

Starved Wood-sedge (*Carex depauperata*)

2015 Report

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Summary

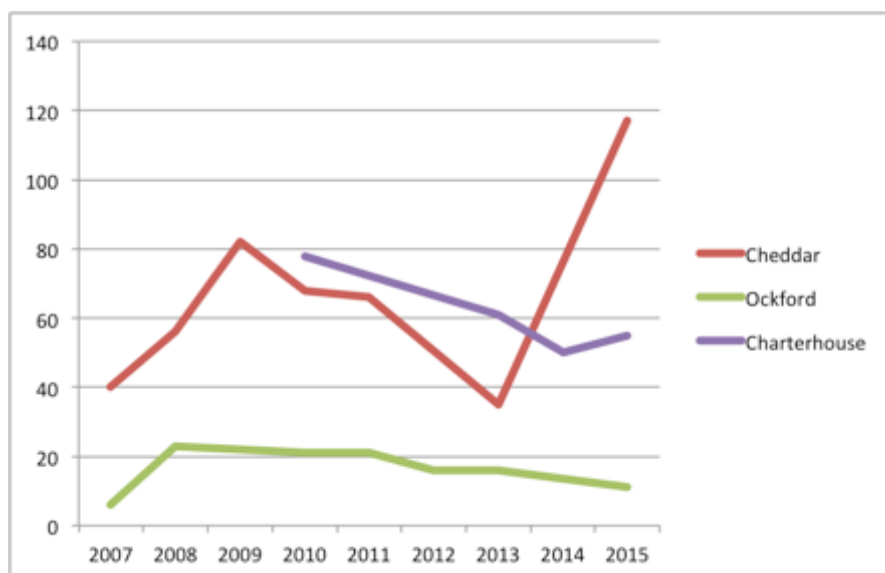
Starved Wood-sedge is currently confined to two native sites, Cheddar Woods in Somerset and Ockford Wood in Surrey. In addition there is a re-introduced population at Charterhouse School (from where it disappeared in the 1950s) comprising two sub-sites and an earlier re-intro site at Cheddar.

In 2015 the Somerset site recorded a huge increase of plants, most likely as a result of scrub clearance work carried out as part of the SITA funded project in 2014.

The Surrey sites all recorded a small decrease, although there are several young plants present which currently can not be identified with 100% accuracy, so this number may pick up in future years.

All the sites are in good condition, and management issues surrounding the dumping of leaf sweepings at Charterhouse 1 appear to have been resolved. All the Charterhouse populations are still in an early post-establishment stage, so the fact their numbers are holding up so well is encouraging. The increase in plants numbers at Cheddar is hugely positive news, leading to 2015 recording the highest UK population of plants seen for some time, as well as a good indication that we are getting the management right there.

SITE	Cheddar	Cheddar intro	Ockford	Charterhouse	TOTAL
2007	40		6		46
2008	56		23		79
2009	82				82
2010	68		21	78	167
2011	66		21		87
2012			16		16
2013	35		16	61	112
2014				50	50
2015	117	11	11	55	194



