



Pink Water-speedwell (*Veronica catenata*)



Biodiversity Action Plan | Cummey Yannoo Beiyen-Feie

Background

This species is very rare on the Island and would appear to have disappeared from two former sites. Its persistence in very low numbers in the Dumb River, is due to the unusual grazing access provision. Pressure to fence off watercourses continues as a generalized conservation measure which would rapidly result in the disappearance of the species in the Great Meadow area.

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



An emergent wildflower of base-rich wetland areas. Very similar to blue water speedwell.

Credit – Simon Wilkinson

British Isles Distribution

This species is most common in the southwest of England, but can be found throughout the British Isles, (although not in the Highlands of Scotland or on Shetland).

Isle of Man Distribution

On the Isle of Man, it has been recorded from the Rhencullen Dub and an unlocalised pre-1900 record in the southwest of the island. The Rhencullen Dub is partly filled in, but Penny-royal is still found here and the species may exist in the seedbank.

Its stronghold on the Island is in the upper Dumb River catchment area. Allen records it as being on the Ballakaighen branch in small quantities, but Amber Cordwell has recorded it from the main river too. It still occurs here in small quantity with its hybrid and Blue Water-speedwell. The single plant found was in a poached cattle access to the river at SC25826837. The fields it occurs in are traditionally cattle-grazed and this is likely to be the reason for the plant's persistence here. The species may still be present in other parts of the upper Dumb River catchment.



Habitat and Ecology

Pink Water-speedwell is an annual of base-rich, moderately fertile conditions. It is described as perennial in some non-British literature.

Normally found in shallow water, it can also be found in the drawdown zone. Gravel and chalk pits are listed as habitats. It is considered more of a drawdown species of still water, unlike Blue Water-speedwell which tends to be an emergent in running water. However, the overlap in habitat is significant - a sterile hybrid of great vigour, it is commonly found where the two occur together. A reasonable base-richness to the water is a requirement and this is clearly a restricting feature for the Isle of Man, where the more acid tolerant (and related) Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*) is the more frequent species.

This species grows from seed as an annual. Its ease of cultivation is not known, but the single plant in cultivation for the Wildflowers of Mann, has a grazing invertebrate that has defoliated it. Repeated searches have not located the culprit. Seed has been harvested, but the storage and cultivation of this seed is an unknown. Once growing, the plant can be increased by cuttings and roots from layered flattened stems (this happens frequently in grazing marshes).

Legal protection

Listed on Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Act 1990 and red-listed under *Plants of Conservation Concern in the Isle of Man 2022*.

Threats

Small population at single site vulnerable to extinction.

Reason for BAP

Prevent Island extinction.

Aims

Establish at MWT Billown Nature Reserve quarry pools.

Linked BAPS

Pink-water Speedwell, Golden Dock and Celery-leaved Buttercup

Delivery Options	Active	Challenges
<p>Establishment by seed would be preferred, but it is unlikely good quantities of seed could be gained, thus young plants may have to be introduced (grown from seed in nursery conditions and cuttings taken).</p> <p>Planting in shallow water and drawdown mud should be attempted. Some plants should have some residual fertility in the pot compost to give the plants an initial establishment boost to put on bulk to</p>		<p>A very tempting target for rabbits and waterfowl, thus protective wire mesh cages should be installed around most plants for a few weeks.</p> <p>The relationship between Pink-water Speedwell, Golden Dock and Celery-leaved Buttercup should be monitored to see if they are directly competing or if they form stable communities.</p>



<p>provide buffers to grazing once the cage come off.</p> <p>Sheep grazing should increase the nitrogen turnover and availability in this wetland although dunging that over time will assist these species.</p> <p>Ultimately it will be the nitrogen availability and fluctuating water tables that will determine the long-term success or failure of this introduction. Artificially increasing nitrogen levels to the habitat would under no circumstances be considered.</p>		
<p>The designation of the Great Meadow as an Area of Special Scientific Interest would enable controls to be put in place to maintain and enhance the habitat for Pink Water-speedwell in perpetuity.</p>		

Delivery Plan

Strategy

Introduction to the shallow pools at MWT Billown Nature Reserve would maintain the species within the general great meadow area, but should provide some reinforcement of the species.

While shallow water and drawdown is common on this site, the low fertility present and the grazing wildfowl and rabbits, may pose challenges to establishment here.

The greatest opportunity will be in the immediate aftermath of scrub clearance works (as per management plan - (Dubbeldam A (2019); Billown Quarries Management Plan 2020-2026; Manx Wildlife Trust). This is when disturbance and leaf litter oxidation will release fertility, there will be additional bare habitat, and there should be a flush of weed growth from a seed bed to provide alternative grazing targets. If the species cannot be established in the two-year window of opportunity it may not be possible at all.

Lead

Manx Wildlife Trust

Action

Grow 30 plants from seed and cuttings.

Timing

2020

Responsibility

Wildflowers of Mann

Prepare MWT Billown Nature Reserve for planting by removal of scrub from site and introduction of grazing.

2019/2020

Wildflowers of Mann



Translocate 30 potted plants.	2020/21	Wildflowers of Mann
Monitor plantings/spread and review grazing.	2021 onwards	Wildflowers of Mann /Colas
Review for next management plan.	2025	Wildflowers of Mann /Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture
Recommend Great Meadow to be considered as an Area of Special Scientific Interest.	2025	Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

Annual Updates

Year	
2019	Plant grown and seed collected.
2020-21	Held in cultivation.
2022	Planted at MWT Billown Nature Reserve in small pool. Native plant found in main pool at Rosehill Quarry ASSI among Blue Water-speedwell.
2023	Blue and Pink Water-speedwell spread at MWT Billown Nature Reserve with lots of seedlings. Plants are clearly perennialising as aquatic fragments, the uprooting of which is probably responsible for some of the spread.

