

# SUFFOLK LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

## Cornflower

(*Centaurea cyanus*)



### Plan lead SWT

#### 1 Definition of habitat or species

Cornflower is an arable plant, known to have occurred in Britain from the Iron Age, but has suffered a dramatic decline with the advent of seed-cleaning and agricultural intensification.

#### 2 Current status: national, regional, and local (including trends and losses)

The UK population of Cornflower has declined from over 250 ten km squares between 1930 and 1960 to less than 78 after 1980. Haughley is the only site in Suffolk where cornflower is sustaining itself in an arable situation.

#### 3 Current factors affecting the species or habitats

The following agricultural changes have largely been responsible for the decline of cornflower and these factors continue to constrain its recovery. In addition the seed is short-lived

Increased use of herbicides and fertilisers

Major improvements in seed cleaning techniques

The demise of crop rotations and the ability to grow monocultures over long periods

Deeper and more intensive cultivations

Loss of field edge refuges

Loss of winter stubbles

#### 4 Current action

The Haughley site is a County Wildlife Site and is maintained in cultivated uncropped margins under a Countryside Stewardship Agreement. This CSS agreement also funds annual monitoring of cornflower margins.

Adjacent margins on the neighbouring farm are in similar management and a CSS agreement with the view to encouraging the spread of cornflower. These margins are also monitored annually.

The verge adjacent to the Haughley site is protected by Roadside Nature Reserve status to prevent it being eroded by adjacent traffic

Seed from the Haughley site has been collected and introduced to the arable plant area at the Museum of East Anglian Life.

In 1990 a further population of cornflower was found at Combs and this is also a CWS.

#### 5 Targets

Maintain and enhance viable populations at current sites.

Establish and maintain two new populations of cornflower at Museum of East Anglian Life and in margins at Tothill farm adjacent to Haughley site by 2010 using seed from the Haughley population.

**Baseline 2005, targets for 2010, and identify targets for long term species or habitat viability for 2015 and 2020 and longer term (if desired)**

#### 6 Actions

Action (apply SMART approach and include locations where relevant).	Achieve by date	Delivery partners (identify lead and support partners)
<b>Site safeguard and management Or species protection/management</b>		
Where appropriate, promote and support existing opportunities in Environmental Stewardship Entry level and Higher level schemes that promote arable wildflowers e.g. conservation headlands, uncropped margins	2006-2010	FWAG SWT, NE,
Endeavour to convert CSS agreements at	2007 and	NE, SWT, FWAG

Haughley into Environmental Stewardship (HLS) when CSS agreements expire	post 2010	
Maintain RNR at Haughley		<b>SCC</b>
Maintain and establish new populations at suitable sites, using seed from Haughley e.g at Museum of East Anglian Life to provide a population at another location and also on the adjacent farm at Haughley to ensure a larger population at this site and to help the case for transference to HLS when the time comes.	2006- 2010	<b>SWT, FWAG, NE, MEAL</b>
<b>Research and monitoring</b>		
Continue to annually monitor Haughley margins	2006-2010	<b>SWT, NE</b>
Resurvey site at Combs to see whether it is still existent and to assess management. Try and include in Environmental Stewardship if appropriate	2007	<b>SWT, SBRC, NE, FWAG</b>
<b>Advisory</b>		
Ensure landowners and managers are alert to its appearance in arable crops and headlands and advise on appropriate management	2006-2010	<b>FWAG, SWT, SBRC</b>
Support and advise on ES applications and options that benefit arable plants e.g. unsprayed cultivated margins, overwintering stubble etc	2006-2010	<b>FWAG, SWT, NE</b>
<b>Communications and publicity</b>		
Raise awareness of the species amongst farmers (e.g. produce articles to reassure landowner/farmer concerns), landowners and managers and the general public and the need to notify conservation bodies of new sites	2006 -2010	<b>FWAG, SWT, SBRC, NE</b>

**NB Most of the action achieve by dates are 2006-2010 this means they need to be achieved or worked towards by 2006 and annually renewed until 2010.**

**Objectives currently not achievable by the plan partners:**

*This section should include objectives that the working group relevant to this plan would like to fund and achieve but due to constraints can't currently. By recognising these in the plan, means they aren't lost from the BAP : A list of bullet points*

**The production of a leaflet arable plants covering why they are important, how they can be incorporated into current farming practice.**

**Work in partnership with the Museum of East Anglian Life to continue to develop and promote their arable plant plot both as a refuge for arable plants and as an educational resource.**

**Monitoring of progress:**

Reported annually on the UK BAP reporting system BARS Biodiversity Action Reporting system.

**List of organisations that have been consulted regarding this plan and have agreed to aim to deliver their organisations commitments: A list of organisations.**

SWT Susan Stone and Dorothy Casey  
NE Monica O'Donnell and Alison Collins  
Mid Suffolk District Council SBP David Hughes  
Suffolk County Council Andrew Murray-Wood  
SBRC Martin Sanford  
Suffolk biodiversity partnership officer Mary Norden  
FWAG Phil Watson  
RSPB Kirsty Coutts  
SOG Steve Piotrowski  
Museum of East Anglian Life

