**Gibside Community Farm**

**Bird Survey – interim report by Chris Cox**

1. **Background**

I’ve been involved with bird surveys for over 30 years, the vast majority of this on a voluntary basis. Organisations I have done voluntary work for include RSPB, British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and Durham Wildlife Trust amongst others and at one time I was surveys organiser for Durham Bird Club.

When I was invited by Mick Marston to get involved in recording birds at Gibside Community Farm it was agreed that we register the site as an official BTO ‘Bird Track’ site so that the records will be useful not only for general interest and management of the site but also for wider ornithological/ecological research.

The method being used is a combination of that employed by the BTO for their recent Winter and Summer ‘Atlases’ and involves 4 x two hour winter visits and 4 x two hour summer visits, the latter to try and establish what birds are possibly, probably or definitely breeding on the site.

1. **Birds recorded**

To date a total of 40 species have been recorded from 5 visits. This includes birds simply flying over (such as gulls) although some of these flying over will also be feeding on insects over the site (such as Swifts and Swallows)and are therefore relating to the land in some way. Definitely breeding on the site include Skylark, Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Goldfinch and Whitethroat. The first two of these, Skylark and Linnet, are on the Red List of Birds of Conservation concern. Up to 50 Linnets were also noted feeding on the site in late winter. Other Red Data species noted on site include Grey Partridge (up to 10 seen in winter) Tree Sparrow and Redpoll

The list is in alphabetical order.(n.b info relating to No.visits on which the particular bird was recorded, the conservation status and the breeding status on site will be included in the final report which will be produced at the end of the first complete survey year c December)

Species No.visits recorded Conservation Status Status on site (breeding etc.)

Black Headed Gull

Blackbird

Blue Tit

Carrion Crow

Chaffinch

Common Gull

Dunnock

Goldfinch

Great Tit

Greenfinch

Grey Partridge

Herring Gull

Jackdaw

Kestrel

Linnet

Magpie

Mallard

Meadow Pipit

Mistle Thrush

Nuthatch

Oystercatcher

Pheasant

Red Kite

Redpoll

Redwing

Reed Bunting

Robin

Skylark

Snipe

Song Thrush

Sparrowhawk

Starling

Swallow

Swift

Treecreeper

Tree Sparrow

Whitethroat

Willow Warbler

Wood Pigeon

Wren

1. **Next steps**

Three further survey visits will be held in July, October and December and a (slightly) more detailed report produced. Information will continue to be recorded on Bird Track. Monitoring may continue into 2019. I would be happy to include reference to any further species or interesting bird sightings by members. Forward details including date and time of record to chris.cox@care4free.net

Chris Cox June 2018