

West Penwith Habitat Surveys: Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) (survey area 11 (part) – 2022)

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Mark Beard



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Project details

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Further information

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Contents

Project details	3
Natural England Project manager	3
Author.....	3
Keywords	3
Further information.....	3
1 General Information.....	5
1.1 Location	5
1.3 Access	5
1.4 Tenure	5
1.5 Survey methodology	5
2 Biological description.....	6
2.1 Habitats.....	6
2.1.1 H4 Ulex gallii – Agrostis curtisii heath.....	6
2.1.2 W24 Rubus fruticosus - Holcus lanatus underscrub	6
2.2 Species	6
3 Condition Assessments	6
4 References.....	9
Appendices.....	10
Species lists for H4 and other vegetation communities	10
Map 1 Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) (Survey Area 11 (part)) 2022 survey area 11	
Map 2 Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) (Survey Area 11 (part)) 2022 NVC.....	12
Map 3 Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) (Survey Area 11 (part)) 2022 priority habitats	
.....	13

**West Penwith Habitat Surveys: Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part)
(survey area 11 (part) – 2022). Natural England**

Vegetation survey:	Mark Beard
Report compiled by:	Mark Beard
Date surveyed:	04/04/2022

1 General Information

1.1 Location

Site name / No.	Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) / Site 11 (part)
County	Cornwall
Parish	St. Just
Central OS Grid Ref(s)	SW 3930 3114
Natural England Area Team	Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
National Character Area	West Penwith (No. 156)

1.2 Summary description

Area	0.27 ha (excluding houses and gardens)
Altitude	185 m A.O.D.
Aspect	flat
Drainage	dry / free-draining

Survey area 11 Busvargus and Tregeseal Common was originally surveyed in 2013 by Hewins Ecology (commissioned by Natural England). That survey covered an extent of some 40.25 ha but omitted a smaller but contiguous area around the properties at McLaren Villas, forming part of the same management/ecological unit. This smaller area was surveyed in 2022 and is the subject of this report.

1.3 Access

Access to McLaren Villas is possible via a private access track from the A3071 public highway.

1.4 Tenure

The land subject to survey is privately owned and survey was carried out with the permission of the landowner. The residential properties and their associated gardens were not accessed for the purposes of this survey.

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 2, 1991) was assigned. This community assignment was implied, based upon a working knowledge of the NVC by the surveyor, 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 surveyor 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 lowland heathland, underscrub habitats, non-native vegetation on made-up ground and hardstanding / access track. The semi-natural habitats observed are discussed below.

2.1.1 H4 *Ulex gallii* – *Agrostis curtisii* heath

Stands of lowland heath vegetation were characterised by *Ulex gallii*, *Erica cinerea*, *Molinia caerulea* and *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and showed a strong affinity to H4 *Ulex gallii* – *Agrostis curtisii* heath albeit atypical of the published NVC in lacking *Calluna vulgaris* and *Agrostis curtisii*. Due to time constraint a comprehensive record of species was not made. No subcommunity was assigned. These small stands form part of the larger expanse of heathland vegetation at Busvargus and Tregeseal Common being separated only by narrow access tracks. The structure was uniform, mature heath with no evidence of recent management. There was a narrow, rough grass strip between the access track and the heath vegetation.

2.1.2 W24 *Rubus fruticosus* - *Holcus lanatus* underscrub

Stands of species-poor underscrub vegetation were dominated by *Rubus fruticosus* agg. Whilst a complete species-list was not made for these stands they showed a strong affinity to W24 *Rubus fruticosus* - *Holcus lanatus* underscrub. Due to time constraint a comprehensive record of species was not made. No sub-community was assigned. There was a narrow, rough grass strip between the access track and the underscrub vegetation.

2.2 Species

A dense patch of the non-native and potentially invasive *Crococsmia x crocosmiiflora* was present on an area of apparently made-up ground to the immediate north of the properties / gardens. No rare, scarce or threatened species were noted during the survey.

3 Condition Assessments

Due to the small size of habitat present and that the survey area forms part of a larger extent of semi-natural habitat previously surveyed, no condition assessment for lowland heathland habitat was deemed necessary.



