

SPECIES ACTION PLAN : Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

Associated Species Action Plans
Brown hare
Skylark
Song thrush
Tree sparrow

1. Current Status

The Grey Partridge is one of Great Britain's most endangered species, and is in serious decline. It is associated with open grassland and arable farmland, but also on moorland fringes, heaths and marshes. The British Trust for Ornithology estimates that numbers declined by approximately 78% between 1972 and 1996 and the UK population to date is estimated at 150,000 pairs. It is not only in decline in Great Britain but is under threat worldwide.

Associated Habitat Action Plans
Arable field margins & beetle banks
Arable fields
Hedgerows
Unimproved Grasslands

Currently there are no breeding records for the Birmingham and the Black Country, with recent sightings from Sutton Park NNR and Walsall Arboretum. Anecdotally, the species seems in severe decline in Birmingham and the Black Country.

2. Current factors affecting species

- Break in food chain caused by the increased use of insecticides and herbicides, killing the insects that are vital for the young birds diet.
 - Vulnerability of young to predators as they have to travel further to find food.
- Intensive farming has led to fewer suitable nesting sites e.g.: hedgerows and other habitats have been destroyed or degraded causing increased predation.
 - Population numbers are susceptible to wet weather during late spring which causes death to young.
 - Reduction in spring-sown cereals, which cause a loss in winter stubble fields that could be available as a food source.

3. Current Action

3.1 Legal status

- Protection in Britain is through the Game Acts. Although shooting of Grey Partridge can continue, only a maximum of 25% of the population can be shot, but only when the partridge population can sustain it.

- The Grey Partridge is listed under Appendix III/1 of EC Birds Directive and appendix III of the Bern Convention.

3.2 Management, research and guidance

- The Game Conservancy Trust published an action plan in 1998 for the conservation of this species in the U.K.

4. Action Plan Objectives and targets

Objective	Target
1. Halt the decline of Grey Partridge	2006
2. Maintain and extend the current range where the species lives	2011

5 Proposed action with partners to meet objectives

ACTION	POTENTIAL DELIVERERS		YEAR							Meets objective number
	Lead	Partner	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2011	
5.1 Policy and legislation										
Make available partridge-friendly farm management systems on a local scale (available in the pilot Arable Stewardship Scheme (funded by MAFF).	MAFF	GCT FWAG LO Farmers	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1,2
5.2 Site / species safeguard and management										
Identify key areas where habitats could be improved to provide shelter and nesting cover for grey partridge.	GCT	LA LO Farmers			•					2
Increase chick food by allowing insects (sawflies) time to emerge before crop spraying.		GCT Farmers LO	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1,2
5.3 Advisory										
Support of advisory staff to help farmers & landowners improve wildlife habitats and manage their land in a more environmentally friendly way.	FWAG	GCT	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1,2
Increase training for pesticide specialists employed by the agrochemical industry to decrease spraying & target it more effectively.	MAFF	Farmers LO contractors	•	•	•					1,2
Extend the network of self-help groups for farmers & landowners that meet with the Trust to discuss grey partridge restoration plans.	GCT	Farmers LO LA FWAG WT	•	•	•					1,2

ACTION	POTENTIAL DELIVERERS		YEAR							Meets objective number
	Lead	Partner	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2011	
5.4 Future research and monitoring										
Introduce a local monitoring scheme to assess numbers of grey partridge.		GCT ER LA RSPB WT WMBC	•	•	•	•	•			1,2
5.5 Communications and Publicity										
Raise awareness, through production of literature, of the plight of the grey partridge and it's salvation	RSPB	ALL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1,2
5.6 Links to other action plans										
Arable fields, Arable field margins and beetle banks, Hedgerows, unimproved grassland										

6. Co-ordination and review

This Biodiversity Action Plan will be implemented over 10 years with a first review after 5 years. A group will be set up to co-ordinate implementation and to report to the Biodiversity Steering Group. This group will meet at a minimum on a yearly basis.

Review will be carried out in conjunction with related Habitat and Species Action Plans as appropriate.

Review will consist of measuring achievement of targets. The group will, with the support of the Steering Group, develop and implement appropriate monitoring methods which will inform the review process.

The Action Plan will be revised and updated in the light of review results and any relevant changes in circumstances and/or additional information which becomes available during the review period.

In line with national guidance, the Steering Group will report to the UK Steering Group.