

Broadland Flood Alleviation Project: rare & scarce plants

Marsh Sow-thistle *Sonchus palustris*



Description & distribution: A very tall (90 cm - 3 m) perennial. Although considered nationally scarce, and known to be absent from many parts of the UK, the plant is widely distributed in the freshwater areas of Broadland. It can be found along road, floodbanks and unmanaged foldings.

Potential impacts: Flood defence works have the potential to reduce populations of the plant. Disturbance of the road, floodbank & folding habitats may destroy the plant itself, & disturb the seedbank necessary for natural regeneration.

Mitigation: Baseline surveys are used to establish the presence & distribution of Marsh Sow-thistle in the works area prior to scheme initiation. Where impact is unavoidable, the aim of mitigation is to ensure that populations are subsequently restored to at least their former levels. Mitigation involves the collection of ripe seed which is then sown



Collection of Marsh Sow-thistle seed prior to works starting

onto suitable areas of the site once works are complete. Additional seed is dried & stored for future use as necessary. This targeted seeding is used to supplement any natural regeneration from the seedbank. Monitoring is undertaken to gauge the success of natural regeneration & the need for further reseeding.