

Unspotted lungwort (*Pulmonaria obscura*)

This is a Red Data Book species occurring in three ancient woodland sites on boulder clay in north Suffolk. Although it is quite widespread on the Continent, these are the only sites for this species in the British Isles.

1 Current status

1.1 National

The species only occurs in one 10-km square in Britain and is classed as Vulnerable in the latest Red Data Book (Wigginton 1999). In the past, confusion with the similar species *P. officinalis* led to doubt about the native status of this species. However, there is now good reason to believe *P. obscura* is truly native in Suffolk since the habitat and associated species closely match those of native sites in Belgium and northern France. In 1994, the total population covered some 18 square metres and produced about 600 flowering stems.

1.2 Local

Suffolk has the entire British population of this species.

1.3 Natural Areas

East Anglian Plain.

1.4 Protection

None.



2 Current factors causing loss or decline

The major threat to this species is lack of management. Although it is a shade-tolerant plant, it flowers more freely, produces larger leaves, and grows more vigorously in light shade as is provided by early stages of the coppice cycle. Seedling establishment is more likely to occur in these lighter conditions and when there is less competition from other vegetation.

Current sites are all ancient woods with a history of management as coppice with standards. One other site in West Suffolk was destroyed in 1970 when electricity pylons were erected through the wood. The populations at two of the extant sites have apparently declined since the 1930s, probably because coppicing had ceased.

3 Current action

- One site is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the other two are County Wildlife Sites.
- Coppicing of two of the sites has been reinstated in recent years.
- Survey and monitoring of the sites on an annual basis.
- Plants from one of the sites have been transferred to Cambridge University Botanic Garden.

4 Action plan objectives and targets

- 1 Halt any further decline in the populations at the three extant sites.
- 2 Bring the two CWS sites into SSSI protection as one composite SSSI (all three sites are very close together).
- 3 Trial further coppicing in the vicinity of existing populations to see if new plants arise either from the seedbank or from existing plants setting seed.
- 4 Collect seed for the Millennium Seed Bank.

Proposed action with key local partners

ACTION	KEY LOCAL PARTNERS	TIMETABLE				
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
A. Policy and Legislation						
Consider notifying the two CWS as SSSI	EN	*	*			
B. Site safeguard and management						
Bring two CWS sites into SSSI	EN	*	*	*	*	*
Plan and reinstate coppice management at all sites						
C. Species management and protection						
Collect seed for Millenium Seed Bank	BSBI	*	*			
D. Advisory						
Continue contact with landowners to ensure sympathetic management	BSBI, EN	*	*	*	*	*
E. Future research and monitoring						
Establish optimum conditions for germination and growth of new seedlings	BSBI	*	*	*	*	*
Estimate total number of flowering stems and area of clumps every two years	BSBI		*		*	
F. Communications and publicity						
Encourage visitors to the sites to contact recorder first so that visits can be co-ordinated to avoid upsetting landowners	BSBI	*	*	*	*	*
Ensure shooting tenants and other users are made aware of the importance of protecting these sites	BSBI, EN	*	*	*	*	*