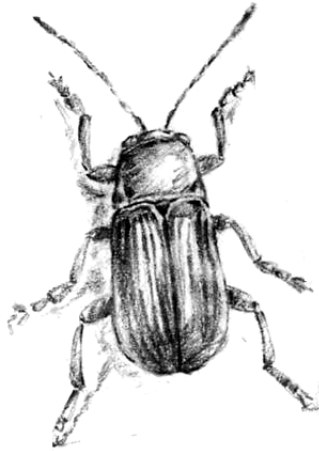


## A leaf beetle (*Cryptocephalus exiguus*)



### 1 Definition

This extremely rare beetle (*Cryptocephalus exiguus*) is only known from a single site in the UK, where it breeds among fen-meadow vegetation. Little is known of its ecology, but specimens are usually associated with herbs in damp hollows and larvae are likely to live amongst ground litter. Other members of the genus have been shown to be highly thermophilic, favouring small pockets of plant litter, with a very warm microclimate. It is not known if these characteristics apply to *Cryptocephalus exiguus*.

### 2 Current status

#### 2.1 National

During the last century it was recorded from various sites in the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads and a valley mire in Lincolnshire but since 1954 it has only been known to occur at a single site, Pashford Poors Fen in West Suffolk. The beetle is listed as endangered on the GB Red List.

#### 2.2 Local

A single male found in 1980 and a female in 1986. Following two unsuccessful searches for the beetle in 1993 and 1996, survey in 1997 found two individuals, suggesting that suitable habitat still occurs but only at a level capable of supporting a very small population. It may be that the species true habitat has still not been discovered and thus only specimens in atypical situations have been found.

Surveys in 1997, 1998 and 2000 recorded small numbers of *C. exiguus* in areas of Pashford Poors Fen, which are specifically managed for the species. Attempts to locate a second population along the River Lark in 2000 failed although a large area of potentially suitable habitat was found.

### **3 Current factors affecting *Cryptocephalus exiguus* in Suffolk**

- Pashford Poors Fen is threatened by lowering of the water table due to drainage of the adjacent land.
- The current grazing regime for the site may be having an adverse impact on vegetation structure.

## **4 Current action**

### **4.1 Legal Status**

The beetle is listed as endangered on the Great Britain Red List for invertebrates but has no protection.

### **4.2 Management, research and guidance**

- Pashford Poors Fen is a SSSI and a Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve.
- The SSSI boundary was extended in 1996 to improve control over the adjacent drainage ditches, and additional bunds have been installed to try and hold water levels higher during the summer months.
- The management plan for the site has been written with greater emphasis on the vegetation management of the wet fen areas where *C. exiguus* has been found. This will primarily concentrate on reducing the level of grazing in autumn and early winter.
- Issues connected with the control of water resources on the site will be addressed through the implementation of the Water Level Management Plan.

## **5 Action plan objectives and targets**

1. *Undertake further survey work to determine whether the beetle is still present at Pashford Poors Fen.*
2. *If found when site is re-surveyed, attempt to establish habitat requirements of the species and initiate monitoring of associated habitat features.*
3. *Review further possibilities for restoring the water table at Pashford Poors Fen through either additional bunding and/or land acquisition.*
4. *Maintain and enhance the surviving population at Pashford Poors Fen. Once established, and if feasible, translocate the beetle to at least two former sites in Suffolk by the year 2005.*

## 6 Leaf beetle: Proposed local action with lead agencies

Action	Date	Partners
<b>POLICY AND LEGISLATION</b>		
Seek to ensure that the ecological requirements of this species are taken into account in water management plans of the remaining or any newly discovered site.	2005 2006 2007	EN, IDBs, EA
<b>SITE SAFEGUARD AND MANAGEMENT</b>		
Ensure that management of Pashford Pools Fen is appropriate to maintain and enhance the beetle's habitat	2005 2006 2007	SWT, EN
<b>RESEARCH AND MONITORING</b>		
Ensure continued monitoring of leaf beetle population at Pashford Pools Fen	2005 2006 2007	SWT
Assess habitat requirements of species and obtain advice from National BAP group for the species.	2004	BAP Wetland Working Group
Pass information gathered during survey and monitoring to JNCC and SBRC so that it can be incorporated into National and Suffolk databases.	2005 2006 2007	BAP Wetland Working Group