



The grizzled skipper *pyrgus malvae* is a characteristic spring butterfly of chalk downland and other sparsely vegetated habitats. Its rapid, buzzing flight can make it difficult to follow, but it stops regularly either to perch on a prominent twig or to feed on flowers such as common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* or bugle *Ajuga reptans*. It can then be identified quite easily by the black and white checkerboard pattern on its wings. It uses three main habitats mainly woodland rides, glades, and clearings, also on unimproved grassland and it occasionally breeds on heathland. In all habitats it requires plentiful spring nectar plants, at least one of the main foodplants growing in short vegetation (< 10cm) usually with patches of bare ground, and patches of taller vegetation (10-50 cm) and scrub or woodland edges.

This butterfly is a relatively widespread species in the southern half of the UK but has declined severely in many areas since 1950. This decline has been most marked in central and eastern counties of England where the species is now rare, and is becoming far more restricted in its remaining strongholds. Herefordshire contains only three known colonies

Threats

- Isolated and fragmented populations
- Fragmentation of habitat by roads and arable farming
- Unsympathetic habitat management, mowing and scrub clearance
- Damage and disturbance through recreational use
- Agricultural improvement of grassland and scrub habitats
- Overgrown and increasingly shaded woodlands

Current Action

- All known sites are surveyed during the butterflies flight period (BC)
- Coppice for Butterflies Challenge (HWT, FC)
- Targeted Woodland Improvement Grant scheme (FC)

	Objective	Action
A	Locate and map existing populations and investigate historic sites	3
B	Monitor populations	1
C	Increase sympathetic ride management and encourage restoration of suitable habitat within its former range	2
D	Examine opportunities for reintroducing the species	5
E	Protect known colonies through targeting funding and protection through site designations	2
F	Increase awareness of habitat requirements	4

	Actions	Target
1	Monitor known populations annually	Annual
2	Maintain existing populations and increase numbers through WGS and funded projects	Annual
3	Map distribution	2020
4	Publicise habitat requirements to landowners and advice on beneficial management	2020
5	Examine reintroduction programme on common land	2020

Lead Partner	BC
Key Partners	FE, HWT, FC