

**Appendix 18: Wintering Bird Survey, Jeskyns Farm, Cobham (2006)**

**Jeskyn's Farm, Cobham**

**Winter bird survey**

**2005/2006**

February 2006

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## **Introduction**

This report presents the results of bird surveys undertaken during winter 2005-2006 of Jeskyn's Farm, Cobham, Kent. The surveys were commissioned by The Landscape Partnership on behalf of Forest Enterprise, as part of an environmental impact assessment and landscape improvement programme for the site.

The site was visited on four occasions between late December 2005 and early February 2006. The area was surveyed thoroughly on each occasion and the numbers of birds present were counted. For recording purposes the site was sub-divided into 11 areas to assist in the assessment of the importance of the habitat types in the area.

This report describes the survey methods used and summarises the numbers and distributions of birds found during the four visits to the site, with short descriptions of the land use and habitats in each area. A limited amount of data from external organisations is also presented. The final section of the report is an evaluation of the importance of the area for wintering birds.

## Survey methods

### **Field studies**

The survey was undertaken between late December and early February. This is the period during which populations of winter birds are fairly stable, with relatively little migration taking place compared to earlier or later in the winter.

The surveys used methods based on those recommended in standard literature (e.g. Bibby *et al.* (1992) and Gilbert *et al.* (1998). Essentially, winter bird surveys tend to rely on 'look-see' counting, in which a surveyor walks an area and counts all birds seen or heard. The accuracy of this method relies on such factors as the experience of the observer of the habitats and species involved, the ability to gain access to all parts of the area, the detectability of species, and the movements of birds in and out of the area depending on time of day or through the season. Inevitably, some birds will be missed, especially of less detectable species, but most species using a site should be found. All areas of Jeskyn's Farm were fully accessible and it is considered that the survey results present a full picture of the bird life utilising the site during the winter period.

Fieldwork for the present survey was carried out wholly by Tim Hodge. The areas comprising Jeskyn's Farm were fairly small and contained little dense vegetation. All surveys were carried out between 08:00 and 13:00 hours, and four hours were spent at the site on each visit, adequate time for all species to be surveyed.

No evening visits were made to the site, but the amount of habitat available for roosting birds within the survey area is very small, and it is not considered likely that any significant roosting concentrations occur on the site at present.

### **Desk studies**

The Kent Ornithological Society was consulted for information on birds within 2 km of the site. Data have been extracted for the period November-March in each year (i.e. the spring, summer and early autumn months have been omitted). Very few records were found during the data search and are shown in Table 6. The records listed are not considered to have any particular significance in relation to the Jeskyn's Farm site.

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## Results

### ***Data presentations***

Tables 1-4 summarise the data recorded on each of the four visits in the winter bird survey. Each table presents the data from the 2005-2006 field survey. In addition a summary table, Table 5, shows the mean number (from 4 visits) of each species recorded for the area as a whole, the maximum count for the whole area and the number of species recorded on each visit and in total.

### ***Survey area descriptions***

The survey area was split into 11 zones to enable analysis of the habitat types preferred by different species. A map showing the location of the zones is shown at the end of the report.

Zone 1: Improved grassland, bounded by trees and hedgerows.

Zone 2: Rape stubble, partially bounded by hedgerows and orchards.

Zone 3: Jeskyn's Farm buildings and adjacent houses.

Zone 4: Cereal stubble, partially bounded by trees and hedgerows.

Zone 5: Rape stubble.

Zone 6: Rape stubble, partially bounded by the CTRL railway line.

Zone 7: Rape stubble, partially bounded by the CTRL railway line and Ashenbank Wood.

Zone 8: Cereal Stubble.

Zone 9: Ploughed field, partially bounded by hedgerows.

Zone 10: Cereal stubble, partially bounded by trees and hedgerows.

Zone 11: Meadow, bounded by orchards, hedgerows and Ashenbank Wood.

