

ORCHIDS ORCHIDACEAE SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

Orchids have been identified as important plants in Caerphilly county borough. They are an attractive part of the landscape and many are instantly recognisable. They can also be indicative of ecologically important habitats, but many are in decline due to human activities. The orchid species included in this action plan are listed below:

- **Bee Orchid** *Ophrys apifera*
- **Common spotted-orchid**
Dactylorhiza fuchsii
- **Early purple orchid** *Orchis mascula*
- **Frog orchid** *Coeloglossum viride*
- **Green-winged orchid** *Orchis morio*
- **Heath spotted-orchid**
Dactylorhiza maculata
- **Pyramidal orchid**
Anacamptis pyramidalis
- **Southern marsh orchid**
Dactylorhiza praetermissa

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	-
EC Habitats Directive	-
Conservation Regs 1994	-
Berne Convention 1982	-
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CITES 1975	-
WCA 1981	Part I, Section 13

2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

The orchid family *Orchidaceae* is one of the largest families of flowering plants, comprising some 20,000 species throughout the world, and displays a diversity of flower structure few other plant families can match. Their distribution ranges from desert to rain forest, and this ecological complexity, along with their popularity worldwide, instigate a need for orchid conservation⁴². Only the fen orchid is a priority species in the UKBAP³⁹, but does not occur in Caerphilly county borough. Some of the habitats supporting the species covered by this SAP, however, are identified as priorities, including dry calcareous and wet grasslands, bogs and marshes, and native coniferous and deciduous woodlands³⁹.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

There are a number of records for some orchid species in the county borough, for example several species have been recorded at SINC 75: **Ton-y-pistyll Fields**⁸. The current status of the different orchid species covered by this action plan is outlined below.

2.2.1 Bee Orchid

The bee orchid is a native species of limestone/calcareous grasslands, sometimes found on roadsides, banks and in open woods. It may also occur in quarries and on railway cuttings in Caerphilly county borough. It is an infrequent species, usually occurring in small numbers, mainly in the south and east of England and Wales, being rare in the north of England and in Ireland.



bee orchid (detail of single flower)

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In Caerphilly county borough the bee orchid has recently been recorded at the Pontymister Industrial Estate, Risca (BSBI) (**Map 16.4**), but further survey throughout the county borough is required to establish its distribution and status.

2.2.2 Common spotted-orchid

This orchid is also a native species to Britain, occurring on base-rich marshes and marshy meadows. It is widely distributed, but usually in rather small populations in the uplands. It has also been recorded in Wales in grassy habitats and open woods, generally on calcareous soils. It is probably the commonest of the marsh orchids, often found in large colonies. In the Rhymney Valley it is found mainly on damp pastures, marshes and streamsides, on basic flushes.



common spotted-orchid (detail of single flower)
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It is widespread and frequent, particularly in the southern Rhymney Valley on calcareous soils²⁸ and has been recently recorded on the Pontymister Industrial Estate. SINCs in Caerphilly county borough⁸: (**Map 16.5**) 65: **Pen-Rhiw Bengi Marsh**, 66: **Nant Philkins Fields**, 68: **Cwm Dows Valley** and 93: **Aberbargoed Fields** (SSSI).

2.2.3 Early purple-orchid

This is a frequent native species, to be found in woodland, often of beech and oak, scrub, grassland and roadside verges. It has also been recorded in hedgerows and quarries in Wales as a whole. It is locally common throughout Britain, and in the Rhymney Valley area of Caerphilly county borough it occurs in damp grassland and woodland. It is rare in the north and mid-valley areas, but more frequent on calcareous soils in the south²⁸.



early purple-orchid (detail of single flower)
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SINCs⁸ (**Map 16.6**): 172: **Rudry Woodlands** and 79: **Penmaen Carr** (also a GWT reserve).

2.2.4 Frog orchid

This species is native in Britain but is considered rare in some parts. It is mainly found in pastures and on calcareous grassland. It is scarce in South Wales, particularly the Glamorgan region, with very few recent records, for example, Caerphilly Common (L. Reynolds, 1946)⁴⁰. It can also be found in grassland and woodland margins, and has been recorded in Wales as a whole in quarries, on stonewalls, bogs, heathland, waste ground and roadside verges.



frog orchid (detail of single flower)
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There is only one recent record for the frog orchid in the south of the county borough.

