

the
species
recovery
trust

2022 Project Update

Spiked Rampion

This project is part funded by
Natural England





Partners

This report has been produced as a collaboration between The Species Recovery Trust, East Sussex County Council, Kew Gardens Wakehurst, Sussex Botanical Recording Society, and Forestry England, who collectively make up the Spiked Rampion Steering Group, formed in 2011.

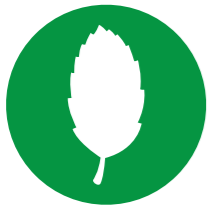
Summary



In 2022 all known sites for Spiked Rampion were monitored, with populations generally holding up



A new trial site was created at Ham Wood, and a new sub-site re-introduced at Dower House Farm



A re-introduction to the Browns Lane site has shown that potentially clumps of plants survive better than individuals plants



While exclosures remain the most effective way to protect plants, they need continual maintenance to avoid becoming choked with vegetation

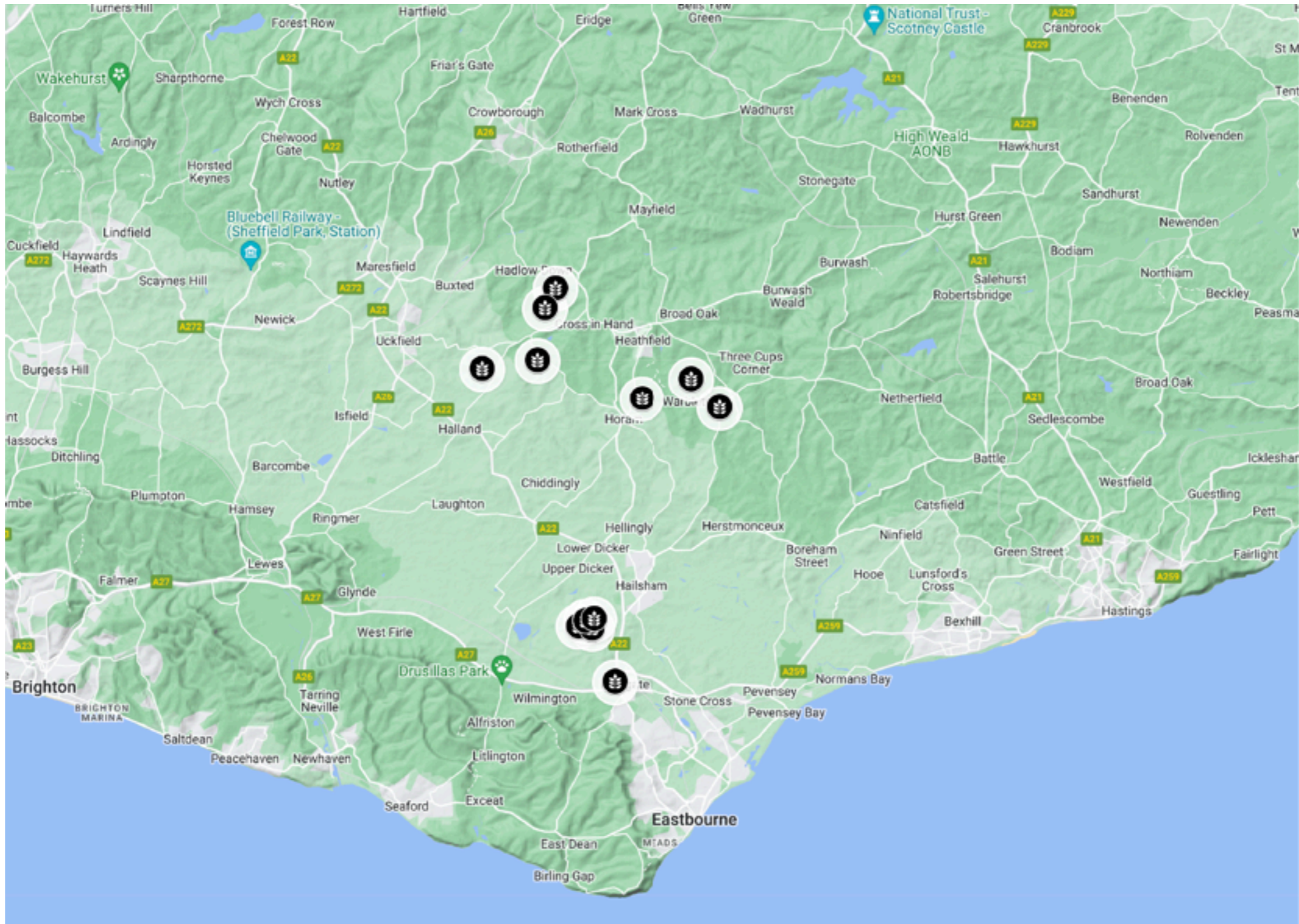


Data Summary

Plants (no. of spikes in brackets) <i>Extrapolated records in italics</i>		1995/ 6	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Abbots Wood - Forest Walk North	TQ56224 07977	23	11	8	16 (+3)	21	17	28	42 (9)	3	15(3)	Not visited	6 (1)	9 (7)
Abbots Wood - Lake Glade	TQ5659508057										27(2)	Not visited	Not visited	8
Abbots Wood Car Park	TQ55921 07427											Not visited	5 (3)	9 (9)
Newplace Farm	TQ 51093 19462	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Maynards Green; Bottle Shaw	TQ 58525 18330	14	4	8	8	8	9 (4)	7 (6)	7	6(9)	4 (4)	8 (8)	10 (16)	18
Dower House Farm; Butlett's Wood	TQ 53628 19919	2	6	10	14	9	17 (24)	NR	20	11	12	11 (19)	17 (12)	12 (14)
Mill Wood, New Sapperton Farm	TQ 57659 05223	unknown	2 (2011)	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2(4)	Not visited	10 (c20)	4
Riverside road verge (Tinkers Lane)	TQ 53914 22374	285 (220)	148 (105)	*c. 189 (140)	c.137	135	257 (359)	188 (273)	113	269 (394)	258 (379)	306 (435)	269 (403)	179 (233)
