

## CHAPTER 6 FLORA AND FAUNA

- Appendix 6.6 Winter Bird Survey

DRAFT

**North South 400kV Interconnection Development**

**Cavan and Monaghan Study Area (CMSA)**

**Wintering Bird Study**

**Survey Period 7: 2013 – 2014**

November 2014

**TOBIN CONSULTING ENGINEERS**



# REPORT

**PROJECT:**

**North South 400kV Interconnection Development  
Cavan and Monaghan Study Area (CMSA)  
Wintering Bird Study  
Survey Period 7: 2013 – 2014**

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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details a seventh year (WSP 7) of winter bird surveys (2013/2014) within a study area which includes an extensive part of Counties Monaghan, Armagh and Cavan. This report updates the findings of the six previous wintering bird surveys carried out to date (November 2007 – April 2014 inclusive). This study is to inform the overall Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed 400kV transmission line (referred to as “preferred line route” herein) in the area of the Flagford-Louth 220kV Overhead Line (OHL) north to the border with Northern Ireland. A separate report is provided for the County Meath Study Area (MSA) section of the development.

Whooper Swans were identified at an early stage in the scoping process as a key species due to their known susceptibility to collision with powerlines. It is therefore important to identify areas used by this species and any flightlines potentially relevant to the proposed development. Following the results of the seven years of survey; this report details a number of key sensitive locations which require consideration of potential impacts and mitigation in the EIS. Previous surveys to inform this report were carried out in 2007/2008 (WSP 1), 2008/2009 (WSP 2), 2009/2010 (WSP 3), 2010/2011 (WSP 4), 2011/2012 (WSP 5) and 2012/2013 (WSP 6).

The key survey findings to date relating to the identification of Whooper Swan sites and flight lines within the zone of influence of the proposed transmission line development are summarised below.

1. Ballintra and associated Lough Toome or Crinkell are considered a County important site for Whooper Swan. At Ballintra a regular flight line was confirmed in WSP 1, 2 and 3 between this feeding area and two small lakes namely Loughs Tonyscallan and Toome or Crinkill which are located approximately 1.5km and 2km east and southeast of Ballintra respectively. Whooper Swans also graze in outlier fields in this area. This area was less active in WSP 4 and no activity was noted in WSP 5 or WSP 6. This area was again used in WSP 7 and a flightline to Lough Toome (or Crinkell) was confirmed. This flight line crosses the preferred line route A.
2. The cluster of lakes including Loughs Comertagh, Mill, Beagh (Greaghlonge) and Raferagh are considered a County important site for Whooper Swan with Whooper Swan recorded regularly at, at least, one of these lakes during all years of survey. Whooper Swans disperse between these lakes throughout the winter. In WSP 7 only, Whooper Swan were also observed on Beagh (Greaghlonge) Lough. In summary, this is a regularly used cluster of lakes bisected by the preferred line route. This indicates unconfirmed and relatively irregular flight lines are likely to occur across the preferred line route.
3. Lough Egish and Lough Morne and smaller lakes to the west are considered a County important site for Whooper Swan. Lough Morne and Egish are bisected by the preferred line route. This section of the Whooper Swan site is used very irregularly by very small numbers of

Whooper Swan and flights are very irregular (one flight observed to date). Whooper Swans concentrate to the west of Lough Morne between Loughs Crossduff, Lurgacham and Tiervaleny throughout the winter period. This is away from the preferred line route.

4. Whooper Swans disperse between Loughs Namachree, Shantonagh, Bellatrain and Lisnakkillewbane throughout the winter period. Flight lines (observed and potential unrecorded flightlines) in this area do not regularly cross the preferred line route as sites utilised all occur to the west of the corridor. This was confirmed based on regular surveys of Bocks Lough (within the corridor) where no Whooper Swans were recorded to date. In addition flightline checks of observed Whooper Swans confirmed roosting on lakes where foraging was observed during the day. In one case a flightline was observed from the northern shore of Lough Namachree north which did not cross the preferred line route.
5. Regular dusk and dawn checks were conducted at Lough Nahinch and environs. No significant Whooper Swan usage was recorded in this area to date and no flights were noted crossing the preferred line route.
6. No Whooper Swan were observed on Lough Laragh, Lackagh and Cremartin Lough during WSP 6 and 7. Flightlines and more regular observations were recorded in previous winter survey periods though observed flightlines were away from the preferred line route.

Small flocks of Golden Plover and Lapwing are regular during spring and early autumn passage period around Lough Egish. These are birds on migration and do not stay long, but use this area for foraging and resting before migrating further. No flightlines were observed relative to the preferred line route.

Mute Swan are scattered throughout a large numbers of lake sites within the study area. A key area where there may be potential impacts is between Lough Egish and Lough Morne as non breeding individual numbers can build up on these lakes in some years, and unrecorded flight lines potentially occur between these lakes which are bisected by the Preferred Line Route.

Despite extensive and multi-year surveys at other potentially sensitive locations identified, no other flightlines were confirmed nor are regular flightlines likely. The most important wintering bird sites (for species other than Whooper Swan) are well removed from the proposed development including Dromore wetlands and Moylan Lough.



## 2 INTRODUCTION

TOBIN Consulting Engineers herein referred to as TOBIN have undertaken winter bird studies within the Cavan Monaghan (Armagh) Study Area (CMSA) for the proposed North - South 400kV Interconnection Development for the winter 2013/2014 period, herein referred to as Wintering Survey Period 7 (WSP 7). The focus of this study was on Whooper Swans (*Cygnus cygnus*) but includes all potentially sensitive bird species in particular wintering wader and wildfowl species („Target“ species for survey). The winter bird surveys inform the assessment of potential impacts and proposed mitigation to be detailed, if relevant, in Volume 3C, Section 6 of the Environmental Impact Statement for the project;

Progress on the project led to the identification of the Preferred Line Route. The identification of which considered a range of criteria including landscape, settlements, archaeology and ecology/ birds.

The study area does not include any Special Protection Areas for Birds and the closest such site, Strabannan-Braganstown SPA (Site Code: IE004091), is at a distance of 24km from the preferred line route.

As detailed above the primary Target species identified for survey within the study area (based on desk review, consultation and surveys to date) is Whooper Swan. Secondary Target species surveyed for included Mute Swan, Wintering Duck (Wigeon, Mallard, Teal), Geese species (Greylag Geese), Waders (Golden Plover, Lapwing and Snipe), Cormorant, Grey Heron, Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe and Moorhen.

Also considered are wintering Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), at potential roost sites identified.

This study updates results of previous studies conducted in 2007/2008 (WSP 1), 2008/2009 (WSP 2), 2009/2010 (WSP 3), 2010/2011 (WSP 4), 2011/2012 (WSP 5) and 2012/2013 (WSP 6).

## 2.1 STUDY AREA

The study area consists of the preferred line route in County Monaghan and relatively small area of Counties Cavan and Armagh (Northern Ireland), as indicated in Figure 1. The study area extends up to 15km east and west of the preferred line route to encompass important winter bird sites and to consider flightlines within this zone of potential influence.

## 2.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were:

1. To determine the numbers and distribution of Whooper Swans and other wintering wildfowl and waders in a wider study area (refer to Figure 1). Also considered are other species of conservation concern potentially sensitive to the development.
2. To identify flight lines in this study area focussed on the preferred line route.
3. Based on data gathered during WSP 7 any new and/or additional information to previous survey findings is highlighted.
4. Based on all survey work to date (2007 – 2014) an evaluation of the importance of identified potentially sensitive (to the development) wintering bird sites (or complex of sites) is detailed in this report.
5. Detail sensitive locations for Whooper Swans (wildfowl) which require assessment of potential impacts and mitigation .

## 2.3 BACKGROUND TO THIS STUDY

In 2007, TOBIN were initially commissioned by EirGrid to undertake a winter bird study focusing on Whooper Swan within the study area for the winter period 2007/2008 (WSP 1). The aim of this survey was to identify any feeding or roosting sites within the study area and to record any regularly used flight lines.

TOBIN were commissioned to repeat this survey each winter since 2007. The purpose of this report is to detail the findings of WSP 7 so as to update findings from previous surveys and add data to inform the assessment of potential impacts and mitigation requirements on the Preferred Line Route.

## 2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Whooper Swan is the key target winter bird species identified in the study area for consideration for the proposed development. A literature review was undertaken to compile known impacts of power lines for this species and others and to aid in identifying appropriate and proven mitigation measures

Appendix 1 presents a bibliography of reviewed information sources which informed this report. In some cases footnotes are detailed with references within the report.

Whooper Swans are listed under Annex I of the EU Birds Directive (EU 79/409/EEC). EU Member States are required to maintain populations of rare and migratory bird species that are listed under Annex I by establishing designated areas – Special Protection Areas (SPA) - for the conservation of these species. Whooper Swans are further protected as they are listed under Annex II of the Berne Convention on the conservation of wildlife and natural habitats (commonly known as the Berne Convention), they are also amber listed in „Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2014 - 2019 (Colhoun & Cummins., 2013) as the numbers of Whooper Swans that winter in Ireland are internationally important.

Whooper Swans are winter migrants to Ireland; generally arriving in October and leaving to return to their breeding grounds in late March/early April. The Whooper Swans that winter in Ireland breed in Iceland. The Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WEBS) office and the Irish Whooper Swan Study Group completed a National Whooper Swan Survey in 2010 which revealed that the national population of Whooper Swans wintering here had increased slightly since the last national survey completed in 2005 to a population of 15,049 birds. Any site that regularly holds 1% of this figure (c.150 Whooper Swans) is considered to be of national importance for Whooper Swans. Based on an international population estimate of 20,900<sup>11</sup>, any site containing 210 birds or more is considered to be of international importance.

Wintering Whooper Swans are found mostly on lowland open farmland around inland wetlands and are regularly seen while feeding on grasslands and stubble. Whooper Swans usually feed during the daylight hours and leave the feeding sites at dusk to congregate at evening roosts (Owen *et al.* 1986 in Robinson *et al.*, 2004).

Whooper Swans are highlighted as a species potentially prone to collisions with transmission lines e.g. EirGrid Ecology Guidelines<sup>12</sup>. This is due to:

- Their relatively high wing loading resulting in less manoeuvrability in flight;
- Behavioural risks due to flying between their roosting and foraging areas (and between foraging areas); and
- Flights are often in low light levels, i.e. pre-dawn and post-dusk periods, and therefore in poor visibility. Whooper Swans, tend to fly at heights at or just below the conductor height of transmission lines (field survey observations) typically 8 to 9m above ground level Griffen *et al.*, (2011).

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<sup>11</sup> Crowe, O. 2005. Ireland's Wetlands and their Waterbirds: Status and Distribution. BirdWatch Ireland, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow.

<sup>12</sup>Eirgrid 2011. Ecology Guidelines for Electricity Transmission Projects. A Standard Approach to Ecological Impact Assessment of High Voltage Transmission Projects

Swans (including Whooper Swan, Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) and Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)) are frequently involved in powerline line collisions, including low voltage and high voltage lines (transmission lines) and this is the most commonly reported cause of swan death in the United Kingdom (MBEC 2006). The fact that swans often fly in flocks is undoubtedly also a contributory factor in determining collision rates. Higher levels of risk are associated with transmission lines that are located on main flight lines, either between roosts and feeding areas or within areas where feeding is concentrated. Whooper Swans are listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive. The European Commission<sup>13</sup> consider that "*The greatest problems to the Whooper Swan are disturbances, deterioration of habitat, illegal hunting and pollution by lead and pesticides and collision with powerlines seems not to be a serious threat.*"

The Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (1994)<sup>14</sup> stated that most researchers agree collisions are not a biologically significant source of mortality for thriving populations of birds. Despite this, it is estimated that power lines are the second highest cause of bird collision mortality in the United States, second to buildings and windows. Other anthropogenic factors listed included automobiles, communication towers and wind turbines (Erickson *et al.*, 2005, taken from Avian Power Line Interaction Committee, 2012)<sup>15</sup>.

