

Appendix 6.1A: Winter bird surveys October 2022 to April 2023

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Report on The Winter Birds Present on  
Lands at Moynetown, Portmarnock,  
Co Dublin. 2022 - 2023

Compiled by John Fox Dip field ecology. May 2023.



**Fig 1. Whimbrel foraging on the Moynetown Lands in the sheep and cattle grazing area.**

**Photo by J Fox.**

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## **Summary:**

Between the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 and the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023, 26 day-time visits were made to the Moynetown Lands, Portmarnock, Co Dublin. Visits were undertaken between the morning and mid-afternoon. Most of the visits were for a period of about 2 hours but some were longer and for more than three hours.

During each visit the lands were observed from various vantage points and were walked. All birds detected were recorded on field sheets. Information regarding the present or absence of any waterbirds was gathered.

No Light-bellied Brent Geese were found but had they been it was intended to record their numbers, activities, whether juvenile or adults were present, together with any events that might cause disturbance to the birds present. Other waterbirds found were counted and their numbers, behaviour and location recorded.

No Light-bellied Brent were observed on the lands during any of the survey periods and none of their droppings were found there either. Brent Geese have however been recorded on these lands during previous visits prior to 2022. Small numbers of foraging waterbirds were found on the lands during each of the visits in the winter of 2022 to 2023.

A total of 44 common bird species of Ireland were recorded on or over the lands. Nine species of high conservation concern (Red listed) were recorded. Eleven species of medium conservation concern, (Amber listed), were recorded. The remaining 24 species recorded were of least conservation concern, (Green listed).

## **Introduction:**

Monitoring of the lands at Moynetown, Portmarnock, Co Dublin was commissioned by Brady Shipman Martin, in October 2022.

Monitoring was undertaken to identify, whether waterbirds were using the lands as an inland feeding area and to identify what other birds were using the lands. All bird species found on the lands were identified and counted where possible.

The site is located to the west of Baldoyle Bay. The R106 Coast Road forms its boundary to the east and north. It is bounded on the west by a housing construction site and a hedgerow. To the south it is bounded by hedgerows. The land are approximately 35 hectares in area, including the currently active construction site. There is a fenced area to the south of the lands that is used to graze cattle and sheep which was not entered but was scanned from its edges. There is also a circular area partially enclosed by a palisade fence, this area was entered and walked on most occasions.

The lands can be entered from the R106 Coast Road. The lands are approximately 1.4 km from Baldoyle and 500m from Portmarnock. The Baldoyle Bay SPA (Site Code 004016) and SAC (Site Code 000199) are along its eastern and northern boundaries.

**Baldoyle Bay SPA (Site Code 4016)** The site comprises a relatively small estuarine system in north County Dublin. It receives the flows of the Mayne and Sluice rivers, both of which drain an agricultural / suburban catchment. Much of the estuary is sheltered from the sea by a large sand dune peninsula (now mostly a golf course). Sediments in the inner sheltered areas are mostly muds or muddy sands, often with a high organic content. Towards Portmarnock Point, the sediments are

predominantly well-aerated sands. In addition to the intertidal flats and salt marsh habitats, a small area of sand hills and sandy beach at Portmarnock Point is included in the site. (NPWS 2020).

The SPA gets its designation from the following bird species, habitats and waterbirds in general.

Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*)

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

#### Wetland and Waterbirds

Birdwatch Ireland provide specific bird counts for Baldoyle Bay SPA. From these counts Baldoyle Bay is recognised as of international importance for Light-bellied Brent Goose and of national importance for Shelduck, Golden Plover and Grey Plover. (Lewis, L. et al 2019)

#### **Light-bellied Brent Goose:**

The whole Light-bellied Brent Goose population winters almost entirely in Ireland, with small numbers in parts of Britain and France. They are a winter migrant from high-Arctic Canada. Most occur in Ireland between October and April. (BWI 2022).

Their Conservation Concern is that they are Amber-listed, as the majority winter at less than ten sites. The Irish population is also internationally significant, another amber listing criterion. The European population has been evaluated as vulnerable as several important populations have declined. (BWI 2023).

Light-bellied Brent goose is a small dark goose, with a black head, neck and breast, and dark-brown upperparts and pale underparts, almost whitish flanks, and small white crescents on the upperparts of the neck visible at close range. (BWI 2023).

During the winter, they feed mostly on eelgrass, which grows on muddy estuaries, and on grasslands. They usually move to grassland when food supplies have been depleted at estuarine sites. (BWI 2023).

They breed in small, loose colonies by coastal tundra, with pools and small inlets. (BWI 2023).

They are mostly found on coastal estuaries during the autumn and early winter, and on grasslands from mid-winter, until departure for the breeding grounds begins in late April. (BWI 2023).

Highest numbers (c. 30,000) are seen at Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland in October, where most congregate on arrival. Thereafter, they move to other estuarine sites. Lough Foyle in County Derry, Dublin Bay in County Dublin, Tralee Bay, Lough Gill & Akeragh Lough in County Kerry, Rogerstown Estuary in County Dublin, Wexford Harbour & Slobs in County Wexford are other well-used sites. (BWI 2023).

## Study Area:

The development lands are circa 35Ha in area and are outlined in red at Fig 2. There are several entrances to the lands from the Coast Road along the northeaster edge of the site. Much of the lands have been lying fallow for several years and are covered with rank sward, areas of recolonising scrub, meadow and an area of grassland grazed by sheep and cattle.

There are a few mature or semi-mature hedgerows that bound the lands and others that are within the lands themselves. These hedgerows contain a mixture of plant species including some mature or semi mature trees.

Some areas of the lands were inaccessible and are approximately outlined in yellow on the aerial photo at fig 2. They include the northern part of a construction site, and an area grazed by sheep and cattle. These areas were not entered but were scanned from their edges. Other areas were fenced off but were still accessible through gaps in the fence during most visits. These areas were walked when possible. The approximate positions of the fences to these areas are shown pink on the aerial photo at fig 2.

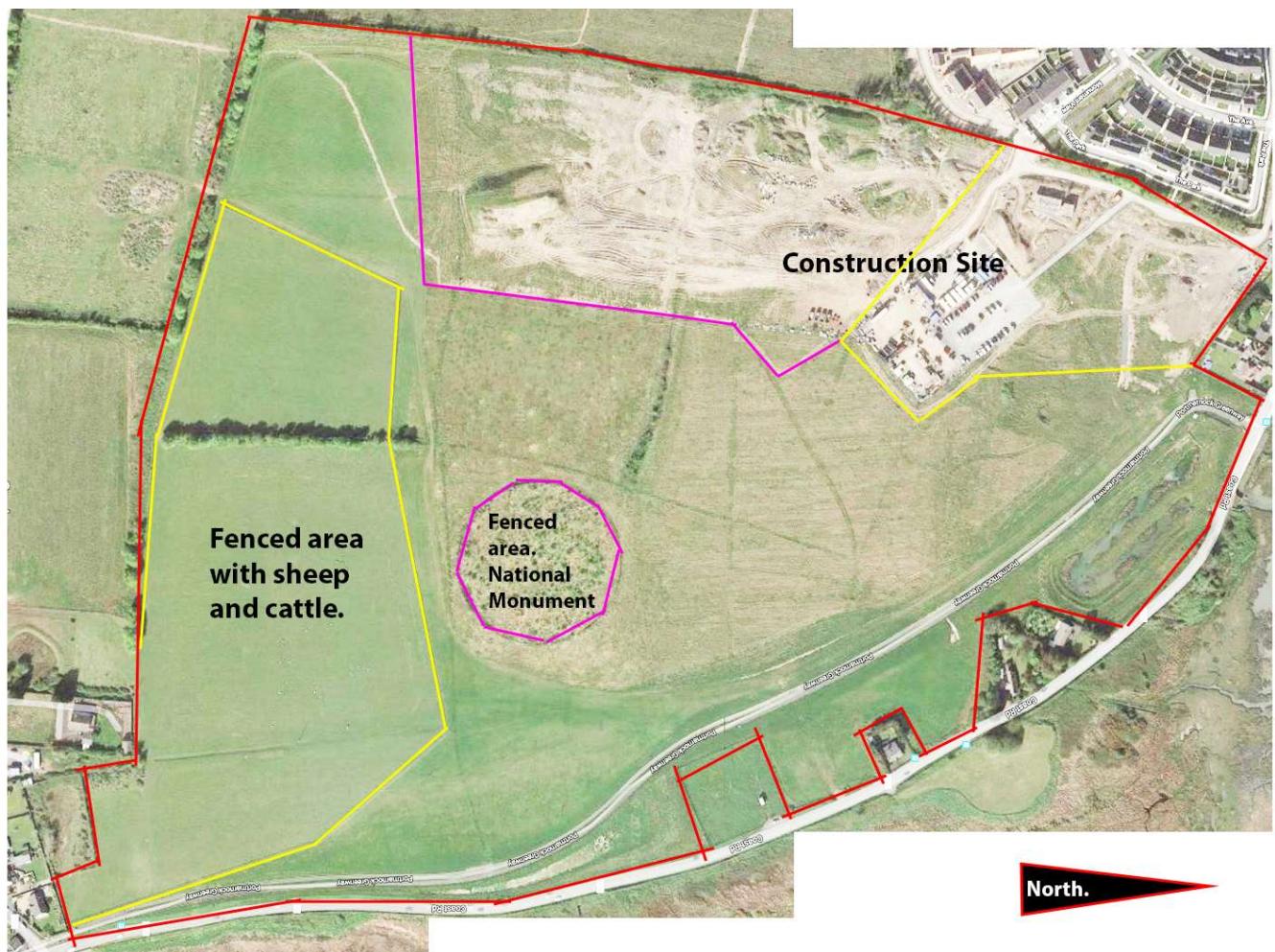


Fig 2. Moynetown Lands outlined red. Inaccessible areas outlined yellow, pink lines indicate fences with gaps that allowed access to the enclosed areas.

## Methodology:

Bird surveys commenced on site on 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 and continued until 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Survey periods varied from a minimum of 1 hour and 10 minutes to a maximum of three hours and thirty minutes. On average the visits were for a duration of 2 hours. A total of 26 visits were made during that time period amounting to 52hrs spent surveying the lands.

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Date	Start	Finish	Wind	Rain	Cloud	Visibility	High Tide	Low Tide
07/10/2022	1250	1500	W. 27Km/hr	None	50%	Good	1046	1626
18/10/2022	1245	1515	E. 16km/hr	None	50%	Good	1902	1206
28/10/2022	1205	1315	SSW. 24km/hr	None	25%	Good	1404	
16/11/2022	1030	1245	W. 3km/hr	None	10%	Good	1650	1014
22/11/2022	930	1210	NNW. 9km/hr	None	100%	Good	1007	
02/12/2022	815	1025	S. 3km/hr	None	50%	Good	656	1229
14/12/2022	1200	1410	NE. 8Km/hr	None	75%	Good	1545	843
16/12/2022	1030	1330	SW. 13Km/hr	None	10%	Good	1713	1042
29/12/2022	1030	1230	WSW. 44Km/hr	Showers	50%	Good	1613	941
03/01/2022	1330	1535	SSW. 24KM/hr	None	100%	Good	919	1458
06/01/2022	1200	1405	SSW. 17Km/hr	None	80%	Good	1119	1719
12/01/2023	1000	1200	SW. 36Km/hr	Showers	35%	Good	1445	810
19/01/2023	1050	1230	W. 3Km/hr	None	35%	Good	906	1511
27/01/2023	945	1135	W. 8KM/hr	None	50%	Good	1539	901
03/02/2023	1230	1430	WSW. 24KM/hr	None	80%	Good	959	1613
10/02/2023	1220	1400	WSW. 24KM/hr	None	100%	Good	1418	748
13/02/2023	1220	1350	SSE.	None	75%	Good	1627	949
22/02/2023	1125	1300	WNW. 22Km/hr	None	75%	Good	1248	615
27/02/2023	1000	1200	E. 19Km/hr	None	100%	Good	429	1016
07/03/2023	1130	1315	N. 12Km/hr	None	35%	Good	1139	
14/03/2023	939	1130	W, 19Km/hr	None	25%	Good	1607	930
20/03/2023	1240	1415	SSW. 22Km?hr	None	80%	Good	1022	1628
30/03/2023	900	1100	SW. 18Km/hr	None	80%	Good	740	1355
03/04/2023	1200	1335	SSW. 24Km/hr	None	80%	Good	1106	1707
13/04/2023	900	1135	W. 27KM/hr	None	10%	Good	522	1137
17/04/2023	800	1130	S. 8Km/hr	None	50%	Good	1016	354

**Table 1. Details of date, time, weather and tidal state during visits made to the Moynetown Lands in the Winter of 2022 to 2023.**

During each visit the lands were walked extensively. All accessible areas were entered when possible and were walked slowly. All accessible hedgerows and boundaries were also walked. The inaccessible areas were scanned from within the lands along their edges. During each visit all birds present, on or close to the lands, seen or heard, were identified where possible and their approximate locations and numbers noted.

Observations were made primarily with the naked eye and through 42x10 binoculars. The songs and calls of birds were also used to identify various species and their locations on the lands.

All waterbirds seen on the land were identified, counted and their behaviour noted.

Night-time visits were not undertaken to the lands.

The Moynetown lands were walked during each of the 26 visits and suitable areas were examined for the presence of geese dropping which would indicate that geese had been foraging there recently.

## **Results:**

A total of 44 bird species common to Ireland were observed on or over the lands. Of these 9 were red listed, 11 Amber listed and the remaining 24 green listed.