Plate 1 – underscrub dominated by *Rubus fruticosus* agg. with marginal grass strip and cultivated daffodils north of McLaren Villas (note roughly surfaced access track)



Plate 2 – unsurfaced/vegetated access northwest of McLaren Villas with stand of H4 heath vegetation on right-hand side (vegetation to the left-hand side was surveyed in 2013)

Table 1 Summary of habitats and vegetation communities

Site 11 (part) – Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) (2022)				
Habitat	NVC communities	Area (ha)	Priority Habitat area (ha)	CA category
Lowland heathland	H4	0.09	0.09	n/a
Underscrub	W24	0.10	n/a	n/a
Non-native vegetation: <i>Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora</i>	n/a	0.01	n/a	n/a
Hardstanding & access track	n/a	0.07	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: Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (Survey Area 11) – 2013). Hewins Ecology.

Rodwell J.S. (ed). (1991) British Plant Communities Volume 1. Woodlands and Scrub. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Rodwell J.S. (ed). (1991) British Plant Communities Volume 2. Mires and heaths. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Appendices

Species lists for H4 and other vegetation communities

DAFOR ratings:

D = dominant; A = Abundant; F = Frequent; O = Occasional; R = Rare

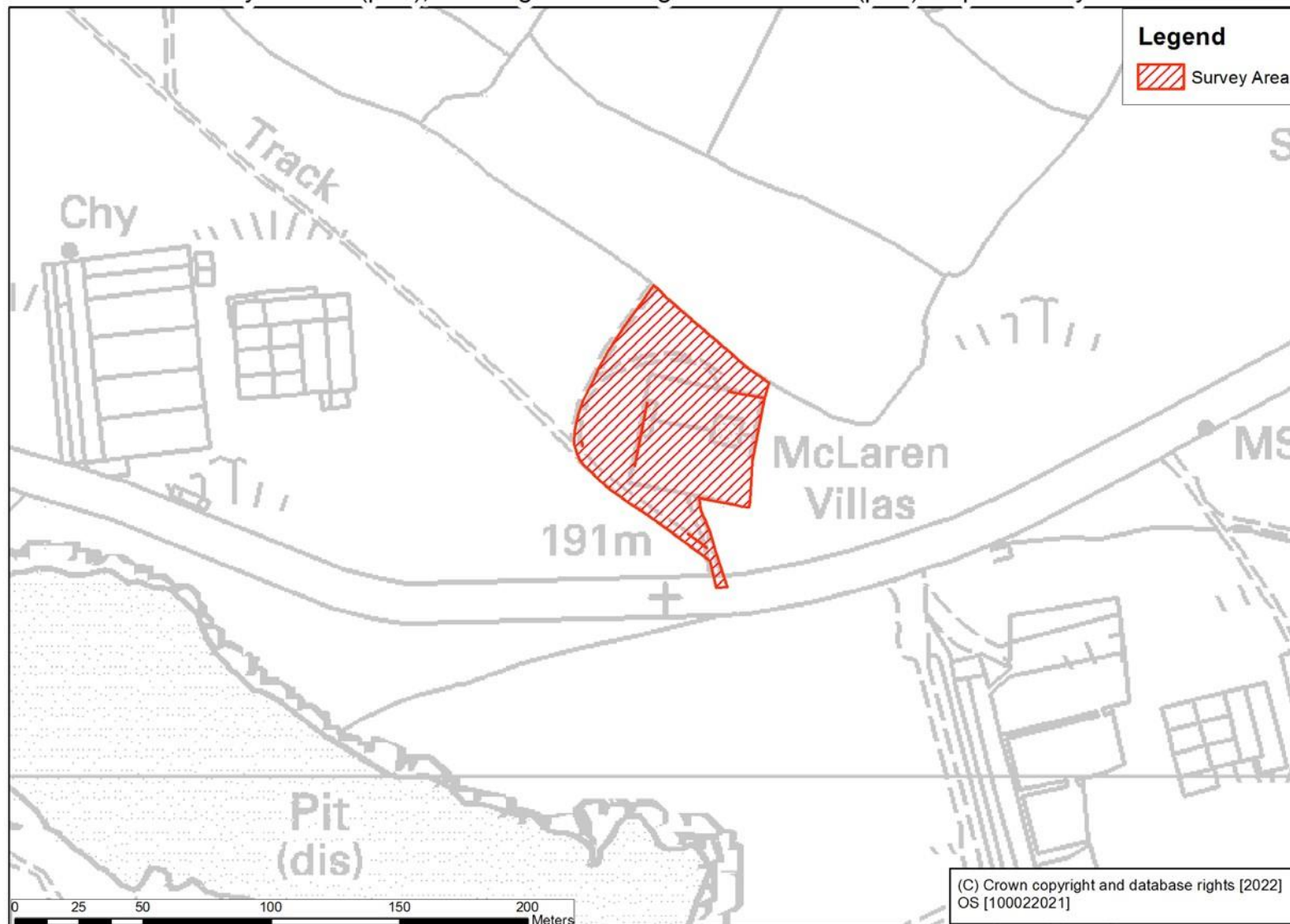
L = Locally (frequent, abundant, dominant)

