

SUFFOLK LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Small flowered catchfly

(*Silene gallica*)



Plan Lead FWAG

1 Definition of habitat or species

Small flowered catchfly is an annual plant usually associated with arable crops on light land. It germinates in autumn but its seedlings cannot tolerate low temperatures or winter wet soil and this probably helps explain its coastal distribution.

2 Current status: national, regional, and local (including trends and losses)

In common with many arable wildflowers, this formerly widespread species has suffered a dramatic decline largely due to agricultural intensification. It is now confined to relatively few small populations in lowland coastal locations. The species has also appeared as an introduction with imported clover seed. In Suffolk, there are a few recent records, virtually all from the Sandlings area. Two appear to be stable populations in arable locations, whilst the other records are casuals of waste places.

3 Current factors affecting the species or habitats

The following agricultural changes have been largely responsible for the decline of small flowered catchfly and continue to affect its extent.

Increase use of herbicides and fertilisers

The development of highly competitive crop varieties

Major improvements in seed cleaning techniques

The demise of crop rotations and the ability to grow monocultures over long periods

Deeper and more intensive cultivations

Loss of field edge refuges

Loss of winter stubble

Early harvests (mid July can destroy before seed has set)

4 Current action

Current distribution is monitored by SBRC and the Westleton site is annually monitored by a voluntary recorder.

5 Targets

Maintain viable populations at current sites and aim to expand range.

Baseline 2005, targets for 2010, and identify targets for long term species or habitat viability for 2015 and 2020 and longer term (if desired)

6 Actions

Action (apply SMART approach and include locations where relevant).	Achieve by date	Delivery partners (identify lead and support partners)
Site safeguard and management Or species protection/management		
Where appropriate, promote take up of Environmental Stewardship(ES) options that encourage and support arable wildflowers e.g. conservation headlands, uncropped margins and overwintered stubbles.	2006-2010	FWAG, NE, SWT
Survey to establish current management .	2007-2010	SBRC, SWT, FWAG
Establish whether existing sites are currently in an agri-environment scheme, and target for Environmental Stewardship as appropriate	2006-2010	SBRC, NE, SWT, FWAG,
Using historic and recent survey information, identify suitable locations and opportunities for introduction to increase the Suffolk population of this species e.g. within wild bird mix, over-wintering stubble ES options. Aim for 2 new sites	2006-2010	SBRC, FWAG, SBRC, NE
Collect some seed to establish new populations in suitable locations	2007-2010	SWT, SBRC, FWAG
Research and monitoring		

Re-survey extant sites to establish current distribution and monitor these sites regularly in the future	2006-2010	SBRC, SWT, FWAG
Research optimal management for the species	2006-2010	SBRC
Monitor the success of any new introduction sites	2008-2010	SBRC, SWT, FWAG
Investigate the feasibility/desirability of including this species in wild bird and nectar mixes and where there are compatible measures to support farmland birds e.g. over-wintering stubble	2006-2010	FWAG
Set up monitoring at Covehithe Site	2007-2010	SBRC
Advisory		
Ensure landowners and managers are alert to its appearance in arable crops and headlands and advise on appropriate management	2006-2010	FWAG, SWT, SBRC
Support and advise on ES applications and options that benefit arable plants e.g. unsprayed cultivated margins, overwintering stubble etc	2006-2010	FWAG, SWT, NE
Communications and publicity		
Raise awareness of the species (e.g. articles, publicity relating to this species and to reassure landowner/ farmer concerns regarding uncropped margins and conservation headlands,) amongst farmers, landowners and managers and the general public and the need to notify conservation bodies of new sites.	2006 -2010	FWAG, SWT, SBRC, NE

NB Most of the action achieve by dates are 2006-2010 this means they need to be achieved or worked towards by 2006 and annually renewed until 2010.

Objectives currently not achievable by the plan partners:

This section should include objectives that the working group relevant to this plan would like to fund and achieve but due to constraints can't currently. By recognising these in the plan, means they aren't lost from the BAP : A list of bullet points

The production of a leaflet arable plants covering why they are important, how they can be incorporated into current farming practice.

Monitoring of progress:

Reported annually on the UK BAP reporting system BARS Biodiversity Action Reporting system.

List of organisations that have been consulted regarding this plan and have agreed to aim to deliver their organisations commitments:

SWT Susan Stone and Dorothy Casey

NE Monica O'Donnell and Alison Collins

NT Philip O'Donoghue

SOG Steve Piotrowski

District Council- Suffolk Coastal only John Davies

Suffolk County Council Andrew Murray-Wood

SBRC Martin Sanford

Suffolk biodiversity partnership officer Mary Norden

FWAG Phil Watson