

Species and Habitat Action Plan Assessment Form

Please refer to the accompanying guidance for information about how to complete this form and an explanation of terms used

Field 1: Action Plan details

Species/Habitat Action Plan	SONG THRUSH <i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Lead Partner/Agency	RSPB
Steering Group/Other organisations	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.
Work programme in existence?	Planned for February 2000

Field 2: Objectives and targets overview

Number and text	UK	E	NI	S	W	Comments
4.2 'Halt the decline in numbers of song thrush in the UK by the year 2000'		Y	Y	Y	Y	Country targets to be considered by February 2000
4.3 'Maintain the range and population levels of the song thrush and where possible restore them to that of the 1970 estimate'		Y	Y	Y	Y	
4.4 'Identify and implement priority research in order to formulate future conservation action'	Y					

Field 3: Proposed actions overview

Number and text	UK	E	NI	S	W	Action significant?	Action complete or ongoing?
5.1.1. Ensure that the results of ongoing research on the causes of decline are taken into account in agriculture schemes, woodland schemes and policy:		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ongoing
5.1.2. Promote the uptake of sensitive farming operations under existing incentive schemes to benefit song thrush		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ongoing
5.1.3 'Consider persuading the European Commission to ban or discourage hunting in France'	Y					Y	ongoing
5.4.1. 'Ensure landowners are aware of the presence, legal status and conservation requirements of this species, and appropriate methods of habitat management'		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ongoing
5.5.1. 'Investigate the relationship between agricultural changes and the use of agrochemicals with the decline of this species, using information collected by the BTO and other sources.'	Y					Y	ongoing
5.5.2. 'Promote research on the effects of woodland design and the management of woodland margins, especially on farmland, in aiding the successful breeding of song thrush.'	Y					N	not yet started

5.5.3. 'Ensure adequate monitoring annually of national breeding song thrush populations through the BTO/ JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey'		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ongoing
5.5.4. Encourage research on the ecological requirements of this species to help identify the causes of the population decline.	Y					Y	ongoing
5.6.1 Produce publicity material and information for the general public to raise awareness of the song thrush and possible links between population changes and human activities.		Y	Y	Y	Y	N	ongoing

Field 4: Assessment of status

	Not appropriate	Recovered	Signs of recovery	No change	Declining	Lost	Insufficient information
UK				Y			
England							Y
Northern Ireland							Y
Scotland							Y
Wales							Y
<p>Common Birds Census (CBC) trend indicates that population is now fluctuating at lower levels after decline between mid 1970s and mid 1980s</p> <p>UK Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) trend stable between 1994 & 1998</p>							

Field 5: Summary statement

Some progress has been made in identifying the reasons for the decline of the song thrush although the preliminary findings relating to habitat availability, particularly in the breeding season need to be confirmed and written up in the next 18 months. Progress has been made in terms of establishing a framework for recovery in that all four countries have implemented new or revised agri-environment schemes which include prescriptions for sympathetic management of lowland farmland for wildlife.

These schemes are still under-funded, however, and the targets set out in this plan are unlikely to be achievable until agreements are implemented on a much wider scale. However the recently agreed reform of the CAP gives Member States the powers to redirect subsidies from production to environmental management. The Government is consulting on whether and if so how, these powers should be used.

Field 6: Signing off

Please 'sign off' the form below to confirm that steering group members or key contacts have been consulted and agreed the information provided.

Contact details	Lead Partner	Contact Point
Name	Dr A D Evans	P. Grice
Organisation	RSPB	English Nature
Assessment date (dd/mm/yy)	27/09/99	27/09/99

Completed forms should be submitted to JNCC

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 Joint Nature Conservation Committee
 Monkstone House
 City Road
 Peterborough PE1 1JY
 Tel: 01733 562626
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 E-mail: lpr99@jncc.gov.uk

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

Objective/target	4.2 'Halt the decline in numbers of song thrush in the UK by the year 2000'				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
UK			Y		
England					Y
Northern Ireland					Y
Scotland					Y
Wales					Y
<p>Country targets yet to be determined. Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) trends have not yet been produced by the British Trust for Ornithology for England or Northern Ireland (although trends for England may be available by the end of 1999). Although country trends are available between 1994 & 1998 for Scotland and Wales the Welsh figure is based on a small sample size. It has therefore been decided not to present any country trends in this report.</p> <p>UK BBS trend shows stability between 1994 & 1998</p>					

Objective/target	4.3 'Maintain the range and population levels of the song thrush and where possible restore them to that of the 1970 estimate'				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
UK					Y
England					Y
Northern Ireland					Y
Scotland					Y
Wales					Y
<p>Insufficient information on range pending a future Breeding Atlas. Numbers fluctuating at low level between 1994 & 1998 (see above)</p>					

Objective/target	4.4 'Identify and implement priority research in order to formulate future conservation action'				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
UK			Y		
England	Y				
Northern Ireland	Y				
Scotland	Y				
Wales	Y				
<p>Priority autecological research nearing completion.</p>					

Table B: Proposed actions (Copiable table)

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.1.1. <i>Ensure that the results of ongoing research on the causes of decline are taken into account in agriculture schemes, woodland schemes and policy:</i> DANI, FA, FE, MAFF, SOAEFD, WOAD	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible		
Action/workplan undertaken?		
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	little available in agri-environment schemes specifically for song thrush as results of research only just coming on line. Nevertheless generic action under agri-environment schemes may benefit song thrush. (See 5.1.2).	
Output and timescale	Results of research available 2001.	<i>Action by</i>
Constraints to action	Results of research only just coming on line.	
Action complete or ongoing?	ongoing	
Next steps	To ensure that the results of the research are available to agriculture and woodland policy makers so that mechanisms that will benefit song thrush can be considered,	
Output and timescale	Management advice to be formulated from research results by 2001. Consider options for implementing agriculture and forestry mechanisms when existing measures are reviewed.	<i>Action by</i> RSPB DANI MAFF SOAEFD WOAD

