

Reed Bunting



Scientific Name:
Emberiza schoeniclus

Current action

The **Reed Bunting** is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the EC Birds Directive, and is listed under Appendix II of the Bern Convention. It is a Priority Listed Species of Conservation Concern and has a dedicated Species Action Plan under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. In Glasgow many of the populations are associated with wetland habitats which receive some planning protection through designations as SSSIs or SINCs.

Nationally the Reed Bunting has only recently been regarded as a priority species for conservation action. It is known to have benefited from initiatives for other wetland species, including the creation of new wetlands and the management of reedbeds, wet grasslands and saltmarshes.

In the Glasgow area wetland and grassland habitats have been targeted by management initiatives. Such initiatives have already significantly increased breeding populations in Glasgow, for example at Hogganfield Park LNR the population has increased from 1-2 pairs to 5-6 pairs in only two years.

Current factors causing loss or decline

Loss of Wetland Habitat: The degeneration of wetland habitats, including loss of small ponds, large scale field drainage systems, unsympathetic river management and the encroachment of scrub are all believed to have had adverse effects on both breeding and wintering Reed Bunting populations.

Changes in Agriculture: The decline in Reed Buntings has coincided with a similar decline of several passerine species associated with farmland. The Reed Bunting shares non-breeding season diet composition with most of these species, indicating that recent changes in land management practice, implicated in farmland bird declines, may also be affecting Reed Buntings.

Severe Winter Weather: Reed Buntings are year-round residents in the UK, and are known to be sensitive to cold winters, particularly where snow cover is extensive. However, population recovery from weather-related declines is typically rapid.

Action	Lead	Delivery	Objective
Policy and Legislation			
To protect known breeding sites from development pressures.	RSPB	GCC-DRS, SNH	1
Designate Robroyston Park and Cardowan Moss as LNRs.	RSPB	GCC-DRS	2
Site Safeguard and Management			
To maximise new habitat creation at targeted sites through development of open water and fen habitat with maximum extent of water-edge habitat with fringing vegetation.	RSPB	FWAG, GCC-LS(CG), GfC, SNH, SWT	1, 2, 3
To maximise opportunities for expanding habitat at existing sites and developing habitat at appropriate wetland sites contiguous with known breeding sites.	RSPB	FWAG, GCC-LS(CG), GfC, SNH, SWT	2, 3
Carry out habitat creation and improvement (e.g. pond excavation, ditch widening) in appropriate areas of Possil Marsh.	RSPB	SNH, SWT	1
Control invasive scrub vegetation and widen main ditch at Bishop Loch LNR.	RSPB)	GCC-LS(CG), GfC	1
Negotiate with farmer/landowner with view to management of SSSI reedbeds at Bishop Loch and reedbeds at Bothlin Burn.	RSPB	FWAG, SNH	1, 2
Negotiate/liase with farmer to encourage RSS protection of grazed wet grasslands and habitat enhancement at Lochwood (Farm) Wetlands.	RSPB	FWAG	1
Double breeding population of Reed Buntings by 2005 by habitat manipulation (scrub control) at Frankfield Loch.	RSPB	GfC	2
Implement further habitat creation at Hogganfield Park LNR, aiming to increase population to 10 pairs by 2005.	RSPB	GCC-LS(CG), GfC	2

continued over



Objectives and targets

An overall aim is to increase the breeding Reed Bunting population, by 25% by 2005, through targeted habitat creation and enhancement, with no negative impact on existing UK priority biodiversity species or habitats. These will be met by three key objectives:

Objective 1: To ensure no net loss of breeding Reed Buntings at List 1 sites (see Diag.1)

Objective 2: To maximise existing or establish new populations at List 2 sites (see Diag.1)

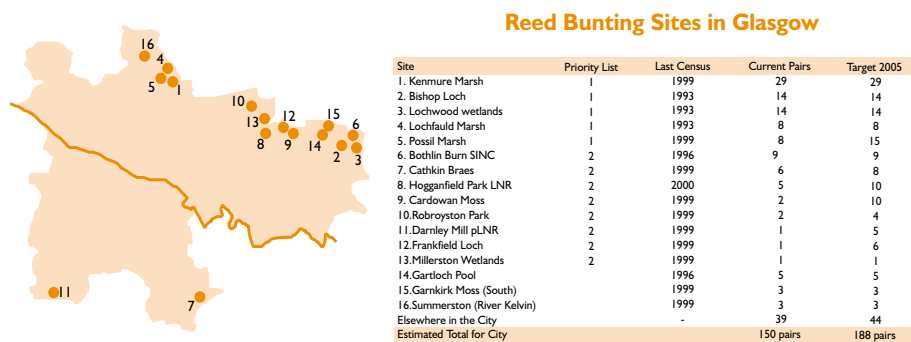
Objective 3: To investigate possibilities for habitat creation and enhancement at other actual or potential sites

LOCAL SPECIES ACTION PLAN

Current status

The **Reed Bunting** is found throughout Britain and Ireland, though is generally scarcer in the uplands, the far north and west. Distribution is patchy, with gaps or low population density in some areas and high population density in others, following no clear pattern as yet discerned. The species is widespread elsewhere in Europe. British Trust for Ornithology census results show relatively high numbers between the late 1960's and the mid-1970's followed by a marked decline that continued until the early 1980's. Overall, the species has declined by more than 50% in the UK since 1975. Between the two BTO Breeding Bird Atlas surveys (1968-72 and 1988-1991) the Reed Bunting's breeding range in the UK contracted by 12%. A reduction in first-winter survival, probably due to food shortages, has been identified as a factor in generating this decline. An increase in the number of Reed Buntings coming into gardens to feed during winter has been recorded in some areas of the UK.