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## Evaluation

### ***Evaluation methods***

The objective of ornithological evaluation is generally to establish the relative importance of an area within a geographical context, typically with respect to five levels of conservation importance: international, national, regional, county and local. The three principal attributes of bird communities which are considered are diversity, population size and rarity. It is desirable that estimates of bird populations in an area are available for analysis covering a number of years although, in practice, this often is not the case, and is not the case for this survey.

### **Diversity**

The number of species recorded in an area (species richness) is a simple and effective measure of diversity, which can be used to describe conservation value separately for breeding, passage and wintering bird communities. Fuller (1980) provided the following criteria for winter:

National	Regional	County	Local
115+	114-85	84-55	54-25

In the present case, data are available from only four visits in one winter (with no additional records available from external sources) and the species richness totals may be slightly below those which could be achieved in a more prolonged survey. However, this is not considered to be a significant factor in the evaluation.

### **Population size**

The standard criterion upon which evaluation of population size is based is that if 1% or more of the defined geographical population of a species regularly uses a site, then that site is important at that geographical scale. This means, for example, that if 1% of the national population occurs, then the site is nationally important for that species. The term 'regularly' implies that data should be available for a five-year period. Key sources for national bird population sizes are Stone *et al.* 1997 and Baker *et al.* 2006.

The 1% criterion for importance is widely accepted at national and international levels. It can also be applied for smaller geographical units but problems may then arise when the total population within the unit is small and very small numbers occurring on a site would confer importance. In such cases, consideration may be given to raising the proportion of the population which defines importance: for example, 5% of a county population may be a better measure of county importance than 1%. This evaluation has followed this procedure, and has also attributed local importance when a population is believed to exceed 10% of the wider local (e.g. district or borough) population.

Unfortunately, very limited comparative data (estimates of winter bird populations) is available at county or regional levels. In most cases, it is necessary to rely on judgement derived from experience of the species concerned, and from data published in county bird reports.

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## Rarity

Various measures of rarity can be employed, the most useful of which relate to the breeding status of birds. Outside the breeding season, the term 'rarities' typically is applied to vagrants or other exceptional visitors to an area, which tend to have little nature conservation significance. In winter, individual species' status is most often defined in terms of population size (see above). An alternative approach is to give special consideration to species which are specially protected by law or otherwise listed as threatened, including those listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, on Annex 1 of the European Community directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC), or as Birds of Conservation Concern (Gregory *et al.* 2002, RSPB 2002). Unfortunately, these listings also have the disadvantage of being based largely on breeding status and, in the cases of the two statutory schedules, are now over 20 years old.

I have preferred to assess areas in terms of the occurrence of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC). These are species which are regarded as threatened in Britain by virtue of their small populations or declining numbers, or for which Britain supports a considerable proportion of the western European totals. The listing of BoCC species does relate largely to their breeding status but it is helpful to draw attention to such species even in winter since their prospects depend on winter survival as much as breeding success. Species are categorised as red-amber- or green-listed. Red list species are those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years, or which have declined historically without a substantial recent recovery. Amber listed species are defined by having: unfavourable population status in Europe; a very small population size; undergone a moderate recent population decline; a highly localised distribution; or occurrence in internationally important numbers. The remaining species are on the green list.

## Survey area evaluations

Field survey in 2005-2006 located 46 species. This is within the local importance category of Fuller (1980) and below the level of county importance.

The maximum count of 156 Corn Buntings is significant in a county context. The species were found mainly in Zone 1, where the improved grassland provided suitable feeding resources. Corn Bunting is on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern, and numbers in Kent are still declining. The best current estimate of breeding pairs in the county is 1,000-1,500 pairs, which equates to 3,000-4,500 wintering birds. The Jeskyn's Farm population thus represents some 3.5%-5.2% of the county population. It is worth noting that the current national breeding population is estimated at 8,500-12,200 pairs (Baker 2006), equating to 25,500-36,600 wintering birds. The Jeskyn's Farm wintering population therefore equates to 0.43%-0.61% of the national population. Although this falls short of the 1% criterion detailed in 4.4 above, it does indicate that the site is significant for this species.

