

Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan



Pearl-Bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*)



The Pearl-bordered Fritillary is one of the earliest fritillaries to emerge and can be found as early as April in woodland clearings or on rough hillsides with bracken where it feeds on spring flowers such as bugle. It was once widespread but has declined rapidly in recent decades, and is now highly threatened in England and Wales. In Shropshire this butterfly is now largely confined to the Wyre Forest where it is still relatively widespread and abundant. It has recently been lost from the Oswestry Uplands area.

1 Objectives and Targets

1.1 Objectives

- A. Protect and enhance the existing populations of Pearl-bordered Fritillary in Shropshire.
- B. Increase the amount of suitable habitat available to this species to try to encourage it to colonise new sites within the Wyre Forest.
- C. Raise awareness of the status and needs of the Pearl-bordered Fritillary through communication and education.
- D. Re-introduce Pearl-bordered Fritillary into one of its former areas.

1.2 Targets

- Maintain, monitor and enlarge the existing population in the Wyre Forest.
- Target the land managers of all known colonies, former sites or potential sites in the Wyre Forest area to see if there is any scope for achieving more favourable habitat management by 2008.

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2 Current Status

2.1 Importance

Widespread across Europe from northern Spain to Scandinavia and eastwards to Russia and Asia. It appears to be stable in many European countries but has undergone serious declines in some places (e.g. Belgium and Denmark >50% decrease in 25 years).

2.2 Trends

In Britain, the Pearl-bordered Fritillary is one of our most rapidly declining species with >50% decline estimate for the last 25 years in both abundance and range. The results of a national targeted survey for Pearl-bordered Fritillary in 2004 were even more depressing and suggested that a) the number of breeding colonies in England had declined by 33% in seven years (1997-2004), and b) since 1997, the species has become extinct in Somerset, Dorset and Kent.

2.3 Population and Distribution

There are now only thought to be 170 colonies surviving across all of England. One of the key nationally important core areas for the Pearl-bordered Fritillary is the Wyre Forest (on the Shropshire/Worcestershire border) where at least 21 sites have recently supported this species.

3 Current Factors Affecting the Species

Nationally and locally the species has suffered losses to:

- Changes in woodland management
- Continuing decline in the market for coppice products
- Changes in bracken management
- Fragmentation of existing habitats and potential habitats

4 Current Action

4.1 Policy and Protection

- The Pearl-bordered Fritillary is currently listed on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (for sale only).
- It is also listed under the following categories:
 - UKBAP Priority Species (1998)
 - A species action plan for the pearl-bordered Fritillary was prepared by Butterfly Conservation in 1995
- The Wyre Forest is a Biodiversity Enhancement Area

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4.2 Management, Research and Survey

- Various management techniques are currently being employed to maintain this species in the Wyre Forest. They include coppicing, bracken rolling, ride-edge management and the opening up of new areas
- At least three sites in the Oswestry area (Llanymynech Rocks, Llyncllys Common and Jones Rough) are currently being managed in a way which would benefit the Pearl-bordered Fritillary if it was still present (the last sighting being in 2004).

5 Key Habitats

- Woodland rides and clearings
- Well-drained grassland habitats either with scattered scrub and/or where bracken is abundant
- Open deciduous woodland (mainly in Scotland)

6 Complementary Plans

UK Pearl-bordered Fritillary SAP
Shropshire Semi-Natural Broadleaved Woodland HAP

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7 Action Plan

Habitat / Species	Action code	Action text	Location of action	Start date	End date	Lead	Assisting
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	SHR PBF CP 02	Produce at least two press releases on the Pearl-bordered Fritillary in Shropshire and how to record and conserve it by 2010.	Shropshire	2006	2010	BC	FC, SWT, SC
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	SHR PBF FR 01	Recruit at least five more volunteers to monitor and survey for Pearl-bordered Fritillary in both the Wyre Forest and the Oswestry areas by 2010.	Wyre Forest and Oswestry area	2006	2010	BC	FC, WFSG, SWT, SC
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	SHR PBF HS 01	Undertake practical habitat management to benefit Pearl Bordered Fritillary at 3 sites identified by action 'SHR PBF SU 01' by 2015.	Shropshire	2008	2015	BC	FC, NE, SWT
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	SHR PBF SM 01	Achieve favourable management for the Pearl-bordered Fritillary in the 21 areas of the Wyre Forest where this species has recently been recorded by 2010.	Wyre Forest	2006	2010	FC, NE	WFSG
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	SHR PBF SU 01	Carry out habitat surveys of 5 sites with the potential to support Pearl-bordered Fritillary by 2010.	Shropshire	2008	2010	BC	FC, NE, SWT
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	SHR PBF SU 02	Undertake habitat quality assessments on all 21 existing sites in the Wyre Forest as well as the three sites in the Oswestry area being considered for a re-introduction of Pearl-bordered Fritillary at least once every three years until 2012.	Wyre Forest and Oswestry area	2006	2012	BC	NE, FC, WFSG, SWT
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	SHR PBF SU 03	Undertake a monitoring programme with the aim of visiting all 21 known Pearl-bordered Fritillary colonies at least once every three years until 2012.	Wyre Forest	2006	2012	BC	NE, FC, WFSG, SWT

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Key to organisations

BC	Butterfly Conservation
FC	Forestry Commission
NE	Natural England
SC	Shropshire Council
SWT	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
SBP	Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership
WFSG	Wyre Forest Study Group

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

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