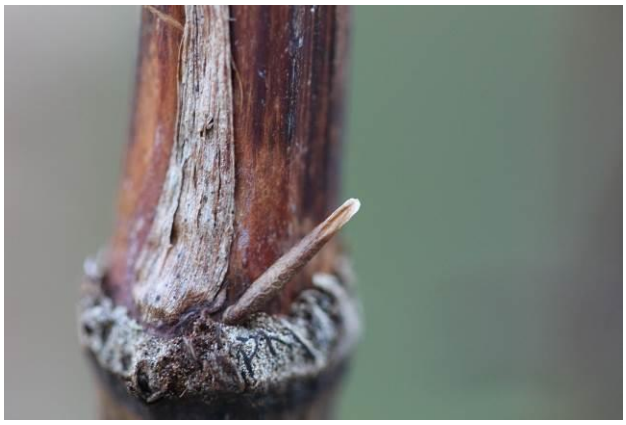
Managing for bespoke species/assemblages within Countryside Stewardship – guidance template

Species/assemblage name

Water-dock Case-bearer (*Coleophora hydrolapathella*)



Larval case of Water-dock Case-bearer (Tony Davis/Butterfly Conservation)

Conservation status

Section 41, pRDB 1,

Water-dock Case-bearer habitat, Burgh Common (Tony Davis/Butterfly Conservation)

Introduction

Occurs at a number of sites in the Norfolk Broads and at a single site in the north-east Suffolk coastal marshes. There is an historic record from County Durham.

The adult moth flies in July and August and lays its eggs on Water Dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*. The larva feeds on the seeds of the foodplant from within a silken case during the autumn and early winter. The case is then fixed to the stem of the foodplant where the larva overwinters before pupating in the same location in the spring.

Water Dock occurs on the fringes of reedbeds, along ditches in grazing marshes and in other open fenland habitat. The moth has been found in all such habitat types.

Whilst the larval case can be determined with care, the adult moth is small and rather non-descript and can only be identified by a small number of experts. The larval foodplant frequently grows in locations which are difficult to access. These factors combined mean that the moth is probably under-recorded within the Norfolk Broads. Nevertheless it is considered to be more restricted than in the past, probably due to scrub encroachment, lack of reedbed management, abandonment or intensification of wet grassland management, and unsympathetic ditch management.

Why a bespoke species/assemblage?

This species is entirely dependent upon Water Dock which is not necessarily well-catered for

in standard management of wetlands. For example, management of reedbeds tends to focus on promoting the reed itself and this can outcompete and eliminate Water Dock.

When and where to apply this guidance

At all sites where the species occurs or at sites within their vicinity where the foodplant occurs within the Norfolk Broads. At the site where the species occurs in the north-east Suffolk coastal marshes.

Developing a Countryside Stewardship agreement

Relevant CS options

WT3	Management of ditches of high environmental value
WT6	Management of reedbed
WT8	Management of Fen
WT12	Wetland grazing supplement

Prescription guidance for WT3 Management of ditches of high environmental value

P340 - Where vegetation removal is done by cutting, cut above the base of the ditch, leaving the roots in the base. [Retain a fringe of emergent vegetation on one side of the ditch.]

P342 - Leave [one bank] unmanaged during any one operation. [Manage these lengths at another point in the rotation. [Do not manage all ditches in any one year.]

P343 - Place the arisings [in the adjacent field]. Do not use the material to fill hollows or low areas within the field, or place it on historic or archaeological features. [Spread spoil thinly to prevent a spoil bank from forming.]

P344 - Following ditch maintenance, re-establish bankside vegetation by [natural regeneration].

Prescription guidance for WT6 Management of reedbed

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

P42 – [Manage] [Common Reed] [in XXXX] [by cutting in areas where it is competing with Water-dock] so that [by year [NUMBER]] cover [of the [LOCATION] is no more than [50]%. [Remove all cut material.]

Prescription guidance for WT8 Management of Fen

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

P320 - Manage to retain an open condition, with scattered trees and scrub covering [no more than 10%] of the area.

Prescription guidance for WT12 Wetland grazing supplement

P489 - Graze [very lightly with cattle to promote germination of the foodplant. Winter grazing is likely to cause the least damage to the foodplant although very light summer grazing can be used with appropriate monitoring] [to achieve a diverse vegetation structure with areas of shorter vegetation and taller tussocks but ensuring that stock do not damage Water-dock. This will require monitoring of foodplant]. ~~[Around [NUMBER%] of the vegetation should be in tussocks or in patches over [50 cm] high.]~~

Monitoring

Counting larval cases on water dock (by specialist) between December and April and assessing abundance of water dock at sites known to support the moth (where specialist experience unavailable). Extant sites for the moth should be monitored at least once every two years.

Training can be provided to anyone volunteering to assist with surveys for Water-dock Case-bearer, for further information please contact Butterfly Conservation.

Further information

Emmet, A.M. (ed.). 1996. *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland. Volume 3.* Harley Books, Colchester.

Authorship/version control

Who wrote it/contributed (with their affiliations), version draft and date

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