

the
ecology
partnership

Bird Survey

Land at Bilsham Road

Yapton

West Sussex

The Ecology Partnership, Thorncroft Manor, Thorncroft Drive, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8J8

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	3
BACKGROUND.....	3
SITE CONTEXT AND STATUS	3
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.....	4
2.0 METHODOLOGY.....	5
3.0 RESULTS	7
<i>ADDITIONAL SPECIES.....</i>	<i>7</i>
4.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9
5.0 CONCLUSIONS.....	11
6.0 REFERENCES	12
APPENDIX 1: LOCATION OF BIRD SIGHTINGS.....	13

LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing and whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated only dominant species maybe recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Gleeson Strategic Land to undertake a breeding bird survey at land at Bilsham Road, Yapton.
- 1.2 This report presents the findings of the surveys on site, which aim specifically to assess the sites potential to support breeding birds. Potential mitigation measures and recommendations for the site will be included within this report.
- 1.3 Section 2 of this report sets out the methodology of The Ecology Partnership's survey. In Section 3 the results of the desk and field survey are presented. The discussion and implications for development are found in Section 4. Finally, conclusions are provided in Section 5.

Site Context and Status

- 1.4 The site is situated along the southern boundary of the West Sussex village of Yapton. The site is set within a semi-rural landscape surrounded by agricultural land as well as commuter towns and villages. The immediate surroundings consist of residential dwellings to the north and east, and arable fields with hedgerows to the south and west. The site is currently dominated by arable land, which at the time of survey, was covered by bare ground.



Figure 1: Approximate location of the red line boundary

Description of the Proposed Development

- 1.5 The exact details of any proposed development are yet to be finalised. Any proposed master plan for the site will be informed by a number of surveys of which ecology is one.

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 Three surveys were conducted on the 29th April, 16th June and 15th July 2016. The surveys were conducted using standard Common Birds Census (CBC) methodology as developed by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) (Gilbert et al, 1998). This method uses registration mapping which, with appropriate survey input, can allow the numbers of breeding territories and distribution of territories to be determined for each species.
- 2.2 The resultant species maps will show the location of each territory of each species (See Appendix 3). This allows the number of territories of all species within individual parts of the survey area to be known and, thus, their relative importance to be assessed.
- 2.3 The more survey visits that are made to a survey area, the more accurate the assessment can be. There are two main reasons why a reasonable number of visits should be undertaken through the breeding season. Seasonal timings of breeding activity vary between species for example many resident species establish territories as early as March while some migrant species do not even arrive in this country to start breeding until May. Only a proportion of individuals of each species will be detected on each visit and some, particularly secretive or low-density species, can be quite elusive and require several visits to detect.
- 2.4 The site was divided into six sections as shown below in figure 2 for ease of analysis.
- 2.5 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no single investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The site was visited over the period of three site visits, as such seasonal variations cannot be fully observed and potentially only a selection of all species that potentially occur within the site have been recorded. Therefore, the survey provides a general assessment of potential nature conservation value of the site and does not include a definitive species list.



Figure 2: Site zones used in the analysis of bird territories. Zone 3a. was added to the development's proposal after the Ecology Partnership was initially instructed to undertake the surveys.

3.0 Results

3.1 The survey recorded a total of 21 bird species that were considered to breed or hold territory in habitats within or fringing the site.

3.2 Table 2 shows the numbers of territories of each species considered to be breeding within each of the 6 sub-sections of the survey area. It must be noted that territories are allotted to a sub-section based on where the nest is either known or is considered likely to be. They commonly extend into adjacent areas.

Table 2: Numbers of territories of each species considered to breed in the survey zones (Z) at Bilsham Road, Yapton, during the 2016 breeding bird survey.

Species	Scientific name	Z 1	Z 2	Z 3	Z 3a	Z 4	Z 5	Total
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>			1		2		3
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	1				2	1	10
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>					1		1
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>				2	2	1	3
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>					1	1	2
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>		1		4	2		3
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	3	2	6	7	2		13
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>					1	1	2
Wood pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	1	1		1		1	3
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			1	3	1		2

Additional species

3.3 Details of an additional five bird species recorded are given in Table 3. These birds were considered to be using the site to pass through to further habitats and not used for breeding. Many are seen feeding within the arable fields or adjacent treelines. Some of

the common species may breed in adjacent habitats however have been discounted due to the lack of repeated sightings on survey visits.

- 3.4 Species of gull were seen flying high overhead during the survey. However the height was too great for a proper identification. No gulls were seen to land or feed on site or in adjacent habitats.

Table 3: Additional species recorded in the survey area at Bilsham Road, Yapton in the 2016 breeding season.

