

APPENDIX 5.3

2023/2024 & 2024/2025 WINTERING BIRD REPORT

Appendix 5.3. – 2023/2024 & 2024/2025 Wintering Bird Report



Wintering Bird Assessment for Lands at Confey West, Leixlip, Co. Kildare.



15th August 2025

Prepared by: Emma Peters of Altemar Ltd.
On behalf of: Vanisland Limited.

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Document Control Sheet			
Client	Vanisland Limited.		
Project	Wintering Bird Assessment at Confey West, Leixlip, Co. Kildare.		
Report	Wintering Bird Assessment		
Date	15 th August 2025		
Version	Author	Reviewed	Date
Final	Emma Peters	Bryan Deegan	15 th August 2025

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Summary

Structure/features:	The proposed development area consists mainly of grassland, recolonising bare ground, bare ground and horticultural land bordered by drainage ditches, treelines and hedgerows. The Royal Canal is immediately to the south of the site.
Location:	Confey West, Leixlip, Co. Kildare.
Bird species present:	Buzzard, Blackbird, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull, Blue tit, Bullfinch, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal tit, Dunnock, Goldfinch, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Heron, Herring Gull, Hooded Crow, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Linnet, Long-tailed tit, Mallard, Magpie, Meadow Pipit, Mistle thrush, Moorhen, Mute swan, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail, Raven, Redwing, Redshank, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Skylark, Song Thrush, Starling, Tree sparrow, Woodpigeon, Wren, Yellowhammer.
Proposed work:	Residential development.
Surveys by:	Emma Peters (BSc Environmental Science) & Jeff Boyle (BSc Environmental Management).
Survey dates:	2024: 15th, 19th, 22nd, 29th January, 7th, 12th, 19th and 29th of February and the 7th and 12th of March 2024. 2024/2025: 5th of December 2024, 20th of January, 4th, 13th of and the 25th of March 2025.



Figure 1. Wintering bird survey area and site outline.



Figure 2. Wintering bird survey location.

Competency of assessor

Since its inception in 2001, Altamar has been delivering ecological and environmental services to a broad range of clients. Operational areas include: residential; infrastructural; renewable; oil & gas; private industry; Local Authorities; EC projects; and, State/semi-State Departments.

This report has been prepared by Emma Peters & Jeff Boyle, and has been reviewed by Bryan Deegan, of Altamar Ltd.

Bryan Deegan (MCIEEM, BSc Applied Marine Biology, MSc Environmental Science)

Bryan Deegan, the managing director of Altamar, is an Environmental Scientist and Marine Biologist with 30 years' experience working in Irish terrestrial and aquatic environments, providing services to the State, Semi-State and industry. He is currently lead project ecologist for Project Pembroke and was contracted to Inland Fisheries Ireland as the sole "External Expert" to environmentally assess internal and external projects. He is also chair of an internal IFI working group on environmental assessment. Bryan Deegan (MCIEEM) holds a MSc in Environmental Science, BSc (Hons.) in Applied Marine Biology, NCEA National Diploma in Applied Aquatic Science and a NCEA National Certificate in Science (Aquaculture).

Emma Peters (BSc Environmental science).

This Report has been prepared by Emma Peters. Emma has carried out a range of wintering and breeding ornithological surveys in Ireland. Emma has experience in bat detection through static detector surveys, dusk emergence, and down re-entry surveys and is a member of Bat Conservation Ireland. She is also skilled in habitat identification, native and non-native species identification and terrestrial mammal surveys.

Jeff Boyle (BSc Environmental Management)

Jeff Boyle (BSc (Hons.) Environmental Management) is skilled in bat detection through static detector surveys, dusk emergence, and down re-entry surveys. He is also skilled in habitat assessment and has undertaken flora/invasive species surveys and breeding/wintering bird surveys to produce numerous ecological assessments on a range of residential, industrial and commercial projects.

Legislative context

The Wildlife Act 1976 protects wild birds in Ireland. Based on this legislation it is an offence to wilfully interfere with or destroy wild birds and their nests and eggs (other than the wild species mentioned in the Third Schedule of this Act). Under this legislation it is an offence for any person who *"wilfully takes or removes the eggs or nest of a protected wild bird otherwise than under and in accordance with such a licence, wilfully destroys, injures or mutilates the eggs or nest of a protected wild bird, wilfully disturbs a protected wild bird on or near a nest containing eggs or unflown young."*

Habitats Directive- Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora has been transposed into Irish Law, including, via, *inter alia*, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

Council Directive 2009/147/EC 2010 on the conservation of wild birds provides for the conservation of wild birds by, among other things, classifying important ornithological sites as Special Protection Areas. The Directive relates to the conservation of all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state, their eggs, nests and habitats in the European territory of the Member States. The Directive prohibits in particular:

- deliberate killing or capture by any method;
- deliberate destruction of, or damage to, their nests and eggs or removal of their nests;
- taking their eggs in the wild and keeping these eggs even if empty;
- deliberate disturbance of these birds particularly during the period of breeding and rearing, in so far as disturbance would be significant having regard to the objectives of this Directive;
- keeping birds of species the hunting and capture of which is prohibited.

Under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended), notwithstanding any consent, statutory or otherwise, given to a person by a public authority or held by a person,

except in accordance with a licence granted by the Minister under Regulation 54, a person who in respect of the species referred to in Part 1 of the First Schedule:

- deliberately captures or kills any specimen of these species in the wild,
- deliberately disturbs these species particularly during the period of breeding, rearing, hibernation and migration,
- deliberately takes or destroys eggs of those species from the wild,
- damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or
- keeps, transports, sells, exchanges, offers for sale or offers for exchange any specimen of these species taken in the wild, other than those taken legally as referred to in Article 12(2) of the Habitats Directive, shall be guilty of an offence.

Wintering bird surveys

This report presents the methodology and results of 10 visits to Confey West by Emma Peters from January to March 2024, in addition to five visits by Jeff Boyle between December 2024 and March 2025.

Survey methodology

Wintering bird surveys were carried out during the wintering bird season at Confey West in order to gather baseline data to assist in assessing the potential impacts on wintering birds from future proposed developments on the site, in particular those listed as Qualifying Interests of SPAs within 15 km and other amber/red-listed birds of conservation concern in Ireland (BoCCI). Potential impacts on wintering bird species include disturbance, destruction of foraging areas, destruction of roosting areas and collision risk during construction and operation (cranes, buildings etc.). These wintering bird surveys were carried out based on the BTO Common Bird Census (Bibby *et al.*, 2000 and Gilbert *et al.*, 1998) and I-WeBS Counter Manual: Guidelines for Irish Wetland Bird Survey counters (BWI & NPWS), following CIEEM guidelines.

A 15-minute settlement period was given following arrival to allow resumption of bird activity after any possible disturbance caused by arrival to the site. Various features such as grassland, scrub, waterlogged areas, recolonising bare ground, bare ground, and treeline were present within the survey area. A roving transect survey around the perimeter was carried out on each occasion, providing clear views of all areas within and over that survey area. A vantage point in the northwest provided unobstructed views across the survey area (Figure 3.). Flight lines, large flights, foraging, perching, bathing and any other observed behaviour by wintering bird species and other species observed within, over and immediately adjacent to the survey area were recorded. Each survey was carried out by a single surveyor. A pair of binoculars were used by the surveyor to identify and count birds at distance.

Care was taken not to double count any observations. Surveys were initiated at varying times (morning/midday/afternoon) to account for fluxes in bird activity and birds transiting to/from foraging and roosting areas. Local temperatures varied from 0 – 10°C. Winds varied from 2– 5 on the Beaufort scale. Weather conditions were favourable on all occasions. Light rain throughout the 29th of January 2024 survey was unlikely to have suppressed bird activity.

Peak counts for the survey area were compared to 1% national and international population sizes of relevant species for which data was available. Foraging areas, flight paths, large flights and other observations were mapped according to field sheet records.

Survey results/discussion

Habitats of wintering bird potential

A desk and ground level wintering bird habitat assessment were carried and used to examine the structures, features and vegetation on site that could provide wintering bird habitat. Potential features associated with foraging/roosting include agricultural fields, improved/amenity grassland, scrub, watercourses and drainage ditches. All open areas, vegetated areas, built areas and water-holding features within and immediately adjacent to the site were assessed for wintering bird potential.

