

HOUSE SPARROW *PASSER DOMESTICA* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The house sparrow is one of the nations best known bird species, thanks to its propensity for living in close proximity to humans. It has been one of the most commonly seen birds in urban, suburban and village communities. It is not currently on the RSPB Birds of Conservation Concern amber list, however, a recent sharp fall in its population status in urban environments, linked to its long-term decline along with other farmland species, suggests it may be added.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority species (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	-
EC Birds Directive	-
Berne Convention 1982	-
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CITES 1975	-
WCA 1981	Part I Section 1
Birds of Conservation Concern List ³⁰	-



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2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

The apparent decline of the species is generally poorly monitored by most BTO surveys although a decline of >50% was identified on Common Bird Census sites between 1970 - 1994, most of these being rural sites.

Its urban decline has been less thoroughly documented. The Garden Bird Watch showed a decline of 10% in the number of gardens it frequents in winter from 1973 to 1983 and Autumn Garden Bird Counts in Kensington showed a drastic reduction from 2603 individuals in 1925 to a very low 81 in 1995. There are regional differences in the fortunes of the species. The Breeding Bird Survey 1994-1998 reported a significant decline in England, a stable population in Scotland and a significant increase in Wales⁶.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

There is currently no substantial evidence to accurately measure its decline in the county borough, but its current breeding distribution is given in **Map 2.6**.

2.3 Links with Habitats

The house sparrow is a species that breeds exclusively in association with human habitation in both urban and rural areas and therefore should be considered in conjunction with the Urban Habitat Statement.

- **Urban Habitats** (domestic gardens, buildings, allotments, derelict sites)

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- In general the declines can be linked to changes in farming practice, with increase in monoculture, use of herbicides & pesticides, change from spring to autumn sowing and

change from hay making to silage making all contributing to the decline of rural and even suburban populations.

- Urban populations may also be associated with the increasing levels of pollution from vehicle emissions affecting the availability of the arthropod food needed to feed chicks.
- Recent research indicates that additives to the new Lead Replacement Fuel may be toxic and killing birds when dissolved in their drinking water i.e. roadside puddles. Further research is currently following up this possibility in inner cities across the E.U.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 Gwent Ornithological Society (GOS) atlas work has been completed. This will contribute to our knowledge of the status of the species in the eastern part of the county borough.
- 4.2 Both GOS and the Glamorgan Bird Club carry out regular surveys and produce annual bird reports^{17, 18, 19}.
- 4.3 BTO's Breeding Bird Survey also contributes to the regular monitoring of the breeding population⁶.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

Not applicable to this species.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

- 5.2.1 Maintain the current population of the house sparrow within Caerphilly county borough. (Target: ongoing)
- 5.2.2 Survey to investigate the possible decline in population in the county borough, and highlight particular areas under threat. (Target: 2004)

