

Hedgerows Habitat Action Plan

1. Introduction

Hedgerows were listed as a UK BAP priority habitat, and subsequently included in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, due to loss of the habitat and resulting impacts on key species. Hedgerows are a characteristic feature of the Worcestershire countryside, as identified in the county Landscape Character Assessment, particularly in the

land. Such hedges, especially if A-shaped in cross profile, with good ground flora, and with sympathetically managed field margins and a varied woody species composition, can be very rich in wildlife

Hedgerow trees within a Conservation Area designated under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 have some limited protection as the local planning authority must be notified of any works to trees above a certain size.

Hedgerows consisting of a liwHsi4(b)4(o)-6(v)1e.HesiHrotectidgHiro(m)-10(i)3TJE9-sie0JETBT1 0

Excessive and badly timed flail cutting.

Damage by livestock, including grazing, nutrient input to the base of the hedge where livestock congregate and physical damage to shrubs leading to 'leggy' and 'gappy' hedges.

Lack of hedgerow management leading to the hedge growing out into a line of trees.

The loss of hedgerow trees through disease (such as *Chalara* ash die-back disease and Dutch elm disease) and felling without replacement planting.

Consideration is rarely given to the establishment or future management of hedgerow base flora when new hedgerows are planted. Previous assumptions were that these species would 'simply arrive', especially if the new hedgerow had good connectivity to existing hedgerows and ancient semi-natural woodland. Recent survey work has suggested that sBT7o304(su)-(s)3h9

hedgerow sections totalling 1890m were surveyed and a questionnaire on hedgerow management regimes, attitudes towards and influences on hedgerow management was returned by 34 landowners. Just under half of hedgerows surveyed passed the good condition assessment thresholds within the Hedgerow Survey Handbook with the most common reason for failing the assessment criteria being leggyness of the hedge arising from lack of management and livestock damage. At the culmination of the project 21 landowners attended an event on good hedgerow management and biodiversity supported by Natural England, the AONB Partnership and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

5. Associated Plans

Arable Farmland