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.1.2. <i>Promote the uptake of sensitive farming operations under existing incentive schemes to benefit song thrush</i> DANI, MAFF, SOAEFD, WOAD	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible		
Action/workplan undertaken?	yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	<p>DANI: Countryside Management Scheme recently introduced. This includes prescriptions for enhancement of lowland farmland song thrush habitat.</p> <p>MAFF: Arable Stewardship pilot is trialing an incentive scheme for creating suitable song thrush habitat on arable land; if this is successful, it would need to be made much more widely available if the national song thrush population is to be affected. Arable prescriptions have also recently become available in some ESAs (South Downs, Breckland) and field margin prescriptions are now available through mainstream Countryside Stewardship. 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.</p> <p>SOAEFD: Recently introduced the Countryside Premium Scheme. This includes prescriptions for enhancement of lowland farmland song thrush habitat.</p> <p>WOAD: Providing funding to CCW to establish and run new all-Wales agri-environment scheme, Tir Gofal.. This includes prescriptions for enhancement of lowland farmland song thrush habitat.</p>	
Output and timescale	Pilot Arable Stewardship. First agreements 1998; due to run until 2002. Tir Gofal ; first agreements due late 1999. Countryside Premium Scheme; first agreements 1997, Countryside Management Scheme; first agreements due spring 2000.	<i>Action by</i> DANI MAFF SOAEFD WOAD
Constraints to action	<p>All these schemes are currently limited in terms of financial resources and the scale of protection or enhancement of song thrush habitat achievable given the current resources will not be sufficient to permit objectives 4.2 & 4.3 to be met</p> <p>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 with this habitat.</p> <p>There is currently no mechanism which encourages a return to the practices traditionally associated with low intensity mixed farming (apart from the organic aid schemes).</p> <p>CAP reform hampered by relative inflexibility of EU.</p>	
Action complete or ongoing?	ongoing	
Next steps	To be determined	
Output and timescale	To be determined	<i>Action by</i>

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.1.3 <i>Consider persuading the European Commission to ban or discourage hunting in France</i> DoE, FO	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible		
Action/workplan undertaken?	yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	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.	
Output and timescale		Action by DETR
Constraints to action		
Action complete or ongoing?	ongoing	
Next steps	To be determined	
Output and timescale	To be determined	Action by

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.4.1. <i>'Ensure landowners are aware of the presence, legal status and conservation requirements of this species, and appropriate methods of habitat management'</i> CCW, DoE(NI), EN, FA, SNH	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible		
Action/workplan undertaken?	yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	<p>CCW: No action reported DoE (NI) No action reported. EN The plight and conservation requirements of this species has been conveyed opportunistically to SSSI owner/occupiers by EN's locally-based conservation staff. FA SNH No action reported.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>SOAEFD: Sponsored, along with SAC, the RSPB publication <i>A Management Guide to Birds of Scottish Farmland</i> by R Badger, D McCracken and S Sankey. It has the same aim as the MAFF sponsored publication above. This species is given brief coverage.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Output and timescale		Action by RSPB MAFF SOAEFD EN, GCT FWAG, BTO, FRCA
Constraints to action	Ideal habitat management to be determined pending results of research	
Action complete or ongoing?	ongoing	
Next steps	To be determined by Steering Group	

Output and timescale	To be determined by Steering Group	Action by
Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.5.1. <i>'Investigate the relationship between agricultural changes and the use of agrochemicals with the decline of this species, using information collected by the BTO and other sources.'</i> CCW, DoE(NI), EN, FA, SNH	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible		
Action/workplan undertaken?	yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	BTO / MAFF: some progress in analysing spatial and temporal changes in song thrush populations in relation to agricultural practices using BTO census and Atlas data. Nest Record Cards have yet to be analysed BTO / RSPB: RSPB funded an analysis of 1st year and post fledging survival 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.	
Output and timescale	Chamberlain et al 1999, BTO Research Report No. 209 DETR/BTO CS2000 survey to be conducted in 2000 and report in 2001.	Action by BTO, RSPB, MAFF, DETR
Constraints to action		
Action complete or ongoing?	ongoing	
Next steps	To be determined by Steering Group	
Output and timescale	To be determined by Steering Group	Action by

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.5.3. <i>'Ensure adequate monitoring annually of national breeding song thrush populations through the BTO/ JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey'</i> CCW, DoE(NI), EN, JNCC, SNH	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible		
Action/workplan undertaken?	yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	JNCC: have continued to part fund BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (which covers song thrush) on behalf of the country agencies. RSPB have also continued to part fund the BBS	
Output and timescale	Noble <i>et al</i> (1999) The Breeding Bird Survey 1998. BTO/JNCC/RSPB - Annual report	Action by JNCC BTO RSPB
Constraints to action	None	
Action complete or ongoing?	ongoing	
Next steps	Maintain current programme	
Output and timescale	Annual report as above	Action by JNCC BTO RSPB

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.5.4. <i>Encourage research on the ecological requirements of this species to help identify the causes of the population decline.</i> CCW, DoE(NI), EN, FA, SNH	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible		
Action/workplan undertaken?		
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	RSPB are nearing the end of a detailed ecological study of song thrush begun in 1995	
Output and timescale	Several scientific papers in next two to three years. Input to new advisory material next 12 months	<i>Action by</i> RSPB
Constraints to action		
Action complete or ongoing?	ongoing	
Next steps	Complete fieldwork. Write up. Disseminate advice.	
Output and timescale	Fieldwork due for completion September 1999. Write up and dissemination during 2000/2001	<i>Action by</i> RSPB