

LNRS Species Advice: Identifying threatened bird species whose drivers of decline operate outside England

Current LNRS advice suggests that species should not be identified for bespoke local action where there is good evidence that the drivers of decline are operating outside of England and so there is little prospect that targeted measures for that species will be effective (criterion F, see table extract in Annex A). This has led to some LNRSs categorising large numbers of migratory birds for ‘no action’, even though there is a dearth of evidence to suggest that the trends in the populations occurring within England are being driven solely by factors operating outside the country.

Criterion F seeks to ensure that the inevitably limited resources available for bespoke interventions are targeted on those species for which there is the best evidence to show that such actions will be effective, ie contribute to local population recovery. This paper seeks to identify bird species which are likely to fall under criterion F, ie bird species for which there is good evidence that the drivers of decline are operating outside of England and so there is little prospect that targeted measures will be effective. These species broadly fall into three categories, as follows:

1. Breeding summer migrants whose declines are most likely being caused by deteriorating conditions on their wintering grounds and / or staging areas, or have very small, dispersed or ephemeral populations.
2. Non-breeding birds that are ‘short-stopping’ due to climate change, or that are present in England in low, variable numbers linked to weather conditions.
3. Non-breeding birds whose threat status relates solely to small/vulnerable breeding populations in Scotland.

A list based on these categories is provided in the table below.

Breeding summer migrants	Non-breeding birds that are ‘short-stopping’ or present in low, variable numbers	Threat status solely relates to breeding populations in Scotland
Quail Marsh Warbler Savi’s Warbler Wood Warbler Fieldfare	White-fronted Goose Smew Red-necked Grebe Slavonian Grebe Green Sandpiper Spotted Redshank Caspian Gull Iceland Gull Glaucous Gull Shore Lark Yellow-browed Warbler Water Pipit Lapland Bunting Snow Bunting	Black-throated Diver Leach’s Storm-petrel Red-necked Phalarope Wood Sandpiper Arctic Skua Great Skua Redwing Parrot Crossbill

Notes:

1. The review is restricted to Threatened and NT species following Stanbury *et al.* (2021).
2. Where the evidence for factors operating solely outside England is only partial, consideration has been given as to whether the conservation needs for that species (eg habitat requirements) are likely to be delivered by other species likely to be targeted for habitat-based or bespoke management (eg the breeding habitat requirements for wood warbler are likely to be provided by habitat-management for other woodland species).

Annex A

<p>F: Drivers of decline operating outside England</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Species with low (or very low) recovery potential due to factors constraining recovery operating beyond English borders - Evidence shows that targeted action in England is highly unlikely to improve species' prospects. - This category is likely to apply only to migratory species (e.g. summer migrant birds whose declines are being caused by deteriorating conditions on their wintering grounds and / or staging areas, and non-breeding waterbirds that are 'short stopping' due to climate change) 	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
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