

# Species and Habitat Action Plan Assessment Form

## Field 1: Action Plan details

<b>Species/Habitat Action Plan</b>	TURTLE DOVE <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
<b>Lead Partner/Agency</b>	RSPB/ EN
<b>Steering Group/Other organisations</b>	Covered by the umbrella Lowland Farmland Bird Species Action Plan Steering Group which is responsible for 10 BAP species.  Current membership: BTO, CCW, DANI, DETR, DoE(NI), EHS, EN, FRCA, GCT, JNCC, MAFF, PSD, RSPB, SNH, SOAEFD, WOAD.
<b>Work programme in existence?</b>	Planned for February 2000

## Field 2: Objectives and targets overview

Number and text	UK	E	NI	S	W	Comments
4.1 <i>In the short term , halt or reverse the decline in numbers of the turtle dove by the year 2003 so that the Breeding Bird Survey index is at least 1996 levels</i>	Y					Country targets to be considered by February 2000.
4.2 <i>In the long term see a sustained recovery in numbers so that the BBS index is at least 50% higher than 1996 levels and the range has recovered to 1968/72 levels by 2008.</i>	Y					

## Field 3: Proposed actions overview

Number and text	UK	E	NI	S	W	Action significant?	Action complete or ongoing?
5.1.1 <i>Take account of the need to recover turtle dove and other farmland bird populations when developing agricultural policy and CAP reform; consider how to extend the Arable Stewardship Scheme if the pilot is successful, and how to substitute for the benefits of set-aside, if this is further reduced or abolished. Retention of hedgerows, thickets and other scrub/wooded habitats on farmland should be encouraged.</i>	Y					Y	ongoing
5.1.2 <i>Where appropriate, incorporate new management prescriptions when reviewing agri-environment schemes especially ESAs, Countryside Stewardship, Tir Cymen and Countryside Premium Scheme in order to reverse some of the recent changes in farm management...</i>		Y			Y	Y	ongoing
5.1.3 <i>Seek a more cautious and targeted use of pesticides and fertilisers on farmland to reduce the impacts on potential food sources for the turtle dove. . This could include encouraging integrated crop management, organic farming and the more widespread adoption of initiatives such as s the recently begun Scottish 'TIBRE' project.</i>		Y			Y	Y	ongoing

5.1.4 Support the European Commission in its efforts to enforce article 7 of the Birds Directive on the hunting of the turtle dove	Y					Y	ongoing
5.2.1 Ensure appropriate management of areas of scrub on protected sites (including nature reserves ) within the existing and former range of the turtle dove		Y			Y	N	ongoing
5.4.1 Promote further advice to land managers on management for turtle dove as one of a suite of farmland birds and update that advice in the light of new policies and research findings.		Y			Y	Y	ongoing
5.4.2. Promote effective management of set-aside for breeding birds, including turtle dove		Y			Y	N	not yet started
5.4.3 Promote the sympathetic management of hedgerows and farmland scrub for the benefit of turtle dove and other farmland birds.		Y			Y	Y	ongoing
5.5.1. Compare Nest Record Cards from the 1960s with those from recent years in order to look for possible explanations for the population decline	Y					Y	not yet started
5.5.2 Undertake a study into the summer ecology and habitat use of turtle doves, including an assessment of diet and a comparison with a study carried out in the 1960s.	Y					Y	ongoing
5.5.3 Ensure appropriate monitoring of turtle dove breeding numbers through continuation of the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey.	Y					Y	ongoing
5.6.1 Use the turtle dove as an example of a bird under pressure from factors operating outside the UK in order to promote increased protection and beneficial habitat management throughout its range. JNCC		Y			Y	N	ongoing

**Field 4: Assessment of status**

Please tick the appropriate category to indicate the assessment of status of the species or habitat, for each country/region where appropriate, and provide a statement supporting the category selected.