Totals of other species were unexceptional in a county context. The counts of 956 Wood Pigeons, 207 Skylarks, 68 Meadow Pipits, 551 Fieldfares, 212 Redwings, 27 Linnets and 11 Yellowhammers are likely to be significant in a local context, although comparative data is not available to confirm this.

Eight red-listed species were recorded in the survey area: Skylark, Song Thrush, Starling, House Sparrow, Linnet, Yellowhammer, Reed Bunting and Corn Bunting.



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13 amber-listed species were recorded in the survey area: Kestrel, Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Stock Dove, Green Woodpecker, Meadow Pipit, Grey Wagtail, Dunnock, Fieldfare, Redwing and Mistle Thrush. Mute Swan was recorded flying over the site.

Three Schedule 1 species were recorded during the survey: Fieldfare, Redwing and Brambling. However, the Schedule 1 designation for these species relates to their status as rare breeding birds and not for their wintering numbers in this country.

Most species recorded during the survey are common and widespread species that were fairly well distributed throughout the survey area. The generalist species such as Blackbird, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Wren, Dunnock, Robin and Greenfinch were concentrated around the farms and houses and the hedgerows and trees around the site. Much of the site is open fields with a variety of habitats, principally improved grassland (Zone 1) and both rape and cereal stubbles (Zones 2, 4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10). The improved grassland in Zone 1 was very attractive as a feeding area to a variety of open field specialists, notably Corn Bunting, Skylark and Meadow Pipit, as well as corvids, pigeons and thrushes. The rape and cereal stubbles around the centre of the site were used by Skylarks, Meadow Pipits, Linnets, Starlings, Yellowhammers, thrushes and pigeons for feeding.

## **Conclusions**

The survey area is assessed as having local importance for its wintering birds, with the exception of the Corn Bunting population, which is considered to be of county importance. More prolonged survey of the site would reveal some additional species, but is considered unlikely to raise the evaluation of diversity to county importance. It is considered unlikely that any major features of winter bird conservation interest have been missed. Medium numbers (21 species, 8 Red List and 13 Amber List) of Birds of Conservation Concern were located during the survey.

## References

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## **Tables**

Tables 1-4 present detailed results for each visit from each of the 11 zones in the survey area. Table 5 provides a summary of the visits whilst Table 6 presents the data from the external data search of Kent Ornithological Society database.

**Table 1. Jeskyn's Farm Winter Bird Survey - Results 31/12/2005**

Weather: dry, mild, sunny, 1/8 cloud, 2-3 westerly wind												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Totals
Mute Swan												0
Sparrowhawk	1											1
Kestrel		1										1
Moorhen			2									2
Golden Plover							10					10
Snipe								1				1
Black-headed Gull					1	2	6					9
Common Gull					6	9	2					17
Herring Gull											4	4
Collared Dove			42	4	22	1			4			73
Stock Dove	3				1	2						6
Wood Pigeon	72	32	20	15			420		2	8		569
Feral Pigeon			4									4
Green Woodpecker	1	1										2
Great Spotted Woodpecker											1	1
Skylark	84	1		2	10	27	12	18	1	14		169
Meadow Pipit	4	1		1	12	14	10	7		8		57
Grey Wagtail												0
Pied Wagtail	1		2									3
Wren	3	1	2	2	1					2		11
Dunnock			1	1	1				1	1		5
Robin	2	1	2	3					2	4		14
Blackbird	9	1	6	10	2				2	4	3	37
Fieldfare	84	45	3	5	58	3		2		1	350	551
Song Thrush	3		3	1	2	1			1	4		15
Redwing	4	30	2	2	66	2	7	16		13	70	212
Mistle Thrush	3	3	1		3	2	2		1	1		16
Long-tailed Tit										4		4
Blue Tit	3	3	4	2	1				3	1	2	19
Great Tit	3	1	2	2					2	1	1	12
Jay	2	3									2	7
Magpie	4	4	2	3	6		8			1	2	30
Rook		70										70
Jackdaw	10										2	12
Carrion Crow	2	4	2	3	4	2			1	5		23
Starling	3	120	16		90			4				233
House Sparrow			16	8					2			26
Brambling			1									1
Chaffinch	12	2	16	5	12	17			1	1	40	106
Greenfinch	4		10	4								18
Goldfinch			5	2							4	11
Siskin											5	5
Linnet												0
Yellowhammer	1	1					1			2	6	11
Reed Bunting												0
Corn Bunting	12				2							14
	<b>330</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>2392</b>



