

Lower Ormesby Beck Site - Comparing species and habitats present against the assessment criteria for Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) in the Tees Valley

Habitats present

Semi-improved grassland
Amenity Grassland
Tall ruderal
Swamp
Woodland
Running Water

LWS guidelines for designation of Grassland

For designation of a site as an LWS because of the presence of Neutral Grassland Flora, these guidelines requires 3 grass species and 5 herb species from a given list. The grassland in the southern half of the site contains 8 herb species from this list but only 1 of the grass species, so it doesn't meet the criteria.

(Grass species - *Cynosurus cristatus*, Crested Dogstail
Herb species - *Achillea millefolium*, Yarrow
- *Centaurea nigra*, Common Knapweed
- *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, Common Spotted Orchid
- *Hypochaeris radicata*, Common Catsear
- *Lotus corniculatus*, Bird's-foot Trefoil
- *Primula veris*, Cowslip
- *Ranunculus bulbosus*, Bulbous Buttercup
- *Trifolium pratense*, Red Clover)

However, for designation of a site as an LWS because of the presence of Urban Grassland Flora, 10 species must be present from a different list, and in this case 11 species have so far been recorded (12 if the Aster sp turns out to be *A. novi-belgi*, Confused Michaelmas-daisy).

(All plant species - *Artemisia vulgaris*, Mugwort
- *Blackstonia perfoliata*, Yellow-wort
- *Bromus hordeaceus*, Soft-brome
- *Crepis vesicaria*, Beaked Hawk's-beard
- *Daucus carota*, Wild Carrot
- *Hirschfeldia incana*, Hoary Mustard
- *Linaria vulgaris*, Common Toadflax
- *Linum catharticum*, Fairy Flax
- *Mellitus altissimus*, Tall Melilot
- *Pastinaca sativa*, Wild Parsnip
- *Reseda lutea*, Wild Mignonette)

In addition, around 300 plants of Northern Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza purpurella*) and at least 16 Fragrant Orchids (*Gymnadenia* sp.) were found in this area in the summer of 2017.

Insects

More work is needed to compile a more complete list of insects. 11 species of butterfly have been recorded so far, although several expected species have not yet been recorded, including Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, while other possible species include, Holly Blue, Gatekeeper (although this species is on the edge of its range here) and Wall (which occurs nearby).

Some moth-trapping work is planned for 2018. This should boost the moth list, which currently only includes 3 species, all day-flying.

Only 2 dragonflies, and no damselflies have been recorded, but one of the dragonflies is Black-tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*) which is one of the three species mentioned in section 3.6.3 of “Guidelines for the Selection of Local Wildlife Sites in the Tees Valley” as being rare in the Tees Valley. All sites supporting one of these three species are eligible for selection as Local Wildlife Sites.

Increasing the area of standing water is likely to help the dragonflies present and to lead to an increase in the number of species.

Birds

Of the 35 species of bird that have so far been recorded on the site, or flying over it, 1 and 9 respectively are on the latest version of the Birds of Conservation Concern (BOCC4) Red and Amber lists for the UK. Of these, three species, Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) (Red list), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) and Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) (both Amber list) are thought to breed on site. Other Amber listed species that may breed here are Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*). Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) (Amber list) may breed nearby but there is no suitable habitat on-site. Common Teal (*Anas crecca*) and Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) are regular in winter in small numbers.

Mammals

See separate reports by Amy Carrick and Sarah Barry regarding bat and Water vole surveys that have been carried out on site.