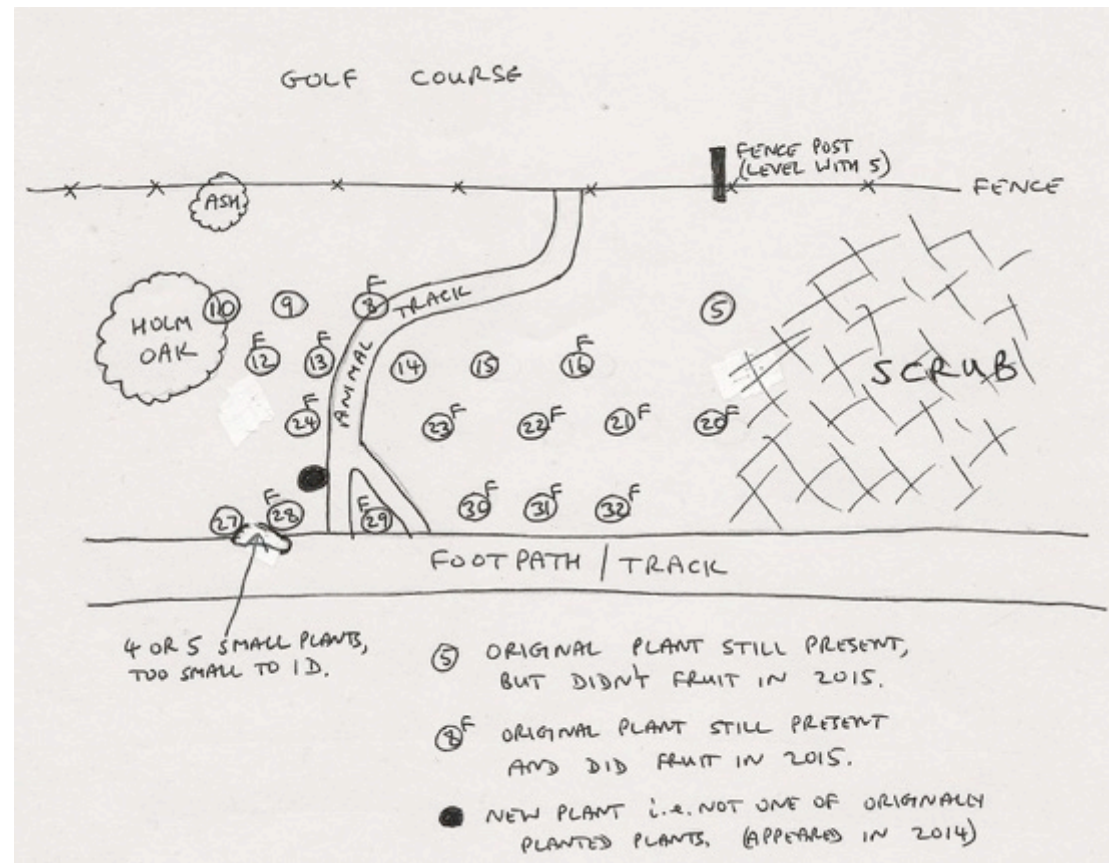
Recommendation for future work

All three sites require regular monitoring and periodic clearance work.
Scrub clearance at Cheddar Woods to be followed up with Somerset Wildlife Trust.
A fourth site for re-introduction should be sought over the next few years.

