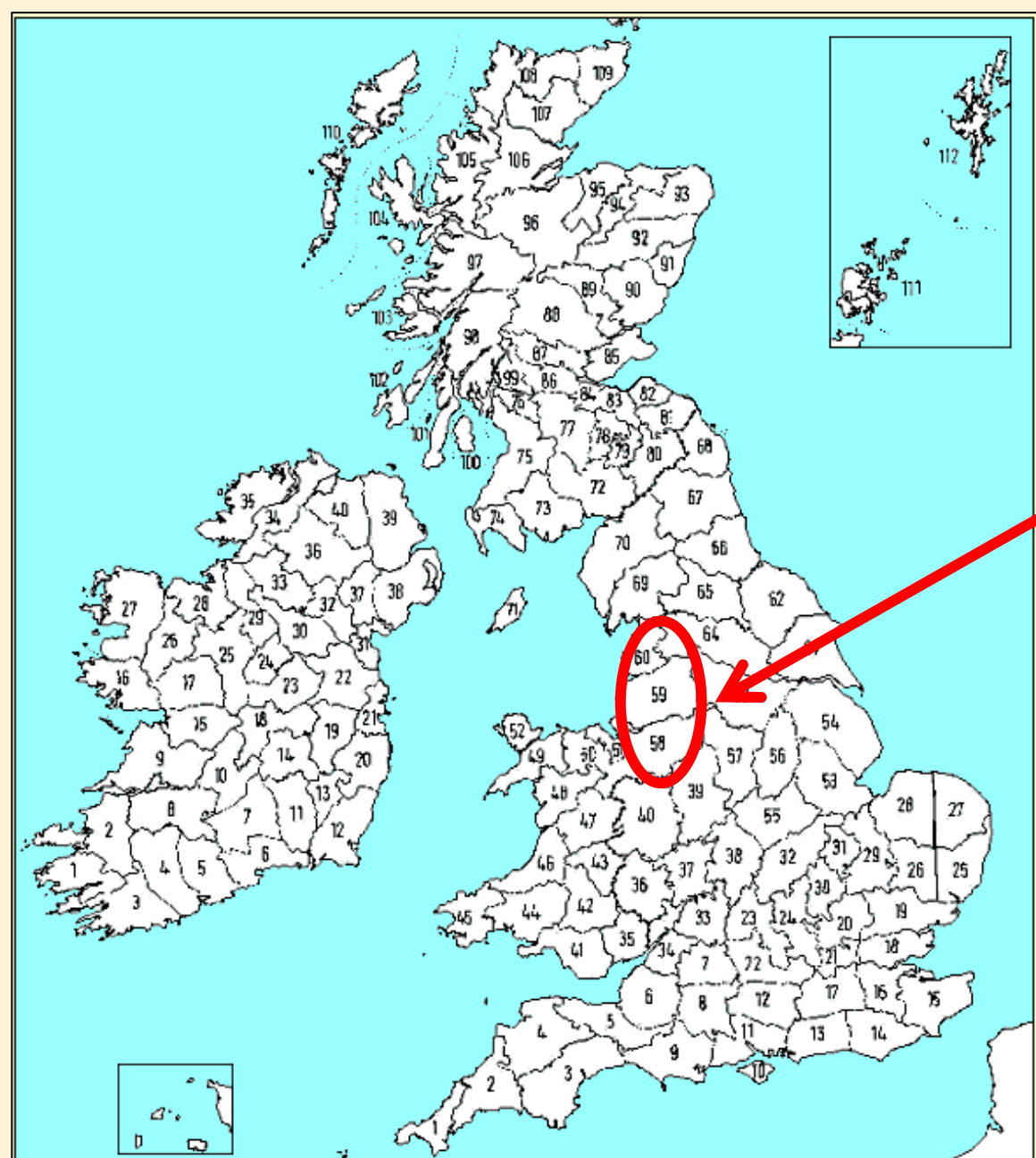


The North West Rare Plant Initiative:

www.nwrpi.weebly.com



Introduction

The NWRPI is a recently set-up (August 2017) initiative based principally across vice counties 58, 59, 60. The primary aim of the initiative are to halt the imminent extinction of 49 targeted priority species across the north-west region which can be viewed online at www.nwrpi.weebly.com.

Extending from the ultimate goal of re-/introduction of threatened species to halt further declines are a series of steps, pre and post-introduction, which includes: a collaboration with relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies, land owners, the establishment of a local, county-wide propagator network and pre and post introductory surveys to monitor success.

Case Study

Mere Sands Wood (SSSI) is a Lancashire Wildlife Trust owned reserve with areas of inland calcareous 'dune grassland' accompanied by wet and transitional heath. These areas contain botanical assemblages usually associated with coastal situations including species such as Sand Sedge (*Carex arenaria*), Yellow Bartsia (*Parentucellia viscosa*), Dune Helleborine (*Epipactis dunensis*) and formerly, Round Leaved Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia* subsp. *maritima*). The latter however, had disappeared within the reserve due to scrub encroachment and had not been seen in many years before a large-scale re-introduction following grazing and scrub clearance. Over 100 plants were planted on the reserve during August 2017 and will be monitored in the coming years.



2017 So Far

After just a few short months, most of the 49 priority species for which this initiative is targeted are now in cultivation, whilst permissions to obtain remaining species such as Whorled Caraway (*Carum verticillatum*) are in place and should be passed within a matter of months.

Past the cultivation stage, the NWRPI has thus far accomplished one substantial reintroduitory project, established four cultivators of priority species locally, a network of potential receptor sites, and has proposals in place for one more substantial re-introduitory project this year involving Sheep's-Bit (*Jasione montana*), whose 2017 population within the VC consisted of two individuals.

2018 & Beyond

The NWRPI is currently liaising with WWT, Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire Wildlife Trusts, the RSPB, Natural England and the Canal and Rivers Trust alongside private landowners for possible introductory and monitoring projects and by 2018 it is forecast 21 of the 49 priority species will be ready for introductory projects across the region...

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