

Habitat management for the Wood White

Woodland rides

Aim to maintain a continuity of open sunny woodland rides, with grass or scrub margins that are lightly shaded by surrounding trees and have abundant vetches.

Ride Management

Rotational cutting of clearings and rides is most beneficial as it adds variety to vegetation structure. The length of rotation will depend on the individual site and colony size, but can be anything from 2 - 6 years. In all but the largest colonies annual cutting removes too high a proportion of potential breeding habitat. Cutting in autumn and winter months is preferable with ride sides managed alternately. In double brooded colonies, shorter vegetation with patches of bare ground is needed during May and June. This can be created by mowing, tree felling or scarification of ride edges.

Periodic removal of scrub margins is beneficial to keep rides as sunny as possible and to provide suitable conditions for the growth of larval foodplants and nectar sources. Connectivity between existing breeding habitat can be improved by widening overgrown, shaded rides. Scallops and box junctions can also be created to make the breeding habitat more open. Management should be planned in sections to avoid disrupting large areas at any time.

High Forest and Coppicing

Suitable conditions can be provided by ensuring a sequence of felling and replanting to create an uneven-aged forest, combined with the maintenance of a network of sunny rides and glades. Re-introduction of coppicing can also improve woodland structure and provide suitable semi-shaded habitat. A wide ride network is also needed in coppiced woodland.

Hedgerows and grass/scrub mosaics

Maintain open but sheltered habitat containing abundant vetches in and around scrub patches and along adjacent hedgerows.

Grazing

Heavy grazing by either sheep or cattle is generally unsuitable as this removes the tall grass/scrub margins to field edges. Extensive cattle grazing is probably the most suitable regime, but should be combined with periodic cutting of scrub/hedge margins or rotational scrub or hedge management.

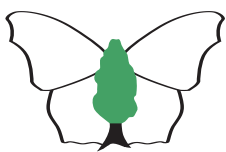
Cutting

Periodic grass cutting on sites with no grazing can be beneficial, although this should be done on a long rotation without cutting all suitable areas in any one year. As with grazing, scrub/hedge margins should be cut periodically to create abundant young scrub where vetches and grass can grow through. Scrub and hedges can also be cut on rotation to provide similar suitable conditions.

below Larva on Meadow Vetchling



below Breeding habitat in woodland



Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

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