

Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*)

Areas and status: Marked contractions in range and population since 1970s. Now very localised distribution. Too scarce to monitor by standard methods. BoCC red list.

Woodland type: Lowland mixed broadleaved woodland (especially containing hornbeam, beech, elm, yew and cherry), lowland beechwoods. Mature orchards, parkland, churchyards and large gardens can be used with conifers sometimes chosen for nesting, though usually within a mixed woodland setting.

Preferred habitat niches:

- Areas of mature seeding trees within mature woodland including parkland and mixed plantations. Diversity of seed trees potentially important.
- Strongly associated with well wooded landscapes. Able to travel large distances with resident populations often supplemented by winter migrants from northern Europe and Scandinavia.
- Adults dependent on large, hard seeds e.g. hornbeam, beech, cherry; as well as berries, buds and shoots of trees and shrubs.
- Feeds young on invertebrates.
- Feed in the canopy year-round, and also on fallen seeds, particularly in winter. Sometimes use garden feeding stations with black sunflower seeds a preferred food choice.
- Usually nests in upper parts of trees, often in creepers.

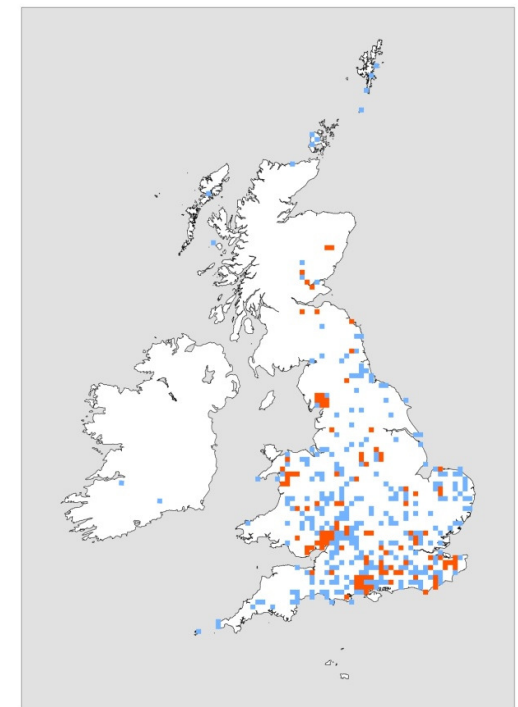
Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Tree crowding leading to reduced crowns and fruit/seed abundance in mature trees.
- Reduced availability of food plants due to loss of understorey through shading.
- Loss of mature orchards.
- Landscape isolation – loss of connecting wooded habitats including parkland, orchards and mature hedgerow trees.
- Disturbance may be an issue as often feeds on the ground.

Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	Comment
Thinning to restore neglected mature woodland. Thin immature stands to develop suitable structure. Partially halo thin around crowded semi-mature trees to encourage growth	Thin mature but under-managed woodland to encourage crown development and a varied understorey structure. Retain proportion of younger food trees to develop to maturity. Retain a mix of trees that bear medium sized, hard seeds e.g. hornbeam, elm, beech, cherry, yew and holly. Retain any climbers such as ivy, to provide nest cover. Undertake management gradually to avoid heavy disturbance or sudden dramatic changes in structure.
Underplanting to provide replacement food trees	Where lacking, underplant in gaps/clearings with important food trees and ensure new planting contains a mix of favoured food species.



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- Breeding
- Wintering

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Maintain & enhance wet features	Dependence for drinking.
Retain ivy and other creepers as nest cover	Resist desire to remove. If excess of trees affected by ivy, ensure some is retained. Long term deer browsing on ivy & honeysuckle on mature trees may reduce nest cover.
Ride/glade creation/improvement; 3-zone management of edges. Create enlarged open space at ride junctions	Ride width/glade diameter should be at least 1.5 x height of mature canopy trees. Carry out 3-zone management, with short vegetation in the centre of the ride or glade, longer vegetation (cut annually) towards edges, and scrub edges (cut on a 3 to 5 year rotation) grading into the tree line. Hawfinches require a clear flight line to mature trees for nesting, and will use open spaces and scrubby edge vegetation for foraging.
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.
Establish ability to manage grazing/browsing	Control grazing/browsing as appropriate to maintain a varied understorey structure with some open space within it. This species will forage in shrub layer and on the ground.
Retain/preserve/plant future generations of mature trees in orchards/parkland/hedgerow trees	Increase number of mature trees in wider landscape as well as within woodlands. Aim for mature trees with large canopies, especially of species bearing large hard seeds, e.g. hornbeam, beech, cherry, where appropriate. Retain climbers such as ivy.
New woodland creation	Requires well connected wooded landscape; including hedgerow trees and in-field trees. Consider connectivity and stepping-stone approach in planning new woods. Particularly consider planting new woodlands containing favoured food trees, where appropriate to landscape and conditions.