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I recall from my undergraduate years that there was a substantial body of work done on the garden chafer in the 1950s(/60s?) by Milne at ARC, Newcastle and I have a Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

dim recollection that he may have made some comparisons with the cockchafer. The conclusion here is not that nothing is known but that any ecological studies on dynamics may have been carried out prior to 1970 when we started putting publications into databases.

My own experience of them is limited but I have only ever seen them in quite rough, permanent pasture and I reason that they need a pretty good vegetative mat in place to survive. (Actually, they seem to have been located on sloping land for some reason which may also be relevant.) They also have a three year life cycle. When I put this together I would be most surprised if arable land per se would support populations even if grass leys are included in the rotation. I have some circumstantial evidence from surveys for other soil insect larvae in the South Hams on organic farms. The only field (out of 95) I found cockchafers in was permanent pasture.

This though is not your specific question. My best guess as to how long it might take for arable land turned over to grass to be colonised by cockchafers is probably not very long - though I suspect that the attractiveness of the grass may depend on sown varieties (definitely not ryegrass!).

The more important question is how long it will take for numbers to grow until there is a viable and sustainable food source for your bats (and badgers, foxes, birds etc.). Again there is no easy answer but what is definite is that any eggs laid this year would not result in available adults for bat dinners for three years. So the first point is that you will have a minimum two years without this food source.

The next aspect is population growth up to environmentally limiting levels. This will take much longer than 3 years and I suspect maybe 10-20 years (I estimate 3-5 years for *Tipula paludosa* which has an annual cycle and hence can probably grow numbers more quickly). None of this accounts for any regulatory effects the bats might have on the cockchafer population size by feeding on them. At low numbers of chafers it is conceivable that predation by bats could drive them to local extinction.

Thus although we cannot be precise in terms of the extent of possible effects, if the bats are highly dependent on this particular food source at a critical development stage, it would be reasonable to assume that the proposed land swap would be deleterious and have at least short to medium term consequences.

Hope this helps

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