

Species Factsheet

the
species
recovery
trust



Carex depauperata

Starved Wood-sedge



Red List Status:
Endangered

Threat of extinction:
Very High

Main Threats:
Habitat loss and
loss of traditional
woodland
management

Description: Creeping rhizomatous perennial sedge that grows to 1m, with leaves 2-4mm wide and purplish sheaths. Bracts are leaf-like, longer than spikes; 1 male spike and 2-4 female. It has a few, well separated flowers and large fruits (7-9mm).

Lifecycle: A tussock forming perennial, flowering in April and May and carrying ripe seed from October to March. Seeds are few and large, and may remain in the seed bank for long periods of time, although are often stubborn to germinate.

Habitat: Grows in gaps along tracks and deciduous woodland and among shrubs on rocky outcrops. Primarily a woodland edge species.

Distribution: Extremely rare in Britain only occurring in 12 sites since records began. Wider distribution includes southern Europe, Belgium and southern Ireland.

Status: Classified as Endangered and is therefore considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

Reasons for decline: Woodland destruction and the cessation of traditional woodland management leading to closed canopy woodland and dense shrub layers. The seeds are suspected to be highly predated by small mammals.

Protection under the Law: Protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), it is an offence to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any plants. Also listed as a Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) and as a Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

What we are doing:

- Coordinating a monitoring network across all sites
- Re-establishing woodland edge, glade and bank habitat and appropriate management at all sites.
- Carrying out habitat restoration work across the network of sites to enlarge the areas where plants can grow

What you can do:

- If you live locally volunteer to become a site monitor

