

Willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Areas and status: Widespread across UK but strong decline in south and east. BoCC amber list.

Woodland type: Lowland mixed broadleaf, upland birch, wet woodland, successional scrub, young plantations both broadleaf and conifer.

Preferred habitat niches:

- Open scrub habitats, eg Successional scrub woodland, coppice, birch with bracken, woodland edge scrub zone; canopy height optimal at 5 to 7m
- Thicket stage important
- Ground nester or in low shrubs tussocky grass and low bramble preferred
- Often associated with birch and willow scrub, but also other species, including conifer where broadleaves present
- Prefers large areas of suitable habitat; occurs in smaller woodland patches within well wooded landscapes where hedge networks, streamside willow and shrubs provide linkage

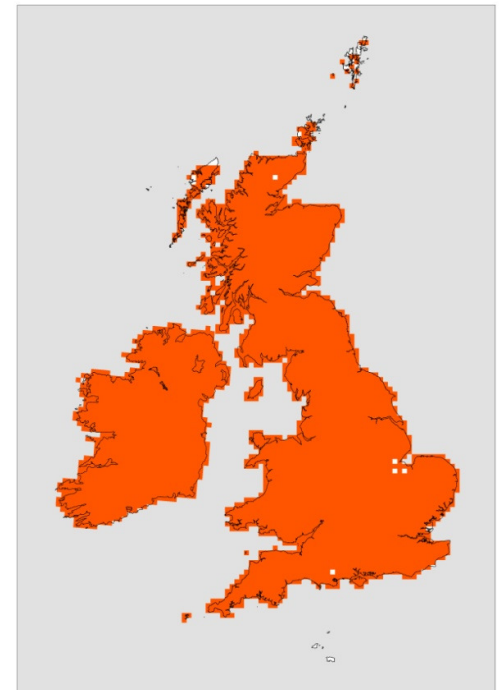
Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Maturation of young woodland beyond thicket (both broadleaf and conifer)
- Reduction in coppice activity and extent
- Local declines in soil moisture
- Heavy livestock grazing suppressing shrubs and saplings
- Heavy deer browsing preventing successional scrub development)

Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	Comment
Control grazing and/or deer numbers	Prevent loss/restore shrub layer. Assess need manage livestock/control deer. Implement deer management plan
Restore neglected coppice	Ideally coppice on cycle (7-10 years)
Ride enhancement	Wide 3 zone rides with good scrub cover at edges; manage on rotation to retain balance of structure (cut sections of scrub, mow areas of rank field layer)
Develop scrubby woodland edge	Provide broad scrubby buffers to woodland with a varied edge structure, retaining young birch
Maintain/enhance naturally high water levels	Reverse or slow internal drainage; dam or weir drains. Buffer wood from external drainage
Manage plantations	Ensure succession of 3-10 year early thicket stage. Avoid excess weeding of broadleaves eg birch, and scrub
New woodland creation	Ensure opportunity for thicket stages; natural succession preferred, retaining birch. Minimal weeding other than of invasive non-native species
Retain open bracken	May need occasional cutting or herbicide treatment if very dense to allow scrub development



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■ Breeding

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