

Warwickshire's Rarest Wild Flowers - Text by James W. Partridge
from information supplied by Pam Copson, 1995

Aceras anthropophorum (L.) Aiton f. Man Orchid NSS

1/1/0 -5%NS Limestone grassland g

Because this orchid was first recorded in Warwickshire in 1968, it must be considered not 'native', but it persists at the same site although in reduced numbers (1995). Its yellowish flowers have been fancied to resemble a human being.

Warwickshire now

It grows in its typical habitat - a disused limestone quarry - in coarse grassland, on a nature reserve.

National status.

Scarce and decreasing due to loss of chalk grassland. Warwickshire is on the North east edge of its distribution (S. and E. England).

Risks

Scrub invasion, close grazing (including rabbits at our site) and herbicide drift from nearby farmland. Individual plants can live for 10-20 years, but seed germination is very unpredictable, like most orchids, it needs a compatible fungal colleague on its roots - transplanting always fails.

Aconitum napellus ssp. napellus L. Monk's-hood. NSS

3/1/1 2%NS Shaded river banks ws

This attractive perennial herb has been known in this county since 1835, but it is also grown in gardens (usually a different species), and may escape: records need careful consideration, and expert identification is needed.

Warwickshire now

Harbury (spoilbank from a quarry) and a hedgerow at Lawsonford - only the second persists; it has not been refound at the historical location.

Past Warwickshire situation

Very rare, 1 site in the S.

National status

Scarce and decreasing, in SW England, Wales. Warwickshire is the extreme NW of its native distribution. The subspecies is unique to Britain.

Conservation

It needs shady wet woodland, and spreads by rhizomes - it is self-incompatible (at least 2 individual plants are needed for fertile seed). It is poisonous to farm animals as well as humans, and may have been removed for this reason.

Adiantum capillus-veneris L. Maidenhair fern. NSS

2/1/0 100%NS Brick walls sk

Though not native in Warwickshire (its natural habitat is shady limestone coastal rocks) this attractive fern establishes itself on damp walls and brickwork, in the mortar, probably from spores from cultivated plants. It is frost sensitive.

Warwickshire current situation

Leamington Spa in a basement 'area'..

Past Warwickshire situation

1st record 1959 at Kenilworth railway station platform, now destroyed.

Agrimonia procera Wallr. Fragrant Agrimony.

2/9/9 -28%Dec Damp scrub, ditches and wet grassland mhr

This perennial, vigorous herb prefers acid or neutral soils. Its fruity scent when crushed, rather like fragrant hay, comes from sticky minute glandular hairs on its leaves, and it is used in country cold-cures and makes a pleasant tea.

Warwickshire now

A field margin near Earlswood, a road verge at Aston Cantlow and at Snitterfield Bushes nature reserve in heathy scrub.

Past Warwickshire situation

In the W., rare, declining.

National status

Infrequent, and significantly declining- more common in southern counties of England.

Risks cons

Loss of habitat (unimproved acid heath/grassland) by urban spread. Agricultural and Local Authority use of herbicides on road-verges and field edges (3 of the lost sites were roadside, 4 were hedgerows) may have contributed to the decline.

In the nature reserve, the plant is vulnerable to competition with scrub and trees.

Aira praecox L. Early Hair-grass.

3/14/14 -14%Dec Dry sandy and gravelly places ru

A tiny annual grass, easily overlooked, though its glistening empty seed heads shine a few inches over the bare acidic soil or sandy gravel where it grows. It also colonises

bare patches in heaths, roadsides and walls or quarries, like its close relative, Silver Hair-grass.

Warwickshire now

Railway embankments at Shrewley and Kenilworth and on Alvecote colliery spoil heap: demonstrating the value of these "waste grounds" for marginal species.

Past Warwickshire situation

Local in the heathy N., sites now lost to development.

Nat

Widespread but somewhat declining, and especially uncommon in the Midlands.

Cons.

Sandy acid heaths are disappearing, and with them, this unglamorous little grass, an indicator plant of potentially species-rich habitats. 'Improving' grassland by fertilisers will cause overgrowth of competing vigorous perennial grasses which otherwise cannot colonise exposed subsoil or rock on roadsides and railway cuttings: rare habitats in Warwickshire which development can create. Managers should resist planting or sowing 'wild flowers', or refilling: bare patches will be colonised naturally by our local plants.

Alisma lanceolatum With. Narrow-leaved Water-plantain.

2/5/11 1%NS Canals, lakes and rivers wa

This tall herbaceous water plant grows either partly submerged or as a marginal, and its frothy heads of tiny lilac petals open in the morning (its commoner relative has afternoon opening times). Country medicine used it for dropsy.

Warwickshire current

1 recent local record, in Kingsbury Water Park,

Warwickshire Past

A dramatic decline since Bagnall found it in 7 out of 10 of his areas of Warwickshire.

National status

This is an uncommon plant of S E Britain, Warwickshire is the edge of its territory.

Risks/conservation measures

Water plants are vulnerable to water-borne contaminants, particularly the pollution resulting from excessive fertiliser drainage. Pond filling, conversion of ditches to underground drains, and over zealous clearance of canal and river banks are other causes for its decline.

Plants in water parks are vulnerable to the other recreational uses, and to 'tidying up' of banks. This plant may have been overlooked, and canal banks and riversides

should be cleared on a rotational system which allows regrowth of plants in waterside habitats, which are scarce in Warwickshire.

Alopecurus aequalis Sobol. Orange foxtail.'NSS' ??????????

5/8/7 2%NS Edges of ponds ws

Usually annual, this grass grows on the margins of shallow water, near a source of fresh water.

Warwickshire now

6 locations at Warwick, Rotton Park Birmingham, Haselor, Hill Wootton, Astley and Burnthurst Wood.

Warwickshire Past

1st recorded by William Withering in 1796 'by the Stews in Edgbaston Park'.

Scattered and never common.

National status

Mainly in C. and S., uncommon, but a recent survey found it was not quite as scarce as had been thought.

Risks/conservation measures

Like other waterside plants, it will be under threat because of the loss of habitat (old ponds are reclaimed, watery land is drained) and because of pollution of water sources.

Anagallis tenella (L.) L. Bog Pimpernel.

2/2/4 -12%NS Bogs ws

An attractive creeping perennial in damp peat and bogs, with pink flowers.

Warwickshire now

It has disappeared from all locations except Sutton Park (SSSI) in N. Warwickshire, where it has been known for over 100 years. Bogs and acid heaths have become very rare habitats in the county.

National status

In Britain it is found in suitable habitats throughout, but declining due to loss of these habitats.

Risks/conservation measures

Sutton Park (SSSI) remains a precious reserve for plants like Bog Pimpernel, and owes its existence to its unsuitability for housing or agriculture, on the edge of Birmingham. The water level needs to be preserved to allow bog plants to survive,

and scrub clearance and grazing will prevent succession to scrub and Birch woodland. Vigilance is needed to control invading colonists such as Japanese Knotweed.

Anthemis arvensis L. Corn Chamomile.

2/15/9 -28%Dec Arable land and waste places c

This pretty annual cornfield daisy has feathery leaves, sweet smelling, and is used for delicious chamomile tea.

Warwickshire now

There is recently only 1 'natural' self-sown record, in Draycote Meadows SSSI. Other records were almost certainly from deliberate introductions in roadside 'wild flower' mixtures, and have not persisted.

Past Warwickshire situation

A rarity in arable fields in a few widely separated sites.

National status

Previously this was one of the commoner cornfield weeds with an SE distribution in Britain, it has significantly decreased.

Risks/conservation measures

Causes of decline include the high purity of agricultural seed, widespread use of weed killers, and loss of field margins. Corn Chamomile is following Corn Cockle to extinction. In the existing SSSI, traditional hay making methods should ensure its precarious existence, but it usually requires arable land to thrive. An artificially maintained arable site with indigenous locally obtained cornfield flowers would allow survival. Indiscriminate use of 'wildflower mixtures' by the well-meaning, on roadside and other sites rarely succeeds, and often introduces non-native plants in the seed mix. There is some hope that scarce arable weeds will return if farming methods are modified (e.g. preserved field management, rotational use of herbicides) which are not necessarily uneconomic.

Apium inundatum (L.) H.G. Reichb. Lesser Marshwort.

1/2/10 -40%Dec On mud in shallow, sluggish water ws

This straggling perennial water plant grows submerged or floating in shallow still water or mud, it superficially resembles watercress.

Warwickshire now

Despite careful searches there is only one recent local record, in a lake near Astley.

Past Warwickshire situation

Warwickshire has few areas of open water, and Lesser Marshwort has gone from 2 other sites probably because of bank clearance, overgrowths by lush water plants, and drainage.

National status

This scarce S. Britain plant has significantly decreased in England and Wales in recent years.

Risks/conservation measures

This hard-to-identify water plant needs expert botanical knowledge for its recognition, and a regular review of the only remaining site seems essential. Artificial reintroduction to potential habitats might be needed. Lakes and ponds need to be preserved.

Asperula cynanchica L. Squinancywort.

2/1/1 -14%NS Calcareous grassland g

This perennial herb of chalk and limestone grassland, with pink-white 'bedstraw'-like flowers was once used for treating sore throats and quinsy ("squinancy").

Warwickshire current

Warwickshire Past

A limestone quarry in Little Compton. All the other records have gone, with the loss of natural grassland.

National status

A S. Britain plant, it is near the north of its distribution in Warwickshire, it has somewhat declined Nationally.

Risks/conservation measures

Warwickshire has very few areas of limestone grassland, and no chalk. These have been reduced even further by eradication of all plants except grass by selective herbicides and ploughing. Unless this decline is reversed, the only limestone flora that remains will be in a few tiny reserves. The existing site is precarious: quarries are vulnerable to infilling, and the grassland around the margin reduces as the quarry extends.

Bolboschoenus maritimus (L.) Palla. Sea club-rush.

3/2/1 4%NS.Salt marshes ws

A tall (up to 1m.) rush of muddy and usually saline places.

