

# Cornfield Flowers Project



## Species Cards



### Shepherd's-needle (*Scandix pecten-veneris*)

#### Critically endangered

Formerly widespread throughout UK, populations have declined dramatically since 1950s

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) Priority Species

Needle-like seed pods give its name (pictured)

**REASONS FOR DECLINE:**  
Herbicides; short-lived seed

### *Our Shepherd's needle experience...*

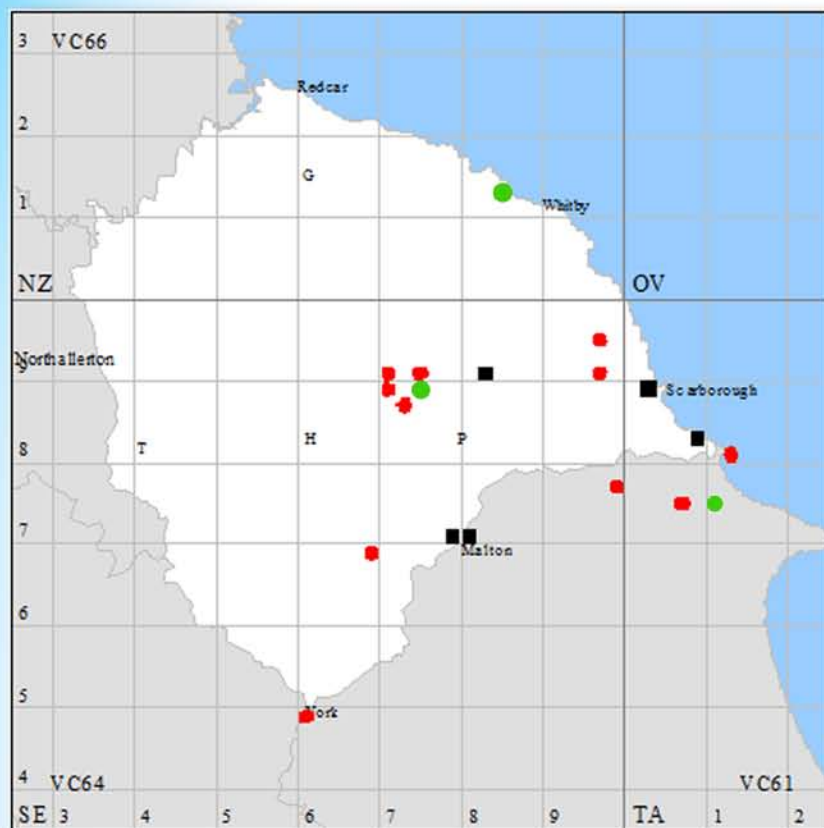
Eva Crackles, in her book *Flora of the East Riding of Yorkshire*, tells us that Shepherd's needle was said to be 'in all cornfields' in 1902. By 1950 it was 'uncommon' but still there in scattered localities. Her last records for it on the Wolds were Sledmere in 1960 and Rillington in 1970. Nan Sykes did not find it during her survey of the North York Moors, and in *Wild Plants and their Habitats in the North York Moors* she considered it extinct in the area.

This then was the position when the Cornfield Flowers Project started in 2000. We obtained seed from an unknown source and grew Shepherd's needle at the Ryedale Folk Museum. In about 2003 it was found growing in the corner of a field near Lythe Church, and this site continues to produce plants most years. Also at about the same time we began to get reports of its presence at Appleton-le-Moors, in particular in a field just to the north of the Common.

At this stage, we destroyed all our plants at the Ryedale Folk Museum and grow only locally sourced seed. The Appleton-le-Moors field eventually produced enough seed for us to be able to deposit 2000 seeds in Kew's Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place. We now have Shepherd's needle producing spontaneous plants at a number of our sites.

In 2013 during a survey of Don Spink's at Highfield Farm, Hunmanby, Shepherd's needle was found growing on the Wolds for the first time since 1970. Seed was taken and Don will try to grow it on in 2014.

# Distribution in north-east Yorkshire: Shepherd's-needle (*Scandix pecten-veneris*)



## 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 - Shepherd's-needle (*Scandix pecten-veneris*)

- A member of the Carrot family, and correspondingly popular with rabbits
- Prefers heavy, calcareous clay soils
- Autumn germinating
- Insignificant white flowers develop into distinctive needle-like seed pods

### 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.

