

Jack Snipe



Scientific Name:
Lymnocyptes minimus

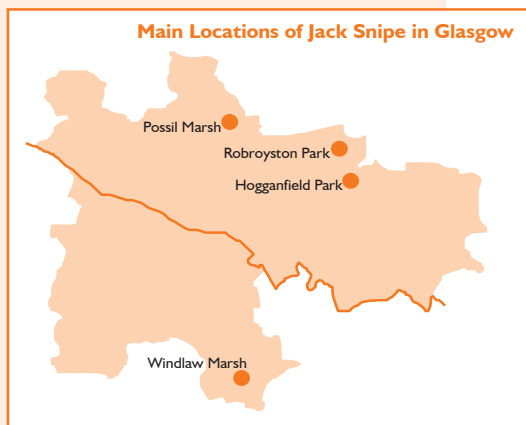
Current status

The **Jack Snipe** is a winter visitor and passage migrant to Britain and is widely distributed, although nowhere common. The winter habitat can include bog, fen, marsh, salt marsh, flooded arable land and imperfectly drained pasture. Chance encounters with Jack Snipe are very unusual, as individuals are only seen when flushed by someone walking very close to them; they are undoubtedly overlooked during wildfowl and wader counts. Estimates of British wintering population vary from between less than 50,000 to 100,000.

The breeding range extends from northern Fennoscandia east to Siberia. Although poorly studied, the European Russian breeding population may be about 100,000 pairs, and there are believed to be 25,000 pairs in Scandinavia, mainly in northern Finland and northern Sweden.

Jack Snipe feeds in dense grass and low cover, taking a diet of larvae and adults of many insects, molluscs, worms and plant material. As with Common Snipe it feeds by probing in soft ground. In addition it may feed from the surface. It takes a higher proportion of plant food than Common Snipe, thus enabling it to retain better condition during hard weather than its larger relative. The Jack Snipe has also been observed tapping the ground with its bill, apparently to bring springtails to the surface.

Jack Snipe occur regularly at a small number of sites within the city, most holding only a small number of birds. Favoured sites include Hogganfield Park LNR (1-3 with up to 11 during passage), Windlaw Marsh (5+, up to 25 occasionally), Robroyston Park (1-3), and Possil Marsh (3-5). Small numbers are also present at a number of other localities, and new sites may be discovered. The total wintering population may be in the region of 20-50 birds. Provisional ringing studies show some site fidelity in Glasgow.



Current factors causing loss or decline

No population trend for either wintering or breeding is available, and the possibility of unrecorded declines is a serious conservation issue. This is of particular concern for a quarry species as, at present, it is impossible to judge if the level of hunting is sustainable. The British Association of Shooting and Conservation estimated that some 10,000 birds were being shot annually by its members in the early 1980's. During autumn migration 5% of European population are believed to be shot. Other major factors causing decline include:

- The loss and degradation of wetland habitat, both on the edges of the breeding range and on its wintering grounds.
- Wetland drainage for agricultural intensification
- Afforestation
- Peat extraction.

Current action

Many of the sites where Jack Snipe occur are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). Wetland creation and enhancement has benefited this species at several sites within the city boundary. The Clyde Ringing Group is currently monitoring birds at several sites. The Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS) also monitors sites holding Jack Snipe within Glasgow. The species has limited protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the EC Wild Birds Directive Annex 11/1 (1991). The promotion of 'wetlands' conservation through the local Biodiversity Action Plan process also aids the conservation of Jack Snipe.

Objectives and targets

Object 1: Establish current distribution and status of all known populations.

Target 1: Survey existing known populations and search for new sites.

Object 2: Maintain the current distribution and population sizes.

Target 2: Ensure no further loss or damage to the surviving populations.

Object 3: Encourage sympathetic habitat management on appropriate sites.

Target 3: Assess current management factors and investigate possibilities for habitat creation and enhancement at other actual or potential sites.

Proposed Action with Lead Authorities

Action	Lead	Delivery	Objective
Policy and Legislation			
Protect known wintering sites from development pressure.	GCC-LS(CRS)	GCC-DRS	2
Site Safeguard and Management			
Maintain or enhance habitat management at Hogganfield Park, Robroyston Park and Windlaw Marsh.	GCC-LS(CRS)	GCC-LS	2, 3
Enhance habitat through provision of small ponds with muddy margins and selective strimming of dense vegetation.	GCC-LS(CRS)	GCC-LS	3
Investigate, through liaison with landowners, possibilities for suitable habitat creation.	GCC-LS(CRS)	GCC-LS	3
Advisory			
Ensure information and guidance on Jack Snipe ecology and habitat management are available to land owners and managers.	GCC-LS(CRS)	GCC-LS	1, 3
Future Research and Monitoring			
Continue monitoring known.	GCC-LS(CRS)	GCC-LS	1, 2
Survey suitable sites to find new populations.	GCC-LS(CRS)	GCC-LS	1, 3
Links with Other Plans			
Co-ordinate with Standing Open Water and other wetland plans.	GCC-LS(CRS)	GCC-LS, SEPA	1, 3
Review progress of plan and actions by 2010.	GCC-LS(CRS)	GCC-LS	1, 2, 3

Biodiversity Officers, Land Services, Glasgow City Council, 37 High Street, GLASGOW G1 1LX **Tel:** 0141-287 5665/7026 **Fax:** 0141-287-3519

Glasgow City Council: Development and Regeneration Services(**GCC-DRS**), Glasgow City Council: Land Services(Conservation Group) (**GCC-LS(CG)**,

Glasgow City Council: Culture and Leisure Services (**GCC-CLS**), Glasgow City Council: Education Services (**GCC-ES**), Glasgow City Council: Land Services Countryside Ranger Service (**GCC-LS(CRS)**,

Scottish Ornithologists' Club (**SOB**), Greenspace for Communities(**GJC**), British Waterways(**BW**), Forestry Commission (**FC**), Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (**FWAG**), The WISE Group (**TWISE**),

Glasgow Natural History Society (**GNHS**), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (**RSPB**), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (**SEPA**), Scottish Natural Heritage (**SNH**), Scottish Wildlife Trust (**SWT**),

Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group (**CARG**), Butterfly Conservation (**BC**).