



Critically endangered at high risk of extinction (UK) in the wild
Legally protected to the highest degree

Scruffy little urchin of a plant



Annual, germinating most months, but doesn't like it too cold

A winter wet, summer dry species

Populations boom and bust

a few thousand plants in some years, over half a million in exceptional years



Keeps good company

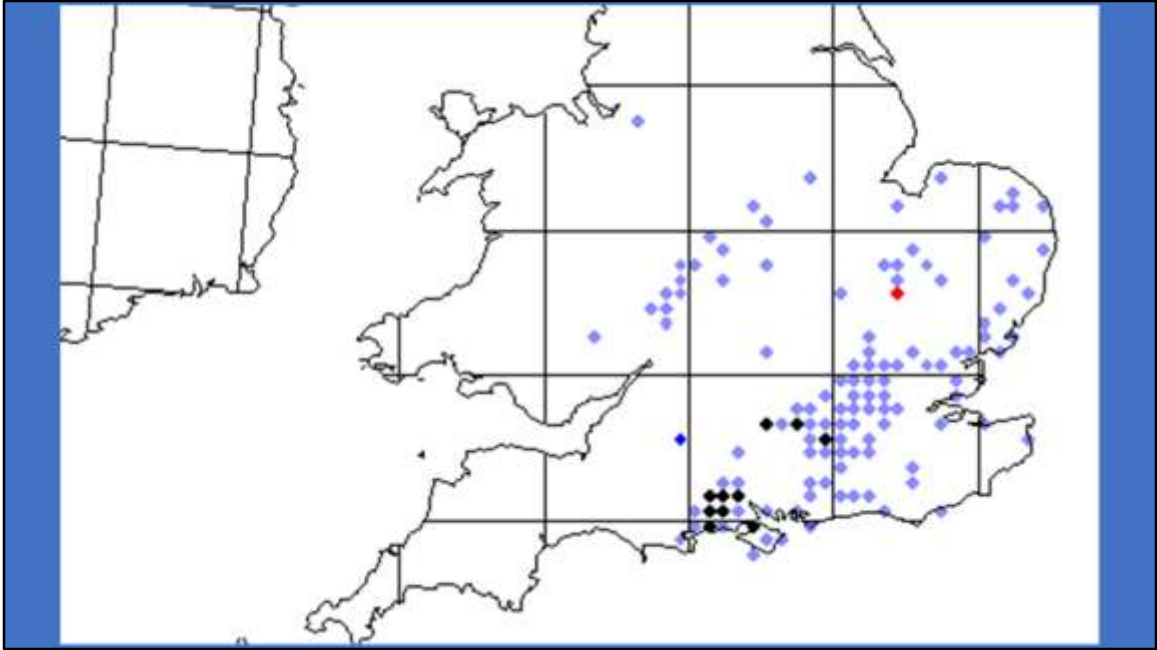
Pennyroyal mint

Chamomile etc



And again in seed

Vast amounts of seed, relatively long-lived seed... at least a decade. Little black bullets that bounce



Atlas 2000 distribution

10 Sites in 1970s

Now confined to the Forest and an outlying drove in the Avon Valley

Same pattern across NW Europe



Classic habitats of the text book. Village greens and associated lanes
The habitat as well as the species receives paper protection here



Tracks over the heath, regularly walked by cattle

Importance of concentration

Too and fro

Lots of mucky mud



Not in the text books

Equally large populations within enclosed land... (outside habitat protected framework|)

Pig field, arcs



Including in farmyards

Large populations at high risk of being tidied away



And trackways within farms (X marks....)



There are lots of places where it has gone, even in the Forest. We can learn from these

South Wiers, can track the decline of the plant with the retirement of three commoners. Still close grazed sward, but not churned up

Nearly gone from the Crown lands

Used to be in Lyndhurst high street, where now you can see plastic grass



So what does it like?

Cattle grazing short turf



Lots of cattle

Direct correlation between Fleabane sites and commoners holdings turning out 50 or more head of cattle

When we worked this out it was possible to predict where best to look



Pigs are helpful too, creating more bare ground



So are ponies.

This is what small fleabane needs in mid-winter

Lots of Mud and filth, NB much of this mud is a veneer over the sward



Same site as previous slide, in early summer



Lots of other things, plants, inverts, fungi have the same habitat requirements

The new Forest is the last stronghold of this ancient landscape, habitat and species in Britain and over much of NW Europe.

It survives because commoning survives.