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English Woodland Grant Scheme

Woodland Improvement Grant 80

March 2009

Reversing Woodland Bird Decline Yorkshire & The Humber Region

Purpose This leaflet provides guidance on how to apply for this regionally focussed grant. It supplements the generic guidance on Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG), which is available from the [EWGS web site](#).

Introduction Wild birds are considered a good indicator of the general state of health of our wildlife and the countryside and they have been chosen as one of the Government's 15 headline indicators of progress towards sustainable development.

The 'Quality of Life' indicator shows woodland bird populations falling by 20 per cent among 33 species in the last 25 years. Some of these such as the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Spotted Flycatcher and Willow Tit have declined by more than 50 per cent since the late 1960s.

The Forestry Commission Yorkshire & The Humber Region in partnership with the RSPB is offering financial support to landowners and managers to improve the habitat for fifteen vulnerable species. Details of the bird species, key areas in Yorkshire & The Humber, potential issues driving decline and the potential solutions are contained in Appendix 2.

Distribution maps can be found on the RSPB web site:
http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/projects/targeting/targeting_maps.asp

Much of the decline can be attributed to changes in woodland management regimes through either low levels of activity or changes in woodland composition

This grant is targeted at woodlands where work to improve woodland structure and species composition, encourage early successional scrub or old growth and dead wood will have a beneficial effect on identified woodland bird populations.

Eligibility In order to be eligible for this grant applicants must meet the following:

- The general criteria and conditions for Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) apply – refer to the WIG guidance for further details
- The application must specify which of the species the work will benefit
- The woodland must be associated with the target area for the species chosen (visit RSPB web site above) and be within the Regional Woodland Bird Priority Areas of South Yorkshire shown in Appendix 1

Note: the Peak District part of South Yorkshire is eligible but administered by the East Midlands FC office.

- The work must benefit the chosen species and be in accordance with the criteria outlined in Appendix 2
- The FC normally expects a management plan to assess the appropriateness and priority of proposals, as well as put them in a wider context. If there is no plan, the woodland should have a Condition, Opportunities & Threats (COT) Assessment undertaken. An [electronic version of the COT](#) is available for download in the WMG section of the website www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs-wmg
- In order to assess the effectiveness of this grant and to compare with similar initiatives, applicants must agree to periodic monitoring of the woodland.

Each eligible application site will be visited by an RSPB and/or FC officer to assess the location to ensure the work is suitable and will benefit the chosen species.

Grant will be paid at 80% of Standard Costs for the agreed items in the proposed work schedule. The operations and standard costs are listed in *Operations Note 9 – Standard Costs*, available from the [EWGS document library](#)

This WIG fund is limited to payments in the financial years 1st April 2009 to 28 February 2014. Claims must be received before the end of the financial year in which the payment is due. Funds are limited and will be awarded on a first come first served basis.

How to Apply Both EWGS 1 *General Details* form and WIG *cost calculator* (which is a Microsoft Excel file) or EWGS 5 *Woodland Improvement Grant* form must be completed and submitted with an OS Master Map ® showing the areas for which grant is sought. Where tree felling is proposed then form EWGS 4 – *Felling Permission and Woodland Regeneration* Grant should also be completed.

Further Advice and Information Further information can be obtained from your local Woodland Officer by contacting the Regional office at Wheldrake on 01904 448778.

Other Advice The EWGS website www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs contains all the information needed to apply for grant support. If you do not have access to the internet, you can request any of the information from your local

Forestry Commission office.

We recommend getting professional advice on woodland management and grants. A list of national and regional professional organisations is available at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-advice or from your local FC office.

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Appendix 1 – Yorkshire & The Humber Woodland Bird Priority Areas



Appendix 1

Reversing Woodland Bird Decline

<i>BIRD SPECIES</i>	<i>KEY AREAS IN YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER</i>	<i>POTENTIAL ISSUES DRIVING DECLINE</i>	<i>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</i>	<i>WIG 80 FUNDABLE</i>
Garden warbler	South Yorkshire	Maturation of young successional woodland; decline in coppice extent	Restore neglected coppice; ride enhancement; develop scrubby woodland edge; conserve soil moisture; new woodland creation.	Fencing; deer/grazing management; coppicing; ride management; scrub establishment in buffer zone; drainage management to achieve wetter ground.
Hawfinch	South Yorkshire	Woodland isolation; degradation in parkland habitats; decline in mature woodland quality	Restructure under-managed mature woodland; restore old parklands; establish grazing management; maintain / enhance in-wood wet features; new woodland creation.	Fencing; deer/grazing management; thinning.
Lesser Redpoll	South Yorkshire	Succession of preferred scrub and young woodland habitats into more mature woodland.	Restructure immature closed canopy woodland to provide immature elements; ride enhancement & glade creation/improvement with scrub edges; create new scrub woodland; favour birch.	Coppicing; ride management; thinning; scrub establishment in buffer zone.
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	South Yorkshire	Tree crowding leading to a lack of open crowned mature trees; lack of standing and in-tree deadwood;	Restructure closed canopy woodland for crown development: Thin mature under-managed woodland; ride enhancement; increase deadwood; conserve soil moisture.	Thinning; ride management; standing deadwood creation; drainage management to achieve wetter ground, coppice.

