



## Habitat management for the Northern Brown Argus

The overall aim is to maintain a varied sward with a large proportion of Common Rock-rose areas in the medium (6-10cm) and tall (>10cm) categories. Site size is important - a minimum of 0.2ha is recommended to support a population.

### Grazing

The most suitable grazing regimes have yet to be determined, but light grazing levels of up to 0.2 LU/ha/year are recommended. Sites managed by more intensive grazing regimes may still support the butterfly, but at a low population density. Proven regimes include winter or late summer and autumn grazing (e.g. 4 sheep or 0.5 cattle per hectare for four months). Alternatively, lighter year round grazing can be used, but stocking levels should be reduced to no more than 0.1 LU/ha between April and July. However, on more fragile hill systems, and on sites in Scotland maintained primarily by rabbits, this may represent overgrazing. Care should also be taken to re-introducing grazing gradually on neglected sites..

### Mowing

Mowing is always a poor alternative to grazing. However, where grazing is impractical, a single annual cut in the autumn (September) can maintain suitable habitat. Grassland should be mown on rotation, leaving some areas uncut each year. Some sward variation can be achieved by adjusting the height of the mower.

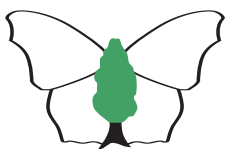
### Scrub control

Periodic scrub removal may be necessary at some sites although some light, well-spaced scrub is often beneficial to provide shelter, especially on more exposed sites. Scrub can be cut on a rotation of 10-15 years to maintain existing levels of cover, and where scrub reduction is necessary the stumps should be treated with herbicide to prevent regrowth. On neglected sites, concentrate on controlling scrub lying within mosaics of grassland and scrub, where the foodplant is still present, in preference to dense scrub.



above Breeding habitat showing varied sward structure

below Taller, sheltered grassland used for roosting



**Butterfly  
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

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