**Table 2. Jeskyn's Farm Winter Bird Survey - Results 09/01/2006**

Weather: dry, fairly mild, 8/8 cloud, light and variable winds												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Totals
Mute Swan												0
Sparrowhawk	1											1
Kestrel												0
Moorhen			1									1
Golden Plover							8					8
Snipe							1					1
Black-headed Gull					3	2	4					9
Common Gull					5	10	2					17
Herring Gull												0
Collared Dove			48	6	14	2			6			76
Stock Dove	2				1	2						5
Wood Pigeon	90	32	15	130			125		2	12		406
Feral Pigeon												0
Green Woodpecker	1	1									1	3
Great Spotted Woodpecker											1	1
Skylark	117	3		4	8	25	14	26	2	8		207
Meadow Pipit	5	2		2	8	14	15	8		7		61
Grey Wagtail			1									1
Pied Wagtail	1											1
Wren	2	3		1	1					2	2	11
Duncock				1	2				1	1	1	6
Robin	1	1	3	3					2	4	2	16
Blackbird	7	4	4	8	2				3	5	3	36
Fieldfare	108	20	1	5	60	3		2		1	225	425
Song Thrush	2	2	2	1	3	2			1	3		16
Redwing	5	20	3	2	42	2	7	16		13	58	168
Mistle Thrush	2	3	1		2	2	2		1	1	1	15
Long-tailed Tit												0
Blue Tit	2	3	4	2	1				3	1	2	18
Great Tit	4	2	1	2					2	1	1	13
Jay	1	3									2	6
Magpie	2	4		3	6		8			1	2	26
Rook	10	32										42
Jackdaw	12	20									2	34
Carrion Crow	2	4		3	4	2			1	5		21
Starling	1	45	10		90			4				150
House Sparrow			14	8					2			24
Brambling			2									2
Chaffinch	11	4	18	5	12	17			1	1	40	109
Greenfinch	2		8	4								14
Goldfinch			4	2							4	10
Siskin											5	5
Linnet												0
Yellowhammer	1	1					1			2	6	11
Reed Bunting												0
Corn Bunting	35	1			2							38
	<b>427</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>2014</b>