Species		Details
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Seen in in zone 3 flying south within the arable field.
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Individuals were seen feeding sporadically across the arable fields.
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Seen flying across the site and landing within the arable fields for feeding.
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Swallows were seen foraging for insects above the arable fields.
Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	One long-tailed tit was identified flying along the north west boundary of the site.
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Several skylarks were heard calling in the surrounding fields to the south and west of the red-line boundary.

4.0 Discussion and Recommendations

Assessment of bird community

4.1 The aspects of the breeding community which have been considered in this assessment include:

- Rarity and species of conservation importance,
- Diversity (number of species present), and
- Size of populations,

Rarity and species of conservation importance

4.2 Species considered to be of conservation importance are those included in Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive (e.g. Birdlife International 2004), Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA), the recently revised Birds of Conservation Concern (BOCC) Red list (Eaton M.A et al (2009) and species included in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Annex 1 species

4.3 None of the recorded species are included in Annex 1 of the EU Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

Schedule 1 species

4.5 None of the species recorded during the survey is included in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Birds of Conservation Concern Red List species

4.6 Three of the species recorded during the survey are included in the BOCC Red list (Eaton et al, 2009). BOCC Red List species are those whose UK breeding population or breeding

range has contracted by 50% or more in the preceding 25 years, or in the case, over the period since BOCC assessment began in 1969: 'longer term'.

- 4.7 The species present on site which are considered under this category include the starling, song thrush and house sparrow. Song thrush and house sparrows had territories within the survey area.
- 4.8 A further three species are included in the BOCC Amber List which were swift, common gull and dunnoek.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority list

- 4.9 UK BAP priority species were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). All three of the BOCC Red List species are also UK BAP priority bird species.

Diversity

- 4.10 A total of 21 species were recorded across both survey visits, of which approximately half are considered to be breeding on site, within the hedgerow and scrub habitats. The diversity of birds found on-site was not considered to be particularly high with largely common bird species identified. This reflects the location of the site, in close proximity to main roads and residential housing estates.

Size of populations

- 4.11 Most breeding species occurred in low densities along the hedgerows within zones 3, 4 and 5. There were excellent feeding habitats identified within the dense areas of hedgerow and scrub.
- 4.12 The abundance of species is undoubtedly higher than what was recorded, in particular those of common garden species, which commonly nest within structures and trees and are often easily disturbed by human interaction. Estimates were based on counts of

apparently territorial pairs with no visible nests or young present at the time of the surveys.

4.13 The site comprises a fairly uniform habitat of arable fields with hedgerows and scrub bordering the site. The edge habitats were identified as supporting a wide range of common bird species and some farmland specialists. As such it is recommended that the master plan be devised to ensure that the boundary habitat be retained and enhanced.

4.14 The UK breeding season for most bird species takes place between March and September. It is therefore recommended that any works affecting the suitable bird habitat on site (including fields and hedgerows) be carried out outside of this period. If this is not possible, it is further recommended that areas suitable vegetation and ground be checked for active nests no more than 48 hours prior to clearance. Should active nests be discovered, any works in the vicinity of the nest must cease until the birds have fledged the nest.

4.16 Bird boxes may be hung on suitable retained trees to increase the number of breeding opportunities throughout the site. Recommended boxes include:

- Schwegler 1N Deep Nest Box – give added nest protection from predators
- Schwegler 1B Bird Box – general purpose bird box, suitable for many species.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The site comprises mainly of arable land with hedgerows and scrub bordering the site. The edge habitats were identified as supporting a range of common bird species and as such it is recommended that the master plan be devised to ensure that the boundary treelines, hedgerows and scrub be retained and enhanced.

5.2 The UK breeding season for most bird species takes place between March and September. It is therefore recommended that any works affecting the suitable bird habitat on site

(including buildings and areas of shingle) be carried out outside of this period or under ecological watching brief, as detailed within this report.

- 5.3 It is further recommended that areas of suitable habitat within the site, particularly on the boundaries of the site be retained and enhanced, where possible. New habitats created as part of the master plan, including areas of wildflower areas, SUDs and new planted hedgerows, would result in new opportunities for a range of bird species. The proposals therefore could provide a net increase in biodiversity interest.

6.0 References

CIRIA C567 (2005) *Working with wildlife – site guide*. CIRIA, London.

BirdLife International (2004) *Birds in Europe: Population estimates, trends and conservation status*. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International. (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 12).

Eaton M.A et al (2009) *Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel islands and Isle of Man*. British Birds 102: 296-341

Gilbert, G., D.W. Gibbons and J. Evans (1998) *Bird Monitoring Methods*. RSPB.