Fourteen waterbird species were observed on or over the lands six of which are red listed (of greatest conservation concern), five are amber listed (of medium conservation concern) and three are green listed (of least conservation concern). The red listed waterbird species observed were Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, and Snipe. The amber listed species observed were, Light-bellied Brent Goose, Mallard, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull and Herring Gull. The green listed species observed were Moorhen, Whimbrel and Great black-backed Gull.

No Light-bellied Brent Geese were observed on the lands during any of the 26 visits. No evidence in the form of geese droppings were found either. Brent Geese were however heard and seen in flight several times close to and over the lands and were often observed foraging in nearby Bald Doyle estuary. Light-bellied Brent Geese have however been seen by the author on the lands in previous years. These sightings usually occurred within or close to the enclosure grazed by sheep and cattle.

Mallard ducks were observed in very small numbers during many visits. Usually, two or three birds were found in or close to areas that held water particularly at the pond close to the southeaster extremity of the lands.

Moorhen were regularly detected on the pond close to the southeaster extremity of the lands. No more than two Moorhens were observed on any occasion.

A single Oystercatchers was observed within the sheep and cattle grazing area during the visit on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 with a second lone Oystercatcher also observed foraging on the same date on the grassed area between the fenced sheep and cattle enclosure and the circular fenced area. Two Oystercatchers were observed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2023 foraging on the grassed area to south of the circular fenced area. Oystercatcher was not observed during any other visit to the lands.

Flocks of Golen Plover were observed on the lands on three occasions. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2022 a total of 55 birds were observed foraging over a number of areas of the lands. These areas included the enclosed sheep and cattle grazing area, the grassed area south of the circular fenced area and the grassed areas between the greenway cycle track and the coast road. On 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2022 three Golden Plover were observed foraging on the northern part of the lands enclosed for sheep and cattle grazing. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 a flock of 88 birds were seen roosting in the southern part of the enclosed sheep and cattle grazing area.

Lapwing were observed on the lands five times with the larges flock of 38 birds found foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Jan 2023. A flock of 18 birds was observed in the same area on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2022. Smaller flocks of Lapwing were observed roosting on the building site lands on three occasions with 1 bird present on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2023,

15 presents on 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 and 2 birds present on 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2022. Small Lapwing flocks were observed flying over the lands occasionally.

Black-tailed Godwits were observed foraging in the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure on a single occasion with just two birds present on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2023. Small numbers of Black-tailed Godwits were also observed flying over the lands on a number of occasions.

Curlew were frequently observed on the lands with occurrences on 10 occasions. Most of the Curlews were observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing area with the largest numbers present on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 when 15 birds were observed. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of December and the 12<sup>th</sup> of January flocks of 12 Curlew were found in the same area. Smaller numbers of Curlew, usually 2 or 3 were observed on 7 other dates. On a number of occasions these small foraging flocks of Curlew, when disturbed from the sheep and cattle grazing area, flew to the building site part of the lands where they roosted briefly before returning to their earlier foraging area.

Whimbrel a passage migrant to Ireland, was observed just once. Three birds were seen foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing area during the final visit on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.

During most visits small numbers of Snipe (maximum 6) were flushed from several widely distributed areas. These included areas close to the greenway cycle/foot path in the northeaster area of the lands, the ponds between the Coast Road and the greenway cycle track, the building site area and areas of rough grassland throughout the site.

Black-headed Gull was often observed flying over the lands but was also observed roosting or foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 the largest flock of Black-headed Gulls was observed roosting within the sheep and cattle grazing area when 141 birds were present. The only other significant flock of Black-headed Gull was a flock of just 12 birds which was observed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2023 in the same area. Black-headed gulls were otherwise observed in just ones or twos on a number of other occasions.

Common Gull was observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure on a single occasion with a congregation of just 8 birds present on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2023.

Great Black-backed Gull was observed flying over the site on a number of occasions but was only observed on the lands themselves once. During the final visit on 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 a single bird was observed foraging with a number of Herring Gulls within the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure.

Herring Gull was observed flying over the lands during every visit but were also observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing areas on several occasions. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023, the last visit to the lands, the largest flock of 46 Herring Gull was observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure while on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2022, 24 birds and on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2023, 11 birds were present in the same area. One or two Herring Gulls were recorded foraging in the same area on a few other occasions.

No other waterbirds were observed on the lands during any of the visits.

A further three red listed species were recorded Kestrel, Meadow Pipit and Redwing.

A single female kestrel was seen hunting over the lands during five visits. It was seen hovering/hunting over several areas. These included an area of scrub just west of the circular fenced enclosure, the circular fenced enclosure itself, the construction site area and other areas of grass and scrub.

Meadow Pipit were numerous and seen during most visits. 16 or more birds were observed on the lands on more than one occasion. Some were displaying early breeding behaviour during the later visits in March and April. Many of these Meadow Pipits may breed on the lands later in the year.

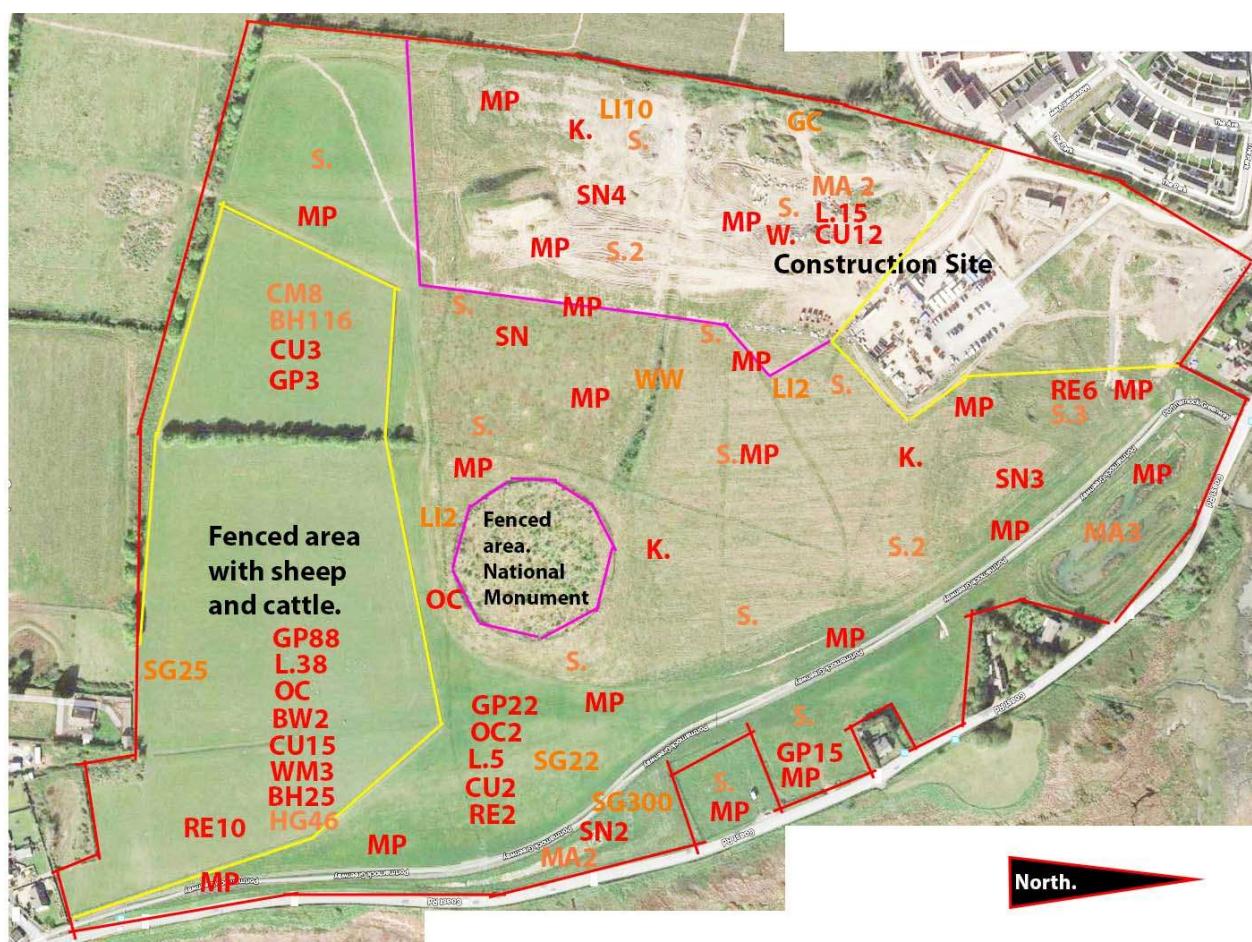
Redwing a migratory species of thrush that is a winter visitor to Ireland was observed foraging in areas of short grass on several occasions. A maximum number of up to 15 birds were recorded during a single visit.

Six further amber listed species were also observed on the lands, Skylark, (Northern) Wheatear, Willow Warbler, Goldcrest, Starling and Linnet.

Skylark were numerous and seen during each visit. Approximate counts of up to 20 birds were made during many visits. Many Skylarks were observed singing while flying above the lands, an indication that they were holding territory. Many pairs will most probably attempt to breed on the lands during 2023.

(Northern) Wheatear is a passage migrant to Ireland with a few pairs breeding in the northern parts of Ireland. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of March a single male Wheatear was observed foraging in the construction site area of the lands.

Willow Warbler is a breeding migrant to Ireland with many pairs breeding throughout Ireland each year. On 13<sup>th</sup> of April a single singing male Willow Warbler was observed along the hedgerow that runs south from the southern boundary of the construction site towards the circular enclosure.



**Fig 3. Moynetown Lands, with the approximate numbers and locations of the red and amber listed bird species indicated**

Goldcrest was observed on a single occasion in the construction site area along the hedge at the western site boundary.

Starling was observed on the lands on many occasions in foraging flocks. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 a flock of approximately 300 Starling were seen foraging south of the sheep and cattle enclosure while the second largest but much smaller flock of just 25 birds was observed within the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2023.

Linnet was observed during many visits. Small foraging flocks were observed during 2 visits primarily on the construction site lands otherwise very small groups of just two to four birds were observed. On most occasions they were found foraging on areas of mostly bare ground or in scrub. Small flock of about 10 Linnet were seen on the construction site area on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2022.

Species & Conservation Status Red, Amber or Green	BTO	Scientific name.	Activity	Maximum Numbers Present
Light-bellied Brent Goose	LG	<i>Branta bernicla (hrota)</i>	Flyover only	45
Mallard	MA	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Foraging	6
Buzzard	BZ	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Hunting	3
Sparrowhawk	SH	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Hunting	1
Kestrel	K.	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Hunting	1
Moorhen	MH	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Foraging	2
Oystercatcher	OC	<i>Haemotopus ostralegus</i>	Foraging	2
Golden Plover	GP	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Foraging	55
Lapwing	L.	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Foraging/Roosting	38
Black-tailed Godwit	BW	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Foraging	2
Curlew	CU	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Foraging/Roosting	12
Whimbrel	WM	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Foraging	3
Snipe	SN	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Foraging	6
Black-headed Gull	BH	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Foraging/Roosting	141
Common Gull	CM	<i>Larus canus</i>	Foraging	8
Gt Black-backed Gull	GB	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Foraging	1
Herring Gull	HG	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Foraging/Roosting	46
Feral Pigeon	FP	<i>Columba livia (domest)</i>	Foraging	2
Woodpigeon	WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Foraging, Singing	85
Skylark	S.	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Foraging, Singing	20
Meadow Pipit	MP	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Foraging, Singing	16
Pied Wagtail	PW	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Foraging	1
Dunnock	D.	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Foraging, Singing	3
Robin	R.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Foraging, Singing	2
(Northern) Wheatear	W.	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Foraging	1
Stonechat	SC	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Foraging	4
Song Thrush	ST	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Foraging, Singing	2
Redwing	RE	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Foraging	15

Mistle Thrush	M	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Foraging, <span style="color:red">RECEIVED: 22/07/2025</span>	2
Fieldfare	FF	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Foraging	12
Blackbird	B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Foraging/Singing	4
Willow Warbler	WW	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Foraging/Singing	1
Wren	WR	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Foraging, Singing	8
Goldcrest	GC	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Foraging	1
Blue Tit	BTO	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Foraging	3
Magpie	MG	<i>Pica pica</i>	Foraging	9
Jackdaw	JD	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Foraging	4
Rook	RO	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Foraging	2
Hooded Crow	HC	<i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	Foraging	6
Raven	RN	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Foraging	2
Starling	SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Foraging	300
Linnet	LI	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Foraging	10
Goldfinch	GO	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Foraging	20
Reed Bunting	RB	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Foraging	3

**Table 2. Bird Species observed on or over the Moynetown Lands. Text colour indicates species conservation status (Red, Amber or Green listed).**

### Discussion:

The data gathered from the 26 visits between November 2022 and April 2023 suggests that Light-bellied Brent Geese probably did not use the Moynetown lands to graze during that period. No Light-bellied Brent Geese were seen on the lands but were seen in flight close to the lands during the survey period. No geese droppings were found on the lands either. Having said that the enclosed area where the sheep and cattle graze was not walked or checked thoroughly for droppings. It is however possible that Brent Geese may have grazed there at some times during the survey months. Brent Geese have been observed on these lands by the author during previous winters.

From the 26 visits and observations made during those visits, it was established that several waterbird species such as Moorhen, Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Whimbrel, Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull and Herring Gull do frequent the lands to forage. Most of the foraging and roosting waterbirds were observed in the sheep and cattle grazing area however Moorhen and Snipe were not found there. Snipe were found in many areas of the lands always in small numbers and usually in an area of rank sward or close to wet areas. Moorhen was only found in the attenuation pond at the northeastern boundary of the lands.