**Table 3. Jeskyn's Farm Winter Bird Survey - Results 21/01/2006**

Weather: dry, bright, mild, 1/8 cloud, 1-2 NW wind												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Totals
Mute Swan												0
Sparrowhawk	1									1		2
Kestrel							1					1
Moorhen			2									2
Golden Plover												0
Snipe												0
Black-headed Gull						3	3					6
Common Gull							4					4
Herring Gull	2				1							3
Collared Dove		6	42	4							10	62
Stock Dove	1				1	2	1			1	2	8
Wood Pigeon	22	360	5	210	160	10	94	2	70	15	8	956
Feral Pigeon				1								1
Green Woodpecker	2											2
Great Spotted Woodpecker							1				1	2
Skylark	111	2			2	38	17	10	3	14		197
Meadow Pipit	12			1		26	11	10	3	5		68
Grey Wagtail												0
Pied Wagtail		1	1								1	3
Wren		2	2				2			2	2	10
Duncock	3		1	5	1		1		2	1	1	15
Robin	6	3	2	4	2		2		2	2	2	25
Blackbird	3	5	3	12	6		2		6	3	3	43
Fieldfare	12	7	3	1	2	132	3		3	20	8	191
Song Thrush	2	1	1						2	1	3	10
Redwing		3				38	8	2	5	4	6	66
Mistle Thrush	1	2	2	3		2	1	1			2	14
Long-tailed Tit										4		4
Blue Tit	5	3	4	3			2		2	3	3	25
Great Tit	6		2	3	1			1	1	3	2	19
Jay		6					1			1		8
Magpie	4	6	2	1		1	2	4	2	1	2	25
Rook	70	4										74
Jackdaw	65	12								6	5	88
Carrion Crow	2	3	1	3	2	2		4	2	4	2	25
Starling		42	24	8		48	6			4	10	142
House Sparrow			10	6	4						6	26
Brambling			9									9
Chaffinch	4	3	32	9	1	10		4	2	8	22	95
Greenfinch		1	2					2	3	2	3	13
Goldfinch			1	2						3	4	10
Siskin												0
Linnet						18			8			26
Yellowhammer					1							1
Reed Bunting												0
Corn Bunting	156				1							157
	<b>490</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>2438</b>

**Table 4. Jeskyn's Farm Winter Bird Survey - Results 05/02/2006**

Weather: dry, fairly mild, 8/8 cloud, 1-2 NW wind												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Totals
Mute Swan										1		1
Sparrowhawk	1										1	2
Kestrel						1						1
Moorhen			2									2
Golden Plover												0
Snipe												0
Black-headed Gull					2	1	4					7
Common Gull					1	1	3					5
Herring Gull												0
Collared Dove			30	4	22						4	60
Stock Dove		3			1		2			1		7
Wood Pigeon	260	85	1	130	30		135		80	12	10	743
Feral Pigeon			3									3
Green Woodpecker		1										1
Great Spotted Woodpecker							1				1	2
Skylark	70	6		2	12	45	14	12	4	12		177
Meadow Pipit	2				4	30	6	12	2	4		60
Grey Wagtail												0
Pied Wagtail			1							1		2
Wren			3	2	1		1			1	2	10
Dunnock			2	2	1			1	2		2	10
Robin	3	2	2	3			2		2	1	2	17
Blackbird	2	4		10	2		2		6	3	2	31
Fieldfare	5	1	70	2	38	110	3		1	31	4	265
Song Thrush			1	1	2				1	2	1	8
Redwing			4	3	56	38	6		6	2	8	123
Mistle Thrush	1	2			2	2	1			1		9
Long-tailed Tit										2		2
Blue Tit	4	2	3	4	2		2		2	3	2	24
Great Tit	2	5		3					1	2	3	16
Jay	2			1			1					4
Magpie	12	2	2	1	4	1	2	1	2		2	29
Rook	42	70										112
Jackdaw	90	32								6	7	135
Carrion Crow	2	9		2	3		2	4	2	3		27
Starling			15		45	60	8			5	8	141
House Sparrow			12	6							6	24
Brambling			5									5
Chaffinch	2	4	14	4	10	12		2	2	6	26	82
Greenfinch	1		2	4	2			2	3		4	18
Goldfinch			1	3						1	5	10
Siskin												0
Linnet						14			13			27
Yellowhammer												0
Reed Bunting						1						1
Corn Bunting	83				2							85
	<b>584</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2287</b>



