

Lesser spotted Woodpecker (*Dryobates minor*)

Areas and status: Lowlands of England and Wales. Rapid decline: 72% since 1970s and 43- 59% since mid 80s. BoCC red list.

Woodland type: Lowland mixed broadleaved woodland, wet woodland, upland oakwoods (at lower elevations), wood pasture/parkland. Sometimes nests in old orchards and uses nearby woodland for feeding.

Preferred habitat niches:

- Mature, usually oak dominated woodland as well as mature wet woodland, parkland and wood pasture. Includes mature birch and ash woods, sometimes old poplar plantations.
- Nest cavities self-excavated, 2-22m above ground, mainly in dead boughs of 12 to 50cm diameter on live trees. Also in standing small diameter deadwood trunks, or in live trunks of eg birch. Oak preferred but wide range of species used.
- Forages in outer branches in the canopy of live trees, gleaning from leaves and twigs. In winter more bark-scaling.
- Larger woods in heavily wooded landscape preferred to small or isolated woodland. Has large territories in winter of several 100ha.
- Can use parkland trees, old orchards and mature hedgerow trees etc, for nesting/foraging.

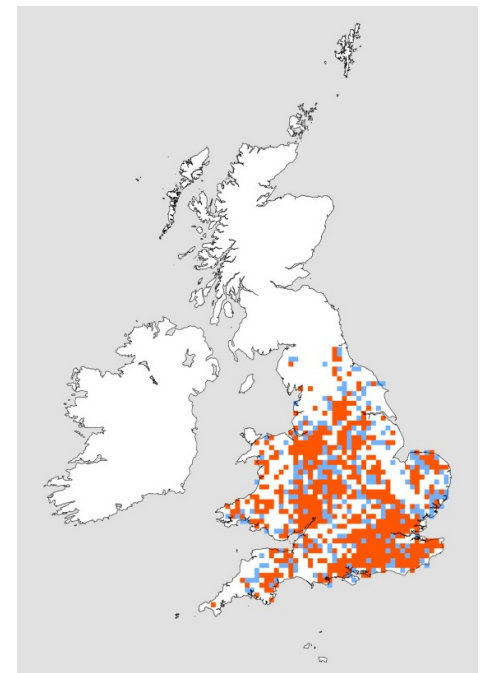
Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Tree crowding leading to reduced crowns in mature trees; hence reduced foliage area thus smaller invertebrate biomass for foraging.
- Lack of small diameter standing deadwood in highly silviculturally managed woodland.
- Lack of deadwood on live trees in highly silviculturally managed woodland.
- Drying out of woodland soils.
- Landscape isolation – loss of connecting wooded habitats including mature hedgerow trees.



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Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	Comment
Thin mature but under-managed wood to restore structure, or immature stands to develop suitable structure. Partially halo thin around crowded trees (especially oak) to encourage growth	Encourage crown development. Retain any deadwood. Select for oak, mature trees, & potential large crowns.
Ride improvement; diversify edges	Increase canopy area on ride & glade edges by thinning. Select and retain good number of suitable in-ride standards in key areas to provide connectivity and foraging habitat.
Increase deadwood within woods	Retain all standing and fallen deadwood in situ unless safety issue. Increase standing deadwood; kill in situ selection of uneconomic thinnings (stem injection can work well), retain trees with dead sections created by mechanised management.
Restore coppice-with-standards, retaining mature standard trees, especially oak	Restore crowded over-stood coppice, retaining mature, preferably oak feature trees as standards at 25-40% canopy cover. Maintain on a long rotation eg 20+ years.
Maintain/restore soil moisture conditions	Reverse, or slow drainage that takes water from the wood; buffer woodland from external drainage. Dam/weir internal drains. Stone extraction routes rather than ditching. NB ensure any relevant permissions are obtained (e.g. from Environment Agency) for works to water courses.
Retain/preserve/plant future generations of mature trees in orchards/parkland/mature hedgerows	Increase number of mature trees in wider landscape (with in-tree deadwood) as well as within woodlands.
Create deadwood on parkland/hedgerow trees	Create dead branches on live trees by mechanical methods or partial stem injection. Retain all existing standing and fallen deadwood.
New woodland creation	Requires well connected wooded landscape; includes hedgerow trees, in-field trees. Consider connectivity and stepping-stone approach in planning new woods. Particularly consider planting new woodlands containing a high proportion of oak, where appropriate to landscape and conditions.



- Breeding
- Wintering

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