

## Managing for bespoke species/assemblages within Countryside Stewardship – guidance template

Species/assemblage name	Conservation status
<p>Black-veined Moth (<i>Siona lineata</i>)</p>  <p>Black-veined Moth (Mark Parsons/Butterfly Conservation)</p>	<p>Section 41, Schedule 5 (Wildlife &amp; Countryside Act), RDB</p>  <p>Black-veined Moth habitat (Kelly Thomas/Butterfly Conservation)</p>  <p>Black-veined Moth habitat (Sean Clancy)</p>

### Introduction

This species has an annual life cycle, flies from late May to early July and can readily be found by day, but also flies by night. It is restricted to a very few sites on the North Downs, centred around Wye, Kent, frequenting longer turf (15-25cm using drop disc, but sometimes taller in June), herb rich calcareous grassland. The larva feeds on marjoram, black knapweed, common bird's-foot trefoil and possibly other herbaceous plants, the species overwintering in the larval stage.

Currently confined to c.7 sites, some very small. Formerly recorded from a few other southern counties. This species requires a delicate balancing act to maintain populations. Overgrazing can be an issue (which in turn can lead rabbit grazing resulting in longer term issues), whereas scrub invasion can also lead to a loss of habitat.

### Why a bespoke species/assemblage?

In effect this is a species that typically requires pulse grazing, i.e. in some years no management is required, followed by a year or two of light grazing. However, management should be informed by regular monitoring of the moth's population so that any management regime can take into account unexpected impacts, such as droughts etc.

### When and where to apply this guidance

North Downs, Kent. Any grazing that is undertaken should take place over winter.

### Developing a Countryside Stewardship agreement

#### Relevant CS options

GS6	Management of species rich grasslands
GS7	Restoration towards species rich grasslands
SP9	Threatened species supplement

#### Prescription guidance for GS6

P42 - [Control/Manage] [scrub] [in XXXX] [by cutting] so that [by year [NUMBER]] cover [of the [LOCATION] is no more than [10] %]. [Remove all cut material.]

P464 - Maintain the extent of [Black-veined moth breeding habitat] of interest within the [grassland] as identified [XXXX].

P470 - [By year X], [at least 2 moderate/high value indicator species Marjoram, black knapweed, common bird's-foot trefoil for Priority habitat feature Lowland Calcareous Grassland must be frequent all year and high value indicator species To for Priority habitat feature XXXX occasional (as defined in XXXX (currently the FEP Handbook)]. [By year X], cover of [species Marjoram, black knapweed, common bird's-foot trefoil must be frequent].

P667 - [From [establishment] onwards], manage by [low intensity cattle grazing] [so that sward height is between 10-25cm, but can be up to 35cm on some sites].

#### IoS for GS6

[in all years], cover of wildflowers in the sward (excluding undesirable species but including rushes and sedges), should be between [20% and 40% or frequent]. At least [30-50%] of wild flowers should be flowering during [May-July].

[in all years], the average sward height [at all times] should be between 10-25cm, but can be up to 35cm on some sites

[in all years], species [Marjoram, black knapweed, common bird's-foot trefoil should be frequent], and flowering during [May to August]

[in all years] [Black-veined moth] [present and maintained] on the site

[in all years], cover of [Tor Grass should be frequent as an indicator of relaxed grazing].

### **Prescription guidance for GS7**

Where a site/parcel has been abandoned, over grazed or improved, GS7 prescriptions can be used to achieve the indicators of success for GS6. Specific management would depend upon on the current condition of the site and advice should be sought from Butterfly Conservation.

### **Prescription guidance for SP9**

Management for this species is a delicate balancing act. SP9 could be used to support a programme of management aimed at providing longer turf (15-25cm using drop disc, but sometimes taller in June), herb rich calcareous grassland. This species does not require annual management and sites can be left for a few years although care should be taken to avoid scrub encroachment.

### **Monitoring**

Undertaking counts by day either by walking a transect or a timed count. Drop discs should be used to give a measurement of vegetation height. Each site should be monitored annually.

### **Further information**

A factsheet is available at: [http://butterfly-conservation.org/files/black-veined\\_moth-psf.pdf](http://butterfly-conservation.org/files/black-veined_moth-psf.pdf). See also Waring, P. & Townsend M. 2009. *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*. British Wildlife Publishing, Gillingham. (Second edition).

A series of annual reports covering the monitoring of this species have been produced by Butterfly Conservation.

### **Authorship/version control**

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