**Table 5. Jeskyn's Farm Winter Bird Survey - Summary Results**

	31/12/2005	09/01/2006	21/01/2006	05/02/2006	Mean	Maxima
Mute Swan	0	0	0	1	0.3	1
Sparrowhawk	1	1	2	2	1.5	2
Kestrel	1	0	1	1	0.8	1
Moorhen	2	1	2	2	1.8	2
Golden Plover	10	8	0	0	4.5	10
Snipe	1	1	0	0	0.5	1
Black-headed Gull	9	9	6	7	7.8	9
Common Gull	17	17	4	5	10.8	17
Herring Gull	4	0	3	0	1.8	4
Collared Dove	73	76	62	60	67.8	76
Stock Dove	6	5	8	7	6.5	8
Wood Pigeon	569	406	956	743	668.5	956
Feral Pigeon	4	0	1	3	2.0	4
Green Woodpecker	2	3	2	1	2.0	3
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	1	2	2	1.5	2
Skylark	169	207	197	177	187.5	207
Meadow Pipit	57	61	68	60	61.5	68
Grey Wagtail	0	1	0	0	0.3	1
Pied Wagtail	3	1	3	2	2.3	3
Wren	11	11	10	10	10.5	11
Dunnock	5	6	15	10	9.0	15
Robin	14	16	25	17	18.0	25
Blackbird	37	36	43	31	36.8	43
Fieldfare	551	425	191	265	358.0	551
Song Thrush	15	16	10	8	12.3	16
Redwing	212	168	66	123	142.3	212
Mistle Thrush	16	15	14	9	13.5	16
Long-tailed Tit	4	0	4	2	2.5	4
Blue Tit	19	18	25	24	21.5	25
Great Tit	12	13	19	16	15.0	19
Jay	7	6	8	4	6.3	8
Magpie	30	26	25	29	27.5	30
Rook	70	42	74	112	74.5	112
Jackdaw	12	34	88	135	67.3	135
Carrion Crow	23	21	25	27	24.0	27
Starling	233	150	142	141	166.5	233
House Sparrow	26	24	26	24	25.0	26
Brambling	1	2	9	5	4.3	9
Chaffinch	106	109	95	82	98.0	109
Greenfinch	18	14	13	18	15.8	18
Goldfinch	11	10	10	10	10.3	11
Siskin	5	5	0	0	2.5	5
Linnet	0	0	26	27	13.3	27
Yellowhammer	11	11	1	0	5.8	11
Reed Bunting	0	0	0	1	0.3	1
Corn Bunting	14	38	157	85	73.5	157
<b>Total birds on each visit</b>	<b>2392</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2438</b>	<b>2287</b>	<b>2282.8</b>	
<b>Total species on each visit</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40.3</b>	
<b>Maximum number of birds</b>						<b>3230</b>
<b>Total number of species</b>						<b>46</b>

**Table 6.** External data search for winter bird records in the Cobham area.

Species	Site	Date	Count
Sparrowhawk	Ashenbank Wood	29.03.1998	1
Green Woodpecker	Ashenbank Wood	31.03.1997	3
Green Woodpecker	Ashenbank Wood	29.03.1998	3
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Ashenbank Wood	31.03.1997	3
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Ashenbank Wood	04.01.1986	1
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Ashenbank Wood	31.03.1997	1
Tree Pipit	Ashenbank Wood	31.03.1997	1
Blackcap	Ashenbank Wood	29.03.1998	1
Chiffchaff	Ashenbank Wood	31.03.1997	11
Chiffchaff	Ashenbank Wood	29.03.1998	18
Marsh Tit	Ashenbank Wood	29.03.1998	4
Marsh Tit	Ashenbank Wood	06.11.2001	2
Willow Tit	Ashenbank Wood	04.01.1986	1
Willow Tit	Ashenbank Wood	29.03.1998	1
Nuthatch	Ashenbank Wood	29.03.1998	3
Jay	Ashenbank Wood	29.03.1998	10
Hawfinch	Ashenbank Wood	31.03.1985	1
Hawfinch	Ashenbank Wood	31.03.1997	3
Hawfinch	Ashenbank Wood	29.03.1998	1



