

West Penwith Habitat Surveys: Trink Hill (part) (survey area 55 (part) – 2021)

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Mark Beard



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Further information

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Trink Hill (part) (Survey Area 55 (part) – 2021)

Vegetation survey:	Mark Beard & Alex Gilroy
Report compiled by:	Mark Beard
Date surveyed:	08/09/2021

1 General Information

1.1 Location

Site name/ No.	Trink Hill (part) / Site 55 (part)
County	Cornwall
Parish	Ludgvan
Central OS Grid Ref	SW 5064 3758
Natural England Area Team	Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
National Character Area	West Penwith (No. 156)

1.2 Summary description

Area	1.04 ha
Altitude	140m A.O.D.
Aspect	flat (at base of slope)
Drainage	Predominantly dry (seasonally wet)

Survey area 55 Trink Hill was originally surveyed in 2013 by Hewins Ecology (commissioned by Natural England). That survey covered an extent of some 45.77 ha but omitted a small but contiguous area at the eastern side of Trink Hill, forming part of the same management unit. This smaller area was surveyed in 2021 and is the subject of this report.

1.3 Access

Access is possible via a track from the south accessed via Trink Farm. The land is mapped as Open Country for public access, with public rights of way crossing it.

1.4 Tenure

The survey site is privately owned and survey was carried out with the permission of the landowner.

1.5 Survey methodology

The site was surveyed by a ‘walk-over’ survey during which observations of the habitats present were made. For each distinct stand of vegetation observed a species list was compiled with an associated estimate of frequency based upon the DAFOR-scale and the most likely vegetation community type of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) (Rodwell, et. al., Volume 1, 1991, Volume 3, 1992, Volume 5, 2000) was assigned. This community assignment was implied, based upon a working knowledge of the NVC by the surveyors, and is not based upon an analysis of quadrat data. As such the full NVC methodology has not been applied. Nevertheless, the experience of the surveyors in the field is considered sufficient for the implied NVC communities to be reliable for the purposes of this survey.

2 Biological description

2.1 Habitats

The survey site supports semi-improved mesotrophic grassland, scrub, bramble patches and ruderal habitats. Each habitat is discussed in turn below. None of these habitats are considered Priority Habitats.

2.1.1 Semi-improved grassland, MG10a *Holcus lanatus*-*Juncus effusus* rush-pasture, typical sub-community

The majority of the area was occupied by a stand of semi-improved grassland, characterised by *Agrostis stolonifera* and *Holcus lanatus*. The sward was uneven with some bare ground and many annuals suggesting poaching from livestock; a drinking trough was present within the grassland stand and it is immediately adjacent to a livestock supplementary feeding station understood to be used in the winter months. *Persicaria hydropiper* was also locally frequent, evidence of winter wet conditions. This suggests affinities to MG10a *Holcus lanatus*-*Juncus effusus* rush-pasture, typical sub-community. It is atypical of the published NVC for this sub-community type as rushes *Juncus* spp. were no more than occasional along with the presence of several annuals/biennials at relatively high abundance (e.g. *Anagallis arvensis*, *Coronopus didymus*, *Persicaria hydropiper* and *Polygonum aviculare*). This may be due to grazing/trampling by cattle if they congregate here for winter supplementary feeding. The presence of *Cynosurus cristatus* and *Lolium perenne* suggest some possible affinity with MG6 *Lolium perenne* - *Cynosurus cristatus* grassland though as they are no more than occasional to locally frequent the affinity to MG10 is considered stronger.



Plate 1 – mesotrophic grassland; note locally abundant water-pepper *Persicaria hydropiper* in the foreground with bramble patches beyond

2.1.2 scrub & underscrub vegetation

One small stand of scrub was present characterised by *Salix cinerea*. This was observed to be species-poor and no species list was made. Whilst it could be assigned to W1 *Salix cinerea-Galium palustre* woodland, the lack of a developed ground-flora made for a poor match and it was considered more appropriate to assign to no NVC community, consistent with other surveys elsewhere in Penwith Moors where this type of poorly developed willow scrub has been encountered.

