Field Eryngo

Alice McCosh Trust 2026

The Species Recovery Trust



Introduction

The Species Recovery Trust was set up in 2012 to tackle the worsening extinction crisis, which over the last half century has started to play out across the world and here in the UK. Our aim is to take a small handful of species and work on them continuously until they are removed from the edge of extinction.

Sadly, just six Field eryngo (*Eryngium campestre*) sites remain in the UK. First documented by John Ray in 1662 in Plymouth, it resembles the more common Sea Holly (*Eryngium maritimum*), but is taller and more delicate, with small green rather than large blue spiky flower heads. Without intervention, the sites will continue to deteriorate and we will, as has happened in Somerset, loose more rare plant sites.



Image: Flowering Field Eryngo at Devils Point, 20.7.26.

Thanks to funding from the Alice McCosh Trust, we were able to visit Plymouth's Billacombe Meadows and Devil's Point population this summer and Scabbacombe monthly. This has enabled us to collect data about the number of plants, area covered, flowering rate, health of the plants and look into seed production.

Image: Mapping the plants at Scabbacombe.





In partnership with Plymouth City Council and the National Trust Devon we have also collated survey data and historic management data for all three sites. In late summer we collected seed and root cuttings to begin propagation trials.



Image: Field eryngo seed collected from Scabbacombe.

Image: Field eryngo at Scabbacombe in August after prolonged drought.

Moving forward this project will enable us to improve the management on the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) at Scabbacombe where it has been lost and the adjacent extant site. We now understand the importance of the time of the grazing and the animals used (ideally not sheep); to ensure light reaches the seed, young plants are not eaten, disturbed ground is created for seeds to set and the thatch is removed.

Below Image: Huge population of 1000's of plants at Billacombe SSSI.



Our ongoing seed and root propagation trials will hopefully provide us with a source of plants for future introductions.

Expenditure:

Item	**Details**	**Spend (£)**
Travel	4 field visits to Scabbacombe- monthly from April to July	54
Travel	1 monitoring visit to Plymouth and to collect seed August	22
Lab equipment	Flags for marking the plants on site	30
Salary	4.5 days work	880
Total		**986**