



## **Central Farmland Landscape Area Habitats & Species**

### **UK BAP Priority Habitats**

#### **Broadleaved Mixed Woodland**

Ancient and semi-natural woodland is clustered mainly around the Leven Valley south of Ingleby Barwick, and to the north and west of Wynyard Village. Linear woodlands are found occasionally along the banks of the River Tees, with a few scattered woodlands across the rural landscape. The majority of the ancient and semi-natural woodland is found on steeply sloping valley sides. Tree cover has been influenced by planting, usually conifers or sycamore, either scattered through the wood or as plantation; ash is the main native tree.

#### **Lowland Meadow**

There are two main clusters of lowland meadow in the Central Farmland Landscape Area, one in the Leven Valley and one around the village of Elwick in Hartlepool. There are also a small number scattered around the outer urban fringe of west Stockton, two in the farmland west of Stockton (both of which are designated as SSSIs), and several around Middleton St George. These meadows are mostly present on steeply-sloping sites and managed as permanent pasture.

#### **Priority Ponds**

There are two concentrations of priority ponds in the Central Farmland Landscape Area, one west of Eaglescliffe and one south-west of Wynyard Woodland Park, with a few also scattered across the farmland west of Hartlepool. The majority of the ponds meet the priority pond criteria due to the presence of common toad, with others also fulfilling the criteria for great crested newt, and a few for water vole.

#### **Fens**

There are six fens scattered across the farmland west of Hartlepool, and three in Stockton (one in the urban fringe and two in the Leven Valley). Fens in the area are typically rush-dominated wet flushes on clay hillsides with occasional bowl and valley bottom fens.

#### **Traditional Orchard**

Remnants of old traditional orchards, associated historically with small commercial enterprises and farms, are scattered across the farmland west of Stockton with a concentration around Yarm and Eaglescliffe. Orchards vary in their size and condition and are now mainly for domestic use.

#### **Hedgerow**

Hedgerows are widespread across the open farmland of the Central Farmland Landscape Area. There is evidence that hedgerows in some areas may pre-date 1700.

## **Other Habitats of Importance**

### **Unimproved neutral grassland**

An extensive area of species-rich MG5 grassland, comprising an area of some 100 hectares is present at Durham Tees Valley Airport and is one of the best examples of this nationally scarce habitat in the Tees Valley.

### **Species-rich Grassland**

There are 33 Local Wildlife Sites designated for the presence of species-rich grassland within the Central Farmland Landscape Area, of which a number have been recorded as the priority habitat Lowland Meadow. Five sites are road verges.

### **Sites of Geological Importance**

There are five sites of geological interest which are a feature of the Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau where it is a part of the borough of Hartlepool. Some of these sites are recolonising with semi-natural habitat (scrub and grassland).

### **UK BAP Priority species**

#### **Great Crested Newt**

Great crested newt is found scattered throughout the Central Farmland Landscape Area with a high concentration in the south around south west Stockton and Middleton St George.

#### **Harvest Mouse**

There are small populations of harvest mouse along the A66 corridor between Eaglescliffe and Darlington and it has also been recorded at Wynyard Woodland Park.

#### **Otters**

Otters are well established on the River Leven and along the lower section of the River Tees.

#### **Brown Hare**

Brown hare is found in open areas such as grassland and arable farmland and is widespread where that habitat occurs in the Tees Valley, including the Central Farmland Landscape Area.

#### **Breeding Birds**

A large percentage of many breeding populations of bird species of key importance in the Tees Valley are present within the Central Farmland Landscape Area. Sixteen species are listed as of red level of concern in the UK (for example yellowhammer, cuckoo, corn bunting, yellow wagtail) and 12 species listed as of amber concern in the UK (for example quail, green woodpecker, redstart and bullfinch). Nineteen out of this total of 28 species are also UKBAP priority species.

#### **Invertebrates**

The forester moth, a day-flying priority species, has its largest UK population at Coatham Wood, Long Newton. This species is associated with common sorrel growing in acid grassland.