Two distinct patches of bramble were present. These were observed to be species-poor and whilst no species list was made they are assigned to W24 *Rubus fruticosus* agg. - *Holcus lanatus* underscrub; no sub-community is assigned.

2.1.3 ruderal vegetation

A strip of ruderal vegetation was present, characterised by *Urtica dioica* and *Rubus fruticosus*. *Persicaria hydropiper* was also present along with a tall brassica which could not be identified in the field as it was largely desiccated due to the season (probably *Brassica nigra*, though could possibly be *B. rapa*, *B. napus* or *Sisymbrium officinale*). This stand of vegetation was difficult to assign to an NVC community with certainty, though it demonstrates some affinity with OV24b *Urtica dioica-Galium aparine*, *Arrhenatherum elatius-Rubus fruticosus* agg. sub-community. It is atypical of the published NVC for this (sub)community type as *Galium aparine*, *Arrhenatherum elatius* and *Heracleum sphondylium* were absent whereas *Persicaria hydropiper* was frequent. This may reflect a tendency for this location to be wet in winter and also the likely influence of the adjacent livestock supplementary feeding station in terms of regular disturbance.

2.2 Species

No rare, scarce or threatened species were noted during the survey.

3 Condition Assessments

As no priority habitats were observed, no condition assessment was necessary.

Table 1 Summary of habitats and vegetation communities

Site 55 (part) – Trink Hill (part) (2021)				
Habitat	NVC communities	Area (ha)	Priority Habitat area (ha)	CA category
Semi-improved grassland	MG10a	0.866	n/a	n/a
Underscrub	W24	0.033	n/a	n/a
Salix scrub	n/a	0.026	n/a	n/a
Ruderal	OV24b	0.070	n/a	n/a

Condition assessment reporting categories:
Favourable (F), Unfavourable Recovering (UFR), Unfavourable No Change (UFNC),
Unfavourable Declining (UFD)

4 References

- Pilkington, S. (2013) West Penwith Habitat Surveys: Trink Hill (survey area 55 – 2013). Hewins Ecology.
- Rodwell J.S. (ed). (1991) British Plant Communities Volume 1. Woodlands and Scrub. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Rodwell J.S. (ed). (1992) British Plant Communities Volume 3. Grasslands. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Rodwell J.S. (ed). (2000) British Plant Communities Volume 5. Maritime communities and vegetation of open habitats. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Appendices

Species lists for H4 and Molinia-Pteridium (Mol-Pta) vegetation communities

DAFOR ratings:

D = dominant; A = Abundant; F = Frequent; O = Occasional; R = Rare L = Locally (frequent, abundant, dominant)

