

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *MUSCICAPA STRIATA* SPECIES ACTION PLAN**1. INTRODUCTION**

The spotted flycatcher is listed as a UK priority species and a UK SAP 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 |
| Birds of Conservation Concern List ³⁰ | Red |
| Other Species Status | RDB Birds: candidate |



© CCBC 2002

2. CURRENT STATUS**2.1 UK and Wales**

The spotted flycatcher is an insectivorous summer migrant. It is one of the latest summer visitors to arrive each year with only a few birds being recorded before mid-April; the main influx being in early May.

They remain in Britain for only a short time and birds start leaving in August and have usually left after second broods by mid-September. They breed in open woodland habitats throughout the UK. Preferred habitats are mature broadleaved woodland (essentially woodland edge and glades), hedgerows with mature trees, parkland, large gardens, churchyards, cemeteries and particularly wooded watersides that are rich in the large flying insects (especially Diptera and Hymenoptera) which form the majority of the spotted flycatcher's diet. The bird takes prey from the air mainly by flying out from a perch, catching the insect and returning to the perch to swallow it. They are fairly tolerant of disturbance and will use open-fronted nest boxes on houses, especially where overgrown by climbing plants.

The spotted flycatcher is well distributed throughout Wales although it generally avoids high ground above 260 meters and its distribution is patchy in the western peninsulas of Pembrokeshire, Llŷn and Anglesey. Evidence in Wales is too scant to show just how much the decline in the UK applies to Wales, however, a decline of up to 25% has been recorded in the breeding population of north Breconshire since the 1980s.

It has been in decline in the UK since the early 1960s; the Common Bird Census data showed a 78% decline in woodland and a 78% decline on farmland between 1972 and 1996. The Breeding Bird Survey also shows a significant decline (23%) in numbers between 1994-98.

2.1 Caerphilly County Borough

In Glamorgan, regularly monitored areas indicated that breeding numbers declined in the 1980s, with populations being sustained at the lower levels into the 1990s. Data collected in the former Islwyn area of Caerphilly county borough by the Gwent Ornithological Society during 1998-2000

indicates a dramatic decline in the distribution of breeding birds when compared to records collected during 1981-85. Birds were recorded in thirteen tetrads compared to 21 previously suggesting a possible reduction of 38%. **Map 2.14** shows the current breeding population distribution in the county borough.

2.2 Links with Habitats

- **Deciduous Woodlands** (lowland wood pasture and parkland, wet woodland)
- **Wildlife Corridors** (hedgerows)
- **Urban Habitats** (gardens)

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

The reasons for the species decline are not clear, but they may include:

- **Loss of nest sites:** many spotted flycatchers nest in large trees and there has been a large-scale loss of these in woodland, parks and hedgerows (especially following Dutch elm disease), which are favoured habitats. However, there is no qualitative data on the effect of these losses.
- **Weather effects:** the key factor appears to be summer weather conditions as more birds breed early if temperatures are warmer.
- **Migration:** the spotted flycatcher passes through the Sahel region en route to wintering grounds in southern Africa. Drought in Sahel or the wintering areas could be a factor in the decline, but no clear link has been established.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 Some aspects of broadleaved woodland management, particularly the creation and maintenance of clearings and wide rides, will have benefited the species.
- 4.2 Provision of nest-boxes (usually for other species) will have helped the species, especially in areas where there is a dearth of natural sites.
- 4.3 Although the species is not monitored systematically, the Gwent Ornithological Society and Glamorgan Bird Club gathers information from its members on the distribution of spotted flycatcher and other birds and both bodies publish annual bird reports^{17, 18, 19}.
- 4.4 The BTO Breeding Bird Survey also contributes to the monitoring and recording of spotted flycatcher 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 spotted flycatcher by the year 2003 so that Breeding Bird Survey index is at least at 1996 levels.

5.1.2 In the long term, see a sustained recovery in numbers so the Breeding Bird Survey index is at least 50% higher than 1996 levels. (Target: 2008).

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

5.2.1 Identify the current population distribution and number in the county borough through appropriate survey work (Target: 2005).

