

Cornfield Flowers Project



Species Cards



Smooth cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris glabra*)

Vulnerable

Much rarer relation of the very widespread Common cat's-ear, but has smooth leaves rather than hairy

An easy plant to overlook, but populations have declined markedly since 1960

REASONS FOR DECLINE:

Nitrogen application; modern competitive crop varieties

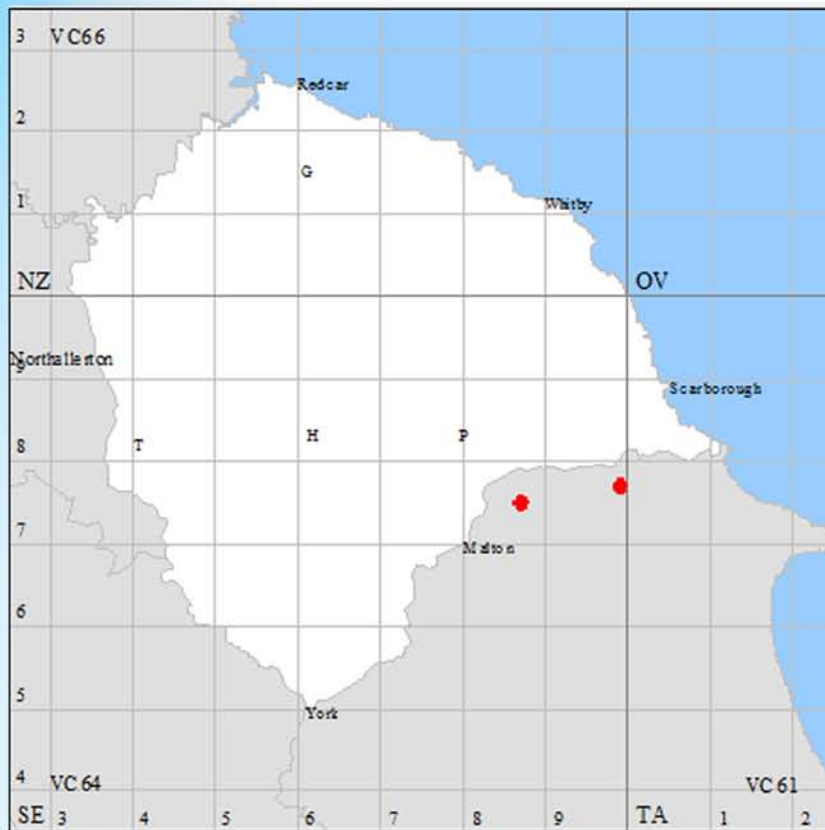
Our Smooth cat's-ear experience...

Smooth cat's-ear is mentioned in *The Natural History of Scarborough* as being 'rare'. It probably means very rare, since the only date given for it is 1888. Eva Crackles in *Flora of the East Riding of Yorkshire* also calls it rare, giving sites at Rillington and Wintringham in 1956 and Allerthorpe in 1958.

We found it growing on Glebe Farm at Potter Brompton in 2008, in such quantity that we thought at first it was a case of mistaken identity. There was more than an acre of densely packed plants, but as we examined them it became apparent that they were indeed Smooth cat's-ear. It would seem that John Middlewood's management of his set-aside on his very sandy soil was exactly what this plant needed.

Being such a rare plant with a need for a special habitat, we have not attempted to introduce Smooth cat's-ear anywhere else except to demonstrate it at the Ryedale Folk Museum. The response was underwhelming – it is a small yellow flower and only opens for about two hours at midday, and that's when it's sunny.

Distribution in north-east Yorkshire: Smooth cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris glabra*)



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 - Smooth cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris glabra*)

- Found only on nutrient-poor acidic sands, in grasslands and arable fields
- UK strongholds in East Anglia and parts of south-east England
- Autumn germinating
- Its similarity to Common cat's-ear and flowers that close by afternoon make it an easy plant to overlook

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.

