

NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

GROUND BEETLE (*Ophonus laticollis*)

This species is a black ground beetle which is mainly seed eating. It lives on arable land where mature hedges are present.

This species has until recently been called *Harpalus* or *Ophonus punctatulus*.

Ref 2/S24	Tranche 2	Species Action Plan 24
Plan Author:	NCC (H. Thompson)	
Plan Co-ordinator:	Heathland BAP Topic Group	
Plan Leader:	NCC	
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1. CURRENT STATUS

National Status

- *Ophonus laticollis* is found in grassland and amongst open scrub on chalk or sandy soils, often under stones. It is an annual species that breeds mostly in the spring. The adults and the larvae are mainly seed-feeding. The beetle is winged and able to fly.
- *Ophonus laticollis* has recently been found only in east Suffolk and at Roydon Common in west Norfolk, but its earlier range included most of southern England as far north as Nottinghamshire as well as the south Wales coast. It is found throughout most of Europe, except the north.
- In Great Britain, this species is classified as Nationally Scarce.

Norfolk Status

- In Norfolk, this species has been recorded from Cranwich Camp, Gallows Hill (Thetford) and Roydon Common (although the most recent record from Roydon is 1985). The Gallows Hill site is the best site in Britain for this species, where it is associated with flower rich ESA margins and mature hedges (Telfer pers comm).

2. CURRENT FACTORS CAUSING LOSS OR DECLINE IN NORFOLK

- This species has been found on chalk soils in arable margins adjacent to thick, ancient hedgerows. In fact, it can be more abundant under the hedge than in the field. It also occurs under scrub on disturbed lowland calcareous grassland, reinforcing the impression that the shelter of shrubs is a habitat requirement for this species. Thus the loss, or poor management of mature hedgerows from the arable landscape of Norfolk, may be a factor in the species' decline.

3. CURRENT ACTION IN NORFOLK

- Roydon Common and Cranwich Camp are SSSIs.

4. ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

National

- Maintain the range of *Ophonus laticollis*.

Norfolk

- Maintain current populations of *Ophonus laticollis* in Norfolk, with Gallows Hill as a priority.

Ground Beetle - *Ophonus laticollis* - Norfolk Action Plan

NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS:
5.1	Policy and Legislation No national action.	No Norfolk action proposed.		
5.2	Site Safeguard and Management No national action.	Ensure local Natural England staff are aware of Gallows Hill population.	NE, NCC	
5.3	Species Management and Protection No national action	No Norfolk action proposed.		
5.4	Advisory No national action.	Advise the landowner of Gallows Hill site (Croxtan Hall Farms) of the presence of this species.	NCC, NE	
5.5	Future Research and Monitoring Monitor extant sites.	Consider re – survey of Gallows Hill population and Roydon Common. Contact UEA and NNNS to promote interest in finding out more about the ecology of this species. Seek Buglife involvement.	Heathland BAP Topic Group NCC NWT	NNNS
5.6	Communications and Publicity No national action.	Write an article for <i>Natterjack</i> , requesting records of <i>O. laticollis</i> caught in light traps.	NCC	
5.7	Links with Other Action Plans The requirements of the species should be taken into account in the delivery of the action plan for lowland calcareous grassland.	The requirements of the species should be taken into account in the delivery of the Norfolk Habitat Action Plan for lowland calcareous grassland.	Farmland BAP Topic Group	

Abbreviations

NCC	Norfolk County Council
NE	Natural England
NNNS	Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society
NWT	Norfolk Wildlife Trust

MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

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

Though carabid beetles are largely species of open habitats, hedgerows are important shelters, both during the inactive period of the diurnal cycle and over the winter. Hedgerows are also important refuges from damaging agricultural activities, as well as corridors for movement. Thick hedges with tussocks and accumulations of leaf litter are likely to be preferred. Hedges should be permeable to beetles, allowing them to exploit habitats on both sides of the hedge with ease.

There are no specific case studies of how the management of ancient and/or species rich hedgerows affects English carabids.

Ophonus species are predominantly seed-feeders, probably supplemented by scavenging. Adults have been found on umbels of wild carrot.

CONTACTS

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REFERENCES

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- Telfer, M. G. and Eversham, B. C. (2000). Species Recovery Programme: Workshop on the ecology and conservation of BAP ground beetles. Unpublished report to English Nature.