



Wood Small-reed (*Calamagrostis epigejos*)

Biodiversity Action Plan | Cummey Yanno Beiy-Feie



Background

A grass restricted to one site on the Island (Santon Gorge Area of Special Scientific Interest).

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



Reed-like tall grass of wet grassland and lightly shaded wet woodland areas.

British Isles Distribution

The species is widespread in the British Isles; however, it is only common in England. In the north and the west, occurrences are much more patchy, but it is recorded to the north of Scotland.

Isle of Man Distribution

The species has been recorded from two sites on the Isle of Man. A mid-19th century report from Andreas is un-localised, and the species has not been recorded from the north of the Island again. An Andreas report would presumably be from an inland wetland, where this non-descript, long-lived plant could still lurk, but it is assumed to be no longer present.

The main population is a large one, covering >100m² of coastal slope, along the coastal footpath between Santon Gorge and Port Soldrick. Some parts of the population are on wet ground, but by no means all of it. Where it grows in drier soils, the colony is much less dense and shorter.

The site would not appear to be at threat and is protected within the Santon Gorge Area of Special Scientific Interest. There is the possibility that the species is under-recorded on the Isle of Man due to grazing and its non-descript appearance.

Habitat and Ecology

A perennial grass species. Wood Small-reed produces fairly dense stands of reeds, less than 2 m tall. In the UK, the species grows in a great variety of locations such as wet woodlands, ditches and dune slacks. While on the Isle of Man, it is only known from coastal slopes, which is typical for the northwest Britain.



The species is thought to grow on either light sand or heavy clay. Given the catholic tastes and vigour once established, it is hard to understand its scarcity. But seed viability, germination and establishment, may well be the limiting factors. The seed viability on the Isle of Man has not been tested.

Wood Small-reed creates dense, grassy habitat that is likely to be of value for shelter and nesting to some species, as well as cavities within the dead stalks that will be suitable for overwintering invertebrates.

Legal protection

Listed on Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Act 1990 and amber-listed under *Plants of Conservation Concern in the Isle of Man 2022* (required elevating to red-listing on next review).

Threats

Single site distribution.

Reason for BAP

The value of establishing this species in a woodland situation, will be to create dense, tall, grassy/reed woodland-edge habitat for bird nesting and overwintering invertebrates. It will also maintain a safe population in the north of the Island.

Aims

To establish a second site for this species.

Linked BAPS

Woodlands for wildflowers and associated BAPs.

Delivery Options

Active

Challenges

Delivery Plan

Strategy

Plants derived from Port Soldrick cuttings, are grown at MWT Mullen e Cloie Nature Reserve in a wetland habitat bed. Although due to the non-threatened nature of the existing population, the need for this is only to provide propagation material.

Direct, bare-root, transplants of healthy nursery material, should establish well in the wetter, mineral-rich, clay ground of the flushed soils of Hairpin Woodland Park (SC44659333). Enough material should be transplanted to allow for losses and to allow for planting in a good range of hydrological situations, particularly at the woodland edge. The reaction of the species to the regular cycles of light and shade in a coppice woodland are unknown, hence the importance of the woodland edge position.

Lead

Manx Wildlife Trust

Action

Timing

Responsibility

Maintain plants in cultivation.

2017 onwards

Manx Wildlife Trust

Plant bare-root plants in wet woodland edge site at Hairpin Woodland Park.

2017 (and 2018 if needed)

Manx Wildlife Trust



Monitor.	2018 onwards	Manx Wildlife Trust
Annual Updates		
Year		
2018	Initial planting at Hairpin Woodland Park not showing great success.	
2019	Some good establishment in Hairpin Woodland Park (Charlies Coppice), in flush areas. But elsewhere, the rabbits appear to demolish fresh growth and strong plants soon disappear (particularly at the Cloughbane quarry wetland area).	
2021	Plants no longer findable, as bramble is too high. We will not know survival until good plant establishment has occurred. Requires further planting at Hairpin Woodland Park and MWT Billown Nature Reserve extension.	

