

Name:**Marsh sow-thistle***Sonchus palustris***UK status:**

Nationally scarce (24 hectads). Regionally declining

London status:

Very rare (1 site). Historic decline. Probably extinct.

Protected status:

W&CA S.13(b); general protection from uprooting without owners' permission

Relevant London HAPs:

Tidal Thames; Reedbeds

Citation:

A tall perennial of riverside vegetation on damp, silty soils rich in nitrogen. It is moderately tolerant of brackish conditions and can grow near tidal river mouths. Its national distribution is concentrated in the Broads of East Anglia. Elsewhere however, and especially in the Thames Valley, urban development has caused a catastrophic decline in the plant. In Greater London one small population (6 plants in 2003) survives in a reedbed fringing the tidal Darent estuary near Crayford (LB Bexley). This population is highly vulnerable and has contracted, and may be threatened by leachate from an adjacent restored landfill site. [Note: the plant may have been lost to habitat destruction in 2005.]

Managing authority; Environment Agency



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Conservation priorities:

- Ensure favourable management of site as a matter of urgency
- Monitor population recovery
- Consider strategic reintroductions as necessary
- Protect any new populations emerging from further survey

References:

Burton R M, 1983. *Flora of the London Area*. LNHS

Cheffings CM & Farrell L (Eds.), 2005. *The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain*. JNCC

Preston CD, Pearman DA & Dines TD (Edit.), 2002. *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*. Oxford

Stewart A, Pearman DA & Preston CD, 1994. *Scarce Plants in Britain*. JNCC