Internationally, the need to develop power line infrastructure in a bird-safe manner is becoming increasingly more recognised. In 2011, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) released a *Review of the Conflict between Migratory Birds and Electricity Power Grids in the African Eurasian Region* (CMS, 2011a) and the *Guidelines for Mitigating Conflict between Migratory Birds and Electricity Power Grids* (CMS 2011b). CMS (2011a) provides a summary of collision issues and hot spots in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Also in 2011, the Budapest Declaration on *Bird Protection and Power Lines* (MME, 2011) was adopted by the participants of the Budapest Conference, Power Lines and Bird Mortality in Europe. The declaration aims for all new construction of power poles to be bird-safe by 2016 and all dangerous poles to be retrofitted by 2020<sup>5</sup>. The sensitive species outlined in these reports are not relevant to the study area and the design of the proposed development means electrocution of raptors specifically will not be an issue.

The Icelandic Whooper swan population (population which winters in Ireland) is considered to be at favourable conservation status (source: JNCC) and populations in Ireland have increased between 2000 and 2005 by 11% (Crowe *et al.*, 2005) and by 6% between 2005 and 2010 (Boland *et al.*, 2010).

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<sup>13</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/threatened/c/cygnus\\_cygnus\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/threatened/c/cygnus_cygnus_en.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) 1994. Mitigating Bird Collisions with Transmission lines: The State of the Art in 1994. Edison Electric Institute. Washington, D.C.

<sup>15</sup> Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) 2012 Reducing Avian Collisions with Power lines: The State of the Art in 2012. Edison Electric Institute. Washington, D.C.

This population increase is occurring in the context of an already extensive transmission line network throughout their wintering range including in Ireland suggesting that transmission lines are not a significant cause of mortality though local site conditions require consideration.

### **Review of Line Marking Effectiveness**

Most studies highlight the earth wire as the main cause of collision for birds. This is because it is relatively more difficult to see and is located at the top of the pylon where Whooper Swans may miss it as they fly over. This is where flight diverters (e.g. Swan Flight Diverter) are installed. Diverters come in a wide range of types and specifications. Recommendations based on a comprehensive review of line markers available carried out for the Beaulieu Denny 400kV project for similar bird constraints/ species highlight that the best all round markers are Swan Flight Diverter (e.g. Dulmison or Tyco Electronics) constructed from high-impact grey PVC (UV stabilised) fitted at 10m intervals<sup>16</sup>. This or a similar product will be recommended for the proposed development.

Marking the earth wire with flight diverters (see Plate 1) has been shown in numerous studies to be a useful mitigation tool at reducing potential collision impacts with powerlines.



**Plate 1: Electricity line marked with swan flight diverters**

Marking electricity lines with flight diverters is now a standard practise by electricity utility companies throughout the world for existing and new HV electricity line projects.

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<sup>16</sup><http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache%3AeD7Vxxt8rNwJ%3Awww.dpea.scotland.gov.uk%2FDocuments%2FqJ2654%2FJ118922.pdf+swan+flight+diverters&hl=en&gl=ie>

Tyco electronics, manufactures of the type of diverter proposed for this project, state that studies have shown that proper installation of bird flight diverters may reduce bird collisions by “up to 90%”<sup>17</sup>.

Examples of where “swan flight diverters” have been shown to reduce collisions or where they are being installed is detailed below.

- San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Merced County, California, USA<sup>18</sup>.
- Skagit County, Washington home to the largest wintering concentration of Trumpeter Swans (similar species to Whooper Swan see plate 2 below) in the United States. The Trumpeter Swan Society in USA “welcomed” proposals to mark lines here.



**Plate 2: Trumpeter Swans**

- In Minnesota, Xcel Energy of Minneapolis planned to install nearly 3,400 swan flight diverters in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Teton Regional Land Trust (TRLT) is working with the Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative (FRREC) on the west side of Yellowstone to add or replace at least 120 bird diverters on electricity lines in areas frequented by Trumpeter Swans. The use of flight diverters again serves to highlight that these diverters are effective and accepted by the Trumpeter Swan conservation organisation in the USA for existing electricity lines.
- Swan flight diverters in areas where conflicts occur (Trumpeter swan collision impacts) were highlighted as “effective in minimising this threat” in Mitchell (1994) taken from Slater (2006)<sup>19</sup>.
- Initial findings indicated no collision-caused mortalities of trumpeter swan at sections of transmission line following installation of swan flight diverters at a site in Montana USA (2004/2005 study)<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://energy.tycoelectronics.com/rrg/dulm\\_rrg/232.pdf](http://energy.tycoelectronics.com/rrg/dulm_rrg/232.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ventanaws.org/conservation/electricitylines.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Slater, G.L. (2006, August 17). Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*): a technical conservation assessment. [Online]. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. Available: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/projects/scp/assessments/trumpeterswan.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.trumpeterswansociety.org/docs/20th\\_conf/20becker\\_and\\_lichtenberg.pdf](http://www.trumpeterswansociety.org/docs/20th_conf/20becker_and_lichtenberg.pdf)



- Mackenzie Bradshaw Environmental Consultants - MBEC (2006) cite a large number of studies where the effectiveness of flight diverters at reducing collision risks by collision prone bird species including swans has been confirmed. Various studies showed a reduction in collisions of between 57 and 89%.
- Barrientos *et al.* (2011), reviewing 21 wire marking studies, similarly conclude that wire marking reduced bird mortality by 55-94%. Line marking is the likely mitigation which will be proposed for this project.
- Jenkins *et al.* (2010) conclude that, barring some notable exceptions, “*any sufficiently large form of marker (which thickens the appearance of the line at that point by at least 20 cm, over a length of at least 10-20 cm), placed with sufficient regularity (at least every 5-10 m) on either the ground wires (preferably) or the conductors, is likely to lower general collision rates by 50-80%*”.
- Frost (2008)<sup>21</sup>, found that the installation of flight diverters on transmission lines adjacent to a sensitive lake location reduced mortalities of Mute Swan from a maximum of 21 (pre diverter installation) to one bird after markers were installed.
- Following the largest worldwide marking experiment to date, Barrientos *et al.* (2012) observed a small (9.6%) but significant decrease in the number of casualties after line marking compared to before line marking in experimental lines<sup>22</sup>.
- The Beaulieu Denny 400kV project<sup>23</sup> which was granted permission in 2010 in Scotland recommended flight diverters for stretches of line where a potential collision risk was determined. Bird flight diverters including swan flight diverters were recommended. This project passed close to or through SPA sites including South Tayside Goose Roost Ramsar and SPA (0.12km); Firth of Forth Ramsar and SPA (1.5km) and Drumochter Hills SPA (crosses). The abundance and diversity of collision prone bird species in the Scottish study area is significantly more than in the overall North South 400kV Interconnection Development study area (MSA and CMSA). For example the Goose Roost Ramsar and SPA site alone regularly supports over 20,000 waterfowl species which is greater than all larger wildfowl numbers in the MSA and CMSA. It is in the context of these high waterfowl numbers that the Scottish Government considered the line marking mitigation detailed in the EIS and consented planning.
- The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust working with Electricity North West in West Lancashire UK (March 2014)<sup>24</sup> are currently examining various types of line diverters for sections of alignment crossed by internationally significant numbers of Whooper Swan and Geese species. The use of diverters was expressed as a very positive approach for reducing impacts to swans and Geese as collisions with unmarked powerlines were considered “a major cause of death for them”. One type of plastic diverter, clipped on the power lines, is packed with crystals that

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<sup>21</sup> Frost D (2008). The use of ‘flight diverters’ reduces mute swan *Cygnus olor* collision with electricity lines at Abberton Reservoir, Essex, England Conservation Evidence (2008) 5, 83-91

<sup>22</sup> Barrientos R, Ponce C, Palacín C, Martín CA, Martín B, *et al.* (2012) Wire Marking Results in a Small but Significant Reduction in Avian Mortality at Power Lines: A BACI Designed Study. PLoS ONE 7(3): e32569. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0032569

<sup>23</sup> <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache%3AeD7Vxt8rNwJ%3Awww.dpea.scotland.gov.uk%2FDocuments%2FqJ2654%2FJ118922.pdf+swan+flight+diverters&hl=en&gl=ie>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.thelancashiremagazine.co.uk/news/north-west/warning-whooper-swans-from-iceland-about-lancashire-power-lines/>

absorb ultra-violet light by day to emit a purple ultraviolet light for 10 or 12 hours after nightfall. The birds can see the plastic roundels glowing violet by night. Fluorescent orange or yellow reflective materials flap in the wind to divert the birds by day. No data is yet available on the findings of this study (July 2014).

More recent updated draft guidelines produced by Bureau Wardenberg (2011) on approaches to avoid and mitigate impacts to migratory birds have been drafted. Some key mitigation approaches outlined are detailed below.

Since bird collisions have been recorded with the guy or stay wires of pylons the construction of self-supporting pylons which do not require stay wires is preferred. This is the case for this project.

Birds are believed to collide most often with the earth or shield wire (the thinnest wire at the top of the electricity line pylon). Removing this wire or designing electricity lines from the outset without this wire is therefore a potential collision mitigation measure (Brown *et al.*, 1987; Bevanger & Brøseth, 2001).

There is room for improvement in the efficacy of line marking devices. In order to achieve this improvement we need to look more closely at bird vision. Recently, Martin & Shaw (2010) and Martin (2011) conducted the first known research into avian visual fields related to electricity line collision. Key research findings and theoretical conclusions include:

- Birds' vision differs from humans in three main ways: colour vision, acuity and field of view;
- Birds' eyes are mostly placed laterally in the skull, birds' visual fields (*i.e.* where they can see) are extensive, and differ between species;
- Relative to humans, birds have small blind spots. However, these blind spots can render a bird blind in the direction of travel, if the head or eye is moved in a certain way;
- Birds have small binocular fields, particularly the cranes and bustards. Binocular vision is important for distance perception;
- Birds' highest visual acuity and colour vision is in their lateral visual field, birds' frontal vision may be tuned for detecting movement rather than spatial detail;
- Birds in flight in open habitats may „predict“ that there are no obstacles in front of them; and
- Birds may detect obstacles such as pylons, and fly towards them with the intention of veering away at the last minute
- Colour is probably less important than contrast;
- Movement of the device is likely to be important; and
- Markers that protrude vertically both above and below the conductor are likely important; since we suspect that many collisions may occur at night, devices that are nocturnally visible (through illumination, phosphorescence, ultraviolet radiation and other means) would be advantage.



This overall information will inform flight diverter type and approach for installation as relevant for the project.

Other wintering bird species in the study area are potentially sensitive to collisions with powerlines though have been observed to regularly feed in areas close to existing transmission lines, refer to Plate 3 below. Mute Swan in particular are prone to collision with power lines. In this regard these species were also surveyed to identify potential collision hazards and line marking is proposed at these locations .

Sensitive species in the study area include:

- Mute Swan;
- Grey Heron;
- Cormorant;
- Wildfowl ducks (Moorhen, Mallard, Teal);
- Wildfowl Grebes (Great Crested Grebe and Little Grebe); and
- Waders (Golden Plover, Lapwing, Snipe).