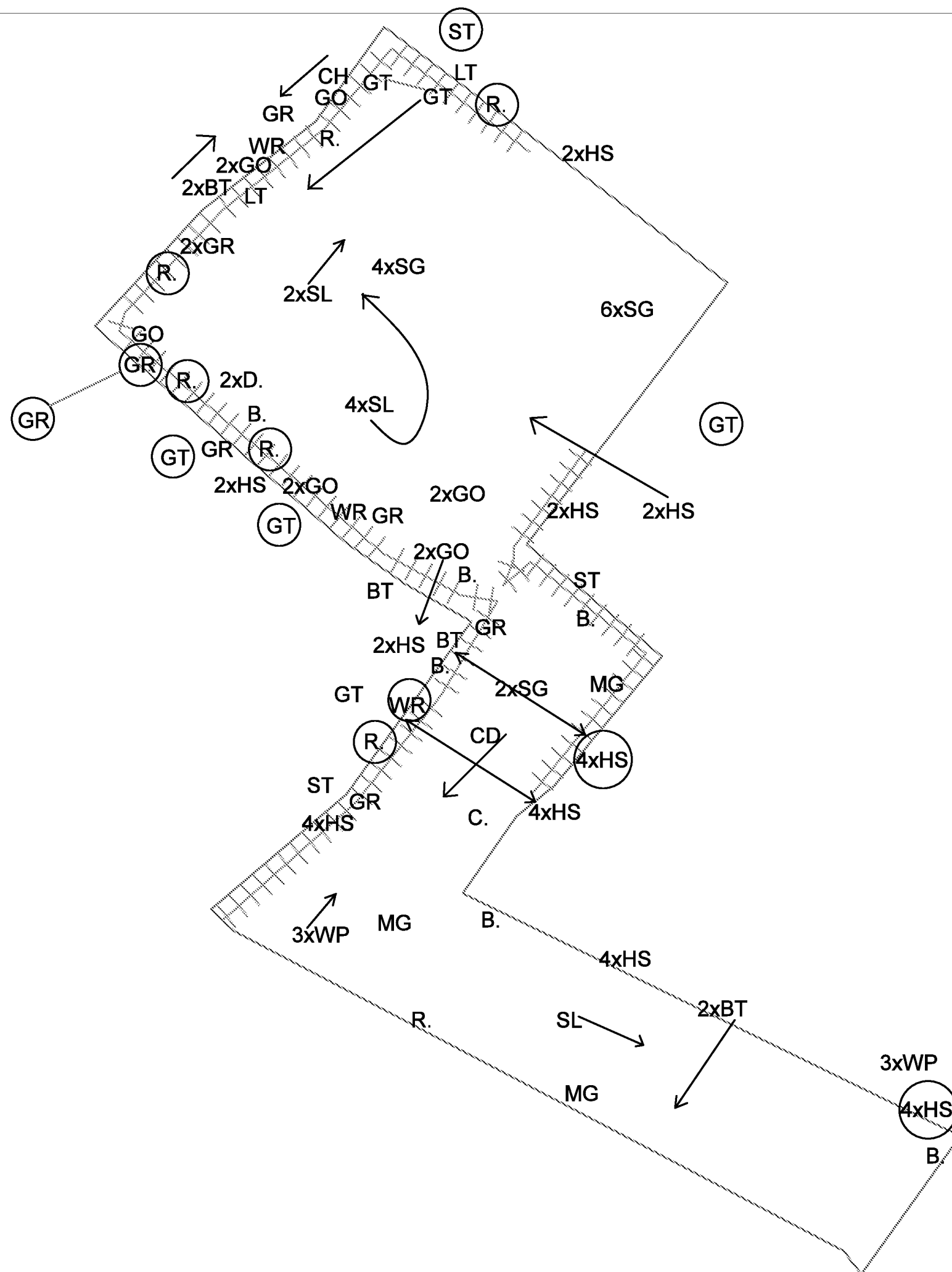
UK BAP Priority Bird Species (2009) <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5163>

Internet resources:

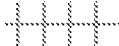
Google Maps: www.maps.google.co.uk

Magic Interactive Map: www.magic.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Location of Bird Sightings



Notes

-  Identified by song
-  Direction of flight
-  Calling between two birds
-  Hedgerow
-  Survey boundary

