

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS
FOR ENGLAND



ECOLOGYSOLUTIONS

Part of the ES Group

**'THE KINGSFIELDS'
– LAND TO THE WEST OF
CAMBOURNE, CAMBRIDGE**

**Wintering Birds
Survey Report**

November 2021
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background & Proposals

- 1.1.1. Ecology Solutions was commissioned in October 2020 by the Church Commissioners for England to undertake an ecological assessment of the site (see Plan ECO1).
- 1.1.2. Further to the findings of the ecological assessment, Ecology Solutions was further instructed to complete a series of wintering bird surveys at the site.
- 1.1.3. The proposals for the site are expected to comprise a residential-led mixed use development, with associated infrastructure, amenity areas and landscape planting.

1.2. Site Characteristics

- 1.2.1. The site is situated to the north and south of Cambridge Road (A428), west of the city of Cambridge. It comprises arable land which dominates, together with limited areas of woodland, hedgerows, treelines, semi-improved grassland, ditches and ponds. The complex of North East Farm and Pembroke Farm is central to the site.
- 1.2.2. The northern part of the site is bordered by the B1040 to the west, and the A1198 along the northeastern and eastern boundary. The southern section is bordered by Bridleway 74/1, and the village of Eltisley to the southwest. Arable land surrounds the site, whilst Cambridge Road (A428) dissects the site in an east-west direction. Further to the north lies the large village of Papworth Everard, with the village of Yelling to the northwest, whilst the village of Caxton and new settlement of Cambourne lie to the southeast and east respectively.

2. LEGISLATION AND ECOLOGY

2.1. Legislation

2.1.1. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird intentionally;
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- Take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

2.1.2. For certain bird species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on the Schedule while it is nesting, or is at (or near) a nest with eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

2.1.3. Certain bird species are listed as Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity under Section 41 (England) of the NERC Act 2006.

2.1.4. The NERC Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to:

...take such steps as appear... to be reasonably practicable to further the conservation of the living organisms and types of habitat included in any published under this section, or...promote the taking by other of such steps.

2.2. Ecology

2.2.1. There are approximately 260 bird species in Britain. Many of them are considered to be in decline due to a variety of factors including habitat loss and disturbance.

2.2.2. As a consequence of the decline in bird species, the Red and Amber Lists of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC)¹ have been devised by a group of organisations including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). These lists give an indication of the status of the UK breeding bird population, and the species that are on this list have suffered declines in their breeding populations.

¹ Red List species are those that are globally threatened, whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years (i.e. by more than 50% in 25 years), or which have declined historically and not recovered. Amber List species are those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years (by more than 25% but less than 50% in 25 years), those whose population has declined historically but recovered recently, rare species (fewer than 300 breeding pairs or 900 individuals), those with internationally important populations in the UK, those with localised populations, and those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- 3.1. The wintering bird surveys were based on the Common Bird Census (CBC) technique. The CBC involves walking a transect route through the area being studied and recording and plotting all bird species observed or heard and their behaviour. Given the size of the site it was split into northern and southern transects.
- 3.2. The transect routes are chosen so that the entire area is covered and all features likely to support wintering birds are surveyed. Directions were varied between visits so that there was no tendency to visit a particular part of the site later or earlier in the day.
- 3.3. The surveys were carried out in the earlier mornings from sunrise and lasted for approximately three hours. Three visits were carried out, two in February and one in early March 2021.
- 3.4. A background data search was also undertaken, with records obtained from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC).

4. SURVEY RESULTS

4.1. Field Surveys

- 4.1.1. Wintering bird surveys were conducted in February and March 2021. The prevailing weather conditions and the timings of these surveys are shown below in Table 4.1.

Date	Time	Cloud (%)	Precipitation	Temp (°C)	Wind
04.02.21	07:30-11:30	100	Dry	2 - 6	Light breeze
18.02.21	07:00-10:30	70	Light rain	8 - 9	Strong breeze
02.03.21	06:45-10:15	100	Dry	4	Light breeze

Table 4.1. Wintering bird survey conditions and timings.

- 4.1.2. The results of the survey work for the southern transect are illustrated on Plans ECO3a to ECO3c, while the northern transect is shown on Plans ECO3d to ECO3f.
- 4.1.3. The full lists of species recorded in the southern and northern transects are included at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.
- 4.1.4. Fifty bird species were observed on site, or flying over site, during the southern transect of the wintering bird survey. Ten Priority Species (i.e. listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006) were recorded, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- 4.1.5. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] were recorded and are on the Red List.
- 4.1.6. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] are on the Amber List.
- 4.1.7. [REDACTED] are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, but this relates to breeding rather than wintering status, when both birds are very common in the countryside. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] are also listed on Schedule 1.
- 4.1.8. Fifty-five species were observed on or flying over the site during the northern transect. Priority and notable species recorded were [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The Red List and Priority Species [REDACTED]

- 4.2.9. The following species have the same designations but were not recorded within the 1km grid squares on-site, Bullfinch, Corn Bunting, Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*, Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*, Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* and Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*. Further details are provided below.
- 4.2.10. The closest record of Bullfinch is from 2013 [REDACTED]. The most recent record is from 2016 in a [REDACTED].
- 4.2.11. The closest and most recent record of Corn Bunting is from 2015 located approximately [REDACTED].
- 4.2.12. A single record of Cuckoo was returned as [REDACTED] in 2013.
- 4.2.13. The most recent Lapwing record is from 2013 within a 1km grid square [REDACTED].
- 4.2.14. A single Lesser Spotted Woodpecker record was returned as being [REDACTED].
- 4.2.15. A single Marsh Tit record was returned as being from approximately [REDACTED].
- 4.2.16. The closest, and most recent, Reed Bunting record was from 2011 [REDACTED].
- 4.2.17. The closest, and most recent, record of Starling was from 2011 [REDACTED].
- 4.2.18. Two Turtle Dove records were returned as being within a grid square [REDACTED] in 2010.
- 4.2.19. The closest and most recent record of Yellow Wagtail was returned as being [REDACTED].
- 4.2.20. Two bird species classified as Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Additional Species of Interest (CPASI) were recorded [REDACTED]. These were [REDACTED] in 2018 and [REDACTED] in 2011.