2.2.5 Green-winged orchid

The green-winged orchid is a native, widespread, but rapidly declining species of unimproved managed hay meadows, including calcareous grassland and pastures. Most inland meadow populations have been destroyed through ploughing, but a few fragments survive on roadsides and above quarries⁴⁰. It is therefore scarce in Wales, and in Glamorgan it is mainly restricted to the coastal fringe, with only 4 colonies known in the mid and south of the area.



green-winged orchid (detail of single flower)
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It has been recorded in Wales as a whole in grassy habitats, open scrub, sometimes in abandoned quarries and sand pits, marshland and wetland. It is a locally significant species, but there are no recent records for Caerphilly county borough.

2.2.6 Heath spotted-orchid

The heath spotted-orchid is a beautiful native species found mainly in acid grassland, heathland, spoil tips and rhos pasture. It is a good indicator of valuable grassland and heathland habitats. It is a locally significant species, but populations are decreasing. It is locally abundant where damp meadows and moorland occur, and in the Rhymney Valley it occurs on wet heath, bog and peaty marshes on acid soils. It is fairly common in the north, but rare to frequent in the south²⁸.

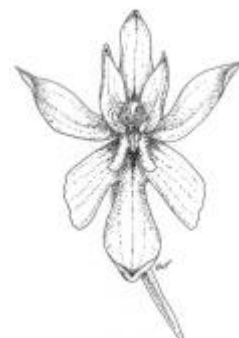


heath spotted-orchid (detail of single flower)
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SINCs⁸ (Map 16.7): 94: **Penllwyn Grasslands** (SSSI), 19: **Y Graig Mire** and 93: **Aberbargoed Fields** (SSSI).

2.2.6 Pyramidal orchid

This is a native species of limestone grassland, but it is scarce or only found in small numbers. It has been recently recorded only from coastal sites⁴⁰. However, in Wales it is often associated with grassy habitats, generally rough unimproved meadows and pastures, banks, roadsides and open woodland rides, generally on calcareous soils. It is one of the commonest orchids in northwest Europe and is found throughout much of Britain.

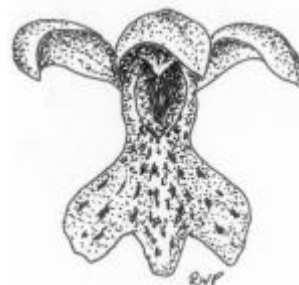


pyramidal orchid (detail of single flower)
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It has been recorded near Hafrodrynys in the county borough, but no systematic surveys have been undertaken.

2.2.7 Southern marsh-orchid

This is another native orchid species, mainly found in base-rich marshy meadows and marshy waste ground. It is common in the lowlands of western Glamorgan, where it often colonises disturbed waste ground. In Wales it is found on base-rich or calcareous soils, in damp meadows, marshes and fens; it is confined to the south and east of Britain. In the Rhymney Valley marshes, damp roadsides and railways are important habitats; the southern marsh-orchid is very local but widespread²⁸.



southern marsh-orchid (detail of single flower)
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SINCs: (Map 16.8): 13: **Nant Bargod Flush** and 56: **Brooklands Marsh**.

2.3 Links with Habitats

These orchid species have been recorded in many different types of habitat including:

- *Wetlands* (marshes and bogs),
- *Deciduous Woodlands* (woodland rides and glades)
- **Species-rich Grasslands** (calcareous and acid grasslands)
- **Wildlife Corridors** (hedgerows, railways, roadsides and walls)
- *Common Land*
- *Heathland*
- *Post-industrial land* (quarries, waste-ground)

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- The main reason for the decline in orchids is habitat loss, due to alteration, destruction and fragmentation.
- Sites have been lost due to agricultural improvements, intensification and abandonment.
- Many urban fringe sites will be affected by residential or employment allocations or development.
- The management of roadsides, railways, hedgerows and walls may effect some orchids (wildlife corridors).
- Over-collecting: removal for trade, horticulture and amateur collections.
- Drainage of wetland areas (**heath spotted-orchid, southern marsh-orchid**).

