

Cornfield Flowers Project



Species Cards



Corn buttercup (*Ranunculus arvensis*)

Critically endangered

Formerly widespread and locally abundant, has declined dramatically since 1960s. Viable populations on arable land are rare

A UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) Priority Species

REASONS FOR DECLINE:

Herbicides; improved seed cleaning methods

Our Corn buttercup experience...

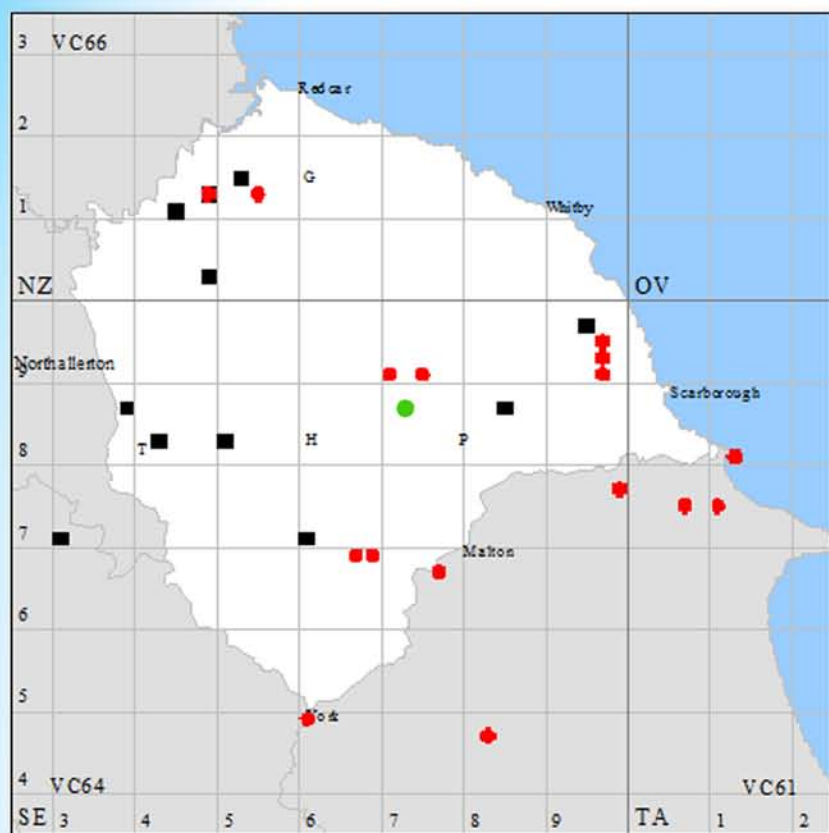
Ranunculus arvensis is one of the arable plants that has shown the greatest decline in North East Yorkshire. In 1950, Scarborough Naturalists classed it as 'uncommon', identifying only three sites for it at Cayton Carrs, Thornton-Le-Dale and Robin Hood's Bay. Within the East Riding, it was known at Thwing and Rillington in 1970, but by 1990 the local botanist Eva Crackles described its status as 'uncommon and decreasing'.

After an apparent absence of many years, Corn buttercup was found during Nan Sykes' survey of the North York Moors near Faceby in 1991, but has not been recorded at this site since. Nan also found it near Marton in 1999, at the beginning of the Cornfield Flowers Project. From this plant, 32 precious seeds were taken and shared between four volunteers, who succeeded in growing nine plants in 2000. Four of these plants were taken to the Ryedale Folk Museum, and the two put in the Nursery produced hundreds of seeds. From 2001 onwards it was grown in the Nursery and by increasing numbers of volunteers. The plants and seed have since been introduced to several sites and spontaneous plants are now produced at the CFP field at Silpho and at Birkdale Farm, Terrington, in good numbers every year.

More seed became available in 2008 when it was found that Gordon Simpson had collected some from Low Dalby, the other site mentioned in Nan Sykes' *Wild Plants and their Habitats on the North York Moors*. Despite moving to Northumberland, he was still growing the plant in his garden and we were pleased to receive additional seed from here.

In 2007, two-thousand Corn buttercup seeds propagated from the original Marton site were safely deposited with the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place, thereby helping to safeguard this plant from the threat of extinction. In 2013, many hundreds of plants grew spontaneously at the CFP field at Silpho.

Distribution in north-east Yorkshire: Corn buttercup (*Ranunculus arvensis*)



Key

● Post-2000 records
(inc. CFP introductions)

■ Pre-2000 records

● Original known site

G: Guisborough T: Thirsk

H: Helmsley P: Pickering

Data: BSBI, 2014 Maps produced by MapMate®

Key Facts - Corn buttercup (*Ranunculus arvensis*)

- Has never been found again at a wild site since Marton in 1999
- Flowers are smaller and paler yellow than the common buttercups
- Requires autumn germination
- Distinctive seeds form long spikes for attaching to animal hair

UK Conservation Designations

The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (2006) designates all UK wildflowers by their rarity, and hence conservation importance, in the following order:

Extinct → Extinct in the wild → Critically Endangered → Endangered
Vulnerable → Near Threatened → Least Concern

The Cornfield Flowers Project is spearheaded by the Carstairs Countryside Trust, Ryedale Folk Museum, North Yorkshire Moors Association and North York Moors National Park Authority. It has a demonstration field and nursery at Ryedale Folk Museum and a working arable field at Silpho, near Scarborough. It is supported by the North York Moors National Park Sustainable Development Fund, North York Moors Coast & Hills LEADER Programme and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

