

NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

RED HEMP-NETTLE (*Galeopsis angustifolia*)

Red hemp-nettle is a relatively low growing plant of light, chalky soils. The leaves are narrowly spear shaped, and the flowers have pinkish-red petals, with white patches at their bases. Flowers between July – October.

Ref 2/S14	Tranche 2	Species Action Plan 14
Plan Author:	Norfolk County Council	
Plan Co-ordinator:	Farmland BAP Topic Group	
Plan Leader:	Natural England	
Date: April 2007	Stage: Final	

1. CURRENT STATUS

National Status

- Red hemp-nettle is a species of arable land, found mostly on calcareous soils but also on coastal sands and shingle in the southern counties of England and Wales. Its distribution is correlated with open vegetation on well-drained soils in sunny locations with low rainfall. It is a summer annual which tends to germinate in spring. Consequently, many plants are eradicated during harvest or by early autumn cultivation before they have set seed. It is therefore most frequently found in spring-sown crops.
- Red hemp-nettle has shown a severe decline since 1930. It has been recorded from a total of 116 ten km squares since 1970, but has been seen in only 61 of these since 1980. Elsewhere, it is found in western, central and southern Europe, eastwards to Poland and Bulgaria. It is rare in north-western Europe.
- In Great Britain, this species is classified as Nationally Scarce. It receives general protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

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- Now very scarce and recently seen only at Snettisham RSPB Reserve, where it was recorded from 1951 to 1970, then re-found in 1995.

2. CURRENT FACTORS CAUSING LOSS OR DECLINE IN NORFOLK

- Widespread use of herbicides and fertilisers.
- The development of highly productive crop varieties.
- Destruction of field edge refuges.
- Autumn cultivation which destroys plants before they have set seed.
- The demise of traditional crop rotations and cultivation on marginal arable land.
- Recreation and tourism on coastal sites may be important factors, but further research is needed to clarify their significance.
- In the future, the species may be vulnerable to sea level rise and increases in salinity.

3. CURRENT ACTION IN NORFOLK

- Coastal populations at Snettisham are protected within SSSIs.
- The Norfolk Flora Group checks records for this species.

4. ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

National

- Maintain current range of natural populations within 77 10km squares in the UK.
- Achieve a two-fold increase in the area of habitat suitable for the natural colonisation of the species by 2010 in priority areas.

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- Ensure that the population remains viable at all current sites.

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NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS:
5.1	Policy and Legislation			
5.1.1	Encourage the development of relevant agri-environment schemes, such as the pilot Arable Stewardship Scheme in England, as a potential means of re-establishing red hemp-nettle in the countryside. When reviewing such schemes, consider whether changes are needed to increase their potential benefits for this and other threatened arable species.	If applicable, use Environmental Stewardship Scheme to help conserve red hemp-nettle in Norfolk.	NE	RSPB
5.1.2	As far as possible, ensure that any seed of red hemp-nettle included in wildflower seed mixes is of native origin.	As far as possible, ensure that any seed of red hemp-nettle included in wildflower seed mixes is of local origin.	NE	Emmorsgate Seeds
5.2	Site Safeguard and Management			
5.2.1	Continue with beneficial management at key sites, implement management at other extant sites and refine techniques as the results of research continue to emerge.	Promote beneficial management at Snettisham.	NE	RSPB
5.2.2	Seek to develop a network of suitable habitats within the vicinity of these species sites, thereby providing opportunities for its spread. Favourable management will include the relevant options under the appropriate agri-environment schemes eg uncropped headlands.	Consider involving Emorsgate Seeds in propagation experiment, using seed material from RSPB reserve.	NE, NCC	RSPB

