

Grizzled Skipper

Pyrgus malvae

DRAFT Species Action Plan

1. Introduction

The grizzled skipper has declined in both occurrence (-53%) and abundance (-37%) between 1976 and 2014. Many remaining grizzled skipper colonies are on brownfield sites, where they are threatened by successional change, redevelopment and landscaping. Conserving the butterfly in these habitats poses a considerable challenge. The grizzled skipper was listed as a UK BAP priority species and subsequently included in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural

Throckmorton landfill site where the butterfly has been recorded on the restored areas of grassland

Hipton Hill, a large area of old plum orchard grazed in rotation and managed by Vale Landscape Heritage Trust

3. Current Factors Affecting the Species

Lack of appropriate management (e.g scrub control, grazing, increasing sward height) leading to a deterioration in habitat quality.

Overgrazing (but some sites can be maintained in an appropriate condition by rabbit grazing).

Tightening of the sward and loss of bare ground.

Re-opening of disused railway-lines.

Development of brownfield sites.

Fragmentation and isolation of existing colonies and the intensive use of the surrounding agricultural land. As many of the butterfly's habitats are transient, the species requires either a cycle of continuous management to maintain early successional stages within a site, or the creation of new areas that are colonized as existing ones become unsuitable.

4. Current Action

4.1 Local protection

Much of the Wyre Forest is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and part of it a National Nature Reserve (NNR).

Hipton Hill was listed as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) in 2018. This is not a statutory designation but gives some protection within the planning system.

4.2 Site management and programmes of action

Butterfly Conservation has worked with local partners on a series of funded projects within the Wyre Forest from 2003 to the present day, including the 3-year SITA Trust-funded project 'Back to Orange' from 2007-2010. One of the main aims of all of this work is to improve and increase habitat for lepidoptera species within the forest