

Habitat management for the Duke of Burgundy

Chalk and limestone grassland habitats

Aim to maintain a mosaic of open, sunny grassland with abundant Primulas in medium height swards (5-20cm), with scrub edges or patches comprising up to 20% of the grassland area.

Maintain taller vegetation for breeding and shorter vegetation to ensure continuity of foodplant supply.

Grazing

Extensive light cattle grazing is ideal. Light to moderate cattle grazing from late summer to winter may be the most suitable regime for long-term maintenance. Regular summer sheep grazing, or heavy sheep grazing at any time of year is detrimental to Duke of Burgundy populations, as an unsuitably tight sward with low foodplant density is produced. Where there is no alternative, rotational sheep grazing can be used, but only up to 25% of the site should be grazed each season. Domestic livestock grazing regimes should take account of rabbit populations which can have a significant deleterious impact.

Scrub Control

Scrub should be cut on long rotations (e.g. 20 years) and targeted at younger, scattered scrub over relic grassland or at bays in scrub edges. Cutting dense mature scrub is not usually immediately beneficial, as Primulas regenerating in an open sward or amongst flushes of Wood False Brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum* are unsuitable for breeding. Scrub control without grazing is rarely sufficient to maintain colonies in the long-term.

Woodland clearings

Aim to ensure a continuous supply of clearings with abundant Primulas in open, sunny conditions.

Glades

Permanent glades can be maintained by controlling scrub regrowth, brambles and coarse grasses, ensuring all cut material is removed. As well as hand tools, strimmers and clearing saws, using a mower set at 10cm every two or three years has been found to be very effective.

Coppicing

A regular cutting sequence of woodland blocks in close proximity will ensure rapid colonisation of new habitat, particularly where open rides permit movement between clearings. Ideal conditions are provided in woodland regrowth a few years after clearance when sheltered areas develop between coppice stools. On thin soils or where deer browsing delays initial regrowth these microhabitats can be prolonged for several seasons.

Rides

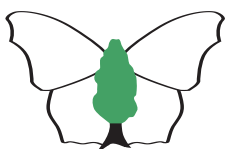
Breeding success is likely to be highest in east-west rides. Open rides can be maintained by short-rotation coppice (5-8 years), cutting back the woodland edge to 5-8m depending on the vigour of regrowth. Herb-rich grassland can be maintained by annual mowing or strimming.



above Larva and larval feeding damage on Primrose
below Breeding habitat in limestone grassland, showing scrub edges and abundant foodplants



below Breeding habitat in woodland clearing



Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

Head Office Manor Yard East Lulworth Wareham Dorset BH20 5QP
Telephone: 01929 400209 Email: info@butterfly-conservation.org

www.butterfly-conservation.org

Compiled by Sam Ellis and Dave Wainwright. Photographs by Tom Brereton, John Davis, Sam Ellis and Martin Warren.

Butterfly Conservation is a registered charity and non-profit making company, limited by guarantee.

Registered Office: Manor Yard East Lulworth Wareham Dorset BH20 5QP.

Registered in England No. 2206468 - Registered Charity No. 254937

Designed and produced by cellcreative 01942 681648. Printed on 100% recycled stock including 75% post-consumer waste.



Kenneth Hargreaves
Charitable Trust

This leaflet has been sponsored by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society and the Kenneth Hargreaves Charitable Trust.