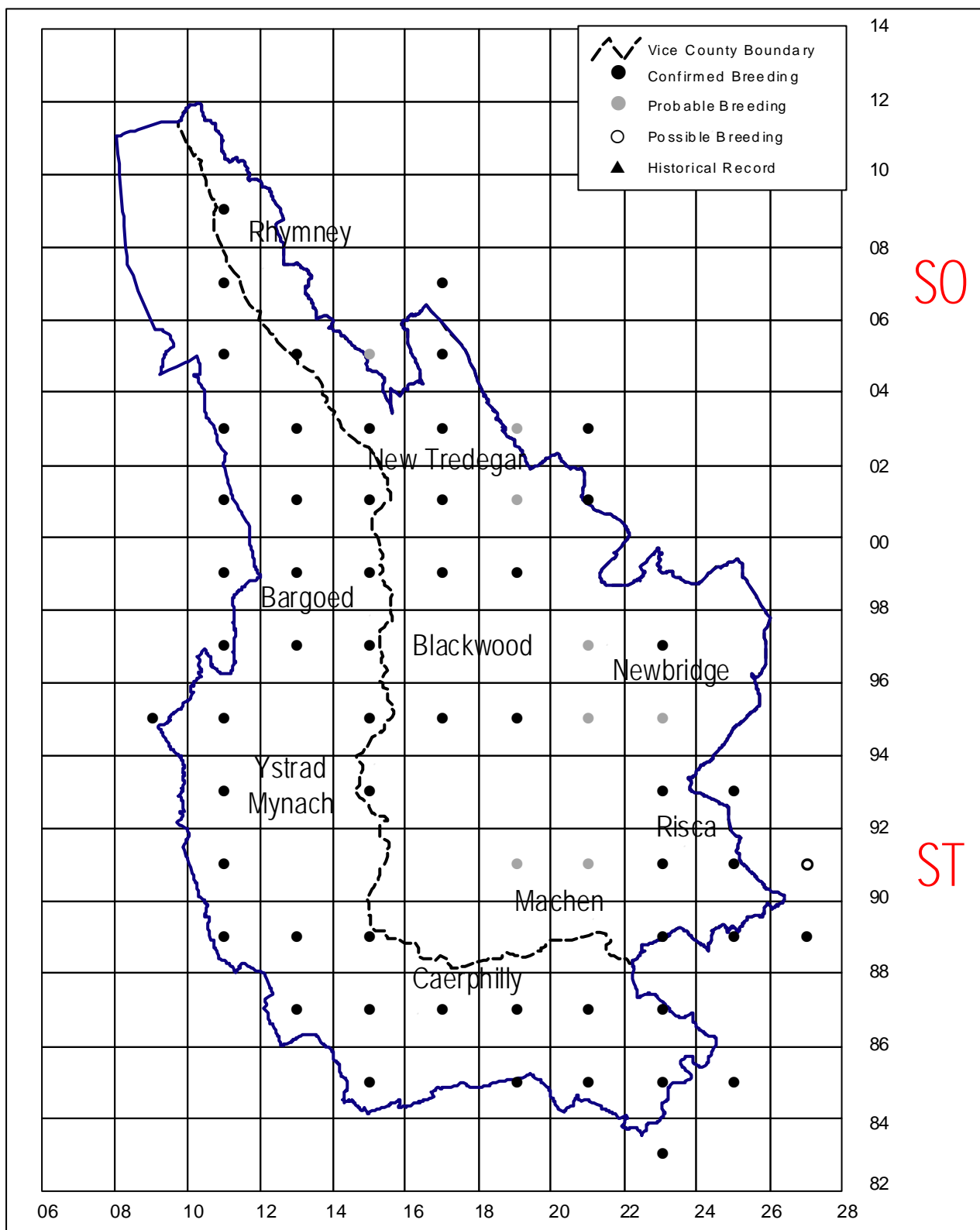
6. ACTION AND KEY PARTNERS

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6.1 Policy and Legislation											
6.1.1 None proposed at this time.	-	-									
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Ensure planning specifications for new properties and modernisation of old properties protect nests in old buildings, but also provide suitable nest sites in new and modernised buildings.	CCBC	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.1 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6.4 Advisory											
6.4.1 Raise awareness of developers, planners and others involved in construction of houses and other buildings of its nesting requirements.	CBP	CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Survey to identify the current status in Glamorgan (VC41) to augment the Gwent data currently being obtained, and then continue monitoring the whole area to identify areas of decline and local threats.	GBC	GOS CCBC	✕								
6.6 Communications and Publicity											
6.6.1 This species is an ideal candidate for use in a local survey of 'house nesting' species in association with starling, jackdaw, swallow, swift and house martin. The survey could be featured in the CCBC newsletter delivered to each household in the area.	CBP	GOS GBC BTO RSPB	✓					✓			

✕ Survey year to be determined.

MAP 2.6 - HOUSE SPARROW



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Atgynhychwyd o fapiad yr Arolwg Ordnans gyda chaniatod rheolwr Llyfifa ei Mawhydi hawffraint y Goron. Mae atgynhychu heb awdurdod yn torri hawffraint y Goron. Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, LA09004L, 2001.