton, WA4 4PG
Tel: 0843 506 5116 www.avianecology.co.uk

0250500 m



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- Site
- 600m Survey Buffer
- Unserved Areas

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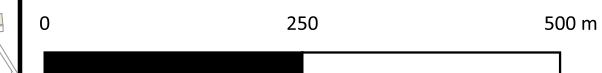
Non-breeding Bird Survey Plan September - December 2025 Map 1

Version: 01

Date: 19/06/2026

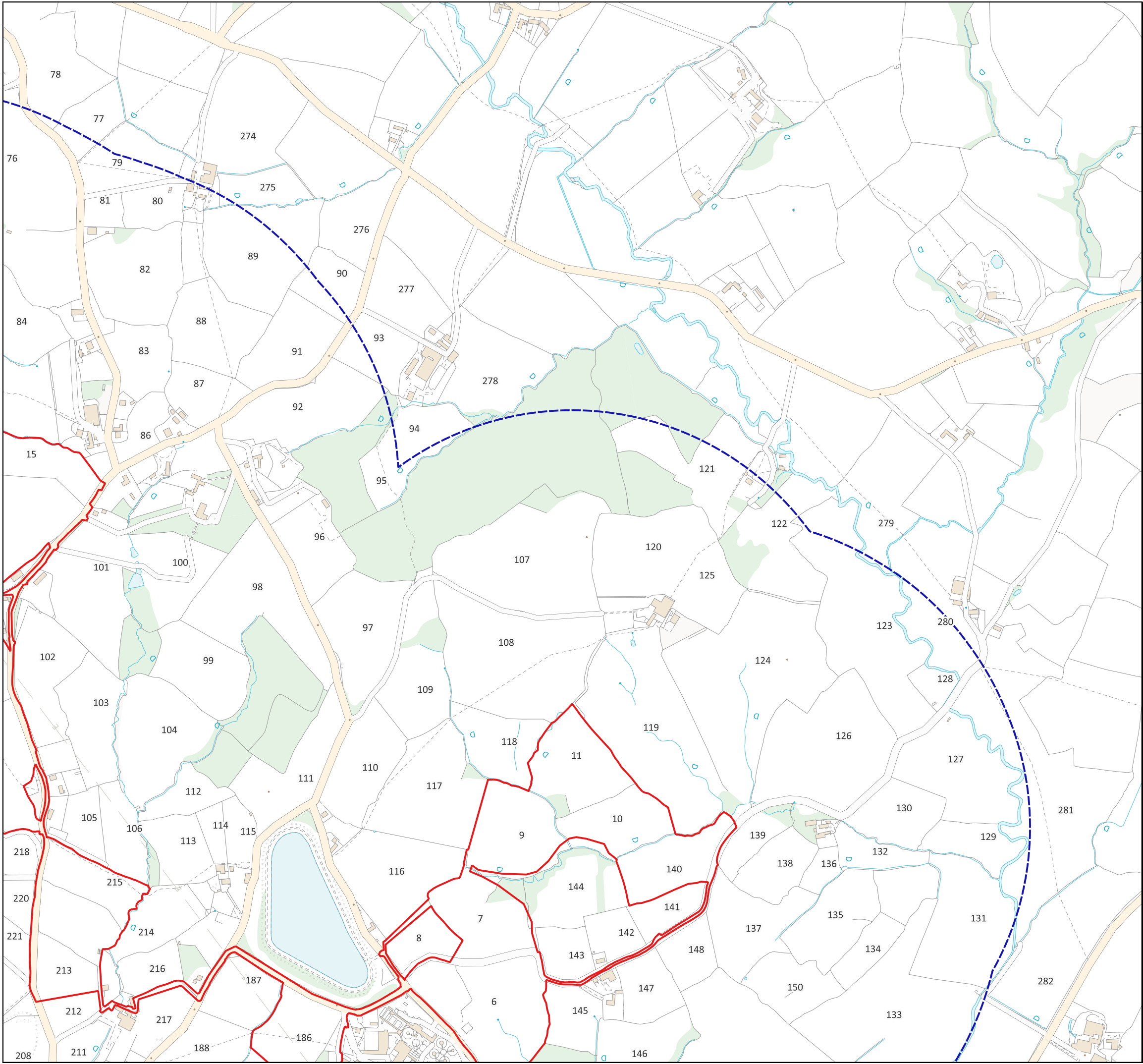


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Tel: 0843 506 5116 www.avianecology.co.uk



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-  Site
-  600m Survey Buffer
-  Unsurveyed Areas

