

Species and Habitat Action Plan Assessment Form

Field 1: Action Plan details

Species/Habitat Action Plan	Silver Spotted Skipper
Lead Partner/Agency	Butterfly Conservation
Steering Group/Other organisations	Butterfly Conservation, English Nature, FRCA/MAFF, Leeds University, Wildlife Trusts Partnership, National Trust, Surrey County Council, MOD, JNCC.
Work programme in existence?	Yes

Field 2: Objectives and targets overview

Number and text	UK	E	NI	S	W	Comments
4.1 Maintain populations throughout the current range, through conservation of large colonies and/or networks of smaller populations.		✓				
4.2 Conduct strategic re-introductions to large sites or a network of small sites.		✓				
4.3 Ensure that a minimum number of colonies are protected within SSSIs.		✓				

Field 3: Proposed actions overview

Number and text	UK	E	NI	S	W	Action significant?	Action complete or ongoing?
5.1.1 Promote favourable land management on occupied grassland, and those within dispersal range of existing colonies appropriate schemes, (e.g. ESAs, Countryside Stewardship etc.).		✓				✓	Ongoing
5.1.2 Encourage approval of licensing trials of rabbit VHD vaccine in the UK.	✓					X	?
5.2.1 Ensure that at least 20 colonies lie within SSSIs across the current geographical range of the species.		✓				✓	Yes
5.2.2 Encourage appropriate management of all known sites with large populations, and associated occupied or potential sites, to encourage the formation of networks.		✓				✓	Ongoing
5.3.1 Conduct strategic re-introductions into suitably restored habitat, if beyond the limits of natural spread.		✓				X	Ongoing
5.4.1 Advise site managers on appropriate habitat management, possibly through the production of an advisory guide.		✓				X	Ongoing
5.5.1 Define the terms 'large' and 'medium- sized' colonies to assist in prioritising conservation action.		✓				X	Ongoing
5.5.2 Survey to identify suitable sites for re-introduction.		✓				X	Ongoing

5.5.3 Investigate rabbit VHD and likely impacts on Silver Spotted Skipper habitat.		✓				X	?
5.5.4 Investigate the suitability of creating new habitats for the species through restoration of inappropriately managed areas.		✓				X	Not started
5.5.5 Encourage regular monitoring of extant sites, continuing existing transects on known sites, and using the information to identify further threats to the species.		✓				X	Yes
5.5.6 Conduct further research on ideal management regimes.		✓				✓	Yes
5.5.7 Encourage research on the ecology and conservation of this species on an international level and use the information and experience gained towards its conservation in the UK.	✓					X	Not started
5.5.8 Pass information gathered during survey and monitoring of this species to JNCC or BRC so that it can be incorporated in national databases.		✓				X	Yes
5.5.9 Provide information annually to the World Conservation Monitoring Centre on the UK status of the species to contribute to maintenance of an up-to-date global red lists.	✓					✓	Action dropped
5.6.1 Promote opportunities for the appreciation and conservation this butterfly and its habitat, and use the species to illustrate the problems of habitat fragmentation.		✓				X	Ongoing

Field 4: Assessment of status

	Not appropriate	Recovered	Signs of recovery	No change	Declining	Lost	Insufficient information
<i>UK</i>							
<i>England</i>			✓				
<i>Northern Ireland</i>							
<i>Scotland</i>							
<i>Wales</i>							

The Silver-Spotted Skipper butterfly is presently monitored systematically at 24 sites. Numbers of Silver Spotted Skipper at monitored sites have generally increased over the past decade or more. Of the seventeen breeding sites that have been monitored for five or more years, thirteen have shown substantial increases, while none of the monitored sites have shown significant declines. There has also been re-occupation of a few adjacent sites in some of the key areas.

Field 5: Summary statement

<p>Overview</p> <p>The Silver-Spotted Skipper butterfly has generally increased in number over the past decade, following large scale declines previously, and it remains restricted to eight key areas. The general increase in Silver-Spotted Skipper numbers may be related to improved management for the species and recovering rabbit populations. Where management is favourable, the increases should be sustained, although at some sites the species may remain vulnerable to fluctuations in the rabbit population.</p> <p>Summary of work programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey –systematic survey work as part of the Butterflies for the New Millennium project. • Status - Monitoring and survey between 1995 and 1998 highlight a slight re-expansion following decline. • Monitoring – The Silver Spotted Skipper is monitored on over 20 transects co-ordinated by BC branches. EN (SRP) fund BC to collate this data and a summary report was produced in 1998. • Management/Restoration - • Research – Long term management trials are ongoing, a review of management on sites was included in the BC/EN report for 1998. • Threats – changes in habitat suitability, resulting primarily from under-grazing . • Constraints – Financial resources are still far to limited to achieve the targets through Agri-environment and other management agreements. Other actions are constrained by a lack of resources – volunteers and staff. • Future work - Continue to monitor the agri-environment programme and develop the schemes in response to the results. Further advisory and site based work. Continue research. Fund raising.
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Field 6: Signing off

