

Little Ringed Plover Action Plan

Introduction and Vision Statement

The little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*) is a summer visitor to Wales – generally arriving in March and leaving in June/July. It nests on shingle banks and feeds on insects and their larvae, supplemented by spiders, small molluscs and worms.

Little ringed plovers' nests are shallow scrapes in the ground lined with small stones or plant material. The eggs in these exposed nests are vulnerable to predation so are well camouflaged – stone coloured with speckles and dark streaks.



The first record of the little ringed plover in the UK was at Tring reservoir (Buckinghamshire) in 1938 and breeding numbers have increased steadily since. The majority of little ringed plovers are found in England although the population appears to be spreading west and north.

It was first recorded in Carmarthenshire in 1984 with a first record of successful breeding in 1986 breeding on shingle banks of the River Tywi. The population has rapidly expanded. In 2004 a survey commissioned by CCW, counted 62 breeding pairs in the Tywi catchment, and in 2007 this had increased to 76 pairs. The bulk of the pairs were located along the Tywi (60 or so); the remainder occurred on two main tributaries, the Cothi and the Bran.

Little ringed plovers do not breed on other rivers in the county such as the Teifi and Loughor although there are some shingle shoals present. These are not extensive enough or sufficiently open and free from encroaching vegetation for nesting. The exact habitat requirements along many rivers are scarce and few in Wales meet the species' requirements. Little ringed plovers may be limited in their scope to colonise that country's rivers due to competition with ringed plovers and even oystercatchers.

The Carmarthenshire population of little ringed plovers amounts to around 10% of the UK breeding population, again highlighting the importance of the county for the future prospects of this bird. The Tywi is scheduled as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for this species but the Cothi and the Bran are not included in that designation. They also have bred occasionally on extensive brownfield sites on the coalfield.

Nests and chicks also are under threat from flooding episodes and being crushed by cattle trampling across the shingle banks. They are also predated on by corvids, and illegal extraction of gravel along the Tywi means that the population in Carmarthenshire is by no means safe.

The vision for the little ringed plover in Carmarthenshire is for an increased population, which uses sympathetically managed habitat, allowing for an expansion in range.

Action Plan Objectives

LRP1SP To maintain and increase the population and range of the little ringed plover in Carmarthenshire

LRP2DCM To gather data on the distribution and status of little ringed plovers in Carmarthenshire.

LRP3RA To raise awareness of the importance of little ringed plover in Carmarthenshire and provide advice on habitat management

Actions

CODE	TEXT	START/END DATE	CONTACTS (lead in bold)	Action goal	Key partners	Funding	Priority L,M,H	Report Jan–Dec 2010	Report Jan–Dec 2011	
LRP1SP1	Identify sites that could benefit from temporary fencing to prevent cattle accessing shingle banks during bird nesting season	2010– 2011	CCC	List/map of key sites	CCW Volunteers Landowners			Action complete. Sites along Tywi identified from aerial photos.		
LRP1SP2	Erect fencing at identified key nesting sites	2010–2015	CCW	At least 2 sites fenced	CCC TAYO Volunteers Landowners	✓		Fencing bought using CCW grant funding and supplied to local landowner to use. (SN 575204)		
LRP2DCM1	Undertake casual monitoring of all known populations along the Tywi valley (SN499200)	2010–2015	CCW	Monitoring report	Volunteers RSPB CBC TAYO Landowners			Awaiting information		
LRP3RA1	Produce an information sheet for landowners providing advice on little ringed plover conservation and habitat management	2010– 2011	TAYO	Info sheet produced	CCC CBC	Funding required		Sheet produced		
LRP3RA2	Letter from CCW to landowners along Tywi re implications of gravel extraction	2010–2015	CCW	Letter to landowners				Not started		
LRP3RA2	Through a press release and article in the Carmarthenshire biodiversity newsletter, encourage recording of little ringed plover in Carmarthenshire	2010– 2011	CCC	PR Newsletter item	TAYO CCW CRT			2011 action		
LRP3RA3	Provide angling clubs with information on little ringed plovers, asking for records and potential impacts	2010– 2011	CCC	Info sheet produced	CRT Angling clubs			Started – not complete		
POL1LRP1	Where appropriate condition shingle enhancement through planning applications	2010–2015	CCC	100% of relevant planning applications	CCW EAW			N/A – No relevant Applications		