The Reed Bunting has a discontinuous distribution within the City, determined by the availability of suitable habitat. Currently the population is estimated to be 150 breeding pairs, with 50% of these concentrated at the top five sites - Kenmure Marsh, Bishop Loch, Lochwood Wetlands, Bothlin Burn SINC and Possil Marsh.



The Reed Bunting is a passerine (perching) songbird that is widespread and familiar in many parts of Scotland, particularly in southern and lowland areas. The species is typically associated with stands of dense herbaceous vegetation on waterlogged soils, particularly reedbeds and fens, often at the edges of still or flowing open stretches of fresh or brackish water. In recent decades it has become increasingly associated with drier habitats in parts of the UK, particularly on farmland with overgrown ditches and hedgerows, arable areas and young forestry plantations. However, this apparent adaptation to wider habitat types has not led to any increase in either range or population, and may be attributed to marginal overspill from prime breeding habitat. Breeding performance is known to be lower, on average, on farmland sites compared to wetland sites. The highest densities in the Glasgow area are found mainly on the margins of open water in swamp, fen and wet grassland habitats, where the species is present all year round. In winter, however, Reed Buntings do tend to disperse to drier habitats, and can be found feeding in stubble fields with other passerine flocks. Adults feed largely on invertebrates and seeds (the latter particularly in winter), while the nestlings are fed exclusively on a wide variety of invertebrates. The species is known to readily move into newly created wetlands.

continued

Proposed Action with Lead Authorities

Action	Lead	Delivery	Objective
Site Safeguard and Management			
Implement wetland management plan at Robroyston Park pLNR.	RSPB	GCC-LS(CG), GfC	2
Negotiate with landowners with view to implementing Kenmure Marsh Management Plan.	RSPB	GfC	1
Enhance habitat through expansion of open water, control of invasive grasses and removal of tree growth from selected wetland areas at Cardowan Moss pLNR.	RSPB	GCC-LS(CG), GfC	2
Increase population to 5 breeding pairs by 2005 through integrating habitat manipulation in association with flood alleviation work at Darnley Mill pLNR.	RSPB	GCC-LS(CG), GfC	2
Increase population at Cathkin Braes to 8 breeding pairs by 2005, through habitat manipulation (e.g. ditch widening, creation of open water and scrub control).	RSPB	GCC-LS	2
Investigate, through liaison with landowners and stakeholders, possibilities for habitat creation or enhancement at suitable, potential sites.	RSPB	GCC-LS(CG), GfC	3
Future Research and Monitoring			
To maintain existing annual Reed Bunting monitoring programme.	RSPB	GCC-LS(CG), RSPB, SOC, SWT	1, 2, 3
Ensure all monitoring is co-ordinated by Clyde SOC Bird Recorder, and methodology standardised with previous surveys.	RSPB	GCC-LS(CG), SOC, SWT	1, 2, 3
To expand annual monitoring activity to include List 1, List 2 and other suitable sites by 2005.	RSPB	GCC-LS(CG), RSPB, SOC	1, 2, 3
To investigate winter habitat usage by Reed Buntings in the City, by recording all individuals and flocks seen outside the breeding season.	RSPB	GCC-LS, RSPB, SOC	1, 2, 3
Conduct breeding Reed Bunting censuses in 2001 and 2005 at Kenmure Marsh, Lochfauld Marsh, Possil Marsh, Bishop Loch and Bothlin Burn.	RSPB	GCC-LS(CG), SOC	1
Monitor breeding Reed Bunting population at Frankfield Loch.	RSPB	GCC-LS, SOC	2
Carry out annual census of breeding Reed Buntings at Hogganfield Park LNR, Robroyston Park pLNR, Darnley Mill pLNR, Cardowan Moss pLNR and Cathkin Braes.	RSPB	GCC-LS	2
Census breeding population in 2001 and maintain or enhance breeding population over 5 years at Millerston Wetland.	RSPB	GCC-LS	2
Communication and Publicity			
Recruit further volunteer assistance to aid with widening monitoring programme.	RSPB	BW, GCC-LS, RSPB, SOC	1, 2, 3
To launch appeals to the public for records of Reed Buntings in the City, particularly in gardens during winter.	RSPB	RSPB	3
Liaise with Lead Agency for national Species Action Plan.	RSPB	RSPB	1, 2, 3
Review progress of plan and actions by 2006.	RSPB	RSPB	1, 2, 3

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Glasgow City Council: Development and Regeneration Services(GCC-DRS), Glasgow City Council: Land Services(Conservation Group) (GCC-LS(CG)),

Glasgow City Council: Culture and Leisure Services (GCC-CLS), Glasgow City Council: Education Services (GCC-ES), Glasgow City Council: Land Services Countryside Ranger Service (GCC-LS(CRS)),

Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC), Greenspace for Communities(GfC), British Waterways (BW), Forestry Commission (FC), Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), The WISE Group (TWISE)

Glasgow Natural History Society (GNHS), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT).

Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group (CARG), Butterfly Conservation (BC), Concern for Swifts (CIS)