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 The IUCN/SSC Orchid Specialist Group (OSG) is preparing an Action Plan for Orchidaceae⁴². It is using information from many experts in the field, which will provide the underlying principles for orchid conservation. Action is recommended for the local level, but they are also using general actions that can be applied to all species.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

Not applicable to these species.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

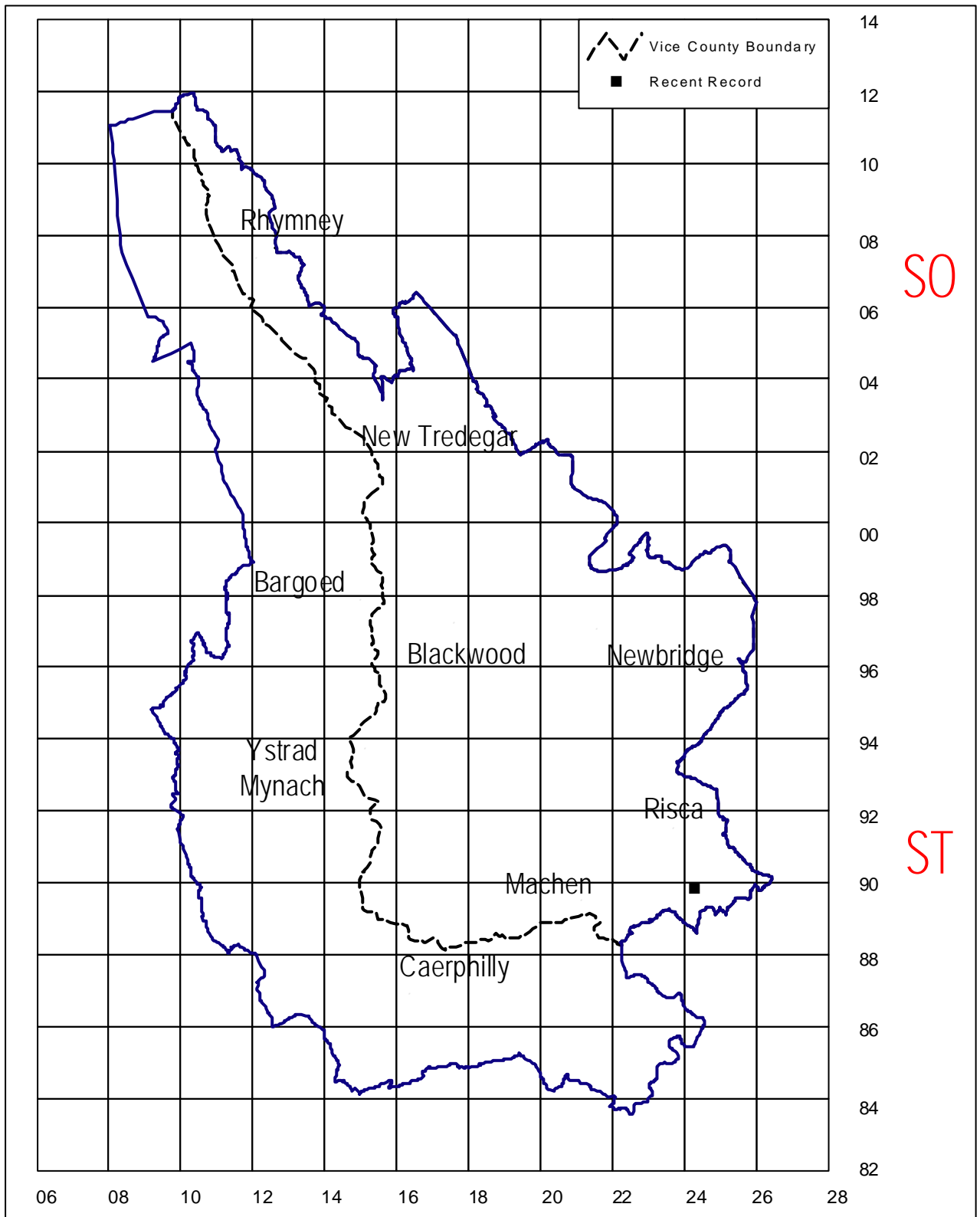
5.2.1 Identify the current distribution for these orchid species in the county borough and monitor habitats/known sites (Target: 2003 and ongoing).

5.2.2 Maintain and enhance all existing populations of orchids and their associated plant communities and ensure that important habitats are managed appropriately (ongoing).

