



Winter Bird Survey for Land at Hayle, Cornwall

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## Winter Bird Survey, Land at Hayle, Cornwall

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## Winter Bird Survey, Land at Hayle, Cornwall

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## Winter Bird Survey, Land at Hayle, Cornwall

### 0.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Site Location</b>	The site comprises approximately 13ha of land at Hayle, Cornwall (NGR SW 579 383).
<b>Previous Surveys</b>	WYG undertook a habitat survey at the site in 2010.
<b>WYG EPT Survey</b>	WYG EPT was commissioned to undertake a winter bird survey to establish which species of birds use the site and in what numbers.
<b>Results</b>	The survey area supported low/moderate numbers of birds during the period January-March 2010 and these many comprised common, resident passerines.
<b>Constraints to survey</b>	The survey was conducted between February and March, no data is available for the early winter.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Hedgerows should be retained where possible and new hedgerows planted.</p> <p>Winter food sources for passerines should be incorporated into any development plans for the site.</p> <p>The creation of open water habitats may attract wildfowl and waders to the site.</p> <p>A habitat management plan should be prepared for the site.</p>

## Winter Bird Survey, Land at Hayle, Cornwall

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

A habitat survey was undertaken by WYG in April 2009 (for full details refer to report *Hayle Habitat Survey Report, 2009*). The survey report recommended further surveys of certain protected species based upon the suitability of habitats present on site and immediately adjacent land and/or records of such species in the area.

Correspondence with the Cornwall Wildlife Trust Deputy Conservation Manager, Cheryl Marriott, received on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010 (Ref: SW53U/09) highlighted the need for a survey of wintering birds. This survey was undertaken between February and March 2010 and together with the other protected species surveys (*Protected Species Surveys for Land at Hayle, Cornwall, 2009*) provides greater certainty as to the value of the site for wildlife and together with the Habitat Survey Report provide a comprehensive assessment of the ecology of the site. Please note that both wintering and spring passage birds are covered by this report.

The objectives of the study are defined as follows:

- To locate and identify birds using the survey area during the winter
- To assess the value of the wintering bird community
- To identify the key habitats being used by the wintering birds
- To make recommendations on how to reduce potential impacts of development on wintering birds

### 1.1 Site Description

The site covers approximately 11ha of land at Hayle, Cornwall (NGR SW 579 383). The site comprised a matrix of tall ruderal, marshy grassland, wet woodland and reedbed habitats interspersed with hedgerows. A new Sainsbury's supermarket and car park is being proposed for the southwest part of the site.

### 2.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Data Search

A search of internet databases provided information on designated sites within 2km that were designated for their bird interest<sup>1, 2</sup>.

The annual bird report for Cornwall<sup>3</sup> and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Cornwall<sup>4</sup> were referred to for the local status of birds recorded during the surveys and RSPB data was used to determine the national status of the birds<sup>5</sup>.

The Environmental Record Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) were contacted for all bird records within 2km of the site boundary.

#### 2.2 Field Survey

Due to the dense vegetation and localised flooding, a transect survey was not considered to be practical. A point count methodology is recommended by Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D., Hill, D.A. & Mustow, S.H. (2007)<sup>6</sup> for such areas and this was adopted here. This involved selecting seven vantage points around the site which between them allowed the maximum area of the site to be observed (for locations of vantage points see Figure 1.). In line with Bibby *et. al.* (2007), fifteen minute observations were conducted at each vantage point on each survey visit. During this time all birds seen or heard were recorded on a 1:10,000 scale map of the site. Bird observation and identification was aided by the use of 10x20 magnification binoculars and a telescope with a x20-60 magnification zoom lens. Only birds within the site boundary were recorded.

Because almost the entire site was visible from the points, it is assumed that most birds present were recorded and no adjustment of the count data was made.

Surveys were undertaken during February and March. All surveys were undertaken on dry, still days when birds would be most easily observed. Surveys were undertaken between one hour after dawn and 12 noon when activity levels are highest.

Furthermore, a site walkover was undertaken in February and March at dusk visit was made each month to look for flocks of roosting birds.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/special/sssi/>

<sup>3</sup> Cornwall Bird-Watching and Preservation Society (2006) Seventy-Sixth Annual Report.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/lbap.aspx?id=465>

<sup>5</sup> [www.RSPB.org](http://www.RSPB.org)

<sup>6</sup> Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D., Hill, D.A. & Mustow, S.H. (2007) *Bird Census Techniques*. Second Edition. Academic Press. Oxford.

