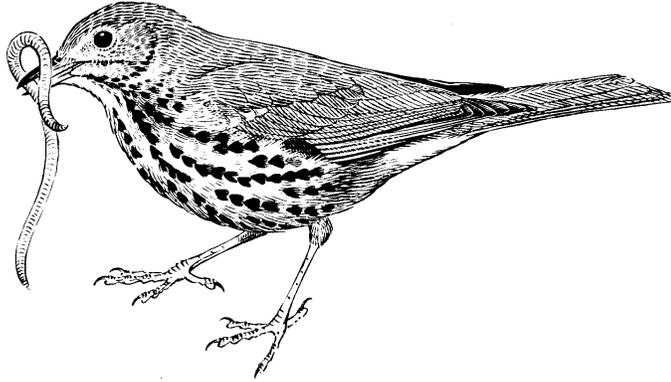


Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

The Song Thrush is a widespread species that occurs almost anywhere there are trees, hedgerows and bushes, primarily in farmland, woodland and scrub habitats, as well as in large gardens and parks. Adults feed on berries, seeds and invertebrates (particularly molluscs) and chicks on a variety of invertebrates.



1 Definition

The Song Thrush is a common but declining resident of the British Isles. It is a partial migrant and a winter visitor. Some continental birds fly to Britain to spend the winter and some resident breeding birds spend the winter further south in Europe. The song thrush occupies a range of British habitats as mentioned above, but changes to farming practices in the last 50 years mean that some of its most suitable habitats are now less favourable.

2 Current status

2.1 National

Song Thrush numbers remained stable until the mid- 1970s after which they declined steadily, with an estimated reduction of 70% in farmland and 45% in woodland habitats between 1971 and 1995.

2.2 Local

Suffolk has a relatively high density of song thrushes with no marked gaps in distribution or density variation. There is no population estimate for the county.

2.3 Natural Areas

All

3 Current factors affecting the Song Thrush in Suffolk

Reasons for the decline on farmland are thought to be due to the loss of food-rich habitats, particularly in the summer, resulting in fewer nesting attempts being made.

4 Current action

4.1 Legal status

The Song Thrush is protected under the EC Birds Directive and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

4.2 Management, research and guidance

- Research work has been carried out into Song Thrush declines in Essex and Suffolk and the results used to produce conservation advice for land managers.
- A National species action plan has been prepared by the RSPB, in collaboration with JNCC and the country agencies.
- Wildlife gardening information available to public, including care with slug pellets (RSPB, SWT).
- SWT undertook a Song Thrush survey in 1999, using volunteers and local schools.
- Five years of survey work at North Warren (RSPB) is now beginning to show an increase in the population.

5 Action plan objectives and targets

1. *Maintain the geographical range of Song Thrush, particularly on farmland habitats, as measured in the 1993 Provisional Atlas of Breeding Birds in Suffolk.*
2. *Continue to monitor Song Thrush numbers through Common Bird Census and Breeding Bird Survey. Set up a series of sample sites of grid squares which are surveyed every year.*
3. *Restore suitable habitat on farmland encouraging uptake of Defra's agri-environment scheme options to benefit Song Thrush.*

6 Song Thrush: Proposed local action with lead agencies

Action	Date	Partners
POLICY AND LEGISLATION		
Ensure Entry Level and Higher Tier agri-environment schemes contain suitable prescriptions to benefit Song Thrush on arable land.	2004	Defra, RSPB, FWAG, EN
Promote uptake of agri-environment scheme prescriptions that are likely to benefit Song Thrush.	2004 2005 2006 2007	Defra, FWAG, RSPB
Ensure compliance with WCA (1981), CE birds Directive by provision of advice to farmers and landowners.	2004 2005 2006 2007	FWAG, Defra, , RSPB
SPECIES SAFEGUARD AND MANAGEMENT		
Continue to support Common Bird Census and Breeding Bird Surveys annually.	2004 2005 2006 2007	SBG, SNS, RSPB
Continue to monitor Song Thrush numbers at North Warren Reserve.	2004 2005 2006 2007	RSPB
RESEARCH AND MONITORING		
Collate all Song Thrush records annually and pass records on to SBRC.	2004 2005 2006 2007	SBRC, FWAG, SWT, Landowners, RSPB
Undertake survey, encouraging landowner and farmers to establish Song Thrush numbers on arable land in Suffolk.	2005	SBRC, FWAG, SWT, Landowners, RSPB, Defra
ADVISORY		
Continue to provide conservation advice to land managers regarding field margins, set-aside management and use of molluscicides to benefit Song Thrush.	2007	FWAG, Defra, RSPB, SWT

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY		
Promote volunteer participation in Breeding Bird Survey by recruiting new volunteers to empty grid squares.	2004	SOG, RSPB
Raise awareness of human influence on Song Thrush numbers, research and conservation action by articles in media, local magazines and local events.	2007	FWAG