

APPENDIX 6.1 BREEDING BIRD ASSESSMENT

Breeding Bird Assessment for a proposed development at Mount Avenue, Dundalk, Co. Louth



28th October 2025

Prepared by: Frank Spellman of Altemar Ltd.
On behalf of: Grandspect Limited

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Summary

Structure/features:	The survey area consists primarily of arable crop fields (exposed during winter) with marginal areas of grassland, hedgerows, treelines, some scrub, and adjacent watercourses to the south and north.
Location:	Mount Avenue, Dundalk, Co. Louth.
Bird species breeding (survey area):	Blackbird, blue tit, chaffinch, chiffchaff, dunnock, linnet, robin, spotted flycatcher, starling, willow warbler, woodpigeon, wren, yellowhammer.
Proposed work:	Residential development.
Impact on breeding birds:	The proposed development will result in a short-medium-term low adverse effect on breeding birds due to habitat during clearance and construction, and a long-term neutral/low positive effect as landscaping within the site matures. Mitigation measures are proposed.
Surveys by:	Frank Spellman.
Survey dates:	7 th May, 4 th June and 19 th June 2025.

Receiving environment

Description of the Proposed Project

Planning permission is being sought by Grandspect Ltd. The development description is as follows:

The proposed development comprises 1,058no. dwellings (765no. houses, 150no. duplex units, and 143no. apartments) including 2no. duplexes with an option to accommodate a childcare facility at ground floor level; a local centre comprising ground floor retail units, a medical unit, and mobility hub; provision of a childcare facility; all in buildings ranging in height from 1 to 6 storeys. All associated and ancillary site development and infrastructural works, hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment works, including public, communal and private open space; public lighting; surface car parking spaces; bicycle parking; ESB substations; bin stores; provision of a foul sewage pumping station; laying a foul rising main along Castletown Road from the proposed new access to the development eastward to the Castletown Road and Bellewsbridge Road Junction. The proposed development will be accessed from two new combined vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian junction at Castletown and at Mount Avenue. A separate pedestrian and cyclist access is also provided at Mount Avenue. A Heritage Park, a playing pitch and a site reserved for a future educational/school facility are also being provided.

The proposed development is located at lands in the Townlands of Newtownbalregan, Castletown and Farrandreg, at Mount Avenue, Castletown, Dundalk, Co. Louth.'

The survey area, location, and layout plan are demonstrated in figures 1-3.

Landscape

The landscape strategy for the proposed development has been prepared by Gannon & Associates Landscape Architecture to accompany this planning application. The proposed landscape plans is demonstrated in figure 4.



Figure 1. Proposed site outline.



Figure 2. Proposed site location.



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Competency of assessor

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

Frank Spellman (BSc Zoology, MSc Zoology).

This report has been prepared by Frank Spellman. Frank has extensive experience in carrying out a wide range of fauna surveys as both a sub-contractor and employee for environmental consultancies and organisations in Ireland and the US. These include both roving and static acoustic bat surveys, terrestrial non-avian mammal surveys, breeding/wintering bird surveys, and freshwater ecology surveys. Frank has been lead ornithologist on numerous development projects within Ireland carrying out full wintering bird and breeding bird assessments.

Legislative context

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

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

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

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

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

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

shall be guilty of an offence.

Breeding bird survey

This report presents the results of three site visits by Frank Spellman on the 7th May, 4th June and 19th June 2025. A breeding bird transect survey was carried out on each occasion.

Survey methodology

This Breeding bird survey was carried out based on the BTO Common Bird Census (Bibby *et al.*, 2000 and Gilbert *et al.*, 1998) and following CIEEM guidelines.

A 15-minute settlement period was given following arrival to allow resumption of bird activity after any possible disturbance caused by arrival to the site. Various features and habitats such as scrub, treelines, mature trees, hedgerows, arable crop fields and grassland were present within the survey area. A single transect following the full perimeter of the survey area was carried out on each occasion, covering all areas and features available for breeding activity within and immediately adjacent to the survey area. General transect direction was alternated between surveys to account for potential activity level variations throughout morning hours. Each survey was carried out by a single surveyor.