### 2.3 Assessment Methodology

Winter bird populations at the site are assessed in terms of their local and national status. Local status is taken from the Cornwall Bird Report, 2006. National status is based on RSPB reports of the species current status.

A report on 'Birds of Conservation Concern' (BOCC) allocates nearly 250 birds that regularly occur in the UK to one of three lists. Those on the Red List are of high conservation concern whose populations or range is rapidly declining, recently or historically, and those of a global conservation concern. Birds on the Amber List are of medium conservation concern, whose population is in moderate decline, rare breeders, internationally important and localised species and those of an unfavourable conservation status in Europe. Bird species on the Green List are at a favourable conservation status. Birds on the UKBAP and LBAP are a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications.

Birds of greatest nature conservation interest tend to be listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended). Measures must be taken to assess whether Schedule 1 birds are present and if so, to ensure their habitats are protected through the planning process.

### 3.0 RESULTS

#### *Data search*

Hayle Estuary and Carrack Gladden Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 2km west of the site. The SSSI comprises inter-tidal mudflats, saltmarsh and reedbeds and has been designated in part for its wintering and migrating bird populations which include widgeon *Anas penelope*, teal *Anas crecca*, ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, curlew *Numenius arquata* and dunlin *Calidris alpina*. The estuary is also important for several wintering species uncommon in Cornwall including pintail *Anas acuta*, scaup *Aythya marila*, long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis*, redbreasted merganser *Mergus serrator*, common sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos* and little stint *Calidris minuta*. Species such as mute swan *Cygnus olor*, oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* and shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* are resident throughout the year.

The open water in Carnsew Pool attracts both wildfowl and diving bird species including blackthroated diver *Gavia arctica*, red-throated diver *Gavia stellata*, great northern diver *Gavia immer*, Slavonian grebe *Podiceps auritus*, little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* and goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*.

ERCCIS informed WYG that a variety of rare and notable bird species have been recorded within 2km of the site. The majority of these birds are ducks and waders associated with the estuarine habitats; however, representatives of other habitats particularly farmland, marshes and reedbed were also recorded. For a full list of bird records from ERCCIS see Appendix B.

#### *Field survey*

The site was visited on 22/2/10 and 3/3/10 between 8:00 and 10:30 Both visits were made on dry, overcast days with little wind. The air temperature varied from 6-10°C

Table 1 presents the species recorded on site with their conservation status, the peak count recorded and the frequency i.e. the number of visits on which the birds were recorded out of a total of 2 visits to the site. Local Status is based on Cornwall Bird-Watching and Preservation Society records, 2006. UK Status based on RSPB data.

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Table 1. Summary of Results Winter Bird Surveys

Species	Conservation Status	Peak Count	Frequency Recorded	Local Status	UK Status
House sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Red	3	2	Abundant breeding resident	C. 2.1-3.7 million pairs
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red	5	2	Very common breeding resident and abundant winter visitor and passage migrant	C.804,000 territories
Song thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Red Cornwall Local Biodiversity Action Plan	3	2	Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor	C.1,144,000 territories
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Amber	3	2	Rare resident breeder. Common winter visitor and scarce passage migrant	>100,000 wintering population
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Amber Cornwall Local Biodiversity Action Plan	2	1	Scarce breeding resident	C.166,000 territories
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber	1	1	Very common breeding resident and rare passage migrant	C.2,163,000 territories
Mistle thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Amber	2	1	Scarce breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor	C. 222,500 territories
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Amber	2	1	Common breeding resident	C. 371,000 individuals winter in the UK
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Green	1	2	Abundant breeding resident	C. 8,512,000 territories
Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	Green	1	2	Common breeding resident and rare passage migrant	C.31,100-44,000 territories. Numbers increasing.
Woodpigeon <i>Columba livia</i>	Green	15	2	Common breeding resident. Very common passage migrant and winter visitor	C.2,570,000-3,160,000 territories
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Green	3	2	Very common resident, very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor	C.5,895,000 territories
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	Green	3	2	Very common breeding resident. Common passage migrant and winter visitor	C. 10-15 million individuals winter in UK