**Plate 3: Flock of Mute Swans which regularly forage in a field beside a Transmission Line in the CMSA study area.**

## 2.5 WHOOPER SWAN- IMPACTS DUE TO TRANSMISSION LINES – UK AND IRELAND

Little information is currently available on the actual impacts of high voltage transmission lines on Whooper Swans and other collision prone species in Ireland and for that matter the UK. Any information

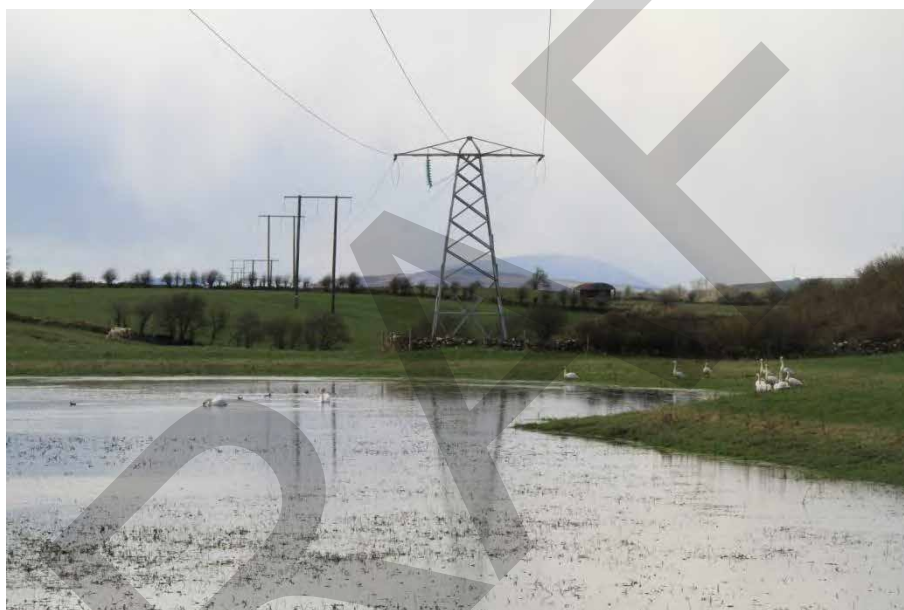
regarding impacts are very general and anecdotal for example<sup>25</sup>, rather than scientifically based observational experiments and subsequent published reports detailing actual mortalities.

Several general observations can be highlighted which are important for determining potential impacts of a new transmission line development in the study area to wintering birds in particular Whooper Swans. These include:

1. Whooper Swans in the study area are utilising areas within an existing electricity line network. The extent of the existing wirescape across the MSA study area consists of approximately 329km of existing high voltage electricity lines (161km of 38kV, 101km of 110kV, 93km of 220kV and 4km of 400kV); refer to Figure 1, as well as thousands of kilometres of medium voltage, low voltage and telephone overhead lines. While collisions undoubtedly occur and have been recorded during surveys, no significant impacts to the overall population is likely to be arising given Whooper Swan populations show a positive trend based on I-Webs data between 2005 and 2010. In addition internationally significant numbers continue to use areas with transmission line infrastructure e.g. Toome Bridge (Northern Ireland) i.e. no displacement issue in this case (Hall *et al*, 2012).
2. Whooper Swans (swan species generally) currently exploit areas around existing low voltage (LV) and high voltage (HV) electricity lines throughout their range. Example sites include Toome Bridge Northern Ireland (HV transmission line) and two examples from County Mayo 110kV (refer to Plate 4 and 5 overleaf). Mute Swan regularly graze under electricity lines (13kV) close to Derryloobinagh Lough in Ballybay, County Monaghan (refer to Plate 3). It has been noted in 2013 that a collision occurred at the Ballybay site though only feathers were noted. The 13kV lines are clearly a local hazard for swans at this wetland site, though do not cause displacement.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.thelancashiremagazine.co.uk/news/north-west/warning-whooper-swans-from-iceland-about-lancashire-power-lines/>



**Plates 4 and 5: Two images of flocks of Whooper Swan in temporary flood area under an 110kV transmission line in County Mayo**

3. Line marking with flight diverters are proposed for sections of the final alignment where a potential localised risk of collision has been highlighted as part of this overall study. Line marking using bird flight diverters is standard mitigation practise internationally for example in countries including Scotland, USA, England and Norway. Flight diverters have been highlighted in various studies as an effective mitigation tool for reducing collisions by birds as detailed above.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology for WSP 7 broadly followed the methodology used during the previous six years of surveys. Given the very extensive area a number of key features and areas were identified to focus the survey work. Ongoing aerial surveys and drive round surveys determined if any additional sites required survey.

#### 3.1 DESKTOP SURVEY

An updated desk-based survey was undertaken to determine up to date information on bird interactions with powerlines, current mitigation approaches and information regarding Whooper Swan research. Additional information has been added to the previous desk study report; refer to section 2.2 and 2.3 above.

#### 3.2 CONSULTATION

NPWS and Birdwatch Ireland have been informed over the course of the study regarding the survey findings and proposed mitigation. The most recent submission was received from Birdwatch Ireland regarding the project was received on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013. A subsequent meeting was held with BirdWatch Ireland on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013 during which impacts on Whooper Swan populations, appropriate mitigation and monitoring were discussed.

#### 3.3 FIELD SURVEY

A total of 57 survey man days were conducted over 43 days between 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014. Four bird surveyors conducted the surveys in the CMSA. All surveyors were fully experienced in the methodologies employed and at identifying target species in the study area.

The survey approach followed as far as possible standard methodologies suitable for identifying key concentrations of wintering wildfowl (WeBS) detailed in Gilbert *et al.*, (1998)<sup>31</sup> and in particular concentrations and flightlines relative to the preferred line route (Vantage Point Surveys – based on SNH 2014<sup>32</sup>).

Table 3-1 below summarises location of survey, survey dates, type of survey conducted on each date and weather conditions.

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<sup>31</sup> Gilbert G., Gibbons D.W., Evans J, (1998). *Bird Monitoring Methods: A manual of Techniques for Key UK Species*. RSPB, Sandy.

<sup>32</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (2014) *Recommended bird survey methods to inform impact assessment of onshore wind farms*.

**Table 3-1: Summary of field surveys undertaken between October 2013 and April 2014 in CMSA.**

| Date     | Location  | Weather                            | Webs (counts and checks presence at sites) | VP Watches Dawn | VP Watches Dusk | Hen Harrier Survey | Hours |
|----------|---|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------|
| 06/11/13 | Lough Namachree   | Rain, Mild, > 10k visibility.      | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1.25  |
| 07/11/13 | Lough Bellatrain/<br>Lisnakkillewbane and Bocks               | Dry, calm, clear > 10k Visibility. | Yes (partial)                              | Yes             |                 |                    | 0.5   |
| 11/11/13 | Lough Egish/ Morne/<br>Lurgacham                              | Dry calm clear                     | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 2     |
| 14/11/13 | Loughs Raferagh/<br>Comertagh/<br>Greaghlonge                 | Dry calm clear                     | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 0.75  |
| 15/11/13 | Loughs Raferagh/<br>Comertagh/<br>Greaghlonge                 | Dry, calm, clear > 10k Visibility. | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1     |
| 16/11/13 | Drumgallon/<br>Drumcarn/<br>Mullyard Bogs                     | Drizzle, calm, visibility 1 – 5km  |  |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1     |
| 18/11/13 | Loughs Raferagh/<br>Comertagh/<br>Greaghlonge                 | Dry calm clear > 20k visibility.   | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1.5   |
| 21/11/13 | North of Drumcarn Bogs (Co Armagh) outside study area         | Drizzle, calm, visibility 1 – 5km  |  |                 |                 | Yes                | 1.5   |
| 21/11/13 | Loughs Raferagh/<br>Comertagh/<br>Greaghlonge                 | Dry, calm, clear > 10k visibility. | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1     |
| 26/11/13 | Lough Egish/ Morne/<br>Lurgacham                              | Dry, calm, clear > 10k Visibility. | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 2     |
| 27/11/13 | Loughs Raferagh/<br>Comertagh/<br>Greaghlonge                 | Dry, calm, clear                   | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1.25  |
| 28/11/13 | Lough Egish/ Morne/<br>Lurgacham                              | Dry, calm, clear                   | Yes (partial)                              | Yes             |                 | Yes                | 1     |
| 30/11/13 | Lough Egish/ Morne/<br>Lurgacham                              | Dry, calm, clear > 10k Visibility. | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 2     |
| 01/12/13 | Drumgallon/<br>Drumcarn/<br>Mullyard Bogs                     | Drizzle, calm, visibility 1 – 5km  |  |                 |                 | Yes                | 1.5   |
| 08/12/13 | Lough Egish/ Morne/<br>Lurgacham                              | Drizzle, calm, visibility < 10k    | Yes (partial)                              | Yes             |                 | Yes                | 1.5   |
| 13/12/13 | Loughs Raferagh/<br>Comertagh/<br>Greaghlonge                 | Dry, calm, clear > 10k visibility. | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1     |
| 20/12/13 | All   | Cold, windy, clear                 | Yes (partial)                              |                 |                 |                    |       |
| 26/12/13 | Loughs Raferagh/<br>Comertagh/<br>Greaghlonge                 | Cold, clear                        | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1     |
| 28/12/13 | Lough Egish/ Morne/<br>Lurgacham                              | Dry, calm, clear > 10k Visibility. | Yes (partial)                              | Yes             |                 | Yes                | 1.5   |
| 28/12/13 | Lough Nahinch,<br>Drumcarn, Crossbane area (Northern Ireland) | Dry, calm, clear > 10k visibility. | Yes (partial)                              |                 |                 | Yes                | 1.75  |
| 31/12/13 | Loughs Raferagh/<br>Comertagh/<br>Greaghlonge                 | Dry, calm, clear > 10k visibility. |  | Yes             |                 | Yes                | 1     |

| Date     | Location                                      | Weather                                  | Webs (counts and checks presence at sites) | VP Watches Dawn | VP Watches Dusk | Hen Harrier Survey | Hours |
|----------|---|--|--|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------|
| 02/01/14 | All   | Dry, clear > 10k Visibility.             | Yes (Full)                                 |                 |                 |                    |       |
| 02/01/14 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | Windy, 5 – 10km visibility               | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                |       |
| 03/01/14 | Lough Nahinch / Cashel Bog area               | Windy, 5 – 10km visibility               |  | Yes             |                 | Yes                | 1     |
| 03/01/14 | Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham                 | Gale, 5 – 10km visibility                |  | Yes             |                 | Yes                | 1.5   |
| 06/01/14 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | Windy, 5 – 10km visibility               | Yes (partial)                              | Yes             |                 | Yes                | 1     |
| 13/01/14 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | Dry, calm, clear > 10k visibility.       | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             |                    | 1     |
| 23/01/14 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | Dry, calm, clear > 10k visibility.       | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             |                    | 1     |
| 23/01/14 | Lough Greaghlonge                             | Dry, breezy, 5 – 10km visibility         |  |                 | Yes             |                    | 1.25  |
| 23/01/14 | Loughs Raferagh/                              | Dry, calm, clear > 10k visibility.       | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1     |
| 24/01/14 | Loughs Raferagh/                              | Dry, calm, clear > 10k visibility.       | Yes (partial)                              | Yes             |                 | Yes                | 1     |
| 24/01/14 | Lough Greaghlonge                             | Dry, breezy, 5 – 10km visibility         |  | Yes             |                 |                    | 1     |
| 27/01/14 | Laragh Lough                                  | Light Wind, overcast 5 – 10km visibility | Yes (partial)                              | Yes             |                 |                    | 1     |
| 27/01/14 | Lough Egish                                   | Light Wind, overcast 5 – 10km visibility | Yes (Full)                                 |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1     |
| 27/01/14 | Lough Lurgacham                               | Light Wind, overcast 5 – 10km visibility |  |                 | Yes             |                    | 0.5   |
| 28/01/14 | Lough Egish                                   | Light Wind, overcast 5 – 10km visibility |  | Yes             |                 | Yes                | 1     |
| 28/01/14 | Lough Crossduff                               | Light Wind, overcast 5 – 10km visibility |  | Yes             |                 |                    | 1     |
| 05/02/14 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | Light Wind, overcast 5 – 10km visibility | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             |                    | 1.5   |
| 10/02/14 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | Light Wind, overcast 5 – 10km visibility | Yes (partial)                              |                 | Yes             |                    | 1.5   |
| 11/02/14 | All   | Dry, sunny, clear > 10k visibility       | Yes (Full)                                 |                 |                 |                    |       |
| 24/02/14 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | Light Wind, overcast > 10km visibility   | Yes (Full)                                 |                 | Yes             |                    | 1.5   |
| 24/02/14 | Lough Namachree                               | Windy, Rain, > 10k visibility            | Yes (Full)                                 |                 | Yes             |                    | 1.5   |
| 24/02/14 | Lough Nahinch                                 | Windy, Rain, 5 - 10k visibility          |  |                 | Yes             | Yes                | 1.5   |