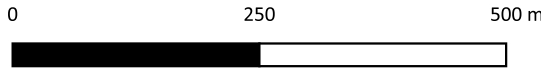
CANDWR SOLAR FARM

Non-breeding Bird Survey Plan September - December 2025 Map 2

Version: 01 Date: 19/06/2026

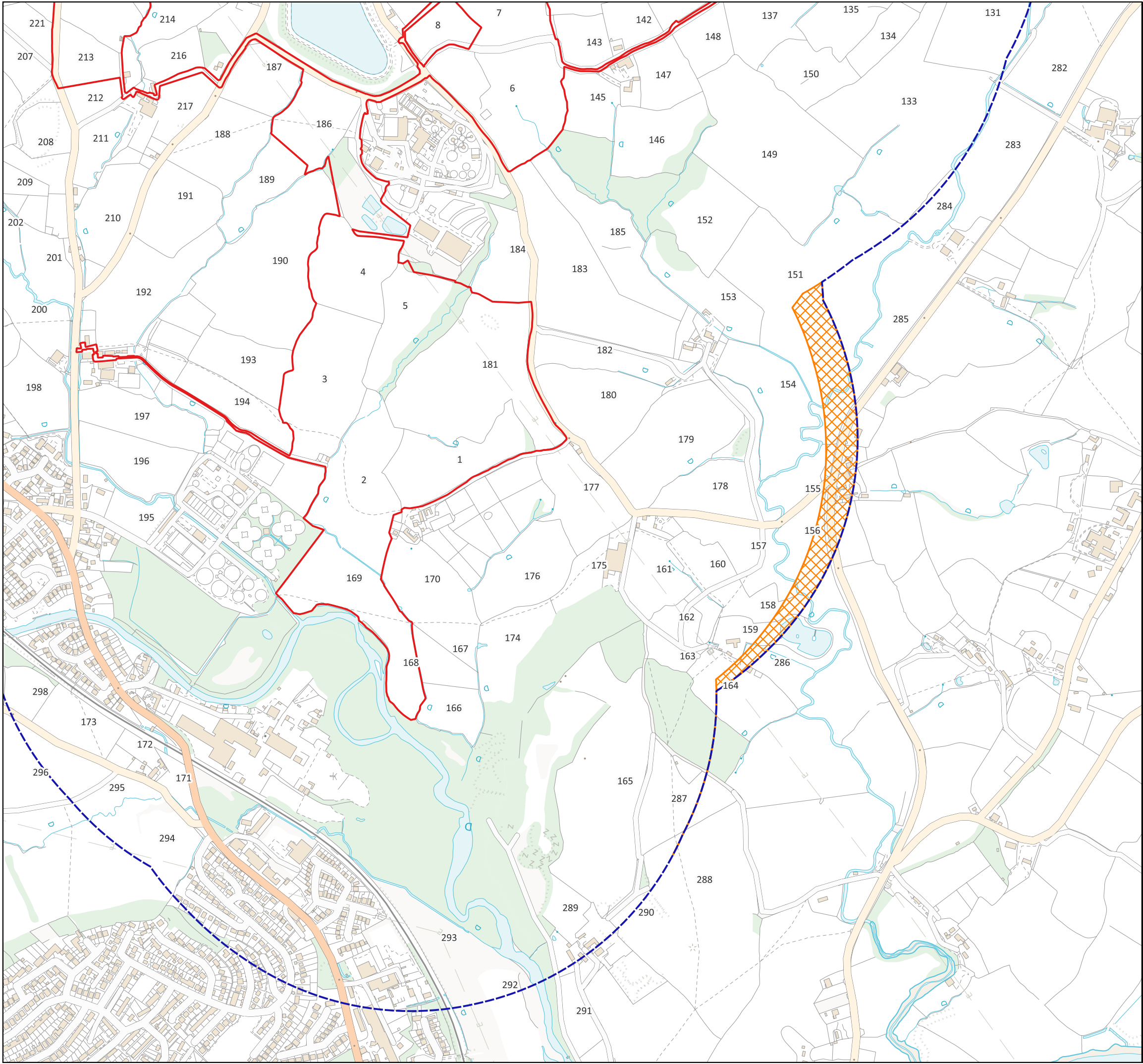


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Site

600m Survey Buffer

Unsurveyed Areas

CANDWR SOLAR FARM

Non-breeding Bird Survey Plan

September - December 2025

Map 4

Version: 01

Date: 19/06/2026

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0250500 m

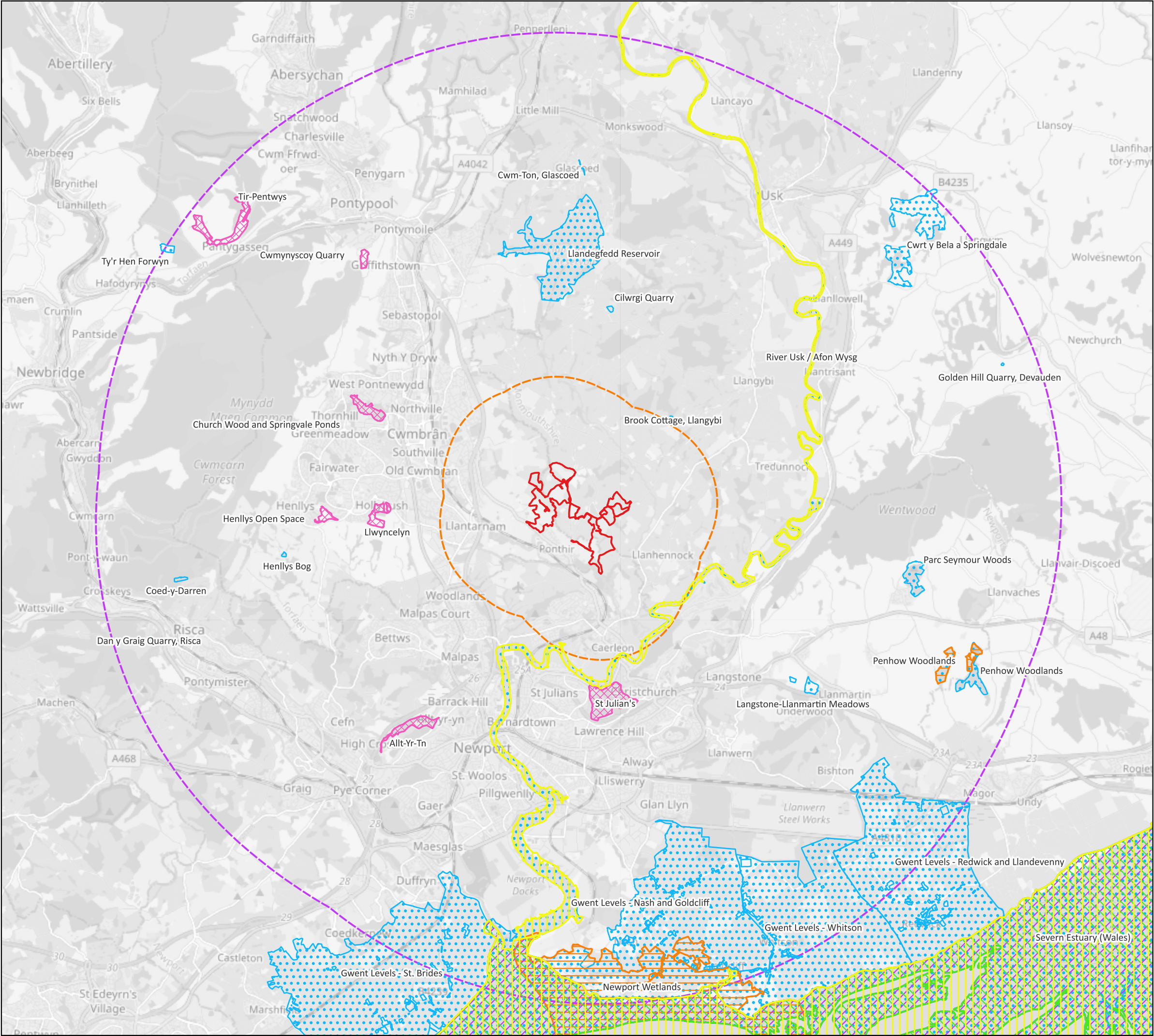
Co-ordinate System : British National Grid

Projection: Traverse Mercator Datum: OSGB 1936 Units: Metres

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Figure 3: Statutory designated sites



- Site
- 10km Search Buffer
- 2km Search Buffer
- Statutory Designated Sites
 - RAMSAR
 - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - National Nature Reserve

CANDWR SOLAR FARM

Statutory Designated Sites

Version: 01

Date: 27/05/2026



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WA4 4FS
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Figure 4: Non-statutory designated sites

Annex 1: Bird species summary

Table A1.1 provides a list of bird species included in the winter bird survey report. Both common and species (Latin) names are presented along with a summary of each species conservation status using the following abbreviations:

- Sch1 – Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- Ann1 – European Birds Directive Annex 1 species;
- S7 - Section 7 priority species of the Environment Wales Act (2026 (updated));
- LNRAP - Monmouthshire Local Nature Recovery Action Plan listed species; and
- BoCC – Birds of Conservation Concern for Wales: Red, Amber and Green categories.