Habitat of foraging value for wintering birds was limited throughout the site. The site consisted mainly of arable crop lands with deep drainage ditches. The fields were bordered by native hedgerows which support many mature trees. Lands immediately to the east and west of the site were grassland habitats. During the survey periods, areas to the northwest of the site had become waterlogged forming large puddles, however these did not contain any vegetation. The site is in close proximity (< 1 km) to the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. However, the site is over 15km away from any SPA and so it is not expected that the Qualifying Interests of the SPA's will utilise and/or fly over the site.



Figure 3. Survey area and vantage point (Blue X).

Wintering bird activity survey (2024)

A total of 42 species were recorded within, above and immediately adjacent to the survey area across 10 surveys (see Appendix 1a for individual observations of target species). Twenty-six green, eleven amber and five red bird species of conservation concern in Ireland (BoCCI) were recorded either within, over and immediately adjacent to the survey area. Details regarding the status, behaviour and abundances of species recorded on/over/adjacent to the site relevant to the conservation interests of Special Protected Areas (SPAs) and red listed BoCCI are discussed below.

Meadow pipit (red BoCCI) was observed foraging mainly in the east portion of the south field on thirteen occasions (Figure 4) on the arable fields. On an additional occasion, three meadow pipits were noted foraging in the north field to the west. Peak count was four individuals. This species was noted on every survey besides survey 1.

Redwing (red BoCCI) was observed on thirty-three occasions during survey 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 &10. (Figure 5). Many of these observations were within the redline. Peak count was forty-eight individuals. Foraging of this species was noted on three occasions, the largest flock observed was 30 individuals. Flight paths of this species over the site were mainly from North to South. Max estimated height was of 20meters with a mean flight height of 10m. Redwings were noted perching in the hedgerows and treelines to the south of the site and in the most northwest corner of the site.

Yellowhammer (red BoCCI) – This species was observed on eight occasions during surveys 2,3,5 & 9. Yellowhammers were noted perched on the north hedgerow of four occasions and twice in the central hedgerow onsite. Two of these sightings were within the redline. The peak count of this species was three. The estimated mean flight height of this species is 6.6m.

Oystercatcher (red BoCCI) – was noted on one occasion (survey 7) off site, of two individuals foraging by the canal. It was an unusual observation as the site is so far inland however the tides was low during this survey.

Redshank (red BoCCI) – was observed on one occasion (survey 7) of three individuals flying at 10m southwest over then central and north hedgerow. It was an unusual observation as the site is so far inland however the tides was low during this survey.

Greenfinch (amber BoCCI) – was observed on eighteen occasions during survey 3,4,5,6,8,9 & 10. This species was only observed perched in treelines and hedgerows throughout the site. The peak count of this species was sixteen.

Herring Gull (amber BoCCI) – was observed on sixteen occasions during surveys 3,4,5,6,7 & 8. Most of the flight heights over the site were headed west, The mean estimated flight height was 16.5 m. Herring gulls were noted foraging on site on three occasions, two within the south field and one occasion of in the east of the north field. Peak count of this species was six.

House sparrow (amber BoCCI) – was observed thirty-four times during all ten surveys. The majority of observations were making of house sparrows using the hedgerows onsite, particularly the treeline in the most east of the site. Flight paths of this species were low, four observations in total. The mean estimated flight height was 7.5m One occasion of foraging was noted during survey 1. The peak count of this species was twelve.

Linnet (amber BoCCI) – a total of 34 observations were made in all 10 surveys. Flight paths were observed originating from all directions with an average estimated flight height of 10.4m. The most notable observations were of the consisted foraging activity from surveys 3-10. Foraging activity was concentrated to the south field where turnips were growing. The largest flock observed was fifty. The peak count of this species was sixty-one.

Mallard (amber BoCCI) – A total of seven observations was made of this species. The peak count of this species was seven. Two mallards were noted foraging in the north field on one occasion (survey 10). Flight paths of this species indicate that they are using the canal, only flying over the site. Average estimated flight height is 17.5 m.

Mute swan (amber BoCCI) – was observed on eleven occasions during surveys 1,3,5,7,8,9 & 10 offsite, on the Royle canal south of the subject site. Two flight paths were noted across the site both at an estimated height of 15m. No foraging of this species was noted onsite.

Skylark (amber BoCCI) –Twelve observations were made of this species foraging 1,2,3,6,8,9 & 10. Foraging activity was concentrated in the northwest portion of the north field. Peak count of this species was fifty-one. One flight path was observed of six individuals at an estimated height of 10m.

Tree sparrow (amber BoCCI) – One observation was made of this species in the centre of the south hedgerow during survey 3.

Table 1. Species recorded within, above and/or immediately adjacent to the survey

Common name	BTO	Latin name	BoCCI
Buzzard	BZ	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Green
Blackbird	B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Green
Black-headed Gull	BH.	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Amber
Blue tit	BT	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Green
Bullfinch	BF	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Green
Chaffinch	CH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Green
Chiffchaff	CC	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Green
Coal tit	CT	<i>Periparus ater</i>	Green
Dunnoek	D.	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Green
Goldfinch	GO	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Green
Great Tit	GT	<i>Parus major</i>	Green
Greenfinch	GR	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Amber
Heron	H.	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Green
Herring Gull	HG		Amber
Hooded Crow	HC	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	Green
House Sparrow	HS	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Amber
Jackdaw	JD	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Green
Lesser Black-backed Gull	LB	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Amber
Linnet	LI	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Amber
Long-tailed tit	LT	<i>Aegithalus caudatus</i>	Green
Mallard	MA	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Amber
Magpie	MG	<i>Pica pica</i>	Green
Meadow Pipit	MP	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Red
Mistle thrush	MT	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Green
Moorhen	MH	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Green
Mute swan	MS	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Amber
Oystercatcher	OC	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Red
Pheasant	PH	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Green
Pied Wagtail	PW	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	Green
Raven	RN	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Green
Redwing	RE	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Red
Redshank	RK	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Red
Robin	R.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Green
Rook	RO	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Green
Siskin	SK	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	Green

Skylark	S.	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Amber
Song Thrush	ST	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Green
Starling	SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Amber
Tree sparrow	TS	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Amber
Woodpigeon	WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Green
Wren	WR	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Green
Yellowhammer	Y.	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red

Table 2. Peak counts of bird species recorded within, above and/or immediately adjacent to the survey area.

Species	Peak count (2024)	1% national	1% international
Buzzard	3		
Blackbird	9		
Black-headed Gull	1		>10,000
Blue tit	11		
Bullfinch	1		
Chaffinch	65		
Chiffchaff	1		
Coal tit	2		
Dunnock	10		
Goldfinch	47		
Great Tit	11		
Greenfinch	16		
Grey Heron	1	25	5,000
Herring Gull	6		>1000
Hooded Crow	12		
House Sparrow	12		
Jackdaw	30		
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1		
Linnet	61		
Long- tailed tit	7		
Mallard	7	280	53,000
Magpie	10		
Meadow Pipit	4		
Mistle thrush	2		
Moorhen	2		>10,000
Mute swan	4		
Oystercatcher	2		
Pheasant	4		
Pied Wagtail	5		
Raven	1		
Redwing	48		
Redshank	3		
Robin	15		
Rook	18		
Siskin	4		
Skylark	51		
Song Thrush	6		
Starling	87		
Tree sparrow	1		
Woodpigeon	74		
Wren	13		
Yellowhammer	3		



Figure 4. Map demonstrating the foraging areas (no. of individuals) of meadow pipits onsite.



Figure 6. Map demonstrating the Flight paths(m) and perched observation of yellowhammers onsite.



