



# Great Harmeston Solar Farm Environmental Statement

Technical Appendix 7.9  
Winter Bird Report



Report

Great Harmeston – Solar Farm

**Winter Bird Report 2024/2025**

For Arise SE

21 July 2025

## Document Control

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background and Scope

Logika Consultants Ltd. ('Logika') has been commissioned by Arise SE to undertake wintering bird surveys on land at Great Harmeston (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'), as outlined by the red line boundary on **Figure 1-1**.

The purpose of the survey is to inform an assessment of the potential impacts that the development of a solar farm may have on wintering birds associated with the area.

The Site is located to the south/ southwest of the village of Johnston, Pembrokeshire and comprises approximately 4.48 hectares (Ha) of predominantly agricultural fields used as grazing pasture for horses. The surrounding landscape is similarly characterised by agricultural land. The central grid reference for the Site is SM 92637 09563.

This baseline report provides the survey methodology and survey results of wintering bird surveys undertaken between December 2024 and March 2025.



Figure 1-1: Site Context

## 2 Survey Methodology

### 2.1 Survey Guidance

The aim of the wintering bird survey was to identify the distribution, diversity and abundance of wintering bird species across the terrestrial habitats within the Site, and to identify areas used consistently, or for a significant part of the non-breeding season.

An adapted version of the Winter Farmland Bird Survey methodology (Atkinson et al. 2006) was applied to all terrestrial habitats within the survey area. Originally developed by the BTO and undertaken between 1999 and 2003, the Winter Farmland Bird Survey assessed the use of British farmland by 30 wintering species including waders, game birds and passerines.

This survey followed the "Winter Walks" component of the methodology, considered the most appropriate for the Sites habitats and land parcels.

Given the relatively small size of the Site, surveyors were able to walk the full extent of field boundaries.

### 2.2 Winter Bird Field Surveys

Surveys focused on key and notable species considered potentially sensitive to solar infrastructure developments, namely:

- Waterfowl, including wildfowl and waders (not gulls unless meeting other criteria below);
- Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- Species listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive;
- Section 7 of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016;
- Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) red list species (Johnstone et al., 2022); and,
- Flocks of 20+ birds of all other species (for example winter thrushes, gulls and corvids).

For these species, the following details will be recorded:

- Number of individuals;
- Locations of records and habitats in which they occur; and,
- Activity (foraging, loafing, roosting.)

The presence of species that do not qualify as notable using the criteria were also noted. However, information on numbers, distribution and behaviour was not recorded.

A single internationally designated site for ornithological interest is located within 10km of the Site: Castlemartin Coast Special Protection Area (SPA). The site is designated for chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*, which are highly unlikely to be present within the onsite habitats therefore was not included specifically as a target species.

An initial scoping visit was undertaken in November 2024 to appraise the onsite habitats for wintering birds. Following this monthly visits were undertaken by ornithologist Stephen Shutt between December 2024 and March 2025. Each survey visit, every field within the Sites redline boundary was walked, with birds utilising the neighbouring fields was also noted from within the Site or public rights of way (PRoW). These were numbered and referenced as per **Figure 2-1**. Details of the timings of each survey visit are provided in **Table 2-1** below.

**Table 2-1: Survey Details**

Survey Visit	Date	Start/End Time	Weather
Visit 1	20/11/2024	10:30 – 15:30	WS: 1, WD: SSE, CC:7/8, Rain: 0, VIS:1, FR: 0, SN: 0, TEMP: 4C
	27/12/2024	08:30 – 15:40	WS: 2, WD: ESE, CC:8/8, RAIN: 0, VIS:1, FR: 0, SN: 0, TEMP: 5C
	28/12/2024	08:30 – 13:15	WS: 1, WD: SE, CC:7/8, RAIN: 0, VIS:2, FR: 0, SN: 0, TEMP: 6C
Visit 2	21/01/2025	08:30 -15:30	2, WD: SSE, CC:8/8, RAIN: 0, VIS:2, FR: 0, SN: 0, TEMP: 6C
	22/01/2025	08:30 – 14:30	1, WD: ESE, CC:7/8, RAIN: 0, VIS:2, FR: 0, SN: 0, TEMP: 6C
Visit 3	27/02/2025	08:00 – 15:30	WS: 2, WD: NNW, CC:1/8, RAIN: 0, CH: 2, VIS:2, FR: 0, SN: 0, TEMP: 4C
	28/02/2025	08:15 – 12:15	WS: 1, WD: ESE, CC:1/8, CH: 2, RAIN: 0, VIS:2, FR: 1, SN: 0, TEMP: 0C
Visit 4	10/03/2025	09:00 – 15:30	WS: 1, WD: NE, CC:8/8, RAIN: 1, CH: 2, VIS:2, FR: 0, SN: 0, TEMP: 10C
	11/03/2025	08:30 – 13:10	WS: 2, WD: NE, CC:6/8, CH: 2, RAIN: 0, VIS:2, FR: 0, SN: 0, TEMP: 5C