4.3. Discussion

- 4.3.1. The survey work has shown that the site supports a good assemblage of wintering birds, including several species of conservation concern (i.e. Red and Amber listed species) and Priority Species. Many of these species would also be expected to breed within the site, though further survey work during the appropriate time of year would be required to confirm this.

- 4.3.2. No Birds Directive Annex I species were recorded, and Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 1 species were limited to Redwing and Fieldfare, which are common winter visitors and whose presence on the Schedule 1 list relates to their breeding status rather than their wintering presence. The record of Hen Harrier is considered to be incidental, with the individual seen on passage rather than remaining within the site. Red Kite was also recorded, but this species is increasingly common in the wider countryside, including in eastern England, and is no longer a rare breeder.
- 4.3.3. Development of the site is likely to affect its use by wintering birds, and therefore the masterplan and landscape strategy will need to consider opportunities for retained and replacement habitat.
- 4.3.4. Overall the assemblage present is considered to be of local value.

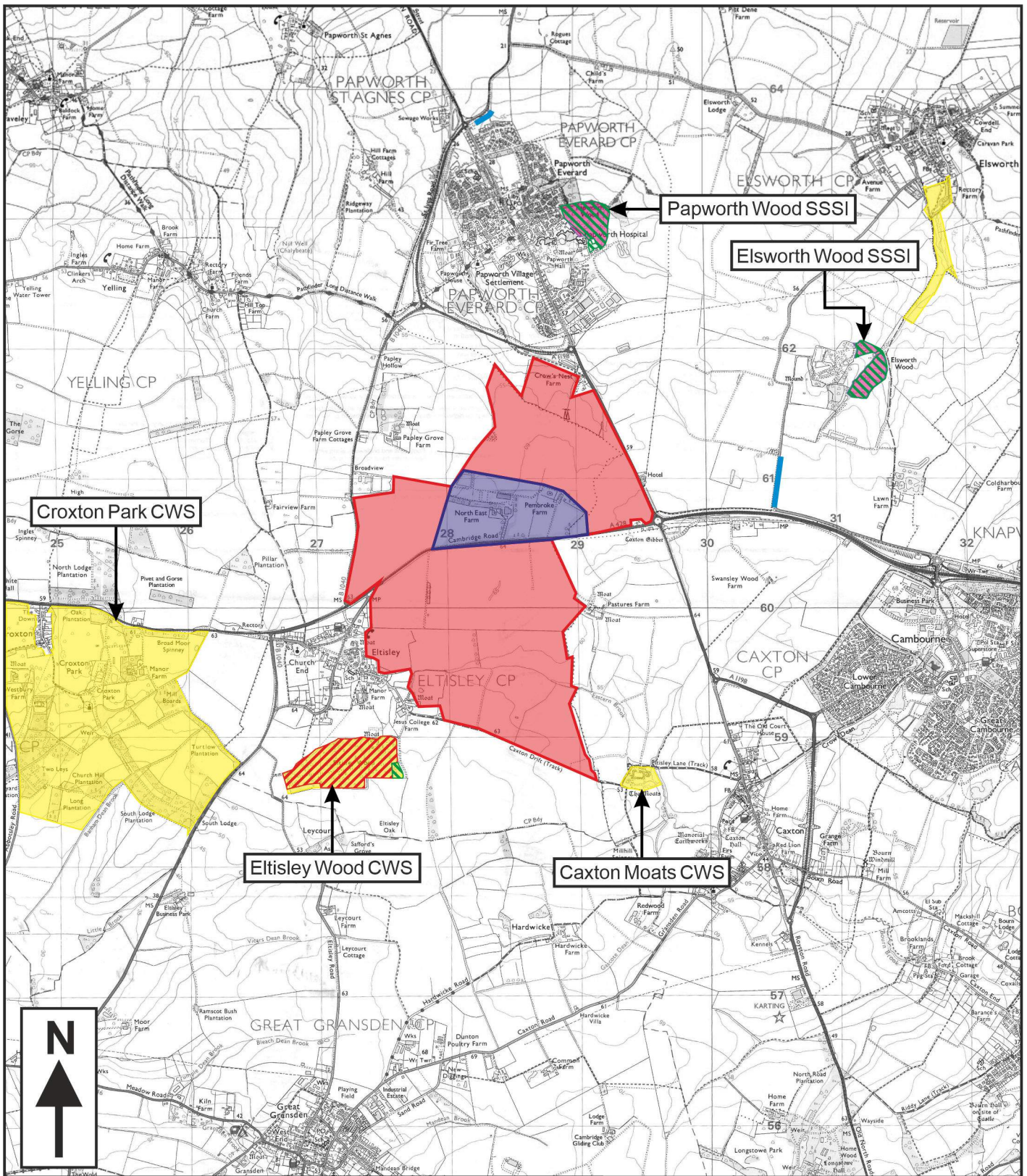
5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. Ecology Solutions was commissioned in October 2020 by the Church Commissioners for England to undertake an ecological assessment of the site.
- 5.2. Further to the findings of the ecological assessment, Ecology Solutions was further instructed to complete a series of wintering bird surveys at the site.
- 5.3. The proposals for the site are expected to comprise a residential-led mixed use development, with associated infrastructure, amenity areas and landscape planting.
- 5.4. The survey work has shown that the site supports a good assemblage of wintering birds, including several species of conservation concern (i.e. Red and Amber listed species) and Priority Species. Many of these species would also be expected to breed within the site, though further survey work during the appropriate time of year would be required to confirm this.
- 5.5. No Birds Directive Annex I species were recorded, and Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 1 species were limited to Redwing and Fieldfare, which are common winter visitors and whose presence on the Schedule 1 list relates to their breeding status rather than their wintering presence. The record of Hen Harrier is considered to be incidental, with the individual seen on passage rather than remaining within the site. Red Kite was also recorded, but this species is increasingly common in the wider countryside, including in eastern England, and is no longer a rare breeder.
- 5.6. Development of the site is likely to affect its use by wintering birds, and therefore the masterplan and landscape strategy will need to consider opportunities for retained and replacement habitat.
- 5.7. Overall the assemblage present is considered to be of local value.

