

If a CWS is, or appears to be affected by development, planning conditions and agreements will be used to protect and enhance the wildlife value of the site. The views of the Wildlife Trust will normally be sought as part of the consultation process.

Acknowledgement of a CWS does not mean that there will be open access across your land. Existing public rights of way remain unaffected and no rights of way are created.

The majority of ordinary land management and agricultural operations remain unaffected. However, for those owners in the Single Farm Payment Scheme, cross compliance and the codes relating to maintaining the land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition require that semi-natural habitats be protected.

If intensification of land use is being considered it may be necessary to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment under the 2006 Regulations. For more information on the Regulations call the Natural England free phone EIA helpline on 0800 028 2140.

Advice to owners and managers

The majority of CWS are privately owned and their survival depends on owners and managers being sympathetic to the needs of wildlife. The high wildlife value of a CWS is often a direct result of land management practices that have allowed wildlife to flourish. This is often of a traditional nature, such as coppicing of woodlands, and grazing and cutting of meadows. The continuation of such management is usually essential to prevent a decline in the wildlife value of the site.

The CWS Partnership recognises the difficulties that site owners and managers often face when looking after a CWS and are keen to provide advice on maintaining and enhancing the special value of these sites as well as providing information on grants available to help.

Further information

For further information about **County Wildlife Sites** please contact the Wildlife Sites Officer at

The Wildlife Trust
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Broad Street
Great Cambourne
Cambridge CB23 6DH

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Fax: 01954 710051
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County Wildlife Sites



Grassland management

Pollard willow



Cover: Bee orchid - L. Parker

Working in partnership:



F. Selway

M. Hubbard

What are County Wildlife Sites?

County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are areas of land important for their wildlife and can be found on public and private land. They vary in shape, size and may encompass a variety of different habitat types such as ancient woodland, species rich grassland, wetlands, roadside verges and hedgerows.

County Wildlife Sites are found throughout Cambridgeshire and outside of statutory designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves are considered some of the best areas for wildlife in the county.

County Wildlife Sites play a vital role in the conservation of the UK's natural heritage by providing essential wildlife refuges, stepping-stones, corridors and buffers linking and protecting other site networks and open spaces found in towns and the wider countryside.

Bumblebee

Bluebells



Marsh orchid



Water vole



Green-veined white butterfly



Oxeye daisy

Why are they so important?

Habitats of special importance for wildlife such as chalk downland, heathland, meadows, rivers, wetlands and ancient woods account for less than 7% of the county area.

- ◆ **County Wildlife Sites** can support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife species and habitats.
- ◆ Many sites will contain habitats and species that are priorities under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), which sets out strategies for the conservation of our most vulnerable wildlife such as the water vole, skylark, black hairstreak butterfly and pipistrelle bat.
- ◆ **County Wildlife Sites** complement SSSI's and nature reserves by helping to maintain links between these sites.

In recent years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of conserving such places so that wildlife can survive in the wider countryside outside nature reserves.

The County Wildlife Site System

The Wildlife Trust in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council takes the strategic lead with respect to the management

of the **County Wildlife Sites** System. Other members of this partnership include; District Councils, Natural England, The Environment Agency, FWAG and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biological Records Centre.

Sites are selected by assessing their wildlife importance in a county context.

Survey data is gathered and then assessed against carefully constructed selection guidelines. Those meeting the guidelines are then selected for designation.

The CWS system is intended to be flexible so newly discovered sites can be added whilst those known to have deteriorated may be removed.

County Wildlife Sites in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Implications for landowners

County Wildlife Sites are recognised by Local Authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and listed within their local development documents. All Local Authorities in the county have developed policies that give CWSs some protection.