



Song Thrush © Northumberland National Park Authority

Working with Wildlife

## Garden Birds Species Action Plan

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Plan Lead	RSPB
Latest version	January 2008

### Description

This garden birds action plan covers the following species:

- Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)
- Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)
- Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)
- House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
- Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)
- Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
- Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
- Swift (*Apus apus*)

Garden Birds is a broad group, which includes a wide range of bird species that are typically found in gardens. Many of the species that are found in parks and gardens are not truly urban but woodland birds that have adapted through loss of natural habitat. All the birds covered in this action plan are seed eating or insectivores, or both. They often have a close relationship with man either recently or historically, due to man providing nesting sites or feeding opportunities (deliberately or inadvertently) which the bird makes use of, and in some cases has come to depend on. Garden birds can provide the main contact with wildlife for many people. Over the years man has become familiar with the presence of these birds and many of them have been viewed as common, however in the last century some of these species have undergone a crash in population levels, the exact reasons for which are not well known.

This plan focuses on those species that have undergone the most worrying declines and as such have been given a red conservation classification. Other species that are not faring as poorly but still causing concern and given an amber classification are also included.

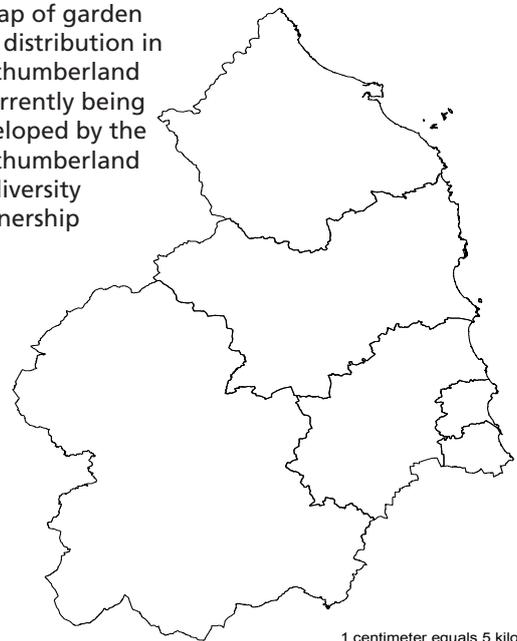
### Conservation Status

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Part I, Section 1 (with exceptions)  
 UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species – Bullfinch, House Sparrow, Song Thrush, Starling & Tree Sparrow  
 North East Biodiversity Action Plan Species – Bullfinch & Song Thrush  
 Birds of Conservation Concern: Red Conservation Status – Bullfinch, House Sparrow, Song Thrush, Starling & Tree Sparrow  
 Birds of Conservation Concern: Amber Conservation Status – Dunnock, Goldcrest, Swallow & Swift

### Current Extent in Northumberland

The Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club recently undertook both a study of Wintering Birds and a study of breeding birds in Northumbria.

A map of garden bird distribution in Northumberland is currently being developed by the Northumberland Biodiversity Partnership



1 centimeter equals 5 kilometers

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### Current Factors Causing Loss or Decline

- Loss of suitable nesting sites due to modern building design and construction
- Reductions in sources of both invertebrate and seed food due to habitat loss and increased use of pesticides
- Increasing 'tidiness' and pesticide use both in gardens and public greenspaces
- Replacement of hedgerows with fencing, removal of creepers on walls and clearance of shrubberies causing reduction in suitable nesting sites
- Development of brownfield sites used for foraging for insects and seeds

### Associated Action Plans

Brownfield Land  
 Built Environment  
 Gardens & Allotments  
 Recreational & Amenity Spaces  
 Transport Corridors  
 Native Woodland  
 Lowland Meadows & Pastures  
 Trees & Hedges

### Further Information

This garden birds action plan links to the bullfinch, house sparrow, song thrush, starling and tree sparrow UK BAP action plans, all led by the RSPB.

Summers-Smith, J.D (1999). Current status of the House Sparrow in Britain. *British Wildlife*, 10: 381-386.

British Trust for Ornithology website - [www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)

RSPB website - [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

Day, J.C & Hodgson, M.S (ed) 2003, *The Atlas of Wintering Birds in Northumbria, Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club*

Day, J.C. 1995, *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Northumbria, Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club*

The Population Status of Birds in the UK - Birds of Conservation Concern: 2002-2007

### Targets

**Maintain the current range of garden birds in Northumberland by 2010**

**Increase the current range of garden birds in Northumberland by 2015**

Code	Priority Actions	Date
GB A01	Encourage public participation in the BTO and RSPB Garden Birdwatch schemes	ongoing
GB A02	Ensure that boxes are put up in suitable areas for a range of species, particularly whenever hedges or suitable nesting habitats are lost due to development	ongoing
GB A03	Encourage responsible and continuous feeding of birds, especially in the winter, by the public and at country parks	ongoing
GB A04	Encourage wildlife friendly gardening, in particular avoiding molluscicides, including plants that are good winter seed sources and leaving dead herbaceous stems and leaves over winter	ongoing
GB A05	Encourage inclusion of boxes in new builds or renovations (e.g. brick boxes for inclusion in walls) and eaves ledges for swallows, swifts and house martins	ongoing
GB A06	Promote installation and registration of nest boxes via National Nestbox Week	ongoing
GB A07	Encourage management of amenity grassland to include plant species that are good winter seed sources and support a wide range of insect species	ongoing