| Date     | Location                                      | Weather                                | Webs (counts and presence at sites) | VP Watches Dawn | VP Watches Dusk | Hen Harrier Survey | Hours |
|----------|---|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------|
| 25/02/14 | Lough Tooncrinkell                            | Windy, Rain, 5 - 10k visibility        |                                     | Yes             |                 |                    | 1     |
| 25/02/14 | Ballintra                                     | Dry, calm > 10k visibility             |                                     | Yes             |                 |                    | 1.75  |
| 28/02/14 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | Light Wind, overcast > 10km visibility | Yes (partial)                       | Yes             |                 |                    | 1.5   |
| 04/03/14 | Ballintra                                     | Dry, calm > 10k visibility             | Yes (partial)                       |                 | Yes             |                    | 1     |
| 05/03/14 | Lough Nahinch                                 | Dry, calm > 10k visibility             |                                     | Yes             |                 |                    | 1     |
| 07/03/14 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | Overcast, drizzle < 5km visibility     | Yes (partial)                       | Yes             |                 |                    | 0.75  |
| 12/03/14 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | Clear > 5km visibility                 | Yes (partial)                       |                 | Yes             |                    | 1     |
| 13/03/14 | Creeve Lough                                  | Dry, calm > 10k visibility             | Yes (Full)                          |                 | Yes             |                    | 1     |
| 14/03/14 | Lough Egish                                   | Fog, < 1km visibility                  |                                     | Yes             |                 |                    | 1     |
| 20/03/14 | Lough Namachree                               | Dry, calm > 10k visibility             | Yes (partial)                       |                 | Yes             |                    | 1     |
| 21/03/14 | Ballintra                                     | Dry, calm > 10k visibility             |                                     | Yes             |                 |                    | 2     |
| 21/03/14 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | Breezy, showers, >2km visibility       | Yes (partial)                       |                 | Yes             |                    | 1.5   |
| 24/03/14 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | Breezy, showers, >2km visibility       | Yes (partial)                       |                 | Yes             |                    | 1     |
| 27/03/14 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | Breezy, showers, >2km visibility       | Yes (partial)                       | Yes             |                 |                    | 1     |

**Note:**

1. Full count indicate that the majority of sites (at least 90%) were surveyed on that day and a full check of all potential sites within 5km of the preferred line route was conducted.
2. Partial Counts were counts recorded on the way to vantage point survey and drive round check conducted of known sites used in the vicinity of the vantage point.

Given the large extent of the study area methodologies were tailored so as to maximise information on location of Whooper Swans and likely / confirmed flightlines as relevant to the proposed development.

Three key methodologies were used which follow standard survey methods (see above) for assessing winter bird distribution and identifying flightlines.

**3.3.1 Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) and drive round survey**

Extensive driving surveys were carried out monthly of the entire study area; refer to Table 3-2 which indicates number of times specific areas with noteworthy wintering bird concentrations were surveyed. All noteworthy wintering bird sites are indicated in Figure 1 and all surveyed at least once/ month.

Surveys were conducted of all potential wintering bird sites and sites identified through consultation and the desk study. All sites were scanned using binoculars and telescopes as appropriate, from vantage points on public roads. Likely habitats close to these sites were also checked, as were areas deemed suitable for Whooper Swans that were seen whilst driving between sites and other small ponds identified in aerial imagery. Records were taken of numbers of Whooper Swans, weather conditions and habitat type. Other species of conservation concern were also noted if seen.

**Table 3-2: Survey Effort (nos. days surveyed) for Whooper Swan sites in the study area**

| Site  | Location Relative to preferred line route | Nos. times surveyed 2013/ 2014 |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Lough Avaghon                               | 5 km - west                               | 11                             |
| Ballintra                                   | 1km - west                                | 33                             |
| Ballyhoe Lough / wetlands                   | 9 – 10km east                             | 1                              |
| Barnagrow Lough                             | 3km west                                  | 9                              |
| Bawn Lakes                                  | 4km west                                  | 15                             |
| Beagh Lough/ Greaglone                      | 1km west                                  | 28                             |
| Bellatrain Lough                            | 3km west                                  | 15                             |
| Blaney Castle Lake or Muckno Lough          | 5km east                                  | 5                              |
| Comertagh Lough                             | < 1km east                                | 26                             |
| Corliss Lough                               | >10km east                                | 11                             |
| Corraghy Lough                              | 5 – 6km east                              | 11                             |
| Creeve lake                                 | 4 – 5km west                              | 16                             |
| Corrawaddy Lough                            | 1km east                                  | 3                              |
| Corvally Lough                              | <1km east                                 | 27                             |
| Creevekeeran                                | >12km east                                | 3                              |
| Creevy Lough                                | 8km east                                  | 14                             |
| Crossduff Lough                             | 2km west                                  | 12                             |
| Derrygoony Lough                            | 6km west                                  | 6                              |
| Derrynalobinagh                             | 4km west                                  | 29                             |
| Dromore Wetlands (Derryroosk Mullanary etc) | 4km west                                  | 12                             |
| Drumgallon                                  | < 1km east                                | 3                              |
| Drumillard lough                            | 10km east                                 | 17                             |
| Druminnick Lough                            | 6km west                                  | 8                              |
| Drumlougher                                 | 12km west                                 | 2                              |
| East Laragh Lough 2                         | 5km east                                  | 18                             |
| Fane River                                  | > 10km east                               | 2                              |
| Kiltybane Lough                             | >13km east                                | 2                              |
| Lackagh                                     | 3km east                                  | 10                             |



| Site                            | Location Relative to preferred line route | Nos. times surveyed 2013/ 2014 |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Lantaur                         | 3km west                                  | 5                              |
| Laragh Lough                    | 4km east                                  | 25                             |
| Lismagurshin or Cremartin Lough | 1km east                                  | 11                             |
| Lisnakkillewbane Lough          | 3km west                                  | 16                             |
| Lough Alina                     | >10km east                                | 14                             |
| Lough Egish                     | 1km east                                  | 28                             |
| Lough Major                     | 3km west                                  | 15                             |
| Lough Morne                     | <1km west                                 | 28                             |
| Lough Nagamaman                 | 4km east                                  | 15                             |
| Lough Nahinch / Tassan/ White   | <1km                                      | 15                             |
| Lough Namachree                 | 3km west                                  | 17                             |
| Lough Patrick                   | >10km east                                | 13                             |
| Lough Ross                      | 10km east                                 | 13                             |
| Lough Sillan                    | 3km west                                  | 11                             |
| Lough Smiley (l north)          | 6km east                                  | 5                              |
| Lurgacham (Lough + fields)      | 2km west                                  | 21                             |
| Mill Lough                      | 1km west                                  | 24                             |
| Milltown Lough                  | 3km west                                  | 10                             |
| Muckno Mill Lough               | 6km east                                  | 15                             |
| Muckno Mill Lough (Tributary)   | 6km east                                  | 3                              |
| Raferagh (pond)                 | <1km north                                | 26                             |
| Shantonagh Lough                | 2km west                                  | 13                             |
| Tievaleny Lough                 | 3km west                                  | 10                             |
| Tonyscallan Lough               | 1km east                                  | 18                             |
| Tooncrinkell Lough              | 1km east                                  | 14                             |
| Tullyvaragh / Moylan Lough      | 10km east                                 | 14                             |
| Tullyvaragh Lower               | 10km east                                 | 4                              |

Additional small wetlands / ponds and lakes occur throughout the study area, which are not detailed in Table 3-2. These were regularly checked (at least once/ month each year of survey) and no significant usage by Target Bird Species was recorded. These include small lakes within 1km of the preferred line route including, Tassan Lough, lake (townland Coohy), small lake and ponds (townland Drumgristin), Lake (townland Cremartin), Boraghy Lough, Bocks Lough and Muff Lough.

### 3.3.2 Vantage Point Surveys

In order to determine flight lines, dawn and dusk vantage point watches were conducted at various sites along the preferred line route, refer to Table 3-3 and Figure 1 which indicates site locations. A total of 27 dawn and dusk vantage point surveys were conducted at 16 separate vantage point locations where flightlines were recorded previously. Locations for survey were determined based on observed Whooper Swan sites and associated flightlines, roost sites in the vicinity of the preferred line route and; precautionary surveys at potential flightline locations e.g. larger river crossings.

In total 63.75 hours of dawn and dusk vantage point work were conducted. In addition to this time extensive checks were conducted in the vicinity of vantage points to identify if flocks of Whooper Swan were present in the wider area.

**Table 3-3: Vantage Point survey date, location, period and effort**

| Date       | Location                                    | Survey Period | Duration (hours) |
|------------|---|---------------|------------------|
| 25/02/2014 | Ballintra                                   | Dawn          | 1.75             |
| 04/03/2014 | Ballintra                                   | Dusk          | 1                |
| 21/03/2014 | Ballintra                                   | Dawn          | 2                |
| 13/03/2014 | Creeve Lough                                | Dusk          | 1                |
| 16/11/2013 | Drumgallon/ Drumcarn/ Mullyard Bogs         | Dusk          | 1                |
| 01/12/2013 | Drumgallon/ Drumcarn/ Mullyard Bogs         | Dusk          | 1.5              |
| 27/01/2014 | Laragh Lough                                | Dawn          | 1                |
| 07/11/2013 | Lough Bellatrain/ Lisnakillewbane and Bocks | Dawn          | 0.5              |
| 28/01/2014 | Lough Crossduff                             | Dawn          | 1                |
| 27/01/2014 | Lough Egish                                 | Dusk          | 1                |
| 28/01/2014 | Lough Egish                                 | Dawn          | 1                |
| 14/03/2014 | Lough Egish                                 | Dawn          | 1                |
| 11/11/2013 | Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | Dusk          | 2                |
| 26/11/2013 | Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | Dusk          | 2                |
| 28/11/2013 | Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | Dawn          | 1                |
| 30/11/2001 | Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | Dusk          | 2                |
| 08/12/2013 | Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | Dawn          | 1.5              |
| 28/12/2013 | Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | Dawn          | 1.5              |
| 03/01/2014 | Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | Dawn          | 1.5              |
| 23/01/2014 | Lough Greaghlone                            | Dusk          | 1.25             |
| 24/01/2014 | Lough Greaghlone                            | Dawn          | 1                |
| 27/01/2014 | Lough Lurgacham                             | Dusk          | 0.5              |
| 13/01/2014 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | Dusk          | 1                |
| 23/01/2014 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | Dusk          | 1                |
| 05/02/2014 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | Dusk          | 1.5              |
| 10/02/2014 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | Dusk          | 1.5              |
| 24/02/2014 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | Dusk          | 1.5              |

| Date       | Location                                    | Survey Period | Duration (hours) |
|------------|---|---------------|------------------|
| 28/02/2014 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | Dawn          | 1.5              |
| 12/03/2014 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | Dusk          | 1                |
| 21/03/2014 | Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | Dusk          | 1.5              |
| 24/02/2014 | Lough Nahinch                               | Dusk          | 1.5              |
| 05/03/2014 | Lough Nahinch                               | Dawn          | 1                |
| 03/01/2014 | Lough Nahinch / Cashel Bog area             | Dawn          | 1                |
| 06/11/2013 | Lough Namachree                             | Dusk          | 1.25             |
| 20/03/2014 | Lough Namachree                             | Dusk          | 1                |
| 25/02/2014 | Lough Tooncrinkell                          | Dawn          | 1                |
| 24/01/2014 | Loughs Raferagh                             | Dawn          | 1                |
| 23/01/2014 | Loughs Raferagh                             | Dusk          | 1                |
| 14/11/2013 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dusk          | 0.75             |
| 15/11/2013 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dusk          | 1                |
| 18/11/2013 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dusk          | 1.5              |
| 21/11/2013 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dusk          | 1                |
| 27/11/2013 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dusk          | 1.25             |
| 13/12/2013 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dusk          | 1                |
| 26/12/2013 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dusk          | 1                |
| 31/12/2013 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dawn          | 1                |
| 02/01/2014 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dusk          |                  |
| 06/01/2014 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dawn          | 1                |
| 07/03/2014 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dawn          | 0.75             |
| 24/03/2014 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dusk          | 1                |
| 27/03/2014 | Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlon | Dawn          | 1                |
| 21/11/2013 | Drumcarn Bogs                               | Dawn          | 1.5              |

### 3.3.3 Aerial Survey

In addition to the above field surveys two aerial surveys of the CMSA were conducted during WSP 7 on the following dates:

- 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014; and
- 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

Due to very poor weather conditions it was not possible to conduct aerial surveys until later in the winter period.

