

## Views About Management

### **A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Eriswell Low Warren Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).**

This statement represents English Nature's views about the management of the SSSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the site's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. English Nature has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of SSSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the SSSI. Also, there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation. English Nature's written consent is still required before carrying out any operation likely to damage the features of special interest (see your SSSI notification papers for a list of these operations). English Nature welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the SSSI to ensure that the management of this site conserves and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

### **Management Principles**

Breckland grass-heaths have a long history of pastoral management. Traditionally, the area was used for a mixture of sheep grazing and rotational arable, with rabbit warrens being introduced from the thirteenth century. These processes caused disturbance and depletion of nutrients. They suppressed the growth of vigorous and dominant plant species and prevented the build up of plant litter. In this way they helped to create the variety of habitats at an early stage of development, including bare ground, that characterize the Breckland area and which support a wide variety of specialised plants and invertebrates. Similar management principles apply today. Grazing with sheep is still the most suitable form of routine management. The precise intensity and timing of grazing will vary both between and within sites, according to local conditions and requirements (for example, the need to avoid disturbance to ground nesting birds such as Stone-curlew). Whilst difficult to control, rabbit grazing remains a useful management tool, particularly for lichen-rich heaths and areas where more open and disturbed conditions are required. A limited amount of cultivation may be helpful to benefit species that require bare ground. The application of pesticides including herbicides, or any fertilizer is damaging and should be avoided.