Warwickshire now

Warwickshire Past

It has been found in 3 sites, one - known since 1873 - a salt spring pond near Southam. The other locations were a Churchover roadside verge (?from road-salting) and a freshwater pool at Ryton.

National status

Common on the coast, rare inland.

Risks/conservation measures

Warwickshire's salt-spring ponds provide a rare saline community in this county most remote for the sea. They are at risk from all the threats to other ponds: infilling, pollution, the overuse of fertiliser, and dumping, as well as the natural risks of drying out and flooding. Because their saline water is often too salty for cattle ("Watergall" is a local place name), farmers may be tempted to regard them a nuisance rather than as a natural resource. Currently, none are in nature reserves.

Botrychium lunaria (L.) Sur. Moonwort.

1/1/6 -19%NS Dry grassland g

This unusual fern of dry grassland has a pair of fan-shaped leaflets (pinnules) and is perennial.

Warwickshire now

Draycote Meadows N.R.

Past Warwickshire situation

First found by Ray in 1670 in Sutton Coldfield, but it has not been found there since the 1950s, nor at any of the sites in the N.

National status

In decline, though widespread.

Risks/conservation measures

Sensitive to pollution, herbicides and fertilisers, it needs an undisturbed open habitat to survive, without invasive scrub or bracken, and so is threatened by ploughing and the "improvement" of grassland.

Calamagrostis canescens (Wigg.) Roth. Purple Small-reed.

1/1/4 0%NS Marshes and open wet woods ws

This rare species needs expert identification to distinguish it from a more common relative, Calamagrostis epigejos. It is a perennial of marshes and wet woods.

Warwickshire current

A bog near Coventry.

Warwickshire Past

A very significant decline from several sites in the N. and C.

National status

Uncommon, mainly found in the C. of England.

Risks/conservation measures

The site is vulnerable to the outward spread of motorways and industry from Coventry, land drainage, and scrub. It is not a nature reserve.

Callitriche species - Water-starworts.

These are aquatic plants, growing submerged or on mud, which can be very hard to identify. Their needs are similar: clean water, without contamination by pollution, herbicides or fertilisers. National status data on distribution is unavailable.

C. brutia Petagna Pedunculate Water-starwort.

1/4/ 100% Unknown Shallow water wa

This needs shallow water, and has been found recently once, in pools in a nature reserve in north Warwickshire.

C. hamulata Kuetz ex. Koch Intermediate Water-starwort.

3/4/ -11% Unknown Shallow water wa

Also needing shallow water, this has been found 3 times, in small ponds in the centre and west - none in protected sites.

C. hermaphroditica L. Autumnal Water-starwort.

This has been found in 1990 in a deep, sheltered pool in an SSSI in the north of the county.

C. platycarpa Kuetz. Various-leaved Water-starwort.

1/16/ 59% Unknown Ponds, rivers and watersides wa

Though once found in 9 localities during the Computer-Mapped Flora recording, this starwort has only been found once recently, in a pond near a canal in east Warwickshire, used for fishing and therefore at risk of over-zealous clearing of water plants.

Campanula glomerata L. Clustered Bellflower.

1/3/8 -8% NS Calcareous grassland g

One of the most beautiful flowers of chalk and limestone grassland, with violet or purplish-blue bells in 'heads' of flowers. A very similar plant, though usually more robust, is grown in gardens and may 'escape'.

Warwickshire current

Short turf at Burton Dassett, and scrubby grass at Aston Grove.

Warwickshire Past

Not uncommon in the S., but as grassland and limestone areas have been ploughed up, or 'improved' and developed, it has rapidly disappeared.

National status

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, scrub invasion, collecting.

Carex species Sedges.

In general, these plants need wet marshy areas but many have very special requirements in acidity, drainage and habitat. They often need expert identification, but many are handsome and attractive plants.

C. curta Gooden. White Sedge.

2/5/4 -4%NS Marshes and bogs ws

Two nature reserves, with wet peaty ground in north and mid Warwickshire are the current locations for this sedge, which is commonest in northern Britain, and very scattered elsewhere.

C. diandra Schrank Lesser Tussock-sedge.

1/2/1 -33%NS Bogs ws

Currently this only grows in one location, in Sutton Park on boggy acid ground. It is scattered throughout Britain.

C. dioica L. Dioecious Sedge.

1/1/4 -11%NS Bogs ws

The same location as *C. diandra*, in similar conditions. This is a northern species of sedge, absent from much of southern Britain.

C. distans L. Distant Sedge.

3/6/8 -23%NS Marshes and damp pasture, mainly on Lower Lias clay ws

This is another of the saline plants found in the eastern salt-ponds in 2 locations, neither protected (see comments on Sea club-rush, *Bolboschoenus maritimus*). It also grows in freshwater marshes, but is rare in inland situations, and is Nationally becoming less common.

C. echinata Murray Star Sedge.

2/5/8 -9%NS Marshes and bogs ws

This sedge tolerates acid or basic marshes, but is rare in southern and central England. It has been found recently in the northern SSSI, and in one site in mid-Warwickshire.

C. elongata L. Elongated Sedge. NSS.

2/2/1 35%NS By still and slow-running water ws

Currently this grows in one wood on a nature reserve in central Warwickshire, beside a pool. It is Nationally Scarce, in central and southern England, preferring waterside locations, and very vulnerable to the repair of canal and river banks: it cannot colonise easily by seed or vegetatively, and prefers a wet but raised habitat, such as wooden canal pilings, or as an epiphyte on fallen boughs in wet woods.

Carex hostiana DC Tawny Sedge.

1/3/4 -21%NS Marshes and bogs ws

Only found at present in Sutton Park, this is a marsh plant that is common in north and western Britain.

Carex laevigata Smith Smooth-stalked Sedge.

2/3/3 -20%NS Damp woods and marshes ws

This only grows Clowes Wood N.R. in a damp woodland clearing. Commoner in south and west Britain, it is absent from most of central and eastern England.

Carex pallescens L. Pale Sedge.

3/16/15 -12%NS Watersides, woodland and scrub ws

This has recently been found 3 times, in wet pasture, in a woodland ride, and by a canal, in north central Warwickshire, having in the past been found much more widespread. It is relatively frequent nationally.

Carex pilulifera L. Pill Sedge.

2/11/13 -16%Dec Dry heathy places h

This has been found twice, in typical habitats of dry bare acid heathland in north Warwickshire. It is relatively common nationally.

Carex pulicaris L. Flea Sedge.

1/1/8 -12%NS Bogs ws

The only recent location is the northern SSSI, for this unusual sedge, that often grows in base-rich fens and bogs. It is absent from much of central and eastern England.

Carex rostrata Stokes Bottle Sedge.

2/8/11 -13%NS Ponds, marshes and bogs ws

Two locations remain, out of 19 previous reports, for this sedge which grows in river margins by a pond. It is also absent from parts of central and southern England.

Carex vesicaria L. Bladder Sedge.

3/8/11 -26%Dec Marshes and riversides ws

Though relatively common in Britain, this sedge of watersides and marshes is now only recorded for 3 locations in the west, centre and east of Warwickshire, by ponds and a pool in a nature reserve.

Centaurea cyanus L. Cornflower. (NSS)

3/12/7 -35%Dec Cornfields c

Familiar to most people as a cheerful garden annual, this cornfield flower was once a common companion to Poppies and Mayweed.

Warwickshire now

Since 1970 it has been found in Coventry, Charlecote and Bishopton - each time where building and roadworks excavated buried seed.

Past Warwickshire situation

Rare and scattered in arable fields.

National status

This plant's decline, like other 'arable annuals', was due to cleaner crop seeds, and the widespread use of herbicides. It still turns up sporadically, sometimes as a garden escape, or in 'wildflower mixtures'.

Risks/conservation measures

Our heritage of arable flowers can be preserved by the use of wider unsprayed field margins and headlands, and by the more selective use of herbicides generally. At (Wellesbourne) the county keeper of biology is attempting to preserve some of these plants on a specially managed arable site.

Centaureum pulchellum (SW.) Druce Lesser Centaury.

2/2/2 -7%NS Damp grassy places g

This elegant annual (the Latin name means 'beautiful') needs open damp grassland.

Warwickshire now

Wilmcote and Aston Grove , and at Hams Hill

Warwickshire Past

Very rare.

National status

Local, mainly coastal.

Risks/conservation measures

Vulnerable to scrub invasion of grassland, and 'improvement' by the use of herbicides.

Cephalanthera longifolia (L.) Fritsch **Narrow-leaved Helleborine NSS.**

1/1/2 Woodland w

This perennial orchid grows in lime-rich woodland margins and has undergone a massive decline throughout Britain. Its need for partial shade makes it a difficult plant to conserve, too much light encourages invasion by competitors, too little impairs the plant's vigour so it is greatly affected by changes in woodland management.

Warwickshire now

Oversley Wood is now the only location in Warwickshire, where it has been known since 1817 - once 'very abundant' (Bagnall), one plant was found in 1988, but none in 1992.

Warwickshire Past

National status

Risks/conservation measures

Ceratocarpus claviculata (L.) Liden **Climbing Corydalis.**

1/0/2 3%NS

This climbing annual plant with cream flowers grows in shady, often rocky, places scattered throughout Britain.

Warwickshire now

It was found in Birchley Hayes Wood in 1976-7, but not in 1983 when forestry operations may have destroyed the habitat.

Past Warwickshire situation

First recorded by Withering in 1787 'in some of the least frequented roads about Birmingham' and rarely since

Ceratophyllum submersum L. Soft Hornwort. NSS...

2/0/0 17%NS Ponds and ditches wa

This is a submerged perennial water plant ,rare in England and Wales, much grows (without roots) in shady ponds.

Warwickshire now

Because it closely resembles another Hornwort, it may have been overlooked before its recent discovery locally, in 1985, in ponds in central Warwickshire. Seven locations have been found, though one pond has subsequently been filled in - a hazard for aquatic plants

National status

Risks/conservation measures

However, it can tolerate a high nutrient content (unlike many other water plants) and this may explain why it is not declining Nationally, even though farming techniques often involve pond-filling and contamination with excess nitrogen-rich fertilisers.

