

FLORANews



Newsletter of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Flora Group

Autumn '98

Dear Flora Group Member

The Flora Group Committee hope that you enjoyed the events held during the spring and summer and we look forward to seeing you at some of the events planned for the coming autumn and winter season. If you have any ideas for future events, tasks, training days etc, please let Catherine Chatters (Flora Group Secretary) know. Catherine's address and telephone number are given at the end of this newsletter.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 20 September 1998 - 10.30am Rose Identification Training Day

Leader: Paul Stanley

Flora Group member, Paul Stanley, has kindly agreed to lead a training day on the identification of roses. The day will involve visiting parts of the New Forest to familiarise ourselves with the many species and hybrids of roses. Paul will help us separate out the commonplace from the more unusual and we will get to know the majority of roses to be found in Hampshire. During the first part of the day (before lunch) we will start with the glandular roses and move onto hybrids. After lunch the training will be much more informal and those who wish to stay on can enjoy a general look at sites rich in different roses. The distribution of roses in the New Forest means we will be visiting a number of locations and will not end up near to where we start; therefore if at all possible please try to share a car. Meet at 10.30am at Godshill Cricket Pitch carpark at grid reference SU183151.

Saturday 26 September 1998 - 10.30am Atlas 2000: Salicornia Safari

Leader: Pete Selby

In Hampshire we are fortunate to have eight

species of glasswort and a hybrid and these have all been recorded at the Gutner Saltmarsh on Hayling Island. The *Salicornia* aggregate species have been recorded along much of the coastline but with a gap in the middle, mainly on the eastern side of Southampton Water. There are saltmarshes along this coast, as far up as central Southampton. *Salicornia ramosissima* appears to be the most common species, with *Salicornia dolichostachya* the next most recorded even though *Salicornia pusilla* would appear to be more common from the data in The Flora of Hampshire. There is of course only one way to find out more about the distribution of glassworts and that is to go looking around the end of September. Pete Selby (Atlas 2000 co-ordinator for South Hampshire) has therefore organised a *Salicornia* Safari to look specifically at *Salicornias* in as many places as conveniently possible. Please come along with wellies, jerseys and lenses to tramp across the saltmarshes hunting for these fascinating but difficult-to-identify plants. The recording effort will be focused around the River Hamble to record from SU 41, SU 51, SU 40 and SU 50. Meet at 10.30am at Brixedone Farm (grid reference SU 496102). This appears from the map to be in the middle of the M27 but is actually under the motorway where it crosses the Hamble. Approach from the small road which joins the A27 at SU 491098. The start point is under cover so you can at least get out of your car in the dry.

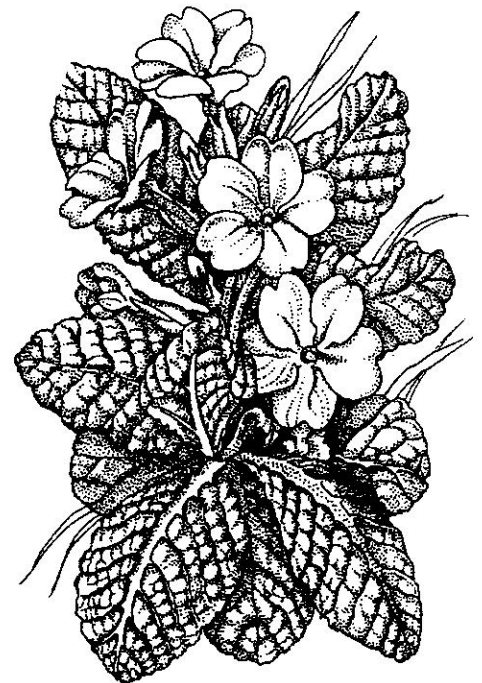
Sunday 17 October 1998 - 10.30am Whiteparish Common: Joint Event with Wiltshire Botanical Society

Leader: Neil Sanderson

Enjoy an autumn day on the Hampshire/Wiltshire border exploring the woodland at Whiteparish Common. Until the 1950s much of the Common was managed as wood-pasture and grazed by cattle. Whiteparish

Common is of particular interest for its stands of small-leaved lime. We will spend the morning with Neil Sanderson who has offered to lead a session looking at the small-leaved lime trees in this wood-pasture context. Lunch can be taken in one of the pubs in the nearby village of Whiteparish or you can bring sandwiches. As Whiteparish Common is close to the Wiltshire/Hampshire border we look forward to joining up with members of the Wiltshire Botanical Society. The Flora Group is grateful to the owner of the Common, Mr Mitchell, for giving us permission to visit the woodlands.