The lands hold good numbers of red listed Meadow Pipit and amber listed Skylark during the winter and many of these birds may attempt to breed on the lands later in the year. A red listed Kestrel was observed hunting over the land on several occasion. Otherwise, the lands hold small numbers of common amber and green listed bird species, some of which may attempt to breed in areas of scrub or hedgerows throughout the lands.

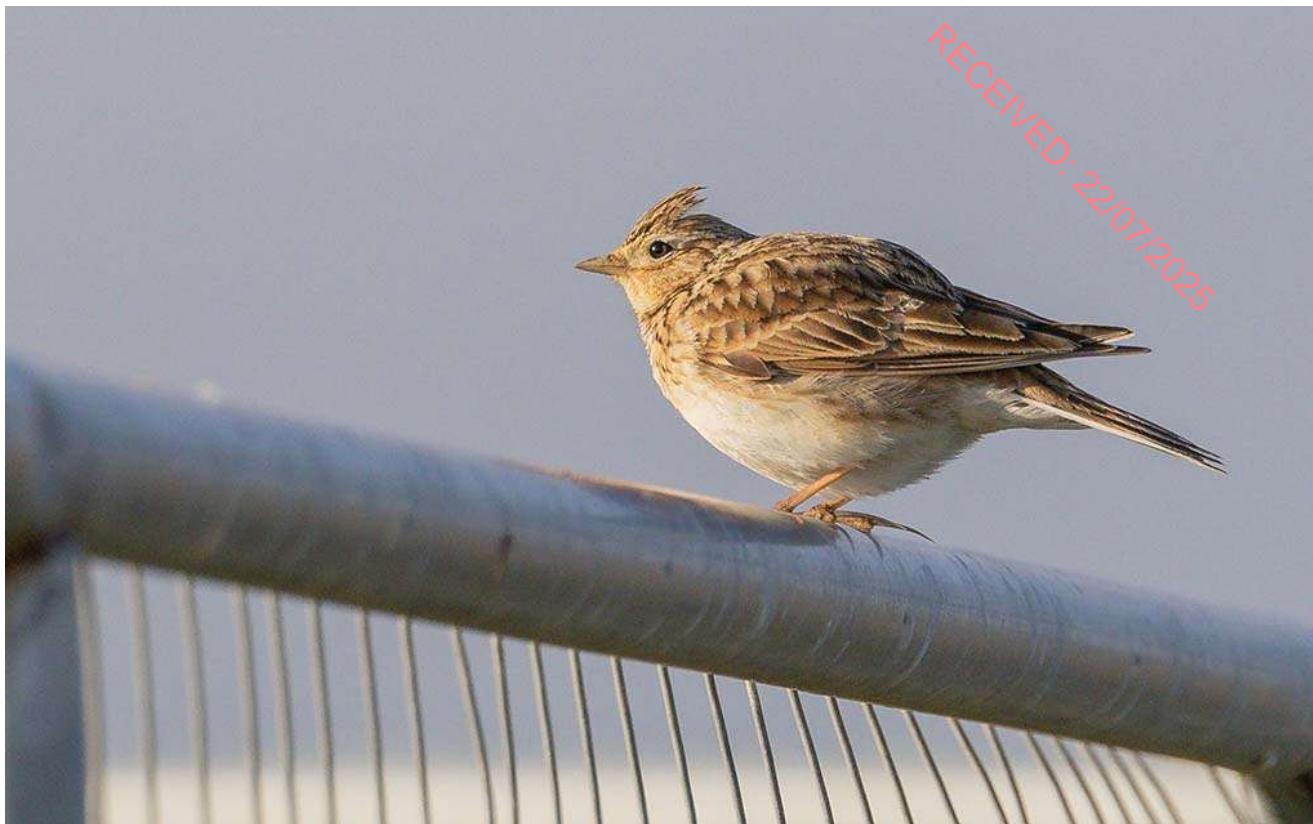


Fig 4. Skylark; Species seen on the Moynetown Lands. Photo J Fox.

### Conclusion:

It was confirmed that 13 waterbirds do use the survey lands. The waterbird species observed were Mallard, Moorhen, Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Whimbrel, Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull and Herring Gull six of which are red listed as species of highest conservation concern and four are amber listed species of medium conservation concern while the remaining three are Green listed as of least conservation concern.

Just one of the waterbird species found on the lands is included in the bird species lists for which the nearby Baldoyle Bay SPA gets its designation that species being Golden Plover.

Light-bellied Brent Goose, which is amber listed, was observed flying over the land and foraging in nearby Baldoyle Bay but was not confirmed to use the lands to graze during the survey period.

A further 29, non waterbird species, were also confirmed to use the lands. Of these three are red listed Kestrel, Redwing and Meadow Pipit and five are amber listed, Skylark, (Northern) Wheatear, Willow Warbler, Starling and Linnet. The remaining 21 species are green listed.

**References:**

Appendix 6.1B: Winter bird surveys October 2023 to April 2025

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Fig 1. Attenuation pond to north of the Moynetown Lands.

Photo by J Fox.

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## **Summary:**

Between the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2023 and the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, and 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 16 day-time visits were made to the Moynetown Lands, Portmarnock, Co Dublin. Visits were undertaken between the morning and mid-afternoon. Most of the visits were for a period of about 2 hours.

During each visit the lands were observed from various vantage points and were walked. All birds detected were recorded on field sheets. Information regarding the present or absence of any waterbirds was gathered.

No Light-bellied Brent Geese were found but had they been it was intended to record their numbers, activities, whether juvenile or adults were present, together with any events that might cause disturbance to the birds present. Other waterbirds found were counted and their numbers, behaviour and location recorded.

No Light-bellied Brent were observed on the lands during any of the survey periods and none of their droppings were found there either. Brent Geese have however been recorded on these lands during previous visits prior to 2022. Small numbers of foraging waterbirds were found on the lands during most of the visits in the winters of 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025.

A total of 35 common bird species of Ireland were recorded on or over the lands. Seven species of high conservation concern (Red listed) were recorded. Eight species of medium conservation concern, (Amber listed), were recorded. The remaining 20 species recorded were of least conservation concern, (Green listed).

## **Introduction:**

Monitoring of the lands at Moynetown, Portmarnock, Co Dublin was commissioned by Brady Shipman Martin, Canal House, Canal Road, Dublin 6, in October 2023.

Monitoring was undertaken to identify, whether waterbirds were using the lands as an inland feeding area and to identify what other birds were using the lands. All bird species found on the lands were identified and counted where possible.

The site is located to the west of Baldoyle Bay. The R106 Coast Road forms its boundary to the east and north. It is bounded on the west by a housing construction site and a hedgerow. To the south it is bounded by hedgerows. The land are approximately 35 hectares in area, including the currently active construction site. There is a fenced area to the south of the lands that is used to graze cattle and sheep which was not entered but was scanned from its edges. There is also a circular area partially enclosed by a palisade fence, this area was entered and walked on most occasions.

The lands can be entered from the R106 Coast Road. The lands are approximately 1.4 km from Baldoyle and 500m from Portmarnock. The Baldoyle Bay SPA (Site Code 004016) and SAC (Site Code 000199) are along its eastern and northern boundaries.

**Baldoyle Bay SPA (Site Code 4016)** The site comprises a relatively small estuarine system in north County Dublin. It receives the flows of the Mayne and Sluice rivers, both of which drain an agricultural / suburban catchment. Much of the estuary is sheltered from the sea by a large sand dune peninsula (now mostly a golf course). Sediments in the inner sheltered areas are mostly muds or muddy sands, often with a high organic content. Towards Portmarnock Point, the sediments are

predominantly well-aerated sands. In addition to the intertidal flats and salt marsh habitats, a small area of sand hills and sandy beach at Portmarnock Point is included in the site. (NPWS 2020).

The SPA gets its designation from the following bird species, habitats and waterbirds in general.

Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*)

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

#### Wetland and Waterbirds

Birdwatch Ireland provide specific bird counts for Baldoyle Bay SPA. From these counts Baldoyle Bay is recognised as of international importance for Light-bellied Brent Goose and of national importance for Shelduck, Golden Plover and Grey Plover. (Lewis, L. et al 2019)

#### **Light-bellied Brent Goose:**

The whole Light-bellied Brent Goose population winters almost entirely in Ireland, with small numbers in parts of Britain and France. They are a winter migrant from high-Arctic Canada. Most occur in Ireland between October and April. (BWI 2025).

Their Conservation Concern is that they are Amber-listed, as the majority winter at less than ten sites. The Irish population is also internationally significant, another amber listing criterion. The European population has been evaluated as vulnerable as several important populations have declined. (BWI 2025).

Light-bellied Brent goose is a small dark goose, with a black head, neck and breast, and dark-brown upperparts and pale underparts, almost whitish flanks, and small white crescents on the upperparts of the neck visible at close range. (BWI 2025).

During the winter, they feed mostly on eelgrass, which grows on muddy estuaries, and on grasslands. They usually move to grassland when food supplies have been depleted at estuarine sites. (BWI 2025).

They breed in small, loose colonies by coastal tundra, with pools and small inlets. (BWI 2025).

They are mostly found on coastal estuaries during the autumn and early winter, and on grasslands from mid-winter, until departure for the breeding grounds begins in late April. (BWI 2025).

Highest numbers (c. 30,000) are seen at Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland in October, where most congregate on arrival. Thereafter, they move to other estuarine sites. Lough Foyle in County Derry, Dublin Bay in County Dublin, Tralee Bay, Lough Gill & Akeragh Lough in County Kerry, Rogerstown Estuary in County Dublin, Wexford Harbour & Slobs in County Wexford are other well-used sites. (BWI 2025).

## Study Area:

The development lands are circa 35Ha in area and are outlined in red at Fig 2. There are several entrances to the lands from the Coast Road along the northeaster edge of the site. Much of the lands have been lying fallow for several years and are covered with rank sward, areas of recolonising scrub, meadow and an area of grassland grazed by sheep and cattle. A cereal crop was planted over part of the lands in October 2023, but this was not repeated in 2024.

There are a few mature or semi-mature hedgerows that bound the lands and others that are within the lands themselves. These hedgerows contain a mixture of plant species including some mature or semi mature trees.

Some areas of the lands were inaccessible since 2023 and are approximately outlined in yellow on the aerial photo at fig 2. They include the northern part of a construction site, and an area grazed by sheep and cattle. These areas were not entered but were scanned from their edges. Other areas were fenced off but were still accessible through gaps in the fence during most visits. These areas were walked when possible. The approximate positions of the fences to these areas are shown pink on the aerial photo at fig 2. Further areas became inaccessible in February of 2025 and these areas are roughly enclosed by a blue line on the aerial photo at fig 2.

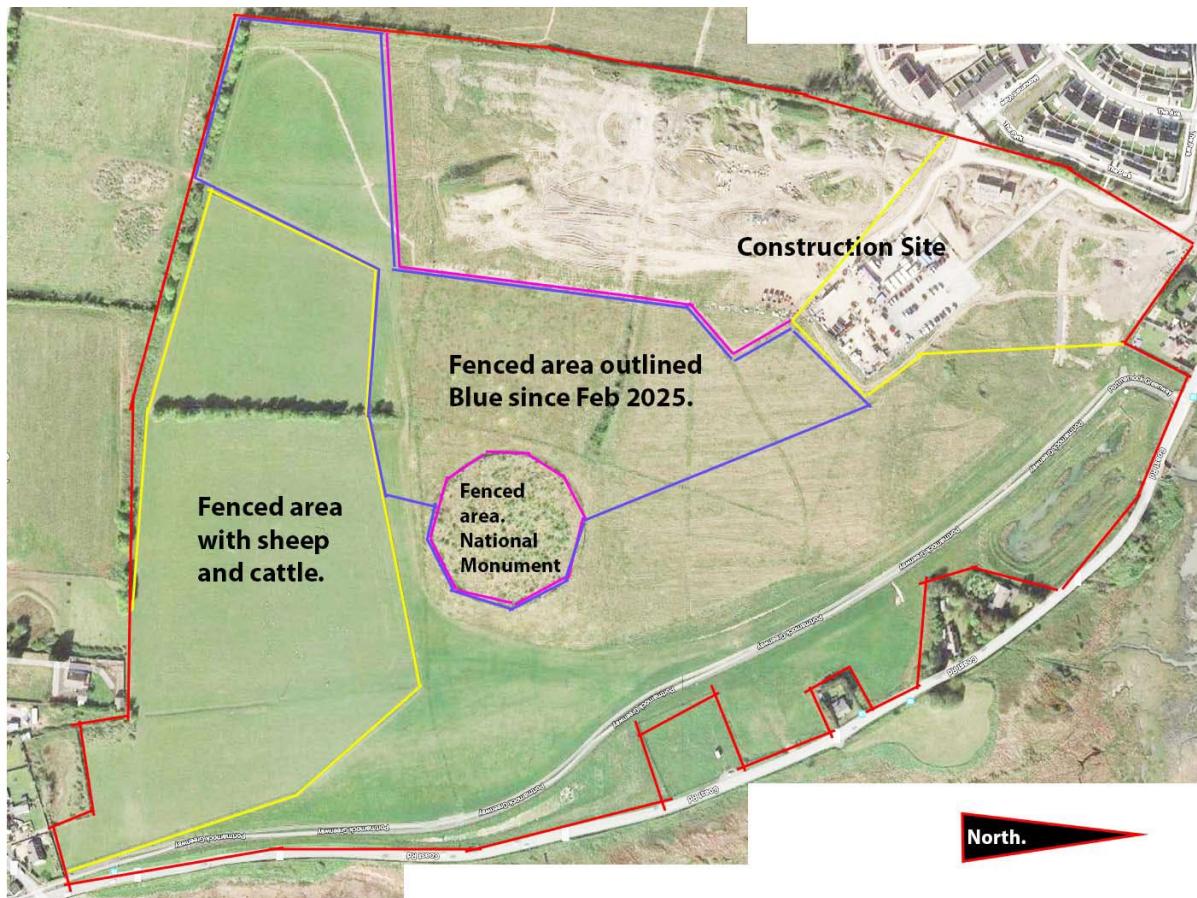


Fig 2. Maynetown Lands outlined red. Inaccessible areas outlined yellow, Pink lines indicate fences with gaps that allowed access to the enclosed areas up to October 2024. Blue Line indicates enclosed areas inaccessible since Feb 2025.

