

Name:**Skylark***Alauda arvensis***UK status:**[UK BAP Priority](#). Rapid recent decline. BoCC Red List.**London status:**

Declining breeding resident and passage migrant.

Protected status:

- W&CA S.1(1-3); general protection from intentional killing, injury and catching, possession, and nest destruction.

'Species of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England' (CRoW Act, 2000)

Relevant London HAPs:

Meadows and Pastures; Acid grassland; Chalk grassland; Floodplain Grassland; Wasteland; Farmland

Citation:

One of the UK's most widespread and popular birds, and the historic inspiration of poets, composers and songwriters. As a breeding bird, the iconic skylark has nevertheless declined steeply across the country. Although this has slowed recently, its continuation is most obvious at range edges, as in the urban fringe. In farmland habitats at least, the reasons are likely to be similar to those operating on other declining birds; yield intensification and associated habitat disturbance and destruction.



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Disturbance is the great problem in London too, where isolated Skylark populations in the larger, wilder open spaces (such as Richmond Park, Wimbledon Common and Hounslow Heath), are strongly affected by the intensity of recreational use. In the Green Belt and on mature brownfield sites, the species has also been locally ousted by land-use changes on redundant farmland.

Conservation priorities:

- London-wide breeding skylark census
- Green belt development control
- Control and management of human disturbance in key sites
- Farmland biodiversity conservation practices [All address UK SAP targets **T1**, **T2**]

References:

Baillie, S.R et al. (2005). [Breeding Birds in the Wider Countryside: their conservation status 2004](#). BTO

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