



Local Wildlife Sites – Grasslands 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 may 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 act 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 Grasslands

Hay meadows and cattle grazed pastures are an enduring image of the English landscape. Yet over the last 60 years most of the UK's traditional grasslands have disappeared; they have been converted to arable, have been agriculturally 'improved', or been destroyed by development. With the loss of grasslands, we have also lost their flora and fauna. A meadow sprinkled with wild flowers is now a rare sight. Insects such as butterflies, and birds such as skylarks, which feed and nest in grasslands, have declined dramatically in numbers. These grasslands may also have locally important historical features and may have been managed using traditional methods for centuries.

In Lincolnshire, wildlife-rich grassland is an ever-decreasing resource. These special grasslands aren't just lost to developments and a change of land use. Their wildlife can also be lost through inappropriate or a lack of management. The decline in traditional livestock farming, tree planting and abandonment can all have a detrimental impact.

Grassland Local Wildlife Sites have maintained a value for wildlife. If managed carefully and sympathetically, these last remaining wildlife-rich grasslands will continue to provide feeding and nesting sites for farmland birds, and the wild flowers will continue to bloom.

Grassland Biodiversity

- Since 1938 more than 99 percent of Lincolnshire's hay meadows have been converted to arable, ploughed or treated with chemicals.
- Skylarks – this familiar songbird has declined by nearly 60% in the past 40 years.
- There are only 92 hectares of limestone grassland and 50 hectares of chalk grassland left in Lincolnshire.
- Brown hare numbers have reduced dramatically in many parts of the UK over the past 100 years.



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.

Farmland & Grassland Habitats:

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)

Land management, advice and assistance on gaining grants through agri-environment schemes.

Tel: 01522 535540

lincIn@fwag.org.uk

www.fwag.org.uk

Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service

Offer on site land management advice and assistance on grants within the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Tel: 01507 609740

aonb@lincswolds.org.uk

www.lincswolds.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 habitat.

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

Froglife

Advice and sources of funding for amphibians.

Tel: 01733 558960

info@froglife.org

www.froglife.org

Plantlife

Information on plant species.

Tel: 01722 342730

enquiries@plantlife.org.uk

www.plantlife.org.uk

RSPB

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

Tel: 01767 680551

www.rspb.org.uk

Further Reading:

English Nature 2002 *Old meadows and pastures: Ancient and threatened habitats* (free from Natural England publications).

Gilbert O and Anderson P 1998 *Habitat creation and Repair*, Oxford University Press

Luscombe G and Scott R 1994 *Wildflowers work – a technical guide to creating and maintaining wildflower landscapes*, Landlife, Liverpool

RSPB, *Lowland Farmland Handbook*

Sutherland W J & Hill D A (eds) 1995 *Managing Habitats for Conservation*