	Not appropriate	Recovered	Signs of recovery	No change	Declining	Lost	Insufficient information
UK					Y		
England							Y
Northern Ireland	Y*						
Scotland	Y*						
Wales							Y

UK Common Birds Census (CBC) trend indicates continuous decline since 1970s CBC sample too small for country trends and Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) country trends have not yet been analysed (England) or the sample size is too small (Wales). It is hoped to have a BBS trend analysed for England by 2000.

The UK BBS trend from 1994 to 1998 was -9% although this wasn't statistically significant. This means that the measured decline could be an artefact (of say sampling strategy). Taken in conjunction with the CBC trend, however, it would appear that the best assessment of current status is declining.

**\* Outside species range prior to decline**

**Field 5: Summary statement**

The ongoing research project will provide information on how breeding turtle doves use their farmland habitat. Prescriptions that will probably enhance turtle dove habitat are already in place in Tir Gofal and the pilot Arable Stewardship Scheme. The financial and geographical constraints on these schemes means that it is unlikely that these prescriptions will be taken up on a wide enough scale to allow the plan targets to be met. More needs to be done to try and ameliorate factors operating outside the UK, especially hunting.

**Field 6: Signing off**

Contact details	Lead Partner	Contact Point
<b>Name</b>	A D Evans	
<b>Organisation</b>	RSPB	
<b>Assessment date (dd/mm/yy)</b>	22/10/99	

Completed forms should be submitted to JNCC

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**Table A: Action Plan objectives and targets (Copiable table)**

Objective/target	4.1 <i>In the short term , halt or reverse the decline in numbers of the turtle dove by the year 2003 so that the Breeding Bird Survey index is at least 1996 levels</i>				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
UK				Y	
England					Y
Northern Ireland	Y*				
Scotland	Y*				
Wales					Y
<p>The UK Breeding Bird Survey (BBS ) trend from 1994 to 1998 was -9% although this wasn't statistically significant. This means that the measured decline could be an artefact (of say sampling strategy). Taken in conjunction with the Common Birds Census trend , however, it would appear that the best assessment of current status is declining.</p> <p>BBS country trends not yet available (England) or small sample sizes (Wales) It is hoped to have a BBS trend analysed for England by 2000.</p> <p>* Outside species range prior to decline</p>					

Objective/target	4.2 <i>In the long term see a sustained recovery in numbers so that the BBS index is at least 50% higher than 1996 levels and the range has recovered to 1968/72 levels by 2008.</i>				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
UK					Y
England					Y
Northern Ireland	Y*				
Scotland	Y*				
Wales					Y
<p>Text description of target progress (separate for each country/region):</p> <p>Too early to assess progress but the signs are not good. See comments under 4.1</p> <p><b>* Outside species range prior to decline</b></p>					