The survey was carried out over 2.5 – 3.5 hours on 3 occasions, beginning at dawn and ending once all areas/features had been surveyed. Care was taken not to double count any observations. Weather conditions were optimal on each occasion.

Survey results

Habitats of breeding bird potential

A desk and ground level breeding habitat assessment were carried and used to examine the structures and vegetation on site for features that could provide breeding habitat. Potential nesting features include scrub, treelines, mature conifer/deciduous canopies, ivy, grassland, reeds, artificial structures etc. All features on site were assessed for breeding bird potential.

Areas of high breeding bird potential included hedgerows, treelines, mature trees, and scrub throughout the survey area and its boundaries. The northeast of the site as well as the woodland in the northwest of the site were heavily used by locals/dog-walkers which were more exposed to regular disturbance than other areas on site.

Breeding activity survey

A total of 29 species were recorded within the survey area across three surveys. Of these species, goldcrest, greenfinch, herring gull, house martin, house sparrow, linnet, spotted flycatcher, starling, swallow and willow warbler area considered amber-listed Bird of Conservation Concern in Ireland (BoCCI). Swift and yellowhammer was also recorded on site which are red-listed BoCCI. The remaining species are green-listed BoCCI.

13 species were recorded breeding or displaying behaviour indicative of breeding within the survey area (table 1). Four breeding species are amber-listed BoCCI. One breeding species (yellowhammer) is a red-listed BoCCI. The remainder of breeding species are green-listed BoCCI. Locations of breeding evidence recorded are demonstrated in figure 5.

Breeding activity was found throughout the survey area. A number of areas held higher concentration of breeding activity. Hotspots for breeding included hedgerows/treelines in the south and west of the survey area. A section of hedgerow/treeline along the southern boundary of the site adjacent to a watercourse was being used by breeding yellowhammer (red-listed BoCCI). Breeding hotspots are demonstrated in figure 6.

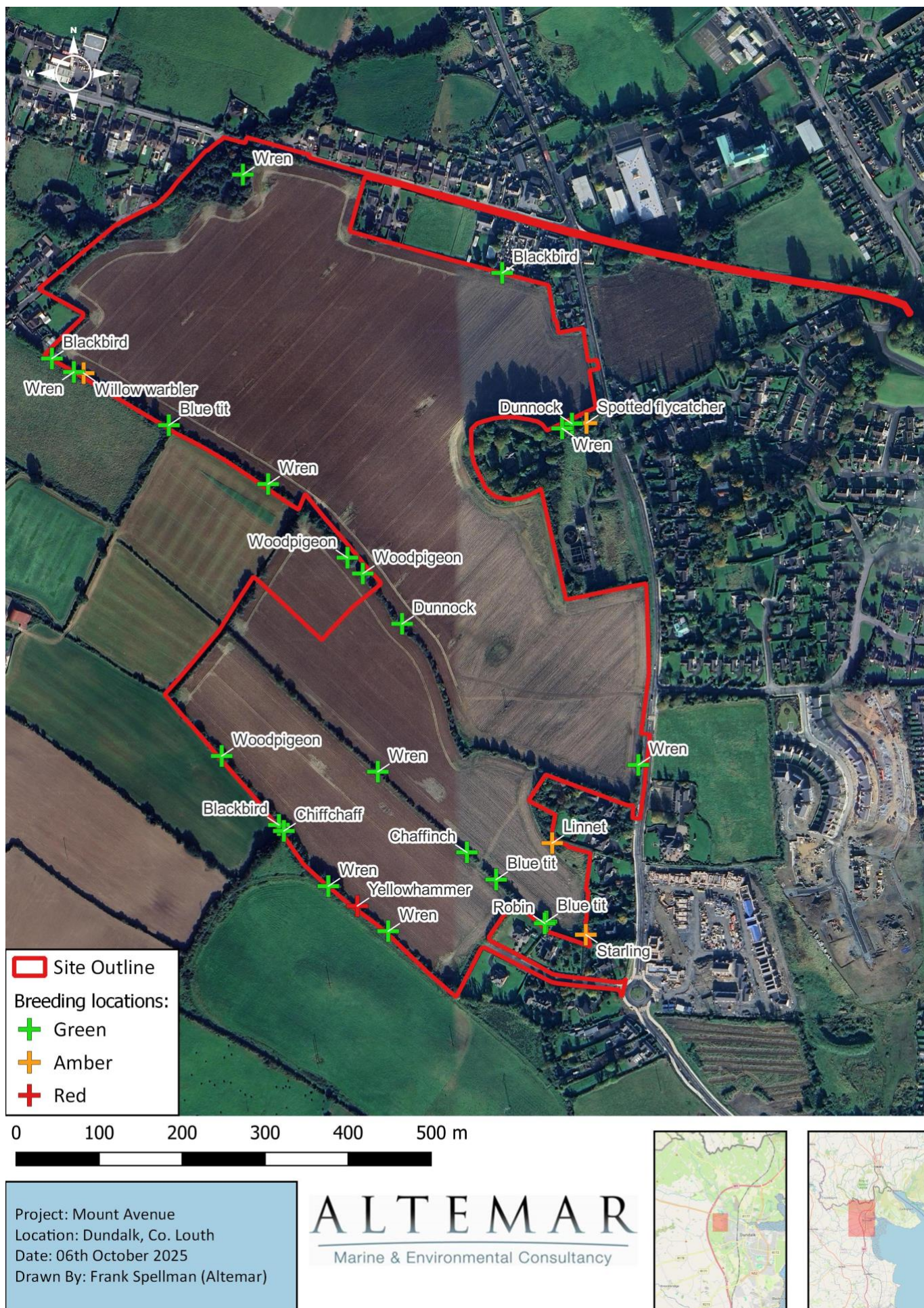
Table 1. Species confirmed breeding within the survey area.

