

Species and Habitat Action Plan Assessment Form

Field 1: Action Plan details

Species/Habitat Action Plan	Cut Grass (<i>Leersia oryzoides</i>)
Lead Partner/Agency	Environment Agency (contact point – English Nature)
Steering Group/Other organisations	No.[As at September 1999, we are in the early stages of developing an informal network of relevant individuals and organisations]
Work programme in existence?	No

Field 2: Objectives and targets overview

Number and text	UK	E	NI	S	W	Comments
4.1 Maintain the range of Cut-Grass in Britain	✓	✓				
4.2 Enhance its range through the spread of populations from extant sites and through re-introductions if considered appropriate	✓	✓				

Field 3: Proposed actions overview

Number and text	UK	E	NI	S	W	Action significant?	Action complete or ongoing? (Please state yes, not started, or ongoing.)
5.1 Policy and legislation							Not applicable
5.1.1 None proposed							
5.2 Site Safeguard and Management							
5.2.1 Promote beneficial management of all extant sites through relevant agri-environment schemes. Such management will include grazing and periodic dredging of ditches.		✓				Yes	Yes
5.2.2 Where possible, encourage the creation of suitable habitats for the spread of cut-grass within the vicinity of extant populations. Favourable management will include the relevant options under appropriate agri-environment schemes.		✓				Yes	Ongoing
5.2.3 Ensure that land drainage work does not take place in the vicinity of extant wet grassland populations.		✓					Ongoing
5.2.4 Ensure that watercourse management programmes at sites for cut-grass fully take into account the requirement of the species.		✓					Ongoing
5.2.5 Ensure that the LEAPs and Water Level Management Plans take full account of the requirement of this species		✓				Yes	Ongoing
5.2.6 Prepare watercourse management plans for all SSSIs with extant populations of cut-grass.		✓					Not started

<p>5.3 Species management and protection</p> <p>5.3.1 Assess the possibility of regenerating cut-grass at suitable historic sites and , if appropriate, undertake experimental management to achieve this. If this fails, the feasibility and desirability of reintroducing cut-grass at selected sites should be considered.</p> <p>5.3.2 Collect seed from all extant populations and deposit in the Millenium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place (Kew). Plants should also be propagated for reintroductions if necessary.</p>		✓					Not started
<p>5.4 Advisory</p> <p>5.4.1 Ensure that all landowners and managers on extant sites are aware of the presence of this species, its importance and appropriate management for its conservation.</p> <p>5.4.2 As far as possible, ensure that all relevant agri-environment project officers, relevant drainage engineers and waterways managers are advised of the location of this species and its management requirements.</p>		✓				Yes	Yes
<p>5.5 Future research and monitoring</p> <p>5.5.1 Resurvey all extant sites in order to determine the current status of cut-grass, check that appropriate management is in place and identify any potential threats.</p> <p>5.5.2 Continue to monitor the Amberley Wildbrooks population, and implement monitoring of all other extant populations.</p> <p>5.5.3 Undertake ecological research with a view to identifying, more precisely, the requirements of cut-grass and refining management techniques for its conservation. Attention should be given to the influence of water pollution on the performance of this species.</p>		✓				Yes	Ongoing
<p>5.6 Communication and publicity</p> <p>5.6.1 Develop links with European botanists, particularly those in areas where cut-grass grows abundantly, so as to improve understanding of the biology and ecological requirements of this plant.</p>		✓					Not started
<p>5.7 Links with other action plans</p> <p>5.7.1 It is likely that implementation of this action plan will benefit <i>Potamogeton compressus</i>.</p> <p>5.7.2 The plan should be considered in conjunction with that for coastal and floodplain grazing marsh.</p>		✓					Ongoing

Field 4: Assessment of status

	Not appropriate	Recovered	Signs of recovery	No change	Declining	Lost	Insufficient information
UK				✓			
England				✓			
Northern Ireland	✓						
Scotland	✓						
Wales	✓						

The plant is not known to occur in Northern Ireland, Wales or Scotland so considered not appropriate. The evidence available suggests that the plant is still found in the sites at which it has historically been found although recent surveys have not located the plant on the Bridgwater – Taunton Canal. In the absence of more exhaustive ongoing surveys the status in UK and England is recorded as ‘no change’. There is a need to collate all historical data and carry out surveys of former sites to search for this species.

Field 5: Summary statement

The sites for *Leersia* within Sussex appear to be safeguarded at the present moment although one or two outlying sites appear less certain. A number of former sites which have been lost in the recent past need to be re-surveyed and re-assessed to establish whether the plant has truly disappeared. On the whole, mechanisms are now in place to enable the conservation of this species, at least in its ‘core’ areas.

The establishment of a more formal steering group is planned for the year 2000.

Field 6: Signing off

Contact details	Lead Partner	Contact Point
Name	Phil Griffiths	Simon Leach
Organisation	Environment Agency	English Nature
Assessment date (dd/mm/yy)	10-09-99	15-10-99

Completed forms should be submitted to JNCC

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Table A: Action Plan objectives and targets (Copiable table)

Objective/target	4.1 Maintain the range of Cut-Grass in Britain				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
<i>UK</i>			✓		
<i>England</i>			✓		
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	✓				
<i>Scotland</i>	✓				
<i>Wales</i>	✓				
Text description of target progress (separate for each country/region):					
Within its core areas in Sussex, populations and range are being maintained and there is possibly some evidence of local spread in these areas. However, some populations in outlying localities (eg Somerset have been lost in the last 10-20 years.					
Objective/target	4.2 Enhance its range through the spread of populations from extant sites and through (re)introductions if considered appropriate				
Country	Not appropriate	Target achieved	Some progress	No progress	Insufficient information
<i>UK</i>				✓	
<i>England</i>				✓	
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	✓				
<i>Scotland</i>	✓				
<i>Wales</i>	✓				
Text description of target progress (separate for each country/region):					
No progress yet. Several former sites appear suitable for this species but (re) introducing is not envisaged until thorough surveys have established that it really has gone from these sites.					

