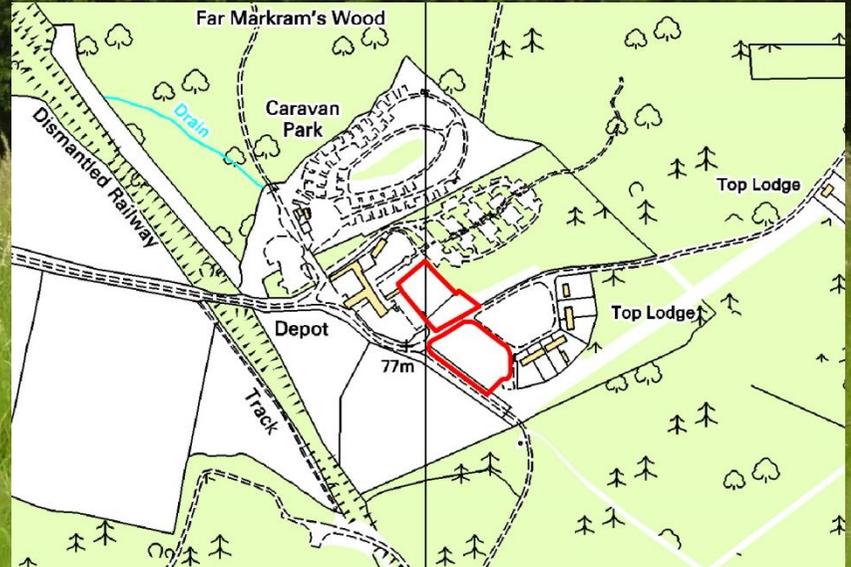




Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Northamptonshire



Fineshade Meadow and Orchard

A Local Wildlife Site (LWS)

2013 Survey Report

Grid Reference: SP980982

Size: 0.65ha

Site E1501

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Fineshade Meadow and Orchard

Introduction

The site consists of a wildflower meadow and orchard on the edge of Fineshade Woods. Both provide important habitats for wildlife, in particular insects and reptiles.

This is a species rich neutral-calcareous meadow, with a good range of wildflowers including frequent lesser stitchwort, common knapweed, musk mallow, hedge bedstraw and cowslips. Having missed a cut last year the site is becoming fairly grassy with Yorkshire fog and cocks-foot frequent alongside sweet vernal grass and false oat-grass abundant towards the hedgerow. The sward is tussocky, with a large number of anthills containing finer grasses and herb species. Woolly thistle is frequent across the site and meadow cranesbill in the south west corner.



Common Knapweed

The orchard comprises of approximately 11 mature apple trees within a small old traditional orchard. Three rows of new 'local' varieties have also been planted. Damson, hawthorn and blackthorn form the boundaries, below which is thick rank vegetation. The ground flora is fairly rank, with nettles dominating, but more grassy in places. Hairy Violets are abundant in spring.

The mature orchard trees are of high value to wildlife in terms of their fruit, structural and dead wood features and the mosses and lichens they support.

To the southwest beyond the hedgerow is a small recently created meadow. The conifers were clear-felled, ground prepared and a seed mix was used. Herbs dominate with ox-eye daisy, birds-foot-trefoil dominate alongside frequent knapweed and ladies bedstraw. Young local apple varieties have been planted across the site, with the aim of them maturing into a new orchard in the future.

Interesting species

Adder and a number of slow worms were recorded in the meadow. In the orchard bug hotels are located in 2 corners and there are 6 bee hives in the west corner of the orchard. With the mix of uncommon habitats the site is likely to be important for a range of insects.

Other plants of interest included Common Sorrel, Field Scabious, Meadow Vetchling, Perforate St John's-wort, Salad Burnet, Wild Marjoram and Woolly Thistle. In addition there are a number of local scarce fruit trees varieties, including Barnack Beauty, Annie Elizabeth and Newton's Wonder.

Meadows

Fineshade Meadow and Orchard is one of 750 Local Wildlife sites in Northamptonshire that are recognised to be important for wildlife within the county. By maintaining a LWS network the Wildlife Trust aims to encourage and support landowners in managing their land in a way that will be sympathetic to wildlife without compromising their own aspirations for the sites. Local Wildlife Sites have no statutory designation and therefore have no associated obligations. LWS recognition does not confer any new rights of access.