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NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS:
5.3	Species Management and Protection			
5.3.1	Undertake experimental management at eight carefully selected historic sites with the aim of regenerating these species from the seed bank, seeking opportunities through appropriate agri-environment schemes.	No action proposed.		
5.3.2	Assess the feasibility and desirability of reintroducing these species at selected sites should regeneration from the seed bank prove unsuccessful.	No action proposed.		
5.3.3	Collect seed from a representative number of sites in different parts of the range of this species and deposit in the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place (Kew). Plants should also be propagated for reintroductions if necessary.	Collect seed from Snettisham and deposit in the Millennium Seed Bank. Plants should also be propagated for reintroductions if necessary.	NE, RBG Kew	RSPB
5.4	Advisory			
5.4.1	On sites where these species are a significant consideration, advise landowners and managers of the presence and importance of this species, specific management for its conservation and any potentially damaging actions. Particular attention should be given to optimal cultivation and harvest times.	Ensure owners of extant site are aware of the presence and importance of this species, specific management for its conservation and any potentially damaging actions.	NE, RSPB	

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NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS:
5.4.2	As far as possible, ensure that all relevant agri environment project officers are advised of locations of this species, its importance, management requirements and potential threats.	Send summary of the Norfolk BAP for red hemp-nettle to NE local staff.	NCC, NE	
5.5	Future Research and Monitoring			
5.5.1	Collate information and resurvey extant and historic sites where necessary in order to gain a more complete understanding of the current distribution and status of these species. This will determine the range over which conservation action is appropriate and help to clarify the threats to remaining populations.	Consult County Recorders and other local botanists to update and collate data on Norfolk distribution.	NCC, NE	NBRC, local botanists
5.5.2	Continue with monitoring and research work; extend to sites with extant and restored populations with a view to refining conservation management techniques. Where possible, monitoring visits should be combined with meeting landowners to discuss conservation management for these species.	Monitor population at remaining site.	NE, RSPB	
5.5.3	Undertake research to determine the selectivity of all graminicides currently in use so as to identify which, if any, are suitable for use in field margins that support this and other threatened arable species.	Apply results of this research to Norfolk, if appropriate.	NE, RSPB	

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NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS:
5.6	Communications and Publicity			
5.6.1	Publicise the plight of this and other threatened arable species. Articles should be written for relevant conservation and farming magazines and newsletters. Botanists should be encouraged to report any new records, eg through Atlas 2000 recording.	RSPB may wish to include in publicity and interpretation for Snettisham. Consider developing an article with a well-known local author on arable weeds in general, possibly based on the Red List species.	RSPB NE, NCC, Norfolk Flora Group	
5.7	Links with Other Plans			
5.7.1	Implementation will benefit other arable species: <i>Arabis glabra</i> , <i>Bromus interruptus</i> , <i>Filago lutescens</i> , <i>Filago pyramidata</i> , <i>Fumaria occidentalis</i> , <i>Fumaria purpurea</i> , <i>Galeopsis angustifolia</i> , <i>Galium tricornutum</i> , <i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i> , <i>Silene gallica</i> , <i>Torilis arvensis</i> and <i>Valerianella rimosa</i> .	Not applicable to Norfolk, unless the species is eventually found in arable habitat. (Currently, it is found only on coastal shingle.)		
5.7.2	The plan should be considered in conjunction with that for cereal field margins.	The plan should be considered in conjunction with the national HAP for coastal vegetated shingle. (The cereal field margins HAP is not applicable, unless the species is eventually found in arable habitat).	Coastal BAP Topic Group	

Abbreviations

NBRC	Norfolk Biological Records Centre
NCC	Norfolk County Council
NE	Natural England
RBG	Royal Botanic Gardens
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

NORFOLK DISTRIBUTION

MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

(This guidance is a general summary; for more detailed information or advice, please consult the references or contacts below.)

Spring cultivation: Stubbles should be left after harvest in the autumn, although this is not relevant to the Snettisham population where it is growing on a shingle bank. Careful ground disturbance and bare ground creation may be necessary.

REFERENCES

Beckett, G., Bull, A. and Stevenson, R. (1999). *A Flora of Norfolk*. Norwich: Jarrold Book Printing.

Wilson, P. and King, M. (2003). *Arable Plants – A Field Guide*. Peterborough and Old Basing, Hampshire: English Nature and **WILD**Guides Ltd.

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