

Wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*

STATUS

Rare and of local distribution, confined to ancient semi-natural, woodlands.



WHAT IS WOOD BARLEY?

Wood barley is an attractive, wild perennial grass species that is restricted to deciduous woodland sites.

WHERE IS IT FOUND IN THE UK?

Wood barley is virtually confined to England, where it is most frequent in the south and east of the country. It is very rare in Wales and unknown in Scotland.

WHY IS WOOD BARLEY OF CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE?

Wood barley is a nationally scarce plant.

WOOD BARLEY IN THE DURHAM AREA

HOW HEALTHY ARE THE POPULATIONS OF WOOD BARLEY ?

Most known populations are small and at least one site for the plant is threatened with extinction.

HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW ABOUT WOOD BARLEY IN THE DURHAM AREA ?

All recorded sites for wood barley in County Durham have been located along the region's major river valleys, the Tees, Wear, Derwent and their tributaries. The species' absence away from these areas is no doubt due to the absence of ancient semi-natural woodland which is essential to the continued survival of this grass. Within the major river systems it is possible that some colonies have been overlooked along wooded stretches of river-bank with limited access.

WHERE HAS IT BEEN FOUND IN THE DURHAM AREA ?

Wood Barley is currently known from only two sites along the Barnard Castle/Whorlton stretch of the Tees, one site on the river Gaunless near Bishop Auckland and from Paddock Hill Wood in the lower Derwent valley, where it is only just surviving. Former sites have included Shincliffe Wood near Durham City and Valley Burn Wood below Spennymoor, both on the Wear. There is also a nineteenth century record from Ferryhill in East Durham.

WOOD BARLEY IS AT RISK FROM:

Tree felling - this increases light and therefore competition to wood barley from plants such as bramble.

WOOD BARLEY BENEFITS FROM:

Shade - reducing competition.

Limited trampling - reducing competition

IMPORTANT HABITATS FOR WOOD BARLEY:

**Ancient semi-natural woodland
Coppice woodland**

OTHER SPECIES ACTION PLANS COVERING ISSUES RELEVANT TO WOOD BARLEY:

Lemon slug

N.B. ** indicates action plan produced in 1998.

WOOD BARLEY AND THE LAW :

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) it is an offence to uproot any wild plant species.

TARGETS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WOOD BARLEY IN THE DURHAM AREA:

	DATE
Target 1 Maintain sustainable populations of wood barley at all known sites and ensure sites are managed appropriately.	ONGOING
Target 2 Reintroduce wood barley to sites where known extinctions have occurred and where long term reintroductions are sustainable.	2005

Wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*

WOOD BARLEY ACTIONS			
ACTION	DATE	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	MEETS TARGET NO.
<u>SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION</u>			
1. Gather viable seed in sustainable fashion from all Durham sites for reintroduction where known extinctions have occurred.	2003	Site owners, Local specialists, DBAP	1, 2
2. Safeguard all known populations of this plant.	2003	Site owners, LRC	1
<u>SITE SAFEGUARD AND MANAGEMENT</u>			
3. Encourage site owners to alter woodland management to benefit wood barley.	2005	DBAP, Site owners	1
4. Where appropriate encourage Forestry Commission to fund suitable management through woodland grant scheme and woodland improvement grant scheme.	2005	FC, Site owners	1, 2
<u>RESEARCH AND MONITORING</u>			
5. Encourage or undertake ecological research to determine precise requirement of plant to flourish and to determine whether historic sites will support sustainable populations if re-introduced.	2005	EN, Local specialists, Universities & Colleges	1, 2
6. Monitor annual population size and management at sites where populations are very small and at great risk.	ONGOING	DBAP, EN, Local specialists, Universities & Colleges, LAs	1
<u>ADVISORY</u>			
7. Ensure landowners and managers are aware of presence and importance of wood barley.	ONGOING	DBAP, EN, LAs, LRC	1