PLANS

PLAN ECO1

Site Location and Ecological Designations



KEY:

- SITE LOCATION
- NORTH EAST FARM AND PEMBROKE FARM
- SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)
- COUNTY WILDLIFE SITE (CWS)
- ANCIENT REPLANTED WOODLAND
- ANCIENT AND SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND
- PROTECTED ROAD VERGE



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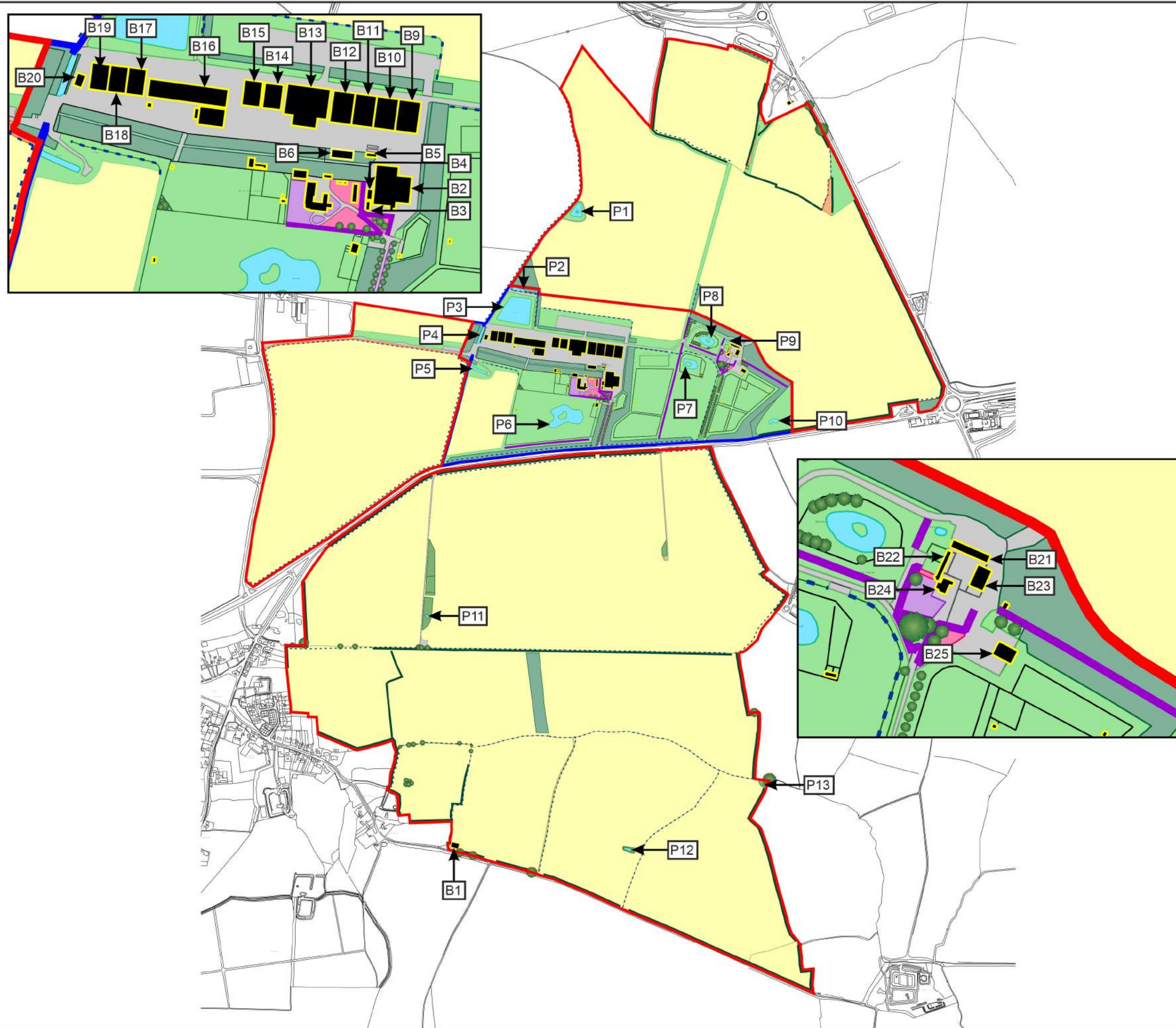
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**PLAN ECO1: SITE LOCATION AND
ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS**

Rev: B
Nov 2021

PLAN ECO2

Ecological Features



- KEY:**
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - BUILDING
 - ARABLE FIELD
 - HARDSTANDING
 - BROADLEAVED WOODLAND
 - SEMI-IMPROVED GRASSLAND
 - AMENITY GRASSLAND
 - AMENITY PLANTING
 - TALL RUDERAL / SCRUB
 - POND
 - AMENITY HEDGE
 - HEDGEROW
 - DRAINAGE DITCH
 - TREE
 - BAT POTENTIAL TREE



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PLAN ECO2: ECOLOGICAL FEATURES	Rev: C Nov 2021
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PLAN ECO3a

Wintering Bird Survey Results 04.02.21 (South)

PLAN ECO3b

Wintering Bird Survey Results 18.02.21 (South)

PLAN ECO3c

Wintering Bird Survey Results 02.03.21 (South)

PLAN ECO3d

Wintering Bird Survey Results 04.02.21 (North)

