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AELTC application to develop Wimbledon Park Golf Course

Merton 21/P2900, Wandsworth 2021/3609

**Bird Species missed by the AELTC in their application documents.**

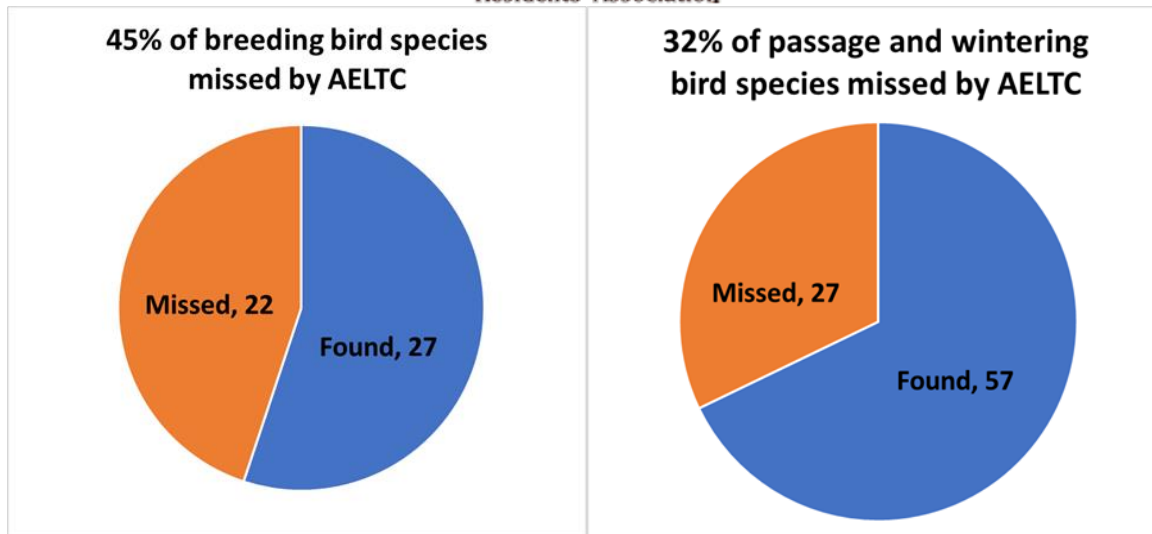
These observations were prepared by Dr D.G. Dawson for the Residents' Association. He is a professional applied environmental scientist, specialising in environmental methodologies. He worked on environment, biodiversity, ecology, and nature conservation for London government from 1983 until 2006 and he was joint Head of the Mayor of London's Environment Group. He developed Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature and led work on the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy for London.

Dr Dawson has lived in the area and taken a keen interest in Wimbledon Park flora and fauna for more than 35 years. We are most grateful to him for his knowledge and expertise.

Please treat this paper as a further planning objection.

For the Wimbledon Park Residents' Association, 56 Home Park Road, SW19 7HN.

Iain C. Simpson Chairman, Dr D. Dawson, and C.B. Coombe, Planning and Environment Committee



AELTC<sup>a</sup> carried out bird surveys for an Environmental Impact Assessment that accompanied the 2021 planning applications for intensive lawn tennis development. As in most other surveys of the existing condition of the application site, these were not adequate. An inadequate survey misses existing value, so biasing the evaluation of biodiversity net change.

105 bird species have been found in the application site in recent years<sup>b</sup>. This shows the site to be rich in birds<sup>c</sup>. 49 bird species depend upon the site for breeding<sup>d</sup>. AELTC<sup>e</sup> missed 22 of these breeding birds and 27 of the 84 species that occur there on migration or in the winter<sup>f</sup>.

**Breeding birds.** Eighteen of the confirmed breeding species were seen by AELTC, but they did not establish breeding. An extra four breeding species were not seen by AELTC: Little owl, Tawny owl, Sedge warbler and Willow warbler. The inadequacy of AELTC's survey clearly led to a significant undervaluing of the existing habitat value for breeding birds.