## Methodology:

Bird surveys commenced on site on 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2023 and continued until 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Were begun again in October 2024 and continued until March 2025. Survey periods varied from a minimum of 1 hour and 30 minutes to a maximum of two hours and ten minutes. A total of 16 visits were made during those time periods amounting to 26 hrs and 20 minutes spent surveying the lands.

Date	Start	Finish	Wind	Rain	Cloud	Visibility	High Tide	Low Tide
02/10/2023	1125	1300	SSW. 12Km/hr	None	100%	Good	1416	0749
02/11/2023	1130	1340	W. 19km/hr	None	75%	Good	1417	0750
05/12/2023	1215	1400	NNW. 11km/hr	None	100%	Good	1729	
04/01/2024	0830	1030	WSW. 18km/hr	None	10%	Good	0506	1052
01/02/2024	915	1110	WSW. 15km/hr	None	100%	Good	1536	
05/03/2024	815	1025	S. 3km/hr	None	50%	Good	1925	
30/10/2024	1000	1210	WSW. 5Km/hr	None	75%	Good		
20/11/2024	1200	1330	NNW. 18Km/hr	None	40%	Good	1425	
1/12/2024	1135	1505	NW. 26KM/hr	None	25%	Good	1156	1753
13/12/2024	1050	1220	NNW. 8Km/hr	None	80%	Good	0935	
1/01/2025	1030	1200	W. 26Km/hr	None	80%	Good	1215	
28/01/2025	930	1050	NW. 21Km/hr	Raining	100%	Good	1040	
4/02/2025	1300	1420	SW. 34km/hr	Showers	80%	Good	1543	
19/02/2025	1200	1330	S. 22Km/hr	None	25%	Good	1546	
5/03/2025	930	1100	SSW. 19Km/hr	None	75%	Good	1519	
20/03/2025	915	1045	ESE. 12KM/hr	None	15%	Good	1512	

**Table 1. Details of date, time, weather and tidal state during visits made to the Moynetown Lands in the Winters of 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025.**

During each visit the lands were walked extensively. All accessible areas were entered when possible and were walked slowly. All accessible hedgerows and boundaries were also walked. The inaccessible areas were scanned from within the lands along their edges. During each visit all birds present, on or close to the lands, seen or heard, were identified where possible and their approximate locations and numbers noted.

Observations were made primarily with the naked eye and through 42x10 binoculars. The songs and calls of birds were also used to identify various species and their locations on the lands.

All waterbirds seen on the land were identified, counted and their behaviour noted.

Night-time visits were not undertaken to the lands.

The Maynetown lands were walked during each of the 16 visits and suitable areas were examined for the presence of geese dropping which would indicate that geese had been foraging there recently.

## Results:

A total of 35 bird species common to Ireland were observed on or over the lands. Of these 7 were red listed, 8 Amber listed and the remaining 20 were green listed.

Nine waterbird species were observed on or over the lands four of which are red listed (of greatest conservation concern), three are amber listed (of medium conservation concern) and two are green listed (of least conservation concern). The red listed waterbird species observed were Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, and Snipe. The amber listed species observed were, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull and Herring Gull. The green listed species observed were Little Egret and Moorhen.

No Light-bellied Brent Geese were observed on the lands during any of the 16 visits. No evidence in the form of geese droppings were found either. Brent Geese were often observed foraging in nearby Bald Doyle estuary. Light-bellied Brent Geese have however been seen by the author on the lands in previous years. These sightings usually occurred within or close to the enclosure grazed by sheep and cattle.

Two Little Egrets were observed foraging to the north of the sheep and cattle enclosure on 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2024. This was the only sighting of this species.

Moorhen were regularly detected on the pond close to the northeaster extremity of the lands. Only a single Moorhen was observed on any occasion.

A single Black-tailed Godwit was observed flying over the lands on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023. Good numbers of Black-tailed Godwits were regularly observed on Bald Doyle Estuary.

A flock of 32 Lapwing were found foraging or roosting within the sheep and cattle area on 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2025. This was the only occurrence of this species found within the lands during either winter survey period.

One or two Curlew were occasionally observed on the lands with occurrences on 7 occasions. All of these Curlews were observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing area with two birds present on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 and five on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

During most visits small numbers of Snipe (maximum 4) were flushed from several widely distributed areas. These included areas close to the greenway cycle/foot path in the northeaster area of the lands, the ponds between the Coast Road and the greenway cycle track, close to the building site area and other areas of rough grassland throughout the site. They were most frequently found in the attenuation pond area to the south of the fenced area with the antenna. Four Snipe were flushed from this location on two occasions in the winter of 2024 to 2025 while two and three birds were flushed on other occasions from the same area.

Black-headed Gull was occasionally observed flying over the lands but was also observed foraging to the east of the sheep and cattle enclosure and within the building site area. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 the largest flock of Black-headed Gulls was observed foraging within the building site area when 34 birds were present. Twenty Black-headed Gulls were also observed foraging just east of the sheep and cattle enclosure on 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2025 together with several Herring Gulls following recent earthworks and soil moving in that location.

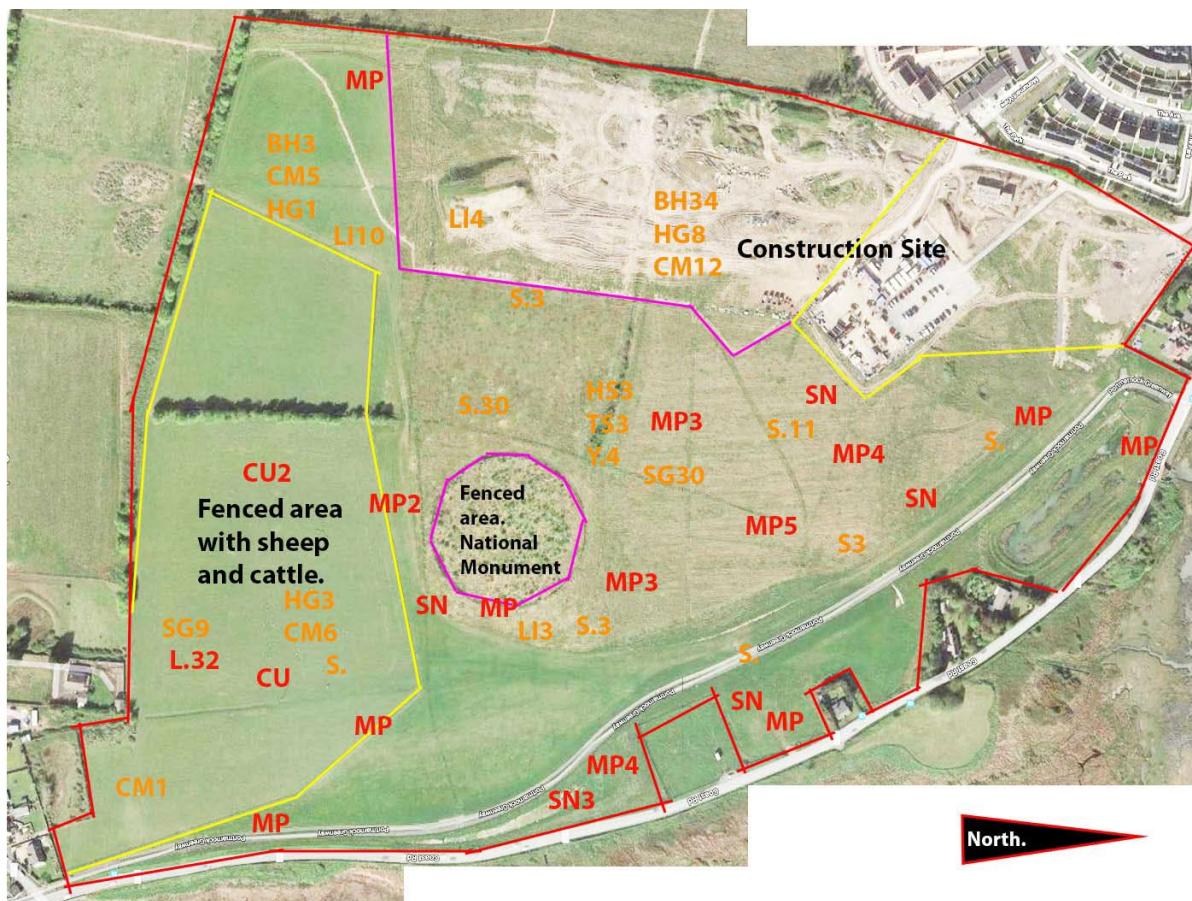
Common Gull was observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure on two occasions with 6 birds present on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2024. Common Gulls were also recorded on 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 when five were foraging to the east of the sheep and cattle enclosure and 12 were

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foraging within the building site area. A single bird was also recorded foraging in the east end of the sheep and cattle area on 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.

Herring Gull was observed flying over the lands during every visit but were also observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing areas on 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2024 when 3 birds were present and on two other dates when single birds were present in the same area. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 a flock of 8 Herring Gull was observed foraging within the building site area with a single bird foraging east of the sheep and cattle enclosure. At least 12 Herring Gulls were also observed foraging in the area to the west of the sheep and cattle area on 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 together with several Black-headed Gull following recent earthworks in that area.

No other waterbirds were observed on the lands during any of the visits.



**Fig 3. Moynetown Lands, with the approximate numbers and locations of the red and amber listed bird species indicated.**

A further three red listed species were recorded. These were, Stock Dove, Meadow Pipit and Yellowhammer.

Two Stock Doves were observed on a single occasion in a mixed flock of about 300 Wood and Feral Pigeons foraging in the cereal crop on 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023. More may have been present but Stock Doves were difficult to identify as the flock was very mobile and difficult to see when on the ground.

Meadow Pipits were numerous and seen during most visits. 15 or more birds were observed on the lands on one occasion. Many of these Meadow Pipits may breed on the lands during the summer.

Species & Conservation Status Red, Amber or Green	BTO	Scientific name.	Activity	RECEIVED: 22/07/2025	Maximum Numbers Present
Little Egret	ET	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Foraging		2
Buzzard	BZ	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Hunting		3
Moorhen	MH	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Foraging		1
Lapwing	L.	<i>Vanellus Vanellus</i>	Foraging/Roosting		32
Black-tailed Godwit	BW	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Flyover		1
Curlew	CU	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Foraging		2
Snipe	SN	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Foraging		4
Black-headed Gull	BH	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Foraging/Roosting		34
Common Gull	CM	<i>Larus canus</i>	Foraging		12
Herring Gull	HG	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Foraging/Roosting		46
Feral Pigeon	FP	<i>Columba livia (domest)</i>	Foraging		110
Stock Dove	SD	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Foraging		2
Woodpigeon	WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Foraging, Singing		155
Collared Dove	CD	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Foraging		8
Skylark	S.	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Foraging, Singing		35
Meadow Pipit	MP	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Foraging, Singing		15
Dunnock	D.	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Foraging, Singing		2
Robin	R.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Foraging, Singing		2
Stonechat	SC	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Foraging		2
Song Thrush	ST	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Foraging, Singing		1
Mistle Thrush	M	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Foraging,		2
Blackbird	B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Foraging/Singing		2
Wren	WR	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Foraging, Singing		3
Magpie	MG	<i>Pica pica</i>	Foraging		4
Jackdaw	JD	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Foraging		45
Rook	RO	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Foraging		60
Hooded Crow	HC	<i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	Foraging		2
Starling	SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Foraging		30
House Sparrow	HS	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Foraging		3
Tree Sparrow	TS	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Foraging		3
Linnet	LI	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Foraging		20
Chaffinch	CH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Foraging		4
Goldfinch	GO	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Foraging		50
Reed Bunting	RB	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Foraging		3
Yellowhammer	Y.	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Foraging		4

Table 2. Bird Species observed on or over the Moynetown Lands. Text colour indicates species conservation status (Red, Amber or Green listed).

Yellowhammer were seen on two occasions with a maximum of 4 birds observed along the hedge close to the east of the circular enclosure on 4<sup>th</sup> of January and a single bird on 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023.

Five further amber listed species were observed on the lands, Skylark, Starling, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow and Linnet.

Skylark were numerous and seen during each visit. Approximate counts of up to 20 birds were made during many visits with a maximum count of 35 birds on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024. Many Skylarks were observed singing while flying above the lands on 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 and on 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2025, an indication that they were holding territory. Many pairs did and will most probably attempt to breed on the lands during the summer.

Starling was observed on the lands on many occasions in foraging flocks. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 a flock of 30 Starling were seen foraging north of the sheep and cattle enclosure in the area where a crop was planted. Smaller flocks and single birds were observed in many areas of the lands on several occasions.

House Sparrow was seen on the land on one occasion, the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023, when three birds were observed along the hedge to the east of the circular enclosure.