Meet at 10.30am along the track at grid reference SU 250220; please note that the meeting place is the dead end road, not the junction of minor public roads as indicated in the previous newsletter. If anyone would like a map showing the meeting place, please send Catherine Chatters a request, together with a stamped addressed envelope.



Saturday 14 November 1998 - 2pm
Atlas 2000: Second Exhibition Meeting
Bishopstoke Community Centre, Church
Road, Bishopstoke
Leader: Pete Selby

The meeting last year proved popular and enjoyable and so Pete Selby has arranged another Exhibition Meeting again this year. The date set is Saturday 14 November by when all the submissions for the year should have been made to the BRC. The database will be set up so any lists can be printed and the distribution maps viewed. There will also be tea and cakes. Please bring any interesting specimens that you have had determined during the year so that other people can learn to recognise them for next year. Once again Pete would be grateful for donations to cover the cost of the hall and postage costs for the coming season. The meeting will take place from 2-4.30pm at Bishopstoke Community Centre, Church

Road, Bishopstoke. Approach via St Mary's Road and Sydney Road and there is lots of parking at the hall (SU 467198).

Saturday 21 November 1998 - 10.30am
Red-tipped Cudweed Conservation
Task at Fleet
Leader: Chris Hall

Once again Chris Hall has kindly agreed to lead a work party to help conserve the population of red-tipped cudweed *Filago lutescens* on the road verge at Broomhurst Farm. This cudweed is one of Britain's rarest wild plants and without management at this site it would not survive as it would become overrun by gorse and brambles in a few years. Come along to help manage the site and contribute to the survival of one of Hampshire's special plants. Meet at 10.30am at the entrance to Broomhurst Farm off the B3013 north of Fleet (grid reference SU 812563). Tools will be provided but bring a garden fork if you have one. It is likely that the necessary work will be completed during the morning.

Sunday 10 January 1999 10.30 am
Scrub Clearance in the New Forest
Leader: Neil Sanderson

Neil Sanderson has kindly offered to lead another important half-day scrub clearance task to benefit the flora of base-rich patches in New Forest valley mires. On 6 June 1998 Flora Group members revisited the site where we carried out work during 1995 and 1996 and the results of the monitoring are given in this newsletter under the "News and Views" section. On Sunday 10 January 1999 we will be carrying out more work aimed at benefiting restricted species such as bog sedge *Carex limosa* and slender cotton grass *Eriophorum gracile*. Meet at the Stony Moors carpark (grid reference SZ 211993) near Holmsley Campsite at 10.30am. Expect cold weather and wet conditions under foot. Tools will be provided but bring your own if you wish. If you require more information, please contact Neil on 01703-844442.

Sunday 21 February 1999 - 10.30am
Tower Mustard *Arabis glabra*
Conservation Task at Woolmer
Leader: Clive Chatters

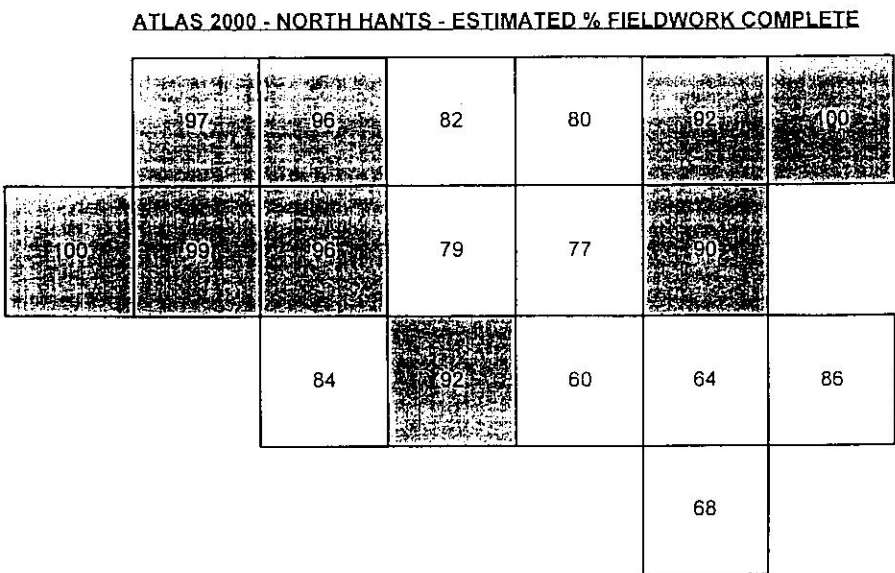
The UK Biodiversity Group has recently published Action Plans relating to vascular plants, one of which is tower mustard *Arabis glabra*. In Britain this species is very