Contact details	Lead Partner	Contact Point
Name	Dr Nigel Bourn	Dr David Sheppard
Organisation	Butterfly Conservation	English Nature
Assessment date (dd/mm/yy)	30/9/99	30/9/99

Table A: Action Plan objectives and targets

Objective/target	4.1 Maintain populations throughout the current range, through conservation of large colonies and/or networks of smaller populations.				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
<i>UK</i>		✓			
<i>England</i>					
<i>Northern Ireland</i>					
<i>Scotland</i>					
<i>Wales</i>					
<p>The Silver-Spotted Skipper is restricted to eight main centres of population in the UK. In all but one numbers have been increasing in the 1990s.</p> <p>Dorset / West Hampshire Downs (1) Before 1990, two large populations occurred on the Wiltshire / Hampshire border. In the past decade or so, two further sites have been colonised, and the butterfly has been observed in small numbers in other areas of chalk grassland in southern Wiltshire and western Hampshire.</p> <p>Dorset / West Hampshire Downs (2) There is one colony in this area and numbers have generally improved, although the population remains small.</p> <p>Dorset / West Hampshire Downs (3) There is one substantial colony in this area. Silver-Spotted Skipper numbers have remained fairly consistent (maximum 52, mean 22). Unlike many other sites, there has been no upward trend in numbers of Silver-Spotted Skipper between 1980 and 1998.</p> <p>East Kent The Silver-Spotted Skipper has increased in number and distribution in East Kent, in conjunction with habitat management at its main refuge site. Introductions elsewhere in Kent were deemed appropriate into habitat too fragmented to be naturally recolonised.</p> <p>Surrey The overall picture for Silver-Spotted Skipper in Surrey is a positive one. Populations are increasing at most sites, generally in conjunction with changed management. Populations have generally increased from very low levels, however.</p> <p>East Sussex Numbers and distribution appear to be increasing.</p> <p>East Hampshire In East Hampshire, two large Silver-Spotted Skipper populations remain on National Nature Reserves. Populations at both sites appear to have increased in size, suggesting that habitat management has been beneficial for the species.</p> <p>The Chilterns Numbers have generally increased on all monitored sites in the Chilterns</p>					

Objective/target	4.2 Conduct strategic re-introductions to large sites or a network of small sites.				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
<i>UK</i>					
<i>England</i>			✓		
<i>Northern Ireland</i>					
<i>Scotland</i>					
<i>Wales</i>					

Four monitored introductions have taken place in the 1990s but it is too early to assess their success.

Dorset / West Hampshire Downs (3) A reintroduction has been attempted at Hambleton Hill (English Nature) over the last 3 years but no definite populations have become established.

East Kent The species was reintroduced to Wye Downs (English Nature) and Burham Downs (Kent Wildlife Trust) in 1997. Silver-Spotted Skippers were recorded at Wye during 1998. The other Kent introduction site, Burham Downs, is located approximately half way between the east Kent populations, and the colonies on the North Downs in Surrey. Silver-Spotted Skippers were recorded at Burham during 1998.

East Hampshire Silver-Spotted Skipper was introduced to Oxenbourne Down (managed by Hampshire County Council in conjunction with Hampshire Wildlife Trust) in the early 1990s. A small population has become established.

Objective/target	4.3 Ensure that a minimum number of colonies are protected within SSSIs.				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
<i>UK</i>					
<i>England</i>		✓			
<i>Northern Ireland</i>					
<i>Scotland</i>					
<i>Wales</i>					
Almost all sites are believed to be SSSI or NNR but this needs confirming.					

Table B: Proposed actions

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.1.1 Promote favourable land management on occupied grassland, and those within dispersal range of existing colonies appropriate schemes, (e.g. ESAs, Countryside Stewardship etc.). ACTION CC EN MAFF Countryside Commission removed from lead agencies as they no longer run Countryside Stewardship.
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	To ensure reviews develop a more flexible and targeted approach towards BAP species To ensure all available data on distribution is available to MAFF/FRCA project officers.
Action/workplan undertaken?	Yes
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	MAFF – Uptake is variable between ESAs but of the two significant for Silver Spotted Skipper, the South Downs (a key area with quarter of all colonies) has 38% uptake, mainly in the east of the ESA where most colonies are found. The South Wessex Downs has 52% uptake but the only large site Fontmell Down, is not presently entered. Countryside Stewardship data are not available but the scheme has been targeted on neutral and chalk grassland and two sites in Kent are under agreement. The ESAs reviewed in the last tranche developed more flexibility and targeting towards BAP species, for example an extensive grazing tier specifically for Marsh Fritillary in the South Wessex Downs ESA. There are no specific criteria available through Countryside Stewardship for any species at the moment.

