

Broadland Flood Alleviation Project: rare & scarce plants

Grass-wrack pondweed *Potamogeton compressus*



Photograph courtesy of Alex Lockton, BSBI.

Description & distribution: A submerged plant with long, slender leaves, producing small petal-less flowers sparingly, on spikes. New plants are generally formed from turions (modified young shoots or suckers). Associated with still or gently flowing calcareous, mesotrophic waters, it is a nationally scarce species. In the Broadland area recent records are confined to

the dykes of Upton and South Walsham marshes.

Potential impacts: The only known population of Grass-wrack pondweed within the BFAP works area is within the soke and marsh dykes of Compartment 2 (South Walsham Marshes); there is therefore the potential to impact upon the species through the in-filling/widening of dykes. There is also potential for indirect impacts if there were to be a lowering of water levels or changes in water quality within the marsh dykes.

Mitigation: Baseline surveys will be used to confirm the plant's presence within the works area prior to scheme initiation. Where present, the aim is to ensure that populations are maintained at, or restored to, at least their former levels. Where dykes will be subject to in-filling, turions will be collected at the end of the growing season prior to works commencing. Additional silts/plants will be manually removed from the dyke immediately prior to works commencing, for transfer to new dykes. A mitigation package will be created, subject to consultation with English Nature, to ensure appropriate use of the plant turions for establishing new plants/populations. The marsh dyke network is always separated from the soke dyke during works to avoid effects upon water levels/quality.