

# Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan



## Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages*)



The Dingy Skipper is a springtime butterfly which can usually be seen in May and June. A typical colony is commonly quite small with bird's-foot trefoil being the usual larval foodplant. Although this species exists on a range of habitats including heathland, embankments, wasteland, quarries, downland and in coastal habitats, the Dingy Skipper appears to have undergone major declines in many areas of the UK over the past few decades. The remaining strongholds of this species are the central southern counties of England, particularly Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorset. In Shropshire, unlike many other counties in the West Midlands region, it is still not an uncommon butterfly although it is now largely localised into four key areas.

### 1 Objectives and Targets

#### 1.1 Objectives

- A. Protect, enhance and monitor the existing populations of Dingy Skipper in Shropshire.
- B. Encourage the Dingy Skipper to naturally colonise more sites by encouraging more sympathetic management for this species.
- C. Keep abreast of any successes in brownfield management for the Dingy Skipper elsewhere in the country and supply this information to local officers and developers so that appropriate measures can be taken.
- D. Increase local awareness of the status and needs of Dingy skipper in Shropshire through communication and education and involve more local people in survey and monitoring for this species.

#### 1.2 Targets

- Maintain, monitor and enhance the existing Dingy Sipper populations in core areas (Telford & Wrekin, Oswestry Uplands, Wyre Forest and the Stiperstones area).

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## 2. Current Status

### 2.1 Importance

The Dingy Skipper occurs widely in Europe to latitude 62 N and eastwards through Asia to China. It is declining in several European countries (e.g. the Netherlands >75% decrease in 25 years).

### 2.2 Trends

The decline of the Dingy Skipper is estimated to be >50% in the UK over the last 25 years (hence its inclusion as a UK BAP Priority Species Candidate in 2005).

### 2.3 Population and Distribution

This is the most widespread skipper in Britain and Ireland although it is locally and patchily distributed. In Shropshire it is still not uncommon although it is now largely localised into four key areas.

## 3. Current Factors Affecting the Species

- Continuing changes in woodland management.
- Continuing deterioration of unimproved grassland/scrub and disused habitats through lack of management, natural succession and re-development of such 'brown-field' sites.
- Continuing fragmentation and isolation of habitats

## 4. Current Action

### 4.1 Policy and Protection

- The Dingy Skipper is not currently listed on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and therefore has no statutory protection.
- It is now listed under the following category:
  - UKBAP Priority Species List Candidate (2005)
  - A species action plan for the Dingy Skipper was prepared by Butterfly Conservation in 2000.
- A number of sites in the Wyre Forest and Oswestry Uplands are SSSIs.
- A number of sites in the Telford & Wrekin area are county Wildlife Sites.
- Most of the Shropshire sites (e.g. in the Wyre Forest, Wenlock Edge and Oswestry area) are within Biodiversity Enhancement Areas.

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## 4.2 Management, Research and Survey

- Management work on a number of sites will be beneficial to this species e.g. scrub management work at Granville Country Park in Telford and grazing at Llanymynech Rocks. The National Trust are managing Lea Quarry (on Wenlock Edge) to maintain habitat for Dingy Skipper.
- Targeted survey for Dingy Skipper has been carried out in Telford & Wrekin in 1997 and 2002 with regular monitoring for this species now being carried out on a number of SWT reserves in the county (e.g. in the Oswestry and Telford area) as well as by the National Trust (at Lea Quarry).

## 5. Key Habitats

- Woodland rides and clearings
- Old quarries, railway lines and waste ground
- Limestone grasslands

## 6. Complementary Plans

Urban areas HAP

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### 7. Action Plan

Habitat / Species	Action code	Action text	Location of action	Start date	End date	Lead	Assisting
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK CA 01	Provide management advice to the land managers of all 26 key county sites for Dingy Skipper and encourage the implementation of this advice. Identify at least two other sites in each core area where managers could be targeted with conservation advice by 2010.	Telford & Wrekin, Oswestry Uplands, Wyre Forest and Stiperstones area	2006	2010	BC	SWT, BTW, FC, NE, NT
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK CP 01	Produce at least one press release on the status of the Dingy Skipper in Shropshire and how to record and conserve it by 2010.	Shropshire	2006	2010	BC	FC, SWT
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK HS 01	Ensure management for Dingy Skipper is identified in the Forest Design Plan for the Gravels Forestry by 2010.	Gravels Forestry	2006	2010	BC	FC
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK HC 01	Ensure adequate mitigation/compensation for any Dingy Skipper habitat lost due to development.	Telford & Wrekin area	2006	-	BC	BTW, SWT, NE
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK SM 01	Achieve favourable management for Dingy Skipper on at least 50% of the 13 key sites in the Telford & Wrekin area by 2010.	Telford & Wrekin	2006	2010	BTW	SWT, NE, AONB, BC
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK SM 02	Achieve favourable management for Dingy Skipper on all four key sites in the Oswestry core area by 2010.	Oswestry area	2006	2010	SWT	NE, BC
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK SM 03	Achieve favourable management for Dingy Skipper on at least two of the three key sites in the Stiperstones core area by 2010.	Stiperstones area	2006	2010	BC	NE
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK SM 04	Achieve favourable management for Dingy Skipper on at least two of the three key sites in the Wyre Forest area by 2010.	Wyre Forest area	2006	2010	BC	NE, FC
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK SM 05	Achieve favourable management for Dingy Skipper on at least two more sites in each of the 4 core areas (8 sites in all) by 2010.	Telford & Wrekin, Oswestry Uplands, Wyre Forest and Stiperstones area	2006	2010	BC	SWT, BTW, FC, NE,

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Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK SP 01	Adoption of all 26 sites supporting key Dingy Skipper colonies as county Wildlife Sites by 2010.	Telford & Wrekin, Oswestry Uplands, Wyre Forest and Stiperstones area	2006	2010	SWT	BC
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK SU 01	Carry out a habitat quality assessment on at least 50% of key county sites for Dingy Skipper at least once every three years until 2012.	Telford & Wrekin, Oswestry Uplands, Wyre Forest and Stiperstones area	2006	2012	BC	SWT, BTW, FC, SC, NT
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK SU 02	Set up a monitoring programme to ensure all key county sites for Dingy Skipper are visited at least once every three years until 2012.	Telford & Wrekin, Oswestry Uplands, Wyre Forest and Stiperstones area	2006	2012	BC	SWT, BTW, FC, NT
Dingy Skipper	SHR DSK SU 03	Survey for Dingy Skipper at Ironbridge Power Station by 2010.	Ironbridge Gorge Power Station	2009	2010	E.ON	BC

### Key to organisations

AONB	Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
BTW	Borough of Telford & Wrekin
BC	Butterfly Conservation
E.ON	E.ON UK Plc
FC	Forestry Commission
NE	Natural England
NT	National Trust
SWT	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
SC	Shropshire Council

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