Output and timescale	Only these schemes can operate at the landscape scale necessary to continue the recovery of the Silver Spotted Skipper. Significant numbers of sites entered under potentially sensitive management prescriptions are essential.	<i>Action by</i> MAFF, EN
Constraints to action	ESA and CS schemes have to balance wildlife objectives with others concerning landscape, historic features and access; and spending is inevitably limited by budgetary constraints. As voluntary schemes, they cannot guarantee full coverage of all eligible sites with this species.	
Action complete or ongoing?	Ongoing	
Next steps	MAFF report that BAP priority habitats and species will be taken into consideration in future scheme reviews and regional consultations when these take place. Increase the level of funding for the agri-environment programme in the UK to ensure all eligible sites with this species are covered with appropriate management agreements. Continue to highlight the importance of these schemes in delivering BAP targets. Continue to monitor these schemes in relation to their effectiveness in terms of delivery of BAP targets.	
Output and timescale	See earlier	<i>Action by</i> MAFF, EN

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.2.1 Ensure that at least 20 colonies lie within SSSIs across the current geographical range of the species. ACTION EN	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	EN to review coverage of species on SSSIs in England.	
Action/workplan undertaken?	Partly	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	Analysis of monitored sites indicates that all but three are in conservation ownership. While monitoring tends to be on reserves, the very high level of monitoring for this species suggests that a very high proportion of sites are designated.	
Output and timescale		<i>Action by</i> EN
Constraints to action	Resources – staff time	
Action complete or ongoing?	Ongoing	
Next steps	Review as part of new English Nature/Leeds University project.	
Output and timescale	Various reports by 2002	<i>Action by</i> EN, Leeds University

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.2.2 Encourage appropriate management of all known sites with large populations, and associated occupied or potential sites, to encourage the formation of networks. ACTION EN	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	EN to confirm that all relevant SSSIs have Site Management Statements and management agreements which mention the presence of Silver Spotted Skipper and incorporate its requirements.	
Action/workplan undertaken?	No	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	Information on networks has been researched and published in a paper. Report by BC (part funded by EN Species Recovery Grant) highlighted status of populations in key areas and potential for natural spread into appropriately managed areas.	

Output and timescale	Paper, Report	<i>Action by</i> EN, Leeds University, BC
Constraints to action	Resources – staff time	
Action complete or ongoing?	Ongoing	
Next steps	Follow up work, could include management advice, training days etc. if resources were available.	
Output and timescale	Better targeted management and feedback to site owners and managers.	<i>Action by</i> EN, BC

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.5.5 Encourage regular monitoring of extant sites, continuing existing transects on known sites, and using the information to identify further threats to the species. ACTION EN	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	All to further develop the network of sites being monitored and seek funding to allow this to be done. BC to determine the present state of monitoring on this species and seek funds to collate data and review trends. Monitoring of the impact of ESAs on BAP species is desirable, and may be possible to a limited extent using volunteers.	
Action/workplan undertaken?	Yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	EN's Species Recovery Programme part funded a detailed report on monitoring by BC in 1998. 24 sites are presently monitored, although recommendations for new sites have led to an increase in 1999. Annual egg numbers are monitored on Beacon Hill NNR in Hampshire as part of a long term research project by BC on the effects of management.	
Output and timescale	Report available from BC. Increased monitoring Knowledge of present trends (see objective 4.1) and impact of management.	<i>Action by</i> EN, BC
Constraints to action	Further reporting back to volunteers is constrained by a lack of resources. Further development of volunteer monitoring may be hampered by lack of volunteers.	
Action complete or ongoing?	Ongoing	
Next steps	Continue to produce occasional reports on the status of Silver Spotted Skipper as resources allow.	
Output and timescale	Reports, feed back on management etc.	<i>Action by</i> EN, BC

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.5.6 Conduct further research on ideal management regimes.	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	BC and EN to write an EN research report on the results of experimental management. ACTION EN	
Action/workplan undertaken?	Yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	There have been long term trials on different grazing regimes and their impact on Silver Spotted Skipper in Hampshire for 11 years by BC. A summary of this work was published in BC News but details have not yet been published, although considerable progress on a report has been made. The Steering Group is not aware of any other research on this.	
Output and timescale	Report expected by end of year.	<i>Action by</i> EN, BC
Constraints to action	Staff time to complete report.	
Action complete or ongoing?	Ongoing	
Next steps	Further research proposal to be developed.	

Output and timescale		<i>Action by</i> EN, BC Leeds Univ
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Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.5.5 Provide information annually to the World Conservation Monitoring Centre on the UK status of the species to contribute to maintenance of an up-to-date global red lists. ACTION JNCC	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	N/A	
Action/workplan undertaken?	No	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	N/A	
Output and timescale	N/A	<i>Action by</i>
Constraints to action	WCMC do not wish to receive raw data sets as they are not established to maintain them.	
Action complete or ongoing?	Not started	
Next steps	Action dropped	
Output and timescale	N/A	<i>Action by</i>