Marsh Tit	South Yorkshire	Deer/sheep browsing leading to poor shrub layer; heavy shade.	Establish ability to control grazing; coppice neglected stands; thin crowded canopy to encourage shrub layer.	Fencing; deer/sheep management; thinning; coppicing; scrub establishment in buffer zone.
Pied Flycatcher	South Yorkshire	Insufficient grazing to maintain open shrub layer; potentially excessive grazing preventing regeneration; overcrowded stands lacking in growth and canopy development; lack of nest holes may be an issue.	Establish ability to manage grazing; selective thinning to encourage tree growth; retain deadwood; extend woodland in appropriate locations; provide nest boxes only where needed (based on objective assessment).	Fencing; thinning; standing deadwood creation; tree establishment to extend woodland.
Redstart	South Yorkshire	Loss of older trees especially on glade/woodland edge; lack of grazing to maintain open ground structure; shortage of natural nest holes.	Establish ability to control grazing; selective thinning to encourage tree growth; glade creation/enhancement; retain deadwood; extend woodland in appropriate locations.	Fencing; thinning; glade creation; standing deadwood creation.
Spotted Flycatcher	South Yorkshire	Decrease in in-stand structural diversity; decrease in glades and open rides; lack of grazing; lack of natural nest sites.	Restructure immature closed canopy woodland; thinning that encourages structural diversity; ride enhancement; glade creation/improvement; retain deadwood.	Coppicing; thinning; creation of standing deadwood; ride management.
Tree Pipit	South Yorkshire	Loss of open-structure woodland through ageing and canopy closure; loss of individual trees in clear fell areas; excessive deer/sheep browsing removing nest cover.	Restructure immature closed canopy woodland; coppice; ride enhancement; glade creation/improvement with scatter of retained trees; establish ability to control grazing; create open scrubby woodland edge.	Fencing; deer/sheep management; coppicing; ride management; thinning; scrub establishment in buffer zone.

Willow Tit	South Yorkshire	Loss of soil moisture; maturing young woodland; increased shade/canopy closure; loss of shrub layer; loss of scrub; lack of nest sites (can be addressed during operations).	Restructure maturing closed canopy woodland; retain deadwood; establish ability to control grazing. Soil moisture conservation; new woodland and scrub creation; specialised nest boxes.	Fencing; deer/sheep management; coppicing; thinning; scrub establishment in buffer zone; nest-site provision including standing deadwood creation; drainage management to achieve wetter ground; nest boxes.
Wood Warbler	South Yorkshire	Insufficient grazing to maintain open shrub layer; may be instances where excessive grazing is causing loss of nesting habitat and preventing regeneration; maturation of stands without replacement.	Establish ability to control grazing; retain deadwood; small group felling or coppicing to regenerate stands; extend woodland in appropriate locations.	Fencing; group felling; tree establishment to extend woodland.
Woodcock	South Yorkshire	Deer/sheep browsing leading to loss of shrub layer; drying out of wet woodland; recreational disturbance.	Restructure immature closed canopy woodland; ride enhancement; glade creation/improvement; establish ability to manage grazing; maintain/enhance naturally high water levels; buffer woodland edge; new woodland creation.	Fencing; grazing management; ride management; scrub establishment in surrounding buffer; drainage management to achieve wetter ground conditions.
Willow warbler	South Yorkshire	Decline in young successional woodland; decline in coppice	Restore neglected coppice; ride management; develop scrubby woodland edge; conserve soil moisture; new woodland creation.	Deer sheep management; coppicing; ride management; scrub establishment in surrounding buffer.
Woodlark	South Yorkshire	Continuity of suitable clear-fell and permanent open ground habitat; conversion to continuous cover forestry; recreational disturbance.	Plan felling and restocking operations to ensure continuity of large coupes; maintain areas of short turf and bare ground.	Vegetation management/control; partial removal of lop and top from clearfells; ride management; access management.

Nightjar

South Yorkshire

Decline in continuity of suitable clear-fell and permanent open ground habitat; conversion to continuous cover forestry; recreational disturbance.

Plan felling and restocking operations to ensure continuity of open areas; large coupes and or very open structure woodland. Visitor access management.

Vegetation management/control; coppicing; ride creation and management; access management.