**Table B: Proposed actions (Copiable table)**

<b>Published action/organisation(s) responsible</b>	5.1.1 <i>Take account of the need to recover turtle dove and other farmland bird populations when developing agricultural policy and CAP reform; consider how to extend the Arable Stewardship Scheme if the pilot is successful, and how to substitute for the benefits of set-aside, if this is further reduced or abolished. Retention of hedgerows, thickets and other scrub/wooded habitats on farmland should be encouraged.</i> DANI, FA, MAFF, SOAEFD, WOAD	
<b>Work plan/organisation(s) responsible</b>		
<b>Action/workplan undertaken?</b>	yes	
<b>Description of work taken and organisation responsible</b>	See also 5.1.2 DANI needs of farmland birds taken into account when developing Countryside Management Scheme. Outside range of turtle dove. MAFF The needs of the turtle dove along with other farmland birds were taken into account when developing the pilot Arable Stewardship Scheme. The requirements of BAP priority species were taken into account in recent (1996–98) quinquennial ESA scheme reviews and some tier options were modified accordingly. These are summarised in the BAP tables published in individual ESA Consultation Documents. One output of these reviews was the introduction of new arable and grassland prescriptions that will provide conditions beneficial for turtle doves. Some ESAs offer arable reversion prescriptions which may conflict with the interests of arable species. CS scheme consultation is carried out at regular intervals to define regional targets which in many cases address regional BAP priorities. The scheme contains options for the management of field margins. Set-aside has been set at 10% under Agenda 2000 reforms. MAFF will continue to press for further CAP reform. The Governments long-term objective remains to phase out production subsidies and to use some of the savings for targeted agri-environment and rural development measures. SOAEFD needs of farmland birds taken into account when developing Countryside Premium Scheme. Outside range of turtle dove. WOAD Providing funding to CCW to establish and run new all-Wales agri-environment scheme, Tir Gofal which includes measures designed to benefit turtle dove. Agri-environment schemes in all parts of the UK encourage the planting and restoration of hedgerows. ESAs and the CS scheme contain measures for the maintenance and enhancement of hedgerows. Legislation to strengthen protection of hedgerows has been introduced (see 5.4.3).	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	CMS First agreements spring 2000 Pilot AS First agreements in 1998 due to run until 2002 CPS First agreements 1997 Tir Gofal: first agreements late 1999, early 2000	Action by DANI MAFF, SOAEFD WOAD,
<b>Constraints to action</b>	All these schemes are currently limited in terms of financial resources. The scale of enhancement of turtle dove habitat achievable given the current resources will be unlikely to be sufficient to permit the objectives of this plan to be met. CAP reform hampered by relative inflexibility in EU.	
<b>Action complete or ongoing?</b>	ongoing	
<b>Next steps</b>	To be determined	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	To be determined	Action by

<b>Published action/organisation(s) responsible</b>	5.1.2. 'Where appropriate, incorporate new management prescriptions when reviewing agri-environment schemes, especially ESAs, Countryside Stewardship, Tir Cymen and Countryside Premium Scheme, in order to reverse some of the recent changes in farm management outlined in Section 2.'	
<b>Work plan/organisation(s) responsible</b>	CCW, DANI, MAFF, SOAEFD, WOAD	
<b>Action/workplan undertaken?</b>	yes	
<b>Description of work taken and organisation responsible</b>	See also 5.1.1 CCW: Management prescriptions under Tir Gofal include sympathetic management of a range of farmland habitats for birds. DANI CMS includes prescriptions for sympathetic management of arable fields and their margins and boundaries but outside range of turtle dove MAFF Arable prescriptions have recently become available in some ESAs (South Downs, Breckland & Cotswolds) and field margin prescriptions (in both arable and grass fields) are now available through mainstream Countryside Stewardship. SOAEFD CPS includes prescriptions for sympathetic management of arable fields and their margins and boundaries but outside range of turtle dove. WOAD Providing funding to CCW to establish and run Tir Gofal.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	CMS first agreements due spring 2000 Pilot AS introduced in 1998 due to run until 2002 CPS First agreements 1997 Tir Gofal: first agreements late 1999, early 2000	<i>Action by</i> CCW DANI MAFF SOAEFD WOAD
<b>Constraints to action</b>	The scale of protection or enhancement of turtle dove habitat achievable given the current resources allocated to these schemes will not be sufficient to permit the objectives of this plan to be met. Agri-environment schemes have to balance wildlife objectives with others concerning landscape, historic features and access; and spending is currently limited by budgetary constraints. As voluntary schemes they cannot guarantee full coverage of all eligible sites .	
<b>Action complete or ongoing?</b>	ongoing	
<b>Next steps</b>	To ensure needs of turtle dove are met by pilot AS and Tir Gofal when results of research are known. To secure substantial increase in funding for these schemes.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	To be determined	<i>Action by</i>