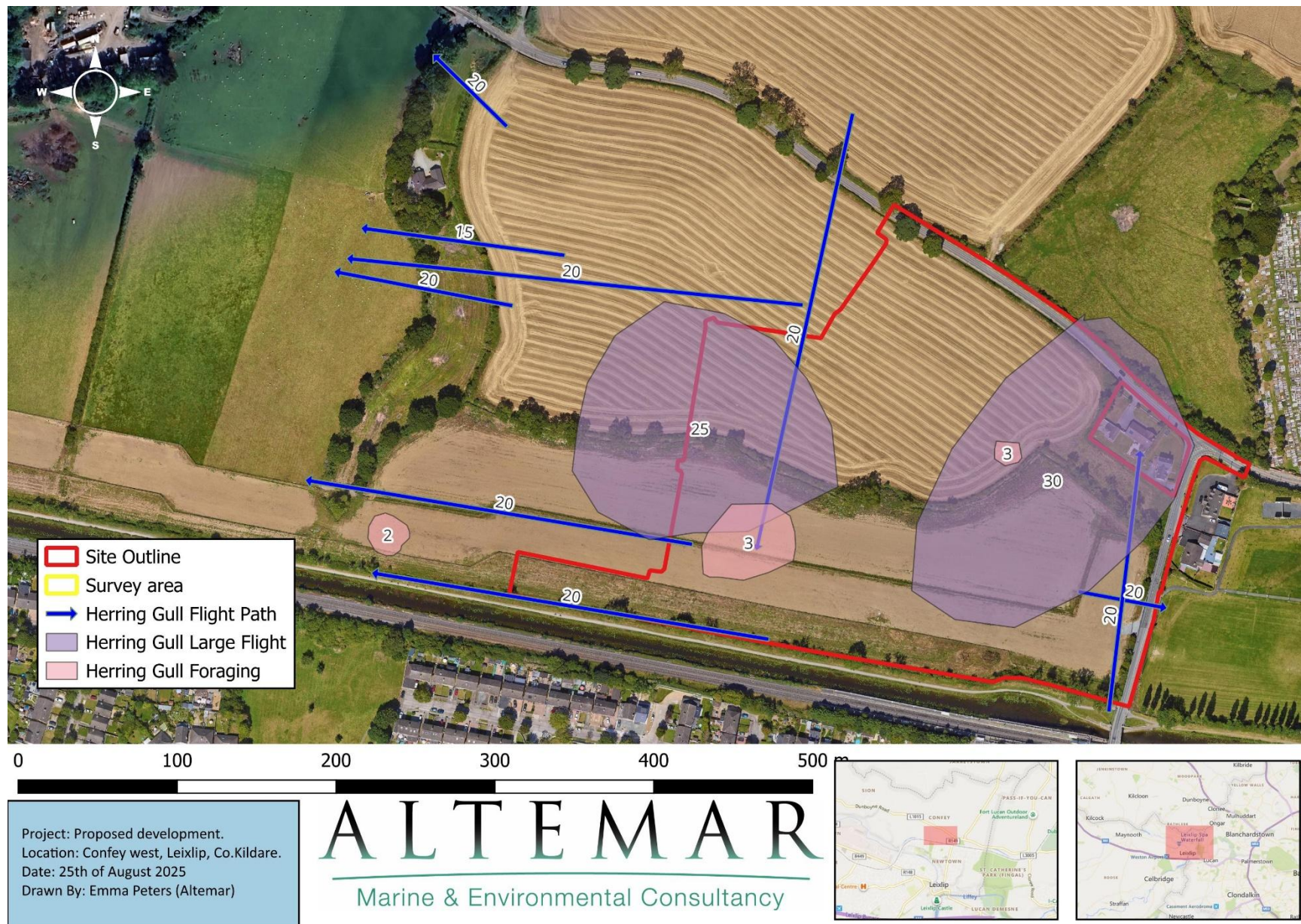


Figure 8. Map demonstrating the Flight paths(m),foraging areas and large flight (m) observations of herring gulls onsite.



Figure 9. Map demonstrating the Flight paths(m), foraging areas and perched observations of house sparrows onsite.



Figure 10. Map demonstrating the Flight paths(m), foraging (no. of individuals) areas and perched observations of linnets onsite.



Figure 11. Map demonstrating the Flight paths(m), foraging (no. of individuals) areas and perched observations of mallards onsite.



Figure 12. Map demonstrating the Flight paths(m) and perched observations of mute swans onsite.



Figure 13. Map demonstrating the foraging (no. of individuals) areas of skylarks onsite.



Figure 14. Map demonstrating the perched observations of the tree sparrows onsite.

Wintering bird activity survey (2024 - 2025)

A total of 29 species were recorded within, above and immediately adjacent to the survey area across 5 surveys. Eighteen green, eight amber and three red listed bird species of conservation concern in Ireland (BoCCI) were recorded either within, over and immediately adjacent to the survey area. Details regarding the status, behaviour and abundances of species recorded on/over/adjacent to the site relevant to the conservation interests of Special Protected Areas (SPAs) and red listed BoCCI are discussed below.

Meadow pipit (red BoCCI) was observed foraging around the centre and south of the site on four occasions (Figure 15). This species was noted on every survey besides survey 2. Peak count was three individuals.

Redwing (red BoCCI) was observed on fourteen occasions during survey 1, 2, 4 & 5. (Figure 16). Many of these observations were outside of the redline but within the wider site boundary. Foraging of this species was noted on two occasions, the largest flock observed was 12 individuals. Flight paths of this species were varied. Max estimated height was of 10meters. Redwings were noted perching in the hedgerows and treelines to the south and west of the site. Peak count was eighteen individuals.

Yellowhammer (red BoCCI) – This species was observed on three occasions during surveys 1,3 & 4. Yellowhammers were noted perched along the treeline dissecting the site. One of these sightings were within the redline. The peak count of this species was one. Yellowhammers were stationary and no flights were observed.

Greenfinch (amber BoCCI) – was observed on seven occasions during surveys 3 & 4. This species was observed perched in treelines and hedgerows throughout the site. On one occasion, a pair flew from the centre treeline eastwards at a height of approximately 15m. Peak count was four.

Herring Gull (amber BoCCI) – was observed on eight occasions during surveys 1, 2, & 5. Most of the flight heights over the site were headed west and tended to be parallel with the Royal Canal. Circling behaviour by this species was observed at the southwest boundary of the site. Herring gulls were noted foraging on site (but outside the red line boundary) on two occasions as shown in Figure 19. Herring gulls were often observed foraging within the GAA club to the east of the site. As shown in Figure 19, a large flight occurred when approximately 15 individuals took flight at approximately 30m heading west from the GAA grounds after circling the site for a couple of minutes. Peak count of this species was fifteen.

Common Gull (amber BoCCI) - was observed a total of five times on surveys 1 & 2 with flight heights ranging from between 10-20m. Similar to herring gulls, four common gulls were observed foraging on the GAA grounds to the west of the site on one occasion. Peak count was three.

House sparrow (amber BoCCI) – was observed eleven times during five surveys. The majority of observations were making of house sparrows using the hedgerows in the middle and south of the site. Two flight path observations were made in total. The mean estimated flight height was 12.5m One occasion of foraging was noted during survey 1. The peak count of this species was ten.

Linnet (amber BoCCI) – a total of 13 observations were made during the 5 surveys. Foraging activity was concentrated to the south field where turnips were growing. The largest flock observed was thirty-one. The peak count of this species was thirty-eight.

Mute swan (amber BoCCI) – was observed along the Royal Canal on survey 1 & 4. No foraging or flight paths of this species was noted onsite. The swans were observed to be bathing. Peak count was 2.

Skylark (amber BoCCI) –Five observations were made of this species foraging between all surveys. Foraging activity was concentrated in the northern portion of the site. The largest flock of this species observed was twenty. Peak count of this species was twenty-two. No flights were observed.

Table 3. Species recorded within, above and/or immediately adjacent to the survey

Common name	BTO	Latin name	BoCCI
Common gull	CM	<i>Larus canus</i>	Amber
Buzzard	BZ	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Green
Blackbird	B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Green
Blue tit	BT	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Green
Chaffinch	CH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Green
Dunnock	D.	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Green
Goldfinch	GO	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Green
Great Tit	GT	<i>Parus major</i>	Green
Greenfinch	GR	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Amber
Heron	H.	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Green
Herring Gull	HG	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Amber
Hooded Crow	HC	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	Green
House Sparrow	HS	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Amber
Jackdaw	JD	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Green
Linnet	LI	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Amber
Magpie	MG	<i>Pica pica</i>	Green
Meadow Pipit	MP	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Red
Mistle thrush	MT	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Green
Mute swan	MS	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Amber
Pied Wagtail	PW	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	Green
Redwing	RE	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Red
Robin	R.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Green
Rook	RO	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Green
Skylark	S.	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Amber
Song Thrush	ST	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Green
Starling	SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Amber
Woodpigeon	WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Green
Wren	WR	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Green
Yellowhammer	Y.	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red

Table 4. Peak counts of bird species recorded within, above and/or immediately adjacent to the survey area.