Small tortoiseshell on field scabious

The site forms a lowland meadow habitat, and is the target for our new *Inspiring Meadows* project. Flower-rich lowland meadows have suffered a 97% national decline in the last 70 years, and are Northamptonshire's most threatened wildlife habitat. They are important habitats for a wild variety of plants as well as other species such as butterflies, bumblebees and hares. Traditional Orchards are also a focus of conservation interest and are part of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Northamptonshire. This means that targets have been set to arrest the current decline and to restore existing sites to good condition.

The *Inspiring Meadows* project is working to restore priority meadow sites across the County through offering surveys and management advice as well as funding practical work. The project will help meet targets set out in the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

Recommendations for management

Both parts of the site are being managed well and this is maintaining a high wildlife interest in a relatively small, but important site.

Species rich grassland relies on management to stop it becoming overgrown with scrub or coarse grasses, whilst conversely over-management can lead to the loss of wildflowers.

Currently the meadow is managed by an annual hay cut when possible. This management should continue with the possibility of an additional cut/top to simulate aftermath grazing in years when growth is high.

In the old orchard continue the traditional orchard management. Keep cutting the ground flora to reduce the nettle cover, with the eventual aim of restoring to a meadow flora that can be managed through an annual cut or graze.

The newly created meadow should continue to be managed with an annual cut and remove. Over the years the oxeye daisy should begin to become less dominant and a more natural diverse flora should establish.

For further advice on managing this site or for additional information on Local Wildlife Sites see www.wildlifebcn.org/wildlife-sites-northamptonshire or contact Matt Johnson.



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Species List

Meadow

Common Name	Latin Name	Abundance
Common Viper	<i>Vipera berus</i>	Y
Slow-Worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>	Y
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	LF
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	O
Common Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	F

Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	LF
Common Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa acetosa</i>	O
Common Vetch	<i>Vicia sativa segetalis</i>	O
Cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>	F
Creeping Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	LF
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	O-LF
Dog-rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	O
False Fox-sedge	<i>Carex otrubae</i>	O-LF
False Oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	O-LF
False-brome	<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	LF
Field Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	F
Field Forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	F
Field Scabious	<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	F
Germander Speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	F
Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	O-LF
Hedge Bedstraw	<i>Galium mollugo</i>	F
Lady's Bedstraw	<i>Galium verum</i>	LF
Lesser Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	F
Meadow Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium pratense</i>	LF
Meadow Vetchling	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	O-LF
Musk-mallow	<i>Malva moschata</i>	F
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	F
Salad Burnet	<i>Sanguisorba minor minor</i>	F
Spear Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	O
Sweet Vernal-grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	F
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i>	O
Woolly Thistle	<i>Cirsium eriophorum</i>	F
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	F

Orchard

Common Name	Latin Name	Abundance
Cinnabar Moth	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>	Y
Apple	<i>Malus pumila</i>	F
Black Medick	<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	O
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	LF
Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	F
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	F
Common Comfrey	<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	LF
Common Figwort	<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	O
Common Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	O
Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	F
Common Ragwort	<i>Senecio jacobaeae</i>	O
Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	LF
Cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>	F
Creeping Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	F-LA

Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	F
Crested Dog's-tail	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	F
Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	O
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	LF
Field Forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	O
Germander Speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	F
Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	F
Greater Burdock	<i>Arctium lappa</i>	F
Ground-ivy	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	F
Hairy Violet	<i>Viola hirta</i>	O
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	F
Hemlock	<i>Conium maculatum</i>	O
Lady's Bedstraw	<i>Galium verum</i>	F
Lords-and-Ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	R
Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	F
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	F
Perforate St John's-wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	O-LF
Red Clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	F
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	F
Selfheal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	O
Spear Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	O-LF
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	F
White Dead-nettle	<i>Lamium album</i>	O
Wild Marjoram	<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	O-LF
Wild Plum	<i>Prunus domestica</i>	LF
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	O
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	F