restricted in its distribution and is classified as a vulnerable species. Tower mustard grows at two localities in Hampshire. It is a species of light, freely draining soils on heathland. It tolerates some shade from other vegetation but does require areas of open ground for seedling establishment and has therefore tended to grow where disturbance by clearance or grazing has provided this. The site where it grows in Woolmer Forest is getting invaded by encroaching scrub and the Ministry of Defence which owns the land has given Flora Group members permission to carry out scrub clearance work during February 1999. Tools will be provided but bring your own if you have any. Meet at 10.30am at the junction of the minor road with the track leading southwards at grid reference SU 814337, where there is a small lay-by and an old pollarded tree on the south side of the road. We will then walk along the track to the work site. If you would like a map showing the meeting place, please send a stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters.

ATLAS 2000

Atlas 2000 Progress Report - North Hampshire

The accompanying chart shows the estimated state of completion of the fieldwork in the



North, and updates that published in the previous newsletter. The squares that appear not to be moving are in fact being actively worked on and will catch up at the end of the season.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who have sent me the results of their fieldwork and site surveys. I am still planning to submit all remaining master cards at the end of this season, which will leave 1999 for troubleshooting.

If anyone has lists for reserves and other sites from surveys since 1987, I would be very grateful to receive a copy. Has anyone lists for Mapledurwell Fen or Micheldever Spoil Heaps?

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Atlas 2000 Progress Report - South Hampshire

Recording continues apace but of course there is still a lot to find. To date 17 10km squares have been submitted, either to BRC or to an adjacent county. A further 10 squares will be submitted at the end of this season, together with significant updates on the first 17 squares. That will then allow one more year's recording to complete the coverage.

I will then be making submissions during October this year so if you have any cards hidden away, or records in notebooks that are still to be transcribed, please send them to me before October. I would like to thank all those who have so far submitted records and also thank you for answering my queries about dates and grid references.

We have had several special recording meetings this season which have generated lots of new records. They have also meant that I have visited lots of bits of Hampshire

which has been an education in itself. I have also greatly enjoyed botanising with so many different people.

Reports of Atlas 2000 field meetings:-

West of the New Forest in SU 21 and SU 20. Saturday 2 May. Three parties recorded on the border between these two squares. Lots of early plants were found including *Moenchia erecta* and *Chamaemelum nobile* and an early flowering *Sagina subulata*.

Petersfield, SU 72. Saturday 23 May. Four parties made some excellent finds including herb paris and lesser butterfly orchid, early purple, common spotted and common twayblade, all in a small coppice. Total species recorded for this square is now over 500, but lots more to find. The recording sheets from Liss Forest were extremely rich in species, both native and alien.

North of Christchurch, SZ 19. Sunday 14 June. Yes it was a wet meeting but still good with lots of *Lotus subbiflorus* and also two records of *Trifolium glomeratum*.

Two further meetings have been held at Lepe, SZ 49 on 25 July and at Stockbridge, SU 33 on 2 August. These meetings are a very useful way of learning how and what to record. If you come along you are split into parties of two or three and sent off to look in particular squares where records are required. Usually people come back with bits and pieces of mystery plants which are generally debated at the end of the day. You will be made very welcome if you would like to attend future meetings.

Pete Selby
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Pete has kindly arranged future Atlas 2000 meetings on 26 September 1998 and 14 November 1998. The meetings have been



arranged under the auspices of the BSBI and Flora Group members are welcome to attend.

NEW AND VIEWS

Flora Group AGM

The Flora Group AGM was held on Saturday 16 May 1998 and was attended by twelve members who enjoyed a walk through Pamber Forest Local Nature Reserve kindly led by Graham Dennis, the Trust's Reserve Warden. Graham showed us the encouraging effects of the re-establishment of grazing in this important area of wood pasture in the north of the county and we were grateful to him for giving up his morning to take us round the Forest. If anyone would like a copy of the brief report on the AGM, please send a stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters.

