



# Marsh Clubmoss (*Lycopodiella inundata*) at Thursley Common

Site Status Report - 2017

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Registered in England and Wales Charity 1146387

the  
species  
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## Introduction

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A survey of Marsh Clubmoss at Thursley and Elstead Commons was carried out by staff and volunteers from The Species Recovery Trust in October 2017. The purpose of the survey was to record a census of the populations as part of our national monitoring programme, and also to observe the success or otherwise of species restoration work carried out on the site in the past, both to inform future management on this site and our general understanding of the autoecology of the species.

Marsh Clubmoss is generally faring well on the site with 8 populations, of which 7 are fairly robust. All of these plants occur on artificial scrapes, emphasising both the value of these features as well as their efficacy in supporting plants.

No new populations any significant distance from existing populations have been found, implying there is still a lack of vectors present capable of moving plant propagules over any distance.

Some populations have vanished over the last decade, including one of the oldest population on the site, which occurred on an informal trackway which is now no longer used due to the bridleway re-alignment.

The occurrence of plants on the site depends in equal measure on the occasional creation of new scrapes, the maintenance of the current network of paths and tracks and the continued presence of grazing animals.

## Summary

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| SITE                                    | GRID REF       | 2011/2014 | 2017 |
|---|----------------|-----------|------|
| Li53a Thursley Keyhole Track            | SU 91155 42061 | 5         | 13   |
| Li53b Thursley Keyhole                  | SU 91140 42064 | 23        | 158  |
| Li53c Thursley Linear Scrape            | SU 90227 41747 | 0         | 1    |
| Li53d Old Trackway                      | SU 90220 41730 | 1000      | 0    |
| Li53e Thursley Boardwalk                | SU 9010041221  | 70        | 0    |
| Li53f Thursley Hammerhead               | SU 90226 40826 | N/A       | 660  |
| Li53g Thursley South of Strip           | SU 90293 40829 | present   | 82   |
| Li53h Thursley Eastern Scrape Extension | SU 90277 40830 | 13        | 7    |
| Li53i Thursley South Of Strip           | SU 90254 40818 | N/A       | 29   |
| Li53j Thursley Wide Scrape              | SU 90301 40846 | N/A       | 112  |

## Further work

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Most of the sites currently have a good amount of available habitat due to previously created scrapes, so no additional management is suggested for these populations at present. However the meta-population as a whole does require periodic creation of new habitat, either through scrapes or grazing, so this may have to be reviewed in the future. The only exception to this is the Keyhole Track (Site a) which despite a small pickup in numbers is still considerably smaller than the hundreds of plants it used to support, and consideration should be given to carrying out some vegetation removal (which could be done by hand) along the track. (Action SWT to consider this)

Grazing is clearly having a good impact on the Clubmoss, however as evidenced by the large amounts of plants sheltering in the permanent quadrat posts, at times the levels of trampling can disturb the plants, so a close eye needs to be kept on this. However in broad terms the plants could not survive without grazing on the site, so there is no question about the benefits of this management.

The diversion of the bridleway and subsequent extinction of the trackway site (Site d) shows how changes in use of the site can have a profound effect on Clubmoss,

It is essential that the Clubmoss is regularly monitored as many of the populations are in a strong state of flux.

# Maps

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## Overall site distribution



## Southern scrapes



## Site Status

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### Li53a Thursley Northern Track

SU 91155 42061

2014 5 plants

2017 13 plants. This track is no longer used and has significantly closed over since the last survey. There is now a lack of bare ground and the plants are confined to a small section near the keyhole



## Li53b Thursley Keyhole

SU 91140 42064

2014 23 plants

2017 158 plants, (inc. 9 plants in circle and 60 on scrape to north). Conditions good with ample bare ground.



## Li53c Thursley Linear Scrape

SU 90227 41747

2017 1 plant 7m up Scrape. Habitat good with plenty of bare ground but population clearly struggling



## Li53d Old Trackway

SU 90220 41730

2011 1000 plants by Minor path 17m from MOD sign  
2017 overgrown due to track realignment to new bridleway. 0 plants.

This site has changed dramatically over the last 5 years since the flooded bridleway was re-instated. This area used to act as a boggy cut though, with a lightly trampled path with bare peat edges supporting Clubmoss. Since this area is no longer being walked on it has become overgrown with Cross-leaved Heath and bryophytes, removing the habitat which supported the plants.

Two small mitigation areas of bare peat were created when the bridleway was realigned, but no Clubmoss plants have colonised these



## Li53e Thursley Boardwalk

SU 9010041221

2011 70 plants in 30x30m patch just south of boardwalk

2017 0 plants. No suitable bare substrate, in damp patches Sphagnum has become dominant, and otherwise Molinia has formed dense tussocks.



## Li53f Thursley Hammerhead

SU 90226 40826

2017 660 plants. Excellent habitat with bare ground and hummocks of Sphagnum. The plants are mostly on bare ground with some patches growing on Sphagnum mats. The densest clusters are growing inside the permanent monitoring plots where the posts are offering protection from grazing.



## Li53g Thursley South of Strip

SU 90293 40829

Old scrape with some bare ground but increasingly more *Sphagnum compactum* and *Erica tetralix* which may eventually occlude bare ground.

2011 present

2017 82 plants, good level of fruiting



## Li53h Thursley Eastern Scrape Extension

SU 90277 40830

2014 13 plants

2017 7 plants in three clumps (one 12m in Scrape) good amount of bare ground, although poaching quite heavy in places



## Li53i Thursley South Of Strip

SU 90254 40818

2017 29 in 5x5 patch.

Old scrape with good bare ground, starting to close up with *Sphagnum compactum*,  
*Molinia* and *Juncus bulbosus*



## Li53j Thursley Wide Scrape

SU 90301 40846

2017 112 plants

Original population of 62 plants which has now colonised into Scrape with a further 55 plants in 7x7 patch in 6 spots.

Good levels of bare ground kept open by cattle with *Carex demissa*, *Juncus bulbosus*, *Molinia*, *Erica tetralix*, *Sphagnum denticulatum*

Bare ground 70%.



15/11/2017

## About Us

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The Species Recovery Trust is a charity set up to tackle the loss of some of the rarest species in the UK.

There are over nine hundred native species in the UK that are classed as under threat, with several hundreds more currently widespread but known to be in significant decline. The countryside is now bereft of many species that were a familiar sight a mere generation ago.

A small number of these species are on the absolute brink of existence, poised to become extinct in our lifetimes; our goal is to stop them vanishing.

Our aim is to remove 50 species from the edge of extinction in the UK by the year 2050. In addition we are reconnecting people with wildlife and the natural world through training programmes and awareness raising.



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