Table A1.1: Summary of bird species

Common name	Species name	Conservation status
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	-
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Ann1
White-fronted Goose (Greenland/European)	<i>Anser albifrons (flavirostris/albifrons)</i>	Ann1 ²⁴ ; S7 ²⁴ ; LNRAP; Red
Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>	Ann1; S7; Red
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	S7; Red
Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	S7; Amber
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	Green
Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	S7; Amber
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Green
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	S7; Amber
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	S7; Amber
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	S7; Red
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Green
Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	S7; Amber
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Green
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Green
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Green
Coot	<i>Fulicula atra</i>	S7; Amber
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	S7; Amber
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	Sch1; Ann1; Green
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	S7; Red
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Sch1; S7; Amber
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Sch1; S7; Amber
Turnstone	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	S7; Amber
Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	S7; Amber
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	S7; Red
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	S7; Amber
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	S7; Amber

²⁴ Greenland white-fronted goose subspecies only

Common name	Species name	Conservation status
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Sch1; S7; Amber
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	S7; Red
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Sch1; S7; Green
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	Sch1; Ann1; S7; Amber
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	S7; Amber
Great Black-backed gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	S7; Amber
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	S7; Red
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Green
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	S7; Green
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Green
Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Sch1; S7; Amber
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Sch1; Ann1; S7; Amber
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Sch1; Ann1; Green
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Green
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	Green
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Sch1; Ann1; Green
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	S7; Amber
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Sch1; Green
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Sch1; Ann1; Green
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	S7; Amber
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	Green
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	S7; Red
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Green
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	S7; LNRAP; Amber
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	S7; Amber
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Green
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	S7; Red
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Green
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	LNRAP; Green
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	S7; Amber
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Sch1; Green
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Sch1; S7; Amber
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	S7; Red
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Green
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	Green
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	S7; LNRAP; Amber
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	S7; LNRAP; Amber
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red

Common name	Species name	Conservation status
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	S7; Amber
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	S7; Red
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	S7; LNRAP; Amber
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	S7; LNRAP; Amber
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	S7; Red
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	S7; LNRAP; Red
Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	S7; LNRAP; Amber

Annex 2: Winter bird survey effort (2025)

Wind Speed (Beaufort)		Wind Direction	Rain		Cloud Cover	
Calm	0	Use 16 point Compass	None	0	In eighths e.g.	3/8
Light air	1		Light Showers	1		
Light breeze	2	N	Heavy Showers	2	Frost	
Gentle breeze	3	NE	Light rain	3	None	0
Mod. breeze	4	ENE	Heavy rain	4	Ground	1
Fresh breeze	5	E			All day	2
Strong breeze	6	Etc	Visibility		Snow	
Mod. gale	7		Poor	0	None	0
Fresh gale	8		< 1km	1	On site	1
Strong gale	9		>1km	2	High ground	2

Visit	Date	Start Time	End time	Wind Speed	Wind Direction	Rain	Cloud Cover	Visibility	Frost	Snow
1	23/01/2025	09:45	16:15	2	W	2	3	2	0	0
	24/01/2025	09:15	16:15	4	SE	0	2	2	0	0
2	29/01/2025	08:05	14:15	1	NE	0	1	2	0	0
	30/01/2025	08:10	14:35	1	NW	0	0	2	0	0
3	06/02/2025	08:20	14:35	1	SE	0	0	2	1	0
	07/02/2025	08:00	14:10	5	NE	0	3	2	0	0
4	14/02/2025	07:50	13:55	3	E	0	6	2	0	0

Visit	Date	Start Time	End time	Wind Speed	Wind Direction	Rain	Cloud Cover	Visibility	Frost	Snow
	17/02/2025	08:15	14:10	2	E	0	7	2	0	0
5	24/02/2025	07:50	14:05	6	SW	3	7	1	0	0
	25/02/2025	07:15	13:20	3	WNW	0	2	2	0	0
6	13/03/2025	07:15	13:25	4	NE	1	7	2	0	0
	14/03/2025	08:00	14:05	3	NE	0	6	2	0	0
7	09/09/2025	07:40	14:50	3	SSE	0	6	2	0	0
	10/09/2025	07:30	13:45	3	SE	1	7	2	0	0
8	29/09/2025	07:10	15:30	1	SE	0	1	2	0	0
	30/09/2025	12:15	17:50	1	WSW	0	4	2	0	0
9	06/10/2025	07:15	16:00	2	SW	0	2	2	0	0
	07/10/2025	13:45	18:35	3	SW	0	7	2	0	0
10	21/10/2025	12:00	17:40	3	W	1	8	2	0	0
	22/10/2025	08:05	14:45	1	W	0	3	2	0	0
11	03/11/2025	10:50	16:55	4	SW	3	8	1	0	0
	04/11/2025	07:50	14:00	4	SW	3	8	1	0	0
12	17/11/2025	07:55	13:40	2	NE	0	0	2	1	0
	18/11/2025	10:20	16:20	2	WSW	0	1	2	0	0
13	01/12/2025	10:40	16:15	1	S	0	1	2	0	0
	02/12/2025	07:55	14:15	2	S	1	2	2	0	0
14	11/12/2025	07:50	13:55	3	SW	1	8	2	0	0
	12/12/2025	11:10	16:20	1	SW	0	1	2	0	0