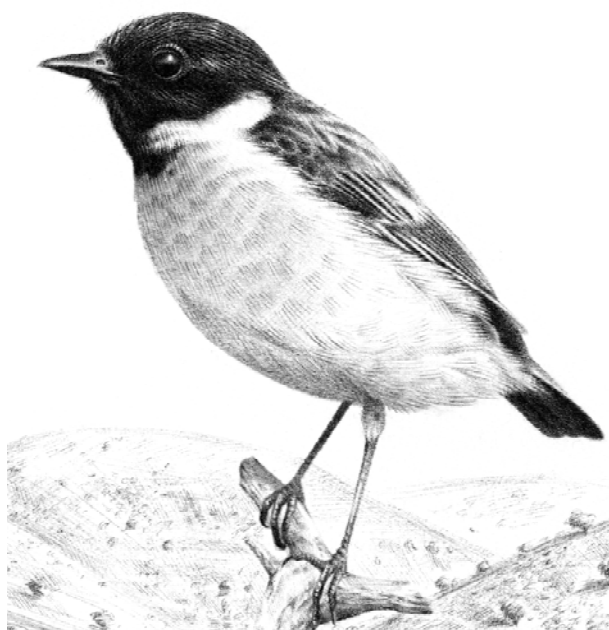


THE STIPERSTONES BREEDING BIRD SURVEY 2004



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A three-year project to survey the breeding birds of The Stiperstones was started in 2004. Three categories of species were defined in the Specification for the Survey:

- Target Species
- Incidental Species
- Excluded Species.

Four separate areas were surveyed in 2004:-

1. the southern half of the National Nature Reserve
2. the site of the former Gatten Plantation
3. the Heathland Restoration Area around Nipstone Rock
4. the open areas at the centre of the proposed Heathland Restoration Areas (HRAs) at The Rock (Rock House and Rock Farm).

The estimated breeding population of Target Species found in these four separate areas during the 2004 Survey is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Estimated Number Of Breeding Pairs Of Target Species Found During The 2004 Survey

Species	Estimated Number Of Breeding Pairs				
	Southern NNR	Gatten Plantation	Nipstone Rock	The Rock H.R.A.	Total
Curlew	0	0	0	0	0
Cuckoo	2	0 - 1	0	0	2 - 3
Skylark	Excluded	Excluded	4	0	n / a
Tree Pipit	8 - 9	5 - 6	8	1 - 2	22 - 25
Meadow Pipit	Excluded	Excluded	2	1	n / a
Redstart	1 - 2	2 - 6	0	0	3 - 8
Stonechat	10	1	0	0	11
Whinchat	5 - 6	0	0	0	5 - 6
Wheatear	3 - 6	0	0	0	3 - 6
Ring Ouzel	0	0	0	0	0
Whitethroat	12 - 14	7	1 - 3	0	20 - 24
Reed Bunting	4	0	0	0	4

The results of the 2004 Survey, along with data for some species collected from other sources, have been compared with results from an earlier survey, carried out in 1995, on the southern part of the NNR. The population trends are summarised in Table 2 overleaf (Grasshopper Warbler is no longer found on the NNR, but is now found in the (former) Gatten Plantation).

Table 2. Population Trends 1995 – 2004

Species	Change Since 1995 (Southern Part Of NNR Only)					
	Decrease		Increase		No Change	Not Known
	Extinct	Yes	Yes	>100%		
Red Grouse					Yes	
Snipe	Yes					
Curlew	Yes					
Cuckoo		Yes				
Nightjar				Yes		
Skylark						????
Tree Pipit					Yes	
Redstart						????
Stonechat				Yes		
Whinchat		Yes				
Wheatear			Yes			
Ring Ouzel					Yes	
Grasshopper Warbler	???	Yes				
Whitethroat				Yes		
Reed Bunting				Yes		

Criteria are outlined for establishing the conservation priorities for bird species on The Stiperstones. Applying these criteria suggests the priorities outlined in Table 3. These preliminary conclusions will be reviewed in the final Report, when all three years' Survey work is completed in 2006, and the population of each species is known.

Table 3. Proposed Conservation Status – Priorities For The Stiperstones Management Plan

PROPOSED CONSERVATION STATUS PRIORITIES FOR THE STIPERSTONES MANAGEMENT PLAN				
Very High		High	Medium	?? Very High
Red Grouse	Stonechat	Curlew	Whitethroat	Merlin
Nightjar	Wheatear	Cuckoo		Snipe
Tree Pipit	Grasshopper Warbler	Skylark		Ring Ouzel
Meadow Pipit	Reed Bunting	Redstart		
Whinchat				

A number of recommendations are made concerning adoption of these priorities, and on the bracken spraying programme and other habitat management issues in the area.

Minimum population estimates are also provided for all the Incidental Species in the area, apart from those explicitly excluded by the Survey Specification. A number of these species are on the *Red List* or *Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern: 2002-2007*.

The detailed Table of Contents provides easy access to the different sections of the Report.

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July 2005