

This Species Action Plan sets out to maintain and improve wet woodland habitat on Caravan Club-owned sites, and has been drafted for Club Site Teams and Site Wardens. It provides background information on wet woodland and makes recommendations on sympathetic management for this habitat.

Introduction

Wet woodland or 'carr', is one of the most neglected woodland types in the UK, yet can be extremely rich in mosses, liverworts and invertebrates. Today it is a rare habitat, having suffered from extensive clearance and drainage over the last century. A number of endangered invertebrate species rely on the damp wood provided by wet woodland.

The Caravan Club audit 2006 revealed that 38 Club sites may support this habitat

How to recognise this habitat

- Occurs on seasonally wet or poorly draining soils
- Ash, beech, willow, and particularly alder are usually the dominant tree species
- Usually associated with water bodies, or can occur in a mosaic with dry woodland
- Boundaries may be sharply defined or grade into other woodland or wetland areas



Credit: Roger Key/Natural England

Current status

- In the late 1980's the Nature Conservancy Council estimated that only 50,000-70,000 hectares of wet woodland remained in the UK, of which 25,000-30,000 hectares were thought to be ancient wet woodland
- Some 5-10% of wet woodlands are listed as SSSI's. Some of these habitats are bog woodland and alluvial forests, which are listed under Annex 1 of the EC Habitats Directive and may therefore be classified as SAC's
- Tree felling and changes in water level management must be approved by the Environment Agencies (England & Wales, Environment Agency; Scotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency)
- Factors causing loss or decline:
 - Habitat loss, fragmentation and pollution
 - Neglect, overgrazing and excessive tidying
 - Invasion by non native plant species
 - Abstraction, lowering of water tables or changes in water regimes

Ecology/management requirements

Wet woodlands can be extremely species rich, particularly in bryophytes, lichens and invertebrates. Wet woodlands require a high water table, with seasonal fluctuations in water level. A variety of dead wood forms, on the ground, free standing, and in water, is necessary to conserve the high density of invertebrate species.

How to look after this habitat

	Site safeguard and management	Habitat management and protection
DO'S	<p>DO <u>Maintain</u> the current extent and distribution of wet woodland across the site network, safeguarding known areas</p> <p>DO <u>Remove all non-native invasive species</u> from areas of wet woodland</p> <p>DO <u>Avoid flood prevention measures, drainage and water abstraction</u> in and around areas of wet woodland</p> <p>DO Implement suitably structured <u>management</u> for wet woodland at all sites where present</p> <p>DO <u>Allow the increase amount of dead, rotting wood</u> in current wet woodland areas</p>	<p>DO <u>Survey</u> all sites to establish the exact status of this rare habitat</p> <p>DO <u>Prevent the return of invasive species</u> at all sites where they have been previously removed</p> <p>DO <u>Monitor</u> water table levels</p> <p>DO <u>Extend or buffer</u> areas of wet woodland by planting native species in adjacent areas</p> <p>DO <u>Record</u> additions to the distribution of National BAP species on existing and new wet woodland sites</p>
DON'TS	<p>DON'T <u>Drain</u> any areas of wet woodland</p> <p>DON'T Remove any dead, rotting wood</p>	<p>DON'T Allow to become dry woodland</p> <p>DON'T <u>Allow invasive species</u> (such as Indian balsam <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>) to establish in wet woodland areas</p>

For further information on this species visit:

The Caravan Club Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for wet woodland: <http://www.caravanclub.co.uk>

The UK BAP for wet woodland <http://www.ukbap.org.uk>