Acid Grasslands

Over the last couple of years we have been reviewing information that suggests the botanical importance of our acid grasslands may have been under regarded by conservationists. Where a parched grassland on sand or gravel is kept open by grazing and

disturbance it can support an exceptionally rich flora. The species turning up on acid grasslands are making us reconsider some long accepted 'truths'. The Copythorne Common grasslands in the New Forest support the expected purple moor grass and chamomile but also salad burnet and basil thyme. A recent survey of this area by John Rowe has revealed an exceptionally interesting flora. Similarly Tony Mundell's explorations of disused mineral workings in East Hampshire have found good populations of shepherd's cress *Teesdalia nudicaulis* and sheep's bit *Jasione montana*. Many of these species were once quite common throughout lowland England but are now highly restricted due to the loss of habitat and the decline in quality of the habitats that survive. Now we are seeing a revival in grazing heaths and grassland, and are moving towards creating new habitats in sites such as mineral workings and marginal farmlands. Recorders may be rewarded by spending more time in these sites.

Clive Chatters

Hedgehog Fungi in the New Forest

The production of Gordon Dickson and Ann Leonard's Mycota of the New Forest has spurred the Trust into thinking more about the conservation needs of our rare native fungi. Earlier this year one of the rarest of the New Forest fungi *Hericium erinaceus*, a hedgehog fungus, received legal protection. This hedgehog fungus and its close relative the even rarer *H. coralloides* are known from the New Forest but we do not have an up-to-date understanding of their populations. Gordon Dickson is leading a series of surveys of New Forest woods this autumn. We need volunteers to join in to give as great a coverage as possible. Unlike many fungi the hedgehog fungi are not particularly difficult to identify and experts will be on hand to help when needed. If you are interested in helping and enjoying a pleasant autumnal walk in the New Forest, please contact Debbie Wicks at the Trust office.

Species Recovery

As this Flora Group newsletter goes to print we have just received confirmation that English Nature's Species Recovery Programme is able to assist with various studies. The hedgehog fungi study referred to elsewhere in this newsletter will be supported as will a re-survey of the legally protected lichens of the New Forest. Neil Sanderson carried out the original survey five years ago and now is the time to assess how successful we have been in conserving these species. The third study which has received Species Recovery support is a study of dung as a habitat. The dung of cattle and ponies can support an exceptionally rich range of species. Most of the species associated with dung are invertebrates and fungi but there are also important lower plants such as the moss *Splachnum ampullaceum*. Dung-enriched habitats are also known to support a rich vascular plant flora. We will be describing these species and their habitats and finding ways to encourage livestock owners to conserve them. If you would like to hear more about these studies, or could contribute ideas or offer your time to help with them, please contact Clive Chatters or Debbie Wicks at the Trust office.

Kew Millennium Seed Bank Appeal

Very many thanks to those members who have helped Kew by gathering seeds. This has been an odd year with some very poor "crops" of some species such as the narrow leaved lungwort *Pulmonaria longifolia*. Over the winter we expect to hear from Kew about which species they would like seed to be collected from during 1999. If you have already volunteered we will be in touch. If you would like to know more about becoming a volunteer, please contact Clive Chatters at the Trust office.

Records of Uncommon Plants in Gardens

Martin Noble has sent in the following record from his garden:-

"My garden is in the New Forest and is

based on the rather sandy soils of the local plateau gravels. It is of course very light and free draining and with very little shade so it is not suited to many perennial plants. It does however grow a variety of annuals and I tend to encourage these by leaving reasonably sized areas of bare soil for them to seed into. One of the species I have in the garden which I believe is quite rare in the wild nowadays is the lesser snapdragon *Misopates orontium*. It seeds itself into almost any patch of bare ground and is really quite common here although I have never seen it anywhere outside the garden".

If you have any records of unusual plants in your garden please send them to Mrs Mary Platt, Chalk Cottage, Soames Lane, Ropley, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 0ER.

Notable Finds

Hampshire Wildlife Trust member Ralph Cook has reported his discovery of star of Bethlehem *Ornithogalum umbellatum*; a thriving colony of the plant was found during spring 1998 in a grass ride at Morgaston Wood in North Hampshire on land owned by the National Trust.