<b>Published action/organisation(s) responsible</b>	5.1.3 Seek a more cautious and targeted use of pesticides and fertilisers on farmland to reduce the impacts on potential food sources for the turtle dove. This could include encouraging integrated crop management, organic farming and the more widespread adoption of initiatives such as the recently begun Scottish 'TIBRE' project. DANI, MAFF, SOAEFD, WOAD	
<b>Work plan/organisation(s) responsible</b>		
<b>Action/workplan undertaken?</b>	yes	
<b>Description of work taken and organisation responsible</b>	<p>MAFF (PSD): The Statutory Code of Practice for the safe use of pesticides on farms and holdings was revised and reissued in 1999. The revision included strengthened guidance on environmental protection generally. The Pesticides Forum aims to promote the adoption of Integrated Crop Management (although whether pesticide reduction goes far enough under ICM to deliver biodiversity benefits needs to be fully investigated) and other initiatives directed at reducing the impact of pesticides. A variety of activities by Forum members, including research and development, training, advice, demonstration and crop assurance support these objectives. Increased Government support and stronger market demand for organics is leading to increased conversion of farms.</p> <p>MAFF have recently commissioned further research into the role of the indirect effects of pesticides in the declines of farmland birds, and an assessment of whether the current regulatory procedure is adequate to protect against these effects. We must ensure that the recommendations from this work are adopted as quickly as possible. In addition, DETR have established a sub-group of ACRE to consider the wider biodiversity issues related to the release of GMOs, and their work has clear implications for the future assessment of pesticides in relation to their use on GM crops.</p> <p>Agri-environment schemes encourage the reduced use of pesticides and fertilisers.</p> <p>DANI, SOAEFD, WOAD No action reported other than prescriptions for pesticide reduction within agri-environment schemes covered in 5.1.1 &amp; 5.1.2.</p>	
<b>Output and timescale</b>		<i>Action by</i> MAFF
<b>Constraints to action</b>		
<b>Action complete or ongoing?</b>	ongoing	
<b>Next steps</b>	Whilst progress has been made the Forum needs to give full consideration to the targets and proposed actions contained in the SAPs for farmland species.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	To be determined	<i>Action by</i>

<b>Published action/organisation(s) responsible</b>	5.1.4 <i>Support the European Commission in its efforts to enforce Article 7 of the Birds Directive on hunting of the turtle dove.</i> DETR, FO	
<b>Work plan/organisation(s) responsible</b>		
<b>Action/workplan undertaken?</b>	yes	
<b>Description of work taken and organisation responsible</b>	DETR: The UK has supported the European Commission with respect to the actions taken against France for its contravention of the Wild Birds Directive. The European Court of Justice is still considering the case.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>		Action by DETR
<b>Constraints to action</b>		
<b>Action complete or ongoing?</b>	ongoing	
<b>Next steps</b>	To be determined	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	To be determined	Action by

<b>Published action/organisation(s) responsible</b>	5.4.1 <i>Promote further advice to land managers on management for turtle dove as one of a suite of farmland birds and update that advice in the light of new policies and research findings.</i> MAFF, WOAD	
<b>Work plan/organisation(s) responsible</b>		
<b>Action/workplan undertaken?</b>	yes	
<b>Description of work taken and organisation responsible</b>	MAFF: Sponsored the RSPB publication <i>A Management Guide to Birds of Lowland Farmland</i> by GW Dodds, MJ Appleby and AD Evans, produced in association with the BTO, FWAG and GCT. The publication has been disseminated to advisers to inform them about farmland bird conservation and to improve the quality of advice that they give. This species is given brief coverage.  RSPB: Published the above, Has run a programme of seminars and workshops, often in association with other conservation bodies, to train dedicated farm advisers (eg CCW, FWAG, FRCA, SAC) which focus on the farmland bird BAP species. See also 5.4.2.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	See above.	Action by RSPB MAFF GCT FWAG BTO
<b>Constraints to action</b>	Lack of species specific knowledge	
<b>Action complete or ongoing?</b>	ongoing	
<b>Next steps</b>	New research results will be used to update the information given to farmers and advisors.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	2002	Action by