Appendix 1 Site accounts

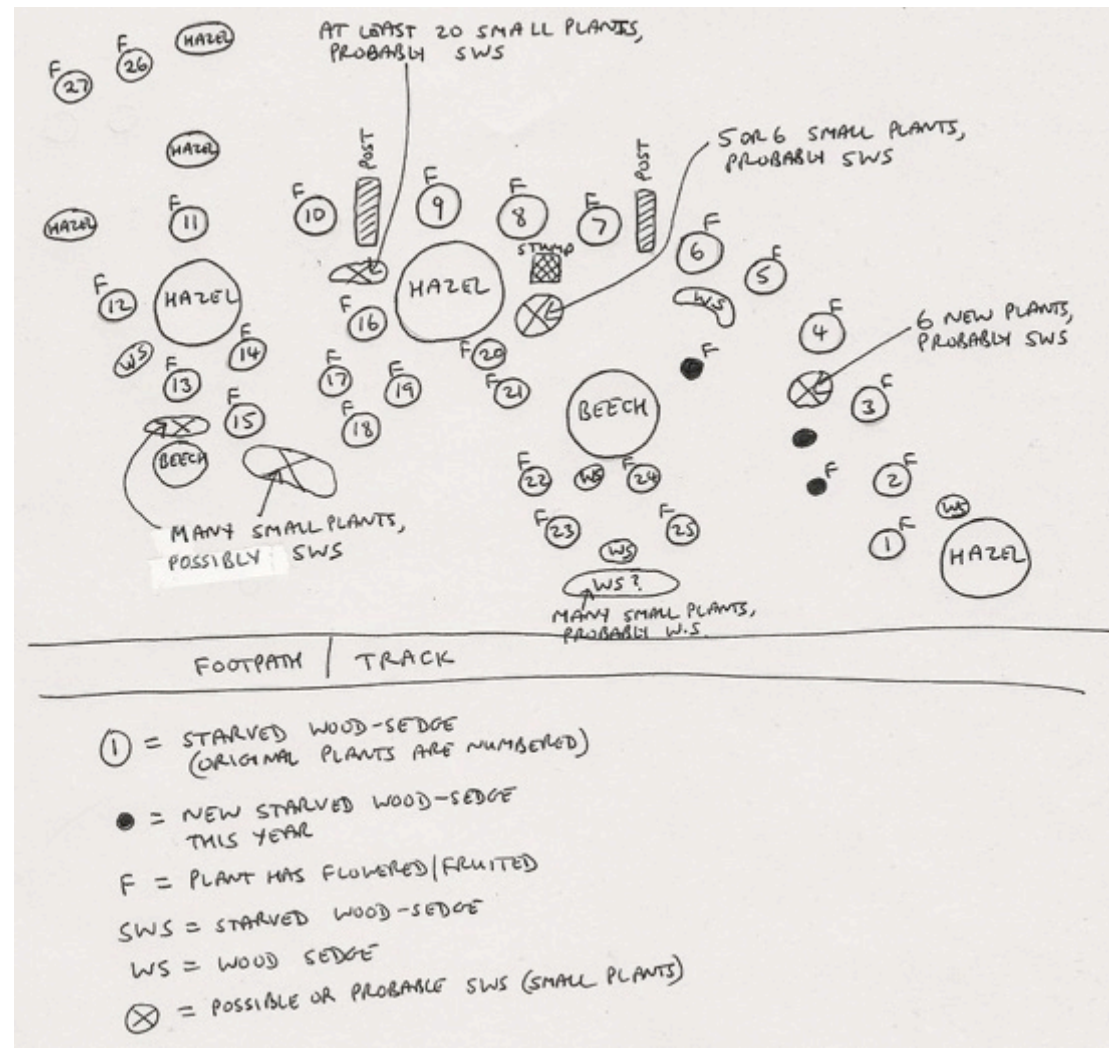
Name of site	Charterhouse School – Site 1
Recorder	Debbie Cousins
Date	6 November 2015
Changes from last Site Visit (e.g. site now grazed by sheep, site has been recently mown)	Leaves are no longer being deposited by the groundsmen. Scrub is encroaching on the eastern side. As last year, plant 28 by the track had been grazed.
Description of species population (e.g. 10 plants on single ants' nest c.5m north of gate)	21 plants present, of which 14 had fruited. There were an additional 4 or 5 very small plants near the track (below 27 and 28) but they were too small to ID.
Increase or decrease in population since last site visit?	Decrease of 2 plants since November 2014. (Numbered plants 18 and 25 have disappeared since 2014) The 6 plants lost in 2014 beneath the pile of leaves have not re-emerged and a further 2 plants could not be found, i.e. plants 18 (lost beneath scrub?) and 25 (near Holm oak). Plant 10 looked small.
Potential threats to population (e.g. over-grazing by rabbits, disturbance from motorbikes, scrub encroachment)	Main threats are shading by the Holm oak and competition from scrub and other competitive plants. Also grazing by unknown animal.
Actions required (e.g. scrub removal, installation of protective fencing)	Periodic removal of competitive vegetation.
Notes (e.g. likely to be more plants evident later in year)	

Updated sketch map (if necessary)



