

# Cornfield Flowers Project



## Species Cards



### **Pheasant's-eye** (*Adonis annua*)

#### **Endangered**

A native of the Mediterranean, it has been naturalised in the UK since at least the Iron Age

Populations declined by 30% from 1960 to 2000

#### **REASONS FOR DECLINE:**

Improved seed-cleaning technologies; modern competitive crop varieties; nitrogen application; herbicides

### ***Our Pheasant's-eye experience...***

Pheasant's-eye is classed as Nationally Endangered and is a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. It is now exclusively confined to the chalk and limestone of southern England, but used to be much more widespread.

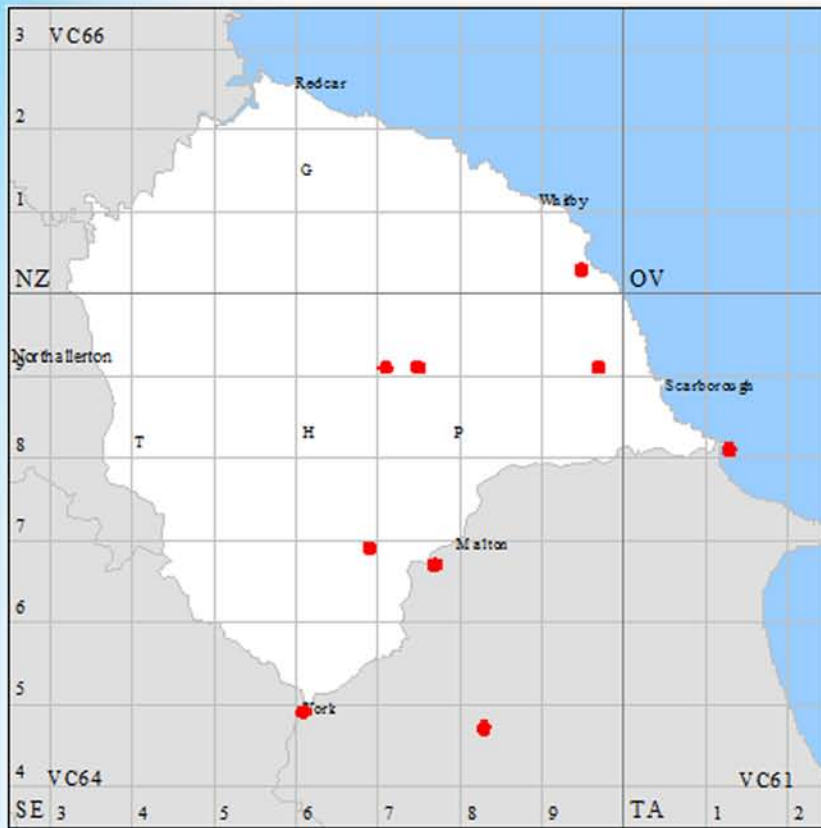
One of the consequences of sowing seed from the South of England in our first year at the Ryedale Folk Museum (2000) was the appearance in the cornfield of some attractive, bright-scarlet flowers in late June. It turned out to be Pheasant's-eye, and for most of us it was our first sight of this plant. We saved seed from the two specimens that had appeared, but never managed to grow it again. Because we thought this species had never been recorded in the area, it did not seem to be appropriate to acquire more seed.

In 2008 at a meeting of the North-east Yorkshire Botany Group, we discovered a record for Pheasant's-eye from the late-1800s at Spikers Hill Farm just north of West Ayton, and since then another record has been found in Eva Crackles' *Flora of the East Riding of Yorkshire*, growing on Bridlington Quay in 1902.

As a result of our experiences with Pheasant's-eye, when we were offered more seed from a supporting farmer in Middlesex we took up the offer and managed to grow it successfully from his seed in 2011 and from our own in 2012.



# Distribution in north-east Yorkshire: Pheasant's-eye (*Adonis annua*)



## Key

● Post-2000 records  
(inc. CFP introductions)

■ Pre-2000 records

G: Guisborough T: Thirsk

H: Helmsley P: Pickering

Data: BSBI, 2014 Maps produced by MapMate®

## Key Facts - Pheasant's-eye (*Adonis annua*)

- Prefers free-draining chalk and limestone-based soils
- Experienced a large decline in UK from 1880 to 1950, even before agricultural intensification caused further losses
- Predominantly autumn germinating
- Produces large seeds but in small quantities, restricting its ability to spread and succeed

### 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.

