

Depressed or Compressed River Mussel (*Pseudanodonta complanata*)

1 Definition

The status of the Depressed River Mussel (*Pseudanodonta complanata*) is uncertain owing to lack of data, but it is thought to be rare and threatened throughout its European range. It occurs at scattered localities throughout England in lowland rivers and canals where it is usually found at low density.

2 Current status

2.1 National

The Depressed River Mussel has been recorded from 63 10km squares in England and Wales since 1950. The species is easily overlooked, however, and may be more common than thought. The UK probably has the healthiest population in Europe, with the possible exception of Finland.

2.2 Local

The Depressed River Mussel is found in the River Waveney, although it was not known here until 1973. Surveys undertaken over the last 5 years have proved that this snail is present along a greater stretch of the River Waveney than previously thought and is within the dykes and ditches of the Broads. Estimated population in the Waveney is 1.2 million ('Population Genetics, Ecology and Waterway Management in the Conservation of the Depressed River Mussel, Cambridge University).

3 Current factors affecting the Depressed River Mussel in Suffolk

The threats to the depressed river mussel are not fully known but are likely to include water pollution, physical disturbance of river banks and channels as well as drought. The population on the Waveney is quite localised and potentially at high risk from disturbance.

There are a number of reasons that might explain the absence of depressed river mussel from many rivers. Firstly the rivers may not contain fish species that are suitable hosts for Depressed River Mussel larvae. Secondly the mussels rarely move large distances unless severely distressed and therefore rely on fish to transport larvae to new habitats. Thirdly the substrate may not be the correct sediment to allow successful survival and reproduction of this mussel. Dredging of rivers can have a large impact on this mussel and the frequency, timing, location and search of dredged silts can all influence the type of impact of the work.

4 Current Action

4.1 Legal status

The Depressed River Mussel is not protected in the UK. However it is listed as a priority species for conservation concern in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The section of the River Waveney in which it occurs in Suffolk is designated as a County Wildlife Site.

4.2 Management, research and guidance

There has been no recent survey for depressed river mussel in Suffolk.

5 Action plan objectives and Targets

- 1 *Determine the distribution of the Depressed River Mussel in Suffolk river catchments similar in character to the Waveney*
- 2 *Encourage appropriate habitat management for this species*

6 Depressed river mussel: Proposed Action with Lead Agencies

Action	Date	Partners
POLICY AND LEGISLATION		
Seek to include this species' habitat requirements in Strategic Plans, Development Plans and Policy documents in Suffolk.	2004 2005 2006 2007	EN, SWT, BA, SBRC, Defra, AW, WDC
Ensure that Flood Defence and Navigational activities take account of species.	2004 2005 2006 2007	EA, BA
SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION		
Prepare advice on river management to benefit this species by 2005.	2004 2005	BAP Wetland Working Group, EN, SWT, EA, SBRC
RESEARCH AND MONITORING		
Survey other rivers in Suffolk that are tidal and flow through low lying, agricultural land, eg; Lark, Gipping and Stour.	2004 2005 2006 2007	EA, SWT, AW
Undertake research into dredging practices and the impact on depressed river mussel habitat, preferred sediment types etc. with a view to producing guidelines on dredging.	2005	EA, BA, EN
Commission research on the primary fish host and its distribution and links with larvae of depressed river mussel.	2005 2006 2007	BAP Wetland Habitat Working Group in conjunction with National BAP group
ADVISORY		
Provide advice to river managers in areas where mussel occurs.	2004 2005 2006 2007	BAP Wetland Working Group, IDBs, EA, BA, SWT
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY		
Produce an information sheet for contractors and managers.	2005 2006	BAP Wetland Working Group