

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

VOLUME III APPENDICES

Appendix 7-2 Winter bird Survey Report 2021-2022





BRIEFING NOTE

Project Reference	211052
Date	26.09.2022
Subject	2021/ 2022 Wintering Bird Surveys - Limerick 2030 Cleeves Riverside Quarter
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Background

This briefing note outlines the results of the 2021/ 2022 wintering bird surveys undertaken at St. Michael's Rowing club for Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC. The site of the Proposed Development is divided up into two parcels located at North Circular Road, Limerick City, Co. Limerick (Grid Ref: R 57051 57119).

Statement of Authority

A total of four wintering bird surveys were carried out by Kevin Mc Elduff (B.Sc. (Env.)) of MKO on 15/12/2021, 12/01/2022, 15/02/2022 and 14/03/2022. Kevin has also prepared this briefing note. This briefing note has been reviewed by Colin Murphy (B.Sc. M.Sc.) Colin is a Project Ecologist with over 2.5 years professional consultancy experience.

Methodology

Prior to the commencement of surveys, an initial field visit was undertaken to assess the habitats on site and plan the surveys, as well as to identify suitable vantage points. The survey area covered the development site and the area of shoreline within River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA, approximately 15m to the south of the Proposed Development site. The surveys were undertaken at the site over four dates: 15/12/2021, 12/01/2022, 15/02/2022 and 14/03/2022. Surveys were undertaken monthly at alternate high/low tides. A combination of low and high tide counts has been used due to the differences in behaviour and site use between tidal states, with different species likely to be foraging and roosting in different areas of River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA and the surrounding terrestrial habitats, depending on the stage of the tidal cycle.

The surveys were undertaken by appropriately qualified ornithologists. All observations were recorded, and detailed point data was gathered for each species observation, with all bird species denoted using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) codes and with the number of each species recorded next to each registration. The species recorded in the surveys were those covered by Irish Wetlands Bird Survey (I-WeBS) counts, i.e. all divers, grebes, cormorant, shag, herons, swans, geese, ducks, rails, crakes, waders, gulls and kingfisher. However, in addition to this, all other bird species, including all common and widespread passerines, were also recorded from within the proposed development site.

Wintering Bird Surveys

A total of eight bird species were recorded during the four surveys carried out during the 2021/ 2022 survey period: Black-headed gull, Cormorant, Heron, Lesser black-backed gull, Mallard, Mute swan, Oystercatcher and



Redshank. All birds were recorded outside the site, either feeding (F) on the River Shannon or roosting (R) on the riverbank and in the water (details below).

Three of these species (Black-headed gull, Cormorant, Heron, Lesser black-backed gull, Mallard, Mute swan, Oystercatcher and Redshank, Cormorant and Redshank) are Special Conservation Interests of the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA which is located in close proximity to the site.

Breeding and wintering populations of Mute swan, Cormorant, Mallard, Black-headed gull and Lesser black-backed gull are amber listed, Redshank and Oystercatcher are red listed as per *Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020-2026* (Gilbert et al 2021).

Table 1 Results of 15/12/2021 wintering bird survey

15/12/2021 15:00 High Tide – Sunny – Cloud cover 40% – Low wind – Visibility 2km +		
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)	8	Feeding
Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	4	Feeding
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	6	Feeding
Black-headed gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>)	100	Feeding
Lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)	16	Feeding

Table 2 Results of 12/01/2022 wintering bird survey

12/01/2022 9:00 Low Tide – Sunny – Cloud cover 50% – Low wind – Visibility 2km +		
Grey heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)	4	Feeding
Black-headed gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>)	250	Feeding
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)	8	Feeding
Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	15	Feeding
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	6	Feeding
Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>)	1	Feeding
Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)	19	Feeding
Lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)	6	Feeding

Table 3 Results of 15/02/2022 wintering bird survey

15/02/2022 7:05 High Tide – Cloud cover 90% – Moderate Wind – Visibility less than 2km		
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)	8	Roosting/ Feeding
Black-headed gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>)	~1,250	Feeding
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	5	Feeding
Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	110	Feeding
Lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)	15	Feeding
Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)	75	Feeding

Table 4 Results of 14/03/2022 wintering bird survey

14/03/2022 11:00 Low Tide – Sunny – Cloud cover 30% – Low wind – Visibility 2km +		
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)	14	Feeding
Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	9	Feeding
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	11	Feeding
Black-headed gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>)	200	Feeding
Lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)	25	Feeding/ Roosting



Conclusions of 2021/ 2022 Wintering bird surveys

The proposed development site does not provide suitable supporting habitat for SCI species associated with any SPA. No SCI species were recorded within the proposed development site during the course of the 2021/ 2022 wintering bird survey season.

Additional Surveys

While the wintering bird surveys carried out during the 2021/ 2022 survey period indicate that the proposed development site does not provide suitable habitat for SCI species nor does the site support any populations of SCI species, we recommend that wintering bird surveys be carried out for the upcoming 2022/ 2023 survey season. The purpose of these additional surveys is to ensure that the most up to date data is available for future planning applications to reduce risks.

