



Ymddiriedolaeth
Natur
Gwent
Wildlife Trust

Nightjar

Caprimulgus europaeus

Species Action Plan



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The nightjar is a summer visitor to the UK but spends its winter in scrubby grasslands in Africa. Conservation of this species is complex, as vulnerabilities exist in their summer, winter and migration stepping-stone habitats and food sources, both of which may be impacted by climate change. In the UK, the nightjar is a primarily a bird of lowland heathland, bracken covered hillsides and open woods, with felled and young plantation woodlands becoming important habitats more recently. They feed mainly at dawn and dusk on airborne insects, with moths and beetles making up a large part of the diet.

In Gwent, their population and distribution has fluctuated greatly since they were first officially recorded here in 1926. Gwent's nightjars appear very much dependent on the availability of forestry plantation clear-fells/restocks at suitably open stages, with populations dwindling and shifting when suitable areas become more forested.

Status

- ❖ Amber (UK, 2021) | Green (Wales, 2022) – Birds of Conservation Concern
- ❖ Species of Principal Importance - Section 7 - Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- ❖ Priority Species - UK Biodiversity Action Plan (2007)

Threats

- ❖ Large-scale loss of heathland to agriculture, construction and afforestation (particularly following 2nd World War)
- ❖ Afforestation of clear-fell sites
- ❖ Disturbance e.g., by dogs and humans
- ❖ Decline in prey availability, as result of agricultural intensification
- ❖ Climatic conditions - excessive cold and wet during breeding season
- ❖ Issues on migration and wintering grounds

Current Action

- ❖ Beacon Hill (Monmouthshire) heathland restoration
- ❖ BTO Nightjar Tracking Project
- ❖ BTO Ringing Scheme

	Objectives	Action
A	No net loss of occupied area for existing populations	1,2,3,5
B	Populations increasing in occupied area, abundance and viability	1,2,3,5
C	Nightjar habitats increased in size, quality, resilience and connectivity	2,3,5
D	Knowledge and understanding of the species increased, leading to appreciation, sense of responsibility and action	1,2,3,4

	Key Actions	Target
1	Collaborate with Gwent Ornithological Society (GOS) to establish/support Gwent-wide monitoring, incl. training	2025
2	Produce/distribute advice booklet and work with key stakeholders to ensure appropriate habitat management	2026
3	Undertake survey and mapping to identify populations, key areas and opportunities to build connectivity	2027
4	Increase awareness through media and publishing platforms, talks, events and training	2030
5	Influence forestry practice (afforestation and clear-fell) to include conservation action for nightjar and other species	2030

Lead: Gwent Wildlife Trust

Key partners: TBC