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Species	Conservation Status	Peak Count	Frequency Recorded	Local Status	UK Status
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Green	4	2	Very common summer visitor and passage migrant. Scarce in winter	500-1000 birds winter in the UK. Many of the birds that breed in the UK winter abroad.
Long-tailed tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Green	1	1	Common breeding resident	C.273,000 territories
Coal tit <i>Parus ater</i>	Green	1	1	Common breeding resident and scarce passage migrant	C.653,000 territories
Blue Tit <i>Parus caeruleus</i>	Green	11	2	Abundant breeding resident	C.15 million birds winter in the UK. Some of these birds breed abroad.
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	Green	7	2	Very common breeding resident	C. 2,074,000 territories. The population is increasing
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	Green	6	2	Very common breeding resident	C. 650,000 territories. The population is increasing
Jackdaw <i>Corvus monedula</i>	Green	4	2	Very common breeding resident	C. 555,000 territories
Carrion Crow <i>Corvus corone</i>	Green	2	2	Very common breeding resident	C.790,000 territories. The population is increasing
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Green	5	2	Very common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor	C. 5,974,000 territories. The population is increasing
Greenfinch <i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Green	4	2	Very common breeding resident	C. 734,000 territories. The population is increasing
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Green	7	2	Very common breeding resident	C.100,000 birds winter in the UK. Some of the birds that breed in the UK winter abroad

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Twenty-four species of birds were recorded during the survey and this included three Red Listed species (house sparrow, starling and song thrush) and five Amber Listed species of Conservation Concern (snipe, bullfinch, mistle thrush, dunnock and mallard). Furthermore, Two Local BAP species were recorded; these were bullfinch and song thrush. No Schedule 1 species were present.

The majority of birds recorded were common, resident passerines which were associated with the hedgerows and scrub habitats. A peak count of three snipe was also recorded and these birds were seen feeding in the marshy grassland and reedbeds.

The evening visits to the site revealed no flocks of roosting birds.

Incidental records from the nearby RSPB bird reserve at Hayle Marsh and the Hayle Estuary, which were visited after the survey visits revealed large flocks of wildfowl and wading birds including oystercatcher, wigeon, lapwing, black-headed gull, lesser black-backed gull, sandpiper, dunlin, redshank, shellduck, curlew, egret and pintail as well as flocks of small passerines including goldfinch and long-tailed tit.

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### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The survey area supported low/moderate numbers of birds during the period February-March 2010. The maximum number of birds recorded was 81 individuals in February. The site does not appear to be a key site for wintering wildfowl or passage migrants which appear to favour the habitats available around the estuary. This is probably due to the lack of open water on the site. However, the site might be an important feeding site for resident passerines during the winter months. The site is of **local** value to wintering birds.

**5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

If the site is to be developed then provision should be made to retain habitats that provide food for wintering passerines. Food sources for the Local BAP species bullfinch and song thrush are particularly important to maintain the local populations of these birds. Seed and fruit-bearing plants will be particularly valuable to these birds in the winter.

Hedgerows are a key habitat for those birds which winter on the site and should be retained where possible and new hedgerows should be planted where there are opportunities to do so.

The creation of open water habitats may attract wildfowl and waders to the site.

A detailed management plan should be compiled for any new and retained functional habitats on the site.

## **6.0 CONSTRAINTS**

This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of the visit. Some species that might use the site or be apparent at other times of the year, or only in certain years, would not have been detected.

The behaviour of animals can be unpredictable and may not conform to standard patterns recorded in current scientific literature. This report therefore cannot predict with absolute certainty that animal species will occur in apparently suitable locations or habitats or that they will not occur in locations or habitats that appear unsuitable.

The survey was undertaken during February and March 2010 and no data was collected for the early part of the winter. It is possible that more bird species would have been recorded if the study had been conducted over an entire winter.

