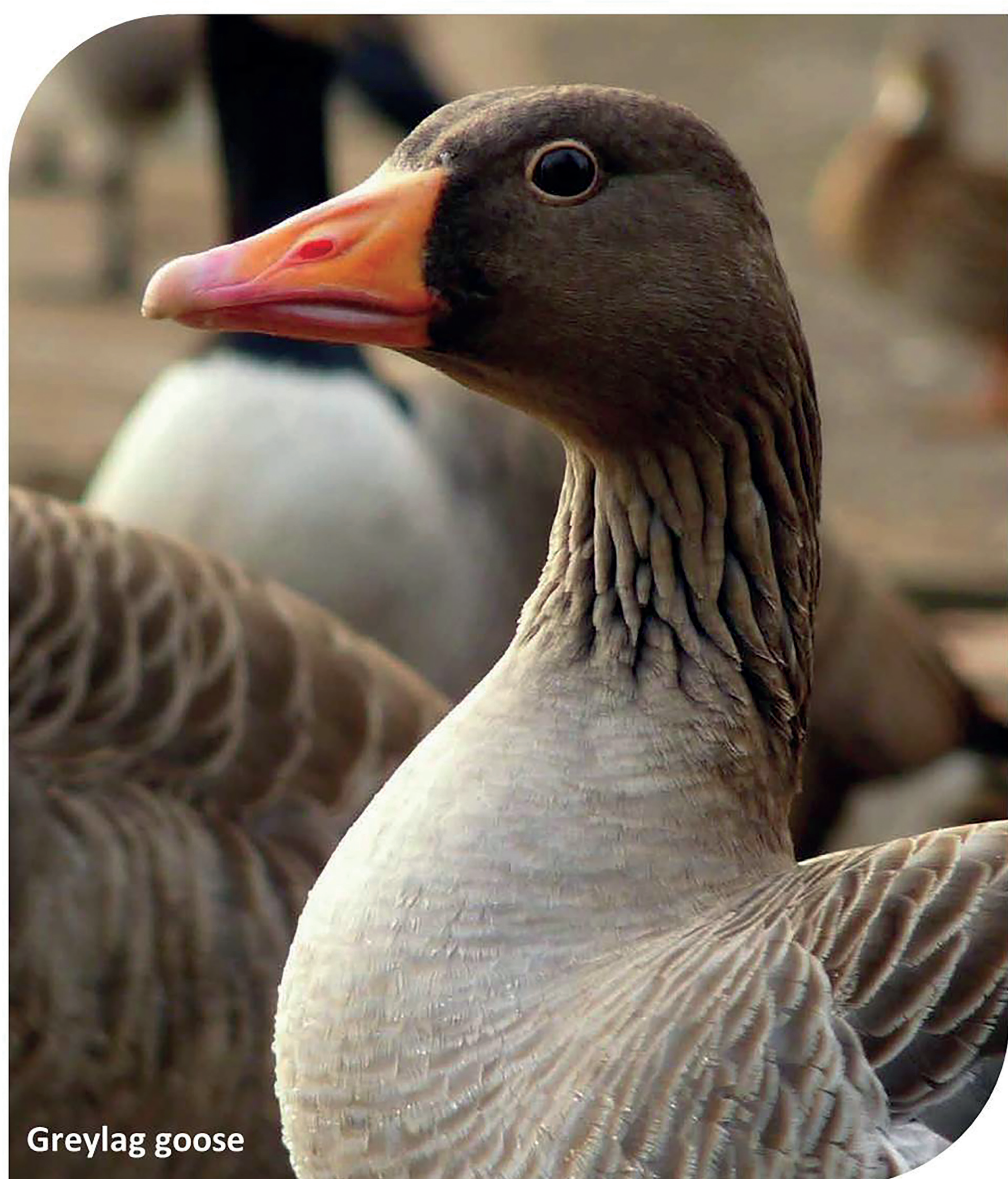


Gordonbush wind farm - proposed extension

Environmental considerations

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to identify and assess potential environmental impacts of the proposed extension to Gordonbush wind farm. The information gathered through the EIA process has helped to shape the design and layout of the proposed extension and identify any required mitigation measures. The findings of the EIA will be reported in an Environmental Statement (ES) which will accompany our planning application.



Greylag goose

Ornithology

We have a good understanding of the bird activity in the area due to the bird survey work that has been undertaken since 2003 in relation to the existing site. Further surveys were undertaken between 2009 and 2012 as part of the existing operational site and this is in addition to the survey work carried out in 2012 and 2013 in relation to the proposed extension.

Species identified on site include Golden Plover, Greylag Geese, Pink Footed Geese, Greenshank, and Skylark amongst others. Survey results have indicated that there are no significant impacts on the range of identified species.

Ecology

A range of habitats are present on site including woodland plantation, rush pasture, grasslands and mire communities.

There are also two nearby designations which lie within 5km:

- *Coir' an Eoin SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest)* – to the west. This is part of the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- *Carrol Rock SSSI* – on the south-westerly shore of Loch Brora

The presence of Otter, Water Vole, Bats, Atlantic Salmon and Brown Trout, amongst others, were also surveyed within the site and surrounding area.

Surveys for habitat, fish and protected species have been undertaken within the development site from 2012 to 2014. Assessments to date have indicated that there are no significant impacts on protected species and habitats.

Other environmental aspects

The EIA has also considered potential effects on traffic and transport; noise; peat stability; geology and hydrology; cultural heritage; telecommunications; aviation and other infrastructure. The EIA surveys conclude that there are no detrimental effects in these areas and survey results are within national guidance levels.

Assessments have also been undertaken on land-use; tourism; recreation and socio-economics. No significant effects are anticipated, however the development is anticipated to contribute positively through the wind farm supply chain.



Otter