Species	Peak count (2024/25)	1% national	1% international
Common Gull	3		
Buzzard	1		
Blackbird	4		
Blue tit	6		
Chaffinch	36		
Dunnoek	4		
Goldfinch	30		
Great Tit	5		
Greenfinch	4		
Herring Gull	15		>1000
Hooded Crow	14		
House Sparrow	10		
Jackdaw	22		
Linnet	38		
Magpie	7		
Meadow Pipit	3		
Mistle thrush	2		
Mute swan	2		
Pied Wagtail	3		
Redwing	18		
Robin	10		
Rook	9		
Skylark	22		
Song Thrush	1		
Starling	55		
Woodpigeon	40		
Wren	7		
Yellowhammer	1		





Figure 16. Redwings perched, foraging and flight paths



0 75 150 m



Project: Confey Phase 1A
 Location: Leixlip, Co. Kildare
 Date: 29th August 2025
 Drawn By: Jeff Boyle (Altamar)

ALTEMAR
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Figure 17. Yellowhammers perched onsite



0 75 150 m

Project: Confey Phase 1A
 Location: Leixlip, Co. Kildare
 Date: 29th August 2025
 Drawn By: Jeff Boyle (Altamar)

ALTEMAR
 Marine & Environmental Consultancy

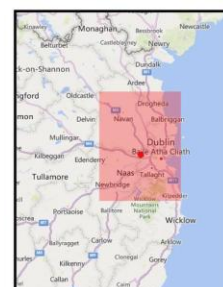


Figure 18. Greenfinches perched and flightlines





Figure 20. House sparrow flight paths and perched onsite



Figure 21. Linnet flight lines, foraging and perched onsite



Figure 22. Mute swans observed along the Royal Canal



Figure 23. Skylarks foraging within the survey area

Wintering bird assessment findings

Review of local bird records

The review of existing bird records (sourced from NBDC Database) within a 2 km² grid (Reference grids O03D) encompassing the study area reveals that 47 known bird species have previously been observed and recorded locally (*Table 3*).

Table 5: NBDC bird records within 2 km² (grids O07S)

Species name	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
Blackbird (<i>Turdus merula</i>)	22/10/2020	Birds of Ireland	
Blackcap (<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>)	22/04/2019	Birds of Ireland	
Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Blue Tit (<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Buzzard (<i>Buteo buteo</i>)	29/11/2022	Birds of Ireland	
Chaffinch (<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>)	22/04/2019	Birds of Ireland	
Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>)	22/04/2019	Birds of Ireland	
Coal Tit (<i>Periparus ater</i>)	27/03/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Collared Dove (<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)	22/10/2020	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	27/03/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Dipper (<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Goldcrest (<i>Regulus regulus</i>)	18/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Goldfinch (<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Great Tit (<i>Parus major</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Greenfinch (<i>Chloris chloris</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Grey Wagtail (<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>)	23/11/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)	22/04/2019	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Hooded Crow (<i>Corvus cornix</i>)	28/03/2021	Birds of Ireland	

Species name	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
House Martin (<i>Delichon urbicum</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Jackdaw (<i>Coloeus monedula</i>)	22/10/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Jay (<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>)	19/04/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)	11/12/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Long-tailed Tit (<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Magpie (<i>Pica pica</i>)	22/10/2020	Birds of Ireland	
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	20/01/2024	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Moorhen (<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>)	07/02/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)	02/03/2024	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Pheasant (<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Pied Wagtail (<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>)	20/02/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Pied Wagtail (<i>Motacilla alba</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Reed Bunting (<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	
Robin (<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Rock Dove (<i>Columba livia</i>)	22/10/2020	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species
Rook (<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>)	22/10/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Song Thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Sparrowhawk (<i>Accipiter nisus</i>)	07/08/2021	Birds of Ireland	

Species name	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	28/03/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swift (<i>Apus apus</i>)	27/06/2023	Swifts of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Willow Warbler (<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	
Woodpigeon (<i>Columba palumbus</i>)	22/10/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Wren (<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Yellowhammer (<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List

Mitigation

The proposed site is of moderate importance to the local wintering bird population. There is the potential for negative impacts by loss of foraging habitat and during construction phase through collision risks to species transiting to and from foraging and roosting areas along the Royle canal. Out of an abundance of caution, the following mitigation measures relevant to birds should be implemented to minimise any potential negative impact on biodiversity:

1. The majority of areas where red and amber BoCCI listed species were observed perched are to be retained. Foraging areas of red and amber BoCCI listed species onsite will be lost. It would be recommended that meadows planted within this development contain flora species to attract these species of bird. The project ecologist will review seed mixes to include plant species to allow for foraging of red and amber listed species on site.
2. The red listed BoCCI yellowhammer has been using the north hedgerow onsite. This is to be retained.
3. Due to the amount of bird activity within the hedgerow and treelines throughout the site, it would be recommended that these habitats would be retained where possible and additional compensatory planting where these are lost.
4. During construction phase, due to the sites proximity to the Royle canal, procedures should be taken to ensure minimal disturbance on bird species using the canal and its banks.

Conclusion

This report aims to build on the baseline data and provide information to assist in assessing the potential impact of proposed developments at Confey, Leixlip, Co. Kildare on wintering birds within/over/adjacent to the development area. This report presents the methodology and results of 10 visits to this location by Altamar Ltd. from January 2024 to March 2024, and five visits from December 2024 to March 2025.

In the 2024 season, a total of 42 species were recorded within, above and adjacent to the survey area across five surveys. Twenty-six green, eleven amber and five red species of conservation concern were recorded either within, over or immediately adjacent to the survey area boundary. Five red-listed species of conservation concern in Ireland, meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) and redshank (*Tringa totanus*) were recorded within or adjacent to the survey area.

In the 2024-2025 season, a total of 29 species were recorded within, above and immediately adjacent to the survey area across 5 surveys. Eighteen green, eight amber and three red listed bird species of conservation concern in Ireland (BoCCI) were recorded either within, over and immediately adjacent to the survey area. It is important to note that no significant numbers of QI of SPA's were noted on site. However, several red and amber listed species were noted on site.

The proposed development in Confey West will reduce available foraging areas for wintering birds, in particular for meadow pipits, linnets and skylarks. Impacts on wintering bird species moving between foraging and roosting sites are not likely in the absence of mitigation measures. The proposed development is likely to reduce total foraging area within the survey area for red and amber listed species recorded during surveys. However, the reduction of foraging area for these species is not considered significant due to the scale of the development in the context of the surrounding areas and habitats available, and as the proposed site layout and landscape plan will continue to facilitate foraging by these species within the site.

Out of an abundance of caution, mitigation measures are recommended. Following the full implementation of mitigation measures, no significant impacts on wintering bird species, particularly Qualifying Interests of nearby SPAs, are predicted. It would be expected that impacts on Red and amber listed species would be on the site only with a potential reduction in foraging on site. It should be noted that this site is within a rural landscape where numerous similar habitats are present in neighbouring fields and the displacement would be on a site level rather than a local level.

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Appendix 1a

Appendix 1a – Individual survey observations of target species.

