

## Marsh Tit (*Poecile palustris*)

**Areas and status:** Largely confined to the lowlands of England and Wales. Continuous decline since 1970. BoCC red list.

**Woodland type:** Range of lowland broadleaved woodland types.

**Preferred habitat niches:** Dense, diverse shrub layer within mature woodland. Larger woods preferred (low probability of presence in woods <10ha; territories 2.5 to 8ha). Nests in natural cavities, most frequently in ash. May use woodpecker holes, does not respond well to nestboxes, however nest site availability is not generally limiting

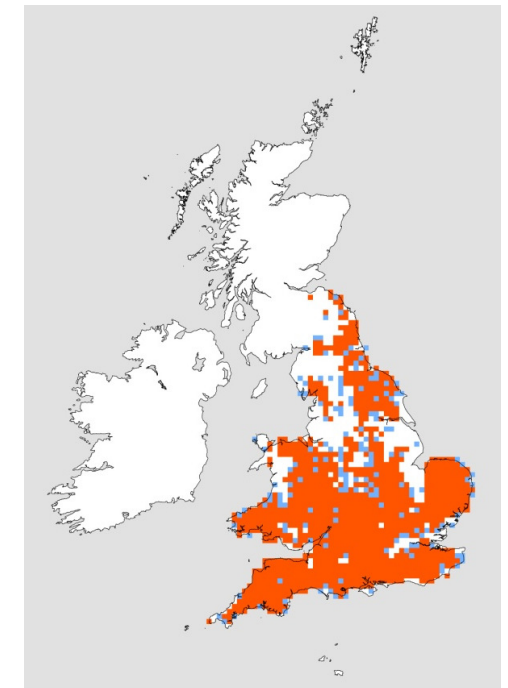
### Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Deer or livestock browsing leading to poor shrub layer and grazing limiting regeneration
- Shade leading to deterioration of shrub layer
- Clearance of understorey during thinning operations
- Senescence of understorey due to insufficient management
- Lack of connectivity between smaller woodlands, or between suitable habitat within larger blocks

Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	Comment
Establish ability to control grazing and browsing	Possibly fencing to exclude stock to maintain a healthy shrub layer and protect coppice regeneration and growth. Encourage at least 40% understorey cover.
Thin to restore crowded, immature, even-age stands lacking vertical structure. Partially halo thin around crowded trees to encourage growth	Select to encourage high canopy and dense shrub layer regeneration. Aim for a varied structure with mature canopy and at least 40 % understory cover.
Rotational harvesting/cutting of underwood	To maintain continuity of suitable structure. Manage rotationally for continuity of cover at around 4m height.
Restore neglected coppice	Restore to long rotation coppice cycle (≥15 years) with standards, small-scale harvesting system better.
Enhance deadwood	Retain all deadwood in situ unless safety issue, Including low standing deadwood in the shrub layer. Enhance deadwood through mechanical tree damage etc.
Create/manage rides/glades with scrubby edge structure	Create or widen rides to width at least 1.5 x mature canopy height. Carry out 3-zone management of ride edges (short grassy zone grading to longer vegetation, to scrub edge).
Retain/create/manage a scrubby woodland edge structure	If necessary heavily thin back trees from woodland edge to allow development of scrubby vegetation at woodland edge. Where possible allow scrub to extend beyond woodland boundary, creating gradation from woodland to scrub habitat. Rotationally manage woodland edge scrub to provide a variety of structure.
Create new dense hedgerows to connect woodland blocks	Habitat connectivity is important across landscape. Allow connecting hedgerows to mature to a min height of 3m and min width of 2m.
Plant new native woodlands where suitable	Plant new native woodlands where suitable in a landscape context. Mix should contain at least 20% oak and 10% beech/birch. Around 40% of mix should be understory species including hawthorn, and where appropriate: elder, crab apple, spindle, honeysuckle. Aim for a varied structure with mature canopy, at least 40% understory cover, and standing deadwood availability. Manage rotationally for continuity of cover at around 4m height. Make sure that any planting is appropriate in the landscape and do <b>not</b> plant on top of other priority habitats.



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- Breeding
- Wintering

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