



TREND IN THE PEAK DISTRICT:

Stable.

ESTIMATED POPULATION IN THE PEAK DISTRICT:

34 colonies in 8 White Peak dales.

NATIONAL BAP STATUS:

Priority Species

ASSOCIATED PEAK DISTRICT ACTION PLANS:

Habitats: Limestone Dales.

INTRODUCTION

Appleyard's feather-moss (*Brachythecium appleyardiae*) is a rare moss found within Derbyshire, so far, at only eight sites within the White Peak. Although this moss has also been found at one site in Somerset and one site in Wiltshire, the Peak District is the British stronghold for the species. Formerly Appleyard's feather-moss was thought to be endemic to Britain, but it has since been found in Germany and Northern Ireland.

At all its Peak District sites, Appleyard's feather-moss grows at the bottom of limestone cliffs under low overhangs, about 0.6 - 1m high. Inland cliffs form an integral part of the dales habitat, and it is likely that other populations of the species occur on cliffs where these very specific conditions are met. These low overhangs protect the species from both physical damage and direct rainfall.

Appleyard's feather-moss is provisionally classified as 'near threatened' in Britain, and 'vulnerable' in Europe. Derbyshire holds the largest populations of the species.

ADVERSE IMPACTS

- Scrub encroachment leading to shading out of the species.
- Unintentional damage by visitors and climbers.
- Unlicensed collection by bryologists.

CURRENT ACTION

Designated Sites

- Five of the eight Derbyshire sites are protected within SSSIs, all of which are also within the Peak District Dales cSAC.

Sites Owned and Managed by Conservation Organisations

- Of the five SSSI sites, two lie within the Derbyshire Dales NNR and are managed by EN and one is owned and managed by DWT.

Survey and Research

- A survey of the eight populations of the species within the White Peak is currently underway, and this will detail site specific management requirements.

ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

National Targets

- Maintain populations at all extant sites, and increase the extent of these populations if appropriate and feasible.
- Establish by 2005 *ex situ* stocks of this species to safeguard extant populations.

A Vision for the Peak District

The Peak District is probably the world stronghold for Appleyard's feather-moss. Decline or loss of any Peak District sites would therefore be of global conservation concern. Thus, targets for this very special species are in line with those set nationally and the actions proposed have been devised to address the site specific needs for individual populations.

For such a globally rare moss *ex situ* stocks are often maintained in order to ensure the survival of the species. The action plan needs to consider the development of collection techniques using the Peak District populations, to meet national requirements for *ex situ* stocks.

OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

Objective 1

Maintain the population and distribution of Appleyard's feather-moss within the Peak District.

Targets

Complete survey of known sites by 2001.

Secure favourable management for the species at all known sites by 2002.

Initiate monitoring programme by 2002.

Continue maintenance of favourable condition and amend management in the light of increased knowledge.

Objective 2

Consider the need to develop collection techniques using Peak District populations.

Target

Establish, by 2005, the need for developing collection techniques in the Peak District.

Main Factors Likely to Affect Achievement of Targets

Lack of appropriate knowledge of specific requirements for the species.

Lack of knowledge of collection techniques for *ex-situ* conservation.

Conflicts with other ecological conservation priorities in terms of management.

ACTIONS

Key to the achievement of the proposed targets are the actions relating to:

- the survey and monitoring of known sites (Actions AF3 and AF6)
- negotiation of appropriate management (AF9 and 10).

ACTIONS		TIMESCALE	LEAD AGE & Partners
DATA COLLATION AND SURVEY			
Data Collation			
AF1	Collate information on all known sites. (Objective 1)	2001	EN
AF2	Compile a register of sites and initiate a system for regular up-dating. (Objective 1)	2001	EN
Survey			
AF3	Complete survey of eight known sites. (Objective 1)	2001	EN
EVALUATING THE IMPORTANCE AND CONDITION OF SITES			
Defining Favourable Condition			
AF4	Agree definitions of favourable condition. (Objective 1)	2001	EN
AF5	Agree guidelines for the range of appropriate management needed to achieve favourable condition. (Objective 1)	2001	EN
MONITORING			
AF6	Initiate a monitoring programme for known sites and ensure results are collated and used to update the register. (Objective 1)	2001	EN

AWARENESS-RAISING

AF7	Share information on the wildlife importance and management needs of key sites with the landowners/managers, including feedback from surveys. (Objective 1)	2001 onwards	EN/PDNPA
AF8	Consider the need for awareness raising amongst conservation organisation staff with regard to the species' ecology and management requirements and implement if necessary. (Objective 1)	2002	EN

CONSERVATION ACTION AND INCENTIVES

Negotiation and Review of Agreements

AF9	Review management of all sites within SSSIs. Where necessary agree revised management regimes with owners/managers through appropriate mechanisms, such as WES to ensure maintenance or restoration of favourable condition. (Objective 1)	2002	EN/DWT
AF10	If appropriate, negotiate conservation agreements with land owners/managers of all known sites for Appleyard's feather-moss outside SSSIs, in order to achieve maintenance or restoration of favourable condition. (Objective 1)	2002	EN/DWT/PDNPA

Direct Action

AF11	Assess need for, and if necessary develop, strategy for collection techniques for ex situ stocks. (Objective 2)	2005	EN
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RESOURCES

It is envisaged that the majority of the actions proposed will be carried out by the relevant organisations using current resources.