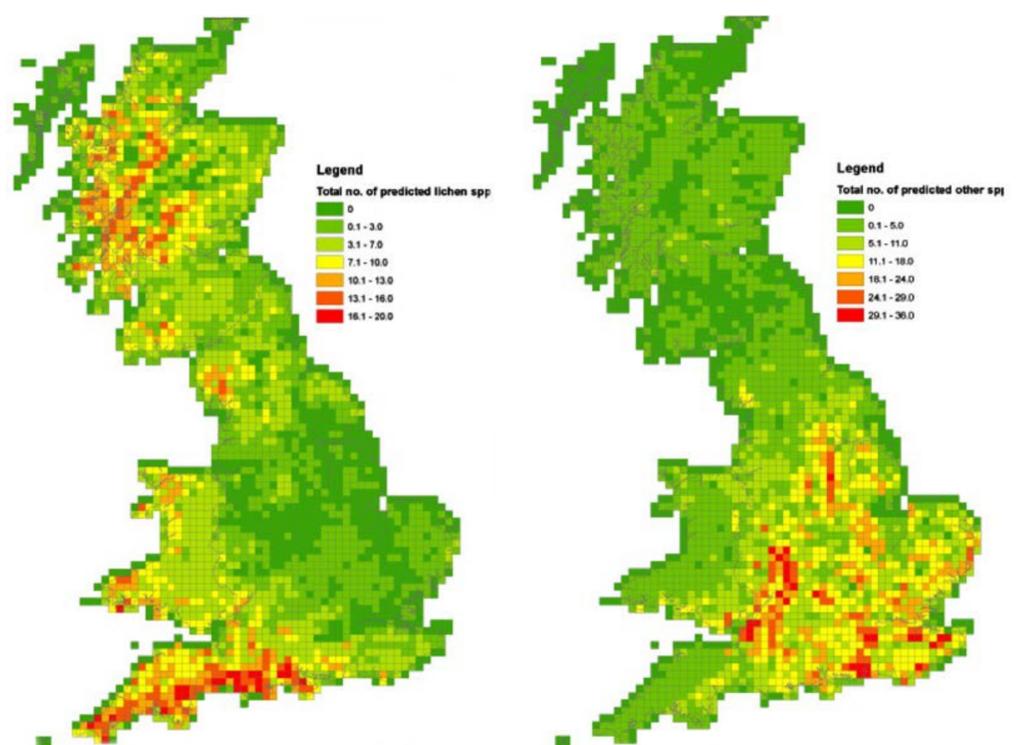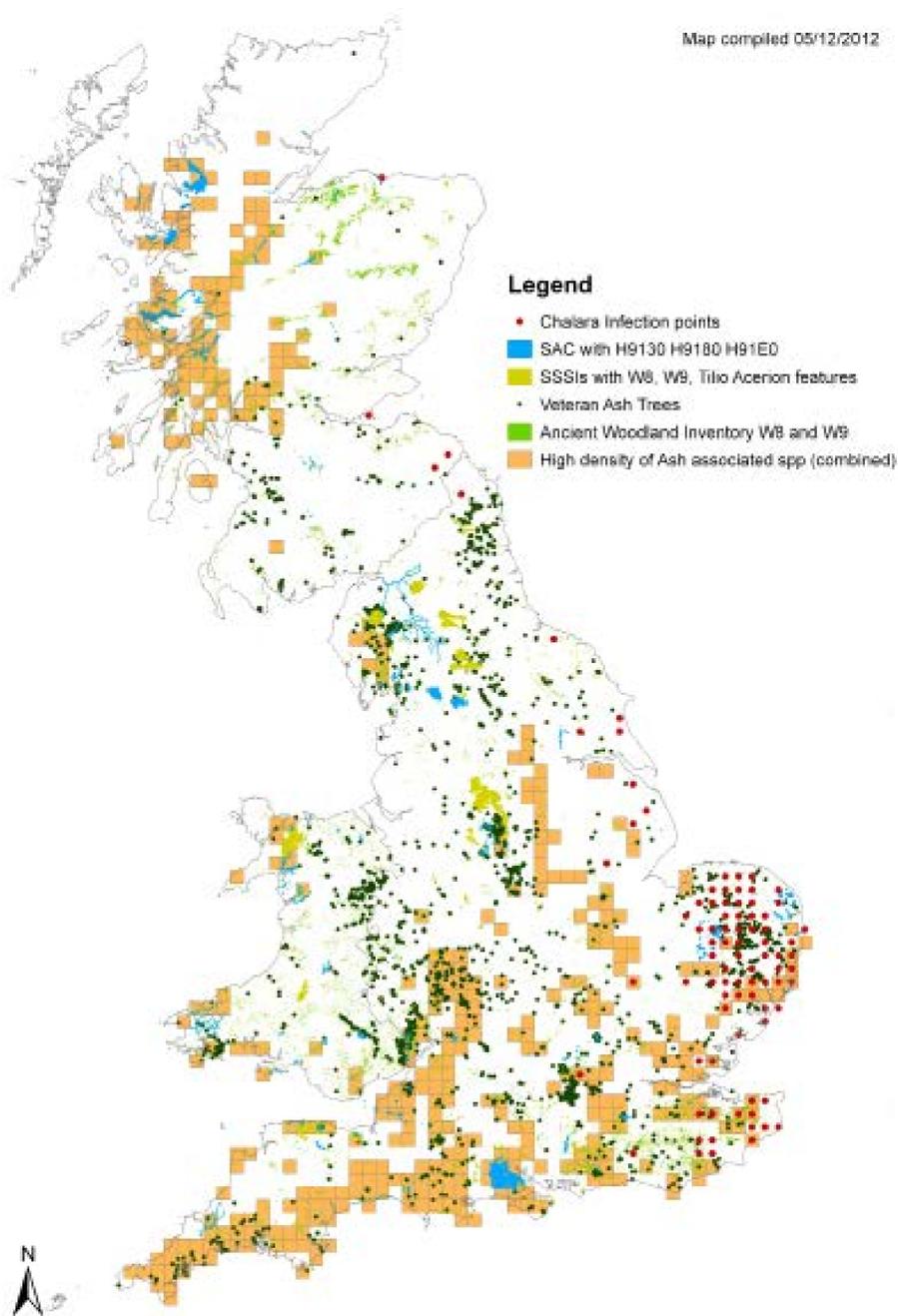# Identifying 'important ash' in Great Britain