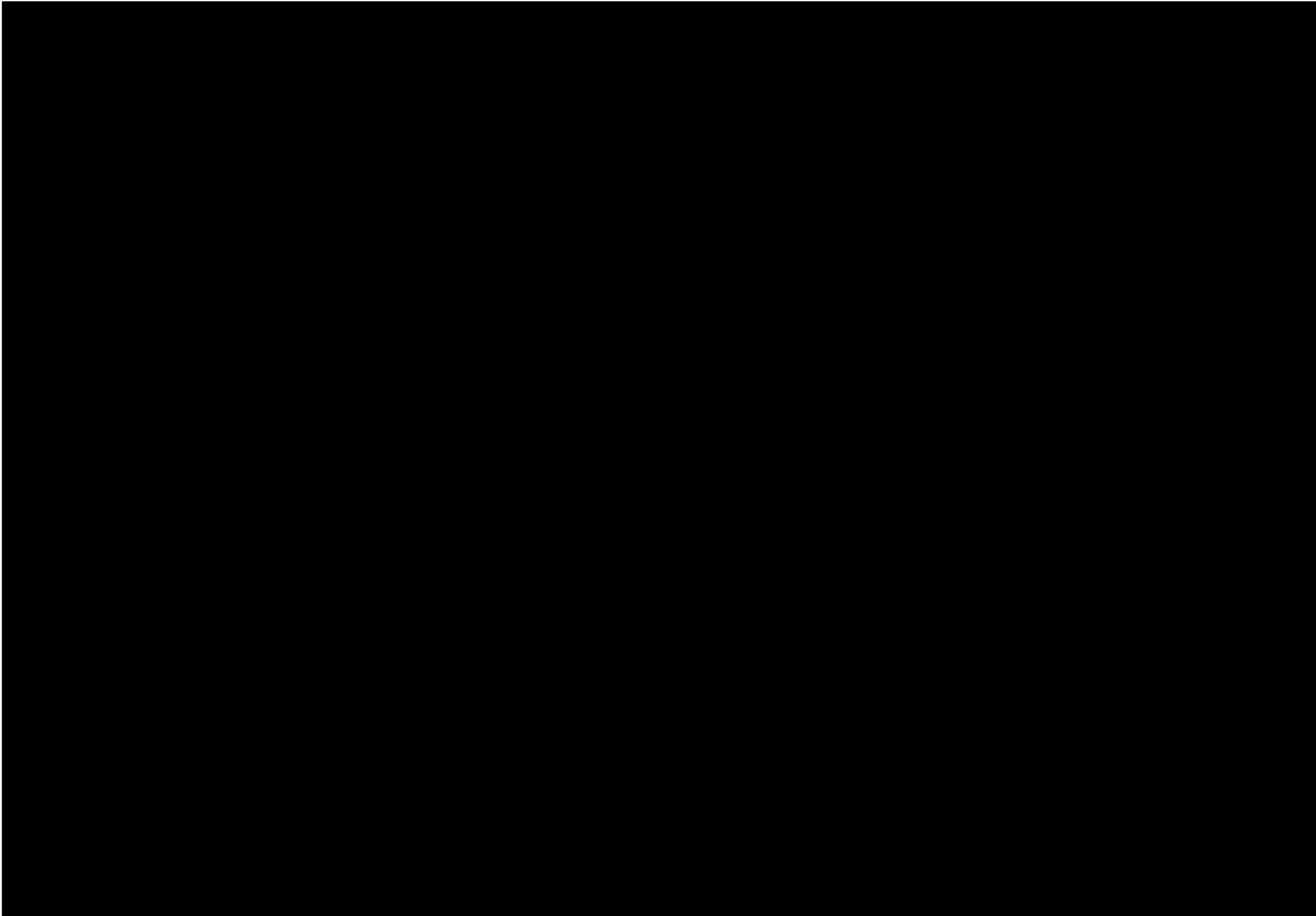
PLAN ECO3e

Wintering Bird Survey Results 18.02.21 (North)



PLAN ECO3f

Wintering Bird Survey Results 02.03.21 (North)



