



### Grayling (*Hipparchia semele*)



Cryptic colouring makes the Grayling difficult to see when at rest on bare ground, tree trunks or stones. The wings are kept closed when not in flight making it appear smaller than it actually is. In flight it is a distinctive large butterfly with a looping and gliding flight. The Grayling is widespread on the coast and southern heaths of Britain but is declining in many areas, particularly inland. In Shropshire the Grayling appears to be bucking the national trend and is currently undergoing a period of expansion.

## 1 Objectives and Targets

### 1.1 Objectives

- A. Protect, enhance and monitor the existing populations of Grayling in Shropshire.
- B. Encourage the Grayling to naturally colonise more sites by encouraging more sympathetic management for this species.
- C. Keep abreast of any successes in brownfield management for the Grayling elsewhere in the country and supply this information to local officers and developers so that appropriate measures can be taken.
- D. Increase local awareness of the status and needs of Grayling in Shropshire through communication and education and involve more local people in survey and monitoring for this species.

### 1.2 Targets

- Maintain, monitor and enhance the existing Grayling populations in core areas (Stiperstones and Long Mynd area) and elsewhere.

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## 2. Current Status

### 2.1 Importance

The Grayling occurs widely in Europe to latitude 63 N although it is absent from parts of south-east Europe. It is declining in many European countries (e.g. in Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg 50-75% decrease in 25 years).

### 2.2 Trends

The decline of the Grayling is estimated to be >50% in the UK over the last 25 years (hence its inclusion as a UK BAP Priority Species Candidate in 2005).

### 2.3 Population and Distribution

The Grayling is primarily a coastal species in Britain where it is widespread particularly along western coasts. However it does also occur inland, frequently on heaths, former industrial land and on rocky outcrops and scree slopes. In Shropshire it is largely localised to the Stiperstones and the Long Mynd area where it is not uncommon and appears to be expanding its range.

## 3. Current Factors Affecting the Species

- Development
- Agricultural intensification
- Changes in heathland and grassland management
- Fragmentation and isolation of sites

## 4. Current Action

### 4.1 Policy and Protection

- The Grayling is not currently listed on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and therefore has no statutory protection.
- It is now listed under the following category:
  - UKBAP Priority Species List Candidate (2005)
- A number of sites in the Stiperstones and Long Mynd areas are SSSIs.
- A number of the Shropshire sites are county Wildlife Sites.
- All the sites in the Shropshire Hills fall within the Biodiversity Enhancement Area.

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### 4.2 Management, Research and Survey

- Recent reduction in the grazing pressure on the Long Mynd has resulted in this area being colonised by the Grayling.
- Research project on the Graylings on the Shropshire Metal Mines was carried out from 1998-2000.

### 5. Key Habitats

- Coastal habitats on dunes, undercliffs and clifftops
- Old quarries, spoil heaps and other derelict industrial sites
- Dry heathland
- Calcareous grasslands
- Rocky outcrops and scree slopes

### 6. Complementary Plans

Shropshire                      Acid Grassland HAP

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### 7. Action Plan

Habitat / Species	Action code	Action text	Location of action	Start date	End date	Lead	Assisting
Grayling	SHR GRA CA 01	Provide management advice to the land managers of all 15 key county sites for Grayling and encourage the implementation of this advice. Identify at least two other sites in each core area where managers could be targeted with conservation advice by 2010.	Shropshire, Stiperstones and Long Mynd	2006	2010	BC	NE, NT, FC, SWT, SC
Grayling	SHR GRA CP 01	Produce at least one press release on the status of the Grayling in Shropshire and how to record and conserve it by 2010.	Shropshire	2006	2010	BC	FC, SWT, SC
Grayling	SHR GRA FR 01	Recruit at least five more volunteers to survey for Grayling species by 2010.	Shropshire	2006	2010	BC	SC, FC, SWT
Grayling	SHR GRA HS 01	Ensure management for Grayling is identified in the Forest Design Plan for the Gravels Forestry by 2010.	Gravels Forestry	2006	2010	FC	BC
Grayling	SHR GRA HC 01	Ensure adequate mitigation/compensation for any Grayling habitat lost due to development.	Priority to Stiperstones area	2006	-	BC	SC, SWT
Grayling	SHR GRA SM 01	Achieve favourable management for Grayling on sites on the Long Mynd by 2010.	Long Mynd	2006	2010	NT	BC, NE, SWT, FC
Grayling	SHR GRA SM 02	Achieve favourable management for Grayling at Bog Mine and Snailbeach Mine by 2010.	South Shropshire	2006	2010	SC	BC, NE
Grayling	SHR GRA SM 03	Achieve favourable management for Grayling on all key sites on the Stiperstones by 2010.	Stiperstones & Hollies	2006	2010	BC	NE
Grayling	SHR GRA SM 04	Achieve favourable management for Grayling at Earls Hill by 2010.	Earls Hill	2006	2010	SWT	BC

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Grayling	SHR GRA SM 05	Achieve favourable management for Grayling on at least two more sites in the county by 2010.	Shropshire	2006	2010	BC	SWT, FC, NE, SC, NT
Grayling	SHR GRA SP 01	Adoption of all 15 sites supporting key Grayling colonies as County Wildlife Sites by 2010.	Shropshire	2006	2010	SWT	BC
Grayling	SHR GRA SU 01	Carry out a habitat quality assessment on at least 50% of the 15 key county sites for Grayling at least once every three years until 2012.	Shropshire	2006	2012	BC	SWT, NE, NT, FC, SC
Grayling	SHR GRA SU 02	Set up a monitoring programme to ensure all key county sites for Grayling are visited at least once every three years until 2012.	Shropshire	2006	2012	BC	SWT, NE, FC, NT,

### Key to organisations

BC	Butterfly Conservation
FC	Forestry Commission
NE	Natural England
NT	National Trust
SC	Shropshire Council
SWT	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
SBP	Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership

**Plan Author:** Jenny Joy, Butterfly Conservation (July, 2006).

**Plan last revised:** April 2008 by Fran Lancaster, Biodiversity Support Officer, Shropshire Council.

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