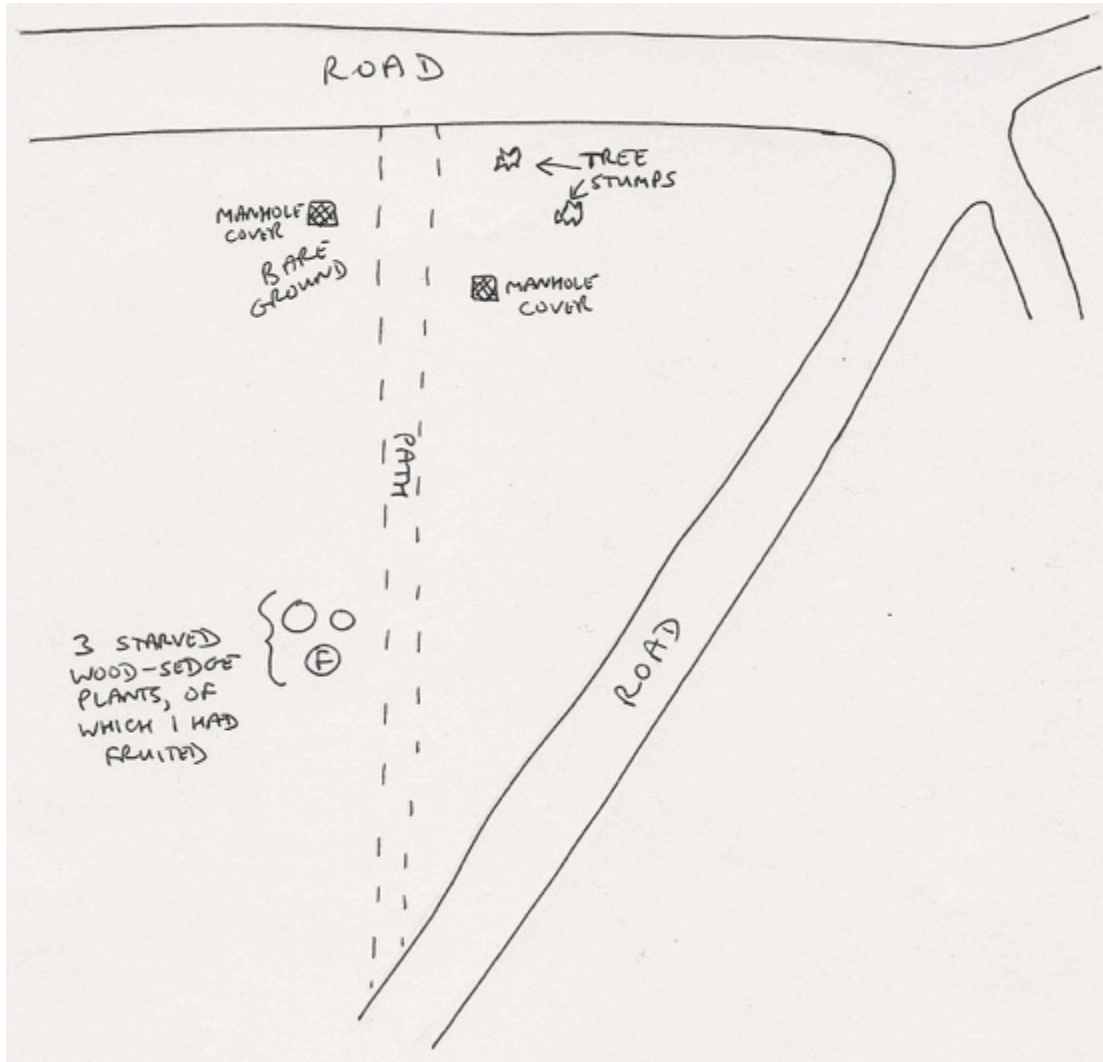
Name of site	Charterhouse School – Site 3
Recorder	Debbie Cousins
Date	6 November 2015
Changes from last Site Visit (e.g. site now grazed by sheep, site has been recently mown)	Despite removing most of the large sedge plants of species other than starved wood-sedge (SWS) in November 2014, there were a lot of quite large sedge plants in November 2015 that were not SWS.
Description of species population (e.g. 10 plants on single ants' nest c.5m north of gate)	30 plants, of which 29 had fruited. (N.B. If plant 28 is present then the total count is 31 – see below) Numerous juvenile sedge plants, many of which might be starved wood-sedge.
Increase or decrease in population since last site visit?	Increase of 3 plants since November 2014. In 2014, plant 18 couldn't be found, but I did find one in a similar location in 2015 so I think plants numbered 1 - 27 are still present and all of these had fruited. (N.B. Having looked at the 2014 form I see that I forgot to check whether plant 28 was still present or not.) There were an additional 3 definite new plants (see sketch map). There were numerous small plants that were below mature starved wood-sedge but were too small to ID. The head groundsman has been checking the site and said that there were a lot of new starved wood-sedge plants this year and that many of them had flowered. I only found 3 definite new plants of which 2 had flowered, but it was late in the season so some of the other small plants may have flowered but I was unable to confirm this.
Potential threats to population (e.g. over-grazing by rabbits, disturbance from motorbikes, scrub encroachment)	Competition from other sedge species. Also scrub encroachment, especially the plants high up the slope nearer the woodland.
Actions required (e.g. scrub removal, installation of protective fencing)	Periodic removal of competitive vegetation, especially other sedge species.
Notes (e.g. likely to be more plants evident later in year)	

