

Environmental Statement: Technical Appendix 8.8 – Alaw Môn Echoes Project Minutes 19 June 2023

ES TA 8.8

Development of National Significance

Alaw Môn Solar Farm

Land west of the B5112, 415m south of Llyn Alaw, 500m east of Llantrisant and 1.5km west of Llannerch-y-Medd, Anglesey

February 2024



<p>Alaw Môn Solar Farm: Echoes Project meeting 19 June 2023 11am BSG Project Ref: P23-363</p>	
<p>19 June 2023 11am (via Teams)</p>	
<p><u>Attendees:</u> Dr Rachel Taylor (British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) / Echoes Project) Callum MacGregor (British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) / Echoes Project) Owen Horrell (Enso Energy, Project Developer) Guy Miller (BSG Ecology, Principal Consultant Ecologist) Apologies: Rob Styles (Enso Energy)</p>	
<p><u>Note:</u> These notes record the discussion points from a meeting held between Enso Energy, the developer of the Alaw Môn Solar Farm; Dr Rachel Taylor, a research scientist at the BTO, based in Bangor; and BSG Ecology the consultant providing ecological advice to Enso Energy. The purpose of today’s meeting was to get an update in relation to the Echoes project white-fronted goose data, and to review the latest project findings with Rachel Taylor and Callum MacGregor, so that this can be considered in the EIA. Meetings with Rachel were previously carried out in 2021.</p>	
<p><u>Alaw Môn update:</u></p>	<p>Guy Miller gave a brief update on the current status of the project (it was temporarily on hold but is now being progressed and we are now updating baseline survey work from 2020/21 – breeding birds, great crested newt and habitat survey data) as part of the EIA process.</p>
<p><u>Echoes project update</u></p>	<p>Callum/Rachel gave a brief update on the status of the Echoes project: There are no new data since the last consultation, and no further data are expected (currently one bird has died; one has lost its collar, so is no longer transmitting; the third bird is wintering on Colonsay, Scotland). There are no plans to tag further birds at the present time. The project currently involves analysis of the existing data, including day and night data. The project is due to come to an end in June 2023, when the project data administration is simplified as data ownership is passed from the EU funding body to the BTO.</p>
<p><u>Key discussion points</u></p>	<p>The geese are using two areas in Anglesey:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Llyn Alaw and surroundings, including the fields to the north, and Llyn Hafodol (open water and wetland habitat to the north-west of Llyn Alaw) 2) Cefni valley, 15km to the southwest. <p>Within Llyn Alaw, the roost is mainly in the northern part of the reservoir; a bay part-way down the east side of the reservoir is also used, possibly this is more sheltered in windy conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The birds are considered to be site-faithful, and therefore the existing data is considered likely to be broadly representative of typical use/habitat selection. The data are from just one winter, and it is not possible to rule out use of other fields, and that patterns of activity might vary between year. Although the tagging work has ceased, visual observations from Cefni area, suggest that the birds are continuing to use the same fields in this area. • Raw data analysis has considered both daytime and night-time activity, and flight behaviour. Night behaviour can vary depending on the moon phase – there may be some feeding activity at night in full moon phase; dawn/dusk

	<p>activity can blur the distinction between activity/location between night and day; caution is required when interpreting data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The birds tend not to move far from roost sites (estimated to be maximum of 3.5 – 4kms). • Habitat suitability and behaviour has been modelled by the BTO; this includes consideration of habitat type (e.g. pasture and wetland), distance from roost sites and elevation (land above 80m is the cut off used in the model; the data indicate that birds very rarely use habitat above this height, and that lower lying areas, valleys are preferred). This data could be obtained from BTO. • Birds can become habituated to some human activity (e.g. farming activities) however they are generally sensitive to disturbance; particularly any work/activity that could be confused with hunting (e.g. loud bangs, people holding tools/equipment that resembles guns). Certain construction phase activities could therefore have potential to disturb birds, if nearby areas were used. • At distances over 2kms (where there is a line of sight) the geese are unlikely to be unaffected by disturbance (e.g. pedestrians on the horizon); closer than this, where sight lines exist, there is potential for disturbance. Where there is human disturbance within two fields distance birds tend to be sufficiently disturbed to fly off. • Flight lines are generally likely to be along shallow valleys. During longer flights birds are at altitude. If disturbed, birds will fly low along hedgerows. A flight line (birds are flying to the Cefni Site from Llyn Hafodol) crosses part of the Site; birds would be expected to be at height on these flights. Other regular flight lines (linking Llyn Alaw and Cefni) are to the generally east of the Site. • The geese are not present between mid-April and late October. This is a good time to plan for work that could otherwise give rise to disturbance. • Geese numbers and recruitment are thought to be dropping; the decline may have a link to avian flu. Precautionary assessment is recommended. • No other local development projects are currently discussing impacts on white-fronted geese on Anglesey with BTO.
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Minutes taken by Guy Miller, BSG Ecology

19 June 2023