



Black poplars mainly occur in wet conditions along floodplains and were traditionally planted to mark parish boundaries. Since the use for their wood (matches) has declined and due to the females' abundant seeds dispersal (covering of white) the black poplars has come out of favour with land owners.

There are fewer than 150 mature black poplars in the county including fewer than 5 females. There is also a poor age range and many specimens would benefit from management work especially pollarding.

In Herefordshire the tree is distributed across the county but the main concentrations lie immediately north and east of Hereford City. The former distribution of the black poplar is along the Wye and Lugg floodplains and along parish boundaries. Natural propagation is limited through lack of females and conditions for successful seed germination have to be very exact. Recent studies have shown that there is a particular genetic variety in Herefordshire known as the Marches variety.

Over the past 35 years, there appears to have been a decline of 30%-50% within the county. Mismanagement and lack of management of trees is still prevalent.

Threats

- Loss of suitable sites by drainage and conversion to other land use
- Excessive ground and surface water abstraction from aquifers
- Small total area of suitable habitat and critically small population sizes
- Lack of or inappropriate management
- Planting of non-native species
- Lack of females
- Ecologically insensitive flood defense works

Current Action

- County survey in 2015 (WT)
- Species Management Guidelines (EA)
- Approved suppliers of black poplars (EA)
- Eight trees genetically tested (EA)
- Formation of a county Black Poplar Group (HTF)
- UK Black Poplar Group (UKBAP)
- Wet Woodland Project (EA, EN)

	Objective	Action
A	Locate and map existing trees	7
B	Protect females	2
C	Protect and increase numbers of both males and females	4,6
D	Increase sympathetic tree management	1,3
E	Increase public awareness and encourage people to plant local variety	3,5

	Actions	Target
1	Maintain existing habitat through HTS, HLS, WGS and funded projects	Annual
2	Protect females by placing TPOs on them	2020
3	Promote planting of local varieties through publicity and targeting garden centres	2020
4	Promote restoration of a wet woodland habitat	2020
5	Publicise habitat requirements to landowners and advise on beneficial management	2020
6	Propagate 50 females and 150 males and plant along traditional range and monitor success rates	2020
7	Publish survey results in BAP Atlas	2017

Lead Partner	EA
Key Partners	HC, HWT, HTF