

Back from the Brink – Species summary


Rock-rose Pot Beetle

BftB project: IPO4 Limestone’s Living Legacies

Project lead organisation: Butterfly Conservation

Contact: info@butterfly-conservation.org

Partner organisation for species: Buglife

Species name – common & scientific	Rock-rose Pot Beetle <i>Cryptocephalus primarius</i>
Photograph	 <p>© Liam Olds / Back from the Brink</p>
Taxon group	Coleoptera (Beetles)
Conservation status	A species “of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity” under Section 41 (England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Endangered (IUCN) Nationally Rare (GB)
UK distribution	A scarce species in Britain mostly of calcareous grasslands in southern England, with disjunct records also from Perthshire in Scotland. Now known from just a few calcareous grasslands in Dorset, Gloucestershire and Hampshire.
Habitat associations	A species of unimproved calcareous grassland. Adults typically occur in warm, dry, sheltered conditions on south-facing slopes, suggesting an underlying thermal requirement. A short sward and an abundance of Common Rock-rose are deemed important.

BftB work carried out:	
Survey & Monitoring	<p>Surveys with volunteers and Buglife focussed on the two known sites with recent records Stinchcombe Hill and a privately owned site, plus a third site, Rodborough Common which had historic records from 1985 but was thought to be extinct.</p> <p>2018 surveys: Stinchcombe Hill (as part of Rock-rose Pot Beetle Identification and Survey workshop with Buglife)</p> <p>2019 surveys: Stinchcombe Hill Site 2: A privately owned site</p> <p>2020 and 2021 surveys: Stinchcombe Hill Site 2: A privately owned site Rodborough Common</p>
Sites habitat management works	<p>Clearance of encroaching scrub from the area of grassland where the beetle is known to occur at Stinchcombe Hill (it is currently not feasible to introduce grazing animals to this site).</p> <p>Following site advice, cattle grazing was introduced by the landowner at Site 2 in 2020.</p>
Technical advice provision	<p>Site advice visit to Site 2 with the landowner. Advice provided on management for Rock-rose Pot Beetle, followed by email advice and reports from Buglife.</p> <p>A new Rock-rose Pot Beetle factsheet was also produced with Buglife.</p>
Links made with other taxa / conservation work?	<p>The above advice visit also discussed management for Grizzled Skipper.</p> <p>Species requirements link to habitat management for the Large Blue and other short sward, heat-loving species.</p>
Wider engagement & advocacy activities?	<p>Rock-rose Pot Beetle Identification and Survey workshops led by Buglife for volunteers in 2018, 2019 and 2021. Attended by 34 people.</p>
BftB results obtained:	
Recorded Distribution (in BftB focal areas)	<p>2018 surveys: Stinchcombe Hill – zero found on volunteer workshop</p> <p>2019 surveys: Stinchcombe Hill – 1 found Site 2 – 3 found</p> <p>2020 surveys: Stinchcombe Hill – max. count in one survey of 7 Site 2 – max. count 39 Rodborough Common - first Rock-rose Pot Beetle found in 35 years. Max. count 7</p> <p>2021 surveys: Stinchcombe Hill – max. count in one survey of 2 Site 2 – max. count 17 Rodborough Common – max. count 4</p>

	<p>Further results can be found in Buglife reports: 'Survey for Rock-rose Pot Beetle (<i>Cryptocephalus primarius</i>) in Gloucestershire' – Liam Olds, Buglife 'Further surveys for the Rock-rose Pot Beetle (<i>Cryptocephalus primarius</i>) in Gloucestershire' – Liam Olds, Buglife</p> <p>(Final summary report covering all survey years to come in Sept 2021)</p>
Recorded Abundance of species populations	A total of 69 adult beetles from Site 2 in 2020 establishes it as probably the most important site for the beetle in the country. 14 were found at Rodborough Common and 9 at Stinchcombe Hill.
Other results documented?	<i>Cryptocephalus bipunctatus</i> also recorded on each survey.
Species Recovery Curve progress made	Species recovery curve score moved from 2 to 6: Potential recovery solutions continue at Stinchcombe Hill through scrub removal work. Grazing reintroduced at Breakheart Hill following advice to landowner.
Recommendations for future work:-	<p>Further clearance of encroaching scrub from the area of grassland where the beetle is known to occur at Stinchcombe Hill. Discussions started re using the No Fence GPS collar system which if purchased could enable grazing of the site.</p> <p>Cattle grazing was introduced by the landowner of Site 2 in 2020. Need to keep an eye on the resulting sward and amend number of cattle/amount of time grazing as a result.</p>