Updated sketch map (if necessary)



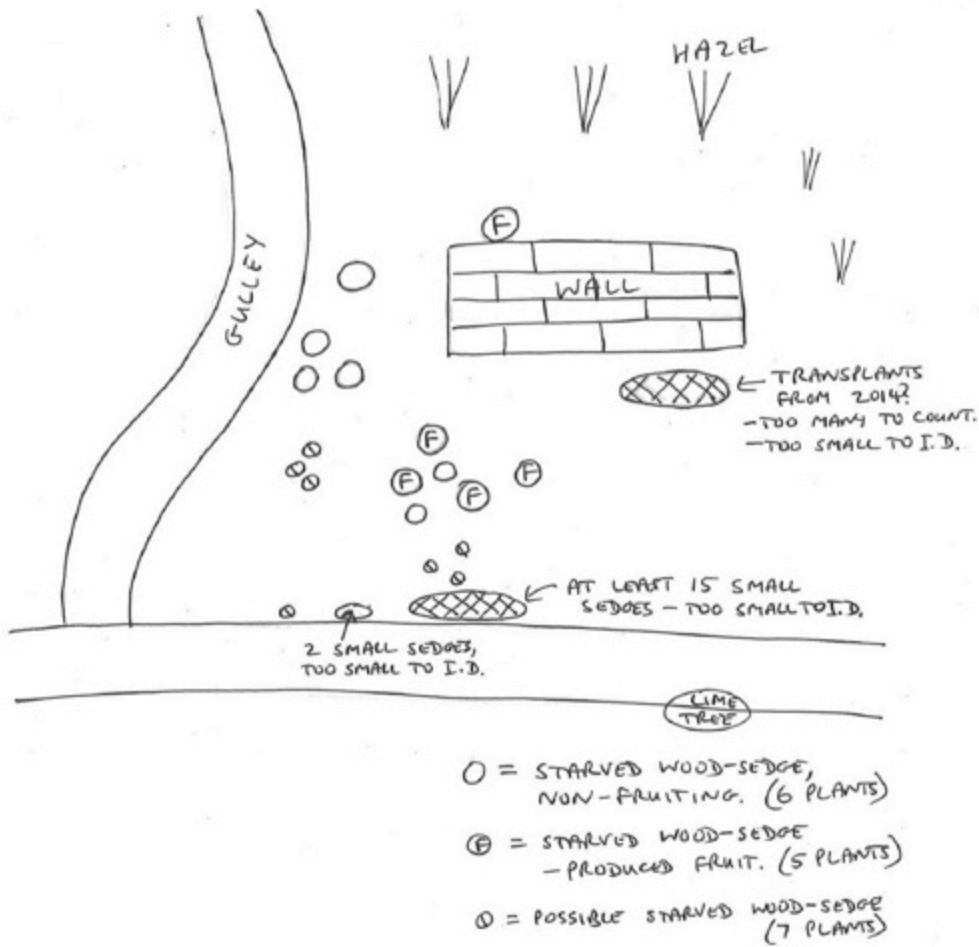
Name of site	Charterhouse School – Site 4
Recorder	Debbie Cousins
Date	6 November 2015
Changes from last Site Visit (e.g. site now grazed by sheep, site has been recently mown)	Two trees at the top of the slope had blown down sometime in 2014 and had to be removed – just the stumps were remaining. In order to protect the starved wood-sedge plants near these trees, the head groundsman said that they had dug up a number of plants, potted them up and stored them in a greenhouse. He was uncertain exactly how many plants this was.
Description of species population (e.g. 10 plants on single ants' nest c.5m north of gate)	Only 3 plants were recorded this year, of which 1 had fruited.
Increase or decrease in population since last site visit?	Decrease. Actual number unknown, as it wasn't certain how many plants had been potted up. However, even further down the slope where last year there was a group of 5 plants, only 3 of these were recorded in 2015. It was late in the season and there were a lot of leaves on the ground, but a thorough search still only revealed 3 plants.
Potential threats to population (e.g. over-grazing by rabbits, disturbance from motorbikes, scrub encroachment)	Competition from dense ground elder cover. Trees – shading and smothering by leaf fall.
Actions required (e.g. scrub removal, installation of protective fencing)	Re-plant plants further apart, or potentially move to a different site.
Notes (e.g. likely to be more plants evident later in year)	