These surveys allowed confirmation of total numbers of Whooper Swans and locations utilised including areas that cannot easily be surveyed during ground surveys. Hence this survey verified the accuracy of ground surveys. It also indicated any sites where more survey work was recommended regarding potential flight lines.

A four seat, single-engine light aircraft was used for the survey. The surveys were undertaken in conditions of good light and visibility, when flocks of Whooper Swans were detectable up to at least 10km either side of the aircraft. To minimise disturbance the plane avoided as much as possible flying below 1000 feet. Two experienced observers engaged in locating the Whooper Swans, counted them accurately and identified sites used by the Whooper Swans.

#### 3.3.4 *Hen Harrier Winter Roost Survey*

A number of locations were identified in the study area where particular attention was paid to recording wintering Hen Harrier Roosts. Suitable habitat (wetlands, dense heather cutover bog) is generally avoided by the preferred line route. However, potential winter roost habitat occurs at several specific locations close to the preferred line route (<2km). The vantage point surveys at Raferagh, Drumcarn and Drumgallon in particular focused on detecting this species. The methodology followed O'Donoghue (2011) in particular the required timing for detection as follows; "In the evenings, the best time to observe harriers at a winter roost is from *at least* 60 minutes before sunset until it is no longer feasible to continue observations in the dark. In the morning, observers should be stationed at the roost 40 minutes before sunrise until *at least* 60 minutes after sunrise".

#### 3.3.5 *Survey Constraints*

A number of minor constraints occurred with regard to conducting the surveys in line with standard guidance: Parts of the study area are relatively low lying with limited view sheds.

- Weather conditions and associated visibility was generally adequate with swans up to 1km away readily identifiable. Visibility in particular will influence the adequacy of survey and all dates except 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014 had adequate visibility for survey work.

It is considered that despite these issues that the survey is robust and the bird counts and flightlines are accurate. Location distribution and numbers (of Whooper Swan) are supported by the aerial survey findings.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 WHOOPER SWANS

#### 4.1.1 *Site distribution*

During the course of the study to date, 57 sites have been identified within the CMSA study area as being utilised by Whooper Swans. During WSP 7, Whooper Swans were recorded at 25 of these sites. Details on Whooper Swan numbers recorded at each site on each survey date during WSP 7 are provided in Appendix 2. The distribution and location of Whooper Swan sites in CMSA is detailed in Figure 1.

The peak counts during WSP 7 for all Whooper Swan sites are summarised in Table 4-1 below. This table details all sites where Whooper Swans have been recorded in CMSA during the 7 years of survey to date, even if there is no data for WSP7. Also listed are 2 sites (Lough Major and Lough Sillan) where no Whooper Swans have been recorded in any year, though they were identified as sites used in the past by NPWS.

**Table 4-1: Summary Whooper Swan counts during WSP 7 at all sites Whooper Swan previously recorded in the study area.**

| Site Name                                   | October 2013 | November 2013 | December 2013 | January 2014 | February 2014 | March 2014                    | April 2014 | PEAK NOS. |
|---|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Dromore Wetlands (Derryroosk Mullanary etc) | NC           | 41            | 3             | 0            | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 41        |
| Lough Namachree                             | NC           | 15            | 17            | 17           | 32            | 37                            | 0          | 37        |
| Ballintra                                   | NC           |               | 2             | 0            | 3             | 25                            | 0          | 25        |
| Shantonagh Lough                            | NC           | 18            | 0             | 0            | 0             | 25                            | 0          | 25        |
| Greaglone*                                  | NC           | 0             | 0             | 24           | 11            | 0                             | 0          | 24        |
| Tullyvaragh Upper                           | NC           | 22            | 0             | 13           | 16            | 3                             | 0          | 22        |
| Lough Avaghon                               | NC           | NC            | NC            | 0            | 19            | 0                             | 0          | 19        |
| Milltown Lough                              | NC           | 17            | NC            | 0            | 10            | 0                             | 0          | 17        |
| Corvally Lough*                             | NC           | 0             | 14            | 12           | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 14        |
| Lough Nagarnaman                            | NC           | NC            | NC            | 13           | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 13        |
| Comertagh Lough                             | NC           | 12            | 12            | 0            | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 12        |
| Derrynalobinagh                             | NC           | 12            | 4             | 0            | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 12        |
| Raferagh (pond)                             | NC           | 0             | 0             | 12           | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 12        |
| Barnagrow Lough                             | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 10                            | 0          | 10        |
| Bellatrain Lough                            | NC           | 10            | 0             | 5            | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 10        |
| Creeve lake                                 | NC           | 8             | 9             | 9            | 4             | 9                             | 0          | 9         |
| Ballyhoe Lough / wetlands                   | NC           | NC            | NC            | NC           | NC            | NC                            | 8          | 8         |
| Lisnakkillewbane Lough                      | NC           | 0             | 0             | 8            | 2             | 0                             | 0          | 8         |
| Lurgacham (Lough + fields)                  | NC           | 4             | 7             | 0            | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 7         |
| Mill Lough                                  | NC           | 7             | 2             | 2            | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 7         |
| Lough Nahinch - area                        | NC           | 5             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 5         |
| Lough Morne                                 | NC           | 3             | 4             | 2            | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 4         |
| Corrawaddy Lough *                          | NC           | NC            | NC            | 3            | NC            | 0                             | 0          | 3         |
| Crossduff Lough                             | NC           | 0             | 3             | 3            | 0             | 0                             | 0          | 3         |
| Tievaleny Lough                             | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 1             | 0                             | 0          | 1         |
| Tooncrinkell Lough                          | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | Roost site<br>Ballintra birds | 0          | 0         |

Winter Bird Study CMSA 2013-2014

| Site Name                          | October 2013 | November 2013 | December 2013 | January 2014 | February 2014 | March 2014 | April 2014 | PEAK NOS. |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Annaghierin Lough                  | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Bawn Lakes                         | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Blaney Castle Lake or Muckno Lough | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Corliss Lough                      | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Corraghy Lough                     | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Creevekeeran                       | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Creevy Lough                       | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Derrygoony Lough                   | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Drumillard lough                   | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Druminnick Lough                   | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Drumlougher                        | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| East Laragh Lough 2                | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Fane River                         | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Kiltybane Lough                    | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lackagh                            | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lantaur                            | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Laragh Lough                       | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lismagurshin or Cremartin Lough    | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lough Alina                        | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lough Egish                        | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lough Major**                      | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lough Patrick                      | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lough Ross                         | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lough Sillan**                     | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Lough Smiley (I north)             | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Muckno Mill Lough                  | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Muckno Mill Lough (Tributary)      | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |

| Site Name          | October 2013 | November 2013 | December 2013 | January 2014 | February 2014 | March 2014 | April 2014 | PEAK NOS. |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Mullyore flood     | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Tonyscallan Lough  | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Tooncrinkell Lough | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |
| Tullyvaragh Lower  | NC           | 0             | 0             | 0            | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         |

Notes:

1. \* = new site identified in 2013/ 2014 (WSP7),
2. \*\* = historical site only (no records during all surveys to date).
3. NC = Not Counted,
4. The Dromore wetlands are well removed from the development and were subject to partial count only.



During WSP 7 Whooper Swans were recorded at 25 sites in total within the CMSA, refer to Table 4-2 below. The key observations regarding the site usage and flightlines in relation to the preferred line route are detailed. The flightline data and findings are further detailed in section 4.1.2 below.

**Table 4-2: Sites where Whooper Swan recorded in 2013/2014, usage (forage and or roost), flightline recorded or probable (2007 – 2014 data) and maximum count**

| Site Name                                   | Foraging (F), Roost, Foraging and roost site (F+R) <sup>1</sup> | Location Relative to preferred line route | Flightline crossing preferred line route (based on survey to date 2007 - 2014) <sup>2</sup> | Maximum Count (2013/ 2014) |
|---|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| Dromore Wetlands (Derryroosk Mullanary etc) | F+R   | 4km west                                  | No  | 41                         |
| Lough Namachree                             | F+R   | 3km west                                  | No  | 37                         |
| Ballintra                                   | F   | 1km - west                                | Yes   | 25                         |
| Shantonagh Lough                            | F+R   | 2km west                                  | No  | 25                         |
| Beagh Lough/ Greaglone*                     | F+R   | 1km west                                  | Yes - occasional  | 24                         |
| Tullyvaragh / Moylan Lough                  | F+R   | 10km east                                 | No  | 22                         |
| Lough Avaghon                               | F+R   | 5 km - west                               | No  | 19                         |
| Milltown Lough                              | F+R   | 3km west                                  | No  | 17                         |
| Corvally Lough*                             | F+R   | <1km east                                 | No  | 14                         |
| Lough Nagarnaman                            | F+R   | 4km east                                  | No  | 13                         |
| Comertagh Lough                             | F+R   | < 1km east                                | Yes - occasional  | 12                         |
| Derrynalobinagh                             | F+R   | 4km west                                  | No  | 12                         |
| Raferagh (pond)                             | F+R   | <1km north                                | Yes - occasional  | 12                         |
| Barnagrow Lough                             | F+R   | 3km west                                  | No  | 10                         |
| Bellatrain Lough                            | F+R   | 3km west                                  | No  | 10                         |
| Creeve lake                                 | F+R   | 4 – 5km west                              | No  | 9                          |
| Ballyhoe Lough / wetlands                   | F+R   | 9 – 10km east                             | No  | 8                          |
| Lisnakillewbane Lough                       | F+R   | 3km west                                  | No  | 8                          |
| Lurgacham (Lough + fields)                  | F+R   | 2km west                                  | No  | 7                          |
| Mill Lough                                  | F+R   | 1km west                                  | No  | 7                          |
| Lough Nahinch - area                        | F+R   | <1km                                      | No - Further monitoring   | 5                          |
| Lough Morne                                 | F+R   | <1km west                                 | Yes - occasional  | 4                          |
| Corrawaddy Lough *                          | F+R   | 1km east                                  | No - Further monitoring   | 3                          |
| Crossduff Lough                             | F+R   | 2km west                                  | No - Further monitoring   | 3                          |
| Tievaleny Lough                             | F+R   | 3km west                                  | No - Further monitoring   | 1                          |
| Tooncrinkell Lough                          | F+R   | 1km east                                  | Yes   | 0                          |
| Annaghierin Lough                           | F+R   | 4 km - west                               | No  | 0                          |
| Bawn Lakes **                               | F+R   | 4km west                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Blaney Castle Lake or Muckno Lough          | F+R   | 5km east                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Corliss Lough                               | F+R   | >10km east                                | No  | 0                          |
| Corraghy Lough                              | F+R   | 5 – 6km east                              | No  | 0                          |
| Creevekeeran                                | F   | >12km east                                | No  | 0                          |

