

Date Notified: 15 March 1988

County: Humberside **Site Name:** Haxey Grange Fen

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as amended.

Local Planning Authority: Boothferry Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SK 737973 **Area:** 13.8 (ha) 34.1 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 112 **1:10,000:** SK 79 NW

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Description:

Haxey Grange Fen is principally a fen site with complementary areas of unimproved neutral grassland, willow scrub and woodland. It is the best example of primary fen habitat known in South Humberside and is particularly important for its invertebrate communities. The site lies on the flat carr land of the River Idle valley and is divided by a system of internal ditches.

The tall vegetation which occupies the major part of the site, comprises a mosaic of vegetation types in which the relative abundance of species is determined by local variations in the water level. Typical dominant species include blunt-flowered rush *Juncus subnodulosus*, soft-rush *J. effusus*, greater pond-sedge *Carex riparia*, amphibious bistort *Polygonum amphibium*, common reed *Phragmites australis* and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. In addition there is a rich variety of herb species with several of uncommon occurrence including purple-loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, which is abundant here, yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*, wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris* and skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata*.

Seasonal fluctuations in the water table create shallow temporary pools, with stands of hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum* and bittersweet *Solanum dulcamara* at their edges. The beetle fauna associated with bare peat at the pool margins is of particular interest and includes a high diversity of ground beetles *Carabidae* with species such as *Blethisia multipunctata*, *Bembidion obliquum*, *Bembidion gilvipes* and *Acupalpus dorsalis*, being of national note.

Unimproved neutral grassland occurs in the south western part of the site. This supports several large stands of purple small-reed *Calamagrostis canescens* and the locally uncommon plant, common meadow-rue *Thalictrum flavum*.

Stands of grey willow *Salix cinerea* are scattered throughout the site, becoming denser in the vicinity of drainage ditches. Towards the northern and eastern margins of the site dense willow scrub grades into Birch *Betula pendula*, *B. pubescens* woodland with hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and a smaller area of woodland occupies the raised south east corner of the site. These scrub and woodland areas provide important feeding areas and shelter for the invertebrate fauna.

North Carr Drain, which forms the northern boundary of the site, supports beds of pond water-crowfoot *Ranunculus peltatus* together with branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum* and curled pondweed *Potamogeton crispus*.