

## Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

**Areas and status:** Largest populations in the uplands of north and west Britain. Now more localised in lowlands, with higher densities around the New Forest, North Midlands and South West England. Sharp population decline in 1960s/70s, largely stable since. BoCC amber list.

**Woodland type:** Upland oak woodland, upland mixed ashwoods, upland birch woodland, wood pasture and parkland, lowland broadleaved, coniferous woodland but preference for broadleaf.

### Preferred habitat niches:

- Mature, open-spaced woodland, preference for open oak-birch woods
- Often on woodland edge adjacent to semi-natural habitat; also in mature scrub on bracken slopes
- Preference for heavily wooded landscapes and larger woodland blocks of >5ha, although scarce in south-east England
- Nests in tree holes, often forages in sparsely vegetated field layer

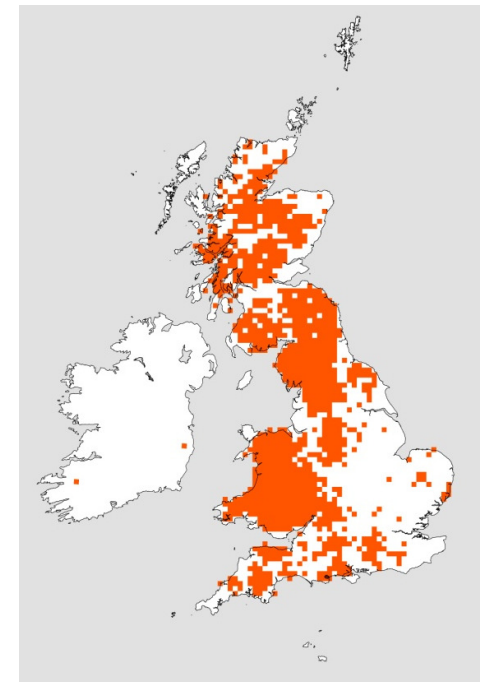
### Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Loss of older trees especially where woodlands are adjacent to open landscapes such as farmland
- Succession causing infill/crowding of mature trees and loss of open structure in woodland interior
- Lack of low-intensity grazing to maintain field layer structure
- Invasion by holly, beech, rhododendron etc. replacing open structure
- Agricultural improvement of land adjacent to otherwise suitable woodland edges



©Mike Langman (rsps-images.com)

Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	Comment
Establish ability to manage grazing/browsing	Graze to maintain open character of understorey and to create or preserve areas of bare ground and sparse vegetation (territories focused on these). Aim for a light understorey with open space within it
Thinning crowded stands to encourage tree canopy growth/partial halo-thinning	Selectively thin, retaining >75% canopy to limit understorey regeneration through maintaining shade, while encouraging bigger trees by providing space for development. Select for bigger trees, especially oaks, retain trees with natural holes etc. Partially halo-thin semi-mature oaks
Long term rotation of group felling	To aid oak regeneration which needs good light to germinate and thrive in small gaps, over a long rotation (>100 years), but excluding areas for old growth (determine at site level)
Glades with mature edge trees	Create glades (diameter at least 1.5 x mature canopy height) with mature edge-trees
Create/manage rides with mature edge trees	Create rides (width at least 1.5 x mature canopy height) with scalloped edges and mature edge-trees and/or in-ride trees
Retain/create/manage scattered scrub at woodland edge habitat interfaces	Particularly where adjacent to open upland habitats – where suitable promote gradation from woodland through scattered trees and scrub to open habitat. Avoid planting on top of other high priority habitats. Rotationally manage woodland edge scrub for varied structure including open space
Restore parkland and wood pasture	Remove tree and scrub infill around veteran and mature trees to promote open structure. Retain a scatter of replacement trees to ensure continuity
Retain/enhance deadwood	Retain all In tree, standing and fallen. Also retain wind or operationally damaged trees to develop dead wood and nest sites. Create new deadwood, using partial stem injection if possible
Provide nest boxes where needed	Only where lack of natural tree holes is limiting population. Provide nestboxes in small groups through woodland, sited >2m from the ground with a south easterly aspect to avoid exposure to prevailing bad weather and provide some warmth in spring
Remove invasive woody vegetation	Aim to remove all rhododendron and control other invasive woody species as appropriate
Plant new native woodland habitat where suitable	This species prefers well wooded landscapes – increase suitable woodland cover in landscape. Make sure that any planting is appropriate in the landscape and do <b>not</b> plant on top of other priority habitats



■ Breeding

Map reproduced from *Bird Atlas 2007–11*, which is a joint project between BTO, BirdWatch Ireland and the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, with permission from the British Trust for Ornithology.

[www.birdatlas.net](http://www.birdatlas.net)