Tree Sparrow was seen on the land on two occasions. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 when 3 birds were seen and the 4<sup>th</sup> of January when 2 birds were seen. Both sightings were along the hedge just west of the circular enclosure.

Linnet was observed during many visits. Small foraging flocks were observed during 2 visits primarily on or close to the construction site lands. A mixed finch flock of over 60 birds was seen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2023. Most of the species present were Goldfinch but at least 10 Linnet were also in the flock. Otherwise very small groups of just two to four birds were observed. On most occasions they were found foraging on areas of mostly bare ground or in scrub and occasionally within the eastern part of the sheep and cattle enclosure.

## **Discussion:**

The data gathered from the visits between October 2023 and March 2024 and again between October 2024 and March 2025 suggests that Light-bellied Brent Geese probably did not use the Maynetown lands to graze during that period. No Light-bellied Brent Geese were seen on the lands but were seen in Baldoyle Bay close to the lands during the survey periods. No geese droppings were found on the lands either. Having said that the enclosed area where the sheep and cattle graze was not walked or checked thoroughly for droppings. It is therefore possible that Brent Geese may have grazed there at some times during the survey months. Brent Geese have been observed on these lands by the author during previous winters.

From the many visits and observations made during those visits, it was established that several waterbird species such as Little Egret, Moorhen, Curlew, Snipe, Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, and Herring Gull do frequent the lands to forage. Most of the foraging and roosting waterbirds were observed on the building site and in or close to the sheep and cattle grazing area however, Moorhen and Snipe were not found there. Snipe were found in many areas of the lands always in small numbers and usually in an area of rank sward or close to wet areas. Moorhen was only found in the attenuation pond at the northeastern boundary of the lands.

The lands hold good numbers of red listed Meadow Pipit and amber listed Skylark during the winter and many of these birds did or may attempt to breed on the lands later in the summer. Small numbers of red listed Yellowhammer and amber listed Tree Sparrow were also observed on two

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occasions. Neither of these species had been observed on the lands for several years prior to these surveys and probably returned following the planting of a cereal crop in 2023. Neither were seen in the second survey period during the winter of 2024 to 2025. Otherwise, the lands hold small numbers of common amber and green listed bird species, some of which may attempt to breed in areas of scrub or hedgerows throughout the lands.

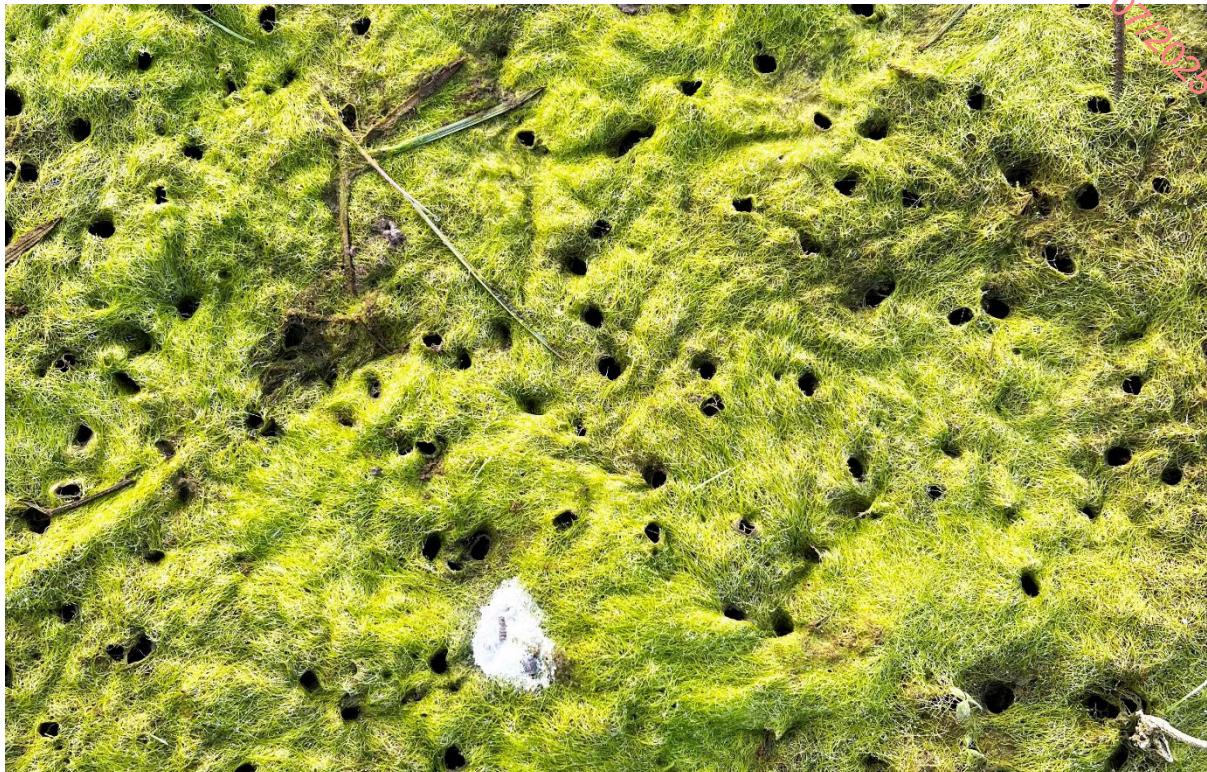


Fig 4. Holes at bottom of dry attenuation pond to southeast of lands probably created by foraging Snipe. Photo J Fox.

## Conclusion:

It was confirmed that 8 waterbirds do use the survey lands and a ninth Black-tailed Godwit, was seen flying over the lands. The 9 waterbird species observed were Little Egret, Moorhen, Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, and Herring Gull, four of which are red listed as species of highest conservation concern and three are amber listed species of medium conservation concern while the remaining two are Green listed, of least conservation concern.

None of the waterbird species found on the lands is included in the bird species lists for which the nearby Baldoyle Bay SPA gets its designation.

Light-bellied Brent Goose, which is amber listed, was observed foraging in nearby Baldoyle Bay but was not confirmed to use the lands to graze during the survey period.

A further 26, non waterbird species, were also confirmed to use the lands. Of these three are red listed Stock Dove, Meadow Pipit and Yellowhammer and five are amber listed, Skylark, Starling, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow and Linnet. The remaining 18 species are green listed.

**References:**

Appendix 6.1B: Winter bird surveys October 2023 to April 2025  
Birdwatch Ireland 2023. *Ireland's Birds: Light-bellied Brent Goose*. [online] Available from: <https://www.birdwatchireland.ie/Default.aspx?tabid=157>

Lewis, L. J., Burke, B., Fitzgerald, N., Tierney, T. D. & Kelly, S. (2019) Irish Wetland Bird Survey: Waterbird Status and Distribution 2009/10-2015/16. *Irish Wildlife Manuals*, No 106 National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Ireland.

NPWS (2020) Natura 2000 Standard Data Form. Bald Doyle Bay SPA. [online] Available from: <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/natura2000/NF004016.pdf>

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Appendix 6.1C: Breeding bird surveys April 2023 to July 2025

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Report on The Breeding Birds Present on  
Lands at Maynetown, Portmarnock,  
Co Dublin. April to August 2023

April to May 2024 and April to July 2025.

Compiled by John Fox Dip field ecology. July 2025.



**Fig 1. Nesting Meadow Pipit with food at Maynetown 2025.**

Photo by J Fox.

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## **Summary:**

Between the 25<sup>th</sup> of April and the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2023, 16<sup>th</sup> of April and 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 and 17<sup>th</sup> of April and the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2025, 13 day-time visits were made to the Maynetown Lands, Portmarnock, Co Dublin. Visits were undertaken in early morning. All of the visits were for a period of between one and three hours.

The lands were walked slowly during each visit. The routes walked focused primarily on areas of, hedgerows, areas of scrub, recolonising bare ground, meadows and ponds.

Data from the visit were recorded and the approximate positions for the birds as seen or heard were plotted on aerial photographs. Approximate numbers of birds present and their breeding status if any were recorded.

A species table indicating the species found on the lands was prepared.

A total of 36 common bird species of Ireland were recorded on the lands, of which 6 were confirmed as breeding. Four species of high and eight of medium conservation concern were recorded. The remaining 24 species recorded were of least conservation concern. Several of the species recorded were just heard, seen in flight or were foraging and may not have been breeding on the lands at the time of the visits.

No Light-bellied Brent Geese were observed on the lands during any of the survey visits and none of their droppings were found there either. Brent Geese have however been recorded on these lands during previous winter visits prior to 2022. Eight species of waterbird, Mallard, Moorhen, Curlew, Whimbrel, Snipe, Greater Black-backed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Herring Gull were found on the lands during one or more of the visits between 25<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2023, 16<sup>th</sup> of March and 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 and 17<sup>th</sup> of April and 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2025.

## **Introduction:**

Monitoring of the lands at Maynetown, Portmarnock, Co Dublin was commissioned by Brady Shipman Martin, Canal House, Canal Road, Dublin 6, in April 2023.

This survey aim was to get an overview of the bird species present on the lands during the breeding seasons of 2023 and early breeding seasons of 2024 and 2025 and to indicate their breeding status and abundance.

The site is located to the west of Bald Doyle Bay. The R106 Coast Road forms its boundary to the east and north. It is bounded on the west by a housing construction site and a hedgerow. To the south it is bounded by hedgerows. The land are approximately 35 hectares in area, including the currently active construction site. (The active construction site has extended east since the 2023 surveys reducing the survey area in 2024 and again further reducing it in 2025). There is a fenced area to the south of the lands that is used to graze cattle and sheep with some horses present there in 2025. This area was not entered but was scanned from its edges. There is also a circular area that was partially enclosed by a palisade fence, this area was entered and walked during most visits in 2023 and 2024. Fencing to this circular area was repaired in 2025 and was therefore not accessed during the 2025 survey period.

The lands can be entered from the R106 Coast Road. The lands are approximately 1.4 km from Bald Doyle and 500m from Portmarnock.

## Study Area:

The development lands are circa 35Ha in area and are outlined in red at Fig 2. There are several entrances to the lands from the Coast Road along the northeaster edge of the site. Much of the lands have been lying fallow for several years and are covered with rank sward. There are also areas of recolonising scrub, meadow and an area of grassland grazed by sheep and cattle. There are two manmade attenuation ponds along the eastern boundary. Between the first and second visits in 2023 approximately 8 hectares of the lands was ploughed and sown with a cereal crop. This cultivation was not repeated in 2024 or 2025.

There are a few mature or semi-mature hedgerows that bound the lands and others that are within the lands themselves. These hedgerows contain a mixture of plant species including some mature or semi mature trees. Some of the hedgerows present in 2023 have now been removed.

Some areas of the lands were inaccessible in 2023/24 and are approximately outlined in yellow on the aerial photo at fig 2. They include the northern part of a construction site, and an area grazed by sheep and cattle. These areas were not entered but were scanned from their edges. Other areas were fenced off but were still accessible through gaps in the fence during most visits in 2023. These areas were walked when possible.

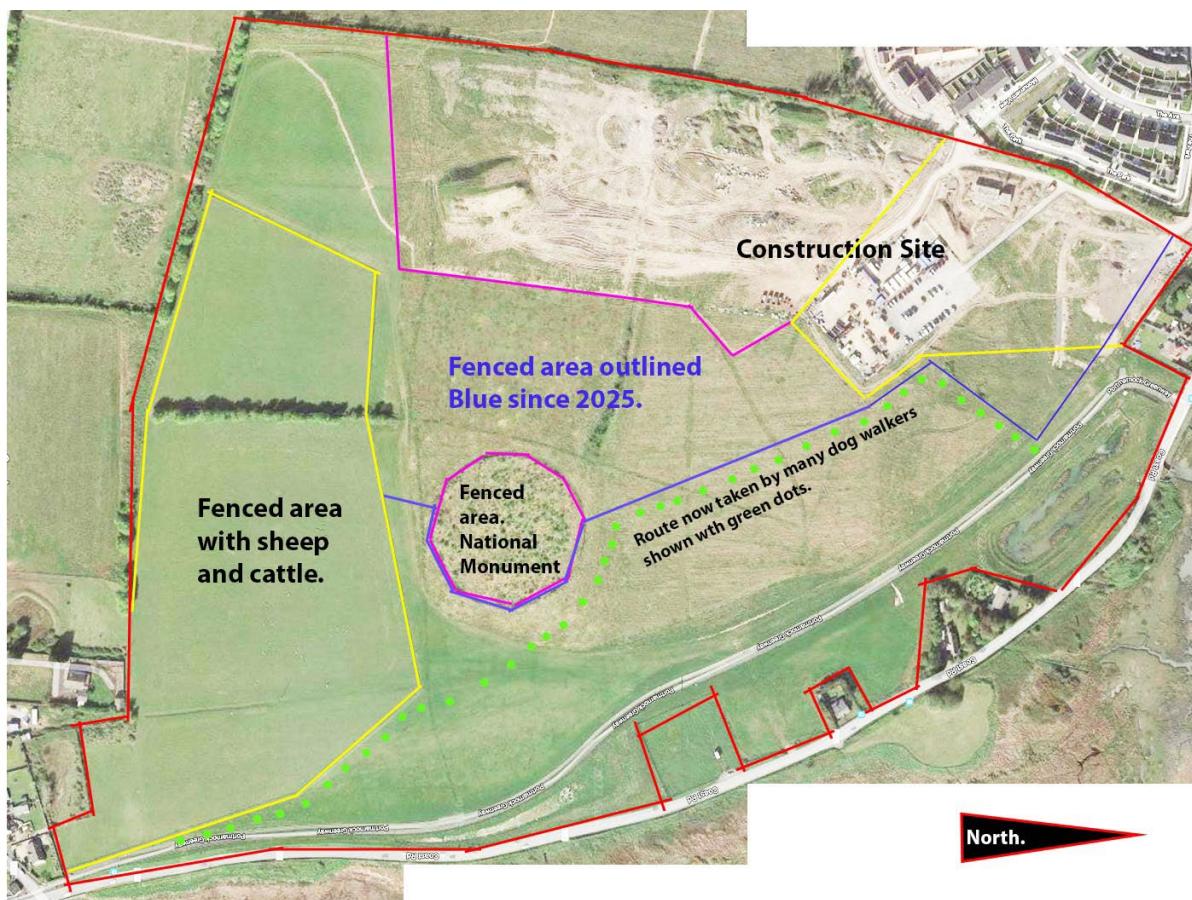


Fig 2. Moynetown Lands outlined red. Inaccessible areas outlined yellow, pink lines indicate fences with gaps that allowed access to the enclosed areas in 2023 and 2024. Blue lines indicate fences erected in 2025 creating further inaccessible areas. Green dots indicate route favoured by many dog walkers where dogs are usually let off leads.

