

Back from the Brink – Species summary

Marsh Tit

BftB project: IP06 Roots of Rockingham

Project lead organisation: Butterfly Conservation

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Partner organisation for species: RSPB

Species name – common & scientific	Marsh Tit <i>Poecile palustris</i>
Photograph	 <p>© RSPB Images / Back from the Brink</p>
Taxon group	Class: Aves Order: Passeriformes
Conservation status	Classified in the UK as Red under the Birds of Conservation Concern 5: the Red List for Birds (2021). Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.
UK distribution	Largely confined to the lowlands of England and Wales. Continuous decline since 1970. See Marsh Tit factsheet on Woodland Wildlife Toolkit for distribution map
Habitat associations	Range of lowland broadleaf woodland types. Preferred habitat niches: Dense, diverse shrub layer within mature woodland. Larger woods preferred.

BftB work carried out:	
Survey & Monitoring	Volunteers carried out Marsh Tit surveys on 7 sites and RSPB staff carried out surveys at 3 sites. 12 sites were also visited by RSPB staff to assess current habitat condition, as well as potential beneficial habitat management for the priority bird species.
Technical advice provision	<p>Detailed site surveys carried out at 12 sites by RSPB. During each site survey, a route was walked around the wood, following the ride network and aiming to cover the majority of area of the woodland. A visual assessment was made for each wood of the following: stand structure and composition, internal open space (rides and glades), internal and external edge structure, scrub / pioneer habitat availability, availability of large mature / open grown trees, decaying wood availability, wetness and wet features; and where possible, connectivity to other woodland habitats. File notes were provided for each site to inform the relevant landowners and managers how they could manage their land to improve habitat for the target bird species.</p> <p>Section on managing woodland for birds was included in each of the three landowner workshops.</p>
Wider engagement & advocacy activities?	ID and survey training, guided walks, talks, bird quiz, virtual dawn chorus walk, creative writing workshop.
BftB results obtained:	
Recorded Distribution (in BftB focal areas)	Recorded in 10 sites.
Recorded Abundance of species populations	Total of 93 records during project surveys. Was the most abundant of the priority bird species. Long-term population trends could not be identified from the survey data given the timescale of the project, as well as disruption to surveys due to Covid-19 restrictions in 2020.
Species Recovery Curve progress made	Species Recovery Curve moved from 4 to 5. Volunteer bird surveys showed marsh tit to be the most abundant and widespread of the priority bird species across the project sites, and habitat management recommendations were made to site managers for this species. However the species is not likely to see much benefit from the main habitat work carried out by the project, which focused along rides. Thinning carried out by FE as part of the Forestry Works may allow development of good understorey habitat for this species over next decade.
Recommendations for future work:-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bird survey skills and enthusiasm of the volunteers should be harnessed by linking project volunteers to local bird groups and national bird surveys such as those run by the British Trust for Ornithology • See Marsh Tit factsheet on Woodland Wildlife Toolkit for further information including habitat management advice for this species