| Site Name                       | Foraging (F), Roost, Foraging and roost site (F+R) <sup>1</sup> | Location Relative to preferred line route | Flightline crossing preferred line route (based on survey to date 2007 - 2014) <sup>2</sup> | Maximum Count (2013/ 2014) |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| Creevy Lough                    | F+R   | 8km east                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Derrygoony Lough                | F+R   | 6km west                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Drumillard lough                | F+R   | 10km east                                 | No  | 0                          |
| Druminnick Lough                | F+R   | 6km west                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Drumlougher                     | F+R   | 12km west                                 | No  | 0                          |
| East Laragh Lough 2             | F   | 5km east                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Fane River                      | F+R   | > 10km east                               | No  | 0                          |
| Kiltybane Lough                 | F+R   | >13km east                                | No  | 0                          |
| Lackagh                         | F   | 3km east                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Lantaur                         | F   | 3km west                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Laragh Lough                    | F+R   | 4km east                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Lismagurshin or Cremartin Lough | F+R   | 1km east                                  | Yes   | 0                          |
| Lough Alina                     | F+R   | >10km east                                |   | 0                          |
| Lough Egish                     | F+R   | 1km east                                  | Yes - occasional  | 0                          |
| Lough Major**                   | F+R   | 3km west                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Lough Patrick                   | F+R   | >10km east                                | No  | 0                          |
| Lough Ross                      | F+R   | 10km east                                 | No  | 0                          |
| Lough Sillan**                  | F+R   | 3km west                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Lough Smiley (I north)          | F+R   | 6km east                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Muckno Mill Lough               | F+R   | 6km east                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Muckno Mill Lough (Tributary)   | F+R   | 6km east                                  | No  | 0                          |
| Tonyscallan Lough               | F+R (Ballintra roost site)                                      | 1km east                                  | Yes   | 0                          |
| Tooncrinkell Lough              | F+R (Ballintra roost site)                                      | 1km east                                  | Yes   | 0                          |
| Tullyvaragh Lower               | F+R   | 10km east                                 | No  | 0                          |

Notes:

1. F + R lakes are locations where Whooper Swans feed on lake and adjacent grasslands generally within 300m of the lake edge based on all observations to date. F are sites where flightlines greater than 300m have been observed to grassland areas.
2. Yes = flightline observed at least in some years. No = Regular flightlines not recorded. No = Random irregular flightlines possible only.
3. Drumgallon Bog (not detailed in Table) is a potential Hen Harrier winter roost site (not indicated above) that was surveyed which is located < 1km east. No roost site was noted.

Whooper Swan sites are mainly centred on small permanent water bodies with adjacent open improved grassland. It was observed during field surveys that these sites generally offer habitats for both feeding and roosting and therefore there is no requirement for the Whooper Swans to commute extensively between separate roosting and feeding sites, with the exception of the area around Ballintra.

Three new sites (Beagh Lough or Greaghlone, Corawaddy Lough and Corvally Lough) were confirmed as supporting Whooper Swans during WSP7. These were all lake sites and were used for foraging (including adjacent grasslands) and roosting. It is evident that occasional flightlines occurred between a cluster of lakes near Greaghlone over the course of the winter including Comertagh, Raferagh and Corawaddy as a similar sized flock (12 birds) was noted on different lakes over the course of the winter.

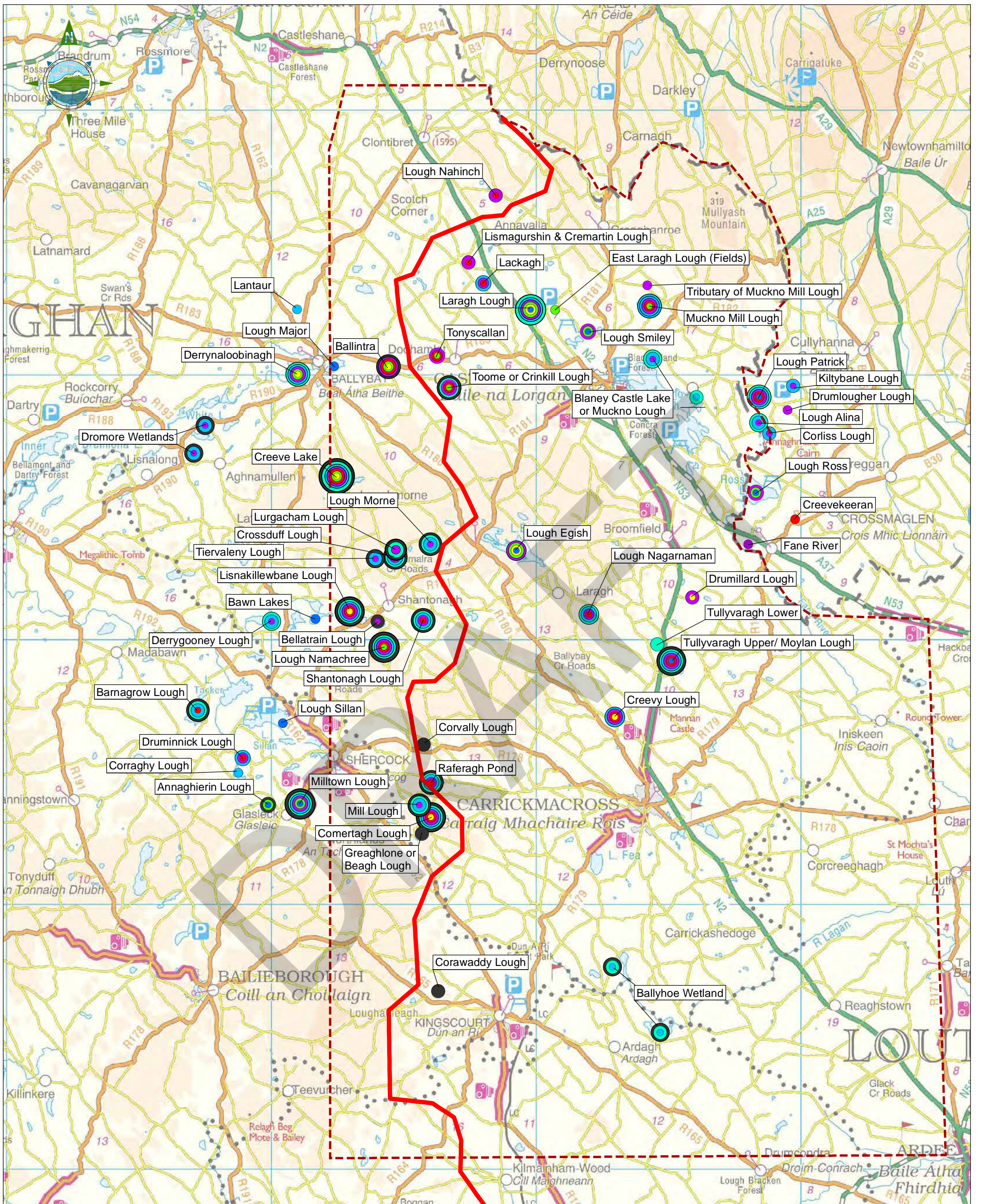
The results of the two aerial surveys completed during WSP 7 to confirm Whooper Swan numbers and locations are outlined in Table 4-3 below.

**Table 4-3: Whooper Swans recorded during the Wintering Survey Period 7 Aerial Surveys**

| Site Name                | Grid Reference | 04/03/14  | 01/04/14 |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------|----------|
| Lough Shantonagh         | H758108        | 25        | 0        |
| Lough Namachree          | H745099        | 37        | 0        |
| Ballintra                | H745203        | 25        | 0        |
| <b>TOTAL (ALL SITES)</b> |                | <b>87</b> | <b>0</b> |

Whooper Swans were recorded at 3 sites during the March Aerial Survey only as detailed in Table 4-3. No sites were noted which were not regularly surveyed in ground based surveys. Other swans species observed were confirmed as Mute Swans during follow up ground checks on the same days. No new sites were recorded during aerial surveys.





- Legend**
- Cavan Monaghan Study Area (CMSA)
  - Proposed Line Route
  - Historical Swan site
  - Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 1: 2007/2008
  - Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 2: 2008/2009
  - Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 3: 2009/2010
  - Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 4: 2010/2011
  - Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 5: 2011/2012
  - Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 6: 2012/2013
  - Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 7: 2013/2014

NOTE:  
Multi-year/ period observation dots stacked.  
Thickness of Route Line not to scale. Actual Route Corridor much narrower.

Scale @ A3: 1:130,000  
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5  
Kilometres

| Issue | Date     | Description | By   | Chkd.  |
|-------|----------|-------------|------|--------|
| B     | DEC 2014 | Issued      | G.F. | O.McA. |
| A     | JAN 2014 | Issued      | M.S. | E.C.   |

**NOTES**  
1. FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS DRAWING  
2. ALL LEVELS RELATE TO ORDNANCE SURVEY DATUM AT MALIN HEAD



Project:  
NORTH-SOUTH 400 kV  
INTERCONNECTION DEVELOPMENT

Title:  
WHOOPEL SWAN DISTRIBUTION

Prepared by: G.Fil  
Checked: O.McAlister  
Date: December 2014

Project Director: D.Grehan



6244 FIGURE 1 (CMSA) Issue: B



#### 4.1.2 Flight Lines during WSP 7

Vantage point locations, survey date, survey time period, key observations and flightlines which crossed (or likely crossed) the preferred line route are detailed in Table 4-4 below. The summary of flightlines recorded in WSP 7 and during other years of survey is indicated in Figure 2.

**Table 4-4: Vantage point locations, dates, key observations and flightline details**

| Vantage Point Location                      | Date (survey period) | Key Observation   | Flight Crossed proposed preferred line route |
|---|----------------------|---|--|
| Ballintra                                   | 25/02/2014           | 0 WS noted during survey, 3WS were present later in the day indicating flightline                                     | Likely (unconfirmed)                         |
| Ballintra                                   | 04/03/2014           | Dusk-25WS flew to Toome or Crinkell Lough (see map)   | Yes (WS)                                     |
| Ballintra                                   | 21/03/2014           | 14WS flew in to valley from south east (likely Toome or Crinkell Lough)   | Yes (WS)                                     |
| Creeve Lough                                | 13/03/2014           | 9WS walked from grass to lake, roosted on lake, no flights  | No   |
| Drumgallon/ Drumcarn/ Mullyard Bogs         | 16/11/2013           | Hen Harrier Roost survey. None noted. Ringtail Hen Harrier noted foraging over rough pasture in Crossbane Lough area. | No   |
| Drumgallon/ Drumcarn/ Mullyard Bogs         | 01/12/2013           | Hen Harrier Roost survey. None noted.   | No   |
| Laragh Lough                                | 27/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No   |
| Lough Bellatrain/ Lisnakillewbane and Bocks | 07/11/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No   |
| Lough Crossduff                             | 28/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No   |
| Lough Egish                                 | 27/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No   |
| Lough Egish                                 | 28/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No   |
| Lough Egish                                 | 14/03/2014           | 4 CA flew on to lake from west  | Yes (CA)                                     |
| Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | 11/11/2013           | 8MS, 3CA, 3BH, 280GP on lake and lake shore. No flights observed  | No   |
| Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | 26/11/2013           | 200GP circling over island. No flightlines away from lake.  | No   |
| Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | 28/11/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No   |
| Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | 30/11/2001           | Possible 10 WS feeding on grass then walking in to lake. No flightlines   | No   |
| Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | 08/12/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No   |
| Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | 28/12/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No   |
| Lough Egish/ Morne/ Lurgacham               | 03/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No   |
| Lough Greaghlone                            | 23/01/2014           | 25 WS on lake. No flightlines.  | No   |
| Lough Greaghlone                            | 24/01/2014           | WS audible on lake, 0 flights. Heavy fog. No flights observed   | No   |
| Lough Lurgacham                             | 27/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   |  |
| Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | 13/01/2014           | 14WS(3juv), 2MS (pair), 18WN, 22BH, 6MA, 11T flew south west to roost   | No   |
| Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | 23/01/2014           | 13WS, 160WN, 16TU, 20MA, 2MS (pair), 8L. No flightlines observed.   | No   |
| Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | 05/02/2014           | 16WS (2juv), 242WN, 16TU, 14MA, 3MS, 6BH, 8T. No flightlines observed.  | No   |
| Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                  | 10/02/2014           | 14WS(2juv), 2MS(pair), 4CA, 280WN, 26TU,  | No   |