**Passage<sup>g</sup> and wintering birds.** The site is clearly more important for passage and wintering species than the AELTC survey would suggest. Nineteen species included in National or Regional Red and Amber Lists<sup>h</sup> had been seen recently, but were not found by AELTC: Common tern, Common sandpiper, Curlew, Gadwall, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Linnet, Meadow pipit, Pintail, Redpoll, Redshank, Sand martin, Shelduck, Short-eared owl, Skylark, Swallow, Tawny owl, Wigeon and Yellow wagtail. Again, the inadequacy of AELTC's survey clearly led to a significant undervaluing of the existing habitat value for important passage and wintering birds.

It is not just for bird habitat that AELTC's surveys of biodiversity value are deficient. There are similar biases in the Environmental Impact Assessment for almost all other plant and animal groups. This pervasive omission **invalidates AELTC's examination of biodiversity net gain.**



Bar-headed goose	Great white egret	Pochard
Barnacle goose	Green woodpecker	Raven
Black swan	Greenfinch	Redpoll
Blackbird	Grey heron	Redshank
Blackcap	Grey wagtail	Redwing
Black-headed gull	Greylag	Reed bunting
Blue tit	Herring gull	Reed warbler
Brambling	Hobby	Ring-necked parakeet
Buzzard	House martin	Robin
Canada goose	House sparrow	Sand martin
Carrion crow	Jack snipe	Sedge warbler
Cetti's warbler	Jackdaw	Shelduck
Chaffinch	Jay	Short-eared owl
Chiffchaff	Kestrel	Shoveller
Coal tit	Kingfisher	Siskin
Collared dove	Kite	Skylark
Common tern	Lapwing	Snipe
Common gull	Lesser black-backed gull	Song thrush
Common sandpiper	Lesser spotted woodpecker	Sparrowhawk
Coot	Lesser whitethroat	Spotted flycatcher
Cormorant	Linnet	Starling
Curlew	Little owl	Stock dove
Duncock	Little egret	Swallow
Eastern rosella	Little grebe	Swift
Egyptian Goose	Long-tailed tit	Tawny owl
Feral pigeon	Magpie	Tree creeper
Fieldfare	Mallard	Tufted duck
Gadwall	Meadow pipit	Water rail
Goldcrest	Mistle thrush	Whitethroat
Goldfinch	Moorhen	Wigeon
Goosander	Mute swan	Willow warbler
Great black-backed gull	Nuthatch	Woodpigeon
Great crested grebe	Pheasant	Wren
Great spotted woodpecker	Pied wagtail	Yellow wagtail
Great tit	Pintail	

The table lists the bird species found recently in the application site.

<sup>a</sup> The applicant formally was the All England Lawn Tennis Ground Plc, so a Public Limited Company, but is usually known under this acronym.

<sup>b</sup> Almost all the bird records were made by Dr Dawson. A few were added by expert members of the golf club and anglers. There were no species found by the AELTC surveys that were not already known to occur.

<sup>c</sup> 105 is a big number for a suburban site. For example, this is considerably more than the 80-odd species from Cannon Hill Common, studied by Ron Kettle for many years (Cannon Hill Common Birds, an update. London



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Bird Report 72:183-198.). The much-better-watched Wimbledon Common, which is a Special Area of Conservation, has a list of around 155 species (website).

<sup>d</sup> Most of these nested on site. Four (Grey Heron, Herring Gull, Swift and House Martin) bred nearby and commuted to the site to obtain food for their young. Since the AELTC survey, the Grey Heron has begun to breed there, but the breeding House Martins are now so distant that commuting to the site seems to have ceased.

<sup>e</sup> Environmental Impact Assessment, appendix 12.6.

<sup>f</sup> Environmental Impact Assessment, appendix 12.7.

<sup>g</sup> "Passage birds" are those that breed and winter elsewhere but visit the site whilst on migration.

<sup>h</sup> The Amber and Red lists are prepared by UK conservation organisations: [www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/uk-conservation-status-explained/](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/uk-conservation-status-explained/). London, also, has a list of priority species.

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