Chrysosplenium alternifolium L. Alternate-leaved Golden saxifrage.

3/1/6 5%NS Marshy places ws

The longwinded English and Latin names do not do justice to this neat and attractive plant of stream sides and boggy woods.

Warwickshire now

Temple Balsall Nature Reserve, Packwood and Whichford Wood

Warwickshire Past

Seriously decline since its first record in Crackley wood.

National status

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss.

Cirsium dissectum (L.) Hill Meadow Thistle.

2/6/9 -28%Dec Heathy and marshy areas g/ws

Because it needs peaty fields and bogs which have not been drained or 'improved', this attractive purple Thistle with pale silvery leaves is uncommon in Britain and declining.

Warwickshire now

Sutton Park SSSI and near the river Blythe at Maxstoke

Past Warwickshire situation

Rare, in the heaths and marshes which were once in the NW

National status

Local in suitable sites up to N.England.

Risks/conservation measures

Appropriate management of these wetland areas is necessary, with preservation of water-levels and keeping the balance between overgrazing and scrub invasion.

Clinopodium acinos (L.) Kuntze Basil Thyme.

2/5/7 -21%NS Calcareous quarries,railway cuttings and roadsides ru/sk

This annual herb of dry, usually lime-rich fields and grassy banks is uncommon Nationally, and somewhat declining.

Warwickshire now

Harbury Spoilbank and Bishop's Bowl disused quarry and railway Long Itchington.

Past Warwickshire situation

Rare and only in the SE

National status

Risks/conservation measures

The main hazard is loss of an already scarce habitat, lime-rich grassland.

Colchicum autumnale L. Meadow saffron.

3/7/16 -15%NS Woodland, grassland, watersides and hedgerows w/g

This perennial bulb needs rich damp meadows and open woodland - it is scattered through southern and central Britain. The purple crocus-like flowers with striking orange stamens appear in the autumn without any leaves (which arrive in spring) - hence the local name of Naked Ladies.

Warwickshire current

Rowington, Chesterton Wood and Snitterfield Bushes N.R.

Warwickshire Past

Until 1912 it was widespread but rare in the county, since then it has only been found in the SW

National status

Risks/conservation measures

Entirely dependant on habitat preservation.

Convallaria majalis L. Lily-of-the-valley.

2/6/11 -11%NS Woodland w

This beautiful, scented woodland perennial still grows wild in Britain, preferring dry woodland and hedge banks on a lime-rich soil. It is of course a frequently grown garden plant, often in a more robust form, which may escape.

Warwickshire now

Earlwood N.R. and Hay Wood.

Warwickshire Past

Once abundant and widespread in woods in the N. and C., disappearing with the urban advance

National status

Risks/conservation measures

It is at risk from uprooting by "plant-lovers" and by loss of our scarce broad-leaved woodland.

Cystopteris fragilis (L.) Bernh. Brittle Bladder-fern.

2/7/2 -6%NS Damp walls sk

This delicate fern grows 'in the wild' on shady base-rich rocks and exposed soil, but also colonises damp mortar in walls.

Warwickshire current

2 railway sites at Kenilworth and Berkswell, and a churchyard wall at Monks Kirby. (No protection exists for any of these sites.) Churchyards of course provide invaluable nature reserves for our endangered species, as are railway bridges and verges.

Warwickshire Past

First record 1843 at Compton Verney, scattered records from damp walls since then.

National status

Risks/conservation measures

Walls provide a precarious habitat for ferns as the plants' survival requires a water content sometimes inconsistent with the security of the wall.

Dianthus armeria L. Deptford Pink. NSS

1/0/5 17%NS

This rare plant is native to Britain, though it is sometimes introduced.

Warwickshire now

It had been known in Warwickshire since 1817, but was then lost in 1871, until its rediscovery in railway sidings at Water Orton in 1980., where it was still growing in

1992. The usual habitat of this annual/biennial unscented 'Pink' is dry grazed grassy places: our record may well be an introduction.

National status

Risks/conservation measures

It is declining Nationally due to loss of pasture land to the plough, or to building.

Eleocharis species Spike Rushes

These perennial water - plants are inconspicuous short 'rushes', 5 species have been found in Warwickshire. Experts distinguish them by minor variations in their flower spikes, but they also vary in their requirements and rarity.

Like all water-plants, they are at risk of drainage, water pollution, competition from invasive 'invaders' and bank clearance.

Eleocharis acicularis (L.)Roemer & Schueltes Needle Spike-rush 'NSS'

1/4/8 -32%NS Canal- and lakesides

Warwickshire current

The only current site is Earlswood.

Warwickshire Past

There were 5 sites in 1970, and 11 in the last century.

National status

It is less common Nationally.

Risks/conservation measures

As for the group.

Eleocharis quinqueflora (F.Hartman)O.Schwartz Few-flowered Spike-rush.

2/1/2 -12%NS Bogs ws

Warwickshire current

The only current site is Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

1 previous location near Coventry.

National status

Widespread.

Risks/conservation measures

As for group.

Eleocharis uniglumis (Link)Schultes Slender Spike-rush.

2/4/0 -4%NS Marshes ws

Warwickshire current

2 records at Lighthorne and Southam Holt (a salt-marsh)

Warwickshire Past

1 other site at Henley in Arden.

National status

Scattered in Britain, often coastal.

Risks/conservation measures

As for group.

Empetrum nigrum ssp. nigrum L. Crowberry.

1/2/1 -2%NS Heaths and bogs h

A low-growing heath-like shrub with edible fruit of wet heathland.

Warwickshire current

Only at Sutton Park, but in a diminishing area.

Warwickshire Past

No other sites.

National status

Abundant in suitable sites in the Northwest.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of a scarce habitat, at any rate locally.

Epilobium lanceolatum Sebast.& Mauri Spear-leaved Willowherb 'NSS'

1/1/0 -4%NS ru

A weedy perennial of disturbed ground where competition is low, such as gardens and railways.

Warwickshire current

A rare casual, found in Stratford (1953) and Atherstone (1989).

Warwickshire Past

No record.

National status

Locally frequent in S England

Risks/conservation measures

Vulnerable to 'tidying up' waste places.

Epipactis palustris(L.)Crantz Marsh Helleborine.

1/0/3 -27%NS Marshes ws

An attractive orchid which grows in marshy lime-rich fields and fens, white-flowered with red and yellow markings.

Warwickshire Present

Only at Ladywalk Nature Reserve.

Warwickshire Past

Oversley wood(1817), not found in CMF

National status

Locally frequent in coastal sites, it is becoming extinct in inland Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

Scrub invasion, water-level changes, over-grazing and trampling.

Epipactis purpurata Smith Violet Helleborine

3/2/- 65%NS Damp woods w

This pretty orchid has greenish-violet flowers ,marked with white, and grows in wet ancient woodland on heavy basic soil.

Warwickshire current

Moreton Morrell and Bannam's Wood, Preston Bagot (though it may have gone from the latter site since the Elms died.)

Warwickshire Past

4 previous sites in N Warwickshire from which it has gone.

National status

Moderately common in S Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of ancient woodland, a scarce National resource.

Equisetum sylvaticum L.: Wood Horsetail.

1/4/8 14%NS Wet heaths, woods and hedgerows w

Perhaps this is the most attractive member of the horsetail family, with delicate branched whorls of branches. It grows in damp woods and hedgerows.

Warwickshire current

Monks Park Wood and Bentley Park Wood and Earlswood.

Warwickshire past.

Once fairly widespread, disappearing from most locations in this century.

National status

Uncommon, only growing in central and S.England.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of habitat.

Erica cinerea L. Bell heather.

2/5/11 -15%Dec Heaths h

A familiar low growing shrub of acid heaths and moors, with purple flowers.

Warwickshire current

Bell heather has retreated to Coleshill bog, Sutton Park and Baddesley Common: islands of heathland in urban development.

Warwickshire Past

With the loss of nearly all of our heathland ,once a common habitat in the north of the county, as place-names in Birmingham recall, this once widespread, lovely plant was almost eradicated in the 19th century.

National status

Abundant in suitable places in Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of habitat.

Erica tetralix L. Cross-leaved Heath.

1/5/8 -17%Dec Acid soils h

Another shrubby bell-heather with pink bells, rather than purple.

Warwickshire current

Sutton park.

Warwickshire past

Never common, but with 4 sites still occupied at the time of the CMF

National status

Widespread in suitable places.

Risks/conservation measures

Entirely dependant on preservation of its habitat.

Eriophorum angustifolium Honck. Common Cottongrass.

2/7/7 -10%NS Marshes and bogs ws

An attractive grass of wet peaty places, with white fluffy seed heads, in a hanging pendant .

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park, and spoil heaps at Kingsbury colliery and Bishops Itchington, at risk of development when the sites are exhausted.

Warwickshire Past

Rare, with very scattered sites.

National status

Common in suitable sites.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss.

Eriophorum vaginatum L. Hare's tail Cottongrass.

1/2/5 -6%NS Bogs h

A close relative of the above, and needing similar habitats, this grass has single upright seed heads.

Warwickshire current

Coleshill pool and Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

1 other location at Packington, now lost.

National status

Very uncommon in Central, S. and E. Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of habitat.

Erodium moschatum (L.) L'Hér. Musk Stork's-bill. NSS.

1/0/5 -32%NS Waste ground

An annual of short grassland, rocky or sandy places with pink flowers and leaves smelling of musk. Its beaked fruits set seed reliably, so that it persists.

Warwickshire current

Not native to the county, it has been regularly found in Leamington Spa from 1984-1992.

Warwickshire Past

5 previous records until 1884.

National status

Scarce, in coastal sites in S. and W. Britain. An introduction elsewhere.

Risks/conservation measures

Scrub invasion, erosion, weedkillers.

***Euphorbia platyphyllos* L. Broad-leaved Spurge NSS**

1/0/1 2%NS c

An annual arable plant, growing on field-margins where it can escape herbicides. Its seeds can survive for some years.

Warwickshire current

Twice found at Walton in 1988, but not since.

Warwickshire Past

Very rare, first record in 1891. 'Casual; on railway banks, near Myton, single specimen, Bromwich.'

National status

Scarce and declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Like other scarce cornfield flowers, this plant depends for its survival on agricultural methods which allow a proportion of other plants to grow on field-margins as well as the economic monoculture.

***Festuca altissima* All. Wood Fescue. 'NSS'.**

1/0/0 51%NS

A perennial grass growing in large leafy tufts.

Warwickshire current

First found in 1972 in Bentley park wood on a steep rocky stream bank, a typical habitat. Still present in 1990.

Warwickshire Past

No records.

National status

Very uncommon, but not declining, in upland sites in NW Britain mainly.

Risks/conservation measures

Entirely dependant on the preservation of its habitat, fortunately it is long-lived and chooses inaccessible places.

***Festuca filiformis* Pourret. Fine-leaved Sheep's fescue.**

1/7/10 -11%Unknown Dry heathy grassland h

A perennial grass of open, acid sandy soil, needing expert identification .

Warwickshire current

1 site at Binley Bogs.

Warwickshire Past

A significant decline, once there were 17 locations in the west of the county, habitat loss is the likely cause though it may have been under-recorded.

National status

Widespread and not uncommon in suitable habitats (which are locally scarce).

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss and 'improvement' of grass-land.

***Filago minima* (Sm.) Pers. Small Cudweed.**

1/2/3 -29%Dec Dry waste places ru

A tiny annual covered with white woolly hairs, growing in bare sandy soil, often in waste places.

Warwickshire current

Brandon Marsh and also near Coventry.

Warwickshire Past

Rare and scattered

National status

Widespread but infrequent.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss and the indiscriminate use of herbicides in waste places.

Name

***Fritillaria meleagris* L.** **Fritillary.** **NSS.**

1/0/3 91%NS Damp meadows and g

pastures A delicate lily with chequered grey and white flowers, growing in wet grassland, but also a popular garden plant.

Warwickshire current

There are no longer Fritillary meadows, and current records are almost certainly escapes and introductions at Newbold Comyn, Priory Park and Hampton-on-the-hill.

Warwickshire Past

The Fritillary fields of Tamworth have gone, and its status in the county has always been uncertain, though 2 of the 3 sites in Bagnall may be native records.

National status

Scarce and rapidly disappearing after the widespread use of herbicides in the last 50 years.

Risks/conservation measures

Early mowing of water-meadows for silage rather than hay. Though it sets seed freely, it probably depends mainly on bulb-offsets to spread. Another victim of grassland 'improvement' and modern farming methods, it needs moist soil and late mowing to survive.

Fumaria capreolata L. White Ramping-fumitory. 'NSS'

1/0/1 78%NS

An attractive climbing annual, growing over hedges and walls, with pinkish-white flowers and delicate feathery leaves. Once these flowers were called 'wax dolls' in Warwickshire because of their texture.

Warwickshire current

Unlikely to be native. It has recently been found in Warwick Castle park.

Warwickshire Past

A few records from 1831 onwards.

National status

Scattered throughout Britain and not declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Herbicides, clearance of hedges.

Fumaria densiflora DC. Dense-flowering Fumitory. NSS.

1/1/0 12%NS Arable fields c

An annual arable weed with pink flowers which prefers limey soils.

Warwickshire current

First found in 1959 in Wellesbourne, where it persists.

Warwickshire Past

No records.

National status

Scarce and declining, mainly in SE England and very scattered elsewhere.

Risks/conservation measures

Very susceptible to herbicides and overgrowth from competitors, though its seeds can persist for some years.

Fumaria muralis Sonder ex Koch. Common ramping-fumitory.

1/0/3 13%NS

A scrambling hedgerow plant with pink flowers.

Warwickshire current

2 sites at Sherbourne and Coventry

Warwickshire Past

First record in 1872, very few records.

National status

Not uncommon, scattered

Risks/conservation measures

Hedgerow clearing, herbicides

Galeopsis angustifolia Ehrh. ex Hoffm. Red Hemp-nettle. NSS

3/8/ -51%Dec Limestone and calcareous clay soils c

An annual arable plant of lime-rich soil.

Warwickshire current

3 records: an Ufton field, and quarries at Cross Hands and Ratley.

Warwickshire Past

An occasional plant of the Lower Lias limestone and calcareous clay in the south.

National status

Scarce and declining like other arable plants, mainly found in SE England.

Risks/conservation measures

Seed is set in the autumn and may be prevented by early autumn ploughing of stubble. It cannot compete with heavily fertilised crops and is killed by herbicides.

Genista anglica L. Petty Whin.

1/0/8 -40%Dec Sandy heaths

A small spiny shrub with yellow 'pea-flowers, growing on sandy and peaty heaths.

Warwickshire current

1 record near the M6 motorway near Coleshill.

Warwickshire Past

A rare plant of the sandy heaths of the N., found between 1817-1878.

National status

Widespread but declining due to loss of habitat.

Risks/conservation measures

At risk of scrub overgrowth and roadside-verge 'tidying'.

Name

Geranium columbinum L. Long-stalked Crane's-bill.

3/6/8 -13%NS Grassland g

An annual with reddish-pink attractive flowers, growing in grassy hedgerows on basic soils.

Warwickshire current

A roadside at Little Packington and grassland at Walton and Snitterfield Bushes N.R.

Warwickshire Past

Rare and scattered.

National status

A plant of S. and W. Britain, only scattered in the Midlands and N.

Risks/conservation measures

Hedge clearance, roadside herbicides, scrub invasion.

Name

Gnaphalium sylvaticum Heath Cudweed. 'NSS'

2/8/12 -61%Dec Heathy woods h/ru

A short-lived perennial of open areas in woodland, heaths and hedges on acid soil.

Warwickshire current

A woodland clearing near Berkswell and a ride in Brandon wood.

Warwickshire Past

An occasional plant uncommon in the N., where it has since disappeared

National status

Uncommon and declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss and the increased density of commercial plantations.

Name

Groenlandia densa (L.) Fourn. Opposite-leaved Pondweed.

3/1/5 -24% Dec Ponds, canals and streams wa

An underwater perennial waterplant of ponds and streams.

Warwickshire current

The R. Blythe at Temple Balsall, R. Leam at Offchurch and canal inlet at Marston
Doles.

Warwickshire Past

Not uncommon and widespread until 1950.

National status

Relatively common in S., rare elsewhere.

Risks/conservation measures

Vulnerable to pollution and competition.

Gymnocarpium robertianum (Hoffm.) Newm. Limestone Fern. NSS

1/1/0 10% NS Walls sk

A delicate fern of limestone pavement and scree, it is also cultivated and grows easily
from spores.

Warwickshire current

A railway bridge at Tanworth in Arden until 1984 when it was destroyed by
repointing.

Warwickshire Past

Not native, sporadic appearances since 1866.

National status

Restricted to calcareous sites liable to quarrying, very scarce.

Risks/conservation measures

As a non-native, growing on mortar, it is always precarious.

Name

Heliathemum nummularium (L.) Miller Common Rock-rose

2/8/8 -12%NS Calcareous grassland g

An attractive creeping perennial with yellow flowers, growing in base-rich grassland, but also cultivated.

Warwickshire current

Aston Grove and Little Compton.

Warwickshire Past

A rare plant of the S.

National status

Common in suitable sites, though absent from some.

Risks/conservation measures

Most of this county's scarce limestone grassland has been lost by ploughing and 'improvement'. Scrub invasion is prevented by grazing and grass-cutting.

Name

Helleborus foetidus L. Stinking Hellebore NSS

3/2/6 42%Inc Scrub and open woodland on calcareous soils w

A handsome plant of woods and hedges on basic soil, with dark green leaves and clusters of green-white flowers, locally called Bearsfoot. Also cultivated.

Warwickshire current

Sperrall Park, Butler's Marston, Ullenhall, Great Alne and Alveston. In the last 2 sites it has been known for at least 25 years.

Warwickshire Past

Perhaps not native, though recorded since 1817, always very infrequent.

National status

Scarce and declining, partly due to habitat loss.

Risks/conservation measures

It is short-lived and reproduces by seed, which is set poorly. Modern crude hedgerow management, and more dense woodland, also contribute to the problems of this scarce plant.

Name

Helleborus viridis L Green Hellebore

1/3/6 -18%NS Woods and hedgerows on calcareous soil w

A similar plant, also cultivated, with larger, green flowers in smaller clusters, growing in similar places. It is also extremely poisonous, and has been used for worms in children(sometimes killing both worms and child). Locally called She-barfoot.

Warwickshire current

Bannam's Wood, where it has been known for at least 25 years.

Warwickshire Past

Probably native, local and scattered.

National status

Very local, mainly in the S. and W.

Risks/conservation measures

As for H. foetidus.

Name

Hydrocotyle vulgaris L. Marsh Pennywort

1/11/11 -16%Dec Watersides and marshes ws

This creeping perennial plant, growing in wet places, .gets its common name from its circular leaves. In Warwickshire it was known as 'Sheep rot', from an unfair reputation of infecting sheep.

Warwickshire current

Coleshill Pool and Alvecote Pools Nature Reserve.

Warwickshire Past

Previously widespread in the N.

National status

Locally common, but declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of habitat, drainage.

Hypericum androsaemum L. Tutsan.

2/2/4 14%NS Woods and hedges

Though native in damp woods and hedges, this attractive shrubby St. John's-wort is also cultivated. 'Toute-saine' means 'all-wholesome' in French, referring to its reputation as a healer.

Warwickshire current

Woods at Farnborough and Hampton in Arden.

Warwickshire Past

Rare, often as a garden escape.

National status

Commonest in the SW, not declining.

Risks/conservation measures

At risk from changes in hedge and woodland management.

***Impatiens noli-tangere* L. Touch-me-not Balsam. NSS**

2/0/1 -22%NS

A rare annual of damp woods, this plant with attractive orange flowers needs an open, rich soil. Its seeds have only a short viability. They are shot out explosively, to the delight of children of all ages, hence its name. It has been a garden flower.

Warwickshire current

Berkswell, where it has been known since 1852.

Warwickshire Past

Probably not native, no other records.

National status

Scarce and declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Scrub invasion, changes in river and woodland management.

***Jasione montana* L. Sheep's bit.**

1/0/5 -22%Dec

This herbaceous plant of sandy acid grassland and stony places has pale blue scabious-like flowers with 'nibbled' edges.

Warwickshire current

Middleton gravel workings, refound in 1989.

Warwickshire Past

Very rare, previous record 1874.

National status

Widespread and not uncommon in W.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, at the current site by extension of the quarry.

Name

Juncus squarrosus L. Heath Rush.

1/7/6 -10% Unknown Heaths and acid woods h

A densely tufted short rush of open acid heaths and moors.

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

Scattered over the N., in heaths that have now gone.

National status

Common in suitable sites but absent from much of Central England.

Risks/conservation measures

Invasion by gorse and heather, which are kept in check by grazing : a reminder that it is not sufficient to 'fence off' a rare plant in a reservation, the site needs appropriate management.

Name

Lathraea squamaria L. Toothwort.

1/4/1 -23% NS On woody species w

Easily overlooked because it spends most of the year underground, parasitic on trees and shrubs (particularly Elder, Hazel and Elm), this plant briefly sends up its short white stems with cream flowers in early spring.

Warwickshire current

Nuneaton and Goldicote Coppice. Possibly under-recorded.

Warwickshire Past

Widespread but very erratically found.

National status

Locally frequent, but declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Root parasites without green leaves are of course entirely dependant on the survival of their hosts, and Dutch elm disease is partly a cause of the decline, as well as loss of old woodland and hedgerows.

Name

***Lepidium latifolium* L. Dittander NSS.**

3/0/0 28% NS

Normally growing in salt-marshes, this herbaceous perennial spreads by stolons. Its roots have been used as a pepper substitute, making a very hot sauce.

Warwickshire current

A causal only, found at railway sidings in Birmingham and Minworth and by water at Kettlebrook and Coton Kingsbury.

Warwickshire Past

First record 1978.

National status

Scarce but increasing, probably because of its salt tolerance, like other plants which been 'encouraged' by the salting of roads in winter.

Risks/conservation measures

Herbicides, clearance of waste places, river banks and roadsides.

Name

Limosella aquatica L. NSS.

2/1/4 5%NS Mud at lake edges ws

An ephemeral grass-like annual growing on exposed mud, and appearing in summer for a few months.

Warwickshire current

Earlwood Reservoir.

Warwickshire Past

The only other site, a Solihull pool, has been destroyed.

National status

Scarce and very significantly declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Drainage, filling in of ponds, surfacing of tracks.

Name

Littorella uniflora (L.) Asch. Shoreweed.

3/2/3 -1%NS Edges of lakes ws

Another very similar plant of foreshores on acid sandy soil, also growing submerged.

Warwickshire current

Brandon Marsh Nature reserve and reservoirs at Olton and Earlwood.

National status

Very local and decreasing.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, as before.

Name

Meconopsis cambrica (L.) Viguier Welsh Poppy. NSS.

3/0/1 63%Inc

Widely grown in gardens, a long-lived perennial, growing in many habitats : woods, hedges, stony and waste places. The native plant has yellow petals, garden plants may also have orange, scarlet and double forms.

Warwickshire current

Not native, but found at Sutton Park, Kingsbury Waterpark, Leek Wootton and Hampton in Arden.

Warwickshire Past

First record 1869, scattered, scarce.

National status

Native in Wales and S.W., where it is scarce and declining on moist shady rocks.

Risks/conservation measures

It spreads by seed, and as a casual seems to be increasing in waste places.

Name

Medicago minima (L.) L.

1/1/0 -40%NS ru

Another casual to Warwickshire, this tiny annual with yellow flowers grows on dry sandy heaths. It is sometimes introduced with wool-waste ('shoddy') ,an agricultural fertiliser..

Warwickshire current

Warwick, near the railway in 1972.

Warwickshire Past

No records.

National status

Scarce and decreasing in E.

Risks/conservation measures

Reproducing by seed , it relies on grazing to eliminate competition.

Name

Medicago polymorpha L. Toothed Medick

1/1/2 -18%NS ru

Another casual to this county, it is a seaside annual also brought with shoddy.

Warwickshire current

A single record in a Warwick footpath in 1981.

Warwickshire Past

National status

S.coast, declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Also needs bare ground and little competition.

***Medicago sativa* ssp. *falcata* (L.) Arcang. Sickle Medick NSS**

2/0/0 -28%Unknown

Also not native to Warwickshire, this deep-rooted perennial (a relative of Lucerne) has yellow flowers and curved seed-pods.

Warwickshire current

Alvecote colliery, Wilnecote and Wellesbourne bypass, where it may have come from a 'wild-flower' mix-an ecologically unpopular attempt by the well-meaning to 'beautify' a raw road-verge. Aside from the fact that such habitats quickly become colonised by local plants needing a niche, the main objection to this activity is that non-native species may unwittingly introduced, sometimes with disastrous effects on the flora.

Warwickshire Past

First record 1975.

National status

On the Breckland in East Anglia in dry grassland, declining. Introductions elsewhere rarely persist.

Risks/conservation measures

Scrub invasion, rabbits.

***Menyanthes trifoliata* L. Bog Bean**

2/8/8 -19%Dec Watersides and marshes ws

Widely grown as a handsome water plant for its glossy bean-like leaves and spikes of white flowers.

Warwickshire current

Its only native site is Sutton Park. Other records are deliberate introductions, and in water gardens, where it can be invasive.

Warwickshire Past

1 other site in the N., now lost.

National status

Declining in its native sites.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of habitat, pollution and nitrates, but otherwise able to hold its own against competitors.

***Minuartia hybrida* (Villars) Schischkin. Fine-leaved Sandwort. NSS**

3/8/2 -16%NS Walls, quarries, railway ballast and dry waste places ru

A tiny annual with white starry flowers, naturally growing on calcareous stony places but colonising dry fields, and ruderal sites such as walls , railways and roadsides.

Warwickshire current

A meadow at Halford, a rifle-range at Warwick and a quarry at Little Compton..

Warwickshire Past

Rare and scattered.

National status

Scarce and markedly declining in its natural habitats, though spreading elsewhere as a 'railway alien'.

Risks/conservation measures

Filling in of quarries, herbicides: it spreads only by seed.

***Monotropa hypopitys* L. Yellow Bird's-nest.**

3/0/2 -13%NS

This plant lacks chlorophyll and lives underground as a saprophyte on leafmould under Pine and Beech trees. In summer pale yellow, scented flowers appear on short brown stems. There are 2 subspecies, distinguished by the number and hairiness of the flowers.

Warwickshire current

Ssp.hypopitys is at Wilnecote, *ssp.hypophegea*(Wallr.)Holmboe at Ufton Fields N.R. Not refound at Moreton Morrell, where it was found in 1972.

Warwickshire Past

Rare and in the S. only.

National status

Local, ssp.hypophegea absent from many places in the N&W.

Risks/conservation measures

Entirely dependent on the preservation of mature woodland.

Montia fontana L. Blinks.

This unassuming scrambling water-plant apparently had no common name until it was christened by a Victorian botanist with the strangely appropriate name of 'Blinks'. It resembles Chickweed, and has 4 subspecies, distinguished by their seeds, 3 have been found locally.

Warwickshire current

Ssp.amporitana Sennen has been found at Sutton and Cornet's End; ssp. minor Hayw. at Thickthorn wood Kenilworth; ssp.variabilis Walters at Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

All 3 ssp. are rare and only found in the N. and C.

National status

Locally common, though scattered; ssp. amporitana general, ssp. minor rare in the N., where ssp. variabilis is more common.

Risks/conservation measures

These fragile plants need undisturbed and uncontaminated wet places, with a preference for acid soils, they may annual or perennial.

Myosotis secunda A.Murray. Creeping Forget-me-not

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2/5/4 16%NS Bogs and wet acid soil h

A waterside plant that may be annual or perennial, told apart from the commoner species by its stem hairs and flowers.

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park, Barton Hill and Plant's Brook.

Warwickshire Past

Scattered in the NW.

National status

Common, though absent from much of C. and E. England.

Risks/conservation measures

At risk from the usual hazards of waterplants: bank clearance, habitat loss and pollution.

Myosurus minimus L. Mousetail. ('NSS')

4/7/7 -12%NS Cultivated land c

The neat spikes of tiny yellow flowers of this dwarf annual are easily overlooked in arable fields, where it grows particularly in trampled and rutted areas. It needs fertile, disturbed soil which is not intensively grazed or cultivated.

Warwickshire current

Arable fields in the C., Moreton Morrell, Bishop's Tachbrook, Hampton Magna, Wellesbourne and Copdock Hill.

Warwickshire Past

Widespread throughout, but disappearing with the introduction of intensive farming.

National status

S. and C. England, where it is rapidly declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Like other plants of arable land, its survival will depend on a reduction in herbicide use and the use of conservation methods. In a National status survey, this county was one with still a few recent records of this plant.

Neottia nidus-avis (L.) Rich Bird's-nest Orchid.

3/8/13 -30%Dec Limestone woods w

The flower-stem appears in mid-summer with a few pale scales instead of leaves, the flowers are brown and look withered even when fresh. But, underground the plant looks more striking, the tight mass of fleshy roots feed this saprophyte and give the reason for its popular and scientific names.

Warwickshire current

Woodland at Farnborough and Ufton, a roadside at King's Newnham.

Warwickshire Past

Rare and only in the S. Centre.

National status

Scattered and significantly decreasing.

Risks/conservation measures

Dependant on the preservation of old woodland, especially Beech on calcareous soils.

***Nymphoides peltata* Kuntze Fringed Water-lily. NSS.**

4/1/2 39%NS Lakes wa

A perennial floating aquatic with attractive yellow flowers. It has under water rhizomes and its sticky seeds may be spread by water-birds, it is sometimes cultivated and 'escapes'.

Warwickshire current

Not native, in the past 10 years found at Sutton Park, Plants Brook, Over Whitacre Nature reserve and Bradnock's marsh.

Warwickshire Past

First record 1841 at Packington Park, increasing due to introduction, can be invasive.

National status

Scarce in its native Thames valley and E. Anglia, but spreading due to deliberate cultivation and escaping.

Risks/conservation measures

It tolerates moderate nitrogen levels (eutrophic), and is one of the few water-plants that is not declining.

***Oenanthe fluviatilis* (Bab.)Coleman River Water-dropwort. (NSS).**

3/0/6 -24%NS In rivers wa

An under-water plant of flowing water with tubular linear leaves, only occasionally producing 'umbelliferous' flowers above water, perennial.

Warwickshire current

4 records for the R. Leam at Marton, Birdingbury, Hunningham and Eathorpe, 1 for R.Avon at Rugby.

Warwickshire Past

Very intermittently recorded since 1870, in the S.

National status

Very uncommon, perhaps overlooked (its leaves are easily confused with other aquatics), in S. England. Warwickshire is the N. limit of distribution of this declining species.

Risks/conservation measures

Susceptible to water-pollution, mainly spreading by detached leaves and stems, which readily root, sometimes by seed if flowers emerge and are not swamped by floods.

Oenanthe lachenalii C.Gmelin Parsley Water-dropwort.

2/4/4 -14%NS Marshes, ditches, pond- and river-sides ws

A marginal of ditches and marshes, usually near the sea, it can tolerate some salt.

Warwickshire current

Wilmcote Rough, Stratford and Alvecote.

Warwickshire Past

Occasional, probably declining.

National status

Coastal, scattered inland, not declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Pollution, loss of habitat.

Ophrys insectifera L. Fly Orchid.

1/0/1 -29%NS

A delicate little orchid whose flowers may imitate flies sufficiently to induce them to 'mate' with them and so spread their pollen.

Warwickshire current

It re-appeared in the county at Snitterfield in 1988, and persists.

Warwickshire Past

Not native, 1 record in 1880 at Oscott.

National status

Scattered in S. and C. England in woods and grassland on calcareous soil, declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Overgrowth by scrub, loss of its scarce habitat, collection.

Orchis morio L. Green-winged Orchid (NSS).

8/16/14 -32%Dec Meadows and pastures g

An attractive orchid of unimproved grassland on neutral soil.

Warwickshire current

From 1971-1994 : railway banks at Rugby and Henley, meadows at Ettington, Yarningale, Tredington, Birmingham, Sherbourne, Bedworth, Napton, Harbury, Gorcott and Draycote Meadows N.R. Some of these sites may be lost.

Warwickshire Past

Only in the C., rare, though 25 sites were found in the 1950-1965 survey. It has seriously declined.

National status

Declining due to habitat loss : ploughing, intensive field management.

Risks/conservation measures

Because of the 10 year delay between seed germination and a mature flower, only long-term measures to conserve meadows will ensure this plant's future. An attempt in this county to 'transplant' a doomed hay-meadow failed .Orchids need an accompanying root-fungus to succeed, and cannot compete with the coarse plants encouraged by artificial fertilisers and 'improvement' of grassland.

Papaver argemone L. Prickly Poppy (NSS).

6/17/15 -30%Dec Cultivated land and waste places c

A colonist of railways and waste places, and an 'arable annual' of poor, well-drained soil, with long, hairy seed-pods.

Warwickshire current

3 arable fields at Offchurch, Fulbrook and Wellesbourne; railway sites at Bishop's Itchington and Long Itchington; and waste places / roadsides at Edgehill, and Binley.

Warwickshire Past

Occasional, mainly S. and C., disappearing.

National status

Much less common, especially in areas other than S.E.England.

Risks/conservation measures

Unlike other, commoner, poppies it rarely appears in large numbers. Its seed remains viable for some years, with sporadic germination. It is overwhelmed by heavily-fertilised crops and killed by herbicides.

Papaver hybridum L. Rough Poppy (NSS).

1/0/0 -13%NS Cultivated land c

Even less common than the preceding poppy, this one has round hairy pods, but otherwise has a similar distribution, ecology and history of decline.

Warwickshire current

1 record at Wellesbourne in an unsprayed 'organically-farmed' wheatfield.

Warwickshire Past

Not recorded.

National status

See above.

Risks/conservation measures

As before.

***Parnassia palustris* L. Grass-of-Parnassus.**

1/1/7 -12%NS ws

For some people this is Britain's most beautiful flower, with pure white petals, decorated inside with tiny white staminodes and golden stamens, a perennial herb of wet grassland and marshes.

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park, since 1812.

Warwickshire Past

Almost extinct. In the last century there were 17 sites, lost by urban spread and land drainage.

National status

Widespread but scattered in the N. and W., absent or very rare in S.

Risks/conservation measures

Vulnerable to habitat destruction.

***Pedicularis palustris* L. Marsh Lousewort.**

1/2/7 -25%Dec Bogs ws

An annual or biennial of wet heaths and bogs with pink-purple flowers and small divided leaves. Once supposed to give cattle lice or liver-rot.

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

Rare and scattered

National status

Significantly declining, rare in C. and E. England.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, drainage.

Pedicularis sylvatica L. Lousewort.

1/13/14 -22% Dec Marshes and damp grassland g/ws

A perennial herb similar to the former but with differences in the flowers and rather more common, of marshes and wet grassland.

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park and Brandon wood N.R.

Warwickshire Past

Rare, mainly in the N.W. Declining in this century.

National status

Widespread but becoming less common.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, drainage.

Petroselinum segetum(L.) Koch Corn Parsley.

1/5/5 -2% NS Cultivated, grassy and waste places on calcareous soil c

An annual or biennial of bare calcareous grassy places and arable fields, with umbelliferous flowers, and smelling of parsley.

Warwickshire current

A grass verge at Armscote.

Warwickshire Past

Rare, and only in the S.

National status

Mainly in the S., uncommon and declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Another casualty of modern farming, herbicides and 'tidying' of roadsides.

Pinguicula vulgaris L. Common Butterwort

1/1/4 -14% NS Bogs ws

The misleading 'common' name distinguishes this intriguing plant, which is nowhere 'common', from even rarer relatives. It grows in wet places, has purple flowers, and its sticky leaves curl over to trap insects.

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

Once at Stivichall, and Bannerley Pool.

National status

Becoming less common, absent from most of S. and C. Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, drainage.

***Platanthera bifolia*(L.)Rich. Lesser Butterfly-orchid.**

1/1/2 -34%Dec Woodland w

An elegant orchid requiring expert skill to distinguish it from its close relative, which is much more frequent locally, growing in calcareous woods and grassland.

Warwickshire current

Ufton Woods SSSI.

Warwickshire Past

Very rare, in the S.

National status

Uncommon and declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, collection, scrub invasion.

***Polygonum rurivagum* Jordan ex Boreau Cornfield Knotgrass (NSS).**

4/1/ Cultivated fields c

A late-flowering inconspicuous arable annual of light and chalky soils on roadsides and fields.

Warwickshire current

Roadsides at Ansty, Hampton-in-Arden and Lighthorne, and a stubble-field at Bascote.

Warwickshire Past

First record 1957 near Rugby, probably under-recorded.

National status

SE.England, extremely rare elsewhere.

Risks/conservation measures

Herbicides, modern farming, stubble-burning (seeds set Aug.-Nov.).

Polypogon monspeliensis(L.)Desf. Annual Beard-grass NSS.

1/1/ 17%NS ru

A coastal grass which may be introduced in bird-seed.

Warwickshire current

In a Warwick garden from 1981-1992, and once in a waste-place near Charlecote in 1992.

Warwickshire Past

Not recorded

National status

Scarce and declining, in the SE. Spread by seed, which may remain dormant for some years.

Risks/conservation measures

Drainage, cultivation of habitats.

Populus nigra L.ssp. betulifolia (Pursh)W.Wettst. Black Poplar.

1/4/1 -31%Unknown Watersides ws

A tall, rather 'top-heavy' waterside tree with its bark fissured, and studded with bosses.

Warwickshire current

8 local records have been authenticated during a National status survey, 5 are likely to be 'wild', at Binton, Studley, Brandon, Stretton under Fosse and Coombe Abbey.

Warwickshire Past

Probably declining but there are difficulties with identification and deliberate plantings.

National status

Significantly declining, many trees are male, and seed germination is erratic. More vigorous cultivars are now preferred in forestry and the native female tree is unpopular because of its profuse, 'messy' feathery seeds.

Risks/conservation measures

Female trees have been found National Survey and there is a campaign to propagate them. A happy result of a successful National status conservation scheme.

Potamogetons Pondweeds.

These are all aquatic, growing either submerged or with floating leaves, most need very careful identification. They may form hybrids, in fact Britain's rarest hybrid was found once locally, and never seen again. They vary in their tolerance of nutrients (especially agricultural fertilisers), and their unglamorous appearance makes them difficult candidates for conservation.

Potamogeton friesii Rupr. Flat-stalked Pondweed (NSS).

1/8/11 -70%Dec Canals wa

Very significantly declining, not tolerating high nutrient levels, and growing in still or slow-moving water, usually with some lime content.

Recently found at Wormleighton reservoir and in the Oxford canal at Sowe Common.

Potamogeton polygonifolius Pourret Bog Pondweed.

1/6/16 19%NS Bogs, acid pools and ditches wa

Ponds and streams are the habitat for this plant, which is absent from parts of C and E. England.

1 record for Bickenhill Plantation.

Potamogeton trichoides Cham.&Schldl. Hair-like Pondweed. NSS.

1/3/17 -11%Unknown Ponds and canals wa

Nationally scarce, growing in still or slowly moving shallow water, it may be an early colonist.

1 record for Bascote by the canal.

Potentilla argentea L. Hoary Cinquefoil (NSS).

2/3/ -29%NS Rocks and dry banks sk

A trailing yellow-flowered perennial of warm, free-draining soil without too much competition.

Warwickshire current

1 site on rocks near Warwick, re-found after its first discovery there by Perry in the early 19th. century.

Warwickshire Past

1 record for a Water Orton railway siding, not re-found.

National status

Decreasing and local, though it has a reputation for persistence.

Risks/conservation measures

Competition, habitat loss, roadside clearance. Though it sets seed, it does not readily colonise new areas.

Ranunculus arvensis L. Corn buttercup.(NSS).

10/31/17 -52%Dec Mainly calcareous soils.c

Once this 'arable annual' was a scourge that blighted crops and its spiny fruit earned it the name 'Devil-on-both-sides' in Warwickshire.

Warwickshire current

21 recent records, mainly in the S. and C., usually for single plants : the most abundant were 'about 30 per acre' in 1992 near Cherington.

Warwickshire Past

Widespread and common until the introduction of modern herbicides in the 1960s.

National status

Very significant decline, this county and Worcestershire are the 2 places where it is said to occur 'at all frequently'.

Risks/conservation measures

Very susceptible to herbicides, but its seeds can germinate after many years, particularly in autumn- and winter-sown crops.

Ranunculus fluitans Lam.

1/2/3 1%NS Rivers wa

The starry white flowers of this aquatic perennial emerge above the water of slow-moving rivers, the linear leaves are submerged.

Warwickshire current

In the R.Itchen at Hunningham, the R.Stour at Whichford and the Langley Brook at Middleton.

Warwickshire Past

It has always been very rare, though as a group the Water-crowfoots can be abundant enough to block streams and are locally known as 'Rait', a dialect word meaning 'messy tangle'.

National status

Scattered throughout, but declining.

Risks/conservation measures

It needs well-oxygenated water low in nutrients and survives in upper waters, disappearing as the pollutants accumulate downstream.

Ranunculus omiophyllus Ten. Round-leaved Crowfoot.

1/2/5 11%NS Ditches and marshes ws

In contrast to the previous species, this Crowfoot only has lobed leaves and lacks underwater leaves. Annual or perennial, it can be aquatic or marginal.

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park, where it has been found since 1859.

Warwickshire Past

No other records.

National status

Local in S. and W. Britain in non-calcareous muddy streams.

Risks/conservation measures

Vulnerable to drainage and water-pollution, including lime.

Ranunculus parviflorus L. Small-flowered Buttercup.(NSS)

3/1/9 -32%NS Open ground ru

An annual buttercup with pale yellow petals and folded-back sepals, growing on open, disturbed soil, such as paths, field margins and loose turf.

Warwickshire current

Arable fields at Hatton Rock, Bishop's Tachbrook and Moreton Morrell, also very persistently at Copdock Hill in grassy scrub.

Warwickshire Past

Infrequent and very scattered.

National status

S.W.Britain, especially coastal, rare elsewhere and not above N.Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

It cannot tolerate competition, and is also a victim of the 'war on weeds' in roadsides, parks and fields.

Ribes alpinum L. Mountain Currant NSS.

In meadows at Salford Priors and Butler's Marston where plants other than grass are tolerated, a refreshing change from the usual green monotony of 'improved grassland'.

Warwickshire Past

Scattered and rare in the S.

National status

S. England and Wales, on calcareous or sandy soils.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of habitat by ploughing meadows, herbicides and fertilisers.

Sagina nodosa (L.) Fenzl. Knotted Pearlwort

1/1/2 -23% Dec Marshes and bogs ws

A tiny perennial of damp peaty or sandy soil with grass-like leaves and small knotted clusters of white flowers

Warwickshire current

Only in Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

Found at Coleshill and 'Warwickshire Moor' Tamworth, long since gone, the moor and the plant with it.

National status

Scattered, local, very significantly declining, though easily overlooked.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss

Salix cinerea ssp. cinerea L. Grey Willow (ssp.).

2/1/- Watersides ws

The Grey Willow is one of the commonest willows, and the subspecies oleifolia is abundant in the county. However, this ssp., distinguished by leaf shape and hairiness, is much less common.

Warwickshire current

Newbold on Stour and Hampton-in-Arden.

Warwickshire Past

2 records at Kenilworth and Lowsonford.

National status

Mainly in E. England in base-rich wet places.

Risks/conservation measures
Habitat loss, waterside tidying.

Salix myrsinifolia Salis. Dark-leaved Willow (NSS).

1/1/ -17%Unknown

Not native in Warwickshire, this shrub has leaves that blacken when bruised (as do some other willows).

Warwickshire current

1 record at Shrewley, a large clump.

Warwickshire Past

Not recorded.

National status

Local, mainly N. Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss.

Salix repens L. Creeping Willow.

1/3/4 -26%Dec Marshy ground ws

A low-growing shrub of acid heaths and wetland.

Warwickshire current

It was introduced in the 1950s with sea-sand to extinguish a coal heap fire at Emscote sidings, and lives there still (1995), but maybe not much longer, when the site, famous for its seaside flora miles inland, is developed.

Warwickshire Past

It has gone from its native sites at Sutton Park and Forshaw Heath.

National status

Rare or absent in the Midlands, fairly common though declining in acid heath and wet places throughout Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss.

Salvia verbenaca L. Wild Clary.

An elegant herb of dry open grassland, whose mucilaginous seeds were once used for cleansing sticky eyes ('clear-eye' = 'clary').

Warwickshire current

A roadside at Bidford on Avon, where it may be a garden escape, first noted in CMF, and also on a roadverge at Alderminster, found in 1995.

Warwickshire Past

Rare and scattered, 10 records.

National status

Local but widespread, declining.

Risks/conservation measures

Roadside verges are one of the scarce reserves for wildlife but they are vulnerable to widening schemes, dumping, inappropriate mowing and herbicides (both policies are usually unnecessary and wasteful as well as destructive). This scarce plant can compete very successfully in grassland, spreading by deep roots and also by seed, set late in summer unless the flower spikes have been mown. Without proper management of road verges these 2 remnants will follow their close relative, Meadow Clary, into extinction in Warwickshire.

Sambucus ebulus L. Dwarf Elder.

Mythologically, this plant grows where Danish blood was shed. It is a perennial long-persistent herb whose leaves and flowers somewhat resemble Elder, though with red berries, and dying back to ground-level each winter.

Warwickshire current

2 well-known sites at Temple Grafton and Knowle, and a recent discovery at the Welcombe Hills.

Warwickshire Past

First recorded 'near Warwick' in 1491, there have been 7 records since, all but 2 gone.

National status

Scattered and local, doubtfully native.

Risks/conservation measures

2 sites are road verges with the hazards mentioned before, the last is a reserve where the main risk is scrub invasion.

***Samolus valerandi* L. Brookweed.**

A perennial herb of wet places with neat shiny leaves and spikes of small white flowers.

Warwickshire current

R. Leam at Birdingbury, and Charlecote Park.

Warwickshire Past

Rare, though widespread prior to CMF.

National status

Scattered, locally common, especially near the sea.

Risks/conservation measures

Waterside clearing, pollution, water-level changes.

Scandix pecten-veneris L. Shepherd's-needle. NSS.

A rare 'arable annual' on heavy calcareous clay, which gets its common name from the long spiny seeds (Beggars' needle locally).

Warwickshire current

Arable fields at Monk's Kirby, Fulready and Napton, only in very small numbers.

Warwickshire Past

Once it was so abundant that it clogged mechanical harvesters, and was found in over 50 places in the CMF., its decline followed intensive agricultural methods.

National status

A precipitate decline, now scarce in S. and C. England.

Risks/conservation measures

Its seeds are autumn-germinating, with only limited dormancy, the plant is killed by herbicides. Arable annuals will survive only if their modification of modern farming methods.

Scrophularia umbrosa Dumort. Green Figwort (NSS).

A perennial herb of fertile shady wet soil, with a broad-winged stem and toothed leaves.

Warwickshire current

Recently refound after a long absence, in Moreton Morrell.

Warwickshire Past

Rare, 3 records.

National status

Very uncommon though it may be increasing. It closely resembles a much commoner plant and may have been overlooked until the recent survey of potentially scarce plants showed it was growing in 101 places, and just exceeded the 100 limit which defines 'scarcity'.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, competition, herbicides.

Sedum telephium L. Orphine.

A fleshy perennial of hedges and woodland, also cultivated in gardens, with a magical reputation : predicting whether there would be love, aversion or death between sweethearts.

Warwickshire current

A roadside at Fen End and a hedge at Wroxall.

Warwickshire Past Occasional and scattered.

National status

Widespread but scattered.

Risks/conservation

Habitat loss and the risks of roadside plants, see above.

Silene gallica L. Small-flowered catchfly NSS.

An annual of sandy soil, with sticky leaves and stem and small 'campion-like' flowers.

Warwickshire current

Not native but found with other birdseed 'casuals' in Birmingham Cathedral churchyard in 1983.

Warwickshire Past

Not recorded.

National status

Scarce and declining in coastal S. Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

Vulnerable to intensive farming in its native sites.

Silene noctiflora L. Night-flowering Catchfly (NSS)>

A sweet-scented annual with sticky parts and white flowers, needing a limey soil

Warwickshire current

Unsprayed field margins at Walton and Edgehill.

Warwickshire Past

Rare and scattered in the S.

National status

A very considerable decline, along with other arable flowers.

Risks/conservation measures

Seed is set late and germinates in spring, so that it survives in late-harvested crops or if the stubble is left. Vulnerable to herbicides, it needs unsprayed reserves at field edges.

***Solidago virgaurea* L. Goldenrod**

This is the only native goldenrod (the garden plants come from N. America) and it is sometimes known as Aaron's Rod, it had a reputation for healing wounds. It is a perennial of open woods, grassland and rocky places.

Warwickshire current

Roadsides at Windmill Naps, Dorridge and Cornet's End.

Warwickshire Past

Uncommon and only in the 'Mid-West'.

National status

Not uncommon, except for the Midlands.

Risks/conservation measures

Roadside verge clearance, habitat loss.

***Spirodela polyrhiza* (L.) Schleiden. Greater Duckweed.**

This is the largest British Duckweed and is recognised by its many roots, it floats on the surface of ponds and still water.

Warwickshire current

Stretton Wharf canal and ponds at Frankton and Old Milverton.

Warwickshire Past

Rare and scattered.