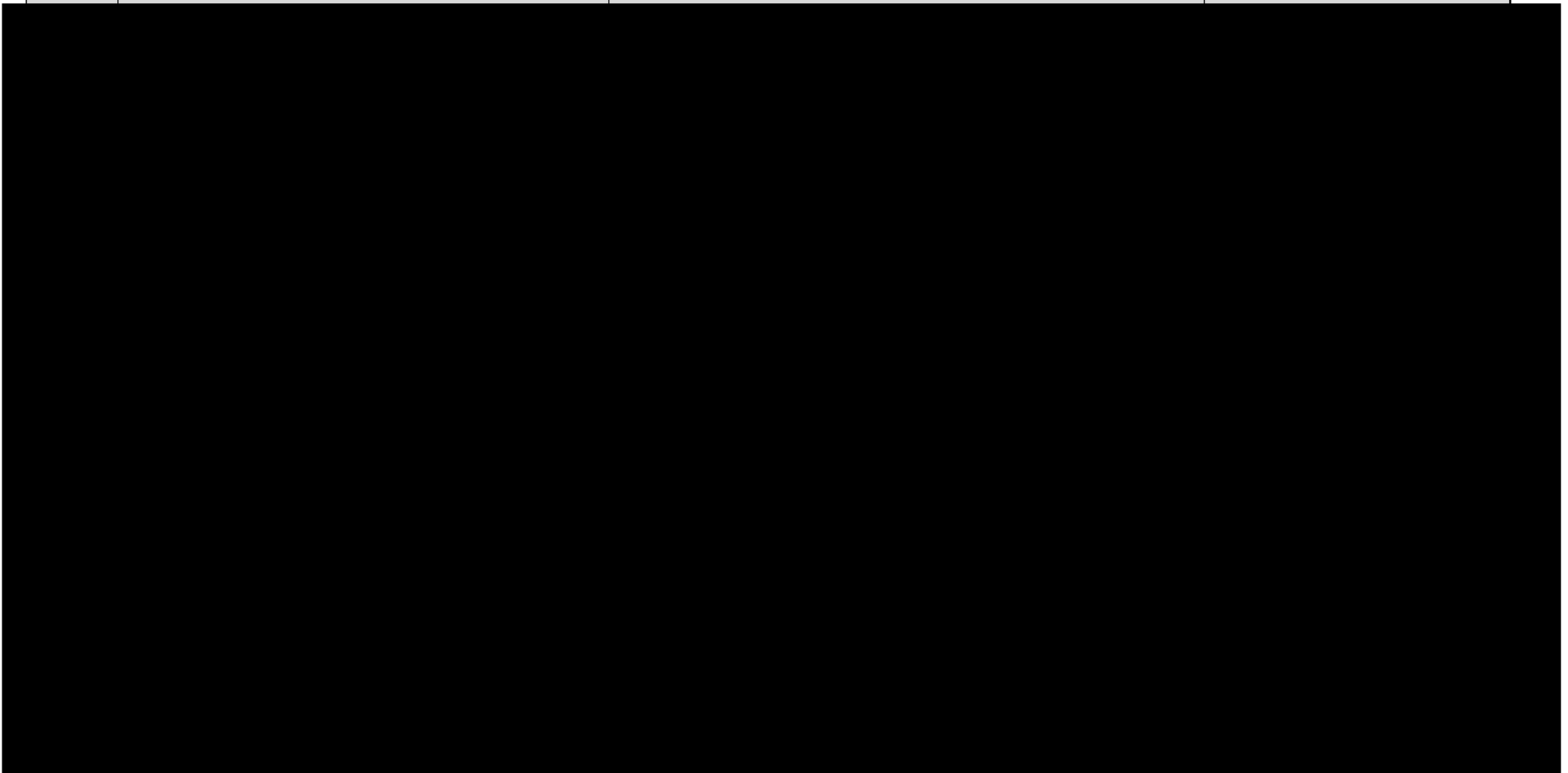
APPENDICES

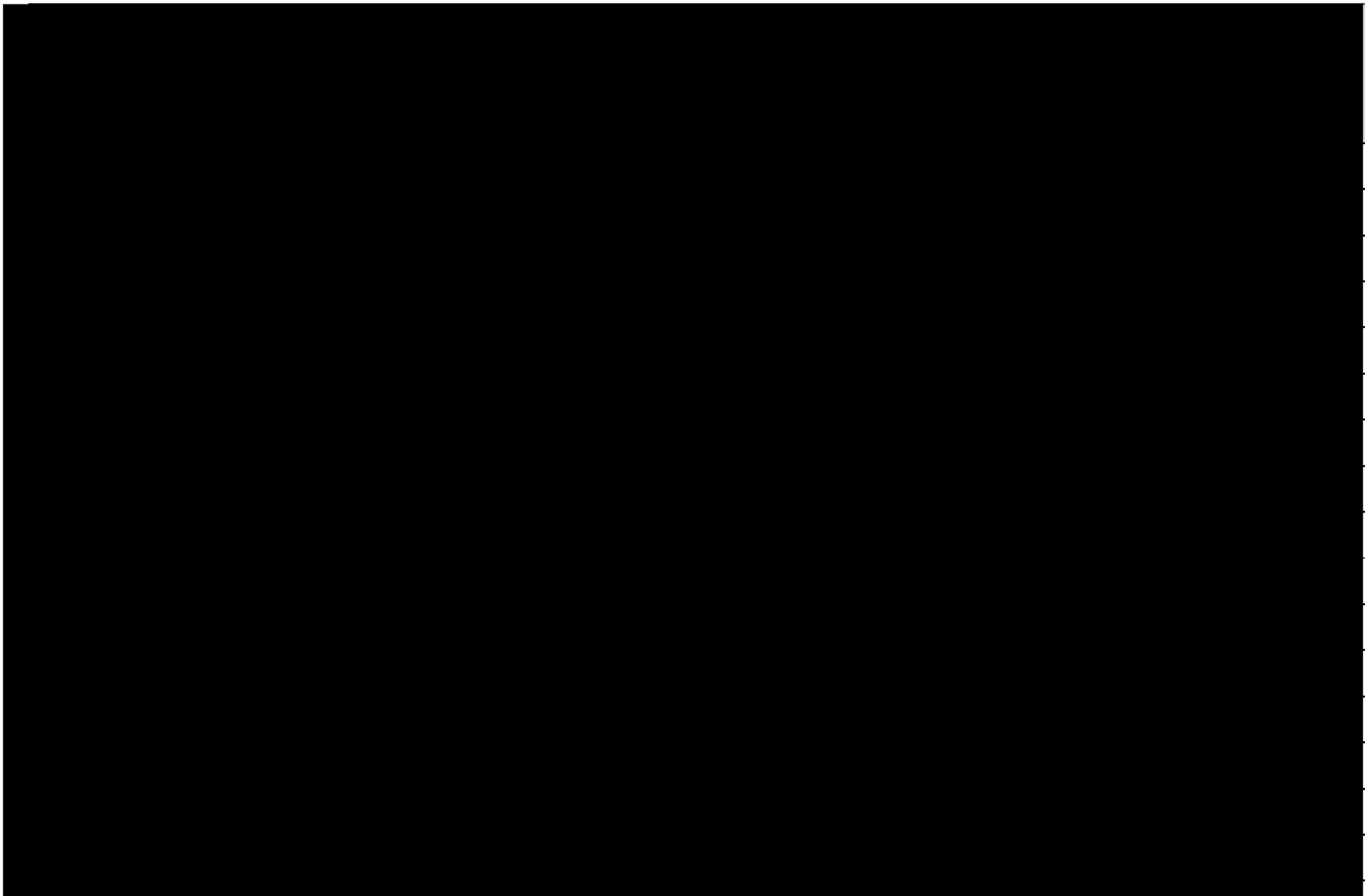
APPENDIX 1

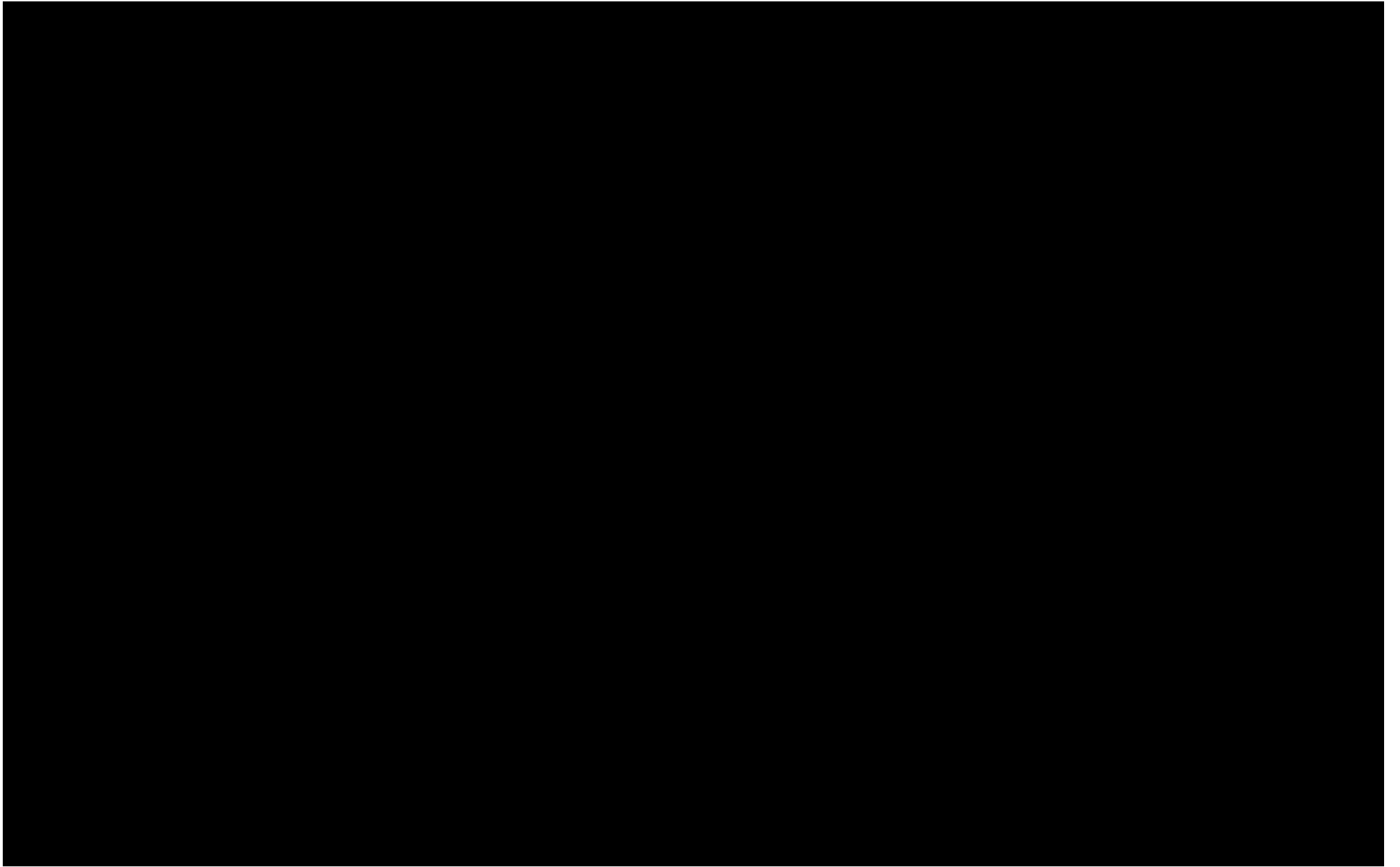
Wintering Bird Survey Results 2021 (South)

APPENDIX 1: WINTERING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS 2021 (SOUTH)

Summary of 2021 wintering bird surveys. Legislation and designation. National: R = Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern; A = Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern; UKBAP = UK BAP Priority List of Species; S1 = Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; S41 = Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.