Common name	BTO	Latin name	BoCCI
Blackbird	B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Green
Blue Tit	BT	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Green
Chaffinch	CH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Green
Chiffchaff	CC	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Green
Dunnock	D.	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Green
Linnet	LI	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Amber
Robin	R.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Green

Common name	BTO	Latin name	BoCCI
Spotted Flycatcher	SF	<i>Musciapa striata</i>	Amber
Starling	SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Amber
Willow Warbler	WW	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Amber
Woodpigeon	WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Green
Wren	WR	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Green
Yellowhammer	Y.	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red

Table 2. Total species recorded within the survey area.

Common name	BTO	Latin name	BoCCI
Blackbird	B.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Green
Blackcap	BC	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Green
Blue Tit	BT	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Green
Bullfinch	BF	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Green
Chaffinch	CH	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Green
Chiffchaff	CC	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Green
Collared Dove	CD	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Green
Dunnock	D.	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Green
Goldcrest	GC	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Amber
Goldfinch	GO	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Green
Greenfinch	GR	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Amber
Herring Gull	HG	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Amber
Hooded Crow	HC	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	Green
House Martin	HM	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Amber
House Sparrow	HS	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Amber
Jackdaw	JD	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Green
Linnet	LI	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Amber
Magpie	MG	<i>Pica pica</i>	Green
Robin	R.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Green
Sedge Warbler	SW	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	Green
Song Thrush	ST	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Green
Spotted Flycatcher	SF	<i>Musciapa striata</i>	Amber
Starling	SG	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Amber
Swallow	SL	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Amber
Swift	SI	<i>Apus apus</i>	Red
Willow Warbler	WW	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Amber
Woodpigeon	WP	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Green
Wren	WR	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Green
Yellowhammer	Y.	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red



