

Grasslands for Wildlife



Photographer: G Cragg

Here in the UK it is estimated that we have lost up to 99% of our wildflower rich grasslands since 1930. This has been caused by agricultural intensification, lack of traditional management, and more recently pressure from development.

The dramatic loss of traditional wildflower meadows means that remaining areas of grassland are vitally important habitats, not only for wildflowers, but also for the vast range of invertebrates including moths, butterflies, beetles and bees. This variety of plants provides ideal conditions for a range of invertebrates.

The Erewash Valley is a fascinating wetland landscape that has been manipulated by man over many centuries to provide industry, housing, fuel and aggregates. Once, the Valley was a wide tract of natural floodplain, rich with marshes, wet woodlands and species rich grasslands. Now, there exists a more fragmented pattern of remnant grasslands and pockets of marshland associated with the River Erewash and the Nottingham and Erewash canals. The Erewash Valley still contains a rich mosaic of habitats, and is particularly important for its species rich wet and dry grasslands containing a wealth of native wildflowers. These grasslands support a vast range of invertebrates, the most visible of these being the brightly coloured butterflies, moths, beetles, dragonflies and bees.

It is increasingly important therefore, that we manage remnant grasslands appropriately to ensure their survival and create new species rich grasslands where we can reconnect existing grasslands.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's Blue Butterfly – Grassland's for Wildlife Scheme aims to work with landowners and the public to create or restore existing species rich grasslands throughout the Nottinghamshire and the Erewash Valley.

Creative Conservation Area, Awworth

This species rich wet grassland was created in 1997 as part of Awworth Bypass work. It was created using a diverse seed mix but some of the species present have colonised naturally.

In the meadow you are likely to see; Cuckooflower, common water-crowfoot and false fox-sedge in the wetland areas, whilst lady's bedstraw, meadow vetchling, bird's-foot trefoil, cowslip, yellow-rattle, great burnet and betony can be seen in the meadow itself.

Common toad, smooth newt and grass snake use the wetter areas of the site, while reed bunting, willow warbler and chiffchaff can be seen in the adjacent hedgerows and scrubby areas.



Photographer: Paul Shaw



Photographer: Matt Berry



Photographer: G Cragg



Photographer: Sean Browne



Photographer: G Cragg

Millennium Park, Cossall

This species rich grassland is owned by Nottinghamshire County Council and is managed in partnership with the local community. The meadow supports a diverse range of wildflowers and fine grasses. The meadow's location next to the Nottingham Canal, adds to its ecological value, as species of bird such as reed bunting and dragonflies and damselflies will use this area for foraging in addition to the canal and its associated habitats.

On this meadow you may see the following butterflies; Common Blue, Gatekeeper, Comma, Small Copper and Meadow Brown.



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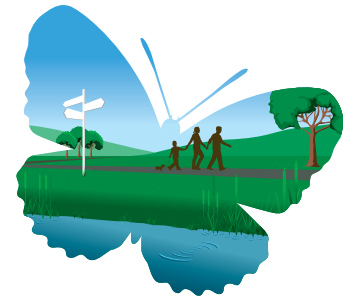


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The Common Blue butterfly is the flagship species for the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's Blue Butterfly scheme, which is helping to restore existing meadows and create new wildflower habitats across the county.



EREWASH VALLEY TRAIL

For more information see www.erewashvalleytrail.co.uk

project partners include:



Photographer: Darin Smith

Fascinating Facts

1. Wormwood is in fact the principle ingredient in absinthe, the alcoholic spirit.
2. Caterpillars have over 4000 muscles, whilst humans have only 792!
3. Butterflies taste with their feet!
4. The largest butterfly has a wing span of 30cm!



Nottinghamshire County Council



Photographer: Philip Precey



Photographer: John Black



Photographer: Scott Tilley



Photographer: Rob Pettifer



Photographer: Steve Hammonds



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