In 2024 and again in 2025 the active construction area extended and became inaccessible for bird surveying. The approximate positions of the fences to the construction areas erected in 2024 are shown pink and enclose an area along the western boundary on the aerial photo at fig 2. The fences erected in 2025 are indicated in blue further restricting the extent of the areas accessible for bird surveying. The circular area enclosed with a pink outline remained accessible in 2024 but has become inaccessible for the 2025 survey period.

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## Methodology:

Bird surveys commenced on site on 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 and continued until 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2023 recommenced on 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 and continued until 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 commenced again on 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 and finished on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2025. Survey periods varied from a minimum of 1 hours to a maximum of about three hours. On average the visits were for a duration of 2 hours and 20 minutes. A total of 13 visits were made during that time period amounting to over 29 hours spent surveying the lands.

**Table 1. Details of date, time, weather and high tide time during visits made to the Moynetown Lands in the 2023 and 2024.**

Date	Start	Finish	Rain	Cloud	Wind	Visibility	High Tide Time
25/04/2023	06.30	09.30	None	2/8	WNW 6Km/Hr	Good	16.02
08/06/2023	06.20	08.40	None	1/8	E 19Km/Hr	Good	03.01
20/06/2023	06.15	08.30	None	6/8	S 4KM/Hr	Good	01.31
12/07/2023	06.10	08.45	Showers	8/8	W 19Km/Hr	Good	07.50
01/08/2023	06.00	08.15	None	3/8	W 25 KM/Hr	Good	11.54
16/04/2024	06.40	08.40	None	6/8	WNW 24Km/Hr	Good	06.12
06/05/2024	06.00	08.30	None	7/8	WNW 12Km/Hr	Good	11.38
17/04/2025	08.00	10.00	None	1/8	SW 4Km/Hr	Good	15.03
01/05/2025	09.30	10.30	None	0/8	W 10Km/Hr	Good	15.01
14/05/2025	06.30	09.30	None	0/8	E 14Km/Hr	Good	13.31
09/06/2025	07.00	09.00	None	7/8	SW12Km/Hr	Good	11.29
27/06/2025	07.00	09.00	None	7/8	S 18Km/Hr	Good	13.46
01/07/2025	07.25	09.30	Drizzel	8/8	N 15Km/Hr	Good	16.59

During each visit the lands were walked extensively. All accessible areas were entered when possible and were walked slowly. All accessible hedgerows and boundaries were also walked. The inaccessible areas were scanned from within the lands along their edges. During each visit all birds present, on or close to the lands, seen or heard, were identified and a breeding status assigned to them where possible and their approximate locations and numbers noted.

Observations were made primarily with the naked eye and through 42x10 binoculars. The songs and calls of birds were also used to identify various species and their locations on the lands.

Night-time visits were not undertaken to the lands.

**Conservation Status:** A list of “Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 4: 2020-2026”(Gilbert et all 2021) indicates three categories of concern as follows. See appendix 1 for more detail.

- Red list species (high conservation concern).
- Amber list species (medium conservation concern).
- Green list species (least conservation concern).

These statuses have been assigned to all regularly occurring species in Ireland. The criteria on which they have been assessed is based on their international conservation status, historical breeding declines, recent population declines, European conservation status, breeding rarity, localised distribution and the international importance of populations.

**Breeding Status Indicators:** The following breeding status indicators were used to establish breeding status.

1. **Confirmed Breeding:** Eggs/nest, Occupied nest, Adult carrying faecal sac or food for young or recently fledged young.
2. **Probable Breeding:** Paired birds seen, Agitated behaviour, Permanent territory, Courtship or display, Nest building or visiting a nest site.
3. **Possible Breeding:** Species in suitable habitat during breeding season or singing male present.
4. **Non-Breeding:** Birds present but not likely breeding due to a lack of suitable nesting habitat and no behavioural evidence to suggest breeding on the site.

## Results:

A total of 36 bird species common to Ireland were observed on or over the lands. Of these 4 were red listed, 8 Amber listed and the remaining 24 green listed.

Nine waterbird species were observed on or over the lands two of which were red listed (of highest conservation concern), two were amber listed (of medium conservation concern), and four are green listed (of least conservation concern). The red listed waterbird species were Curlew and Snipe.

Amber listed waterbird species were Mallard, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Herring Gull. The green listed species were Grey Heron, Moorhen, Whimbrel and Greater Black-backed Gull.

A single Grey Heron was seen flying over the lands on 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2024. There is no Herony within the lands and Grey Heron is therefore recorded as a non-breeding species.

Mallard ducks were observed in very small numbers during two visits. Three birds were found in the building site area close to the northwestern extremity of the lands in 2023 and four were present in the sheep and cattle grazing area in 2024. No firm breeding evidence was found for Mallard, but breeding is possible and both male and female were present.

Moorhen were regularly detected on the pond close to the northeaster extremity of the lands. No more than two Moorhens were observed on any occasion. No firm breeding evidence was found for Moorhen either, but breeding is possible for this species on the pond along the northeastern boundary of the lands.

A flock of six Curlew was observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing area on 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2024. There is however no suitable habitat for Curlew to breed within the survey lands.

Whimbrel a passage migrant to Ireland, was observed just once. Three birds were seen foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing area during the first visit on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023. Whimbrel is a migratory species and are not known to breed in Ireland.

On a single occasion two Snipe were flushed from the attenuation pond area that runs parallel and close to the R106 Coast Road towards the southern boundary during the first visit in April 2025. There is however no suitable habitat for Snipe to breed within the survey lands.

Great Black-backed Gull was observed flying over the site on a number of occasions but was only observed on the lands themselves twice. During visits on 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 and April 16<sup>th</sup> 2024, a single bird was observed foraging with a number of Herring Gulls within the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure. Habitat within the survey lands is not suitable for Great Black-backed Gull to breed.

Herring Gull was observed flying over the lands during every visit but was also observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing areas on five occasions. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023, a flock of 46, on 16<sup>th</sup> of April, a flock of 24, on 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 a flock of 15 and on 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 two Herring Gull were observed foraging within the sheep and cattle grazing enclosure. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 two birds were present in the recently ploughed area. One Lesser Black-backed Gull was also seen foraging with the two Herring Gulls on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 in the ploughed area. Three Lesser black-backed gulls were observed foraging in the sheep and cattle grazing area on 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2024. Habitat however within the survey lands is not suitable for Herring Gull or Lesser Black-backed Gull to breed.

No other waterbirds were observed on the lands during any of the breeding bird survey visits.

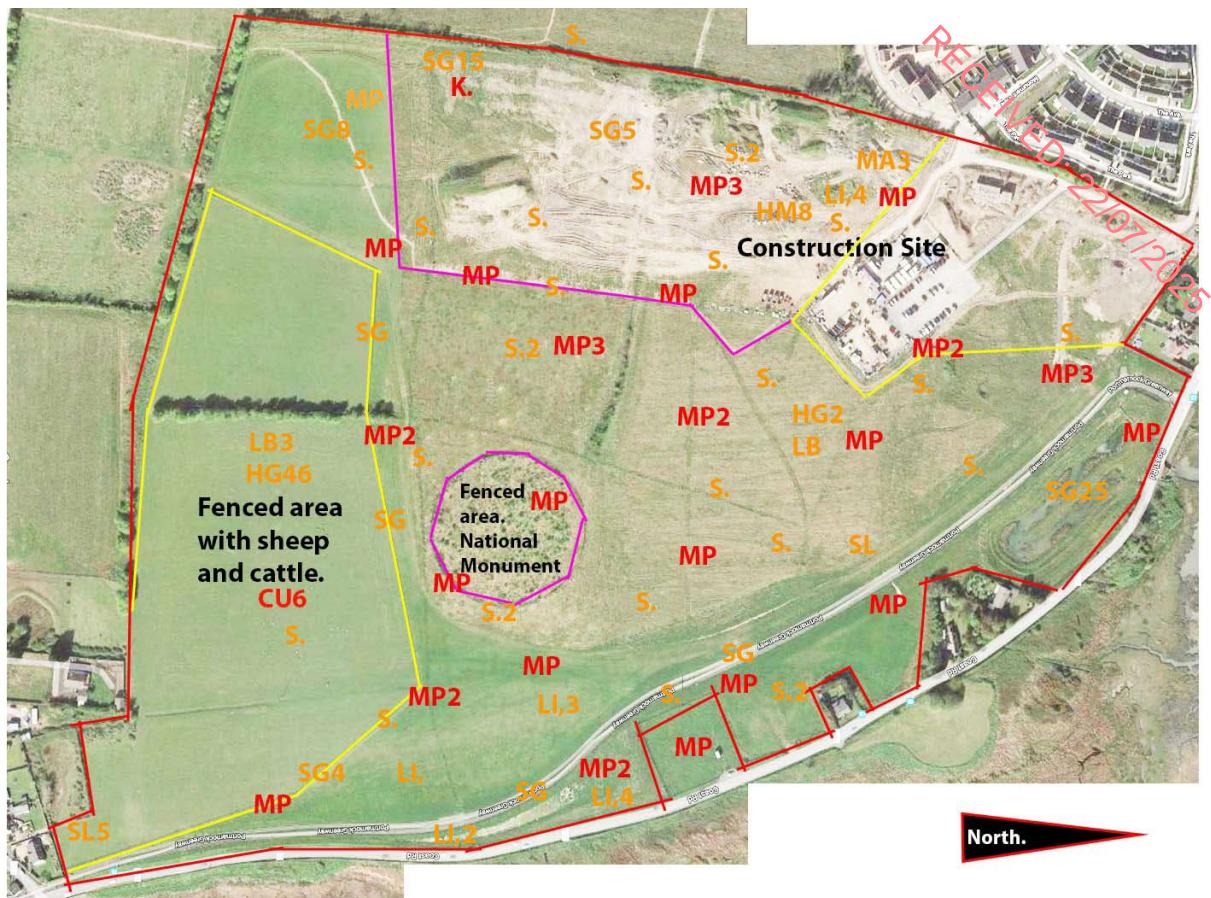
Two other red listed species were recorded Kestrel and Meadow Pipit.

A single female kestrel was seen hunting briefly over the lands during the visit on 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2023. It was seen hunting over the construction site area. No breeding evidence was found for Kestrel on the lands other than one sighting of a single bird in suitable habitat.

Meadow Pipit were numerous and seen during most visits. 16 or more birds were observed on the lands on more than one occasion with several singing males and adult birds observed carrying food. Recently fledged juvenile birds were also identified. Many pairs of Meadow Pipits appear to have bred successfully on the survey lands during each of the survey periods but with their numbers reducing as more land was taken over for development.

Eight amber listed species were also observed on the lands, Mallard, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Skylark, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Starling and Linnet. Three of these amber listed species are waterbirds and their breeding status for these lands has been described in the text above.

Skylark were numerous and seen during each visit. Approximate counts of up to 20 birds were made during many visits. Many Skylarks were observed singing while flying above the lands, an indication that they were holding territory. A number of birds were seen carrying food. Many pairs appear to have bred successfully on the lands during 2023 with several juvenile recently fledged birds also identified. Breeding was established to the level of probable, for 2024 and 2025 with overall numbers reduced as more land was taken over for development.



**Fig 3. Maynetown Lands as surveyed in 2023, with the approximate numbers and locations of the red and amber listed bird species indicated.**

Starling was observed on the lands on many occasions in small foraging flocks. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2023 a flock of approximately 25 Starling were seen foraging near the pond along the northeastern boundary. This flock included some juvenile birds which confirms breeding during 2023 but probably not within the survey lands themselves due to a lack of suitable nest sites. A flock of about 15 juvenile starlings was again seen in 2025 close to the buildings just outside the southeast corner of the site and may have come from nests in those buildings

Barn Swallow were seen on several occasions flying over the lands, but no firm evidence of breeding was identified, and no suitable manmade structures were identified within the lands where Barn Swallows might nest. It is likely however that there are some suitable structures nearby where they did nest and bred.

House Martins were seen flying over the lands on a number of occasions and several were seen collecting mud for nest building on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2023. As there are no suitable manmade structures within the survey lands on which House Martins could nest, it is unlikely that House Martins bred within the survey lands. It is however very probable that they did breed under the eaves of some of the housing nearby or on the newly constructed housing within the original site boundaries in 2025.