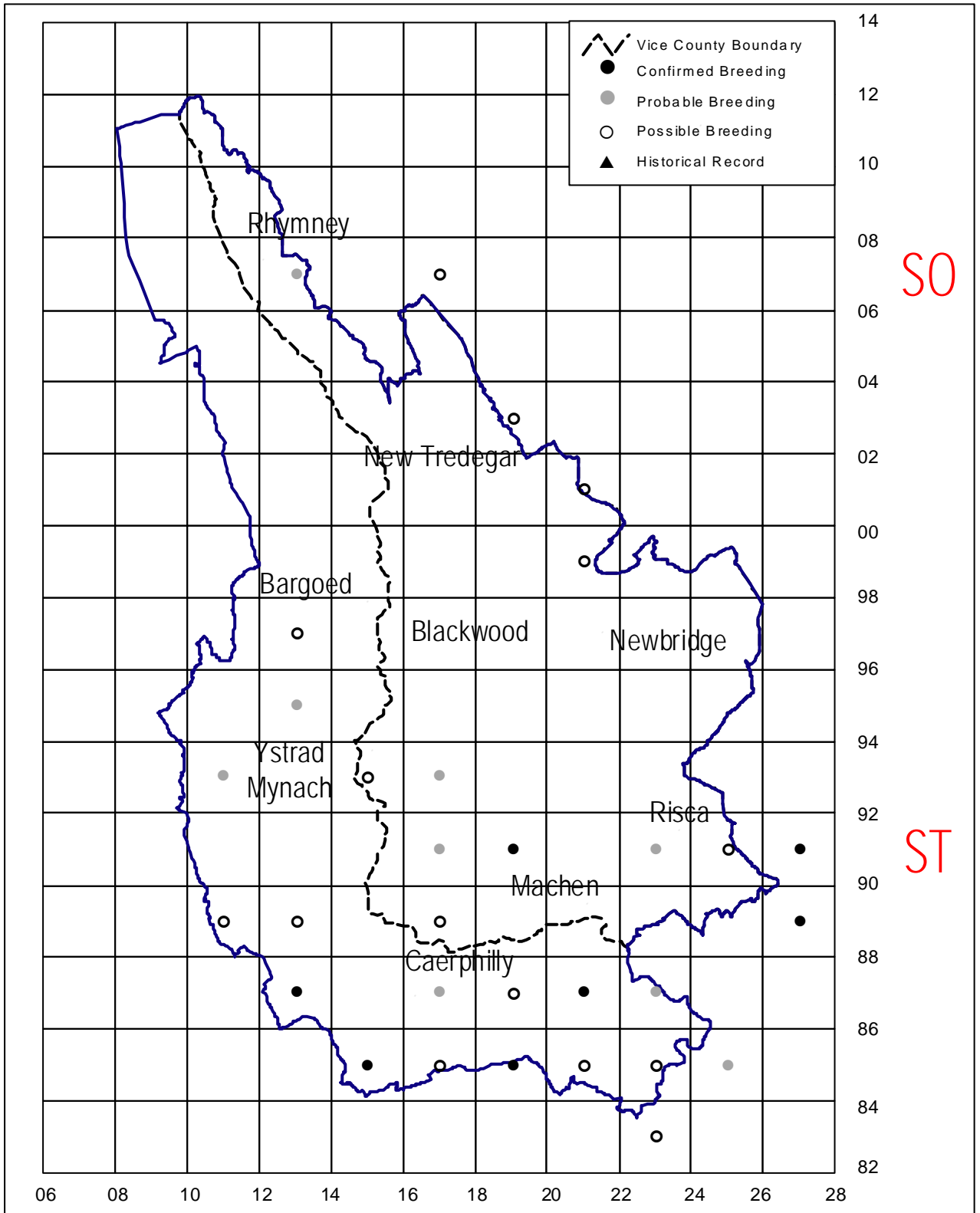
5.2.2 Maintain the current distribution of the species in the county borough and seek to increase the local population size and range (identified in 5.2.1) by 50% (Target: 2010).

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 areas of importance (breeding sites) as SINCLNR. | CCBC | CCW | | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 6.2 Site Safeguard and Management | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.2.1 Seek to protect sites that regularly support breeding spotted flycatchers such as deciduous woodlands, wildlife corridors (hedgerows) and urban habitats. | CCW | CCBC GWL GLWT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.2.2 Identify potential new sites for this species and encourage appropriate habitat management; maintain and/or create woodland glades and rides, manage hedgerows, churchyards, etc. | CCW | FC CCBC Coed Cymru | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.3 Species Management and Protection | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.3.1 Consider the requirements of nesting spotted flycatchers when providing nest-boxes in nature reserves, country parks and other suitable sites and habitats. | CCBC | Coed Cymru landowners | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.3.2 Continue to implement wildlife legislation. | Gwent Police | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.4 Advisory | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.4.1 Raise awareness of the needs of this species in general advice on woodland and farmland management, including provision of broadleaved stands with an open canopy and open spaces, such as rides and tree falls. | CCW | FC NAWAD NFU FUW CCBC | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.5 Future Research and Monitoring | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.5.1 Encourage appropriate monitoring through the continuation of the Breeding Bird Survey (BTO/JNCC/ RSPB) and local ornithological society survey work. Develop better understanding of the population and range of species over the county. | GBC GOS | BTO RSPB | ✘ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.6 Communications and Publicity | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.6.1 Consider targeting this species for a "public-participation" survey. | CBP | | ✓ | | | | | | | | |

✘ Survey year to be determined.

MAP 2.14 - SPOTTED FLYCATCHER



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Caerphilly County Borough Council, LA09004L, 2001.

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