

## 1. CURRENT STATUS

### 1.1 Legislation and priority status

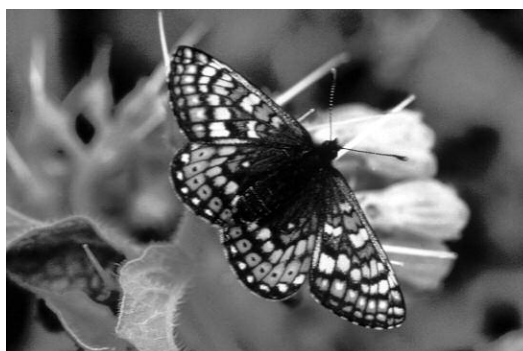
International	Habitats Directive <sup>a</sup> ( <i>Annex II</i> ) Berne Convention ( <i>Appendix II</i> )
UK and Wales	Wildlife and Countryside Act ( <i>Schedule 5</i> ) UK BAP priority Welsh S74 list <sup>b</sup>
Gwynedd	Snowdonia BAP

### 1.2 Status in Wales and beyond

Wales provides one of the European strongholds for the marsh fritillary<sup>c</sup>, which has declined in almost every European country and is now extinct in northern Belgium<sup>1</sup>. However even in Wales it has declined substantially over the last 150 years, its range having been reduced by over 60%, and has recently disappeared from most of eastern England and eastern Scotland<sup>1</sup>. Colonies are quite widespread in parts of southwest England and Wales, although they are now estimated to be disappearing at a rate of well over 10% per decade<sup>1</sup>.

### 1.3 Status in Gwynedd<sup>d</sup>

In Gwynedd LBAP area marsh fritillary butterflies are known to exist at Llyn Tangrisiau, Cors Gyfelog, Rhosgyll, Bryn-engan, Cors y Wlad, Hendy and near the newly developed A487 Penygroes road. In Snowdonia LBAP area there are 2 confirmed sites centred on the Dolgellau area; Cae Pencefn (Dolgellau) and Tir Stent (Cadair Idris), and a population has recently been discovered at Morfa Harlech.



## 2. FACTORS AFFECTING THIS SPECIES IN GWYNEDD<sup>e</sup>

- Loss of suitable habitat as a result of improvement of pastures, land drainage, afforestation, changes in grazing stock and practices, abandonment of grazing. Many local farms now tend to concentrate more on sheep rather than cattle or mixed grazing systems.
- Good populations of marsh fritillary are dependent on a range or mosaic of unimproved habitat patches nearby, where new colonies can establish as old ones become extinct. However habitat loss has led to the fragmentation of these mosaics, which is having a long-term effect on potential populations.
- Difficulties in managing the grazing on many of these larger sites due to Common Land grazing rights.

<sup>a</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

<sup>b</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, *Going Wild in Wales - List of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biological Diversity*. Crown Copyright 2003.

<sup>c</sup> *Eurodryas aurinia*

<sup>d</sup> Within this document the term "Gwynedd" refers to areas outside the Snowdonia National Park area, except where specified otherwise

<sup>e</sup> See also associated HAPs for more general factors affecting this species' habitat

## 3. ASSOCIATED GWYNEDD SAPS / HAPS<sup>f</sup>

Lowland heathland, Lowland meadows and pasture, Rhos pasture, Wetlands

## 4. CURRENT ACTION IN GWYNEDD

### 4.1 Site and habitat protection

- Marsh fritillaries may occur in areas of Gwynedd identified as potential Wildlife Sites, or designated as SSSI, NNR or candidate SAC.
- A number of marsh fritillary populations are found within SSSI's in Gwynedd, e.g. at Cors Gyfelog and Cors Geirch; part of Cors Geirch is an NNR.
- Marsh fritillary are a primary reason for selection of Corsydd Eifionydd candidate SAC, which supports the most significant metapopulation of marsh fritillary in north Wales.

### 4.2 Management and programmes of action

- A high quality marsh fritillary site was managed under the Llŷn ESA agri-environment scheme.
- Posters and recording postcards looking at the marsh fritillary and produced by Gwynedd Council have been distributed to local schools, to other conservation organisations and at local agricultural shows and events.
- Marsh fritillary is one of the species eligible for funding from Countryside Council for Wales Species Challenge Fund.