Wilderness Wood (intro)	TQ 53556 23856										30 plants planted	Not visited	16	3
Brown Lane (re-intro)	TQ 56107 20591										6 clumps planted	(31)	(44)	(33)
Little England Farm; Homegrove Wood	TQ 54332 23276	5	1	2	4 (26)	3 (+12)	3 (+10)	19 (47.5)	14(34)	10(24)	7(12)	Not visited	Not visited	8 (9)
St Dunstans Farm	TQ 60800 19300	4	5	5	4	3	5 (5)	4 (4)	6 (11)	10 (17)	12 (10)	38 (45)	35 (49)	(50)
St Dunstans boost population													3 clumps plants	(13)
Rushlake Green	TQ 62153 18007	4	22	32	36	40	49 (37)	42 (65)	42	41	41	Not visited	33 (69)	33
TOTALS		339	200	256	220	230	376	308	246	349	386		401	378

Site locations

For interactive map click [here](#)



Bulking up and new site creation

Dower House Farm

The population at this site is now confined to a single location, typically containing 11 plants. This site had previously supported another sub-site further up the track, but despite managing the woodland to allow more light in, no plants had regenerated.

In 2020 a decision was taken to bulk up the site by re-creating the second sub-site using stock grown at Kew Gardens.

On September 29th, 2022, 20 individuals were planted at three locations - 2 on either side of a ride, and 1 on a woodbank on the edge of the field, details below

TQ5359119919 29.9.22 10 plants every 50cm SW from old Chestnut stump. Using stock from Riverside via Kew 2016 plants.

TQ5358619907 29.9.22 Clump of 4 +3 running SW from junction. 5m intervals then 10m. Using stock from Riverside via Kew 2016 plants

TQ5357819932 29.9.22 3 plants introduced from Kew/Riverside 2016 plants



Ham Wood

This site had been recce'ed in early 2022 and had the advantage of being owned by one of the members of the steering group, thus giving us a chance to regularly monitor the plants, which perhaps has been lacking in previous unsuccessful introductions.

On 8th Dec 2022 10 plants were introduced to a 2.5x1 patch of woodland, on the edge of a sunlit ride. The plants will be fenced off in the spring closely monitored.