**Forest Enterprise**

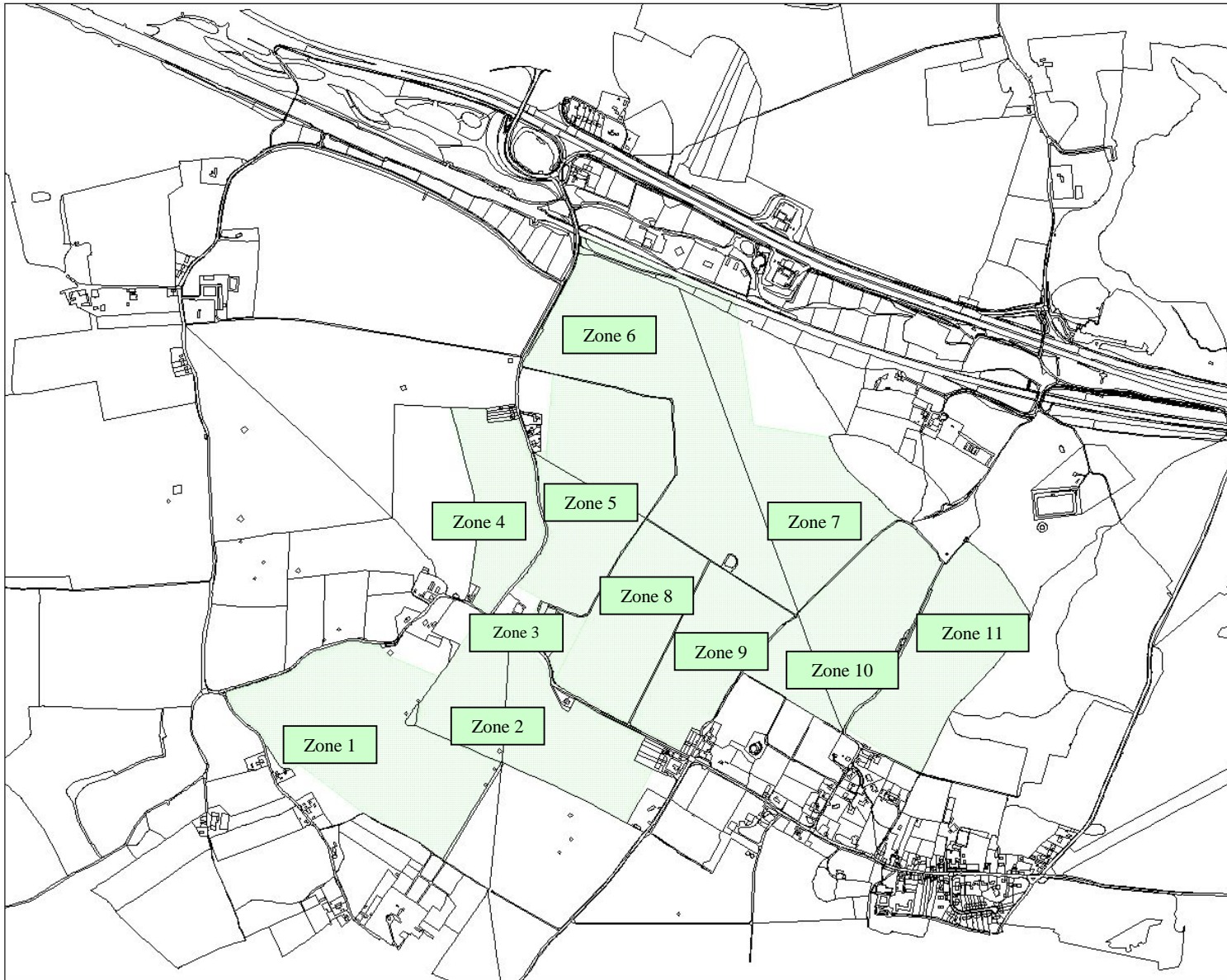
Forest District - EAST ANGLIA

Title Jeskyn's Farm

Type of Map Location

Scale 1:10000

Date 4 May 2005



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