Survey	Date	Time	Species	No.	Behaviour	Height (m)	Details
1	15/01/2023	10:04	Skylark	6	Foraging		In central west of arable lands.
1	15/01/2023	10:05	Linnet	1	Flight path	10	Northern flight path at east of site.
1	15/01/2023	10:21	Linnet	4	Perched		In deciduous tree central west hedgerow.
1	15/01/2023	11:08	Mute swan	1	Perched		West on the canal.
1	15/01/2023	11:22	House sparrow	1	Foraging	1	Northeast corner of North field.
1	15/01/2023	11:38	Skylark	50	Foraging		Over arable field.
1	15/01/2023	12:00	Buzzard	1	Flight path	20	Southerly flight along the west boundry. A pair, the other perched in tree off site south of site.
1	15/01/2023	12:01	Skylark (Returned)	50	Foraging		Over arable field.
2	19/01/2023	09:37	Redwing	5	Flight path	15	Southbound through centre of site
2	19/01/2023	09:38	Buzzard	1	Flight path	15	Southbound along west boundry
2	19/01/2023	10:10	House sparrow	1	Perched		East of central hedgerow
2	19/01/2023	10:24	Linnet	2	Flight path	10	Northeast bound
2	19/01/2023	10:28	Redwing	1	Perched		west of central hedgerow.
2	19/01/2023	10:55	Meadow pipit	2	Foraging		centre of southern field
2	19/01/2023	10:56	Yellowhammer	1	Perched		East of central hedgerow
2	19/01/2023	10:57	Starling	1	Flight path	5	Southwest bound
2	19/01/2023	10:59	Linnet	3	Perched		East of central hedgerow
2	19/01/2023	11:00	House sparrow	1	Perched		East of central hedgerow
2	19/01/2023	11:04	Starling	5	Flightpath	10	Northbound over east portion of site
2	19/01/2023	11:05	House sparrow	1	Flightpath	10	Northbound in east of site
2	19/01/2023	11:05	Redwing	2	Flight path	15	Northbound
2	19/01/2023	11:08	Redwing	1	Perched		Middle of central hedgerow
2	19/01/2023	11:23	Skylark	50	Foraging		South field
2	19/01/2023	11:24	Redwing	3	Foraging		Centre of south field
2	19/01/2023	11:31	Linnet	1	Flight path	5	east bound in centre of south field
2	19/01/2023	11:57	Redwing	10	Foraging		West of north field
2	19/01/2023	11:58	Linnet	1	Perched		North of west treeline

Survey	Date	Time	Species	No.	Behaviour	Height (m)	Details
2	19/01/2023	12:01	Redwing	1	Flight path	20	East bound in centre of north field.
2	19/01/2023	12:23	Yellowhammer	3	Flight path	5	Eastbound in north field
3	22/01/2024	09:37	House sparrow	1	Perched		In NE corner hedge
3	22/01/2024	09:54	Redwing	5	Perched		NW of N boundry
3	22/01/2024	09:56	Herring Gull	2	Flight path	20	W over W boundry
3	22/01/2024	10:01	Redwing	8	Perched		Northwest corner hedgerow.
3	22/01/2024	10:05	Greenfinch	1	Perched		Northwest corner hedgerow.
3	22/01/2024	10:09	Redwing	2	Perched		North of west hedgerow
3	22/01/2024	10:10	Starling	1	Perched		Roof of house in west boundry
3	22/01/2024	10:15	Skylark	50	Foraging		Centre of S field.
3	22/01/2024	10:22	Redwing	1	Perched		West of central hedgerow
3	22/01/2024	10:26	Linnet	3	Flight path	5	South over central hedgerow.
3	22/01/2024	10:59	Herring Gull	1	Flight path	20	West through S field
3	22/01/2024	11:00	Greenfinch	2	Perched		Most east of central hedgerow
3	22/01/2024	11:00	House sparrow	1	Perched		Most east of central hedgerow
3	22/01/2024	11:05	Skylark	1	Foraging		SE corner
3	22/01/2024	11:10	Mute Swan	3	Perched		On the banks along tha canal east side.
3	22/01/2024	11:11	Herring Gull	1	Flight path	20	SW over S field
3	22/01/2024	11:12	House sparrow	1	Flight path	5	N through centre of site.
3	22/01/2024	11:13	Meadow pipit	2	Foraging		Central of the N field
3	22/01/2024	11:15	House sparrow	3	Flight path	10	W along S boundry
3	22/01/2024	11:15	Linnet	3	Foraging		W of S Field.
3	22/01/2024	11:20	Meadow pipit	3	Foraging		Centre of central hedgerow.
3	22/01/2024	11:26	Mute swan	1	Swimming		Along the canal
3	22/01/2024	11:28	Tree sparrow	1	Call		Centre of S hedgerow

APPENDIX 5.4

2025/2026 WINTERING BIRD ASSESSMENT

Appendix 5.4- 2025/2026 Wintering Bird Assessment for Lands at Confey West, Leixlip, Co. Kildare.



26th May 2026

Prepared by: Gayle O'Farrell of Altemar Ltd.
On behalf of: Vanisland Limited.

Document Control Sheet			
Client	Vanisland Limited.		
Project	2025/2026 Wintering Bird Assessment at Confey West, Leixlip, Co. Kildare.		
Report	Wintering Bird Assessment		
Date	26 th May 2026		
Version	Author	Reviewed	Date
Final	Gayle O'Farrell	Bryan Deegan	26 th May 2026

Summary

Structure/features:	The proposed development area consists mainly of grassland, recolonising bare ground, bare ground and horticultural land bordered by drainage ditches, treelines and hedgerows. The Royal Canal is immediately to the south of the site.
Location:	Confey West, Leixlip, Co. Kildare.
Bird species present:	Buzzard, Blackbird, Black-headed Gull, Blue tit, Chaffinch, Coal tit, Dunnock, Goldfinch, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Heron, Hooded Crow, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Linnet, Long-tailed tit, Mallard, Magpie, Meadow Pipit, Mistle thrush, Moorhen, Mute swan, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Skylark, Song Thrush, Starling, Woodpigeon, Wren, Yellowhammer.
Proposed work:	Large-scale Residential Development
Surveys by:	Gayle O'Farrell (BSc Agri-Environmental Sciences) & Jeff Boyle (BSc Environmental Management).
Survey dates:	29 th October 2025, 13 th November 2025, 12 th December 2025, 6 th January 2026, 8 th January 2026, 12 th January 2026, 29 th January 2026, 4 th February 2026, 12 th February 2026, 18 th February 2026, 9 th March 2026, 25 th March 2026.



Figure 1. site outline.



Competency of assessor

Since its inception in 2001, Altamar has been delivering ecological and environmental services to a broad range of clients. Operational areas include: residential; infrastructural; renewable; oil & gas; private industry; Local Authorities; EC projects; and, State/semi-State Departments.

This report has been prepared by Gayle O'Farrell & Jeff Boyle, and has been reviewed by Bryan Deegan, of Alemar Ltd.

Bryan Deegan (MCIEEM, BSc Applied Marine Biology, MSc Environmental Science)

Bryan Deegan, the managing director of Altamar, is an Environmental Scientist and Marine Biologist with 30 years' experience working in Irish terrestrial and aquatic environments, providing services to the State, Semi-State and industry. He is currently lead project ecologist for Project Pembroke and was contracted to Inland Fisheries Ireland as the sole "External Expert" to environmentally assess internal and external projects. He is also chair of an internal IFI working group on environmental assessment. Bryan Deegan (MCIEEM) holds a MSc in Environmental Science, BSc (Hons.) in Applied Marine Biology, NCEA National Diploma in Applied Aquatic Science and a NCEA National Certificate in Science (Aquaculture).

Jeff Boyle (BSc Environmental Management)

Jeff Boyle (BSc (Hons.) Environmental Management) is skilled in bat detection through static detector surveys, dusk emergence, and down re-entry surveys. He is also skilled in habitat assessment and has undertaken flora/invasive species surveys and breeding/wintering bird surveys to produce numerous ecological assessments on a range of residential, industrial and commercial projects.

Gayle O'Farrell (BSc Agri-Environmental Sciences)

Gayle O'Farrell (BSc (Hons.) Agri-Environmental Sciences) is a skilled ornithological surveyor and has led a number of breeding / wintering bird surveys for a wide range of residential, industrial and commercial projects across Ireland. Gayle is also skilled in bat detection through static detector surveys, dusk emergence, and dawn re-entry surveys, experienced in habitat assessment, terrestrial mammal, and flora/invasive species surveys to produce numerous ecological assessments.

Legislative context

The Wildlife Act 1976 protects wild birds in Ireland. Based on this legislation it is an offence to wilfully interfere with or destroy wild birds and their nests and eggs (other than the wild species mentioned in the Third Schedule of this Act). Under this legislation it is an offence for any person who "*wilfully takes or removes the eggs or nest of a protected wild bird otherwise than under and in accordance with such a licence, wilfully destroys, injures or mutilates the eggs or nest of a protected wild bird, wilfully disturbs a protected wild bird on or near a nest containing eggs or unflown young.*"

Habitats Directive- Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora has been transposed into Irish Law, including, via, *inter alia*, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

Council Directive 2009/147/EC 2010 on the conservation of wild birds provides for the conservation of wild birds by, among other things, classifying important ornithological sites as Special Protection Areas. The Directive relates to the conservation of all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state, their eggs, nests and habitats in the European territory of the Member States. The Directive prohibits in particular:

- deliberate killing or capture by any method;
- deliberate destruction of, or damage to, their nests and eggs or removal of their nests;
- taking their eggs in the wild and keeping these eggs even if empty;
- deliberate disturbance of these birds particularly during the period of breeding and rearing, in so far as disturbance would be significant having regard to the objectives of this Directive;
- keeping birds of species the hunting and capture of which is prohibited.

