

East Coast 400kV Overhead Line Upgrade
Environmental Impact Assessment Report
Volume 4 | Appendix 7.4

Bird Consultation Results

January 2021



APPENDIX 7.4 – BIRD CONSULTATION RESULTS

1.1.1 This Appendix presents the summarised findings from the ornithological consultation exercise undertaken to inform the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) for the proposed East Coast 400 kV Overhead Line Upgrade ('the Proposed Development').

Information Requested

1.1.2 To help inform the ornithological element of the EclA a consultation exercise was undertaken to request recent historical records of protected and notable species of conservation concern (i.e. target species) from the past 10 years (i.e. 2010-2019 inclusive) within 2 km of the OHL Route. Target species were those which fall into at least one of the following categories:

- Birds listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive¹;
- Birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)²;
- Birds that are qualifying features of European designated sites of nature conservation importance for birds (i.e. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) in proximity or potentially connected to land associated with the OHL Route; and
- Red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) (Eaton et al., 2015)³.

1.1.3 The following ornithological interest groups and land management organisations were consulted for any relevant data they may hold:

- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RPSB) Conservation Data Management Unit;
- North East Scotland Raptor Study Group (NESRSG);
- Tayside and Fife Raptor Study Group (T&FRSG);
- Central Scotland Raptor Study Group (CSRSG); and
- Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS: for areas of land under their management in proximity to the OHL Route).

1.1.4 Due to the extensive area for which records were sought and the extremely large volume of data which was received, the data was refined such that only records of EU Annex I and Schedule 1 raptors (and capercaillie, where relevant), were considered up to 2 km from the OHL Route. Records received for all other target species were filtered down to those occurring within 1 km of the OHL Route. This refinement of consultation records is broadly consistent with the approach taken for the Previous ES (SSE, 2013)⁴.

1.1.5 **Table 7.4.1** provides summary details of the target species for which records were received within the 1 km and 2 km search buffers, the distribution of which are presented in **Figure 7.4.1** (Sheets 1-10). EU Annex I and Schedule 1-listed species for which records within 2 km of the OHL Route were considered are marked with an asterisk (*). Due to the sensitive nature of EU Annex I and Schedule 1-listed species' breeding locations (particularly raptors), nest site records have been restricted to

¹ EU Birds Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009L0147>.

² Schedule 1-listed species of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/1>.

³ Eaton MA, Aebischer NJ, Brown AF, Hearn RD, Lock L, Musgrove AJ, Noble DG, Stroud DA and Gregory RD (2015). Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *British Birds* 108, 708–746.

⁴ SSE (2017). East Coast 400kV Reinforcement Project Environmental Statement. April 2013.

Appendix 7.5: Confidential Bird Records, the distribution of which is limited to the Applicant's project team, NatureScot, RSPB and the Energy Consents Unit (ECU).

Table 7.4.1: Summary of Target Species Records Received in Proximity to the OHL Route

Species	Conservation Status			Summary of Records Received
	EU Annex I	WCA Schedule 1	Red-list BoCC	
Barn owl* <i>Tyto alba</i>		ü		Twenty-four records associated with Dollar, Loch of Kinnordy, near Fettercairn, Blairgowrie, Banchory (2010-2012), including breeding sites near Dollar, Loch of Kinnordy and Banchory.
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>			ü	Four records of singing/calling birds near Dunecht and Edzell (2013 and 2014).
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>			ü	291 records of wintering and breeding/territorial birds with concentrations around Dunecht/Kintore, Banchory, Fettercairn/Edzell and Crook of Devon (2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015).
Goshawk* <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		ü		Sixteen records, including observational records of individual birds associated with Loch of Kinnordy, Edzell, Fettercairn, Fetteresso Forest, Banchory, and Dunecht/Kintore (2010-2015) and seven known breeding sites near Banchory (2), Feteresso Forest (3), Fettercairn (1) and Kinross/Loch Leven (1).
Grey partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>			ü	A single observational record of a single bird near Dunecht (2012).
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinereal</i>			ü	A single observational record of a single bird near Alyth (2017).
Greylag goose <i>Anser anser</i>				A single observational record of a flock of 300 birds near Alyth (2014).
Hen harrier* <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	ü	ü		Ten observational records of individual birds associated with Loch of Kinnordy (2010-2012).
Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>		ü		A single observational record of an individual bird near Fetteresso Forest (2014).

Species	Conservation Status			Summary of Records Received
	EU Annex I	WCA Schedule 1	Red-list BoCC	
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>			ü	303 records of wintering and breeding/territorial birds with concentrations around Banchory, Edzell/Kirriemuir and Crook of Devon (2012, 2013 and 2014).
Marsh harrier* <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	ü	ü		295 records associated with Loch of Kinnordy (2010-2019), including two regularly held breeding territories.
Merlin* <i>Falco columbarius</i>	ü	ü		Three observational records of individual birds associated with Loch of Kinnordy (2010-2012).
Mistle thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			ü	A single observational record of a flock of 15 birds near Edzell (2014).
Osprey* <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	ü	ü		Over 250 observational records associated with Loch of Kinnordy (2010-2019), including two regular breeding pairs as well as seven other known breeding sites near Bridge of Earn (1), Coupar Angus (2), Alyth (1) and Kirriemuir (3).
Peregrine* <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	ü	ü		Fourteen records, including 12 observational records of individual birds associated with Loch of Kinnordy (2010-2012) and two known breeding sites; one near Yetts o Muckart and the other near Milnathort.
Pink-footed goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>				A single observational record of a flock of 200 birds near Alyth (2014).
Red kite* <i>Milvus milvus</i>	ü	ü		Over 400 records distributed along the OHL Route (2010 - 2019), including known breeding sites near Dunecht (5), Banchory (2), Fettercairn (3), Edzell (7) and Kirriemuir (7).
Short-eared owl* <i>Asio flammeus</i>	ü			Five observational records of up to 12 birds associated with Loch of Kinnordy (2011-2012).

Species	Conservation Status			Summary of Records Received
	EU Annex I	WCA Schedule 1	Red-list BoCC	
Spotted flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>			ü	A single observational record of a single bird near Edzell (2014).
Tree pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>			ü	Three records of singing birds near Dunecht (2011, 2012 and 2017).
White-tailed eagle* <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	ü	ü		Five observational records of individual birds associated with Loch of Kinnordy (2010-2012).
Whooper swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	ü	ü		A single record of seven birds near Alyth (2014).