

**County:** Humberside

**Site Name:** Cinquefoil Brow and Wood Dale

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

**Local Planning Authority:** East Yorkshire Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SE 968637, 958643      **Area:** 10.8 (ha) 26.6 (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 101      **1:10,000:** SE 96 SE

**First Notified:** 1989

**Description:**

Cinquefoil Brow and Wood Dale consist of two disjunct areas of unimproved chalk grassland situated in the dry valley complex to the east of Sledmere in the Yorkshire Wolds. The site is important as one of the best remaining examples of species-rich chalk grassland of a type which is particularly scarce on the northern Chalk of North Humberside. Chalk grassland was formerly more widespread but has become more restricted in distribution due to reseeded, afforestation and lack of management resulting in scrub encroachment.

The grassland is situated on steep slopes of both southerly and westerly aspects. The sward is dominated by upright brome *Bromus erectus* and sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* with species such as common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, common bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella* being especially abundant.

Other frequently occurring species include ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, wild thyme *Thymus praecox*, yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, quaking grass *Briza media* and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*. Of particular note is the presence of species such as large thyme *Thymus pulegioides*, hawkweed oxtongue *Picris hieracioides*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella* and clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata* which have a restricted distribution on the northern chalk.

The west facing grassland of Wood Dale is also of particular interest due to the presence of conspicuous ant hills, formed by the yellow ant *Lasius flavus*. The soils of these mounds are fine and friable and develop a characteristic flora which often differs from the surrounding grassland.

Maintenance of the nature conservation interest is dependent on the continuation of livestock grazing without the use of fertilisers or herbicides.