Under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended), notwithstanding any consent, statutory or otherwise, given to a person by a public authority or held by a person, except in accordance with a licence granted by the Minister under Regulation 54, a person who in respect of the species referred to in Part 1 of the First Schedule:

- deliberately captures or kills any specimen of these species in the wild,
- deliberately disturbs these species particularly during the period of breeding, rearing, hibernation and migration,
- deliberately takes or destroys eggs of those species from the wild,
- damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or
- keeps, transports, sells, exchanges, offers for sale or offers for exchange any specimen of these species taken in the wild, other than those taken legally as referred to in Article 12(2) of the Habitats Directive, shall be guilty of an offence.

Wintering bird surveys

This report presents the methodology and results of 12 visits to Confey West by Jeff Boyle & Gayle O'Farrell between October 2025 and March 2026.

Survey methodology

Wintering bird surveys were carried out during the wintering bird season at Confey West in order to gather baseline data to assist in assessing the potential impacts on wintering birds from future proposed developments on the site, in particular those listed as Qualifying Interests of SPAs within 15 km and other amber/red-listed birds of conservation concern in Ireland (BoCCI). Potential impacts on wintering bird species include disturbance, destruction of foraging areas, destruction of roosting areas and collision risk during construction and operation (cranes, buildings etc.). These wintering bird surveys were carried out based on the BTO Common Bird Census (Bibby *et al.*, 2000 and Gilbert *et al.*, 1998) and I-WeBS Counter Manual: Guidelines for Irish Wetland Bird Survey counters (BWI & NPWS), following CIEEM guidelines.

A 15-minute settlement period was given following arrival to allow resumption of bird activity after any possible disturbance caused by arrival to the site. Various features such as grassland, scrub, waterlogged areas, recolonising bare ground, bare ground, and treeline were present within the survey area. A roving transect survey around the perimeter was carried out on each occasion, providing clear views of all areas within and over that survey area. A vantage point in the northwest provided unobstructed views across the survey area (Figure 3.). Flight lines, large flights, foraging, perching, bathing and any other observed behaviour by wintering bird species and other species observed within, over and immediately adjacent to the survey area were recorded. Each survey was carried out by a single surveyor. A pair of binoculars were used by the surveyor to identify and count birds at distance.

Care was taken not to double count any observations. Surveys were initiated at varying times (morning/midday/afternoon) to account for fluxes in bird activity and birds transiting to/from foraging and roosting areas. Local temperatures varied from 0 – 10°C. Winds varied from 2– 5 on the Beaufort scale. Weather conditions were favourable on all occasions.

Peak counts for the survey area were compared to 1% national and international population sizes of relevant species for which data was available. Foraging areas, flight paths, large flights and other observations were mapped according to field sheet records.

Survey results/discussion

Habitats of wintering bird potential

A desk and ground level wintering bird habitat assessment were carried and used to examine the structures, features and vegetation on site that could provide wintering bird habitat. Potential features associated with foraging/roosting include agricultural fields, improved/amenity grassland, scrub, watercourses and drainage

ditches. All open areas, vegetated areas, built areas and water-holding features within and immediately adjacent to the site were assessed for wintering bird potential.

Habitat of foraging value for wintering birds was limited throughout the site. The site consisted mainly of arable crop lands with deep drainage ditches. The fields were bordered by native hedgerows which support many mature trees. Lands immediately to the east and west of the site were grassland habitats. During the survey periods, areas to the northwest of the site had become waterlogged forming large puddles, however these did not contain any vegetation. The site is in close proximity (< 1 km) to the Rye Water Valley/Carlton SAC. However, the site is over 15km away from any SPA and so it is not expected that the Qualifying Interests of the SPA's will utilise and/or fly over the site.



Figure 3. Survey area and vantage points (Blue X's).

Wintering bird activity survey

A total of 34 species were recorded within, above and immediately adjacent to the survey area across 12 surveys. Twenty-four green, eight amber and two red bird species of conservation concern in Ireland (BoCCI) were recorded either within, over and immediately adjacent to the survey area. Details regarding the status, behaviour and abundances of species recorded on/over/adjacent to the site relevant to the conservation interests of Special Protected Areas (SPAs) and red listed BoCCI are discussed below.

Meadow pipit (red BoCCI) was observed foraging mainly in the east portion of the south field across 6 surveys (Figure 4) on the arable fields. Peak count was 20 individuals.

Yellowhammer (red BoCCI) – This species was observed on two occasions during surveys 2 & 9. Yellowhammers were noted perched twice in the central hedgerow onsite. The peak count of this species was one.

Greenfinch (amber BoCCI) – was observed on eight occasions. This species was only observed perched in treelines and hedgerows throughout the site. The peak count of this species was 3.

Black-headed Gull (amber BoCCI) – was observed on six occasions during surveys. Most of the flight heights over the site were headed west. The mean estimated flight height was 30 m. Black-headed gulls were noted foraging on site on one occasion, 22 within the northern field. Peak count of this species was 23. It should be noted that 22 black-headed gulls were noted foraging on the Confey GAA Lands during a separate survey.

Linnet (amber BoCCI) – a total of 7 observations were made during 7 surveys. The most notable observations were of the consisted foraging activity concentrated to the south field where turnips were growing. The largest flock observed was 45. The peak count of this species was 56.

Mute swan (amber BoCCI) – was observed during 9 out of 12 surveys, on the Royal Canal south of the subject site. One flight path was noted across the site at an estimated height of 15m. No foraging of this species was noted onsite.

Skylark (amber BoCCI) – Nine observations of skylark were made across nine surveys. Foraging activity was concentrated in the southern field. Peak count of this species was 58.

Table 1. Species recorded within, above and/or immediately adjacent to the survey

Common name	BTO	Latin name	BoCCI
Buzzard	BZ	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Green
Blackbird	B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Green
Black-headed Gull	BH.	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Amber
Blue tit	BT	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Green
Bullfinch	BF	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Green
Chaffinch	CH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Green
Coal tit	CT	<i>Parus ater</i>	Green
Dunnock	D.	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Green
Goldfinch	GO	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Green
Great Tit	GT	<i>Parus major</i>	Green
Greenfinch	GR	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Amber
Heron	H.	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Green
Hooded Crow	HC	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	Green
House Sparrow	HS	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Amber
Jackdaw	JD	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Green
Linnet	LI	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Amber
Long-tailed tit	LT	<i>Aegithalus caudatus</i>	Green
Mallard	MA	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Amber

Magpie	MG	<i>Pica pica</i>	Green
Meadow Pipit	MP	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Red
Mistle thrush	MT	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Green
Moorhen	MH	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Green
Mute swan	MS	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Amber
Pheasant	PH	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Green
Pied Wagtail	PW	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	Green
Robin	R.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Green
Rook	RO	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Green
Siskin	SK	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	Green
Skylark	S.	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Amber
Song Thrush	ST	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Green
Starling	SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Amber
Woodpigeon	WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Green
Wren	WR	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Green
Yellowhammer	Y.	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red

