

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Action Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The house sparrow is a resident species throughout Britain and is a familiar bird of urban areas. House sparrows have traditionally taken their food from garden bird tables as well as the seeds of flowers in gardens, wastelands and grasslands.
- 1.2 The house sparrows domed nest is usually built near or on a building although the species will nest in creepers, dense scrub or trees. The species generally produces three broods per year. Insects such as aphids and caterpillars become an important part of the house sparrow's diet when feeding their young.

2. Current Status

- 2.1 There is much evidence that this once abundant bird has declined dramatically in recent years. A British Trust for Ornithology survey reported that the average number of house sparrows has fallen by about 50% between 1978 and 1993. The National Breeding Birds Survey shows a statistically significant decline in house sparrows of 7% between 1994 and 1998.
- 2.2 A number of factors have been put forward to account for the observed changes in the house sparrow population. Some of the factors are outlined below:
 - Use of insecticides leads to a decline in the availability of invertebrates for feeding young and thus a lack of breeding success in house sparrows.
 - Reduction in seed supply due to changing land use.
 - Increases in house sparrow predators such as sparrowhawks.
 - Changes relating to availability of nest sites.
 - The house sparrow is still recognised as a pest species in some areas and may be controlled legally.
- 2.3 Although the species is included on English Nature's Species Recovery Programme the house sparrow is still classified as a pest species in relation to the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981, as amended). It provides for an annually reviewed general licence to control house sparrows, with the landowner's consent (Statutory Instrument no 3010).

3. Key Site

- 3.1 The house sparrow has been recorded at Thornton Fields landfill site in Teesside.

4. Objectives & Targets

No	Objectives	Target
4.1	Increase knowledge of the status and distribution of house sparrow on all Biffa Waste Services sites and ensure information is recorded appropriately.	Action to be in place by 2005.
4.2	Ensure appropriate conservation and enhancement measures are implemented on sites where house sparrows have been recorded and protect existing sites from damage and destruction.	Ongoing.
4.3	Ensure knowledge of the status and distribution of house sparrows on Biffa Waste Services sites, and the implementation of the house sparrow SAP, is kept up-to-date and revised as appropriate.	Action to be in place by 2007.
4.4	Increase awareness of the house sparrow and its conservation on Biffa sites.	Ongoing.

5. Action Plan

There are generic actions for Data Collection & Information Management, Site Management, Monitoring & Audit and Biodiversity Awareness that apply to all Species Action Plans. These are located in a separate 'Generic Action Plans' section that should be read in conjunction with this document.

Please note that the partners identified in the House Sparrow Action Plan are not an exclusive list and new partners are both welcome and needed.

Action	Potential Partners	Year						Meets Objective No.
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2013	
5.1 Data Collection & Information Management								
5.1.1 Determine house sparrow population and distribution on all Biffa sites through an ecological survey.	WT	•	•	•				4.1
5.1.2 Develop a procedure to record and manage house sparrow data (as part of a wider BAP information management system).	WT, JNCC	•						4.1
5.1.3 Implement data management system, recording house sparrow data & keep up-to-date as appropriate.	WT		•	•	•	•	•	4.1
5.1.4 Identify the key issues on the status of house sparrows and possible causes of decline, which should be investigated in the research projects, with an emphasis on waste management sites.	WT, UNI, EN, RSPB, BTO	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.1
5.1.5 Support relevant house sparrow research projects.	WT, UNI, EN, RSPB, BTO	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.1
5.2 Site Management								
5.2.1 Based on the results of the ecological survey, protect existing house sparrow populations.	WT	•	•	•	•			4.2
5.2.2 Determine use of insecticides & other pesticides on sites where house sparrows are recorded and seek uptake of a more cautious and targeted use.	WT	•						4.2

Action	Potential Partners	Year						Meets Objective No.
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2013	
5.2.3 Undertake a comprehensive programme of bird box installation in appropriate habitats at key sites.	WT	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.2
5.2.4 Develop generic management prescriptions to improve sites for house sparrows.	WT, EN, BTO, RSPB	•						4.2
5.2.5 Ensure that house sparrow management prescriptions are included in Biodiversity Management Modules for sites where the species occurs.	WT	•	•	•				4.2
5.3 Monitoring & Audit								
5.3.1 Develop a monitoring protocol for house sparrows on Biffa sites.	WT, EN, LA, RSPB, BTO	•						4.3
5.3.2 Implement a monitoring protocol for house sparrows on Biffa sites.	WT		•	•	•	•	•	4.3
5.3.3 Contribute to the UK Breeding Bird Survey through annual monitoring of breeding house sparrows at Biffa sites.	BTO, WT, JNCC, RSPB,	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.3
5.3.4 Pass information gathered during survey and monitoring to JNCC so that it can be incorporated into a national database.	WT, JNCC	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.3
5.3.5 Develop an auditing procedure for the house sparrow species action plan.	WT, EN, LA, RSPB, BTO	•						4.3
5.3.6 Implement an auditing procedure for the house sparrow species action plan.	WT		•	•	•	•	•	4.3
5.3.7 Ensure the house sparrow species action plan species is reviewed and updated.	WT, EN, LA					•	•	4.3

Action	Potential Partners	Year						Meets Objective No.
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5.4 Awareness								
5.4.1 Inform relevant site managers of their responsibilities for conserving the house sparrow and provide management advice.	WT	•	•	•				4.4
5.4.2 Produce education and interpretive material for relevant Biffa Waste Services stakeholders on the house sparrow and its action plan.	LA, WT	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.4
5.4.3 Publish results of the house sparrow SAP.	-	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.4

6. Partners

- BTO - British Trust for Ornithology
- EN - English Nature
- JNCC - Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- LA - Local Authority
- RSPB - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- UNI - Universities
- WT - Wildlife Trust