

LINNET *CARDUELIS CANNABINA* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The linnet is a priority species in the UKBAP and a national action plan has been prepared³⁷.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority species (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	P
EC Birds Directive 1979	
Berne Convention 1982	App. II
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CITES 1975	-
WCA 1981	Part I Section 1 Sch. 3
Birds of Conservation Concern List ³⁰	Red



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2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

The status of the linnet in the south Wales Valleys is not accurately known.

The linnet was historically a common species but its numbers have declined nationally by over 50% in the last 25 years.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

In Glamorgan the linnet is regarded as thinly scattered in the eastern area of the coalfield, of which Caerphilly county borough is a part. Locally there is little evidence of declines of the magnitude found in other areas of the UK, although there is anecdotal evidence of some decrease. The relative health of our local populations may make them of regional or national significance in the long term. **Map 2.9** shows the current distribution of the linnet in the area.

2.3 Links with Habitats

Linnets are associated with weedy arable crops, heathland, scrub and, in particular, gorse thickets. Areas of coedcae/ffridd and upland heath on common land should be ideal habitats, although the species seems to be found at greater population densities at lower altitudes.

- *Wildlife Corridors* (disused railway lines and roadside verges)
- *Common Land*
- **Ffridd/Coedcae**
- **Heathland** (upland heath)
- Gorse stands

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Loss of habitat to urban or industrial development.
- While agricultural intensification may be an important factor nationally it will be of less importance locally, although the use of herbicides and the lack of winter stubbles will have some effect.

- The grubbing out or burning of gorse and other scrub will remove suitable breeding habitat.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 Farmland Bird Management Guidelines have been produced by BTO, RSPB and FWAG.
- 4.2 The Ecology and Behaviour Group at Oxford UC is analysing the BTO Breeding Bird Survey in order to study the long-term persistence of farmland birds (inc. the linnet).
- 4.3 Some upland heath has already been designated as SIN C in Caerphilly county borough⁸.
- 4.4 The Gwent Ornithological Society and Glamorgan Bird Club gather information from its members on the distribution of linnets and other birds and both bodies publish annual bird reports^{17, 18, 19}.
- 4.5 BTO's Breeding Bird Survey contributes to regular monitoring of breeding populations⁶.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

- 5.1.1 In the short term, halt or reverse the decline in numbers of the linnet by the year 2003 so that the Breeding Bird Survey index is at least at 1996 levels.
- 5.1.2 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 – 1972 levels by 2008.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

- 5.2.1 Confirm population statistics both nationally and locally, identifying important habitats and sites in Caerphilly county borough. (Target: 2005)
- 5.2.2 Safeguard existing breeding and wintering sites. (Target: 2005 and ongoing)
- 5.2.3 Seek to enhance the linnet population in the county borough (Target: 2008)

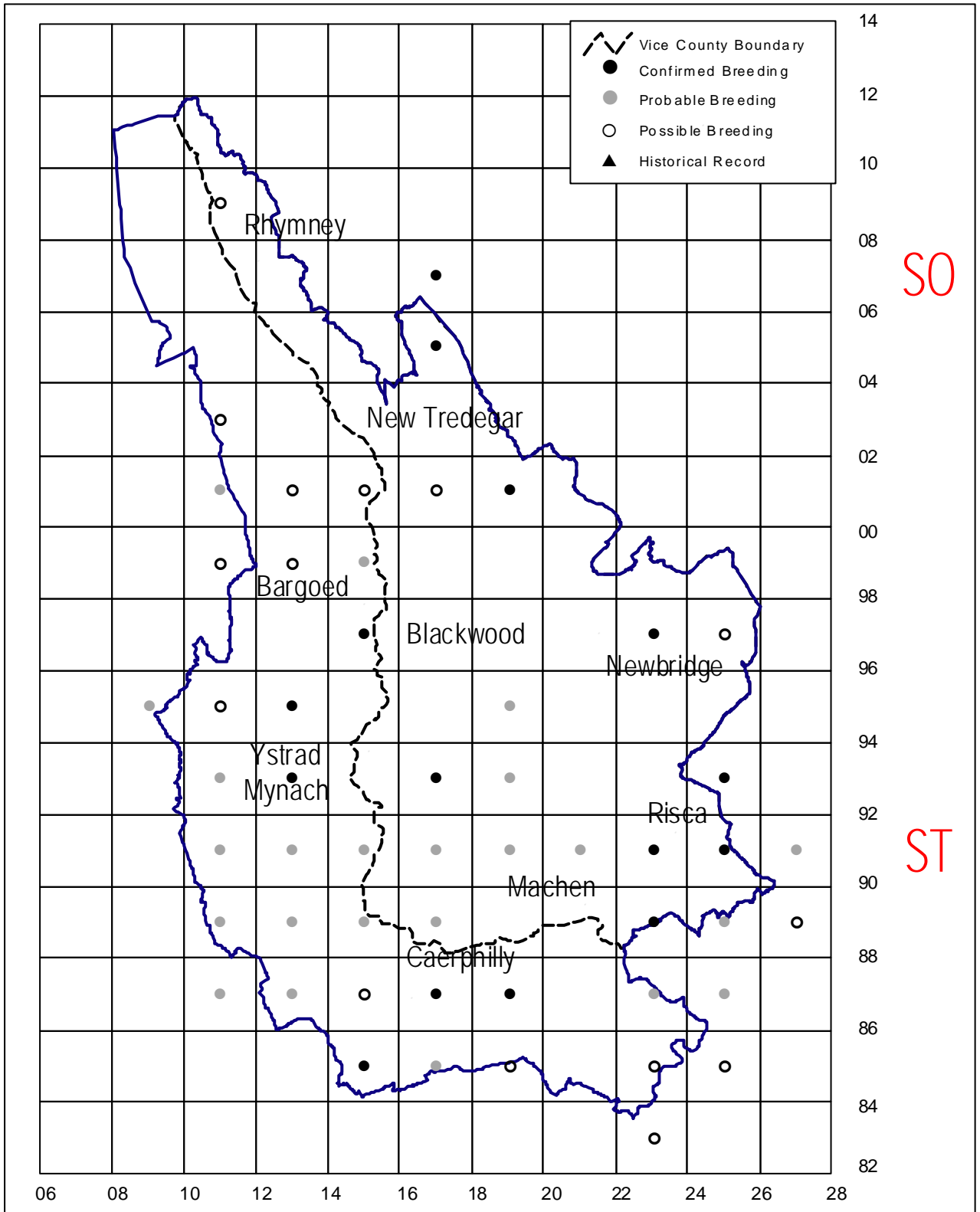
6. ACTION AND KEY PARTNERS

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 Seek to designate suitable breeding areas as SIN C and promote farming practices that will benefit the species.	CCBC	NAWAD FUW NFU									✓
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Adopt sympathetic management of all CCBC land with breeding linnet and consider the planting of gorse banks along highways.	CCBC	-			✓					✓	

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.1 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4 Advisory											
6.4.1 Educate and inform the general public of the relative importance of our local population of linnets.	CBP	RSPB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Survey and monitor linnet populations within the county borough.	GBC GOS	CCW BTO	✘								
6.6 Communications and Publicity											
None proposed at this time.	-	-									

✘ Survey year to be determined.

MAP 2.9 - LINNET



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