



## Local Wildlife Sites – Brownfield / Urban Information for Landowners

Pressures on wildlife in town and country continue to grow. Demand for new housing and roads, and the impact of climate change, all contribute to the decline of wildlife and loss of natural habitats. A well managed network of Local Wildlife Sites is vital for sustaining wildlife in Lincolnshire.

### What are Local Wildlife Sites?

Local Wildlife Sites are wildlife rich areas that have been identified and selected for their nature conservation value. These sites are amongst the best places for wildlife in the county, and represent the local character and distinctiveness of Lincolnshire.

Local Wildlife Sites may support threatened habitats such as chalk grassland or ancient woodland, or be important for the plants and animals which are present. Many sites contain habitats and species that are priorities under the UK & Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plans: these documents set out strategies for the conservation of our most vulnerable wildlife. Together with statutory protected areas (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves), Local Wildlife Sites are vital to maintain the current levels of wildlife in Lincolnshire. This network of sites acts as reservoirs from which wildlife can spread – something which will become more important as climate change increases the pressure on wild species and their habitats over the coming years.

### What does it mean for landowners?

A Local Wildlife Site notification is a recognition of a site's nature conservation value. The owner is not obliged to carry out work to protect or maintain the land's wildlife interest and the notification does not confer any rights of access. However, it is hoped that owners and managers of Local Wildlife Sites will want to consider wildlife when making their management decisions.

### The Value of Brownfield Sites

'Brownfield' refers to land that has been formerly developed but is now unused, for example previous industrial and housing sites or disused railway lines. Such sites can provide a variety of valuable habitats, including grassland and scrub. Public perception of brownfield sites can be negative, as they can look untidy and may be the focus of antisocial behaviour. But for wildlife, brownfield sites are an important element in the network of urban green space, forming links between isolated pockets of biodiversity and the countryside along which wildlife can migrate. Many brownfield sites are rich in flowering plants and can support rare invertebrates. Areas of bare ground are often undervalued but can be important basking spots for reptiles. Empty or derelict buildings can also provide roosting and nesting opportunities for bats and declining urban bird species such as the house sparrow.

In Lincolnshire, and throughout the country, brownfield sites are under threat from government policy which prioritises their redevelopment. Their wildlife can also be lost through inappropriate management aimed at making sites more visually appealing as urban greenspaces. Importing topsoil, planting trees and creating grassy areas can be as damaging as redevelopment.

Brownfield Local Wildlife Sites have a value for wildlife. If managed carefully and sympathetically, these wildlife-rich sites will continue to provide valuable habitats for a wide range of species including invertebrates, reptiles, bats and birds.

#### Brownfield Biodiversity

- Government targets - 60% new development is to take place on brownfield land.
- House Sparrow numbers have declined by 62% in the UK over the last 25 years.
- Pipistrelle bats are estimated to have declined in number by 70% between 1978 and 1993.
- All six species of British reptile are now listed as UK Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan as being of conservation concern.



## Further information and advice

Conservation organisations have information available on their websites or as factsheets and leaflets that can be posted. However, most of these organisations have limited capacity for visiting sites and offering on the ground advice to landowners and managers.

### Brownfield & Urban Habitats:

#### **British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)**

UK charity working with people to bring about positive environmental change

Tel: 01302 388 883                      www.btcv.org.uk

#### **Groundwork**

Advice on sustainable local projects

Tel: 0121 236 8565

info@groundwork.org.uk      www.groundwork.org.uk

#### **Natural England**

Advice and provision of funds through environmental stewardship.

Lincoln Office Tel: 0300 060 6000

Nottingham Tel: 0300 060 6000

Wakefield Office Tel: 0300 060 1863

www.naturalengland.org.uk

eastmidlands@naturalengland.org.uk

eastmidlands@naturalengland.org.uk

humber@naturalengland.org.uk

### Local Contacts:

#### **Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership**

Advice on site management and general wildlife.

Tel: 01507 526667

info@lincsbiodiversity.org.uk

www.lincsbiodiversity.org.uk

#### **Lincolnshire County Council**

General management advice, grants for tree planting, ponds etc, information on Local Nature Reserves.

Tel: 01522 552222

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

#### **Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust**

Advice on site management and general wildlife.

Tel: 01507 526667

info@lincstrust.co.uk

www.lincstrust.org.uk

#### **North Lincolnshire Council**

General advice and information (including Local Nature Reserves)

Tel: 01724 296296

www.northlincs.gov.uk

#### **North-East Lincolnshire Council**

General advice and information (including Local Nature Reserves)

Tel: 01472 313131

www.nelincs.gov.uk

### National Organisations:

#### **Bat Conservation Trust**

Information on bats, bat roosts and habitats.

Tel: 020 76272629

enquiries@bats.org.uk

www.bats.org.uk

#### **Buglife**

Information on invertebrates and their habitats.

Tel: 01733 201210

info@buglife.org.uk

www.buglife.org.uk

#### **Flora Locale**

Advice on habitat recreation and restoration schemes.

Tel: 01672 515723      www.floralocale.org

#### **RSPB**

Wide range of habitat and species specific books, advisory sheets and leaflets.

Tel: 01767 680551

www.rspb.org.uk

#### **Froglife**

Advice and sources of funding for amphibians and reptiles.

Tel: 01733 558960

info@froglife.org

www.froglife.org

### Further Reading:

**Barker, G.M. & Graf, A.** 1989 *Principles for Nature Conservation in Towns and Cities (Urban Wildlife Now)*, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

**English Nature** 1998 *Brownfield: red data. The values artificial habitats have for uncommon invertebrates* (free from Natural England publications)

**Gilbert, O.L.** 1991 *The Ecology of Urban Habitats*; Kluwer Academic Publishers

**Gilbert, O.L. & Anderson, P.** 1998 *Habitat Creation and Repair*, Oxford University Press

**Sutherland, William J. & Hill, David A.** 1995 *Managing Habitats for Conservation*, Cambridge University Press

**Wheater, C.Philip** 1999 *Urban Habitats (Habitat Guides)*, Routledge; III edition