### 2.3 Limitations

No surveys were conducted during October. After a review of the designated sites, and the habitats present within and in close proximity to the site boundary this is not deemed to be a significant limitation. It is unlikely that additional surveys would have resulted in the identification of additional species.

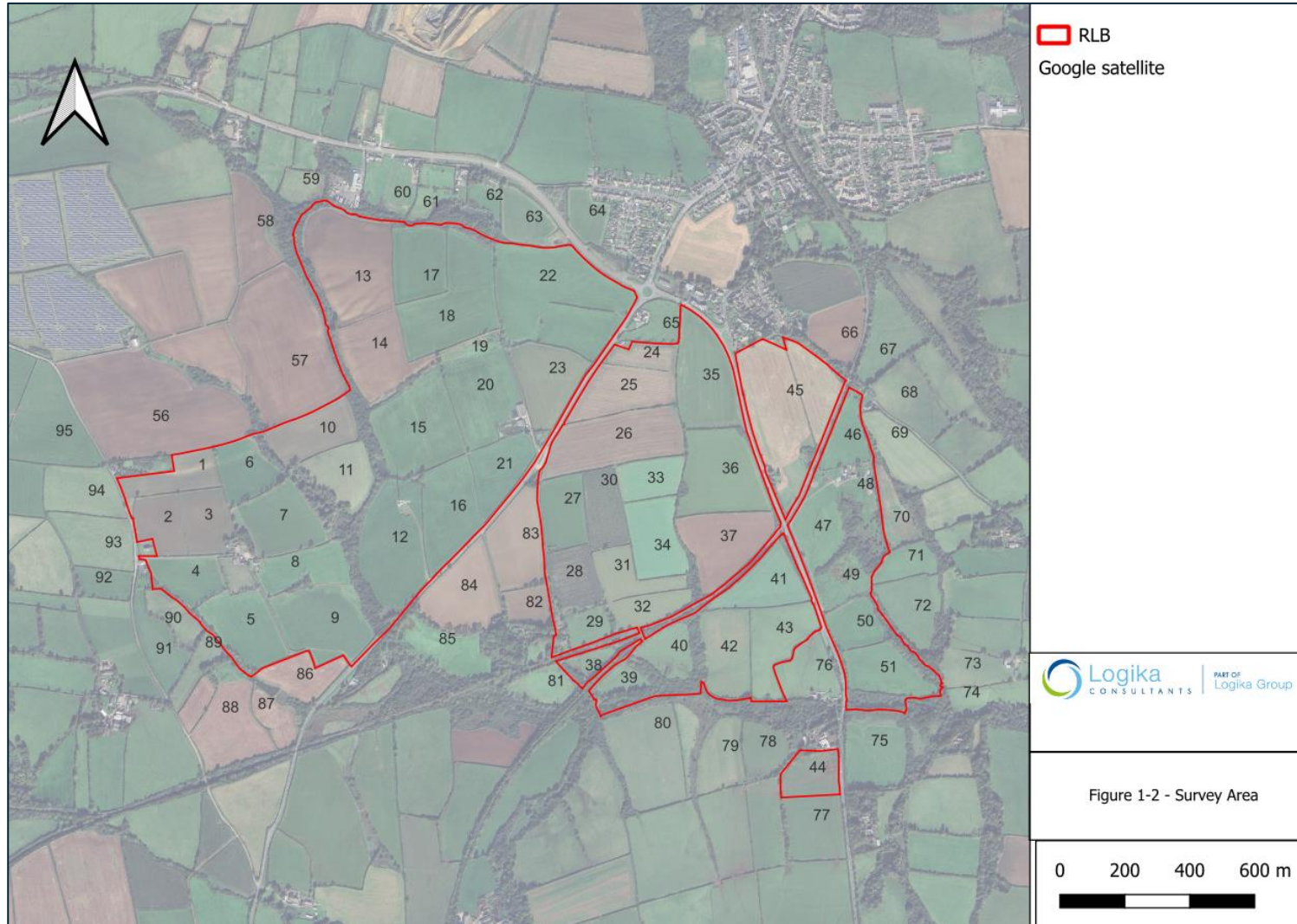


Figure 2-1: Survey Area – Field Identification

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Peak Counts and Notable Species