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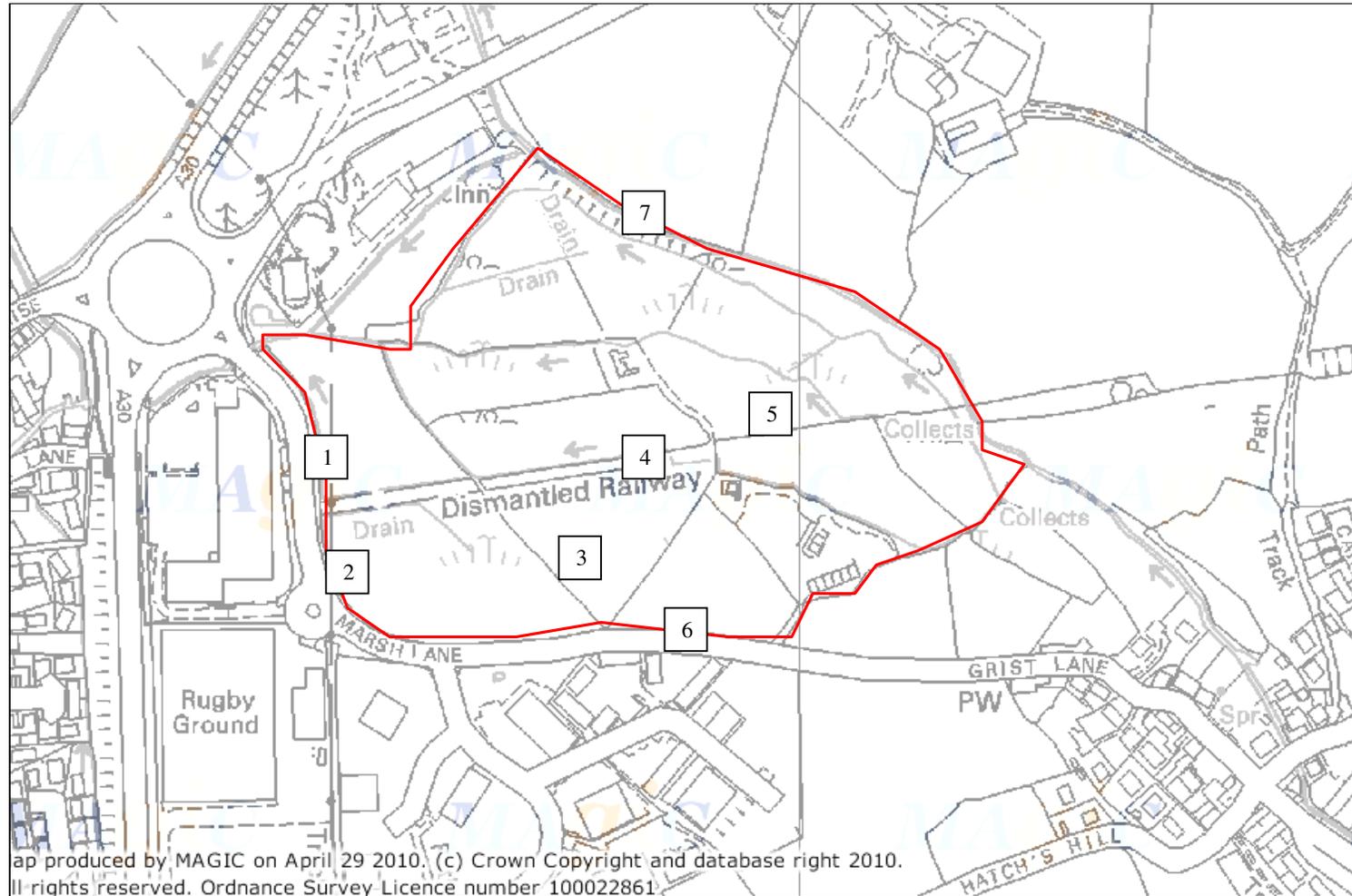


Figure 1. Vantage Point Locations

## **APPENDIX A- REPORT CONDITIONS**

This report is produced solely for the benefit of WYG Planning and SSL and no liability is accepted for any reliance placed on it by any other party unless specifically agreed in writing otherwise.

This report is prepared for the proposed uses stated in the report and should not be used in a different context without reference to WYG Environmental Planning & Transport Ltd. In time improved practices, fresh information or amended legislation may necessitate a re-assessment. Opinions and information provided in this report are on the basis of WYG Environmental Planning & Transport Ltd using due skill and care in the preparation of the report.

This report refers, within the limitations stated, to the environment of the site in the context of the surrounding area at the time of the inspections. Environmental conditions can vary and no warranty is given as to the possibility of changes in the environment of the site and surrounding area at differing times..

This report is limited to those aspects reported on, within the scope and limits agreed with the client under our appointment. It is necessarily restricted and no liability is accepted for any other aspect. It is based on the information sources indicated in the report. Some of the opinions are based on unconfirmed data and information and are presented as the best obtained within the scope for this report.

Reliance has been placed on the documents and information supplied to WYG Environmental Planning & Transport Ltd by others but no independent verification of these has been made and no warranty is given on them. No liability is accepted or warranty given in relation to the performance, reliability, standing etc of any products, services, organisations or companies referred to in this report.

Whilst skill and care have been used, no investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or not fully representative information. Any monitoring or survey work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations, including for example timescale, seasonal and weather related conditions.

Although care is taken to select monitoring and survey periods that are typical of the environmental conditions being measured, within the overall reporting programme constraints, measured conditions may not be fully representative of the actual conditions. Any predictive or modelling work, undertaken as part of the commission will be subject to limitations including the representativeness of data used by the model and the assumptions inherent within the approach used. Actual environmental conditions are typically more complex and variable than the investigative, predictive and modelling approaches indicate in practice, and the output of such approaches cannot be relied upon as a comprehensive or accurate indicator of future conditions.