Linnet was observed during many visits when mixed foraging flocks of Linnet and Goldfinch were observed either on the construction site lands or along the eastern boundary. Recently fledged juvenile birds were seen among these flocks confirming breeding either within or close to the survey lands.

**Table 2. Bird Species observed on or over the Maynetown Lands. Text colour indicates species conservation status (Red, Amber or Green listed).**  
**Appendix 6.1B: Winter bird surveys October 2023 to April 2025**

Species & Conservation Status Red Amber Green	BTO Code	Scientific name.	Breeding Status	Numbers Present & Behaviour
Mallard	MA	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Possible	3-4 Foraging
Grey Heron	H.	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Non breeding	Flyover
Buzzard	BZ	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Possible	3 In flight only
Kestrel	K.	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Possible	1 Hunting
Moorhen	MH	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Possible	2 Foraging
Curlew	CU	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Non breeding	6 Foraging
Whimbrel	WM	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Non breeding	3 Foraging
Snipe	SN	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Non breeding	2 Foraging
Gt Black-backed Gull	GB	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Non Breeding	1 Foraging
Herring Gull	HG	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Non Breeding	46 Foraging
Lesser Black-backed Gull	LB	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Non Breeding	2 Foraging
Feral Pigeon	FP	<i>Columba livia (domest)</i>	Possible	30 Foraging
Woodpigeon	WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Probable	5 Singing males
Skylark	S.	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Confirmed	10-15 singing males.
Barn Swallow	SL	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Non Breeding	Flyover
House Martin	HM	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Non Breeding	Gathering mud
Meadow Pipit	MP	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Confirmed	8-14 Singing males.
Pied Wagtail	PW	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Possible	1 Foraging
Dunnock	D.	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Probable	2 Singing males
Robin	R.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Probable	2 Singing males
Stonechat	SC	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Confirmed	2 pairs
Song Thrush	ST	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Probable	1 Singing male
Blackbird	B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Probable	At least 2 pairs
Sedge Warbler	SW	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobeanus</i>	Confirmed	1 Singing male
Wren	WR	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Probable	4-6 singing males
Blue Tit	BTO	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	Probable	2-3 adults
Magpie	MG	<i>Pica pica</i>	Possible	2-3 Pairs
Jackdaw	JD	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Possible	1-2 Pairs
Rook	RO	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Possible	Up to 50 Foraging.
Hooded Crow	HC	<i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	Possible	3 Pairs
Raven	RN	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Possible	1 Pair.
Starling	SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Possible	25 Foraging.
Chaffinch	CH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Possible	Singing male
Linnet	LI	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Confirmed	8-10 in mixed flocks
Goldfinch	GO	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Confirmed	14-20 in mixed flocks
Reed Bunting	RB	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Confirmed	2-3 pairs. Fledglings

## Discussion:

Breeding bird survey of the Maynetown lands, were carried out by visiting the lands thirteen times. Five visits between April and early August of 2023, two visits between April and May of 2024 and six visits between April and early July of 2025. During the thirteen visits 36 species of common birds were recorded on the lands three of which were red and eight were amber listed species. The remaining 24 species were green listed. Seven bird species were confirmed to breed, and seven were probably breeding. A further thirteen species were identified as possible breeding species on the survey lands as they were in suitable habitat and/or males were often heard singing. A further nine species were identified as non-breeders because the survey lands do not contain suitable nesting habitat for those species, or the species is not known breed in Ireland.

It should be noted that many of the recently fledged birds found on the lands, which confirmed them as breeding species, may have come from nests close by but outside the lands.

The lands held considerable numbers of both Meadow Pipit and Skylark in 2023, both of which are species of conservation concern in Ireland. There overall numbers have declined since then as more of the land is now under development for housing leaving less suitable habitat for these species. That said the small area of nesting habitat that remains for those species would appear to still have some successful breeding pairs though their numbers are greatly reduced. Efforts therefore should be made to maintain as much breeding habitat within the lands for these species so that they continue to breed here in the future.

A significant threat however to those ground nesting species that still occupy what is left of that habitat is now coming from people and their dogs, walking in that area. It was observed by the author on several occasions that many dog owners who like to walk the greenway with their dogs on leads, now leave the greenway path and enter the remaining small areas of meadow while allowing their dogs off the lead to run freely through that area.

Also of concern were observations of cats hunting around the pond area towards the northeastern boundary. Two cats were seen at the southern end of northerly attenuation pond on a number of occasions in 2025 and when disturbed retreated through the hedge to the property directly south of the pond. Meadow Pipit, Sedge warbler, Stonechat and Reed Bunting were all confirmed to breed in the vegetation of, or close to this pond and Moorhen possibly does.

## Conclusion:

The survey was carried out between April and early August of 2023, April and early May 2024 and April and July 2025. April to August being the optimal time of year to conduct the breeding bird surveys.

36 species, typical of the type of habitats were recorded on the lands. Of these, seven were confirmed to breed, additionally a further seven probably breed and another thirteen possibly breed. The remaining eight species most probably do not breed on the lands, but some may breed on lands, buildings, or structures close to the site and on recently constructed buildings within the lands. The lands are probably used by those nonbreeding species for foraging or hunting. No nocturnal species were detected on the lands.

One red listed species was confirmed to breed, one red listed species was seen hunting on the lands and two red listed species were found foraging on the lands. Two amber listed species were confirmed to breed on the lands and a further two amber listed species are possibly breeding. The remaining 4 amber listed species do not breed on the lands.

The remaining areas of meadow and scrub, the ponds, mature trees and hedgerows are the habitats of most importance for the breeding birds present on the site. Any removal or alteration of part or all of these habitats should only be undertaken outside the breeding season. All mature trees should be retained where possible and checked for existing active nests before removal. Grass and meadow cutting should only be undertaken after August.

The site also has supported many wintering species including some already mentioned and others not commonly found in Ireland during the breeding season. These include thrushes such as Fieldfare and Redwing, as well as many waterbird species such as Brent Goose, Snipe, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Oystercatcher, Golden Plover and Lapwing. Whimbrel was recorded on the lands during the first visit in April 2023; however, Whimbrel are a passage migrant to Ireland and therefore only occur here when moving between breeding and wintering grounds.



**Fig 4. Sedge Warbler confirmed breeding at Attenuation Pond, Maynetown Lands in 2025. Photo J Fox.**

## Appendix 1.

### Birds of Conservation of Concern in Ireland (BoCCI)

The first comprehensive analysis of the population status of birds on the island which identified those species most in need of conservation was published 16 years ago. (Newton et al 1999). It was an initial review followed the publication of the Irish Red Data Book by Wilde in 1993. A further review followed several years later (Lynas et al 2007), which include data for the first time on an all- Ireland basis. A third review six years later BoCCI (Colhoun and Cummin 2013) followed and was also on an all-Ireland basis. BoCCI in Ireland 4: (Gilbert et all 2021) was published this year and forms the basis on which the conservation statuses were assigned to the bird species in this report.

Seven quantitative criteria have been adopted to determine population status for birds in Ireland.

These include, assessments of global and European conservation status, recent population decline (both in terms of numbers and distribution), historical population decline, breeding rarity, localised distribution and international importance.

The status of 211 species in Ireland was assessed against each of the chosen criteria. Of these 54 species, were assigned to the Red List. A further 79 species were assigned to the Amber List. The remaining 78 species were assigned to the Green List. In terms of conservation concern the Red listed species are species of immediate conservation concern, Amber listed species are of medium-term concern while Green listed species are currently of least conservation concern.

### References:

- Gilbert G., Stanbury A., & Lewis L. 2021. Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020-2026. Irish Birds, 43: 1-22. Birdwatch Ireland, Kilcoole Co Wicklow.
- Colhoun, K. and Cummins, S. 2013. Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2014-2019. Irish Birds, 9: 523 - 544. Birdwatch Ireland, Kilcoole Co Wicklow.
- Lynas, P., Newton, S.F, & Robinson, J.A., 2007. The Status of Birds in Ireland: an analysis of conservation concern 2008 – 2013. Irish Birds 8:149 – 166.
- Newton, S.F., Donaghy, A., Allen, D. & Gibbons, D.1999. Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland. Irish Birds 6: 333 – 344.

Appendix 6.1D: Breeding bird surveys April 2025 to July 2025  
(rising main route)

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Report on The Breeding Birds Present at the  
Proposed Pipeline Lands at Maynetown,  
Portmarnock, Co Dublin.  
April to July 2025.

Compiled by John Fox Dip field ecology. July 2025.



**Fig 1. Meadow Pipit at Maynetown Proposed Pipeline Lands 2025.**

Photo by J Fox

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## **Summary:**

Between the 14<sup>th</sup> of April and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2025, 6 day-time visits were made to the Maynetown Pipeline Lands, Portmarnock, Co Dublin. Visits were undertaken in early morning. All of the visits were for a period of between two and three hours.

The lands were walked slowly during each visit stopping regularly to scan and listen for birds. The routes walked generally followed existing roads, paths, tracks and trails but sometimes it was necessary to walk through areas of meadow, scrub and bramble, where no trails or paths existed. As much of the land as possible was walked but some areas of dense growth were inaccessible and were only observed from nearby vantage points.

Data from the visit were recorded and the approximate positions for the birds as seen or heard were plotted on aerial photographs. Approximate numbers of birds present and their breeding status if any were recorded.

A species table indicating the species found on the lands was prepared.

A total of 38 common bird species of Ireland were recorded on the lands, of which 18 were confirmed as breeding. Four species of high and ten of medium conservation concern were recorded. The remaining 24 species recorded were of least conservation concern. Several of the species recorded were just heard, seen in flight or were foraging and may not have been breeding on the lands at the time of the visits.

Four species of waterbird, Mallard, Snipe, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Herring Gull were observed on or over the lands during one or more of the survey visits.

## **Introduction:**

Monitoring of the Pipeline lands at Maynetown, Portmarnock, Co Dublin was commissioned by Brady Shipman Martin, Canal House, Canal Road, Dublin 6, in mid-April 2025.

This survey aim was to get an overview of the bird species present on the lands during the early breeding seasons of 2025 and to indicate their breeding status and abundance.

The site is located about 700m to the west of Bald Doyle Bay. The Moyne Road forms its boundary to the north. It is bounded on the west by the Dublin to Belfast rail and DART Line which is elevated several meters above the lands. To the south and east the boundaries are less well defined with a wire mesh fence along much of the southern boundary but there is nothing to define the eastern boundary which is an arbitrary line that runs through an area of scrub and meadow typical of much of the lands.

The lands are approximately 10.2 hectares in area. There is a wire or palisade fence along the north, west and south boundaries, however the land is open to the east. The river Moyne flows through the land from west to east but is quite overgrown and only accessible at a few points. There are some hardcore roads on the lands with one running almost the full length of the land directly north to south that includes a bridge over the river Moyne. At the northern end of this road, is the Moyne Road where a locked gate controls access.

A single tethered horse was present on the lands during each visit in 2025.

The lands can be assessed from the Red Arches housing development by following a partially completed road to the west.

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## Study Area:

The development lands are circa 10.2 Ha in area and are outlined in red at Fig 2. The land can be accessed on foot from several points along its eastern boundary. There is a vehicular access from the Moyne Road to the north, but this access is gated and kept locked. The lands appear to have remained unmanaged for several years and are thus made up of a variety of habitat types. There are areas of recolonising scrub, meadow, rank grassland, hard standing and areas of recolonising bare ground.

Much of the land is covered with Willow, Bramble, grass and other typical recolonising plant species together with occasional areas of mature and semi mature trees. Some areas of the lands are inaccessible due to the nature of the vegetation including much of the Moyne riverbanks.



Fig 2. Moynetown Pipeline Lands outlined red.

## Methodology:

Bird surveys commenced on site on 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 and continued until 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2025. Survey periods varied from a minimum of 2 hours to a maximum of three hours. On average the visits were for a duration of 2 hours and 20 minutes. A total of 6 visits were made during that time period amounting to over 14 hours spent surveying the lands.

**Table 1. Details of date, time, weather and high tide time during visits made to the Maynetown Pipeline Lands in 2025.**

Date	Start	Finish	Rain	Cloud	Wind	Visibility	High Tide Time
14/04/2025	07.45	09.45	None	8/8	S 12km/hr	Good	13.21
02/05/2025	06.30	08.30	None	7/8	NNW 10km/hr	Good	15.59
13/05/2025	06.30	09.00	None	1/8	ENE 10km/hr	Good	12.58
04/06/2025	06.30	09.10	None	0/8	SW 20kn/hr	Good	06.59
25/06/2025	06.30	09.30	None	7/8	WSW 10km/hr	Good	12.10
02/07/2025	07.15	09.45	None	8/8	NW 12km/hr	Good	17.51

During each visit the lands were walked extensively. All accessible areas were entered when possible and were walked slowly. Boundaries were also walked where possible. The inaccessible areas were scanned from within the lands along their edges. During each visit all birds present, on or close to the lands, seen or heard, were identified and a breeding status assigned to them where possible and their approximate locations and numbers noted.

Observations were made primarily with the naked eye and through 42x10 binoculars. The songs and calls of birds were also used to identify various species and their locations on the lands.

Night-time visits were not undertaken to the lands.

**Conservation Status:** A list of “Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 4: 2020-2026”(Gilbert et all 2021) indicates three categories of concern as follows. See appendix 1 for more detail.

- Red list species (high conservation concern).
- Amber list species (medium conservation concern).
- Green list species (least conservation concern).

These statuses have been assigned to all regularly occurring species in Ireland. The criteria on which they have been assessed is based on their international conservation status, historical breeding declines, recent population declines, European conservation status, breeding rarity, localised distribution and the international importance of populations.

