

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<p><b>Cattle Grazing</b></p> <p>Cattle are turned out by local farmers who hold grazing rights for the Commons. There is no time restriction on the grazing rights; however the farmers avoid the winter months when the ground is very wet. Cattle grazing is absolutely essential for the management of Hawkesbury, Inglestone, Hareley &amp; Assley Commons. Not only does the flower-richness of the neutral grassland depend upon it, but there are rare species on the Commons which depend upon trampling by livestock to complete their lifecycles. Read about conservation grazing under 'Grassland Management' in the 'Management' section of this website.</p>					█							
<p><b>Scrub Management</b></p> <p>Scrub is an important habitat, so the aim of scrub clearance is by no means to remove all scrub from the Commons; rather to reduce its extent, opening out the Commons to enable the cattle to push through and graze isolated pockets of grassland, and to manage the remaining stands of scrub to maximise species, age and structural diversity and to promote a good 'interface' between the scrub and the grassland. Work is undertaken during the winter months to avoid disturbance to nesting birds. Read about scrub management in the 'Management' section of this website.</p>	█									█		
<p><b>Thistle control</b></p> <p>As the Commons are managed through an agri-environment scheme, certain farming regulations need to be followed. This includes controlling the spread of 'injurious' weeds, such as creeping thistle, spear thistle, ragwort, broad-leaved dock and curled dock. On the Commons the main species to be controlled is creeping thistle, and this is mainly achieved by topping. Thistles are topped in late June through to July, once they have put their effort into producing a flowering head but <u>before</u> they start to set seed. Read about weed control in the 'Management' section of this website.</p>							█					
<p><b>Wild flower seed harvesting</b></p> <p>Wild flower seed is harvested to be spread onto less species-rich areas of grassland on the Commons. A brush-harvester is used to collect ripe seed from nearby, species-rich meadows. The brush-harvester does not cut the sward - it uses brushes to sweep the seed from the field and into a hopper. This means that hay can still be made, and as the harvester only takes what is ripe on the day, the impact on the donor meadow is negligible. Seed is harvested in mid-July, and then dried, cleaned and kept in cold storage until the autumn. Learn more about seed harvesting under 'Seed Enhancement' in the 'Management' section of this website.</p>							█					
<p><b>Wild flower seed sowing</b></p> <p>In the autumn, the wild flower seed can be sown on the Commons in areas where there are few or no wild flowers present within the grassland. This takes quite a lot of work. First, the recipient area must be cut or grazed as tightly as possible, to reduce the competition from the existing sward for the new seed. Then, the area must be scarified, creating up to 50% bare ground. This is essential to give the seed a chance to take within the existing sward. Finally, the seed is broadcast onto the area. Learn more about sowing wild flower seed under 'Seed Enhancement' in the 'Management' section of this website.</p>									█			