Adder *(Vipera berus)*

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Areas and status: Widespread in Great Britain but locally rare. Major declines and local extinctions in some areas, especially central England.

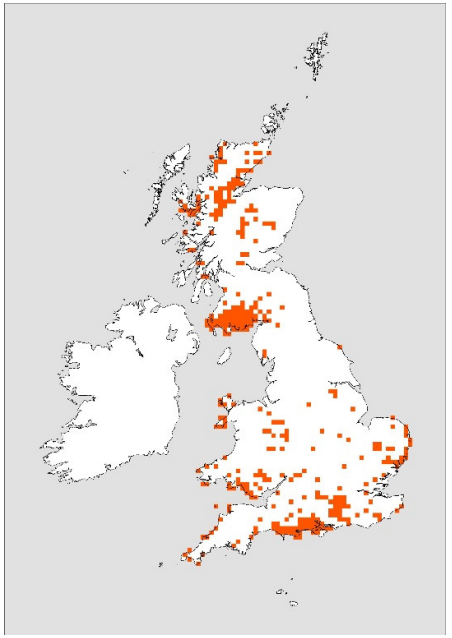
Woodland type: Lowland broadleaf and conifer woodland, plantation and scrub on free-draining soils with open character.

Preferred habitat niches: Woodland edges, rides, wayleaves and glades with south-facing aspect. Scrub/heath/bracken/grass-woodland ecotone. Young plantation and recently felled areas are preferred, with low to moderate canopy cover. Structural mosaic of ground-level vegetation often favoured (heathers, bramble, coarse grasses, and sedges). Open scrub habitats within and adjacent to woodland often important. Raised features such as banks and windrows often important for basking, night-time refuge and hibernation. Often associated with birch woodland on south-facing slopes. Adults may migrate to lower-lying, damp areas in summer

Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Maturation of woodland leading to high canopy cover, resulting in cooler habitat and less favourable vegetation structure at ground level.
- Removal or intensive management of important scrub and ground-level vegetation, resulting in low, uniform vegetation structure.
- Predation and habitat alteration by pheasant and wild boar; persecution and disturbance by humans.
- Heavy livestock or deer grazing suppressing grasses and shrub layer.
- Forestry operations damaging hibernation sites.

Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	*Comment*
Create or maintain internal and external open space	Rides, glades, wayleaves and woodland edges – ensure provision of such open areas, with good sun exposure and connectivity to other favoured areas in the woodland. Can achieve this by felling and coppicing on rotation. Manage open areas to maintain structural diversity of vegetation at ground level, eg grass-heath-bracken mosaic.
Thinning	Thin woodland with medium-high canopy cover to create more open areas, in locations with good connectivity to other favoured areas in the woodland.
Ride enhancement	Focus on east-west rides due to thermal properties. Ensure rides have good grass/heath/shrub or scrub cover at edges. Scallop edges of south-facing woodland along rides to create open, sheltered areas. Manage on rotation to retain structural variation.
Develop scrubby woodland edge	Provide broad scrubby buffers to woodland with a varied edge structure, retaining young birch, on south-facing edges.
Manage grazing regime	Aim to prevent loss of or to restore grass/shrub layer with good structural diversity. Assess need to alter livestock management, including reduction in density or cessation if appropriate. In unmanaged woods, consider instituting grazing if appropriate.
Identify and safeguard hibernation areas	Hibernation areas are often limiting, so use survey and habitat assessment to identify likely hibernation areas. Mark on plans and ensure management methods, timing and intensity here are carefully considered. Ensure hibernation areas do not become too shaded.
Reduce impacts of pheasant, wild boar and humans	Stop, relocate or reduce pheasant releases. Manage or fence out wild boar. Manage human impacts via interpretation, outreach or access restriction.



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