

Plant survey
Bradlaugh Fields
Northampton
May & June 2019

By Dr R G Field

Site description

Three areas previously either ponds or areas of wet grassland were surveyed in May and June 2017. Areas 1 and 2 were surveyed again in May and June 2018 and 2019. Plant species observed were recorded plus any other species present were noted. The three areas are now dry. This has been the case for the last several years since Anglian Water repaired a leak nearby. It is presumed that these areas will remain dry in the future and this was the third year the study was conducted so future management could be agreed.

Area 1

Small area which formally was a pond just to the north of the main building. Was cleared of vegetation (including scrub) in the winters of 2016/7, 2017/8 and 2018/9. This has been colonised by a range of wildflowers and grasses (Tables 1 and 1a).

Area 2

Area formally a pond with ditch area to the south of the main building. Was cleared of vegetation in winters of 2016/7, 2017/8 and 2018/9. Edges of the pond and ditch were colonised by wildflowers, while the central section is more nutrient rich and is dominated by grasses and nettles (Table 2 and 2a).

Area 3

Area formally a pond with wet grassland. To the south of the main building and within 50m of Area 2. Overgrown with grasses and scrub species. No management work carried out on this site for several years. A full survey of this area was not carried out but several interesting species were noted in 2017 such as: Pignut, meadow buttercup, Cuckoo flower, Garlic mustard and Gorse.

Table 1	Area 1	2017/8/9 species	
Smooth stalked meadow grass	Yorkshire fog	Red fescue	Small leaved timothy
Rough meadow grass	Hedge woundwort	Soft rush	Bittersweet
White clover	Sedge sp.	Greater plantain	Mugwort
Reed canary grass	Perennial rye grass	Sterile brome	Crested dogstail
Ribwort plantain	Cowslip	Yellowrattle	Common speedwell
Cow parsley	Cocksfoot	Common ragwort	Spear thistle
Common nettle	Bush vetch	Cleavers	Barren brome

Broad leaved dock	Creeping buttercup	Herb bennet	Hogweed
Birdsfoot trefoil	Dandelion	Ox-eye daisy	Great willowherb
Ragged Robin	Meadow buttercup	Crack willow	Black knapweed
Red campion	Yarrow	Creeping thistle	Creeping buttercup
Sterile brome	Meadowsweet	Great willowherb	
	New 2018 species		
Salad burnet	Hedge mustard	Sweet vernal	Glaucous sweet grass
Tufted vetch	Wild sage	Meadow cranesbill	Cut leaved cranesbill
Field scabious	White campion	Wild carrot	Sow thistle
Greater knapweed			
Table 1a	New Species 2019		
Daisy	Ladies bedstraw	Rough hawksbit	Pendulous sedge
Table 2	Area 2	2017/8/9 species	
Red fescue	Yorkshire fog	Red fescue	Soft rush
Rough meadow grass	Hedge woundwort	Lesser stitchwort	Lesser trefoil
White clover	Yellow oat grass	Greater plantain	Mugwort
Red clover	Perennial rye grass	Sterile brome	Crested dogstail
Ribwort plantain	Meadow foxtail	Salad burnet	Common speedwell
Cow parsley	Cocksfoot	White dead nettle	Spear thistle
Common nettle	Bush vetch	Cleavers	Barren brome
Broad leaved dock	Creeping buttercup	Common sorrell	Hogweed
Birdsfoot trefoil	Dandelion	Ox-eye daisy	Great willowherb
Ragged Robin	Meadow buttercup	Germander speedwell	Black knapweed
Red campion	Yarrow	Creeping thistle	Spiked sedge
Yellowrattle	Meadow foxtail	Goatsbeard	False oat grass
Soft rush	Cut leaved cranesbill	Dovesfoot cranesbill	Tufted vetch
	New 2018		

	species		
Small leaved timothy	Mouse ear	Bulbous buttercup	Common ragwort
Hedge mustard	Sweet vernal	Garlic mustard	Field bindweed
Germander speedwell	Velvet brome	White campion	Greater knapweed
Reed sweet grass	Soft brome	Cowslip	
Table 2a	New species 2019		
Field scabious	Ladies bedstraw	Sow thistle	Nipplewort
Rough hawksbit	Hairy St. John wort		

Suggested Management

The management for areas 1 & 2 is to cut and clear all the vegetation in late autumn each year. This will slowly reduce any nutrient levels and encourage wildflowers to spread. The central area of 2 could be cleared of the top layer of soil which is nutrient rich. This material could be thinly spread over an area of grassland with little botanical interest.

Area 3 needs a lot more work and it is suggested that it should be kept short for at least 12 months using a cut and collect mower. After that it may need extra cuts each year or can move to one late cut and collect each year.

Other species noted

Speckled wood, Small tortoiseshell, Comma, Marbled white, 6 spot Burnet, Brimstone, Orange tip, Common blue damselfly, Large skipper, Ringlet, Meadow brown, Cinnebar moth and Chimney sweeper moth.