Aspen hoverfly *(Hammerschmidtia ferruginea)*

© Jane Sears

Areas and status: IUCN Endangered (1991) and Nationally Rare. Currently only found within 8 sites in Aberdeenshire and the Cairngorms in the UK (down from 13 in 1999). Historically the species seems to have always been scarce with only a few additional populations recorded north of Inverness.

Woodland type: Aspen woodland. *Populus tremula*

Preferred habitat niches:

- Large and mature aspen stands with more than one dead or decaying large aspen tree and other large living trees offering the potential for continuity of habitat when they die.
- Large decaying trees over 75cm circumference at breast height (CBH) with cambium in 'ripe' stage of rot, for females to oviposit (egg lay) and to provide larval food.
- Sap runs from wounds on living damaged trees
- Flowering shrubs such as Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Bird Cherry *Prunus padus* flowers for adult nectaring.

Source: Rotheray *et al*, 2009

Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Lack of Aspen woods of sufficient size to produce a regular influx of deadwood
- Heavy livestock and deer grazing causing poor Aspen regeneration
- Removal of dead trees for firewood and aesthetic reasons.
- Isolated aspen hoverfly populations of sizes limits chance of population expansion.

Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	*Comment*
Increase area of existing Aspen stands	Encourage aspen regeneration and expansion of existing aspen stands..
New Aspen woodland creation in areas with potential to support the species	Identify areas for new planting, especially where these increase connectivity between existing stands
Control grazing and/or deer numbers	Prevent grazing of aspen suckers and bark removal from decaying trees. Manage livestock access into aspen woodlands and implement deer management plan.
Restrict or prohibit dead wood removal	Tag decaying trees with labels to explain the importance of leaving them in situ. Provide alternative sources of firewood
Supplement the amount of decaying wood	In times when it is predicted there will be a shortage of new dead wood, it is possible to provide more by a) moving some from other sites where the species isn't present b) Felling live wind-blown trees. c) dropping snagged branches or stems to the ground to increase the time of decay. Care should be taken to ensure no other protected or threatened species are adversely affected by the action.