

**Species Action Plan: Northern Wood Ant - *Formica lugubris***

**Current Status and Importance**

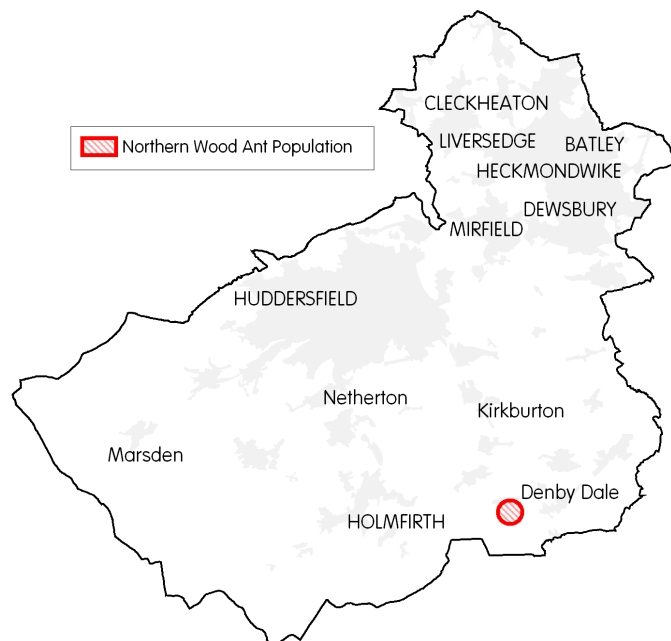
- The Northern Wood Ant (also known as the 'Hairy Ant') is an Internationally important Red Databook Listed species.
- UK populations appear to be stable but elsewhere in decline.



**Habitat**

- Inhabits semi-open woodland on dry soils.
- Large nests are constructed of pine needles, often situated on the south-facing side of the tree to gain heat from the sun.
- The ants farm aphids and feed on the honeydew, although they also feed on other invertebrates and will even scavenge vertebrates.

**Distribution**



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*Northern wood ant distribution in Kirklees*

- The UK distribution extends from the Highlands of Scotland through, upland areas of northern England and as far south as mid Wales.
- It occurs at one site in Kirklees and one other site in West Yorkshire.

**Conservation Issues**

Loss of Northern wood ant colonies has been attributed to:

- Loss of suitable woodland habitat through agricultural clearance, urban or industrial development.

- Inappropriate woodland management, for example through changes in traditional practices, intensive afforestation with conifers or destructive felling operations. Loss of sunny woodland rides and clearings due to overgrowth and scrub invasion.

## Objectives

- Maintain the colony at Denby Dale and preferably increase its size through appropriate woodland management. It is not intended to create new colonies as this species can have detrimental impacts on other invertebrate communities, which are not fully understood.
- Identify further colonies if present

## Target areas for habitat management and creation

- Denby Dale site.

## Targets

- Maintain colony at or above current size.

## Key Links and Organisations

- Site protection: Kirklees Council.
- Management and restoration: Upper Dearne Woodlands Conservation Group (UDWCG).
- Monitoring: Upper Dearne Woodlands Conservation Group (UDWCG).

## See Also

- [UKBAP Northern wood ant](#)
- Kirklees HAP Lowland Deciduous Woodland  
(the above document available at [www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity))