

BSBI
(www.bsbi.org.uk)
VC 60 News April 2010

INTRODUCTION

This Newsletter is a brief update on what is happening in the vice-county.

EXTINCT AND RARE SPECIES

Rare species monitoring has continued. So far data for 32 species found in VCs 59, 60 and Lancashire 64 has been assembled. Five species have not been seen for 30 years or are known to have disappeared more recently. Two more species were only found on the Sefton coast having disappeared from the rest of the region. However sometimes species reappear after a long absence. Of the remaining 25 species many are confined to one or two sites and total population sizes are fewer than ten plants. Other more frequent species have lost 50% of their localities in the last 30 years. For one of these the picture is complex. *Parnassia palustris* has gone from many inland sites but at some, leaves have been seen early in the year but by flowering time, usually in September, either a colony is reduced to one or two flowers or nothing is found. More work is needed to discover what is really taking place.

It has also been found that where species occur inland as well as on the Sefton sand dunes they often seem to be doing very well on the coast but disappearing inland. Good examples are *Blysmus compressus* and *Gentianella campestris*, the former confined to two sites in VC 60 and the latter probably now gone from its last site in northern Lancashire.

Species chosen by BSBI for monitoring nationally are added to the Lancashire monitoring list. This year the only national species selected and occurring in the region is *Chrysanthemum segatum*. This was until recently frequent in the Fylde and as a consequence there are few localised records. It is believed it may now be a much rarer plant. The local list of species includes *Calystegia soldanella*, *Genista tinctoria*, *Gentianella amarella* and *Jasione montana*. All are known to have declined recently so that it is important to identify and record the size of remaining populations.

As well as informing the Wildlife Trust of the results of this work the information is also passed to the Lancashire Biodiversity Partnership who have selected some 300 species to be included in a 'long-list' of Biodiversity Action (BAP) species.

A FLORA OF NORTHERN LANCASHIRE

I completed a draft of the Flora during the year and in the autumn, in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust, initiated discussions with three possible publishers. All are interested in the project but they all require a large grant to produce the book. The Flora is large with over 600 pages and with small anticipated sales a retail price of near £50 may not recoup costs. All agree that with a shelf life of 50 to 100 years any form of electronic publishing is not feasible. At least guide lines of what is possible are to hand and the next steps are to find the means to publish.

However one of the problems in preparing a Flora over such a long time-scale is that the taxonomy and nomenclature change. Thus the publication this month of Stace's 3rd edition of his *New Flora of the British Isles* means there is a lot of editing to do on top of what will be a huge job of preparing the draft for publication.

BSBI RECORDER

BSBI Recorder was published in April with a number of fascinating articles. Of particular interest to VC 60 was one about the endemic *Fumaria purpurea* by Alex Lockton. *F. purpurea* is a threatened species in the UK with a curious disjunct distribution extending from Cornwall to the Orkney Islands. Within this range there are distinct clusters of records and one of these is in VC 60. It is a difficult species to identify and its erratic appearance makes monitoring difficult. Much of the article discusses these problems but concludes that it is holding its own. A plea is made for regular monitoring of populations or tetrads where it is known to occur.

There is also a reminder that BSBI records in decadal date classes and that 2010 marks the start of a new recording decade.

RECORDING 2010

I would be particularly grateful for any information on populations of the rare species selected for monitoring this year. However as a new decade has arrived for general tetrad recording species lists for any tetrad would be welcome.

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