National status

Generally uncommon, especially in the N.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss and contamination of ponds, competition from aggressive invaders such as Lemna minuta and Crassula helmsii.

Stellaria pallida (Dumort) Crepin. Lesser Chickweed.

An inconspicuous early-flowering annual growing on bare sandy soil.

Warwickshire current

Railway ballast near Fenny Compton.

Warwickshire Past

First record 1958, very rare and probably not native.

National status

Rare, mainly coastal S. Britain.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, herbicides, competition.

Stratiotes aloides L. Water-soldier. NSS.

An attractive floating and submerged water plant, much cultivated and sometimes escaping or deliberately introduced.

Warwickshire current

Ponds at Warwick and Moreton Morrell (where in some years it reaches 'plague proportions').

Warwickshire Past

Not native, first record 1977.

National status

Severely declining in its native habitats in E. England.

Risks/conservation measures

British plants are all female and never set seed, spreading by offsets along waterways. It is particular in its mineral requirements and is killed by high phosphate slurry or fertiliser contamination. It needs open unshaded water without competition from reeds.

Thymus pulgioides L. Large Thyme.

A perennial herb of short turf on chalk or sand, with beautiful pink-purple flowers.

Warwickshire current

One tiny clump on a concrete wall near Pailton Pastures, a relic of the abundant plants that once grew in the chalk grassland there, but now ploughed up, like most of that scarce habitat in Warwickshire.

Warwickshire Past

Once widespread, but rapidly disappearing in this century. Shakespeare knew 'of a bank where the wild thyme grows' but now there is a single site for this species and only 4 places where its close relative, Thymus polytrichus, is known.

National status

Locally common in suitable habitats in S. Britain, scarce elsewhere.

Risks/conservation measures

Totally dependant on preservation of calcareous or rocky grassland from 'improvement' ,destruction and scrub invasion.

Tilia platyphyllos Scop. Large-leaved Lime. NSS.

A long-lived tree of old woodland, particularly on calcareous soil, but also planted widely.

Warwickshire current

Unlikely to be native, it is known to have been planted at 6 locations but it has also been found in mixed, possibly natural woods at Alvecote, Wirehill and Hartshill Hayes.

Warwickshire Past

A rare tree of woods and hedges, first recorded in 1783.

National status

Scarce and declining in its native sites in C. and S. England.

Risks/conservation measures

It spreads by seed and suckering, and tolerates competition well. Its decline is due to the grubbing up of ancient woodland.

Torilis arvensis (Hudson) Link. Spreading Hedge-parsley. NSS

An 'arable annual' of heavy calcareous soil, rather inconspicuous and Nationally Scarce.

Warwickshire current

It still survives in field borders at Bascote, Newbold Pacey and Snitterfield, where herbicides do not reach it.

Warwickshire past

Local and rare, but perhaps overlooked.

National status

Once widespread in S. Britain, it has been almost eliminated by intensive farming.

Risks/conservation measures

It has moderate dormancy and can survive in the seed bank, germinating in the autumn after ploughing. It sets its bristly seeds well, which are spread by animals (including humans) but it is susceptible to herbicides.

Trichophoron cespitosum (L.) Hartman. Deergrass.

A densely tufted perennial of moors and heaths, very like a sedge.

Warwickshire current

Only in Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

Ray found this in 1670 near Middleton and it has also been found in Coleshill Bog, but it has disappeared with the loss of the N. Warwickshire heaths.

National status

Frequent in suitable places in N. and W. Britain, but absent or rare elsewhere.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss

Trifolium scabrum L. Rough Clover.

A small-flowered annual clover of short grassland and bare sandy soil.

Warwickshire current

In the disused quarries at Burton Dassett Country Park, where it is well established and in some years quite plentiful.

Warwickshire Past

No other records.

National status

Locally common in coastal sites but uncommon inland.

Risks/conservation measures

Scrub invasion, turf erosion by overuse of the park, herbicide drift.

Trifolium subterraneum L. Subterranean Clover.

An annual white-flowered clover, growing in sandy soil, with an unusual method of planting its seeds, by turning its flower-heads upside-down and pushing them into the soil.

Warwickshire now

In a farm track near Sherbourne, where it has been found since 1866.

Past Warwickshire situation

Very rare, 4 scattered records.

National status

Occasional in S. Britain, especially coastal, also as a wool-shoddy alien.

Risks/conservation measures

Herbicides, grassland 'improvement'.

Ulmus species Elms.

'Leafy Warwickshire' was once famous for its Elms until they were almost eradicated by Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s. Some hedgerow Elms have regenerated, though they continue to be reinfected, and have not quite reached sufficient size to be accurately identified. Ulmus plotti Druce, a Nationally Scarce tree unique to Britain has not been identified locally since 1970.

Umbilicus rupestris (Salis.) Dandy. Navelwort.

The circular succulent leaves have an intriguing dimple, hence the Latin and common names for this perennial herb of walls and rocks.

Warwickshire current

Maxstoke Priory walls, where it has been found since at least 1817. Not native in the Midlands, it was perhaps brought here for medicinal purposes by the monks (though the Romans used it to procure love).

Warwickshire Past

Guy's Cliffe and 'the old pound Coten End'.

National status

Frequent in W. Britain, rare or absent elsewhere.

Risks/conservation measures

'Tidying-up' of ruins and old walls.

Utricularia australis R.Br. Bladderwort.

This underwater and floating plant has no roots but its leaves carry small pouches which trap water-fleas and similar tiny animals. It grows in still, acidic water and its spikes of spurred yellow flowers emerge from the water in the summer, though in many years it fails to bloom.

Warwickshire current

Alvecote pools.

Warwickshire Past

Rare and very scattered. A similar species, *U. minor*, is now extinct in Warwickshire.

National status

Distribution and frequency uncertain because of difficulties in distinguishing the various species.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of habitat (acidic pools are rare in this county), pollution, dumping.

Vaccinium oxycoccus L. Cranberry.

A creeping shrub with pink flowers and edible red berries which appear for the American Thanksgiving. It grows on wet heaths and bogs.

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

First recorded by Ray in 1669 from Middleton, 'hereabouts we have them in great plenty'. Also found at Coleshill Bog.

National status

Common in suitable places in N and W. Britain, absent from most of the S.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat destruction, overuse of the park.

Vaccinium vitis-idaea L. Cowberry

A low-growing shrub of peat moors and woods with pink flowers and edible red berries.

Warwickshire current

Sutton Park.

Warwickshire Past

Rare, in the acid heaths that once prevailed in the N.

National status

Locally common from the Midlands northwards.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss.

Valerianella dentata (L.) Pollich. Narrow-fruited Cornsalad (NSS).

An 'arable annual' of light calcareous soil, only recognisable from its close relatives by its seeds (2 other species are found locally).

Warwickshire now

An SSSI field at Oxhouse farm and a disused Ufton quarry.

Warwickshire Past

Widespread particularly in the S.

National status

A very significant decline following agricultural intensification, now very infrequent or absent.

Risks/conservation measures

This somewhat 'delicate' plant does not compete well with very vigorous autumn sown crops, or those which have been given heavy nitrogenous dressings, it is also very susceptible to herbicides.

Verbascum virgatum Stokes. Twiggy Mullein NSS.

An attractive biennial with yellow flowers, the stamens have violet hairs, this is native in S.W.England where it grows on open, dry rocky grassland. Elsewhere it has escaped from gardens, and colonises waste places.

Warwickshire now

Wasteground at Hill Wootton, Bidford on Avon and Bearley.

Warwickshire Past

Not native, 1st record 1873, very infrequent casual in Warwick-Wilnecote area.

National status

Locally frequent in the extreme S.W. of England, nationally scarce.

Risks/conservation measures

Herbicides, scrub invasion.

Verbena officinalis L. Vervain.

A perennial of bare rough ground with wiry spikes of tiny lilac flowers, used in herbal remedies or 'simples' and locally once known as Simpler's joy. It also was used in exorcism: 'Vervain and Dill hinder witches from their will'

Warwickshire now

Water Orton sidings and Cross Hands quarry.

Warwickshire Past

Doubtfully native, 1st record 1817, declining, once moderately widespread in the S.

National status

Locally common in S.England, rare casual elsewhere.

Risks/conservation measures

Clearance of waste ground, scrub invasion.

***Vicia lutea* L. Yellow-vetch NSS.**

A sprawling annual with tiny yellow flowers, only native on the coast.

Warwickshire now

Near Brandon wood on 3 occasions between 1977 and 1992, perhaps introduced with grass-seed.

Warwickshire Past

No records.

National status

Very infrequent on cliffs and beaches, declining. Its seeds can remain dormant until competing perennials are killed by drought or fire.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss, scrub invasion.

***Vicia parviflora* Cav. Slender Tare. NSS.**

A delicate climbing annual with small pale blue flowers, colonising calcareous clay soil, another of the 'arable annuals', but also found in grassland.

Warwickshire now

Arable fields at Oxhouse farm and Walton, wasteground at Alderminster, Lighthorne quarry.

Warwickshire Past

wksp

Rare in the S., associated with the limestone area.

National status

Very significantly declining, now rare due to intensive agriculture.

Risks/conservation measures

Herbicides, competition from vigorous crops and 'improved' grass.

***Viola canina* ssp. *canina* L. Heath Dog-violet**

A scentless perennial violet of heaths, dunes and fens, recognised from the commoner dog-violets by its yellow spur and the absence of leaf-rosettes.

Warwickshire now

Coombe country park where it is native, and at Warwick where it was introduced with sea-sand and is well established.

Warwickshire Past

Rare in the N. and C., very seriously declining.

National status

Uncommon, a third of its sites have been lost.

Risks/conservation measures

Loss of habitat.

***Viola palustris* ssp. *palustris* L. Marsh violet.**

An elegant perennial with glossy leaves and pale lilac petals with dark blue veins.

Warwickshire now

Clowes wood and Hay wood.

Warwickshire Past

Very significant decline, once 'occasional' in the N.

National status

Absent from most of C. and E. England, in suitable habitats elsewhere.

Risks/conservation measures

Habitat loss The other 6 sites in Warwickshire were drained and developed.

LAST ENTRY