Further planting is planned to compare different environments and planting techniques.

TQ 58830 19962. 8.12.22 10 plants in 2.5x1m patch





Other Sites

Abbots Wood

Some of the historical sites have now become unsuitable to a proliferation of Bramble and ephemeral plants, combined with increased walking pressure at the side of the tracks. However, the woodland is still supporting three sub-sites; these are mainly in new situations, including a ride by the carpark where plants were first discovered in 2021. Management work over the winter aims to keep these sites largely free of bramble.

Maynards Green; Bottle Shaw

Condition good, though there may be year on year less light getting through to the ground. Second visit in early June confirmed the cluster of 17, plus one outlier we didn't see before, it's about 1m higher up the bank. One flower per plant.

Dower House Farm

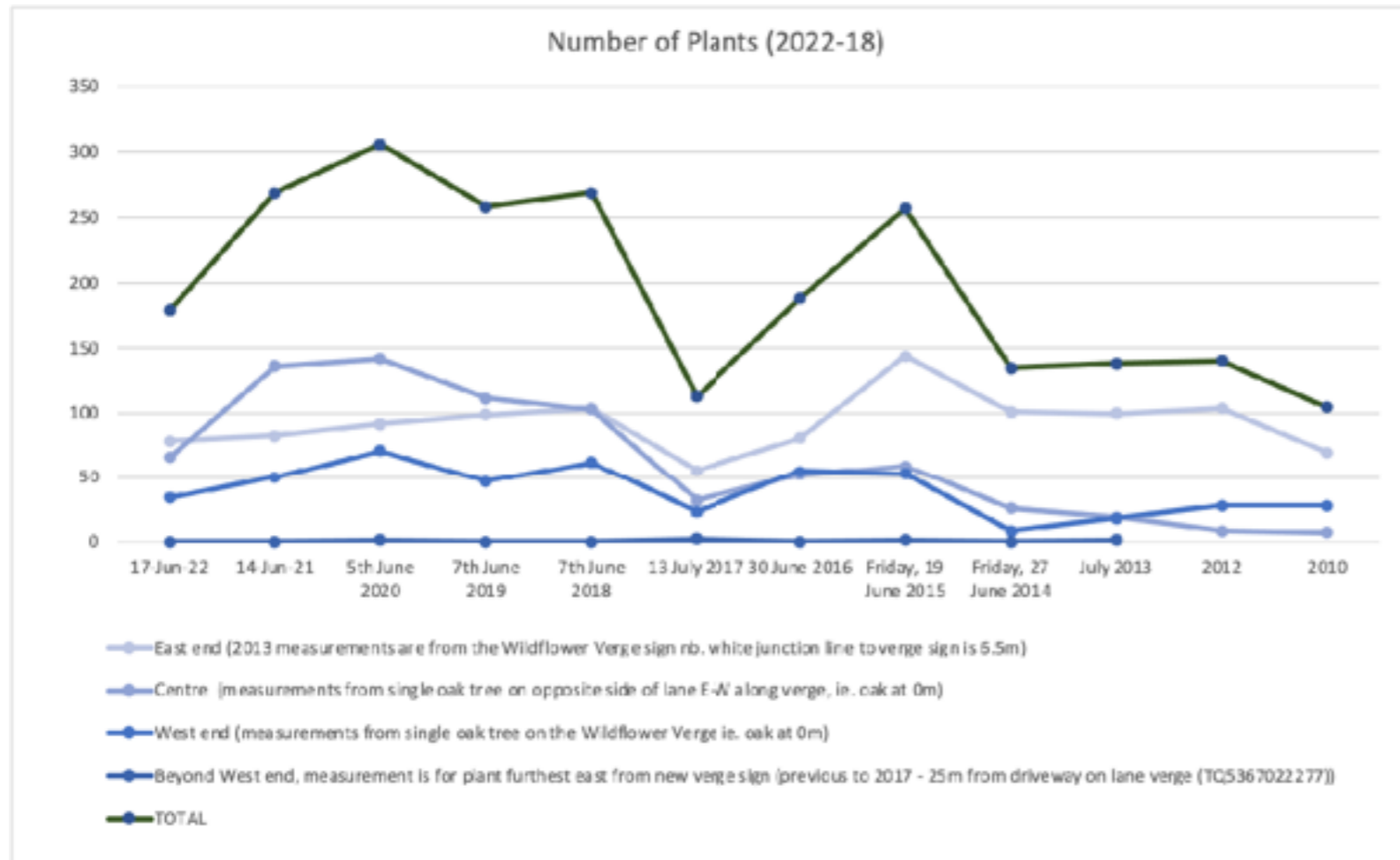
A slight drop off in numbers here, although conditions in the cage appear to remain the same. Three more sub-sites were planted up at this site (see above)