6. ACTION AND KEY PARTNERS

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:									
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
6.1 Policy and Legislation												
6.1.1 Seek to designate important habitats supporting orchids, such as species-rich grassland, heath, wetland, and rhos pasture, as SI NC.	CCBC	-										✓
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management												
6.2.1 Encourage the appropriate management of sites with populations of these orchid species and associated plant communities.	CCBC	FC GWT GLWT Coed Cymru landowners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3 Species Management and Protection												
6.3.1 Ensure protection is given to orchid species in the county borough and management is sensitive to the ecological requirements of the species.	CCBC	NAWAD Coed Cymru	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.2 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4 Advisory												
6.4.1 Provide advice, information and training on grants, incentive schemes, and appropriate management techniques to owners and managers.	CBP	Coed Cymru landowners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring												
6.5.1 Monitor known orchid sites regularly.	BSBI	CCBC	✓				✓					✓
6.6 Communications and Publicity												
6.6.1 Raise awareness of the need to conserve species-rich grasslands, and other important orchid habitats through the use of traditional agricultural practices.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.6.2 Raise awareness of the conservation importance of orchids as indicators of important habitats.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

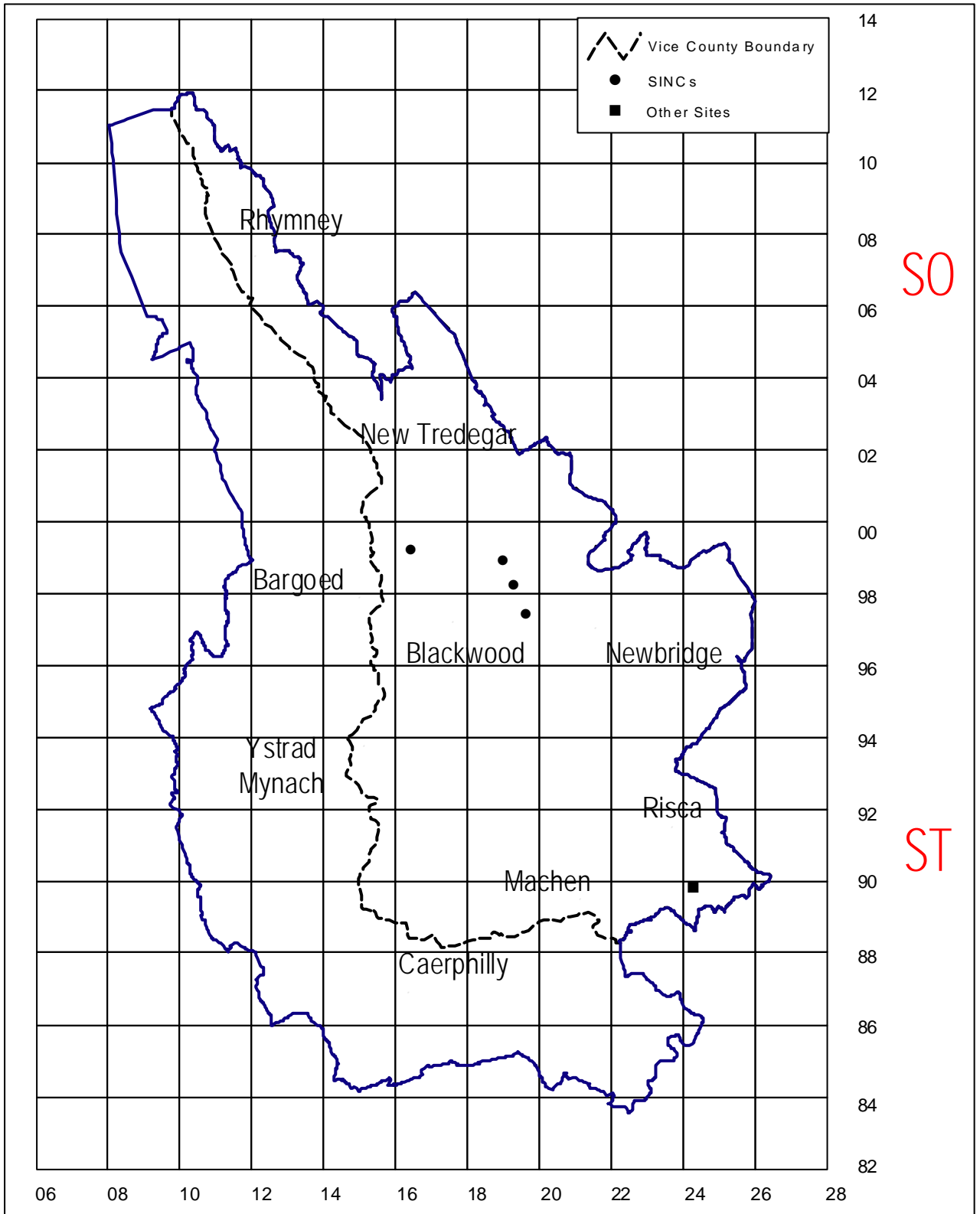
MAP 16.4 - BEE ORCHID



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 Mae atgynhychu heb awdurdod yn torri hawffraint y Goron. Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos siffl.
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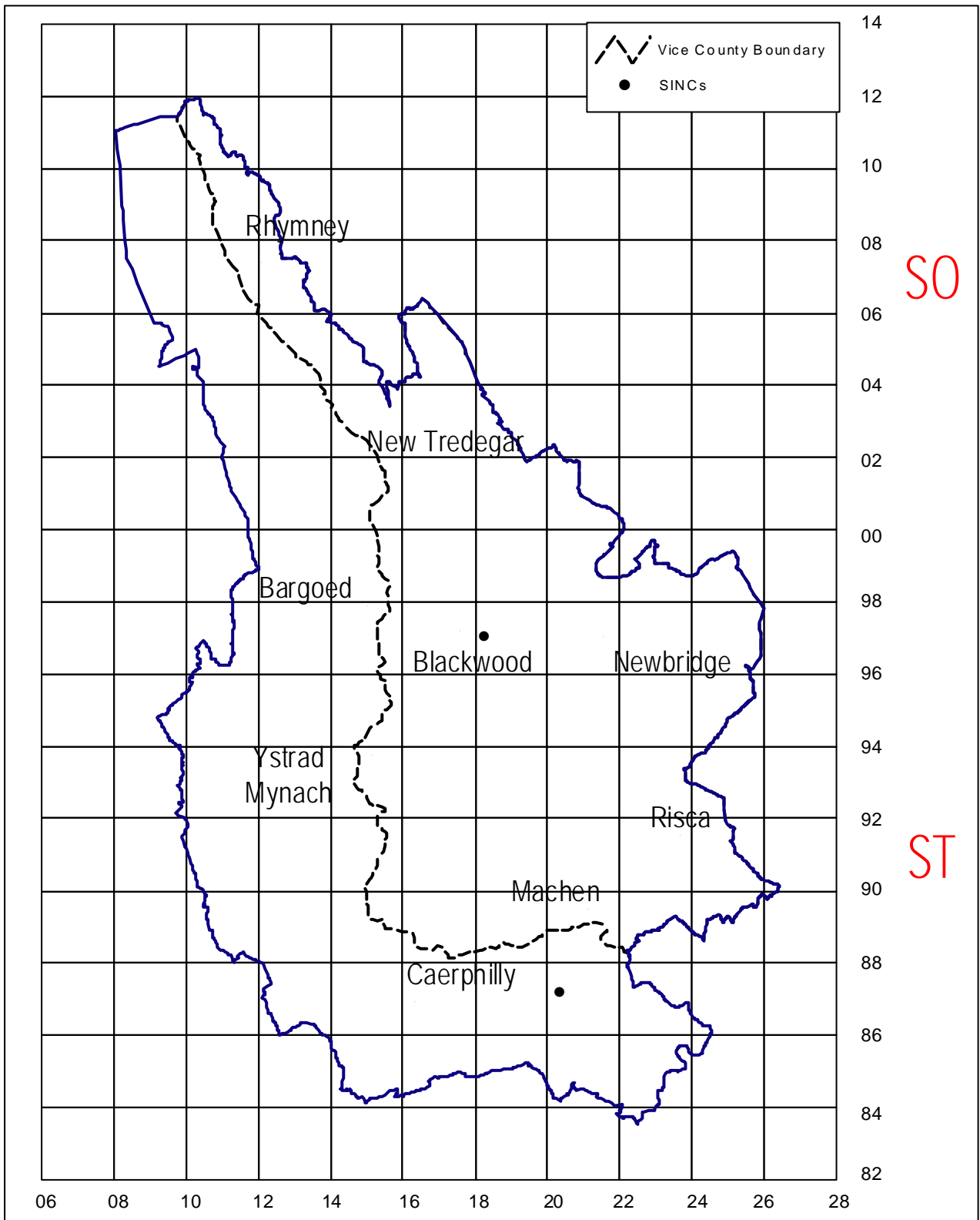
MAP 16.5 - COMMON SPOTTED - ORCHID