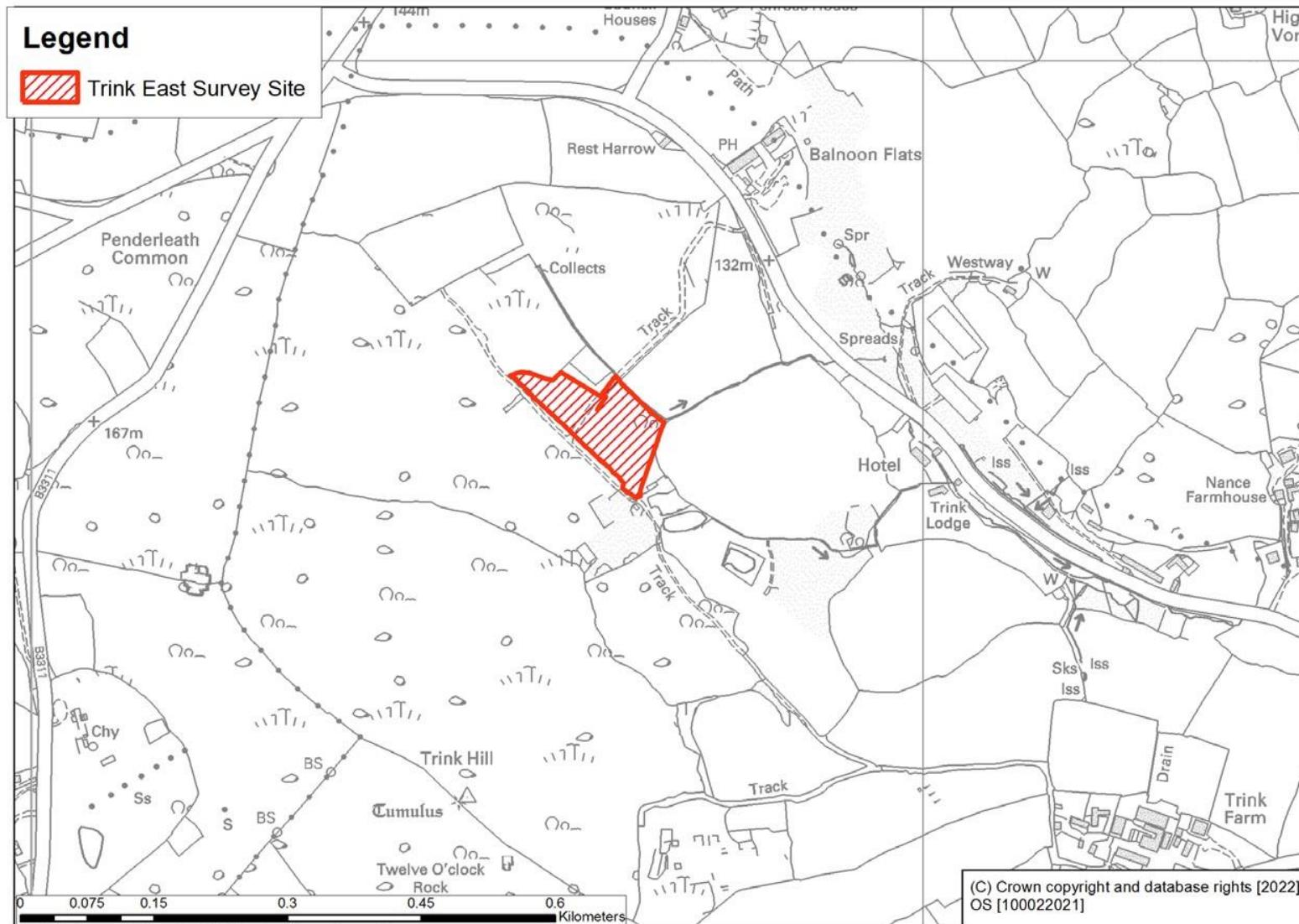
E = Edge (i.e. a species recorded from the margins of the mapped habitat/community)

Scientific name	Common name	Community / sub-community			
		MG10a	W24	Salix scrub	OV24b
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	creeping bent	A			
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	scarlet pimpernel	LF			
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	common mouse-ear	O			
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	creeping thistle	LF			
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	spear thistle	LF			
<i>Coronopus didymus</i>	lesser swinecress	LF			
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	crested dog's-tail	O			
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	A			
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	soft rush	O			
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	perennial rye-grass	O			
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	greater bird's-foottrefoil	O			
<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>	water-pepper	LA			F
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain	O			
<i>Plantago major</i>	broad-leaved plantain	O			
<i>Poa annua</i>	annual meadow-grass	LF			
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	knotgrass	LF			
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	creeping cinquefoil	O			
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup	O			
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	bramble	LF	D		A
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	common sorrel	O			
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	curled dock	R			
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock	O			

<i>Salix cinerea</i>	grey willow			D	
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	prickly sow-thistle	R			
<i>Stellaria media</i>	common chickweed	O			
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover	O			
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	stinging nettle				A
<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>	thyme-leaved speedwell	R			

Map 1 Trink Hill (east) survey site

West Penwith Habitat Surveys: Trink East (2021) Survey site



Map 2 Trink Hill (east) NVC

West Penwith Habitat Surveys: Trink East (2021) NVC



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