Site: Bilsham Road, Yapton

Client: Gleeson

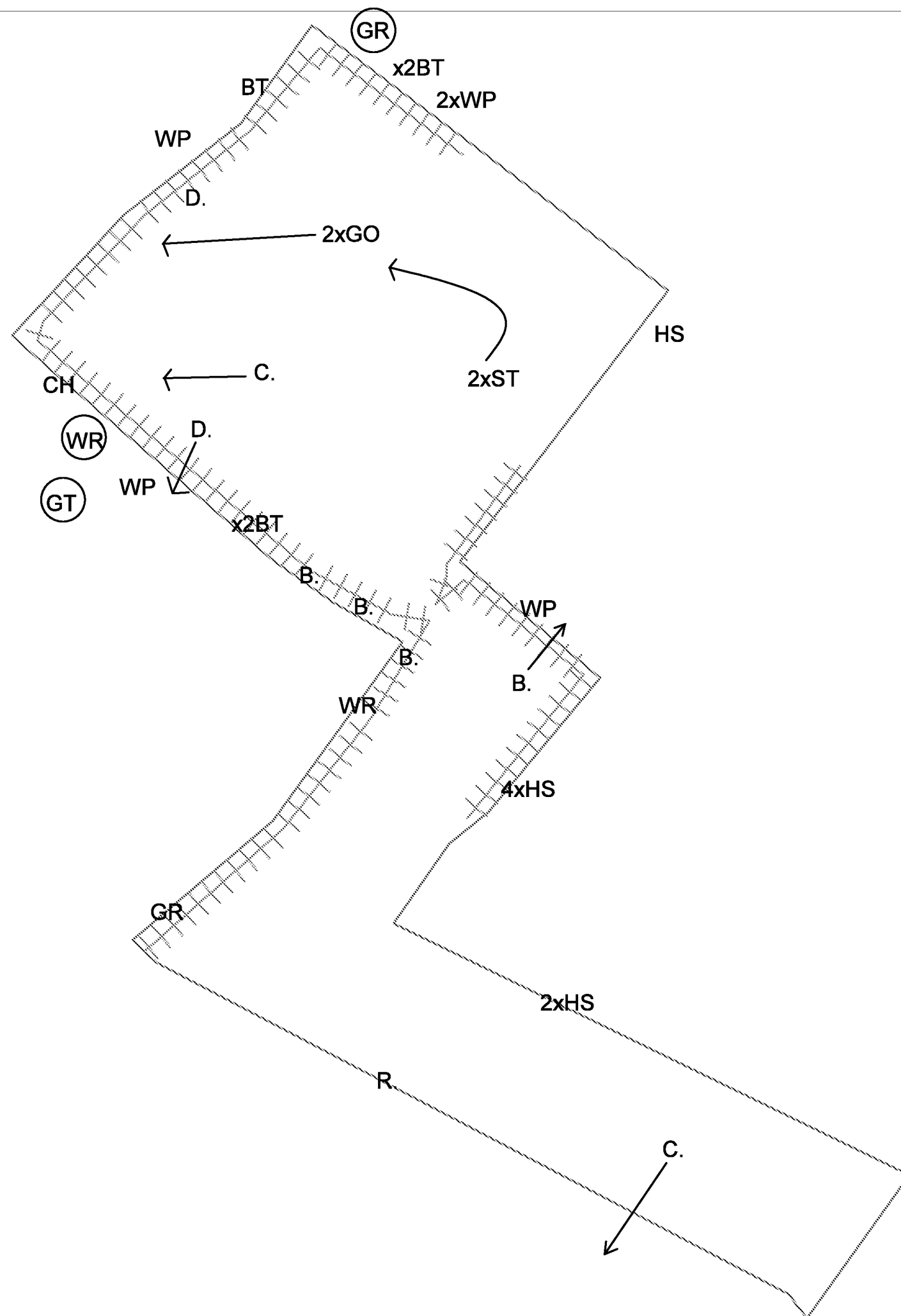
Drawing: EB

Survey Date: 29/04/2016

Drawing Title: Bird Survey Results 1

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partnership

The Ecology Partnership
Dorset House, Kingston Road, Leatherhead,
Surrey, KT22 7PL
01372 824205
www.ecologypartnership.com



Notes

- Identified by song
- ➔ Direction of flight
- ++++ Hedgerow
- Survey boundary

Site: Bilsham Road, Yapton

Client: Gleeson

Drawing: EB

Survey Date: 16/06/2016

Drawing Title: Bird Survey Results 2

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The Ecology Partnership
Dorset House, Kingston Road, Leatherhead,
Surrey, KT22 7PL
01372 824205
www.ecologypartnership.com

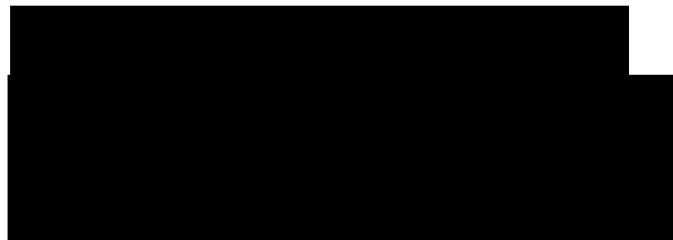
The Ecology Partnership Ltd

Thorncroft Manor

Thorncroft Drive

Surrey

KT22 8JB



Approved by: Alexia Tamblyn MA (Oxon) MSc CEnv MCIEEM FRGS,

Managing Director

Date: 19/07/2016

Reissued 05/12/2017