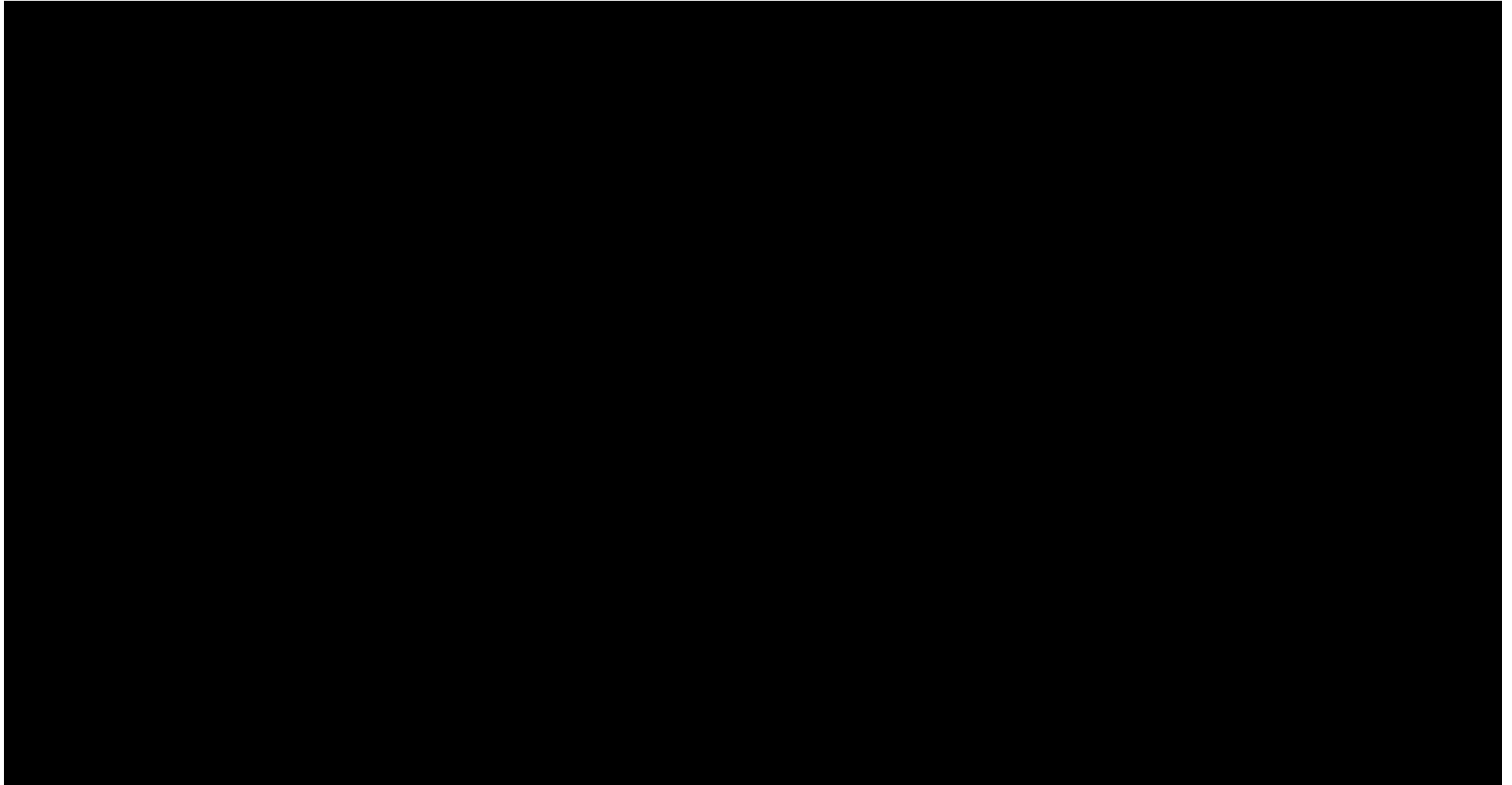


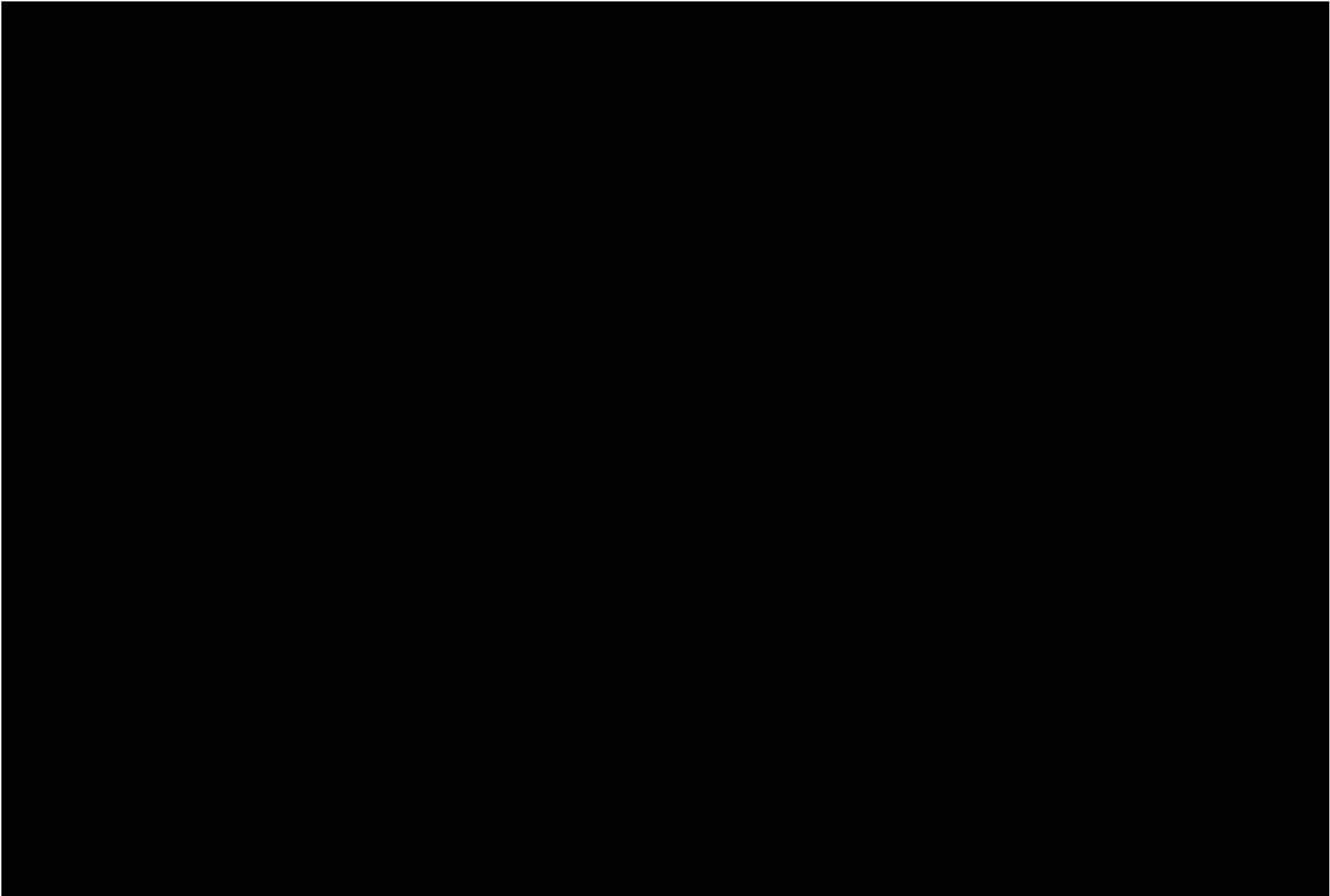
APPENDIX 2

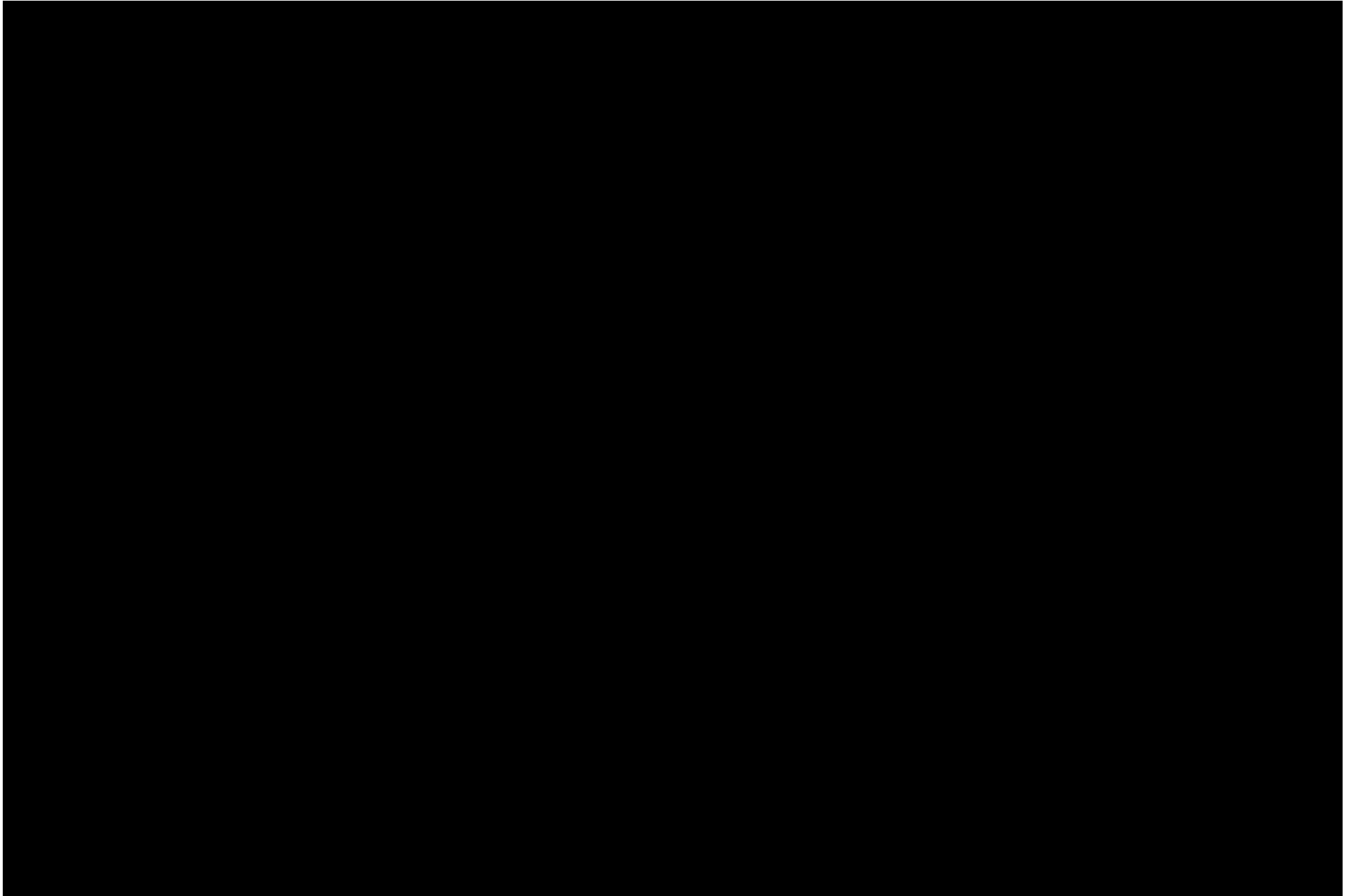
Wintering Bird Survey Results 2021 (North)

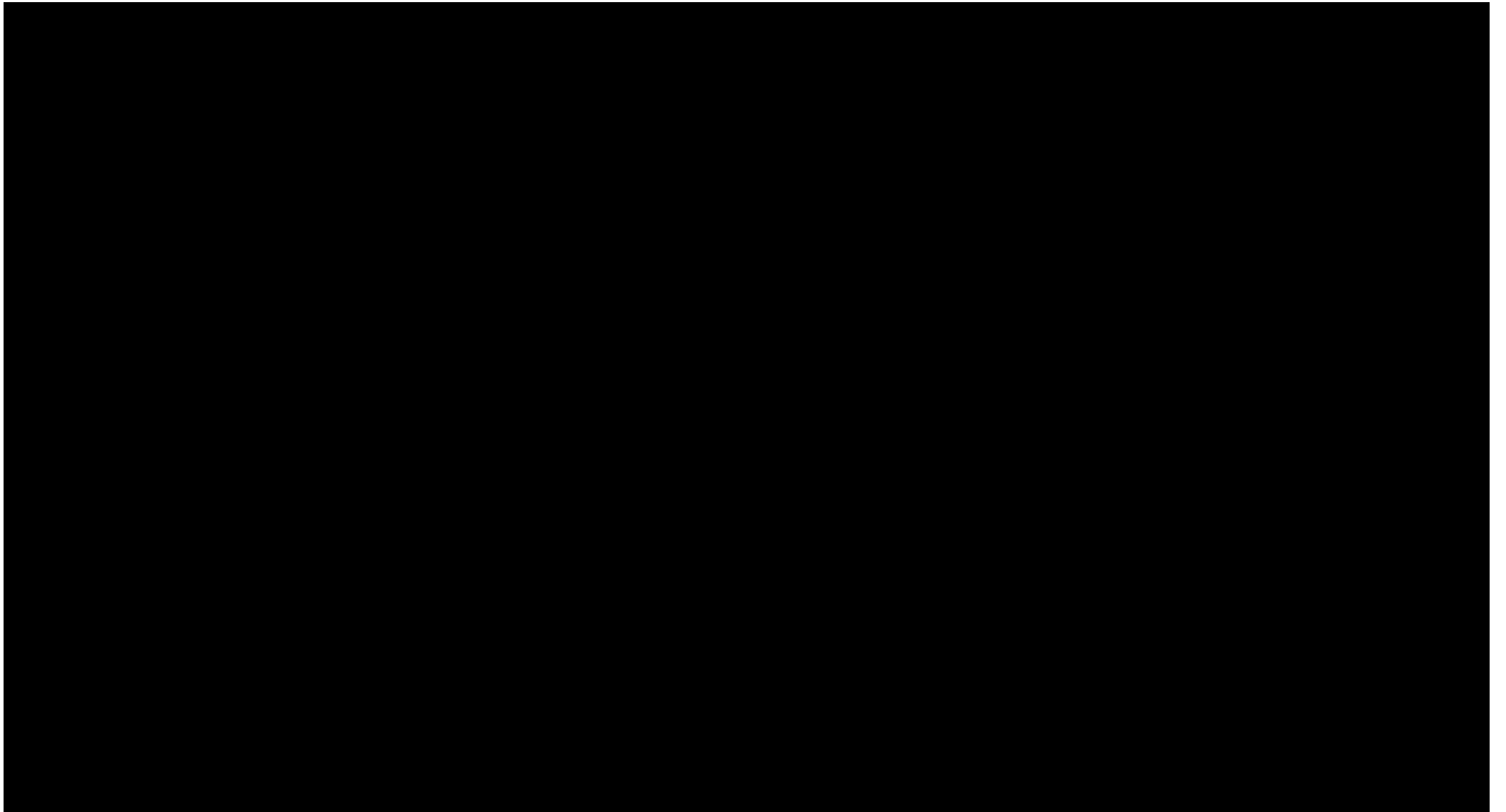
APPENDIX 2: WINTERING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS 2021 (NORTH)

Summary of 2021 wintering bird surveys. Legislation and designation. National: R = Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern; A = Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern; UKBAP = UK BAP Priority List of Species; S1 = Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; S41 = Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.











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