

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Survey of Wintering Birds along the Military Road 2010

Introduction

A survey of the breeding birds along the A3055 (Military Road) between Compton and Chale had been undertaken by Mr Luke Gaskin. This work has been co-ordinated the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, with funding from the IW AONB Partnership, to inform management decisions and land advice being given to landowners a part of their prescriptions under agri-environment schemes.

Methodology

The aims of the survey are to ascertain the wintering bird species and their abundance along the land adjacent to the Military Road along the south-west coast of the Isle of Wight. The survey recorded 49 species, twenty of which were considered as important target species for the habitats concerned.

Target Species

Barn owl	Bullfinch	Chaffinch	Curlew	Dunnock
Fieldfare	Golden plover	Goldfinch	Greenfinch	Kestrel
Grey Partridge	Lapwing	Linnet	Meadow Pipit	Peregrine
Redwing	Reed bunting	Short-eared owl		Skylark
Yellowhammer				

The land was surveyed between December 2009 and March 2010 eight times ie two visits per month. The land was split into five sections along the lines of the previous breeding bird survey.

The surveyor mapped individual or groups of birds and noted land use in each of the land parcels where these birds were recorded.

Results

Of the target species barn owl, reed bunting and short-eared owl were not recorded, although a short-eared owl was recorded in the survey area in April 2010.

A total of 2795 records of individual birds were made and the most recorded species were :

Starling	825
Meadow pipit	481
Blackbird	175
Skylark	161
Fieldfare	144

Land use was split into four main categories and these habitats are recorded below with their importance for the key specie listed above

Table 1 : Use of farmed land by wintering birds including key species

Land Use	No birds observed	No target birds	Key target species
Arable	185	136	Golden plover, lapwing,
Pasture	1587	514	Fieldfare, Meadow pipit, skylark, curlew, grey partridge
Fallow	456	274	Meadow pipit, goldfinch
Scrub	567	165	Bullfinch, chaffinch, dunnock, greenfinch, linnet, yellowhammer

Further observations :

Golden plover (100 %) and lapwing (66%) showed strong preference for autumn sown crops to feed and shelter on.

A number of wildfowl and waders use the Military Road to feed and shelter including Brent goose, curlew, lapwing, little egret, mallard, Mediterranean gull, oystercatcher, and snipe.

Notable records include raven, red kite and peregrine falcon.

Conclusions

- Land bordering the Military Road continues to provide important wintering habitat for a number of species experiencing national population declines
- Twenty target species were chosen as being particularly important in this habitat.
- Pasture and scrub were the most important habitats as 77 % of records were made here. Arable and fallow remain important however for some species.
- It is recommended that this survey is repeated at regular intervals to monitor the fluctuations in wintering bird numbers on this dynamic farmland habitat.