CARMARTHENSHIRE LBAP
LITTLE RINGED PLOVER ACTION PLAN

Introduction

The little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*) is a summer visitor to Wales – generally arriving in March and leaving in June/July. It nests on shingle banks and feeds on insects and their larvae, supplemented by spiders, small molluscs and worms.


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Little ringed plovers' nests are shallow scrapes in the ground lined with small stones or plant material. The eggs in these exposed nests are vulnerable to predation so are well camouflaged – stone coloured with speckles and dark streaks.

The first record of the little ringed plover in the UK was at Tring reservoir (Buckinghamshire) in 1938 and breeding numbers have increased steadily since. The majority of little ringed plovers are found in England although the population appears to spreading west and north.

Little ringed plovers were first recorded in Carmarthenshire in 1984 with a first record of successful breeding in 1986 breeding on shingle banks of the River Tywi. The population has rapidly expanded. In 2004 a survey commissioned by CCW, counted 62 breeding pairs in the Tywi catchment, and in 2007 this had increased to 76 pairs. The bulk of the pairs were located along the Tywi (60 or so); the remainder occurred on two main tributaries, the Cothi and the Bran.

Little ringed plovers do not breed on other rivers in the county such as the Teifi and Loughor although there are some shingle shoals present. These are not extensive enough or sufficiently open and free from encroaching vegetation for nesting. The exact habitat requirements along many rivers are scarce and few in Wales meet the species' requirements. Little ringed plovers may be limited in their scope to colonise that country's rivers due to competition with ringed plovers and even oystercatchers.

The Carmarthenshire population of little ringed plovers amounts to around 10% of the UK breeding population, again highlighting the importance of the county for the future prospects of this bird. The Tywi is scheduled as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for this species but the Cothi and the Bran are not included in that designation. They also have bred occasionally on extensive brownfield sites on the coalfield.

Nests and chicks also are under threat from flooding episodes and being crushed by cattle trampling across the shingle banks. They are also predated on by corvids and illegal extraction of gravel along the Tywi means that the population in Carmarthenshire is by no means safe.

Vision statement and objectives

The vision for the little ringed plover in Carmarthenshire is for an increased population, which uses sympathetically managed habitat, allowing for an expansion in range. Any action would seek to meet one or more of the following objectives:

LRP1 To maintain and increase the population size and range of the little ringed plover in Carmarthenshire

LRP2 To gather data on the distribution and status of little ringed plovers in Carmarthenshire.

LRP3 To raise awareness of the importance of little ringed plover in Carmarthenshire and provide advice on habitat management

Summary of action achieved by LBAP Partners (for more information contact the biodiversity officer – Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk) or visit the national Biodiversity Action Reporting System - http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk:

2010–12

• Fencing erected to protect nesting birds on 3 shingle banks along R. Tywi‡ –CCC/TAYO	LRP1
• Casual monitoring of population undertaken along River Tywi - CBC/vols	LRP2
• Information sheet produced for landowners with advice on habitat management - TAYO	LRP3
• Provide angling clubs with info on little ringed plover - CCC	LRP3

2013

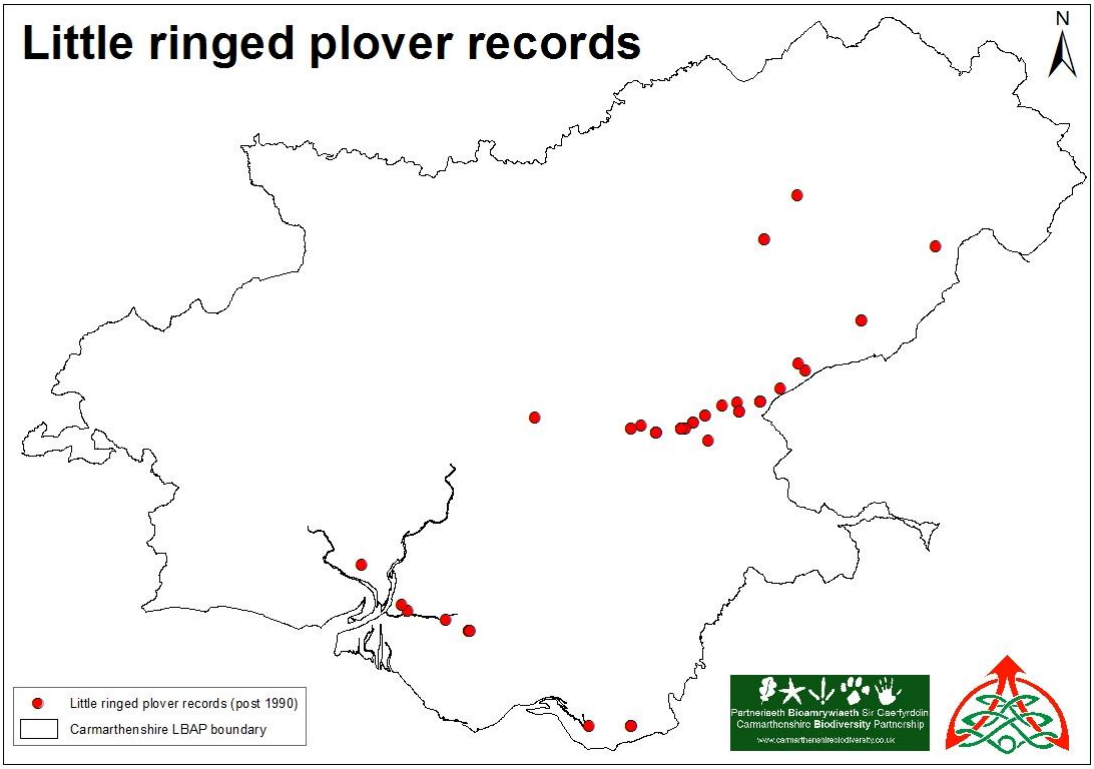
• Casual monitoring of population undertaken along River Tywi - CBC/vols	LRP2

Proposed future action

• Write to landowners re removal of gravel along Tywi and potential impacts - NRW	LRP3
• Encourage recording of little ringed plover - CCC	LRP3

Useful links:

• RSPB – little ringed plover
• The Wildlife Trust – little ringed plover


Little ringed plover records
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Little ringed plover records (post 1990)
Carmarthenshire LBAP boundary
Partneriaeth Bioamrywiaeth Sir Caerfyrddin
Carmarthenshire Biodiversity Partnership