



## Managing for bespoke species/assemblages within Countryside Stewardship – guidance template

Species/assemblage name	Conservation status
<p>Marsh Mallow Moth (<i>Hydraecia osseola subsp. hucherardi</i>)</p>  <p>Marsh Mallow Moth (David Green)</p>	<p>Section 41, RDB</p>  <p>Marsh Mallow (Mark Parsons/Butterfly Conservation)</p>
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>This species has an annual life cycle and is found on a few sites on Romney Marsh, Kent/East Sussex border, and along the Medway around Rochester, Kent. It frequents grazing levels and the banks of brackish rivers, being found amongst stands of the larval foodplant, marsh mallow. Overwinters as an egg, the larva feeds within the stems and roots from May until late July. The adult flies at night in late August and September.</p> <p>Ditch clearance and grazing have impacted upon this species, and in some cases fencing off areas of marsh mallow may be required to protect these from overgrazing. Shading from scrub/trees could also be an additional threat</p> <p>This species requires stands of the larval foodplant, with a minimum of 100 plants or 300 flowering spikes, the plants ideally in close proximity to each other. The species fares better in drier situations (i.e. not damp underfoot during the summer months). If larval foodplant introductions are undertaken, some sward preparation and post-planting care may be necessary.</p>	
<p><b>Why a bespoke species/assemblage?</b></p> <p>This species is limited by its foodplant supply and additional stands of this are required. There is evidence to indicate a loss of marsh mallow, particularly on Romney Marsh, so planting in suitable areas is likely to be beneficial. Careful management of extant sites, to avoid an impact on existing stands of the foodplant, will also be needed.</p>	

## When and where to apply this guidance

Romney Marsh, Kent/East Sussex border, and the River Medway around Rochester.  
Possible areas around Pett Levels and Rye Harbour, E. Sussex, could be considered.  
Planting out of seedling marsh mallow can be undertaken in June/July.

## Developing a Countryside Stewardship agreement

### Relevant CS options

WT3	Management of ditches of high environmental value
GS13	Management of grassland for target features
CT3	Management of coastal saltmarsh
SP9	Threatened species supplement
FM2	Major preparatory works for threatened species

**The aim of management should be to retain any stands of marsh mallow and encourage additional plants to become established. Where ditches need managing marsh mallow should be left in situ, particularly on the upper margins of ditches and along the tops of ditch banks.**

### Prescription guidance for WT3

P340 - Where vegetation removal is done by cutting, cut above the base of the ditch, leaving the roots in the base. [Retain a fringe of emergent vegetation on both sides/one side of the ditch.]

P342 - Leave [at least [50%] of areas of Marsh Mallow] unmanaged during any one operation. [Manage these lengths at another point in the rotation. [Do not manage all ditches in any one year.]

P343 - Place the arisings [in the adjacent field]. Do not use the material to fill hollows or low areas within the field, or place it on historic or archaeological features. [Spread spoil thinly to prevent a spoil bank from forming.]

P344 - Following ditch maintenance, re-establish bankside vegetation by [natural regeneration or plug planting of marsh mallow].

### Prescription guidance for GS13

P673 – Agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage, in writing with Natural England before undertaking any works.

[in all years], species [Marsh Mallow should be (locally) frequent and undamaged by grazing], and flowering during [September]

P530- Do not manage all the ditches covered by this option in the same year.

### Prescription guidance for SP9/FM2

On grassland sites grazing animals should be excluded from key Marsh Mallow areas using

fencing. In addition, new areas for Marsh Mallow moth can be created by excluding stock and introducing the foodplant, for example by plug planting. Competing vegetation may need controlling through cutting.

P697 - Carry out the management for [Marsh Mallow Moth][so that by year [X] [Marsh Mallow is locally frequent in stands of 300 or more flower spikes and livestock are excluded]] as set out in XXXX/Implementation Plan/Feasibility Study produced by [name, organisation] dated [date]].

### **Prescription guidance for CT3**

P26 – Only undertake works to sea defences or water inlet and outlet systems [as set out in the capital works plan] [as follows [XXXX] in the areas identified in [MAP REF] [in years XXXX] [between DATES]].

P42 – [Control/Manage] [Common Reed in areas where it is competing with Marsh Mallow] [in XXXX] [by cutting] so that [by year [3]] cover [of the [LOCATION]] is no more than [50]%. [Remove all cut material.]

P192 - Exclude all livestock.

P673 – Agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage, in writing with Natural England before undertaking any works.

### **Monitoring**

Torch light transects by a specialist. A surrogate at sites known to support the moth would be to monitor the extent of marsh mallow plant. Extant sites should be monitored annually.

### **Further information**

A factsheet is available at: [http://butterfly-conservation.org/files/1.marsh\\_mallow\\_moth-psf.pdf](http://butterfly-conservation.org/files/1.marsh_mallow_moth-psf.pdf).

See also:

Parsons, M.S. & Clancy, S.P. 2008. Conservation of the Marsh Mallow Moth *Hydraecia osseola hucherardi* Mabille (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) on Romney Marsh. *British Journal of Entomology & Natural History*, **21**: 61-74.

Waring, P. & Townsend M. 2009. *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*. British Wildlife Publishing, Gillingham. (Second edition).

A series of annual reports covering the monitoring of this species have been produced by Butterfly Conservation.

### **Authorship/version control**

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