



## Field Mouse-ear (*Cerastium arvense*)



### Biodiversity Action Plan | Cummey Yannoo Beiyen-Feie

#### Background

An attractive wildflower of infertile grassy areas, often over limestone.

This Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been reformatted from a Rare Species Action Plan, produced by Wildflowers of Mann in 2004, and approved by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in the same year.

#### Description



Flowering perennial plant of dry infertile grasslands.

#### British Isles Distribution

This is predominantly a species of the eastern side of the British Isles, with the Isle of Man being a notable outlier. It has a more inland UK distribution than Purple Milk-vetch.

#### Isle of Man Distribution

On the Isle of Man, the species has declined from its former extent in Orrisdale, Ballaghennie and Port St Mary. It is now mostly confined to Langness and Strandhall/Poyllvaish, where the species is, in places, abundant.

Many plants grow un-noticed on tracks (such as at St Michael's Isle), producing few flowers. It may well still occur as non-flowering plants in former sites. Confusion with garden escapees can make finding this species a challenge.

#### Habitat and Ecology

Field Mouse-ear is an attractive, white flowered perennial, of low fertility, dry, calcareous and coastal mesotrophic grassland, as well as slightly acidic sands. It has a poor, competitive ability in rough grassland, but is less sensitive than Purple Milk-vetch. This may partly be facilitated through use of the tops of Yellow Meadow Ant (*Lasius flavus*) nests, such as at Strandhall, but the species also has some scrambling ability in taller grassland. Spread is mostly through underground stolons, that often look like seedlings, as they can appear remote from the parent plant. The role of seed dispersal may be small at a local level. Propagation by stoloniferous cuttings take readily, but seed has not been tried.



<b>Legal protection</b>		
Not listed on Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Act 1990 and amber-listed under <i>Plants of Conservation Concern in the Isle of Man 2022</i> . Not protected in the UK.		
<b>Threats</b>		
The species is currently above the Schedule 7 threshold for extent but has suffered an apparent critical decline. Existing populations should be monitored to ensure declines are not ongoing. Monitoring of its former sites would be worthwhile, and should be undertaken when opportunities arise, especially at Port St Mary where large amounts of potential habitat still exist.		
<b>Reason for BAP</b>		
Loss of species from north of the Island, and general reduction in abundance in the south.		
<b>Aims</b>		
To ensure this species maintains its existing distribution.		
<b>Linked BAPS</b>		
Shaking Grass Action for Wildlife Project and Limestone grassland BAPs.		
<b>Delivery Options</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Propagate plants and hold in cultivation.	yes	
Establish at MWT Billown Nature Reserve.		
<b>Delivery Plan</b>		
<b>Strategy</b>		<b>Lead</b>
<p>When grazed, the MWT Billown Nature Reserve should provide a suitable long-term site for Field Mouse-ear. It is expected to be an easier introduction than many other calcareous species, as its tolerance for soil types and vegetation roughness is broader.</p> <p>Introductions will start at 30 plants (sourced from the stolons of at least 3 parent plants). These will be reinforced if more than 50% failure is evidenced within two years.</p> <p>Management of the site should be as per the management plan (Dubbeldam, A., 2019, <i>Billown Quarries Management Plan 2020-2026</i>. Manx Wildlife Trust. Peel).</p>		Manx Wildlife Trust
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Grow 30 potted plants in nursery conditions.	2019/20	Wildflowers of Mann
Plant in MWT Billown Nature Reserve.	2021-2022	Wildflowers of Mann
Monitor plantings/spread.	2021 onwards	Wildflowers of Mann



Review for next management plan.	2026	Wildflowers of Mann /Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture
Periodically revisit old sites to check for presence.	2020 onwards	Wildflowers of Mann
Periodically check extant colonies.	2020 onwards	Wildflowers of Mann

### Annual Updates

Year	
2019	Cuttings taken from plants at Strandhall. Growing in cultivation.
2022	Many introductions to MWT Billown Nature Reserve.
2023	Survival rate of initial introductions poor due to rabbit uprooting. Some survival, but not yet showing vigour. Some predation by slugs causing further vigour loss.