Table B: Proposed actions

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.2.1 Promote beneficial management of all extant sites through relevant agri-environment schemes. Such management will include grazing and periodic dredging of ditches.	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	No work plan or steering group in existence	
Action/workplan undertaken?	Yes, ongoing	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	Land entered into Countryside Stewardship at Amberley Wildbrooks. Sussex Wildlife Trust ownership at Amberley Wildbrooks and management by RSPB. Organisations responsible included the FRCA, MAFF, Arun Valley Project, Sussex Wildlife Trust and RSPB. Discussions in progress regarding the appropriate management of the Bridgewater-Taunton Canal (EN and BW)	
Output and timescale	Ongoing	Action by FRCA, MAFF, WT, RSPB, EN, BW
Constraints to action	None identified, although there may be conflicts between canal management and management for Leersia which may need to be resolved at the Bridgewater-Taunton Canal.	

Action complete or ongoing?	Ongoing	
Next steps	Other sites need to be secured in management agreements.	
Output and timescale		<i>Action by</i>

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.2.2 Where possible, encourage the creation of suitable habitats for the spread of cut-grass within the vicinity of extant populations. Favourable management will include the relevant options under appropriate agri-environment schemes.	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	No work plan or steering group in existence	
Action/workplan undertaken?	N/A	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	<p>There is a Water Level Management Plan in existence for Amberley Wildbrooks, which has succeeded in raising the water levels in the ditches over the Summer months. The Sussex Wildlife Trust has purchased substantial areas of the Wildbrooks and is currently working with the RSPB and the Agency to enhance further the land in their ownership.</p> <p>The nearby Waltham Brooks SSSI is also owned by the Sussex Wildlife Trust and is under the appropriate conservation management. This site also has a Water Level Management Plan written for it.</p> <p>Provision of extensive areas of suitable habitats adjoining extant Leersia sites</p>	
Output and timescale		<i>Action by</i> EA, RSPB, WT, EN
Constraints to action	None identified, although obviously provision of suitable habitat is dependent on land acquisition and/or existence of sympathetic land managers.	
Action complete or ongoing?	Ongoing	
Next steps	Further extend areas of suitable habitat as opportunity permits	
Output and timescale		<i>Action by</i>

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.2.5 Ensure that the LEAPs and Water Level Management Plans take full account of the requirement of this species	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	No work plan or steering group in existence	
Action/workplan undertaken?	Yes	

Description of work taken and organisation responsible	Presence of <i>Leersia</i> at Amberley Wildbrooks flagged up in the Arun and Western Streams LEAP and as an Action Point. This LEAP currently in progress. The presence of the plant at Amberley is noted in the WLMP Also mentioned in the Appendices of the Waltham Brooks WLMP	
Output and timescale	All relevant LEAPs and WLMPs take account of extant populations of this species. WLMPs produced and Arun LEAP imminent	<i>Action by</i> EA, EN, etc
Constraints to action	None identified	
Action complete or ongoing?	Yes	
Next steps	None envisaged	
Output and timescale		<i>Action by</i>

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.4.1 Ensure that all landowners and managers on extant sites are aware of the presence of this species, its importance and appropriate management for its conservation.	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	No work plan or steering group in existence	
Action/workplan undertaken?	Yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	All land managers with extant (or recently lost) populations of <i>Leersia</i> are aware of its (former) presence.	
Output and timescale	All landowners are aware of existing populations	<i>Action by</i> EA, EN, WTs
Constraints to action	None identified. Almost all extant (or recently lost) sites lie within SSSIs. British Waterways are aware of its recent disappearance from the Bridgewater-Taunton Canal and are keen to take steps to ensure its recovery at this site.	
Action complete or ongoing?	Yes	
Next steps	None envisaged unless further survey leads to discovery of the species at new sites.	
Output and timescale		<i>Action by</i> EN, EA, WTs

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.5.1 Resurvey all extant sites in order to determine the current status of cut-grass, check that appropriate management is in place and identify any potential threats.	
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Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	No work plan or steering group in existence	
Action/workplan undertaken?	Yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	Extant sites in Sussex are subject frequent (annual) survey. Former sites in Dorset and Somerset are being re-surveyed. Other former sites in Sussex and the New Forest also need re-surveying to determine whether habitat is still suitable for this species. Accurate status is given in the Red Data Book.	
Output and timescale		<i>Action by</i> EN, BSBI, WTs, RSPB
Constraints to action	None envisaged	
Action complete or ongoing?	Ongoing	
Next steps	Complete re-survey of former sites and input all historical data to the Threatened Plants Database (BSBI)	
Output and timescale	Definitive statement of the current status of Cut-grass in England.	<i>Action by</i> EN, BSBI, EA

Published action/organisation(s) responsible	5.5.2 Continue to monitor the Amberley Wildbrooks population, and implement monitoring of all other extant populations.	
Work plan/organisation(s) responsible	No work plan or steering group in existence.	
Action/workplan undertaken?	Yes	
Description of work taken and organisation responsible	All extant populations subject to frequent (annual) monitoring at Amberley.	
Output and timescale	Ongoing	<i>Action by</i> EN, WTs, RSPB, SBRS
Constraints to action	None	
Action complete or ongoing?	Ongoing	
Next steps	Need to collate monitoring data to provide a National overview.	
Output and timescale	National overview by the end of 2000. Monitoring data to be input to the Threatened Plants Database (BSBI)	<i>Action by</i> EA, BSBI