The potential influence of our assessment and report on other aspects of any development or future planning requires evaluation by other involved parties.

The performance of environmental protection measures and of buildings and other structures in relation to acoustics, vibration, noise mitigation and other environmental issues is influenced to a large extent by the degree to which the relevant environmental considerations are incorporated into the final design and specifications and the quality of workmanship and compliance with the specifications on site during construction. WYG Environmental Planning & Transport Ltd accept no liability for issues with performance arising from such factors

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### APPENDIX B- RECORDS OF BIRDS WITHIN 2KM FROM ERCCIS

<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Northern Goshawk
<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Sparrowhawk
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark
<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Kingfisher
<i>Anas acuta</i>	Pintail
<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Shoveler
<i>Anas crecca</i>	Eurasian Teal
<i>Anas penelope</i>	Wigeon
<i>Anas strepera</i>	Gadwall
<i>Anser anser</i>	Greylag Goose
<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	Rock Pipit
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Meadow Pipit
<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	Water Pipit
<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Tree Pipit
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Ruddy Turnstone
<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>	Waxwing
<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Brent Goose
<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Common Goldeneye
<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Common Buzzard
<i>Calidris alba</i>	Sanderling
<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Dunlin
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Red Knot
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper
<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Pectoral Sandpiper
<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Little Stint
<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Linnet
<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Greenfinch
<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	Siskin
<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Cetti's Warbler
<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Kentish Plover
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Little Plover
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Ringed plover
<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	Black Tern
<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	White-throated Dipper
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Marsh Harrier
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Hen Harrier
<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Long-tailed Duck
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Woodpigeon
<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Rook
<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Jackdaw
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Cuckoo
<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Mute Swan
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret
<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Yellowhammer
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Robin
<i>Falconiformes</i>	Falconiformes
<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	Pied Flycatcher
<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Brambling
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Common Snipe
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Common Moorhen
<i>Gavia arctica</i>	Black-Throated Diver
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Eurasian Oystercatcher
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Swallow
<i>Lanius senator</i>	Woodchat Shrike
<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Herring Gull
<i>Larus canus</i>	Mew Gull
<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Lesser Black-backed Gull
<i>Larus marinus</i>	Great Black-backed Gull
<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	Mediterranean Gull
<i>Larus minutus</i>	Little Gull
<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Black-headed Gull
<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Black-tailed Godwit
<i>Locustella naevia</i>	Grasshopper Warbler
<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Common Scoter
<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Goosander

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<i>Mergus serrator</i>	Red-breasted Merganser
<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Black Kite
<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Red Kite
<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Northern Gannet
<i>Motacilla alba</i>	White/Pied Wagtail
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Grey Wagtail
<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	Citrine Wagtail
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Yellow Wagtail
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Spotted flycatcher
<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Eurasian Curlew
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Night Heron
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Wheatear
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey
<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	Bearded Tit
<i>Parus major</i>	Great Tit
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow
<i>Passer montanus</i>	Tree Sparrow
<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	Honey Buzzard
Phalaropodidae	Phalaropodidae
<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Pheasant
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	Ruff
<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Black Redstart
<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Redstart
<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Wood Warbler
<i>Pica pica</i>	Magpie
Piciformes	Piciformes
<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Eurasian Spoonbill
<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Snow Bunting
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Grey Plover
<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	Slavonian Grebe
<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	Red-necked Grebe
<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Dunnock
<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	Water Rail
<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	Pied Avocet
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Sand Martin
<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	Stonechat
<i>Serinus serinus</i>	Serin
<i>Sitta europaea</i>	Nuthatch
<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Arctic Skua
<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Roseate Tern
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Common Tern
<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	Sandwich Tern
<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Collared Dove
<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Turtle Dove
Strigiformes	Strigiformes
<i>Sturnus roseus</i>	Rosy Starling
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling
<i>Sylvia undata</i>	Dartford Warbler
<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	Ruddy Shelduck
<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	Common Shelduck
<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Spotted Redshank
<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Spotted Redshank
<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	Lesser Yellowlegs
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Wood Sandpiper
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Common Greenshank
<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Green Sandpiper
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Common Redshank
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Wren
<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Redwing
<i>Turdus merula</i>	Blackbird
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song Thrush
<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Fieldfare
<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	Ring Ouzel
<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Mistle Thrush
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl
<i>Upupa epops</i>	Hoopoe
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Northern Lapwing