### 4.3 Survey, research and monitoring

- A Countryside Council for Wales survey of marsh fritillaries at known sites in Gwynedd was completed in 1997.
- North Wales Wildlife Trust have surveyed part of Pen Llŷn for marsh fritillary.
- Countryside Council for Wales commissioned a Habitat Quality survey of patches within the landscape of Corsydd Eifionydd candidate SAC in 2002.

## 5. ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

1. To establish the current status and distribution of marsh fritillary in Gwynedd.
2. To maintain the current range of marsh fritillaries in Gwynedd, by protecting, maintaining and enhancing existing marsh fritillary populations and related habitats.
3. To maintain and enhance other potential habitats near occupied sites in order to link up marsh fritillary populations and increase marsh fritillary population and distribution.
4. To use the marsh fritillary as a flagship species to raise awareness of the importance of appropriate management of its associated habitats.

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<sup>f</sup> The narrow-bordered bee hawk moth, a UK BAP Priority Species which is found in similar habitats to the marsh fritillary and like it also feeds on devil's-bit scabious when in the larval stage, is also found in Gwynedd

## 6. PROPOSED ACTIONS

Code	Action	Partner(s) <sup>9</sup>
<b>Policy and legislation</b>		
1	Use planning conditions to ensure developments in sensitive locations are compatible with conservation of marsh fritillary TARGET/TIMESCALE: Ongoing	<b>GC</b> , Relevant partners
2	Consider designating suitable sites of importance for marsh fritillary as Wildlife Sites TARGET/TIMESCALE: Start process of designation, By 2005	<b>CCW, BC, GC, NWWT</b>
<b>Species / habitat management and protection</b>		
3	Promote and support grant schemes including Tir Gofal, Llŷn ESA and / or use management agreements where appropriate to secure favourable management of known sites for large and medium marsh fritillary populations, and of nearby potential sites, taking into account the needs of associated LBAP species and habitats TARGET/TIMESCALE: All known sites, By 2009	<b>CCW, BC, CLA, DEPC, EAW, FC, FWAG</b> Cymru, FUW, GC, NFU Cymru
4	Seek funding for land management by developing a biodiversity grant scheme, which would include grants for appropriate management, restoration and / or creation of marsh fritillary habitat TARGET/TIMESCALE: By 2005	<b>GC</b> , Relevant partners
5	Ensure that the potential presence and management requirements of marsh fritillary are considered within any relevant management plans or grant schemes (including NWMPs, WGS, Tir Gofal, ESA) by liaison (including consultation and provision of comments) between key organisations TARGET/TIMESCALE: Ongoing	<b>CCW, BC, DEPC, EAW, FC, FWAG</b> Cymru, GC
<b>Advisory</b>		
	None identified	
<b>Survey, research and monitoring</b>		
6	Survey suitable habitat for marsh fritillary, within the proximity of current or recent localities in Gwynedd TARGET/TIMESCALE: To be set, By 2006	<b>BC, CCW, GC</b>
7	Promote wider searches to determine the overall distribution of marsh fritillary in Gwynedd TARGET/TIMESCALE: Ongoing	<b>BC, CCW, GC</b>
<b>Communications and publicity</b>		
8	Continue to raise awareness of the threats facing the marsh fritillary and the importance of Wales for its survival through attending local agricultural shows and events, creating local publicity, and in producing education / advisory material	<b>GC, BC, CCW, NWWT</b>

<sup>9</sup> Lead partner for this action is indicated by bold typeface, see section 7.2 for explanation of abbreviations

## 7 PARTNERS & OPPORTUNITIES

### 7.1 Overall Lead Partner for SAP

Butterfly Conservation (BC)

### 7.2 Key partners

Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)

Country Land and Business Association (CLA)

Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Welsh Assembly Government) (DEPC)

Environment Agency Wales (EAW)

Farmers Union of Wales (FUW)

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Cymru (FWAG Cymru)

Forestry Commission (FC)

Gwynedd Council (GC)

National Farmers Union of Wales (NFU)

North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT)

### 7.3 Opportunities

County Recorders, Volunteers

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 9. ABBREVIATIONS

BAP: Biodiversity Action Plan, ESA: Environmentally Sensitive Area, HAP: Habitat Action Plan, LBAP: Local Biodiversity Action Plan, NWMP: Native Woodland Management Plan, NNR: National Nature Reserve, SAC: Special Area of Conservation, SAP: Species Action Plan, SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest, WGS: Woodland Grant Scheme

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<sup>1</sup> UK BAP for Marsh Fritillary