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MAP 16.6 - EARLY PURPLE- ORCHID



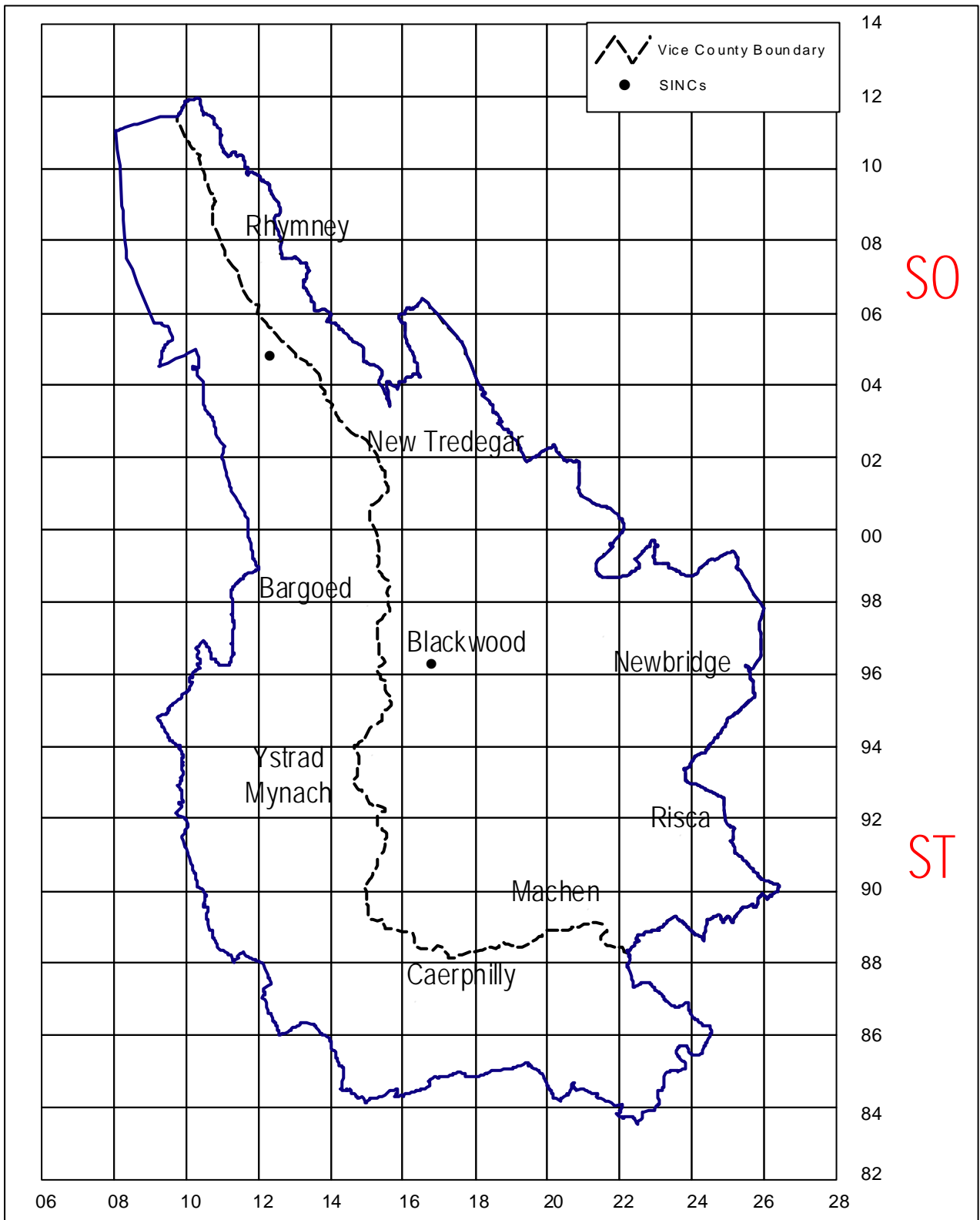
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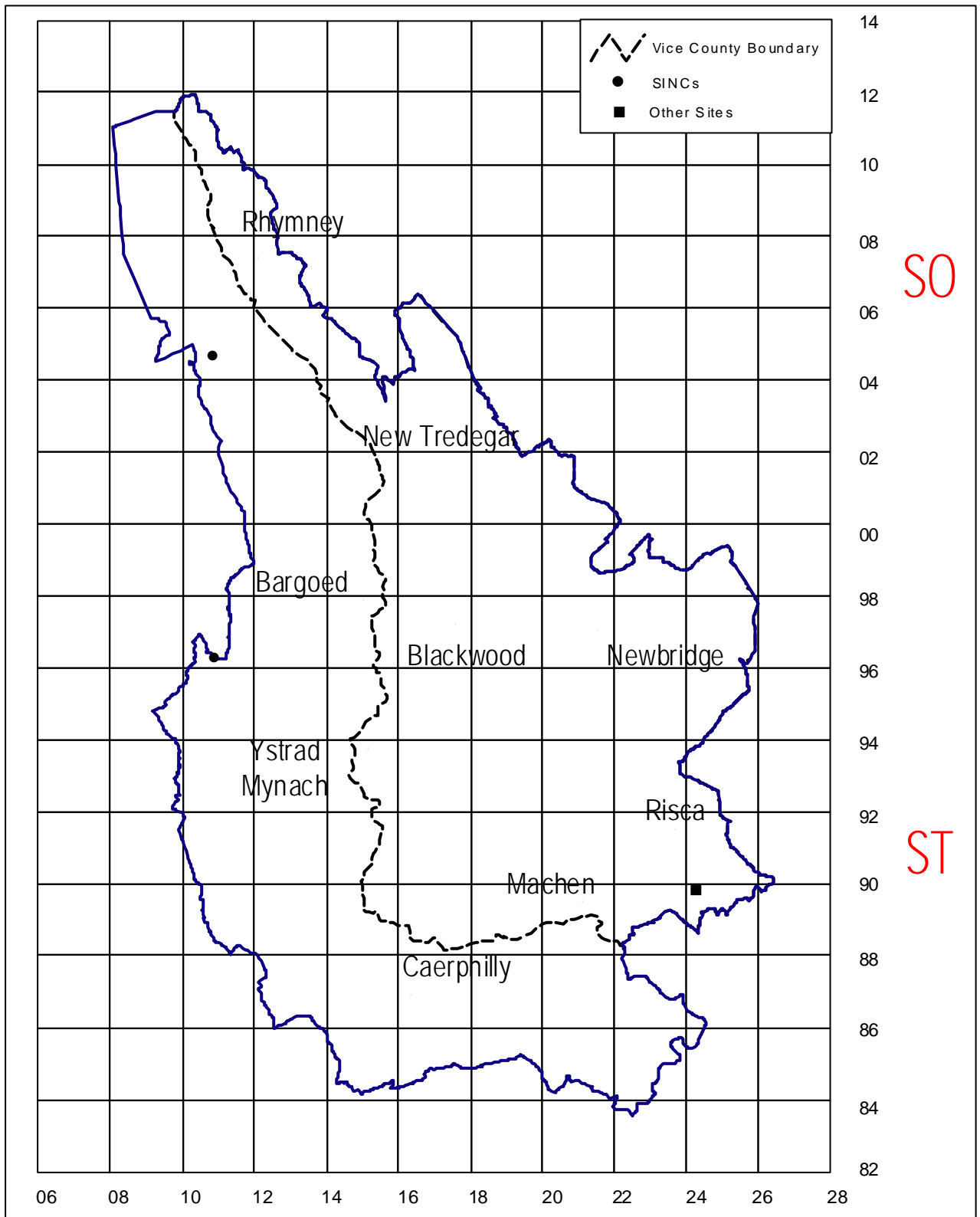
MAP 16.7 - HEATH SPOTTED - ORCHID



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MAP 16.8 - SOUTHERN MARSH - ORCHID



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