Surveys identified a narrow range of target species, typical of the habitats present and the region. Species recorded, number of records, peak count and total peak are summarised within **Table 3-1** below, along with species' legislation/policy status.

In summary, surveys recorded:

- 3 species listed as Schedule 1 on the WCA<sup>1</sup>.
- 7 species listed on Section 7 of The Environment (Wales) Act
- 4 species are red listed as Birds of Conservation Concern<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 3-1: Target and Notable Species Recorded During the Winter Bird Surveys**

BTO Code	Species	No. of records	Peak count	Total Peak*	Legislative protection or conservation status.
BZ	Buzzard	15	1	4	-
BF	Bullfinch	5	2	2	Sec7
C.	Carrion Crow	1	12	12	-
CH	Chaffinch	6	50	50	BoCC Amb
CM	Common Gull	2	150	270	BoCC Amb
D.	Dunnock	22	5	14	Sec7
FF	Fieldfare	5	60	88	WCA1, BoCC Amb
GP	Golden Plover	1	1	1	BoCC Red, Sec7
HG	Herring Gull	7	46	46	BoCC Red, Sec7
HS	House Sparrow	9	12	34	Sec7
JD	Jackdaw	3	35	35	-
KT	Red Kite	4	1	2	WCA1,
L.	Lapwing	1	100	100	BoCC Red,
LB	Lesser Black-Backed Gull	4	36	36	BoCC Amb
MA	Mallard	7	6	8	-

<sup>1</sup> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

<sup>2</sup> Birds of Conservation Concern 5. Available at: [bocc-5-a5-4pp-single-pages.pdf](https://www.bcc5.gov.uk/bocc-5-a5-4pp-single-pages.pdf)

BTO Code	Species	No. of records	Peak count	Total Peak*	Legislative protection or conservation status.
MH	Moorhen	1	1	1	-
RB	Reed Bunting	2	1	1	Sec7
RE	Redwing	16	150	278	WCA1
S.	Skylark	10	2	4	Sec7
SG	Starling	4	100	130	BoCC Red, Sec7
SH	Sparrowhawk	1	1	1	-
SN	Snipe	12	2	6	BoCC Amb
ST	Song Thrush	9	1	5	WCAIII, Sec7
WN	Wigeon	4	2	2	BoCC Amb, WCAII
WP	Woodpigeon	4	38	49	-
Y.	Yellowhammer	1	11	11	Sec7

## 4 Discussion

### 4.1 Waterbirds

#### Waders

One golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria* was recorded throughout the survey period. This bird was observed on the 11/03/2025 within field 22. The bird was flushed by the surveyor, before eventually settling again in field 18. Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, were recorded on one occasion throughout the survey period. One flock of 100 birds were recorded on the ground within field 13. These birds were recorded foraging and loafing before being flushed and re-settling within the compartment. Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* were observed on 12 occasions with a total of 15 bird recorded. Snipe were recorded in low number across the site, with records indicating that compartments 49, 50 & 51 hold the most foraging and loafing potential for snipe.

#### Waterfowl and Rails

There were seven records of Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* throughout the survey period. A total of 19 birds were recorded, with three pairs identified across compartments 11 and 15. Wigeon *Anas penelope* were recorded utilising the ponds within compartments 11, 15 and 20. There were four observations of wigeon recording a total five birds throughout the survey period. One Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* was recorded utilising the pond within compartment 20 on the 11/03/2025.

### 4.2 Raptors

Three raptor species were recorded within the Survey Area. Buzzard *Buteo buteo* were recorded throughout the survey period with a total of 15 records numbering 15 birds. Buzzard were observed perched in the trees and hedgerows around the site and foraging on the ground within compartments 41, 43 and 57. There were four records of red kite *Milvus milvus*, two of the four records consisted of red kite on the ground foraging within compartments 35 and 37. The remaining two records captured red kite perched in trees within compartments 37 and 42. Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* was recorded on one occasion. This sole record observed on individual hunting within compartment 7.

A Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, flew over compartment seven on the 28/12/2024.

### 4.3 Passerines

Over the survey visits one passerine species was recorded in sufficient numbers to be considered a target species. Both male and female Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* were recorded across four survey visits. On the 10/03/2025 a pair was observed in field number 46 within the site boundary. Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* was recorded in moderate numbers, foraging amongst the winter stubble within compartment 45 on the 27/12/2024. There were a further 6 records of chaffinch numbering a total of 17 birds. Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, were recorded across the survey area in fairly low numbers. A peak count of 5 birds was observed on the 20/11/2024. These birds were recorded utilising the hedgerows inside and on the site perimeter for foraging purposes. House sparrow *Passer domesticus* were also recorded utilising the hedgerows on site for foraging purposes. A peak count of 12 birds was observed in compartment 57 on the 22/01/2025. Another colony numbering 10 birds was observed in compartment 20 on the same date. Two records of foraging Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* were made throughout the survey period. These birds were observed in compartments 25 and 46 in January and February 2025.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* were recorded on 5 occasions over the course of the survey period. A peak count of 60 birds was observed perched within the trees separating compartment 41 and 42. A smaller flock of 26 birds was recorded foraging amongst the winter stubble within compartment 45. There were 16 records of redwing *Turdus iliacus*, the largest flock numbering 150 birds was observed foraging within a brassica crop located in compartment 41 on the 27/12/2024. Flocks numbering 100, 40, 26 and 25 birds were also observed foraging within the survey area throughout the survey period.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* were recorded on four occasions, with the largest flock of 100 birds observed foraging within compartments 41 and 43 on the 27/12/2024. Two smaller flocks of 30 birds were also observed foraging within compartments 45 and 29 on the 27/12/2024 and 21/01/2025. There were nine records of Song thrush *Turdus philomelos* observed throughout the survey period. Nine birds were recorded across the survey area within the majority of records occurring in January 2025. Individuals were largely observed foraging within the hedgerows and treelines inside the site boundary.

#### 4.4 Corvids and Gulls

Carrion crow *Corvus corone* and jackdaw *Coloeus monedula* were present in low numbers over the winter months. Four records document these species foraging within compartments 23, 28 and 29, and perched in the trees bordering compartment 21.

Throughout the survey period three gull species were recorded foraging or loafing within the survey Area. Two moderately sized flocks of common gull *Larus canus* were observed on the 20/11/2024. Both flocks numbered around 150 birds and were recorded loafing within compartments 57 and 13. Herring gull *Larus argentatus* and lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus* were all recorded in relatively low numbers with the highest record of 46 Herring gull occurring on the 28/02/2025, foraging within field 20. The highest record of lesser black-backed gull consisted of 36 foraging individuals all located within compartment 41.

#### 4.5 Farmland Birds

Four flocks of woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* were observed within the survey period. The largest flock numbering 38 birds was recorded feeding on the ground inside compartment 5 on the 11/03/2025. The remaining three flocks were observed in the months of January and February (2025) numbering 20, 29 and 29 birds.

Eleven yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* were recorded foraging on the ground inside compartment 37 on the 21/01/2025. There were 17 records of Skylark, equating to 24 birds throughout the survey period. Skylark *Alauda arvensis* were recorded in low numbers on eleven occasions throughout the survey period. These birds were typically observed amongst the winter stubble and ley grass present within the site boundary. A peak count of two birds was observed on the 27/12/2024. This species was most frequently recorded within compartments 17 and 27.

# A1 Species List

**Table 4-1: Full Species List**

BTO Code	Species	Scientific Name
B.	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
BF	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
BT	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
BZ	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
C.	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
CH	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
CM	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
D.	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
FF	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
GL	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
GO	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
GP	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>
GR	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
GT	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
H.	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
HG	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
HS	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
JD	Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
KT	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
L.	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
LB	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
LI	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
LT	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
MA	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
MH	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
MP	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
PE	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
PH	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
R.	Robin	
RB	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
RE	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>

BTO Code	Species	Scientific Name
RN	Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
S.	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
SG	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
SH	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
SN	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
ST	Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
T.	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
WN	Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>
WP	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
WR	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Y.	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>



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