

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

Introduction

Scrub can be thought of as the intermediate stage in succession from more open habitats to woodland. Being a widespread habitat, the ecological importance of scrub is often overlooked. As an ecosystem in its own right, scrub is often highly complex, but frequently scrub is a component of other important habitat mosaics, such as calcareous grasslands, and woodlands. Scrub provides a food source for many species of invertebrate, as well as shelter, nesting opportunities and hibernation sites for a range of animal species.

The Caravan Club audit 2006 revealed that this habitat is present on 38 Club sites

How to recognise this habitat

- Scrub often grows up alongside linear habitat features, such as watercourses or railway embankments, or through the neglect of hedges
- There are three different types: lowland (dry and wet scrub), upland, and coastal scrub
- Composition varies with scrub type, but typical species include hawthorn, blackthorn, bramble, gorse, ivy, common juniper, privet, field rose, sea buckthorn, spindle, traveller's joy, grey willow, yew, and young trees of birch ash, and oak



Current status

- Although still a widespread and fairly common habitat, the extent of scrub across the UK has declined significantly in the last few decades
- It has often been under-valued in the past, even by conservationists. Many areas have been subjected to 'scrub control' under the misapprehension that scrub is of low biodiversity value
- In common with many other habitats, it has suffered as a result of agricultural intensification and development in recent decades
- Scrub also has an important role to play in the long-term future of other habitat types, being the successional stage preceding woodland habitat types

Ecology/management requirements

Scrub can support a wide range of plants, insects, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, including rare species such as man orchid, marsh pea, barred tooth-striped moth, purple gromwell, bladderseed, Suffolk lungwort, slow worm, great crested newt, bullfinch, song thrush, yellowhammer, dormouse, otter and bat species.

How to look after this habitat

	Site safeguard and management	Habitat management and protection
DO'S	<p>DO <u>Conserve existing scrub, and allow new areas to form where possible.</u> It may look 'untidy', but it is a valuable habitat for wildlife</p> <p>DO <u>Develop connectivity between scrub, hedgerow and woodland habitats,</u> to form wildlife corridors which encourage dispersal and colonisation in many plant and animal species</p> <p>DO <u>Allow scrub to develop into woodland habitats</u></p> <p>DO <u>Allow scrub to develop along woodland edges</u> – it provides an excellent buffer which will improve woodland habitat quality</p>	<p>DO <u>Remove any non-native species,</u> such as rhododendron and sycamore</p> <p>DO <u>Encourage a good range of native nut and fruit-bearing species,</u> for birds and possibly dormouse</p> <p>DO <u>Trim scrub only on an infrequent, rolling regime,</u> if strictly necessary – no more than half of overall scrub resource to be cut in any one year, and not during the bird breeding season</p>
DON'TS	<p>DON'T <u>Maintain all scrub as a 'static' habitat.</u> Areas should be allowed to develop into valuable woodland habitat, where space allows</p> <p>DON'T <u>Expect to see succession into woodland in the short-term</u> – it may take many years</p>	<p>DON'T <u>Remove, or excessively cut or tidy scrub,</u> unless it is necessary to prevent it invading a more valuable grassland habitat (see grassland BAP for habitat types)</p> <p>DON'T <u>Allow non-native plant species</u> to invade scrub</p> <p>DON'T <u>Allow excessive grazing</u> by livestock or deer (fencing, or limited culling of deer under licence, may be necessary)</p>

For further information on this habitat visit:

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

There are no national BAPs for scrub at present, but many scrub-dependent plant and animal species do have BAPs – see Caravan Club BAP for links. There are some local BAPs for scrub, including:

The Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local BAP for scrub and carr:

[http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/1B5C13465EA4768C80256E910044BE27/\\$file/ScrubandCarr.pdf](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/1B5C13465EA4768C80256E910044BE27/$file/ScrubandCarr.pdf)