





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

Species/assemblage name	Conservation status
<p>Greenweed Flat-body Moth (<i>Agonopterix atomella</i>)</p>  <p>Greenweed Flat-body Moth (Mark Parsons/Butterfly Conservation)</p>  <p>Greenweed Flat-body Moth larva (Mark Parsons/Butterfly Conservation)</p>	<p>Section 41, Nationally Scarce</p>  <p>Greenweed Flat-body Moth habitat (Mark Parsons/Butterfly Conservation)</p>  <p>Dyer's Greenweed (Mark Parsons/Butterfly Conservation)</p>
<p>Introduction</p> <p>This species has an annual life cycle. It flies from July, hibernating as an adult and re-appearing in spring. The larva feeds on Dyer's Greenweed from late May to June, spinning together the terminal leaves of a shoot and feeding from within this spinning. It frequents rough, unimproved, grassy places where the foodplant is usually common or frequent. However, the foodplant has declined considerable since the 1940s through the loss of old pastures.</p> <p>Historically widely reported in England, but much declined and recently recorded from c.10 sites. However, it has been recorded from Dorset north to Northumberland in recent years.</p>	
<p>Why a bespoke species/assemblage?</p> <p>Dyer's Greenweed has declined due to agricultural improvement and abandonment of grassland. Management should aim to create or maintain substantial colonies of the plant,</p>	

sites with only a few dozen plants are unlikely to support this moth (or other scarce species associated with this plant). On all but the most infertile sites, light winter grazing, is likely to be required to prevent coarse grasses from dominating and scrub invasion. This grazing will also help seeds germinate through ground disturbance.

When and where to apply this guidance

Recent records (in the period from 2000 onwards) are from Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Worcestershire and Northumberland.

Any grazing, through cattle, should take place over late autumn/winter. However, at one larger site supporting this and other scarce moths associated with dyer's greenweed, grazing occurs at other times of year with individual fields being grazed for only a short period. Here, Hebridean sheep have also been used for short periods in late summer/autumn, sometimes in conjunction with cattle. What seems key at this site is that each field is only grazed for a relatively limited period, usually just a few weeks.

If removal of invading scrub is required, then this should be undertaken over the winter months and on rotation over a period of a few years. It is likely that some scrub will be beneficial, providing shelter, so ensure an element of scrub is retained.

Developing a Countryside Stewardship agreement

Relevant CS options

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

Lowland Meadows

Prescription guidance for GS6

Preferred management is light cattle grazing although autumn/winter cutting can also be used to manage sites where grazing is not possible.

P42 - [Control] [scrub] [in XXXX] [by CUTTING] so that [by year [1]] cover [of the [LOCATION] is no more than [5] %]. [Remove all cut material.]

P428 - [Cut and remove [hay] every year or less frequently.][Do not cut before [15 September] and always leave at least 10% uncut. This need not be the same 10% each year. All cuttings must be removed.] [Exclude livestock for a minimum of [7] weeks before cutting and/or by [15 May] at the latest.] [~~In years when hay is taken, graze the aftermath.~~]

P464 - Maintain the extent of [Dyer's Greenweed] of interest within the [grassland] as identified [XXXX].

P470 - [By year X], [~~at least 2 moderate~~/high value indicator species Dyer's Greenweed and XXXX for Priority habitat feature Lowland Meadow must be frequent throughout the summer months ~~in flower during May and June and 2 high value indicator species XXXX for Priority~~]

habitat feature ~~XXXX~~ occasional (as defined in ~~XXXX~~ (currently the FEP Handbook)). [By year X], cover of [Dyer's Greenweed] must be locally frequent].

P667 - [From [establishment] onwards], manage by [grazing] ~~[to maintain VEGETATION CONDITIONS]~~ [so that an open sward is maintained to enable foodplant germination (without a thick thatch)].

IoS for GS6

[in all years] [Greenweed flat body moth] [should be present] on the site

[in all years], species [Dyer's Greenweed should be (locally) frequent], and flowering during [May to July]

Prescription guidance for GS7

In parcels adjacent/nearby- up to 1km to a currently occupied site, GS7 could be used to restore potentially suitable sites.

P423 – Establish [Dyer's Greenweed (additional species) by planting in parcels XXXX / in the areas identified in XXX.]

Maintenance and IoS as per GS6.

Prescription guidance for GS14

In parcels adjacent/nearby- up to 1km to a currently occupied site, GS14 could be used to restore potentially suitable sites.

P423 – Establish [Dyer's Greenweed (additional species) by planting in parcels XXXX / in the areas identified in XXX.]

Maintenance and IoS as per GS6.

Prescription guidance for SP9

On marginal sites where the foodplant is present but not abundant or on land adjacent to site occupied by the moth, this supplement can be used to establish grazing (and stock infrastructure) and also plant Dyer's Greenweed.

Monitoring

Monitor the extent of foodplant. This should be supplemented by searches by a specialist for the larvae at least once every three years on extant sites.

Further information

A factsheet covering species associated with Dyer's Greenweed, including this moth, is available at: <http://butterfly-conservation.org/files/1.dyers-greenweed-species-factsheet.pdf>

See also Parsons, M.S. & Davis, A.M. 2013. Notes on the apparent status of *Agonopterix atomella* (D. & S.) (Lep.: Depressariidae). *Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation*, **125**: 111-113. Emmet, A.M. & Langmaid, J.R. (eds.). 2002. *The Moths and Butterflies of*

Great Britain and Ireland. Volume 4 (Part 1). Harley Books, Colchester.

Authorship/version control

Mark Parsons (Butterfly Conservation), Katie Cruickshanks (BC) & Tony Davis (BC), April 2015 2nd draft