

NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

RED-TIPPED CUDWEED (*Filago lutescens*)

Red-tipped cudweed grows up to 25cm tall and is covered in a felt of yellow-tinged grey hairs. It flowers from mid-July to mid-October.

Ref 2/S15	Tranche 2	Species Action Plan 15
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-tipped cudweed is a species of light, open soil generally on extensively managed arable land or other disturbed ground including field edges, tracks and sandy commons. It is an annual plant which flowers mainly between July and October. Most seed germination takes place in the autumn, with a second flush in spring. Observations suggest that there is no innate seed dormancy, and it seems unlikely that it has a persistent seed-bank, although this requires further investigation.
- Although once recorded as far north as Yorkshire, the UK range of red-tipped cudweed has always centred around the south-east of England. It has suffered a severe decline over the last 50 years, from 212 sites pre-1930 to just 16 sites today (two of these have not been surveyed since 1994). Its remaining sites are in Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, with the largest populations in Surrey. Red-tipped cudweed remains relatively widespread in continental Europe, particularly in central Europe, but appears to be declining throughout its range.
- In Great Britain, red-tipped cudweed is classified as *Vulnerable*. It is specially protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Norfolk Status

- Red-tipped cudweed has been recorded from only five sites since 1950, and was found at only one site in 1997 (a disused railway line in Snettisham). A recent (2005) isolated record has been received from Forest Enterprise land at Weeting Forest near Brandon.

2. CURRENT FACTORS CAUSING LOSS OR DECLINE IN NORFOLK

The following factors were largely responsible for the decline of red-tipped cudweed and are now proving to be constraints on its recovery:

- Increased use of herbicides and fertilisers;
- The development of highly productive crop varieties;
- The destruction of field margin refuges;
- Earlier summer harvests, destroying plants before they have set seed;
- The demise of traditional crop rotations;
- The conversion of marginal arable land to pasture in traditional areas of mixed farming;
- Metalling and hard-coring of unmade paths and tracks;

- Possibly the decline in stock and rabbit populations on heathlands, leading to the loss of beneficial disturbance.

3. CURRENT ACTION IN NORFOLK

- None specifically for this plant. Plantlife has been involved with this species in the past, but is not currently active.

4. ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

National

- Maintain viable populations of this species at all extant sites.
- Achieve an increase in population size at ten extant populations by 2010.
- Establish three metapopulations by 2010.

Norfolk

- Ensure that the population remains viable at the remaining current sites.
- Provide opportunities for the spread of red-tipped cudweed from extant 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, as a potential means of re-establishing red-tipped cudweed in the countryside. When reviewing such schemes, consider whether changes are needed to increase their potential benefits for this and other threatened arable species.	Use Environmental Stewardship Scheme to help re-establish red-tipped cudweed in Norfolk, where appropriate.	NE	Farmers and landowners
5.2	Site Safeguard and Management			
5.2.1	Take steps to ensure that sites for red-tipped cudweed which are currently outside SSSIs are protected from damaging activities. If necessary this may include SSSI notification.	Consider notifying Snettisham railway line at least as a County Wildlife Site.	NE, NWT, NCC	Ken Hill Estate
5.2.2	Ensure that the management of all sites is beneficial to the conservation of this species.	Ensure that the management of Snettisham railway line is beneficial to the conservation of this species and that FE is aware of its presence at Weeting.	NE, FE, NCC	
5.2.3	Seek to develop a network of favourable habitats within the vicinity of red-tipped cudweed sites, thereby providing opportunities for its spread. Suitable management will include the relevant options outlined under the pilot Arable Stewardship Scheme, eg uncropped headlands (cultivated in early autumn).	Encourage owners of land adjacent to extant site to enter Higher Level Scheme of ES and tailor agreement to benefit red-tipped cudweed.	NE, FE	Ken Hill Estate
5.3	Species Management			

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NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS:
5.3.1	and Protection Undertake trial management at five carefully selected historic sites with the aim of regenerating red-tipped cudweed from the seed bank, in the case of arable sites seeking opportunities through appropriate agri-environment schemes.	No action proposed.		
5.3.2	Assess the feasibility and desirability of undertaking reintroductions at selected sites should attempts to regenerate red-tipped cudweed from the seed bank prove unsuccessful.	No action proposed.		
5.3.3	Continue with ex situ conservation work as detailed under English Nature's Species Recovery Programme.	No action proposed.		
5.4	Advisory			
5.4.1	Advise landowners and managers of the presence and importance of red-tipped cudweed, specific management for its conservation and any potentially damaging actions. Particular attention should be given to optimal cultivation and harvest times.	Advise landowners and managers of the presence and importance of red-tipped cudweed, specific management for its conservation and any potentially damaging actions. Send information about red-tipped cudweed to local FE staff and Ken Hill Estate.	NCC, FE NCC, FE, NE	Ken Hill Estate Ken Hill Estate
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.	Ensure that relevant Natural England local team advisers are aware of the red-tipped cudweed BAP	NE, NCC	
5.5	Future Research and			

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NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS:
5.5.1	<p>Monitoring</p> <p>Devise and implement a monitoring programme for this species at all sites with extant and restored populations.</p>	<p>Monitor extant sites.</p> <p>Survey nearby Frimstone carrstone quarry for this species, and possibly consider introduction if not found.</p>	<p>NE, FE, Norfolk Flora Group</p> <p>NCC</p>	<p>NWT, farmers and landowners</p> <p>Frimstone</p>
5.5.2	<p>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 red-tipped cudweed and other threatened arable species.</p>	<p>Apply results of this research to Norfolk, if appropriate.</p>	<p>NE</p>	
5.6	<p>Communications and Publicity</p>			
5.6.1	<p>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.</p>	<p>Consider developing an article with a well-known local author on arable plants in general, possibly based on the Red List species.</p>	<p>NE, NCC, Norfolk Flora Group</p>	
5.6.2	<p>Develop links with European ecologists working to conserve threatened plants of arable habitats.</p>	<p>No action proposed.</p>		
5.6.3	<p>Establish arable conservation display and education centres with the aim of raising public awareness of this threatened group of the UK flora.</p>	<p>No action proposed.</p>		
5.7	<p>Links with Other Action</p>			

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NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS:
5.7.1	<p>Plans</p> <p>It is likely that implementation of this action plan will benefit other arable species, including <i>Arabis glabra</i>, <i>Bromus interruptus</i>, <i>Centaurea cyanus</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 ramosa</i>.</p>	<p>It is likely that implementation of this action plan will benefit other arable BAP species in Norfolk.</p>	<p>Heathland BAP Topic Group, Farmland BAP Topic Group</p>	
5.7.2	<p>The plan should be considered in conjunction with that for cereal field margins.</p>	<p>This plan should be considered in conjunction with the Norfolk HAPs for cereal field margins (if applicable) and heathland/dry acidic grassland.</p>	<p>Farmland BAP Topic Group, Heathland BAP Topic Group</p>	

Abbreviations

FE	Forest Enterprise
NCC	Norfolk County Council
NE	Natural England
NWT	Norfolk Wildlife Trust

NORFOLK DISTRIBUTION

MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

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

The use of conservation headlands or cultivated margins within either spring or autumn crops is the recommended farm management for this species, as it competes poorly with improved crop varieties and related species are susceptible to a wide range of herbicides (ELS/HLS options EF9, EF10, EF11, HF16, HF19 or HF20).

Buffer strips sown with grass will be detrimental to the conservation of this species, as they fail to provide the open disturbed ground conditions necessary for the plant to flourish, in the only area of the field where the seed bank may still exist.

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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