Updated sketch map (if necessary)



Species _____	<i>Carex depauperata</i> (Starved Wood-sedge)
Site Reference Number _____	CD6
Name of site _____	Ockford Wood (Westbrook Copse), Godalming
Recorder _____	Debbie Cousins _____
Date _____	6 November 2015 _____
Changes from last Site Visit (e.g. site now grazed by sheep, site has been recently mown) _____	Scrub encroaching.
Description of species population (e.g. 10 plants on single ants' nest c.5m north of gate) _____	11 plants, of which 5 had fruited. (A further potential 7 plants, but couldn't be positively identified.) In 2014, approximately 15 small sedge plants (species unknown) were transplanted higher up the bank to the east, but these were still too small to identify. Likewise there were at least 15 small sedge plants at the base of the slope that were too small to identify. In 2014, there were a number of potential starved wood-sedge plants on the west of the slope, but most of these could not be seen. It was late in the season though, with lots of leaf fall. Also, one of the two large starved wood-sedge plants on top of the wall could not be found this year. _____
Increase or decrease in population since last site visit? _____	Decrease of 2 plants since 2014. _____
Potential threats to population (e.g. over-grazing by rabbits, disturbance from motorbikes, scrub encroachment) _____	Shading by trees and scrub, especially from the large lime tree on the opposite bank. Competition from encroaching scrub and herbaceous plants. Trampling at base of slope by people, cycles and horses. _____
Actions required (e.g. scrub removal, installation of protective fencing) _____	Monitor shading of lime tree on opposite bank – may require tree works or even complete removal at some point. Will require bat survey first. Monitor encroaching scrub and remove as necessary. Transplant further small plants from base of slope, if/when they appear. _____
Notes (e.g. likely to be more plants evident later in year) _____	_____

Updated sketch map (if necessary)



Cheddar Wood

I went to visit the sedge today, with Helena and Fred Rumsey. We were delighted to see 85 plants in the middle of the track, some a bit squashed most with seed. 2 new clumps below the telegraph pole, and 29 plants on the bank some with seed. There were some little seedlings on the bank as well, which pleased me as there were no plants with seed on the bank last year, I think some may be the seed I scattered in the spring. Its all rather overgrown despite my winter gardening, I will go next week, and start some pulling out of small trees etc. We then went to the reintroduction site. The field is grazed, but the enclosure is impossible to get into, Helena vaulted in over the barbed wire and found 11 plants! We could see them from the field. I will e-mail , Neil who is in charge and ask for some clearance so I can get in. On the way out I was stunned to see a large plant on the bank just opposite the parking bay! I do feel the tree cutting was really justified, and I wonder if more light was let into the introduction site by the grazing as the field was waist high grass when I last visited.

Ann Cole



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 courses and awareness raising.

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