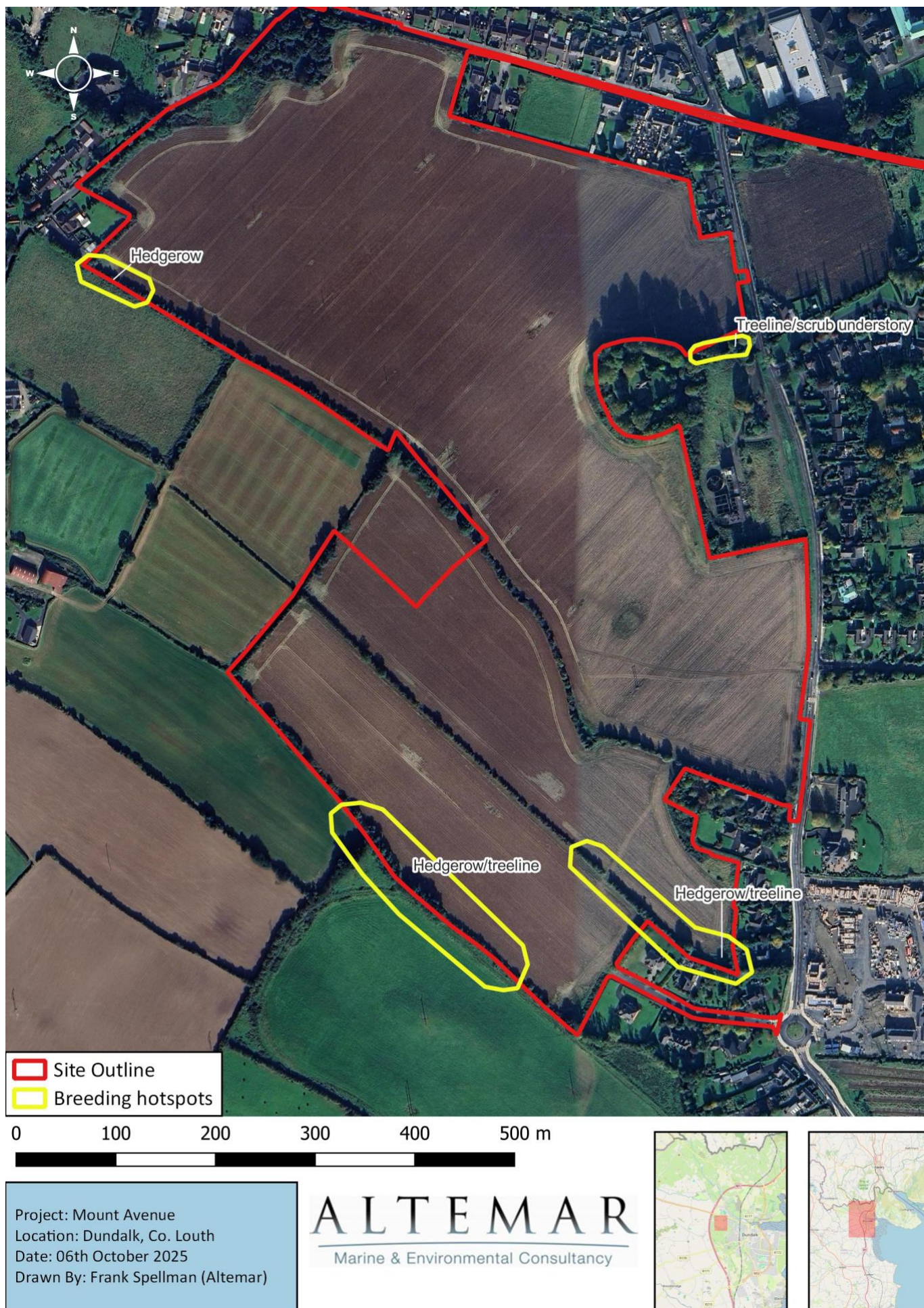


Figure 6. Breeding hotspots.

Breeding bird assessment findings

Review of local bird records

The review of existing bird records (sourced from NBDC Database) within a 2 km² grid (Reference grid J00J) encompassing the study area reveals that 17 known bird species have previously been observed and recorded locally (Table 2).