| Vantage Point Location                        | Date (survey period) | Key Observation   | Flight Crossed proposed preferred line route                                  |
|---|----------------------|---|---|
|   |                      | 40MA, 44L, 28BH, 6SN. No flightlines observed.  |   |
| Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | 24/02/2014           | 16WS(2juv), 2MS(pair), 380WN, 130TU, 12T, 18MA, 6CA, 90L, 6SN. No flightlines observed. | No  |
| Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | 28/02/2014           | 16WS (2juvs), 470WN, 90TU, 70L, 6MA, 6CA, 2MS (pair), 12BH. No flightlines observed.    | No  |
| Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | 12/03/2014           | 10WS, 220WN, 59TU, 9MA, 2T, 4GN, 2GG, 2CA, 4CG, 2SU, 16L. No flightlines observed.      | No  |
| Lough Moylan (Tullyvaragh)                    | 21/03/2014           | 3WS, 2SU, 28TU, 40WN, 2GG, 4MA, 1CA, 18L. No flightlines observed.                      | No  |
| Lough Nahinch                                 | 24/02/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Lough Nahinch                                 | 05/03/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Lough Nahinch / Cashel Bog area               | 03/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Lough Namachree                               | 06/11/2013           | 15WS observed flying NW away from Namachree   | No  |
| Lough Namachree                               | 20/03/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Lough Tooncrinkell                            | 25/02/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh                               | 24/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh                               | 23/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 14/11/2013           | 2MS swans present, were present in flood to east in morning-inferred MS flightline      | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 15/11/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 18/11/2013           | 7WS on Mill Lough. No flightlines.  | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 21/11/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 27/11/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 13/12/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 26/12/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 31/12/2013           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 02/01/2014           | 7WS on Raferagh. No flightlines.  | <b>Yes</b> (change in location of similar nos. Whooper swan infer flightline) |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 06/01/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 07/03/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed. SN audible.                                | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 24/03/2014           | No WS in wider area or flightlines observed   | No  |
| Loughs Raferagh/ Comertagh/ Mill/ Greaghlonge | 27/03/2014           | 2MS + 4MA on Comertagh Lough. No WS in wider area or flightlines observed               | No  |
| Drumcam Bogs                                  | 21/11/2013           | Hen Harrier Roost survey. None noted.   | No  |

A summary description of the key observations in WSP 7 at identified relevant locations where Whooper Swan concentrate in the study area is provided below.

### **Ballintra**

This area was used in WSP 7 and a flightline to Lough Toome (or Crinkell) was confirmed. This flight line crosses the preferred line route.

### **Loughs Comertagh, Raferagh, Mill, Corawaddy**

Unrecorded flightlines were determined as likely in the Lough Comertagh, Raferagh area based on similar counts of Whooper Swan recorded on different lakes.

### **Lough Namachree**

A flightline was observed from here north which would not have crossed an route corridor option.

### **Lough Crossduff**

A flightline was confirmed between foraging Whooper Swans in the townland of Lattacrom and a roosts site on Crossduff Lough. This did not cross the preferred line route.

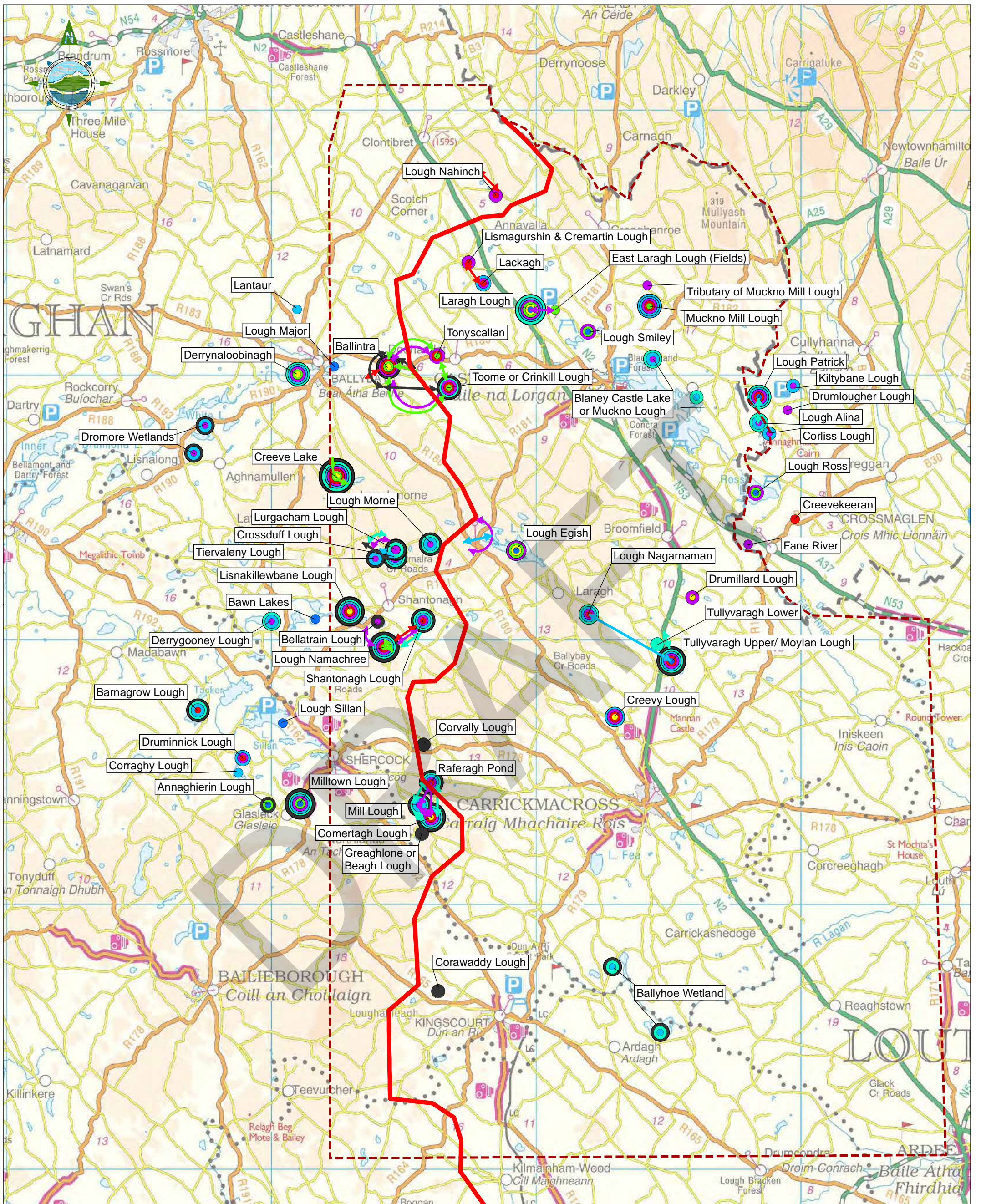
### **Summary**

In summary, flightlines across the preferred line route were recorded at the following locations all of which were highlighted in previous survey years:

1. Between Ballintra and Tooncrinkell Lough which is bisected by the preferred line route.
2. Changes in numbers indicate unobserved flightlines at Loughs Comertagh, Raferagh, Beagh/Greaglone and Corvalley. These lakes are bisected by the preferred line route

No new flightlines of significance were noted which have not been recorded in previous surveys.





**Legend**

- Cavan Monaghan Study Area (CMSA)
- Proposed Line Route
- Historical Swan site
- Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 1: 2007/2008
- Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 2: 2008/2009
- Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 3: 2009/2010
- Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 4: 2010/2011
- Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 5: 2011/2012
- Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 6: 2012/2013
- Whooper Swan sites recorded in Winter Survey Period 7: 2013/2014
- Flight Lines 2007/2008
- Flight Lines 2008/2009
- Flight Lines 2009/2010
- Flight Lines 2010/2011
- Flight Lines 2011/2012
- Flight Lines 2012/2013
- Flight Lines 2013/2014

NOTE:  
Multi-year/ period observation dots stacked.  
Thickness of Route Line not to scale. Actual Route Corridor much narrower.

Scale @ A3: 1:130,000

| Issue | Date     | Description | By   | Chkd.  |
|-------|----------|-------------|------|--------|
| B     | DEC 2014 | Issued      | G.F. | O.McA. |
| A     | JAN 2014 | Issued      | M.S. | E.C.   |

**NOTES**  
1. FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS DRAWING  
2. ALL LEVELS RELATE TO ORDNANCE SURVEY DATUM AT MALIN HEAD

Client:

Project:  
NORTH-SOUTH 400 kV  
INTERCONNECTION DEVELOPMENT

Title:  
WHOOPER SWAN DISTRIBUTION  
FLIGHT LINES

Prepared by: G.Fil  
Checked: O.McAlister  
Date: December 2014

Project Director: D.Grehan

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6244 FIGURE 2 (CMSA) Issue: B



#### 4.1.3 Summary of Key Observations made during WSP 7

During WSP 7, no site, or dispersed clusters of sites, contained internationally or nationally significant concentrations of Whooper Swan. The total counts of all sites on all dates never exceeded nationally significant levels<sup>36</sup> (maximum = 87). Dromore Wetland is considered the only nationally important site in the study area (including Derryloobinagh). This site is removed from the preferred line route and no flightlines linked to this site have been observed to date (WSP1 – WSP7).

The largest flocks of Whooper Swans identified during WSP 7 were recorded at Dromore Wetlands (41), Lough Namachree (max. 37 birds), Tullyvaragh Upper/ Moylan Lough (22 birds) and Ballintra (25 birds). All these sites are at least 4km from the preferred line route, except Ballintra (< 1km). Whooper Swans were relatively scarce and scattered outside these areas.

The key noteworthy observation as relevant to the preferred line route in WSP 7 was the use of 2 new sites near the regularly used cluster of sites at Lough Comertagh, Raferagh and Mill Lough. These consisted of Lough Beagh/ Greaghlone and a temporary flooded area close to Lough Corvalley.

At Ballintra a flight line was confirmed in WSP 7 with a flightline to Lough Toome (or Crinkell) confirmed. This flight line crosses the preferred line route.

Whooper Swans dispersed between Loughs Comertagh, Mill Beagh (Greaghlone) and Raferagh throughout the winter. In WSP 7 only Whooper Swan were also observed on Beagh (Greaghlone) Lough. Whooper Swan grazed on fields adjacent to the lake and walked into the Lake to roost. In addition it is likely that a flock which temporarily used a flood area near Corvalley Lough moved to Raferagh between December and January which would be an irregular flightline within the route corridor. Both Beagh (Greaghlone) and Corvalley Lough are new sites very close (<1km) to Loughs Comertagh, Mill Beagh (Greaghlone) and Raferagh. In summary during WSP 7 numbers varied on these cluster of lakes bisected by Route Corridor A. This indicates unconfirmed relatively irregular flight lines across the preferred line route.

Very small numbers (max = 4) of Whooper Swan were observed on Lough Morne during November, December and January. These birds did not move far and no flights were observed relevant to the preferred line route.

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<sup>36</sup> Boland *et al.*, (2010)

Whooper Swans disperse west of Lough Morne between Loughs Crossduff, Lurgacham and Tiervaleny throughout the winter period. No flightlines were recorded in WSP7.

Whooper Swans disperse between Loughs Namachree, Shantonagh, Bellatrain and Lisnakillewbane throughout the winter period. In one case a flightline was observed from the northern shore of Lough Namachree north which did not cross the preferred line route >2km away. The main concentration of Whooper Swans occurs west of the preferred line route in this area, and no flights were observed across the preferred line route despite regular surveys.

Regular dusk and dawn surveys were conducted at Lough Nahinch and environs. No significant Whooper Swan usage of this area was noted and hence no flights were noted crossing the preferred line route.