Important Discoveries

The spring of 1998 saw great excitement on the Hampshire Coast with the discovery of two important plant populations. The childing pink *Petrorhagia nanteuilii* has been rediscovered on Hayling Island. This member of the carnation family looks like a tiny "sweet william" and was known around the mouth of Langstone Harbour until the 1960s. The plant was re-discovered by Delf Smith on the wide shingle beach at Hayling. It is growing in modest numbers where the gorse has been cleared by a wild fire and trampling is keeping the turf open. The population is now known to the owners who are very proud of having such a beautiful and important plant. Childing pink is known from only one other place in the country which is on the opposite side of Chichester Harbour. The plant is so rare that it is specially protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act.

Star clover *Trifolium stellatum* was only known from a small section of the Sussex coast. This year a strong population was found by Mervyn Southam and John Norton on the Hampshire coast near Browndown. Star clover is relatively common in the warmer, drier parts of nearby mainland Europe but its status as a native in Britain is open to debate. The newly discovered Hampshire population raised the question whether it could be native. Dr Francis Rose has seen the Hampshire plants and believes we should be expecting such species to be colonising our warmer coastal zones. Global warming may be encouraging some of the more mobile species currently known from nearby France to establish populations on this side of the Channel.

Clive Chatters

Eelmoor: A Floral Resurrection

In 1994 Paul Edgar, Hampshire's Heathland Project Officer, asked me to carry out a botanical survey of Eelmoor Marsh SSSI near Farnborough. Paul had been using contractors to clear the pines that dominated

where a heath ought to be and was hoping to convince the Ministry of Defence of the merits of grazing the site. On this he was successful: three years ago horses and cattle were reintroduced to what had once been a heathland common.

The 1994 survey has been a baseline against which to compare subsequent annual monitoring of key species. Three years of low density mixed grazing together with mechanical help targeted at the ranker growth has produced spectacular results.

Eelmoor Marsh in 1994 was in a sorry state. Much of it was well on the way to becoming a pine forest, drainage ditches had been cut into all the wet areas and several acres had been used as a spoil dump. Despite this, it still supported some quality plants and the grasslands had no less than 25 indicator species. Amongst the more noteworthy were five species of insectivorous plants, about 300 plants of *Viola lactea*, *Dactylorhiza incarnata* ssp. *pulchella* at one of only two

Hampshire sites outside the New Forest and 16 species of sedge, including *C. distans* and *C. hostiana*. However, there was a look of relic populations, plants in retreat, of a site where mowing had prolonged the life of some colonies but could never save them indefinitely. The conservation group that had been recording the SSSI since 1975 had a long list of places where species had not been seen for some years.

Three years later much has changed. The grassland indicator list has risen to 27 due to the reappearance of *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and the discovery this year of *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, a new site record. Other orchids are also doing well, notably *Epipactis palustris*, which had consistently produced around 20 spikes for 15 years. In 1998 it has topped 160.

Viola lactea has reappeared at three of its 'lost' sites while the main colony expands further across grassland each year. There are now over 2000 plants. *Parentucellia viscosa*, once present in hundreds, had disappeared

by 1990, but is now back with two sites and 300 plants.

The increase in sundews and butterworts is almost off the scale. *Pinguicula lusitanica*, in modern times confined to the ditches, has begun to reappear in hollows on the surface of the heath. *Drosera intermedia* has increased five-fold. But perhaps the most spectacular increase has been of *Carex hostiana*. From a perilously low five spikes in 1994 it has an estimated 1100 now. Much of this has been achieved using low level, year round mixed grazing, a regime which does not farm the large herbivores, but allows them to become part of the eco-system. Furthermore, it is a regime which conserves the fauna as well, which is essential on a site with so many nationally scarce invertebrates. There is a sense, too, that there is more to come, that restoration of these degraded heaths is not achieved in a season and probably requires a minimum of ten. Much of the success at Eelmoor is due to the initial works undertaken by Paul Edgar, the involvement and zoological guidance of Marwell Zoological Trust and the generous support of the landowner, the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency.

Chris Hall

Plantago coronopus in the North West - Overlooked or Spreading?

The Flora maps *Plantago coronopus* (buck's-horn plantain) as a coastal/New Forest/ North-east species. In recent months I have been surprised to find it in the north-west, so far in 3 10km squares where it is not shown in the Flora:-

SU 652535	Daneshill, Basingstoke
SU 346466	Andover Ring Road
SU 460375	Between Sutton Scotney and South Wonston

All these sites are along the extreme edge of the verge of fairly busy roads, and this suggest that salting of roads may be providing the niche, much as has happened with *Cochlearia danica*. In each case there were numerous plants along a length of the



verge, suggesting that it is spreading. The current distribution of this species may prove interesting, but take care as this habitat is most dangerous to work in!