**Breeding Status Indicators:** The following breeding status indicators were used to establish breeding status.

1. **Confirmed Breeding:** Eggs/nest, Occupied nest, Adult carrying faecal sac or food for young or recently fledged young.
2. **Probable Breeding:** Paired birds seen, Agitated behaviour, Permanent territory, Courtship or display, Nest building or visiting a nest site.
3. **Possible Breeding:** Species in suitable habitat during breeding season or singing male present.
4. **Non-Breeding:** Birds present but not likely breeding due to a lack of suitable nesting habitat and no behavioural evidence to suggest breeding on the site.

## Results:

A total of 38 bird species common to Ireland were observed on or over the lands. Of these 4 were red listed, 10 Amber listed and the remaining 24 green listed.

Four waterbird species were observed on or over the lands one of which was red listed (of highest conservation concern) and three were amber listed (of medium conservation concern). The red

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listed waterbird species was Snipe. Amber listed waterbird species were Mallard, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Herring Gull.

Two Mallard ducks were observed in flight over the lands on a single occasion during the first visit.

On a single occasion during the first visit one foraging Snipe was flushed from the northeastern corner of the lands. There is however no suitable habitat for Snipe to breed within the survey lands.

Herring Gull were observed flying over the lands during every visit and Lesser Black-backed Gull was seen flying over on several occasions. Habitat however within the survey lands is not suitable for Herring Gull or Lesser Black-backed Gull to breed.

No other waterbirds were observed on the lands during any of the visits.

Three other red listed species were recorded on the land these were Kestrel, Swift and Meadow Pipit.

A single male kestrel was seen perched in a tree briefly over the lands during the final visit on 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2025. While perched it was being mobbed by up to ten Goldfinches before flying south out of the lands. No breeding evidence was found for Kestrel on the lands other than that one sighting of a single bird in suitable habitat.

Swifts were observed in very small numbers in flight over the lands on a number of occasions and over the pond which is west of and close to the lands. There is however no suitable nesting habitat for Swift within the lands as they tend to nest in tall manmade structures or buildings.

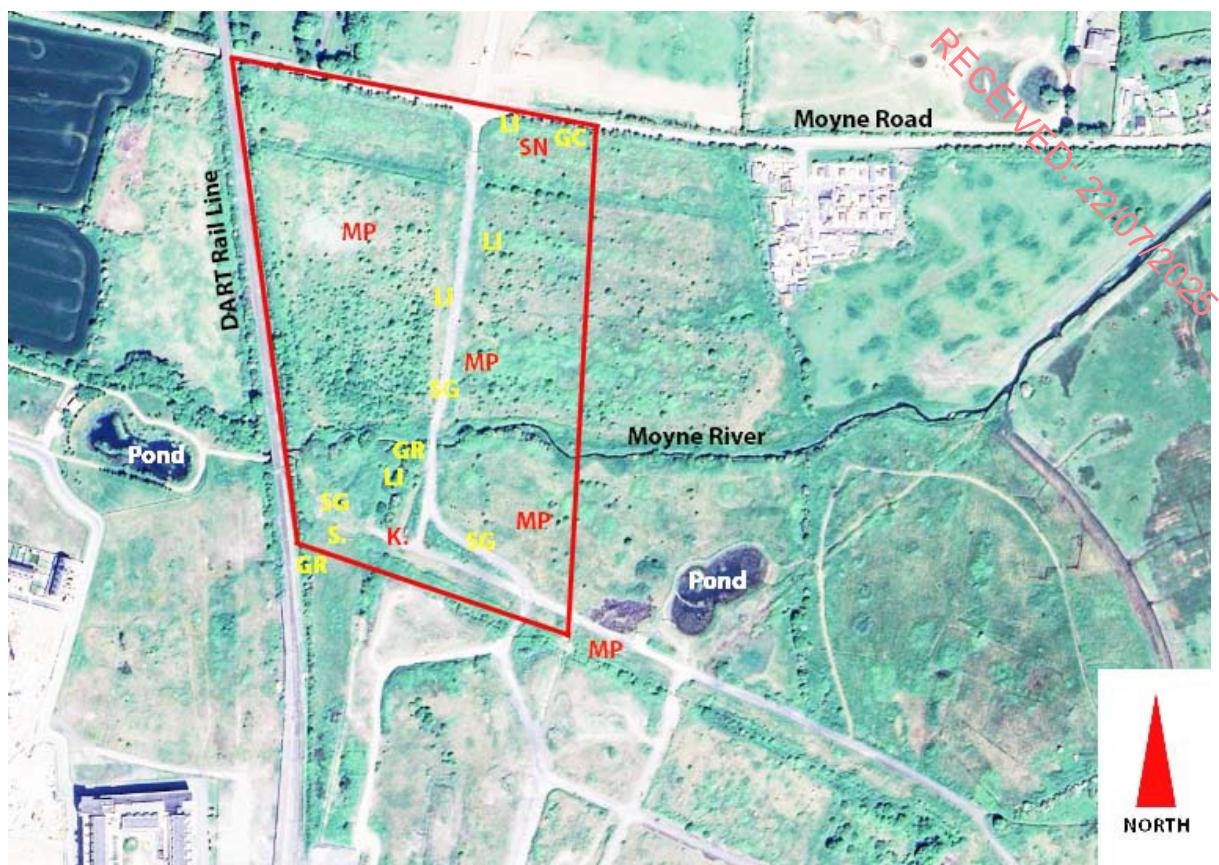
Small numbers of Meadow Pipit were seen and heard during most visits. 2 to 3 were seen on the lands on more than one occasion with singing males present during all visits and adult birds observed carrying food during later visits. Recently fledged juvenile birds were also identified. Two to three pairs of Meadow Pipits appear to have bred successfully on the survey lands during the survey periods.

Ten amber listed species were also observed on the lands, Mallard, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Skylark, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Goldcrest, Starling, Linnet and Greenfinch. Three of these amber listed species are waterbirds and their breeding status for these lands has been described in the text above.

A singing Skylark was seen in flight on one occasion close to the southern boundary during the first visit. As this bird was not observed or heard during subsequent visits it is probable that it did not breed on the lands during the survey period.

Barn Swallow were seen in small numbers on several occasions flying over the lands, but no firm evidence of breeding was identified, and no suitable manmade structures were identified within the lands where Barn Swallows might nest. It is likely however that there are some suitable structures nearby where they did nest and bred.

House Martins were seen flying over the lands on a number of occasions and drinking from the pond to the east of the lands. As there are no suitable manmade structures within the survey lands on which House Martins could nest, it is unlikely that House Martins bred within the survey lands. It is however very probable that they did breed under the eaves of some of the housing nearby.



**Fig 3. Maynetown Pipeline Lands, with the approximate locations of the red and amber listed bird species indicated. Species only seen in flight, not indicated.**

Goldcrest was heard singing from the tree line at the eastern end of the northern boundary of the lands on a single occasion. No further observations of Goldcrest were made during the survey period. It is possible however that Goldcrest did breed within the land or nearby.

Starling was observed on the lands on many occasions in small foraging flocks. These flocks were often groups of juvenile birds which indicates successful breeding during 2025. The probability however is that only a few if any pairs breed within the survey lands themselves due to a lack of suitable nest sites. Starling are hole nesters and it is unlikely that there are many suitable holes available for them to nest in, within the lands.

Linnet was observed during many visits when small mixed foraging flocks of Linnet and Goldfinch were observed. Recently fledged juvenile birds were seen with adults during later visits confirming breeding either within or close to the survey lands.

Greenfinch was seen and heard singing from trees close to the southern boundary on a number of occasions which indicates a bird holding permanent territory which indicates that it was probably breeding on or close to the lands.

**Table 2. Bird Species observed on or over the Maynetown Pipeline Lands. Text colour indicates species conservation status (Red, Amber or Green listed).**

Species & Conservation Status Red Amber Green	BTO Code	Scientific name.	Breeding Status	Numbers Present & Behaviour
Mallard	MA	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Possible	2 in flight only
Buzzard	BZ	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Possible	1 In flight only
Kestrel	K.	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Possible	1 Hunting
Snipe	SN	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Non breeding	1 Foraging
Herring Gull	HG	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Non Breeding	Many flyover
Lesser Black-backed Gull	LB	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Non Breeding	2 Fly over
Woodpigeon	WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Probable	5 Singing males
Collared Dove	CD	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Possible	1 Singing male
Swift (Common)	SI	<i>Apus apus</i>	Non Breeding	3 Flyover
Skylark	S.	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Possible	1 Singing male.
Barn Swallow	SL	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Non Breeding	3 Flyover
House Martin	HM	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Non Breeding	6 Flyover
Meadow Pipit	MP	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Confirmed	2-3 Singing males
Pied Wagtail	PW	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Possible	1 Foraging
Dunnock	D.	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Confirmed	3-5 singing males
Robin	R.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Confirmed	2-3 Pairs
Stonechat	SC	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Confirmed	2-3 Pairs
Song Thrush	ST	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Confirmed	2-3 Pairs.
Blackbird	B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Confirmed	4-6 Pairs
Blackcap	BC	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Confirmed	2 Singing males
Whitethroat (Common)	WH	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Confirmed	2 Singing males.
Sedge Warbler	SW	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobeanus</i>	Possible	1 Singing male.
Willow Warbler	WW	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Confirmed	2 Singing males.
Goldcrest	GC	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Possible	1 Singing Male
Wren	WR	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Confirmed	6-7 Singing males
Great Tit	GT	<i>Parus major</i>	Confirmed	2-3 Pairs
Blue Tit	BTO	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Confirmed	3-4 Pairs
Long-tailed Tit	LT	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Possible	3 in Foraging Group
Magpie	MG	<i>Pica pica</i>	Confirmed	1-2 Pairs
Jackdaw	JD	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Possible	1-2 Pairs
Rook	RO	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Possible	2 Flyovers
Hooded Crow	HC	<i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	Possible	2 Pairs
Starling	SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Possible	15 -20 Juveniles
Chaffinch	CH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Possible	1 Singing male
Linnet	LI	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Confirmed	1-2 Pairs
Goldfinch	GO	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Confirmed	3-4 Pairs
Green Finch	GR	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Probable	1 Singing male
Reed Bunting	RB	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Confirmed	2 pairs

## **Discussion:**

A breeding bird survey of the Maynetown Pipeline lands was carried out by visiting the lands six times between April and early July of 2025. During the 6 visits 38 species of common birds were recorded on the lands four of which were red and ten were amber listed species. The remaining 24 species were green listed. Seventeen bird species were confirmed to breed, and two were probably breeding. A further thirteen species were identified as possible breeding species on the survey lands as they were in suitable habitat and/or males were often heard singing. A further six species were identified as non-breeders because the survey lands do not contain suitable nesting habitat for those species.

It should be noted that many of the recently fledged birds found on the lands, which confirmed them as breeding species, may have come from nests close by but outside the lands.

## **Conclusion:**

The survey was carried out between April and early July of 2025. April to August being the optimal time of year to conduct breeding bird surveys.

38 species, typical of the type of habitats were recorded on the lands. Of these, seventeen were confirmed to breed, additionally a further two probably breed and another thirteen possibly breed. The remaining six species most probably do not breed on the lands, but some may breed on lands, buildings, or structures close to the site. The lands are probably used by those nonbreeding species for foraging or hunting. No nocturnal species were detected on the lands.

One red listed species was confirmed to breed. One red listed species was seen hunting on the lands and two red listed species were found foraging on or in flight over the lands. One amber listed species was confirmed to breed on the lands and another single amber listed species was probably breeding. A further four amber listed species possibly did breed on the lands. While the remaining four amber listed species did not breed in the lands.

All areas of these lands including the riverbanks, meadows, areas of scrub, mature and immature trees and hedgerows are the habitats of some importance for the breeding birds present on the site. Any removal or alteration to part of these habitats should only be undertaken outside the breeding season. All mature trees should be retained where possible and checked for existing active nests before removal. Grass and meadow cutting or scrub clearance should only be undertaken after August.

The site may also have supported many wintering species including some already mentioned and others not commonly found in Ireland during the breeding season. These include thrushes such as Fieldfare and Redwing, as well as waterbird species such as Snipe. The lands currently are not suitable for wintering Brent Geese due to the nature of the habitat present.

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**Fig 4. Male Kestrel, hunting at the Maynetown Proposed Pipeline Lands in 2025.**

Photo J Fox.

## **Appendix 1.**

### **Birds of Conservation of Concern in Ireland (BoCCI)**

The first comprehensive analysis of the population status of birds on the island which identified those species most in need of conservation was published 16 years ago. (Newton et al 1999). It was an initial review followed the publication of the Irish Red Data Book by Wilde in 1993. A further review followed several years later (Lynas et al 2007), which include data for the first time on an all- Ireland basis. A third review six years later BoCCI (Colhoun and Cummin 2013) followed and was also on an all-Ireland basis. BoCCI in Ireland 4: (Gilbert et all 2021) was published this year and forms the basis on which the conservation statuses were assigned to the bird species in this report.

Seven quantitative criteria have been adopted to determine population status for birds in Ireland.

These include, assessments of global and European conservation status, recent population decline (both in terms of numbers and distribution), historical population decline, breeding rarity, localised distribution and international importance.

The status of 211 species in Ireland was assessed against each of the chosen criteria.

Of these 54 species, were assigned to the Red List. A further 79 species ~~were~~ were assigned to the Amber List. The remaining 78 species were assigned to the Green List. In terms of conservation concern the Red listed species are species of immediate conservation concern, Amber listed species are of medium-term concern while Green listed species are currently of least conservation concern.

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