#### *4.1.4 Evaluation of sites based on survey findings to date (WSP 1 – WSP 7)*

The evaluation of Whooper Swan sites (following ecological valuation criteria in NRA 2009<sup>37</sup>) is based on the data recorded between WSP 1 – 7 inclusive (2007–2014) on site usage and flightlines.

This evaluation, in association with observed flightlines are the key data informing the impact assessment and mitigation in the EIS.

1. Ballintra and associated Lough Toome or Crinkell are considered a COUNTY important site for Whooper Swan. At Ballintra a regular flight line was confirmed in WSP 1, 2 and 3 between this feeding area and two small lakes namely Loughs Tonyscallan and Toome or Crinkill which are located approximately 1.5km and 2km east and southeast of Ballintra respectively. Whooper Swans also graze in outlier fields in this area. This area was less active in WSP 4 and no activity was noted in WSP 5 or WSP 6. This area was again used in WSP 7 and a flightline to Lough Toome (or Crinkell) was confirmed. This flight line crosses the preferred line route A.
2. The cluster of lakes including Loughs Comertagh, Mill, Beagh (Greaghlonge) and Raferagh are considered a COUNTY important site for Whooper Swan with Whooper Swan recorded regularly at, at least, one of these lakes during all years of survey. Whooper Swans disperse between these lakes throughout the winter. In WSP 7 only Whooper Swan were also observed on Beagh (Greaghlonge) Lough. In summary this is a regularly used cluster of lakes bisected by the preferred line route. This indicates unconfirmed relatively irregular flight lines are likely to occur across the preferred line route.
3. Lough Egish and Lough Morne and smaller lakes to the west are considered a COUNTY important site for Whooper Swan. Lough Morne and Egish are bisected by the preferred line route. This section of the Whooper Swan site is used very irregularly by very small numbers of

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<sup>37</sup> National Roads Authority (2009) Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes

Whooper Swan and flights are very irregular (one flight observed to date). Whooper Swans concentrate to the west of Lough Morne between Loughs Crossduff, Lurgacham and Tiervaleny throughout the winter period. This is away from the preferred line route.

4. Whooper Swans disperse between Loughs Namachree, Shantonagh, Bellatrain and Lisnakillewbane throughout the winter period. Flight lines (observed and likely unobserved) in this area do not regularly cross the preferred line route as sites utilised all occur to the west of the corridor. This was confirmed based on regular surveys of Bocks Lough (within the corridor) where no Whooper Swans were recorded to date. In addition flightline checks of observed Whooper Swans confirmed roosting on lakes where foraging was observed during the day. In one case a flightline was observed from the northern shore of Lough Namachree north which did not cross the preferred line route.
5. Regular dusk and dawn checks were conducted at Lough Nahinch and environs. No significant Whooper Swan usage was recorded in this area to date and no flights were noted crossing the preferred line route.
6. No Whooper Swan were observed on Lough Laragh, Lackagh and Cremartin Lough during WSP 6 and 7. Flightlines and more regular observations were recorded in previous winter survey periods though observed flightlines were away from the preferred line route.

#### 4.2 OTHER WINTERING BIRDS

While the focal point of the study was Whooper Swans, other wintering bird species of conservation concern, and/or species which are potentially sensitive to transmission line development were also surveyed and recorded. Table 4-5 below details peak counts of other bird species (not including Whooper Swan) recorded in WSP7. Numerous other small lakes (not detailed) occur in CMSA which are used by small numbers (generally < 2) of species, in particular Mute Swan, Cormorant, Mallard and Moorhen.

**Table 4-5: Peak counts of wintering bird species WSP 7 (excluding whooper swan)**

| Site Name  | Other Bird Species (peak count during WSP 7)  |
|--|---|
| Ballintra  | 110 Golden Plover, 200 Lapwing, 1 Grey Heron  |
| Ballyhoe Wetlands                                | 33 Mute Swan, 6 Coot, 15 Cormorant, 4 Tufted Duck, 1 Great Crested Grebe, 3 Moorhen, 1 Little Grebe   |
| Barnagrow  | 20 Cormorant, 3 Great Crested Grebe, 10 Lapwing, 4 Mute Swan  |
| Bawn Lakes                                       | 1 Mute Swan, 7 Cormorant, 5 Great Crested Grebe, 2 Goldeneye  |
| Beagh Lough/ Greaglone                           | 2 Mute Swan, 1 Cormorant, 1 Moorhen   |
| Bellatrain Lough                                 | 14 Mute Swan, 4 mallard, 2 Great Crested Grebe  |
| Cardoo Lough                                     | 6 Mute Swan, 2 Great Crested Grebe, 2 Cormorant   |
| Comertagh Lough                                  | 9 Mute Swan, 2 Great Crested Grebe, 1 Tufted Duck, 4 mallard  |
| Creeve Lough                                     | 19 Tufted Duck, 5 Mute Swan, 2 Great Crested Grebe, 1 Grey Heron, 1 Cormorant   |
| Creevy   | 2 Coot, 6 Mute Swan, 2 Tufted Duck  |
| Derrynaloobinagh (Eastern End Dromore Wetlands)) | <u>57 Mute Swan</u> , 150 Golden Plover, 50 Mallard, <u>35 Teal</u> , 20 Moorhen, <u>23 Curlew</u> , 120 Lapwing, 40 Wigeon, 1 Grey Heron, 2 Tufted Duck, 2 Great Crested Grebe, 1 Black Swan*, <u>26 Dunlin</u> , 1 Snipe, 1 Coot, |
| Dromore Wetland (Partial Checks)                 | 6 Mute Swan, 30 Tufted Duck, 3 Cormorant, 2 grey Heron, 6 Mallard, 2 Great Crested Grebe, 46 Lapwing, Tufted duck   |
| Drumharriff Lough                                | 2 Coot, 4 Little Grebe,   |
| Drumillard Lough                                 | 24 Tufted Duck, 5 Mallard, 3 Little Grebe, 10 Goldeneye, 15 Lapwing, 1 Great Crested Grebe  |
| Lismagurshin or Cremartin Lough                  | 2 Great Crested Grebe, 2 Cormorant, 2 Mallard   |
| Lisnakillewbane Lough                            | 18 Mute Swan, 2 Great Crested Grebe, 2 Cormorant, 4 Mallard, 40 Duck (unid)   |
| Lough Egish                                      | 11 Mute Swan, 6 Cormorant, 280 Golden Plover, 4 Great Crested Grebe, 26 Tufted Duck, 60 Lapwing, 1 Grey Heron, 1 Goldeneye  |
| Lough Major                                      | 4 Mute Swan, 3 Cormorant, 52 Wigeon, 7 Great Crested Grebe, 25 Mallard, 60 Lapwing, 2 Grey Heron, 3 Coot  |
| Lough Morne                                      | <u>9 Little Grebe</u> , 8 Mute Swan, <u>3 Gadwall</u> , 1 Cormorant, 1 Great Crested Grebe, 12 Mallard, 30 Tufted Duck, 6 Teal  |
| Lough Nagarnaman                                 | 10 Tufted Duck  |
| Lough Namachree                                  | 11 Mute Swan, 1 Greylag Goose, 1 Cormorant, 2 Great Crested Grebe, 17 Wigeon, 1 Black Swan *, 2 Grey Heron  |
| Lough Patrick                                    | 34 Mallard, 4 Great Crested Grebe   |
| Lough Ross                                       | 150 Wigeon, 112 Lapwing, 4 Cormorant, 4 Great Crested Grebe, 6 Mallard  |
| Lough Sillan                                     | 11 Great Crested Grebe, 2 Mute Swan, 1 Grey Heron   |
| Mill Lough                                       | 4 Mute Swan   |
| Milltown Lough                                   | 5 Mute Swan, 1 Great Crested Grebe  |
| Muckno Mill Lough                                | 7 Mute Swan, 9 Cormorant, 2 Great Crested Grebe   |
| Muff Lough                                       | 4 Little Grebe, 2 mute Swan, 1 grey Heron   |
| Raferagh   | 2 Mute Swan, 4 Teal, 1 Moorhen  |
| Shantonagh Lake                                  | 7 Mute Swan, 4 Great Crested Grebe  |
| Tullyvaragh Lough                                | <u>380 Wigeon</u> , <u>130 Tufted Duck</u> , 90 Lapwing, 18 Mallard, 11 Teal, 2 Mute Swan, 6 Snipe, 6 Cormorant, 2 Shelduck, 4 Goldeneye, 4 Canada Goose, 240 Golden Plover,  |

Note:

1. No nationally significant counts of any species were noted. Species counts underlined are noteworthy and considered to be of County importance
2. \* = Non Native Species possible escapee from collection

The Key sites for other wintering bird species in the study area are;

Dromore Wetlands including the eastern edge at Derryloobinagh is the most important area. This extensive linear wetland incorporates the Dromore River and associated wetlands and lakes. The focus of the survey was at the eastern end closest to Ballybay (Derryloobinagh) which was regularly counted (unlike the rest). This area supports County Important concentrations of waders and wildfowl and in particular Mute Swan, Curlew (not recorded elsewhere), Teal, Wigeon, and Dunlin (passage flock recorded on one occasion – not recorded elsewhere). Overall it is considered nationally Important when Whooper Swan are included in this evaluation.

Tullyvaragh Lough is the second most important site identified in the study area for wintering wildfowl. This turlough supports high numbers of Wigeon likely to be of County Importance. It also supports locally important concentrations of Golden Plover, Tufted Duck and Lapwing.

Other Sites: Remaining sites are much less important though some such as Loughs Egish, Morne, Creeve and Barnagrow are regularly used at least at specific times of the year for locally important concentrations of wintering bird species detailed.

Mute Swan and Cormorant flightlines were observed irregularly between WSP 1 and WSP 7 in the Lough Egish area and it is likely that relatively regular movements of these species occur across the preferred line route at this location. Cormorant, in particular, regularly disperse between lake sites throughout the CMSA and lake clusters / river valleys are where flights are concentrated. Locations where Cormorant concentrate e.g. Lough Blaney and Dromore wetlands are removed from the preferred line route except in the Lough Egish/ Morne area. Very low numbers of these species were recorded outside these areas.

Two sites in the vicinity of the route corridor were identified as possible Hen Harrier roosts namely Raferagh and Drumgallon Bog. No Hen Harrier were observed relative to the route corridors. A Ringtail (immature male) Hen harrier was observed foraging over rough pasture on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 close to the study area near Crossbane Lough.

## 5 CONCLUSION

### 5.1 WHOOPER SWAN

This report highlights a number of key sensitive locations which require consideration of potential impacts and mitigation in the EIS.

The areas where Whooper Swan flightlines have been observed as crossing the preferred line route and hence where a collision risk is likely are summarised as follows;

- Ballintra/Tonyscallon/Toome or Crinkill Lough;
- west of Lough Egish/ eastern Lough Morne and
- Raferagh Pond/Mill Lough/Comeragh Lough.

### 5.2 OTHER WINTERING BIRDS

Other wintering bird records of note and relevant locations are detailed in this report. Flightlines of other collision prone bird species such as Mute Swan were associated with lake sites, and river valleys. In particular flightlines in the Lough Egish area are relevant to the preferred line route.

## Glossary

- CMSA Cavan Monaghan Study Area
- EIA Environmental Impact Assessment
- EIS Environmental Impact Statement
- EU European Union
- FRREC Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative
- IWSSG Irish Whooper Swan Study Group
- I-Webs Irish Wetland Bird Survey
- kV Kilovolts
- MBEC Mackenzie Bradshaw Environmental Consulting
- MSA Meath Study Area
- NPWS National Parks and Wildlife Service
- OHL Over Head Line
- SPA Special Protection Area
- TRLT Teton Regional Land Trust
- WSP Winter Survey Period

# APPENDIX 1

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## APPENDIX 2

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**WSP 7: 2013 – 2014 Whooper Swan Survey Records**

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