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

Scientific name	Common name	Community / sub-community		
		H4	W24	Non-native vegetation
<i>Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora</i>	montbretia	R		D
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cock's-foot	E	E	
<i>Erica cinerea</i>	bell heather	F		
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog	E	E	
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	purple moor-grass	F		
<i>Narcissus</i> spp.	daffodil (cultivated)		E	
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	bramble	F	D	
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock		E	
<i>Salix cinerea</i>	grey willow		R	
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	dandelion	E	E	
<i>Ulex gallii</i>	western gorse	A		

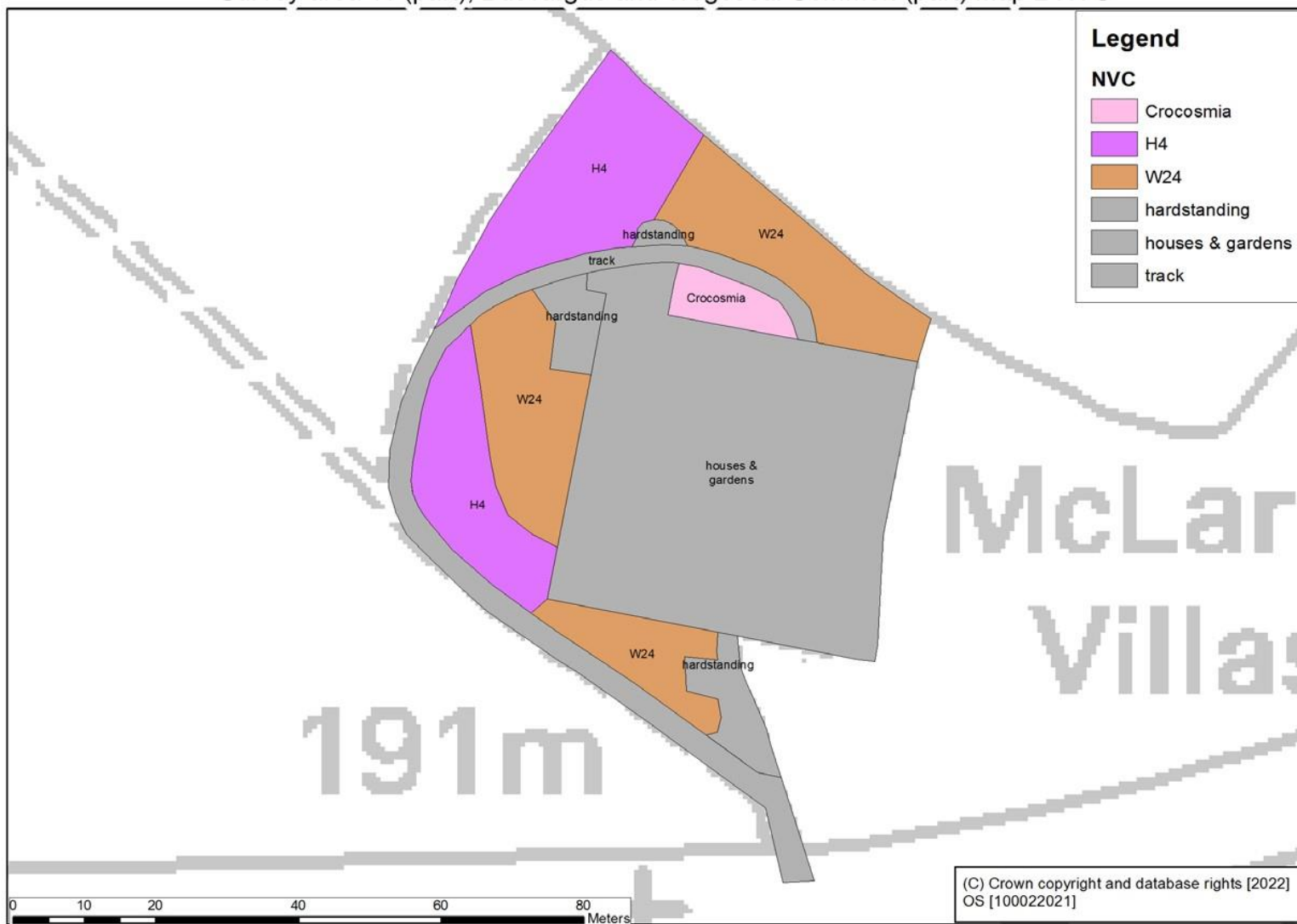
Map 1 Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) (Survey Area 11 (part)) 2022 survey area