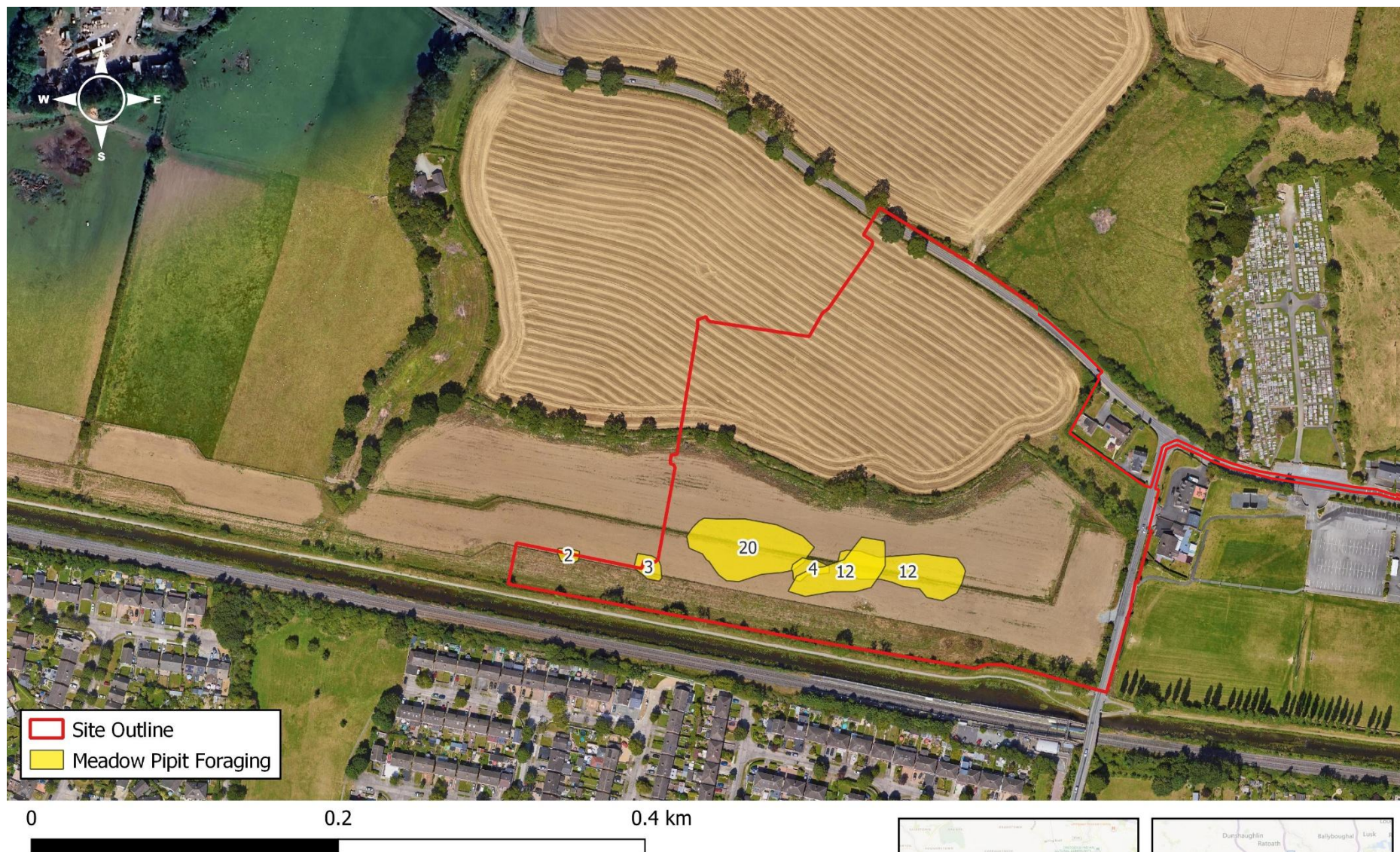
Table 2. Peak counts of bird species recorded within, above and/or immediately adjacent to the survey area.

Species	Peak count (2025/2026)	1% national	1% international
Buzzard	1		
Blackbird	8		
Black-headed Gull	23		>10,000
Blue tit	6		
Bullfinch	1		
Chaffinch	7		
Coal tit	2		
Dunnock	9		
Goldfinch	32		
Great Tit	4		
Greenfinch	3		
Grey Heron	1	25	5,000
Hooded Crow	17		
House Sparrow	4		
Jackdaw	24		
Linnet	56		
Long- tailed tit	6		
Mallard	5	280	53,000
Magpie	16		
Meadow Pipit	24		
Mistle thrush	1		
Moorhen	4		>10,000
Mute swan	4		
Pheasant	2		
Pied Wagtail	2		
Robin	12		

Rook	14		
Siskin	3		
Skylark	58		
Song Thrush	4		
Starling	62		
Woodpigeon	36		
Wren	16		
Yellowhammer	1		



Figure 3. Map demonstrating observations of Buzzard onsite.



Project: Confey P1A LRD
Location: Confey, Co. Kildare
Date: 15th April 2026
Drawn By: Gayle O'Farrell (Altamar)

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Marine & Environmental Consultancy

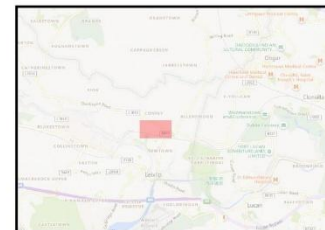


Figure 4. Map demonstrating the foraging areas (no. of individuals) of meadow pipits onsite.



Figure 5. Map demonstrating the perched observation of yellowhammers onsite.



Figure 6. Map demonstrating the perched observations of Greenfinches onsite.

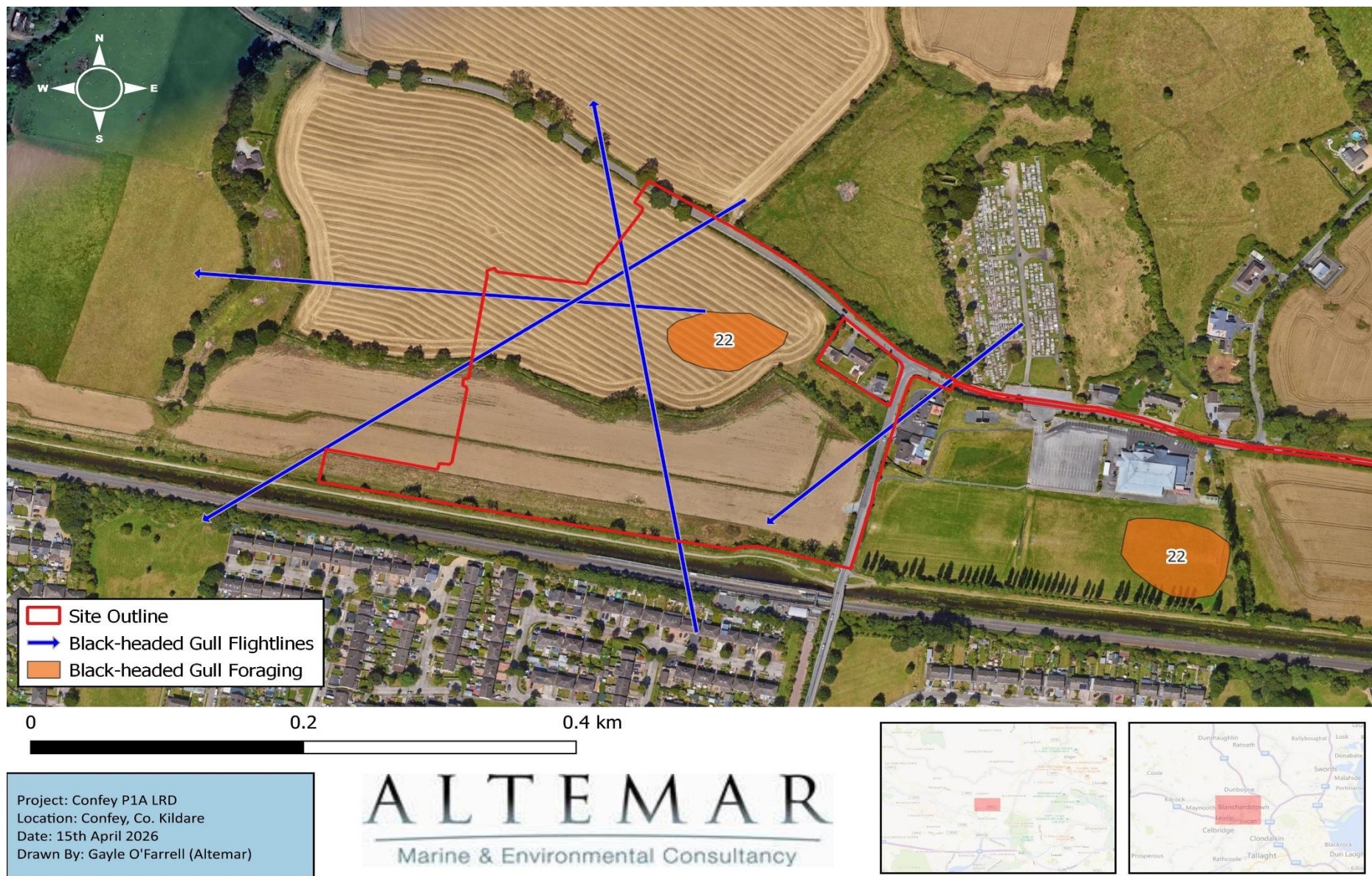


Figure 7. Map demonstrating the Flight paths(m), foraging areas observations of black-headed gulls onsite.