Table 4: Status of bird species within 2 km² (grid J00J)

Species Name	Record Count	Date of Last Record	Dataset	BoCCI Status
Blackbird (<i>Turdus merula</i>)	1	24/05/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Blackcap (<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>)	1	11/01/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>)	1	25/01/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Buzzard (<i>Buteo buteo</i>)	1	01/10/2020	Birds of Ireland	
Chaffinch (<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>)	2	24/05/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Coal Tit (<i>Parus ater</i>)	1	11/01/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Common Sandpiper (<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>)	1	08/08/2018	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>)	2	24/05/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Goldcrest (<i>Regulus regulus</i>)	1	15/12/2020	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Hooded Crow (<i>Corvus cornix</i>)	1	24/05/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Jackdaw (<i>Coloeus monedula</i>)	1	24/05/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Long-tailed Tit (<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>)	1	24/05/2021	Birds of Ireland	
Sparrowhawk (<i>Accipiter nisus</i>)	1	01/03/2016	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)	1	24/05/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swift (<i>Apus apus</i>)	1	15/05/2023	Swifts of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Woodpigeon (<i>Columba palumbus</i>)	1	24/05/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Wren (<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>)	2	24/05/2021	Birds of Ireland	

Mitigation

The survey area within the survey area is not of significant importance to the local breeding bird population. However, the impact of the development during construction phase will be a loss of existing habitats and species. The following mitigation measures relevant to birds, as well as those outlined within the accompanying NIS and EIAR, shall be implemented to minimise any potential negative impact on biodiversity:

- An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) will be appointed to oversee the construction phase and to oversee the implementation of all mitigation including compliance with Wildlife Acts and Water Pollution Acts and ensure that biodiversity in neighbouring areas including birds will not be impacted.
- All mitigation measures outlined in the EIAR Chapters and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) that pertain to the construction stage of the proposed development will be implemented by the Contractor.
- The effectiveness of the proposed mitigation will be monitored throughout the construction period.
- The construction corridor will be marked out prior to the commencement of construction.
- All construction work will be confined strictly to the construction corridor. Any construction works required outside the construction corridor will require prior approval from the ER.
- Lighting during construction should not spill outside the proposed development.
- Relevant guidelines and legislation (Section 40 of the Wildlife Acts, 1976 to 2012) in relation to the removal of trees and timing of nesting birds will need be followed e.g. do not remove trees or shrubs during the nesting season (1st March to 31st August). Should this not be possible a pre-clearance inspection will be carried out by an ecologist and clearance will not take place if nests are present.

Conclusion

This report presents the results of three site visits by Frank Spellman on the 7th May, 4th June and 19th June 2025. A breeding bird transect survey was carried out on each occasion. The surveys comply with bird survey guidance documentation including BTO Common Bird Census (Bibby *et al.*, 2000 and Gilbert *et al.*, 1998) following CIEEM guidelines. Weather conditions were favourable on each occasion.

A total of 29 species were recorded within the overall survey area across three surveys. 13 species were recorded breeding or displaying behaviour indicative of breeding within the survey area.

Eight green-listed bird species of conservation concern were recorded breeding within the survey area; blackbird, blue tit, chaffinch, chiffchaff, dunnock, robin, woodpigeon, and wren.

Four amber-listed bird species of conservation concern were recorded breeding within the survey area: linnet, spotted flycatcher, starling, and willow warbler.

One red-listed bird species of conservation concern was recorded breeding within the survey area; yellowhammer.

Four hotspots of breeding activity were identified, one in the northwest (hedgerow), one in the northeast (treeline and scrub understory), and two in the south (hedgerow/treeline).

The proposed development is predicted to have a short-medium-term low adverse effect on breeding birds within the proposed area due to the removal of some hedgerow habitat within the site. However, the retention of a significant proportion of the existing mature trees, treelines and hedgerows within the landscape strategy, including the majority of breeding hotspots, as well as the addition of native boundary and woodland mix planting within the landscape plan, will facilitate the perseverance of species currently breeding within the site. As the landscape matures, additional planting of native boundary and woodland mixes, in areas where breeding habitat is currently absent, will result in an overall increase in abundance and diversity of available nesting habitat resulting in a long-term neutral/low positive effect on breeding birds within the site.

Mitigation measures are proposed.

References

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