Chalara fraxinea

Chalara fraxinea is a fungal pathogen that causes dieback of ash trees. A high proportion of ash trees in northern Europe are now affected and the number of confirmed cases in the UK, first detected in 2012, continues to grow. Ash is a common and well known feature of the wider countryside. The total distribution of ash has been analysed by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and the Forestry Commission. Reports are available on their websites.

To support the Interim Chalara control plan, JNCC produced an initial assessment of the location of important ash in Great Britain. Important ash was defined as where it is a significant and hard to replace or re-create semi-natural feature with a strong role in ecosystem functioning. Ancient Woodland and designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation were mapped, where ash was a feature of the site, alongside veteran ash tree data from the Woodland Trust and modelled species distributions of highly ash dependent species.

NBN Gateway Data

- 929 species, from a range of key taxonomic groups (including lichen, fungi, bryophytes, invertebrates), were highlighted by experts to be ash dependent.

- Over 200,000 records for 167 most critically ash dependent species were contributed through the NBN Gateway from 63 organisations across 133 datasets.

- The occurrence records were used to model the predicted distribution and hence the number of species estimated to occur in each 10km square in Great Britain to provide a national overview.

- Important squares were judged as those where more than 12 species of lichen or 19 of all other species were predicted to occur.

- Lichens were summarised separately as their combined distribution was very different from the other species groups and would not have been adequately represented within the scale used for all other species. Additional data was provided by the British Lichen Society.

Map compiled 05/12/2012

Legend
- Chalara Infection points
- SAC with H9130 H9180 H91E0
- SSSIs with W8, W9, Tilio Acerion features
- Veteran Ash Trees
- Ancient Woodland Inventory W8 and W9
- High density of Ash associated spp (combined)

Legend
Total no. of predicted lichen spp
- 0
- 0.1 - 3.0
- 3.1 - 7.0
- 7.1 - 10.0
- 10.1 - 13.0
- 13.1 - 16.0
- 16.1 - 20.0

Legend
Total no. of predicted other spp
- 0
- 0.1 - 5.0
- 5.1 - 11.0
- 11.1 - 18.0
- 18.1 - 24.0
- 24.1 - 29.0
- 29.1 - 36.0

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Ongoing work related to Chalara

JNCC are providing data for modelling work by the University of Cambridge and Rothamsted Research to look at the variation in biodiversity impact from infections in different areas. The modelled species distributions, based on the data from the NBN Gateway, are key to providing a biodiversity value for the models.

JNCC is working with the country conservation bodies, Defra and the Forestry Commission to prioritise and commission necessary research on Chalara and biodiversity, which includes a broader look at a long term monitoring strategy.

How can I help?
For some critical, time limited, work, such as this, there is no time to contact data providers and mobilise further relevant data. Instead it relies on having current data already available on the NBN Gateway. To ensure your data can be integrated into these sorts of uses please keep providing your records to those organisations that openly share their data through the NBN Gateway (e.g Local Record Centres, National Schemes).

Acknowledgements