DORSET LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY HABITAT ASSEMBLAGES

Habitat assemblage:	Species of fen-meadows and rush-pastures
Broad Habitat type:	Grasslands
S41 and Priority Habitat type:	Purple Moor-grass and Rush-pasture
Composite species assemblages:	Invertebrates of fens, fen-meadows and rush-pastures Plants of seasonally wet floodmeadows, rush-pastures and fen-meadows

Habitat assemblage description:	Rush-pasture (**M23**) and fen-meadow (**M22 and M24**) are specific vegetation types found on nutrient-poor damp or wet ground with a fluctuating water table and are traditionally managed by grazing. In Dorset there are approximately 450-hectares, and it is typically found as small stands with neutral grassland or sometimes in floodplains, the purple moor-grass-dominated fen-meadow community is much rarer with only around 60-ha present. The vegetation has a tussocky structure which is important for invertebrates and the damp nutrient-poor soils are favoured by specialist plants such as sneezewort, meadow thistle and the rare viper's grass.

Other related assemblages:	Species of ancient and unimproved grasslands Species of species-rich scrub and scrub edges Species of species-rich hedges and hedgebanks

Pressures and Threats	
PA04	**Removal of small landscape features for agricultural land parcel consolidation (hedges, stone walls, rushes, open ditches, springs, solitary trees, etc.)**
	The general intensification of agricultural in the countryside has removed those small-scale features that formerly produced a heterogeneous landscape. The loss of soft edges, wet corners of field and ponds have hastened the decline of many species.
PA05	**Abandonment of management/use of grasslands and other agricultural and agro-forestry systems (e.g. cessation of grazing, mowing or traditional farming)**
	These wet habitats are more difficult to farm and are less productive than drier grassland and therefore abandonment has led to losses the habitat changing to wet woodland through natural succession. Other areas have been planted with non-native trees such as poplars.
PA08	**Extensive grazing or under-grazing by livestock**

	Under-grazing can lead to a build-up of litter that eventually encourages the encroachment of scrub. Over time it can also lead to a loss of species, particularly those smaller herbs that are out-competed by more robust faster growing plants such as tufted hair-grass pond-sedges, reed canary-grass, meadowsweet and great willowherb.
PA13	**Application of natural or synthetic fertilisers on agricultural land**
	The application of artificial fertilizers or regular spreading of slurry favours quicker growing grasses and the few herbs that can tolerate fertile soils and are quick growing and can out-compete the more specialist ancient grassland plants that favour nutrient-poor soils.
PI02	**Other invasive alien species**
	In Dorset there are few invasive non-native plants found in these habitats. Along rivers and streams Himalayan balsam can occur and if left ungrazed can form dense stands and shade out native species.
PI03	**Problematic native species**
	Bramble, willow and alder are the most likely species to impact on these marshy grasslands typically encroaching from the field edges of from stream sides. In floodplains and river valleys robust sedges particularly lesser and greater pond-sedge can be very invasive responding to higher tables or a reduction in grazing. In some sites increased flooding coupled with nutrient-enrichment favours robust perennials such as hemlock water-dropwort and stinging nettle.
PJ03	**Changes in precipitation regimes due to climate change**
	Recent years have seen in changes in weather patterns for example droughts in successive springs and wetter late summers both of which can adversely affect the habitat. Warmer weather in autumn means a longer growing season therefore grazing regimes have to be altered accordingly.
PK04	**Atmospheric N-deposition**
	Continual low-level deposition of nitrogen compounds has a fertilizing effect on vegetation favouring competitive plants and can be compounded by under-grazing and climate change.

Micro-habitat assemblage: Invertebrates of fens, fen-meadows and rush-pasture

Group	Species	Common Name	IUCN GB	IUCN Eng	IUCN other	Criteria	Threats / Pressures							
Flies	*Dioctria cothurnata*	Scarce Red-legged Robberfly	LC	n/a	n/a	**3**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Flies	*Platypalpus aeneus*	a dance fly	NT	n/a	n/a	**2**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Flies	*Platypalpus ingenuus*	a dance fly	NT	n/a	n/a	**2**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Hoverflies	*Microdon myrmicae*		LC	n/a	VU	**1**	PA05	PA08	PJ01	PK04	.	.	.	.
Butterflies	*Euphydryas aurinia*	Marsh Fritillary	VU	n/a	n/a	**1**	PA05	PA07	.	.	.	.	.	.

Micro-habitat assemblage: Plants of seasonally wet floodmeadows, rush-pastures and fen-meadows

Group	Species	Common Name	IUCN GB	IUCN Eng	IUCN other	Criteria	Threats / Pressures							
Plants	*Blysmus compressus*	Flat-sedge	VU	VU	n/a	**1**	PA05	PK04	.	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Cyperus longus*	Galingale	NT	NT	n/a	**2**	PA05	PA08	PK04	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Eriophorum latifolium*	Broad-leaved Cottongrass	LC	LC	n/a	**4**	PA05	PA08	PK04	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Genista anglica*	Petty Whin	NT	VU	n/a	**1**	PA05	PA08	PK04	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Lathyrus linifolius*	Bitter-vetch	LC	NT	n/a	**2**	PA05	PA08	PK04	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Nardus stricta*	Matgrass	LC	NT	n/a	**2**	PA05	PA08	PK04	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Oenanthe fistulosa*	Tubular Water-dropwort	LC	VU	n/a	**1**	PA05	PA08	PK04	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Rumex maritimus*	Golden Dock	LC	LC	n/a	**4**	PA05	PI02	PI03	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Scorzonera humilis*	Viper's-grass	VU	VU	n/a	**1, 4**	PA05	PA08	PK04	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Stellaria palustris*	Marsh Stitchwort	VU	VU	n/a	**1, 4**	PA05	PA08	PA13	PK04	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Trocdaris verticillata*	Whorled Caraway	LC	VU	n/a	**1, 4**	PA05	PJ04	PK04	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Valeriana dioica*	Marsh Valerian	LC	NT	n/a	**2**	PA05	PA08	PK04	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Veronica scutellata*	Marsh Speedwell	LC	NT	n/a	**2**	PA05	PA08	PK04	.	.	.	.	.