<b>Published action/organisation(s) responsible</b>	5.4.3 Promote the sympathetic management of hedgerows and farmland scrub for the benefit of turtle dove and other farmland birds. MAFF, WOAD	
<b>Work plan/organisation(s) responsible</b>		
<b>Action/workplan undertaken?</b>	yes	
<b>Description of work taken and organisation responsible</b>	MAFF Since June 1997 important hedgerows (as defined in the Hedgerow Regulations) have been protected from removal in England and Wales. The Government is currently considering how these regulations can be strengthened. Agri-environment schemes in all parts of the UK encourage the planting and restoration of hedgerows. ESAs and the CS scheme contain measures for the maintenance and enhancement of hedgerows. EN and SNH have recently commissioned a comprehensive review of the biodiversity interest of scrub habitats and the priorities for their conservation.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>		<i>Action by</i> MAFF, EN, SNH
<b>Constraints to action</b>		
<b>Action complete or ongoing?</b>	ongoing	
<b>Next steps</b>	Disseminate results of EN/SNH review	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	To be determined by Steering Group	<i>Action by</i>

<b>Published action/organisation(s) responsible</b>	5.5.1. Compare Nest Record Cards from the 1960s with those from recent years in order to look for possible explanations for the population decline CCW, EN	
<b>Work plan/organisation(s) responsible</b>		
<b>Action/workplan undertaken?</b>	no	
<b>Description of work taken and organisation responsible</b>	CCW EN Ongoing; to be undertaken as part of the EN/WWF/GCT autecological study.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	To be complete by 2001	<i>Action by</i>
<b>Constraints to action</b>		
<b>Action complete or ongoing?</b>		
<b>Next steps</b>		
<b>Output and timescale</b>		<i>Action by</i>

<b>Published action/organisation(s) responsible</b>	5.5.2 Undertake a study into the summer ecology and habitat use of turtle doves, including an assessment of diet and a comparison with a study carried out in the 1960s. CCW, EN	
<b>Work plan/organisation(s) responsible</b>		
<b>Action/workplan undertaken?</b>	yes	
<b>Description of work taken and organisation responsible</b>	EN Ongoing EN/WWF/GCT-funded three-year study in year 2; will include comparison with MAFF/CSL study of the 1960s (including re-survey of Carlton study area).	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	Field work due for completion autumn 2000.	<i>Action by</i> EN, WWF GCT
<b>Constraints to action</b>		

<b>Action complete or ongoing?</b>	ongoing	
<b>Next steps</b>	Ensure that the habitat requirements of the turtle dove, as indicated by the ecological study are provided for by the pilot Arable Stewardship Scheme and Tir Gofal. Update advisory material in the light of the research results.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	2001-20002	<i>Action by</i>

<b>Published action/organisation(s) responsible</b>	5.5.3. Ensure appropriate monitoring of numbers through continuation of the BTO/ JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey . CCW, EN, JNCC	
<b>Work plan/organisation(s) responsible</b>		
<b>Action/workplan undertaken?</b>	yes	
<b>Description of work taken and organisation responsible</b>	JNCC: have continued to part fund BTO/ JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (which covers turtle dove) on behalf of the country agencies. RSPB: have also continued to part fund BBS	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	Noble <i>et al</i> (1999 ) The Breeding Bird Survey 1998. BTO/JNCC/RSPB - Annual report	<i>Action by</i> JNCC BTO RSPB
<b>Constraints to action</b>		
<b>Action complete or ongoing?</b>	ongoing	
<b>Next steps</b>	maintain current programme. DETR: have commissioned BTO to survey birds in a subsample of the 1km squares covered as part of Countryside Survey 2000. Results will be related to detailed habitat information collected in CS2000 and also Land Cover Map 2000.	
<b>Output and timescale</b>	annual reports as above. DETR/BTO CS2000 survey to be conducted in 2000 and report in 2001.	<i>Action by</i> JNCC BTO RSPB DETR