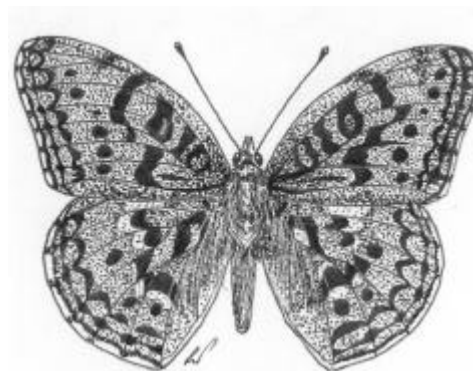


## HIGH BROWN FRITILLARY *ARGYNNIS ADIPPE* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The high brown fritillary butterfly is a UKBAP priority species in severe decline<sup>39</sup>. It occurs in Glamorgan and may still exist in Caerphilly county borough as specialised habitat is still found in the area.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	P
EC Habitats Directive	-
Conservation Regs 1994	-
Berne Convention 1982	-
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CI TES 1975	-
WCA 1981	Sch. 5
Other Species Status	RDB Insects - vulnerable



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### 2. CURRENT STATUS

#### 2.1 UK and Wales

The high brown fritillary was formerly widespread and locally abundant across much of England and Wales. It has, however, declined rapidly in the last 50 years and is now extinct over 94% of its former range. In 1994 only 51 definite colonies were known, many of these were very small and possibly not viable in isolation. The remaining centres of distribution are the bracken slopes of Dartmoor, Exmoor, Herefordshire and Glamorgan. It also occupies the coppiced woodland limestone outcrops of Morecombe Bay. It is still widespread across Europe, although it may have suffered local declines.

#### 2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

High brown fritillaries may still occur in Caerphilly county borough, although confirmed records have not been made since 1992. The coedcae/ffridd of the valley sides in the county borough are a favoured habitat. Violets thrive in the summer bracken canopy, particularly on those with a warm microclimate usually associated with a southerly aspect. In the late 1980s records regularly flowed from the Brynawel area, where extensive areas of bracken still occur. There are also unconfirmed records from other parts in the south and into neighbouring boroughs. Adults are strong fliers and are normally observed on nectar sources such as marsh thistles or buddleia, not necessarily adjacent to breeding locations. The breeding location of the adults previously observed in the Brynawel area has not been confirmed.

#### 2.3 Links with Habitats

- *Coedcae/ffridd*

### 3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Reduction of coppicing: In addition to bracken slopes, the species used to thrive in coppiced woodland generally, not just that on limestone outcrops. The decline in coppicing has left the species dependent in Wales and south-western Britain on bracken habitats.

- Agricultural improvement: Intensification of agriculture combined with a negative perception of bracken has led to considerable loss of this habitat type. Until just a few years ago FC were still actively encouraging removal of bracken in Wales.
- Cessation of grazing and traditional forms of bracken management: Bracken stands need to be extensively grazed, preferably by cattle, to prevent them becoming too dense thus shading out the violet food plants on which the breeding cycle depends. The shift in balance of stock to sheep and their overall huge increase in numbers in Wales in the last twenty years has tended to lead to two equally unfavourable extremes: either sparse and overgrazed bracken slopes lacking diversity of plant species (including violets) or dense impenetrable bracken stands where the violets are shaded out. Also bracken cutting for bedding has declined substantially, again leading to too dense stands.
- Climate Change: Since 1996 a series of unfavourable seasons of weather (warm, damp winter and spring, followed by wetter summers) has caused dramatic falls in the numbers of adults recorded from all monitored sites in the UK. In South Wales, over this period, the species appears to have declined in adult numbers by >90% and disappeared from some colonies discovered in the mid 1990s, leaving one known breeding colony near Bridgend.

#### **4. CURRENT ACTION**

- 4.1 Arrangements are being made to provide training in assessment of high brown fritillary habitat and its condition. This should enable more targeted survey work to begin.
- 4.2 Leaflets are now available from Butterfly Conservation (BC) to publicise the potential of bracken habitats for fritillary butterflies.
- 4.3 BC high brown fritillary training days; e.g. habitat requirements.

#### **5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS**

##### **5.1 UK Objectives and Targets**

- 5.1.1 Halt the current decline and maintain at least 50 self-sustaining populations.
- 5.1.2 Restore suitable habitat within its former range and encourage up to 10 additional sites by 2005, using re-introductions if necessary.
- 5.1.3 Ensure a minimum number of colonies are protected within SSSIs.

##### **5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets**

- 5.2.1 Survey and assess condition of potential habitat, particularly the Brynawel area (Target: 2003).
- 5.2.2 Restore and manage potential habitat into good condition (Target: 2005 and 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
<b>6.1 Policy and Legislation</b>											
6.1.1 Ensure Policies and Strategies do not adversely affect potential or known habitat.	CCW	CCBC WDA FC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.2 Consider the requirements of high brown fritillaries when reviewing agri-environment schemes, with particular attention to the issue of bracken control.	CCW	NAWAD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.3 Following further survey and research (at UK level) identify the ecological requirements of this species and encourage the uptake of incentives for favourable land management on existing and potential sites.	BC	CCW CCBC FC		✓							
<b>6.2 Site Safeguard and Management</b>											
6.2.1 Encourage favourable management of habitat for the species on all confirmed and potential sites.	CCW	CCBC FC		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>6.3 Species Management and Protection</b>											
6.3.1 Determine suitable management of particular sites and habitats, depending on the results obtained after completion of necessary research (6.5.1 and 6.5.2).	CCBC	farmers and landowners			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.2 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>6.4 Advisory</b>											
6.4.1 Raise the awareness of landowners and managers to habitat and species requirements in order to promote management for high browns.	BC	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>6.5 Future Research and Monitoring</b>											
6.5.1 Survey habitat condition of the significant areas of bracken in the county borough particularly those well-established areas with a warm (close to southerly) aspect below 150m.	BC	CCW CCBC BC	✓								
6.5.2 Survey the areas in 6.5.1 for adult fritillary butterflies including sites with historical records of any such species (licensed specialists).	BC	CCW		✓							
6.5.3 Encourage farmers, walkers and members of the public to report any fritillary butterfly sightings promptly.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>6.6 Communications and Publicity</b>											
6.6.1 Promote the importance and wildlife value of bracken slopes and coedcae/ffridd for this butterfly species.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