Mike Wildish

Flora Group Conservation Work at Wilverley Bog

Neil Sanderson who has led a number of Flora Group tasks to clear scrub from base-rich patches within Wilverley Bog in the New Forest, has compiled this report following the Flora Group visit to monitor the site on 6 June 1998:-

"Seven Flora Group members revisited the site of our 1995 and 1996 coppicing at Wilverley Bog to assess the impact of our work. Pony browsing on the regrowing shrubs has been intermittent but has been enough to prevent vigorous regrowth. Many dead stumps are present but some alder is slowly regrowing as rather stunted coppice.

For the time being this is not a concern; it is widely spaced and is providing cover for some taller herbs to flower. The changes in the flora have been dramatic. The regionally rare bog moss *Sphagnum teres* has increased massively as have *Anagallis tenella*, *Carex rostrata*, *Carex viridula* 'oedocarpa', *Equisetum fluviatile* and *Scutellaria minor*. Especially striking, however, is the number of open bog species which have appeared, either by spreading in or from propagules, including the regionally rare *Carex limosa*, *Drosera anglica* and *Sphagnum contortum* along with *Carex echinata*, *Dactylorhiza incarnata pulchella*, *Drosera intermedia*, *Drosera rotundifolia*, *Eleocharis multicaulis*, *Eriophorum angustifolium*, *Narthecium ossifragum*, *Pedicularis palustris*, *Rhynchospora alba* and *Utricularia minor*. On top of this remarkable flora, a small patch of the uncommon fen moss *Calliergon giganteum* was found in the cleared area. This species had not been seen at this site before and previously has mainly been recorded from marl pits ponds in the Forest, although there is an undated old record from 'near Holmsley station' which probably

refers to the large fen, now lost to scrub, further west in the same mire system. All that is lacking from the cut area at the moment are the mats of the specialist brown mosses *Campyllum stellatum* and *Drepanocladus revolvens* but more generalist *Calliergon cuspidatum* is abundant so these species may yet appear.

This conservation work has been a resounding success and clearly indicates that further selective coppicing of sallow-alder stands in Forest mires should be considered.

After examining our earlier work a list was made from the newly cleared site to the west. This has *Carex limosa* and *Carex lasiocarpa* on the edge of the cleared area and rare *Sphagnum teres* within the coppiced area so more exciting results are anticipated.

Afterwards general botanising was carried out to the west towards the main unthreatened base enriched area in this mire. Plentiful flowering *Carex lasiocarpa* was seen along with mats of base demanding bog mosses and brown mosses but the most striking plant seen was a large photogenic colony of the moss *Splachnum ampullaceum*. This bizarre moss grows only on animal dung in very wet mires and has swollen brightly coloured capsule bases. These are thought to attract dung flies which then transplant the spores to new deposits of dung. Needless to say this moss has had a catastrophic crash in the lowlands in recent decades, little dung falls into bogs nowadays, and may be extinct in the lowlands beyond the Forest. "If anyone would like a copy of Neil's full monitoring report, please send a stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters.

Hampshire Habitat Survey

This Trust project intends to describe the habitats of Hampshire. The survey methods are not designed to provide very detailed botanical accounts or to search for rare species, but inevitably certain important species do turn up. Interesting records for 1998 from the surveyors John Rowe (JR) and Ian Ralphs (IR) include the following:

- Red pondweed; *Potamogeton alpinus*, near Barley Heath (SU7253) IR
- Wild Tulip; *Tulipa sylvestris* Rockbourne (SU11) IR
- Bulbous False Oat Grass; *Arrhenatherum elatius* var *bulbosum* In coppice field layer, Swan Pond copse (Isle of Wight) IR
- Awnless Brome; *Bromus inermis*, Flattened meadow grass; *Poa compressa* and Reflexed saltmarsh grass; *Puccinellia distans*, all found on roundabouts in Basingstoke IR
- Hybrid Fescue/Ryegrass; *X Festulolium Braunii*, bank by Basingstone railway station IR
- Hybrid spurge; *Euphorbia X Pseudovirgata* Hollybush Hill, Farnborough IR
- Narrow Leaved Bittercress; *Cardamine impatiens* Catham Copse, Bentley. This is the first Hampshire record since 1977 JR

The Trust's project work on Species and Habitat Conservation is supported by World Wide Fund for Nature (UK)



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