Survey area 11 (part), Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) Map 1 Survey area



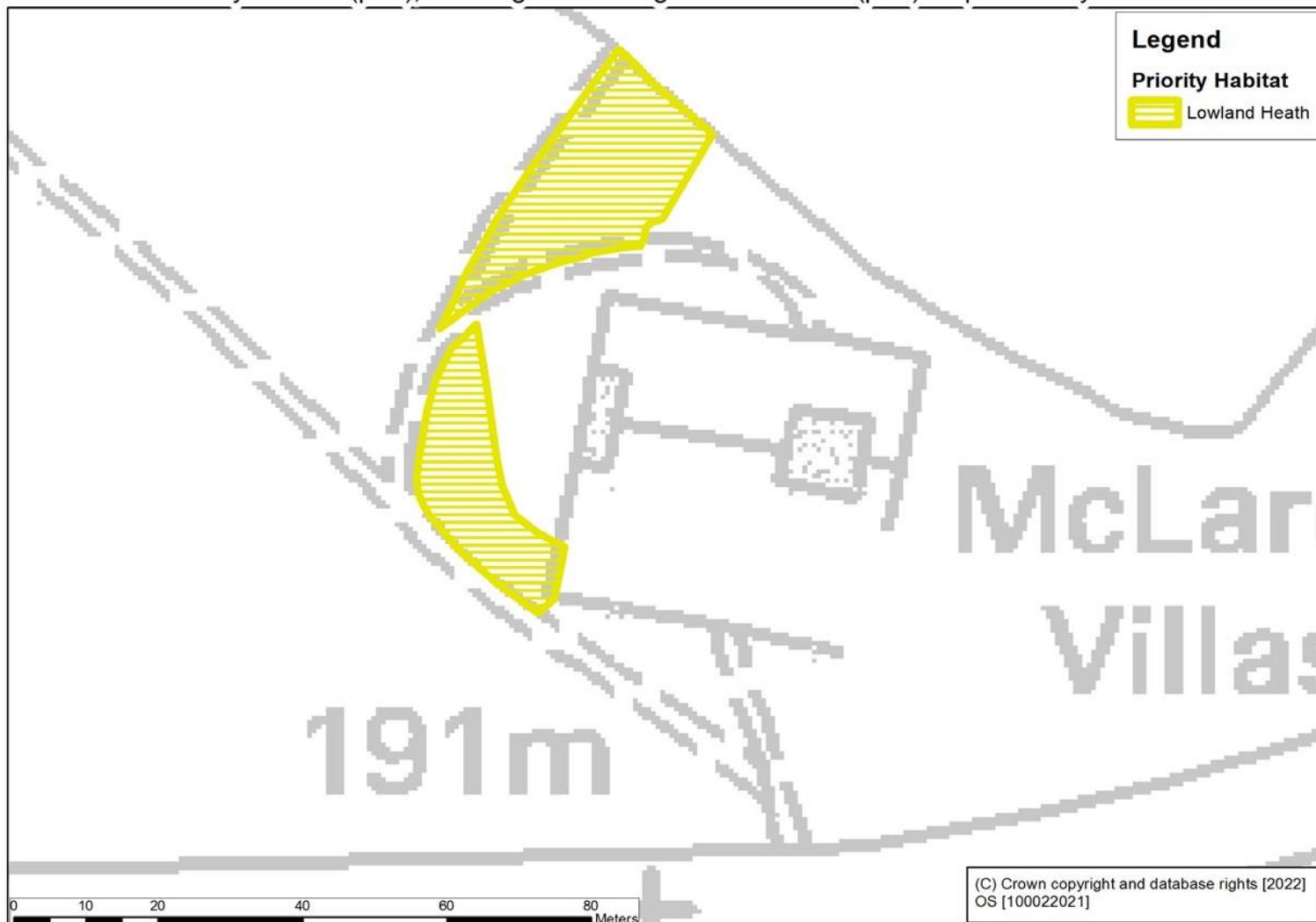
Map 2 Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) (Survey Area 11 (part)) 2022 NVC

Survey area 11 (part), Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) Map 2 NVC



Map 3 Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) (Survey Area 11 (part)) 2022 priority habitats

Survey area 11 (part), Busvargus and Tregeseal Common (part) Map 3 Priority Habitat



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