Figure 9. Map demonstrating the Flight paths(m) and perched observations of mute swans on/adjacent to the site



Wintering bird assessment findings

Review of local bird records

The review of existing bird records (sourced from NBDC Database) within a 2 km² grid (Reference grids O03D) encompassing the study area reveals that 47 known bird species have previously been observed and recorded locally (*Table 3*).

Table 3: NBDC bird records within 2 km² (grids O07S)

Species name	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
Blackbird (<i>Turdus merula</i>)	22/10/2020	Birds of Ireland	
Blackcap (<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>)	22/04/2019	Birds of Ireland	
Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Blue Tit (<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Buzzard (<i>Buteo buteo</i>)	29/11/2022	Birds of Ireland	
Chaffinch (<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>)	22/04/2019	Birds of Ireland	
Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>)	22/04/2019	Birds of Ireland	
Coal Tit (<i>Periparus ater</i>)	27/03/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Collared Dove (<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)	22/10/2020	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	27/03/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Dipper (<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Goldcrest (<i>Regulus regulus</i>)	18/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Goldfinch (<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Great Tit (<i>Parus major</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Greenfinch (<i>Chloris chloris</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Grey Wagtail (<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>)	23/11/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)	22/04/2019	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Hooded Crow (<i>Corvus cornix</i>)	28/03/2021	Birds of Ireland	

Species name	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
House Martin (<i>Delichon urbicum</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Jackdaw (<i>Coloeus monedula</i>)	22/10/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Jay (<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>)	19/04/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)	11/12/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Long-tailed Tit (<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Magpie (<i>Pica pica</i>)	22/10/2020	Birds of Ireland	
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	20/01/2024	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Moorhen (<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>)	07/02/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)	02/03/2024	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Pheasant (<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Pied Wagtail (<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>)	20/02/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Pied Wagtail (<i>Motacilla alba</i>)	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	
Reed Bunting (<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	
Robin (<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Rock Dove (<i>Columba livia</i>)	22/10/2020	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species
Rook (<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>)	22/10/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Song Thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	

Species name	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
Sparrowhawk (<i>Accipiter nisus</i>)	07/08/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	28/03/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swift (<i>Apus apus</i>)	27/06/2023	Swifts of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Willow Warbler (<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	
Woodpigeon (<i>Columba palumbus</i>)	22/10/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Wren (<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>)	15/01/2023	Birds of Ireland	
Yellowhammer (<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>)	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List

I-WeBS

I-WeBS National and Site Trends Report 1994/95 – 2019/20 report presents national and site-specific trends of wetland birds in Ireland. The nearest I-WeBS site is Dublin Zoo Ponds (OU011) (c. 12km). The proposed development site is not considered to be of relevance to any i-webs site. The national trends report is shown in Figure 11.

National Summary

Species	Trend (%)			Long Term Trend
	National - 5 Year	National - 12 Year	National - 23 Year	
Scup	-33.6	-82.9	-89.2	Large Decline
Pochard	-19.8	-60.4	-79.1	Large Decline
Goldeneye	-32.5	-39.0	-66.9	Large Decline
Lapwing	-6.5	-45.1	-63.9	Large Decline
Grey Plover	-30.6	-39.4	-57.8	Large Decline
Golden Plover	-16.9	-58.1	-54.1	Large Decline
Dunlin	5.9	-21.2	-45.2	Moderate Decline
Curlew	-9.4	-23.7	-43.1	Moderate Decline
Turnstone	-33.6	-46.0	-23.7	Intermediate Decline
Coot	-10.1	1.1	-23.2	Intermediate Decline
Mallard	-11.3	-19.7	-19.1	Intermediate Decline
Wigeon	0.9	-17.0	-18.2	Intermediate Decline
Tufted Duck	-20.7	-28.9	-17.9	Intermediate Decline
Red-breasted Merganser	-12.9	5.2	-14.7	Intermediate Decline
Pintail	-0.8	-6.0	-13.7	Intermediate Decline
Great Crested Grebe	-39.5	-6.1	-10.8	Intermediate Decline
Shoveler	23.0	-21.3	-10.8	Intermediate Decline
Knot	0.0	-12.2	-9.8	Intermediate Decline
Bar-tailed Godwit	-32.6	-13.9	-5.1	Intermediate Decline
Ringed Plover	-4.3	-26.8	-1.1	Intermediate Decline
Grey Heron	1.0	-4.9	6.6	Stable or Increasing
Redshank	-14.0	-28.4	6.7	Stable or Increasing
Shelduck	6.3	-0.8	9.3	Stable or Increasing
Oystercatcher	-17.5	-31.1	10.8	Stable or Increasing
Mute Swan	4.6	9.6	13.8	Stable or Increasing
Teal	1.8	5.7	19.4	Stable or Increasing
Purple Sandpiper	-36.4	-37.6	23.5	Stable or Increasing
Gadwall	-26.5	4.3	24.4	Stable or Increasing
Little Grebe	6.1	16.7	38.2	Stable or Increasing
Greenshank	0.9	7.3	41.0	Stable or Increasing
Cormorant	38.5	8.4	42.9	Stable or Increasing
Sanderling	-23.8	-11.1	84.6	Stable or Increasing
Black-tailed Godwit	22.5	25.0	92.3	Stable or Increasing
Light-bellied Brant Goose	-11.2	1.2	93.3	Stable or Increasing
Little Egret	34.6	81.5	483.3	Stable or Increasing

Figure 11. I-WeBS National Trends Report.

Mitigation

The proposed site is of moderate importance to the local wintering bird population. There is the potential for negative impacts by loss of foraging habitat and during construction phase through collision risks to species transiting to and from foraging and roosting areas along the Royle canal. Out of an abundance of caution, the following mitigation measures relevant to birds should be implemented to minimise any potential negative impact on biodiversity:

1. The majority of areas where red and amber BoCCI listed species were observed perched are to be retained. Foraging areas of red and amber BoCCI listed species onsite will be lost. It would be recommended that meadows planted within this development contain flora species to attract these species of bird. The project ecologist will review seed mixes to include plant species to allow for foraging of red and amber listed species on site.
2. The red listed BoCCI yellowhammer has been using the north hedgerow onsite in previous years and the central hedgerow during this wintering bird season. These are to be retained.
3. Due to the amount of bird activity within the hedgerow and treelines throughout the site, it would be recommended that these habitats would be retained where possible and additional compensatory planting where these are lost.
4. During construction phase, due to the sites proximity to the Royal Canal procedures should be taken to ensure minimal disturbance on bird species using the canal and its banks.

Conclusion

This report aims to build on the baseline data and provide information to assist in assessing the potential impact of proposed developments at Confey, Leixlip, Co. Kildare on wintering birds within/over/adjacent to the development area. This report presents the methodology and results of 12 visits to this location by Altamar Ltd. from October 2025 to March 2026.

A total of 34 species were recorded within, above and adjacent to the survey area across five surveys. Twenty-four green, eight amber and two red species of conservation concern were recorded either within, over or immediately adjacent to the survey area boundary. Two red-listed species of conservation concern in Ireland, meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*) and yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) were recorded within and adjacent to the site outline/survey area.

The proposed development in Confey West will reduce available foraging areas for wintering birds, in particular for meadow pipits, linnets and skylarks. Impacts on wintering bird species moving between foraging and roosting sites are not likely in the absence of mitigation measures. The proposed development is likely to reduce total foraging area within the survey area for red and amber listed species recorded during surveys. However, the reduction of foraging area for these species is not considered significant due to the scale of the development in the context of the surrounding areas and habitats available, and as the proposed site layout and landscape plan will continue to facilitate foraging by these species within the site.

Out of an abundance of caution, mitigation measures are recommended. Following the full implementation of mitigation measures, no significant impacts on wintering bird species, particularly Qualifying Interests of nearby SPAs, are predicted. It would be expected that impacts on Red and amber listed species would be on the site only with a potential reduction in foraging on site. It should be noted that this site is within a rural landscape where numerous similar habitats are present in neighbouring fields and the displacement would be on a site level rather than a local level.

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