

SUMMARY

Ranunculus ophioglossifolius Villars

Adder's-tongue spearwort, Llafnyls Tafod y Neidr

RANUNCULACEAE



Photo by Magnus Martinsson

STATUS:

Endangered [EN]
Listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981)

2 / 4 (5) 10-km squares post 1987

OVERVIEW:

Adder's-tongue spearwort (*Ranunculus ophioglossifolius* Villars.) is an annual with seeds that can lie dormant for at least 30 years - but are killed by prolonged desiccation. Germination can be in autumn, over winter or in the spring and can be induced by disturbance. The conditions for maximum growth are bare soils and moist ground from August to October; a mild frost-free autumn with sufficient rain until the end of October; adequate rain in November and December and absence of prolonged severe winter frost. *Ranunculus ophioglossifolius* is a very rare plant in Britain. It has been recorded from a total of five sites, but is currently known just from only two. On a world scale it is widespread in Europe (north to Sweden), North Africa and across western Asia. It occurs on the edges of ponds, typically where trampled by cattle.

Threats to the survival of *Ranunculus ophioglossifolius* in Britain are habitat loss, the effects of succession and climate change.

DISTRIBUTION:

ENGLAND

EXTANT	Badgeworth Nature Reserve
EXTINCT	Inglestone Common Woodsford, near Dorchester West of Hythe

JERSEY

EXTINCT	St Peters Marsh
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MANAGEMENT:

Active management is required in the long term to maintain suitable habitat for *Ranunculus ophioglossifolius*, in its pond sites in England. The following management suggestions are proposed:

- *Grazing by heavy stock* such as cattle, horses or ponies, heaviest in late summer after *R. ophioglossifolius* has successfully set seed, creating open conditions required for autumn seed germination and seedling establishment.
- Only *light grazing* during the flowering/seeding phase of the species annual cycle is probably important at sites with small populations of *R. ophioglossifolius* to avoid excessive loss of maturing plants.
- *Mechanical disturbance* provides an effective alternative to grazing.

For a full profile of *Ranunculus ophioglossifolius* a copy of the full dossier is also available from our species dossier web page.

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