



Ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) Species Action Plan 2009-2013

Plan Lead Organisation	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Plan Coordinator	Keith Ferry
Action Group	Wetland and Coastal
Associated Plans	Mud and Sand Flats
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Description

The ringed plover (not to be confused with little ringed plover) is a small, dumpy, short-legged ground nesting wading bird. It is brownish grey above and whitish below. It has an orange bill, tipped with black, orange legs and a black-and-white pattern on its head and breast. In flight it shows a broad white wing-stripe. It breeds on mudflats, saltmarsh, coastal/inland shingle habitat and artificial gravel environments. The breeding population is supplemented in winter by birds from Greenland and Canada passing through on migration.

The long term national breeding population has taken a recent drastic decline. The British Ornithological Trust (BTO) carried out two comprehensive England wide surveys of breeding populations in 1984 and 2007. The 1984 results indicated an increase in breeding pairs from the previous surveys of 1973-4. This is believed to be due their colonisation of inland locations such as newly created gravel pits as nesting sites. However the 2007 survey showed a 47% decline from 1984. The reasons for this decline are uncertain.

The bird requires open shingle areas for nesting, and access to habitats rich in invertebrates to feed chicks and some cover to protect chicks from natural predators. Areas of bare shingle are important in retaining or attracting this species. The absence of vegetation is also important. Areas can be created using fine material (pea gravel) spread on an area of at least 0.2 ha; larger areas are likely to be more successful. Chicks use isolated clumps of vegetation to hide from predators. Site management should maintain sparsely vegetated areas and create or enhance shallow pools.

Current factors causing loss and decline

- ◆ Reduction of suitable nesting sites through development, disturbance and vegetation growth.
- ◆ Indiscriminate use of beach cleaning methods.
- ◆ Sea rise due to climate change.
- ◆ Predation from avian predators and fox, hedgehog, stoat, weasel and mink.

Conservation Status

Birds of Conservation Concern: Amber Conservation Status

The Species in the Tees Valley

The ringed plover is an increasingly common migrant through Teesmouth, especially during the spring. However in the Tees Valley there has been a significant reduction in breeding habitat range and nesting breeding pairs in the Tees Valley since the 1980's. A breeding bird survey by the Teesmouth Bird Club from 1999-2006 shows 33 pairs holding territories, mainly at coastal sites. In the mid 1980's observers recorded breeding pairs (a maximum of 32 recorded) on the north side of the Tees Estuary, on industrial sites, mainly on the ICI Brinefields site. In 2006 no breeding territories were evident on these sites. The reasons for this loss are unclear. Causes such as increased human disturbance and nest losses due to high tides in beach habitats need to be considered, but these factors are not relevant on some of the industrial sites and the brinefields where there is no public access and low levels of disturbance. Predation by corvids may be a factor.

Current Activity in the Tees Valley

New open shingle areas on the Brinefields site have been created and managed by INCA to provide nesting areas. However these have not been colonised although there has been no perceived disturbance of nest sites or increase in natural predators on these industrial sites.

Further Information

Joint, G., Parker, T. & Fairbrother, V. (2008) The Breeding Birds of Cleveland. A Tetrads Atlas 1999-2006. Teesmouth Bird Club

Liley, D. & Sutherland, W.J. (2007) Predicting the population consequences of human disturbance for Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula*: a game theory approach. *Ibis* 149, supplement 1: 82–94.

Prater, A.J. (1989) Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* breeding populations of the United Kingdom in 1984. *Bird Study* 36: 154-159.

Baker, H., Stroud, D.A., Aebischer, N.J., Cranswick, P.A., Gregory, R.D., McSorley, C.A., Noble, D.G. & Rehfisch, M.M. (2006) Population estimates of birds in Great Britain and the United Kingdom. *British Birds* 99: 25–44.

Websites

Teesmouth Bird Club www.teesmouthbc.com

British Trust for Ornithology www.bto.org

Vision Statement

To increase breeding population size in the Tees Valley by restoring its breeding range on previously occupied sites and increasing breeding success in current coastal locations.

Targets

RP.T1 Maintain the breeding population by managing suitable habitats and reducing disturbance.

Goal: No net loss of breeding pairs from 2006 level of 33 pairs.

PR.T2 Restore breeding range into previously occupied brownfield habitats.

Goal: Successful breeding on brownfield sites.

Actions

Code	Action	Organisation al lead	Action contact	Partners	End date
RP.A1	Negotiate changes in beach cleaning operations between Redcar and South Gare to reduce disturbance to known breeding populations.	Redcar and Cleveland BC	Keith Ferry		2009
RP.A2	Identify existing breeding sites on industrial/brownfield sites.	INCA	Ken Smith	TBC	2009
RP.A3	Carry out habitat creation/management on industrial sites.	INCA	Ken Smith	INCA industry members	2011
RP.A4	Identify sites where there is potential for habitat creation for ringed plover through the planning process as mitigation for development.	Redcar and Cleveland BC	Keith Ferry	Hartlepool BC, Stockton BC	Ongoing
RP.A5	Feed sightings to Teesmouth Bird Club and Tees Valley Wetland and Coastal Action Group to monitor breeding and winter numbers and locations.	TBC	Vic Fairbrother	INCA, BTO	Ongoing
RP.A6	Produce interpretation boards at Saltburn and Redcar beach on the ecology and conservation of coastal birds.	Redcar and Cleveland BC	Keith Ferry	TVWT	2009