Mill Wood, New Sapperton Farm

The cage is working well to keep the deer out, but had become rather overgrown, so was cleared out. Only 4 plants were recorded, just less than half of the previous year.

Maynards Green with proud site owner

Riverside road verge (Tinkers Lane)



The Riverside stronghold unfortunately continues to decline, although is still at slightly higher levels than when recent monitoring was started. The experimental Bracken removal area has not produced significantly higher counts of plants, and is starting to be colonised by rank grasses, suggesting that the presence of Bracken on its own may not be the driving factor in the decline. As with the other sites, the summer heatwave clearly had an impact on plants, and possible was more significant here on a relatively sunlit and well drained road-verge.



Riverside bracken control area in early spring

Wilderness Wood (intro)

This introduction has not fared well, and the summer heatwave appear to have parched much of the site (which appeared to support damper soils when it was recce'ed in 2020). In addition many of the cages had accumulated a deep layer of Sweet Chestnut leaves, which will need much more regular clearing should this site persist. We will monitor this site more closely in 2023

Browns Lane (re-intro)

This 2020 reintroduction is still doing well, although one of the 'clumps' was not re-found in 2022. The original introduction involved planted 6 clumps of young, highly packed plants, and these appear to be faring much better than the lone mature plants used for other introductions. Number were slightly down from last year but still holding up well.

Little England Farm; Homegrove Wood

Site was visited twice and 7 plants were recorded on the eastern bank. Conditions here remain good, with less of an issue seen with deer browsing than in previous years.

On the western side the cage that was built to protect the introduced plants is now completely choked with Bramble, and although a disaster for the Rampion that was formerly inside it, provides a good visual record of just how important deer grazing is in keeping bramble levels under control. This cage should be removed at some point in the future.



Browns Lane being monitored by Ralph Hobbs; site monitor and creator of the 'clump' method

St Dunstans Farm

2022 saw one of the highest counts in the enclosure here, which has responded well to the clearance work carried out in previous years.

St Dunstans boost population

Another sub-site was created in 2021, using the 'clump' method, and 33 of these plants were recorded in 2022.

Rushlake Green - Not visited in 2022



Looking forward

Next steps



Trial introduction to Ham Wood. Aims are to compare caged/uncaged; planting clumps/individuals and different light & moisture conditions in the wood.

PROGRESS: First planting done

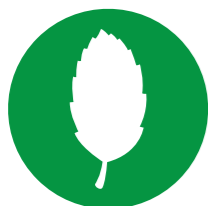


Hard scarification of Mallbank Lane (extinct since 1999) to see if any germination of seedbank can be triggered. Look into Padgham Corner (last recorded in 1999). DP to try and hunt down more accurate record

PROGRESS: Site visited and it is much more wooded than anticipated - keep discussing options. Padgham looks like a spurious record (NE surveyor spoken to and has no memory of seeing it there)



Clearing out and removing old enclosure at Little England



Creation of new sub-site to replace lost one at Dower House Farm.

PROGRESS: Completed

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.



A photograph of a forest floor in spring. The ground is covered with a dense carpet of small purple bluebells. In the foreground, a large, moss-covered tree stump is prominent. The background shows a dense stand of tall, thin trees with fresh green leaves, suggesting a young forest or woodland. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating dappled light on the ground.

**the
species
recovery
trust**

www.speciesrecoverytrust.org.uk
Registered Charity 1146387