

### **B BIRDS**

#### **Br Breeding Birds**

For the purposes of these Guidelines acceptable evidence of breeding bird species follows the British Trust for Ornithology approach using the criteria of probable and possible breeding which includes:

- the presence of a territorial male
- repeated sightings of the species concerned in suitable habitat during the breeding season
- pair behaviour during the breeding season
- birds seen nest building or carrying nesting material
- birds seen carrying feeding material or faecal sacs
- fledgling birds seen or an occupied nest is found.

A breeding population is defined as one pair. The use of the term 'regularly' in these Guidelines means that the species should have been recorded for the site concerned for a minimum of two separate years during the last five years.

Boundaries of sites selected for their breeding bird interest will reflect all of the necessary habitat for breeding, including specific habitat requirements for feeding juveniles.

The use of the term 'rare' in these Guidelines means that there are less than 10 records of the species each year, or that records are restricted to specific habitat types. The use of the term 'scarce' means that the species occurs in only small numbers. The Annual Bird Report for Greater Manchester or the bird database will supplement this assessment.

Account is taken in these Guidelines of the fact that birds are generally far more mobile than other fauna. This means that sites other than breeding sites are also essential for species survival. Such areas may include those regularly used for major pre- and post-breeding gatherings, migration staging posts, moulting and during different stages of the winter.

The SBI Guidelines regarding birds will not generally be applied to occupied domestic dwellings or active industrial buildings. However, consideration will be given to the selection of sites in these types of premises, where the site is either critical to that species' survival in the Greater Manchester context, or supports high species numbers or exceptional populations

*The following will be considered for selection as Grade A SBIs*

**Br1 BIRDS – Significant Breeding Population Sites** that regularly support more than 0.5% of the total British breeding population of any native bird species.

**Br2 BIRDS – Schedule 1** Any site which regularly supports a breeding population of any bird species included in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended.

*Species to which this Guideline may be applied in Greater Manchester include, but may not be exclusive to:*

*peregrine, black redstart, barn owl, little ringed plover, kingfisher, black necked grebe, merlin, hobby, quail, Mediterranean gull,*

**Br3 BIRDS – Rare Breeders** Any site which regularly supports a significant proportion of the breeding population of a bird species regarded as a rare breeding bird in Greater Manchester.

*Species to which this Guideline may be applied in Greater Manchester will include, but may not be exclusive to:*

*cuckoo\*, long-eared owl, short-eared owl, lesser spotted woodpecker\*, yellow wagtail\*, wood warbler\*, spotted flycatcher\*, pied flycatcher, twite\*, redshank, ring ouzel\*, gadwall, pochard, shoveler, goosander, teal, redstart, marsh tit\**

*The following will be considered for selection as SBIs*

**Br4 BIRDS – Scarce Breeders** Any site which regularly supports a significant proportion of the breeding population of a bird species regarded as a scarce breeding bird in Greater Manchester.

*Species to which this Guideline may be applied in Greater Manchester will include, but may not be exclusive to:*

*water rail, golden plover, snipe, woodcock, curlew\*, green woodpecker, grasshopper warbler\*, willow tit\*, tree sparrow\*, corn bunting\*, whinchat, stonechat, raven, lapwing\*, ringed plover, common sandpiper, common tern*

**Br5 BIRDS – UK Priority Species** Any site of significant importance for birds listed as UK Priority Species, which have not been included in the previous Guidelines (marked above with \*). These are species included in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and were previously known as CRoW Act Section 74 species.

**Br6 BIRDS – Assemblages** Any site from which the following have been recorded in the last five-year period for which data is available. Regard will be given when applying this Guideline to the status (e.g. red/ amber list of breeding concern etc) of all the species under consideration for the assemblage.

*10 or more regular breeding bird species*

*20 or more regular breeding and wintering bird species*

*30 or more regular breeding, wintering and passage bird species*

These figures are the **minimum** for consideration for site selection. Account needs to be taken when allocating grades to a site of the distribution of breeding birds within similar habitats in that District.

Only species making regular active use of site should be included. Those simply flying over should be excluded.

**Br7 BIRDS – Colonial Breeders** Any site that supports a significant population of a colonial nesting bird.

*Species to which this Guideline may be applied in Greater Manchester will include, but may not be exclusive to:*

sand martin, grey heron, common tern and house martin

\* UK BAP Priority Species

## **WB Wintering Birds**

The primary source of data for wintering bird populations in Greater Manchester is the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) a joint scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in association with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Data used in these assessments will be the most recent five year period for which data are available.

The winter period is defined as September to March.

*The following will be considered for selection as Grade A SBIs:*

**WB1 BIRDS – Significant Wintering Population of an Individual Species.** Sites that regularly support a significant proportion (more than 10%) of the total Greater Manchester wintering population (based on WeBS counts) of an individual native water bird species (as defined by Wetlands International).

For other wintering bird sites the following guidelines may be used:

**WB2 BIRDS – Wintering Schedule 1** Any site which regularly supports a wintering population of any bird species included in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended.

*Species to which this Guideline may be applied in Greater Manchester include, but may not be exclusive to:*

*Bittern, peregrine, black redstart, barn owl, kingfisher, black necked grebe, merlin, Mediterranean gull.*

**WB3 BIRDS – Wintering UK Priority Species** Any site of significant importance for wintering birds listed as UK Priority Species, which have not been included in the previous Guidelines. These are species included in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006

**WB4 BIRDS – Wintering Assemblages** Any site which supports a significant proportion of the total Greater Manchester wintering population (based on WeBS counts) of all recorded waterbird species (as defined by Wetlands International). The following figures should be used to determine the grading of the site:

- **Grade A** - supports 3% or more
- **Grade B** – supports between 1% and 2.99%
- **Grade C** - supports between 0.5% and 0.99%

Some sites whilst not regularly supporting high numbers of water birds may occasionally be of key importance, particularly in very harsh winter weather (freezing conditions), in enabling species to survive. Sites that may qualify include rivers and large reservoirs which may retain areas of open water whilst all other still water bodies in the area have frozen over. Avoiding disturbance at such sites may be vital to the survival of water birds in freezing conditions. For sites such as these the following guideline should be used:

**WB5 BIRDS – Wintering Harsh Weather Sites** Sites that occasionally (during harsh weather conditions) support a significant proportion (more than 10%) of the total Greater Manchester wintering population (based on WeBS counts) of any native water bird species (as defined by Wetlands International).

Thresholds – With the exception of Schedule 1 species all percentages relate to a minimum of 20 birds of an individual species. Definitions: “Regularly” is defined as being recorded in three out of the last five years for which data are available.

Further information on the interpretation of the Bird Guidelines may be sought from the Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group in the determination of how significant a site may be for a particular species in the sub-region or in the district concerned.