



Common Skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*)



Biodiversity Action Plan | Cummey Yannoo Beiyen-Feie

Background

Recently rediscovered on Island after extinction was assumed, Common Skullcap is not yet legally protected.

Description



It is a moderately vigorous and medium-tall plant, very similar in growth habit, and habitat, as marsh woundwort.

Credit: Andreas Rockstein

British Isles Distribution

Common Skullcap is widely distributed throughout Britain and Ireland.

Isle of Man Distribution

On the Isle of Man, it was recorded near Scarlet in 1832, and re-recorded in 1880. Allen assumed these records were a 'slip'. In 2022, a small but thriving colony was found by D. Bellamy at SC23970 near Ballabeg in Arbory (Ballagawne Farm). The habitat is a small area of mesotrophic marsh, with Branched-Bur-reed, that lies within a wider area of acid-neutral marsh where the plant is absent. The site is cattle grazed. It is most likely that the plant near Ballabeg is a single clone, rather than many plants growing together.

Habitat and Ecology

Common Skullcap is a species of mesotrophic/calcareous open wetlands, occurring in habitats as diverse as dune slacks, canal sides, wet woodland rides, pond edges and marsh. It is an herbaceous perennial that primarily spreads through sub-surface stolons (forming extensive colonies) and also seed. It is a moderately vigorous and medium-tall plant, very similar in growth habit and habitat as Marsh Woundwort.

Common Skullcap is occasionally grown as a garden or herbal plant. However, it is invasive in a flower border, thus not a popular garden plant. Skullcaps have a deadnettle like flower, thus specialised for bees, and are a host for many insects that feed on generic mint family plants.



Legal protection		
Not yet listed on Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Act 1990 and not yet assessed under <i>Plants of Conservation Concern in the Isle of Man</i> .		
Threats		
Occurring as a single small population, makes this plant susceptible to Island extinction.		
Reason for BAP		
Once thought to be extinct on the Island, Common Skullcap is now only known to be located at one site.		
Aims		
Ensure there are multiple viable populations long term.		
Linked BAPS		
Delivery Options	Active	Challenges
Collect stolen cuttings.	2022	
Delivery Plan		
Strategy		Lead
<p>Mesotrophic wetlands are mostly found in the north of the Island around old marl pit ponds. Many of these are still grazed, thus fully suitable. Billown Nature Reserve is comparatively close to the Ballabeg site (<3km), thus the wetter areas of the Billown extension site could become very appropriate for our initial actions.</p> <p>Once a second population on the Billown Nature Reserve (a protected site) has been secured, we can look to establish this species on an additional 2-3 sites around the Island, particularly in newly created/restored sites.</p>		Manx Wildlife Trust
Action	Timing	Responsibility
Introduce 5 plants to Billown Nature Reserve.	2022/23	Manx Wildlife Trust
Reinforce planting at Billown Nature Reserve.	2023/24	Manx Wildlife Trust
Have plants available for introduction to mesotrophic wetland creation in the Agri-Environment Scheme or other projects.	2024 onwards	Manx Wildlife Trust
Assess and review plan.	2027	Manx Wildlife Trust
Annual Updates		
Year		



2023	3 plants planted at Billown Nature Reserve (extension site). One in reasonable health by end of the year and flowering, the other two struggling. The site may be too dry for the species, but further reinforcement planting will be undertaken.
------	---

