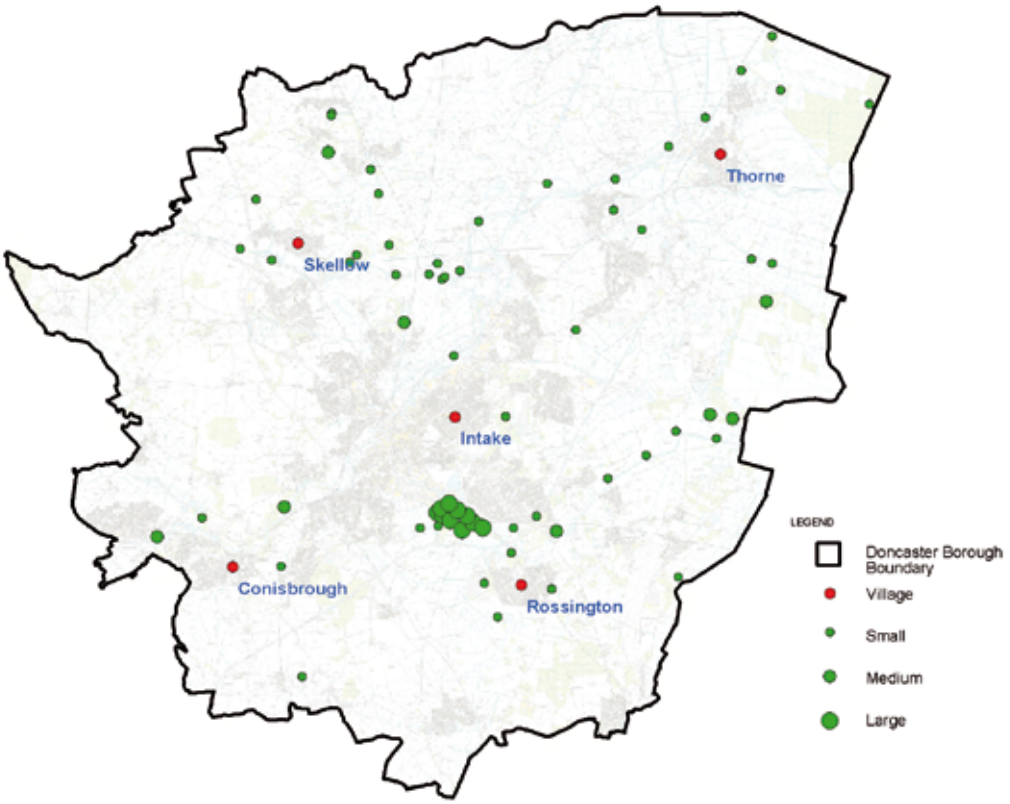
Reedbeds

Summary Habitat Action Plan

Doncaster Local Biodiversity Action Plan
January 2007



1 Habitat description

Reedbeds are fen or swamp habitats dominated by stands of common reed, where the water table is at, or above, the ground level for most of the year. They can support distinctive breeding bird assemblages including marsh harrier, bearded tit and bittern, but the biodiversity of a reedbed tends to be greatly influenced by its area. Reedbeds are very important roosting sites for birds such as swallows and starlings and support diverse invertebrate assemblages. Sedge warbler and reed warbler can typically be found feeding and singing amongst the dense reeds. Reedbed habitats are often closely associated with areas of open water, ditches and areas of wet grassland and carr woodland. Common reed is one of the commonest components of transition zones between land and water and this species can occur with a wide variety of other plants.

2 Characteristic Species

Common reed
Hemp agrimony
Wild angelica
Purple loosestrife
Valerian
Nettle
Greater willowherb
Meadowsweet
Cleavers
Bittersweet
Hedge bindweed
Reed sweet-grass
False oat-grass
Reed canary-grass

3 Current factors causing loss or decline

- Development pressures threaten to damage reedbeds and wetland sites and sever links between open water, drains and other habitats in the surrounding countryside.
- Excessive water abstraction and land drainage causes loss of reedbed habitat and conversion to fertile arable land.
- Flooded fields created by subsidence are valuable habitats that would quickly develop into reedbeds, but opportunities for habitat creation are often lost due to the installation of new pumps or deeper drains.
- Many reedbeds are of small size and support critically small populations of key species that are dependent on this kind of habitat.
- Water quality can be adversely affected by some agricultural, industrial and quarrying operations and nutrient enrichment can change the botanical composition of reedbeds.
- Lack of management leads to a build-up of leaf litter, nutrient enrichment and speeds up the process of terrestrialisation.
- Recreational use such as water sports of reed-fringed water bodies causes disturbance to reedbed habitat.
- Landscape restoration including dredging of ponds and lakes can lead to the loss of reedbed habitats.

4 Objectives, targets & proposed actions

Objective	Target	Ref	Action	Lead & Partners
1) To ensure the protection and maintenance of existing reedbed systems.	By 2008.	1.4	Draw up a list of habitat quality 'indicator' species for reedbed habitat, using locally held records. This can then be used to assess site quality.	DMBC, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) staff and volunteers
	By 2008.	1.6	Research and list the top 10 reedbed sites with water quality problems. Produce a site inventory and the actions necessary to remediate the pollution problems, in preparation for future action.	All DBAP partners
2) To restore degraded sites and ensure appropriate management of reedbeds and reed-lined watercourses.	1 reedbed restoration project initiated on a historic bittern site by 2009.	2.5	Target restoration of reedbeds towards a site, which historically supported populations of bittern.	YWT, Environment Agency (EA), Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), DMBC, Natural England (NE), Private landowners
3) To create new reedbeds, including working towards one block of no less than 20ha, by habitat restoration to join up isolated sites or on a new site where habitat restoration is required. Create further reedbed habitat on smaller sites wherever possible.	By 2008.	3.1	Prepare and submit a funding bid for a reedbed project officer to facilitate the progression of reedbed monitoring, creation and restoration targets, and in particular liase with minerals extraction companies to achieve larger scale reedbed creation schemes as part of minerals restoration. Include in the funding bid an initial assessment of mineral site restoration for reedbed schemes.	DBAP and partners
4) Raise public awareness of the importance and special characteristics of open-water/reedbed habitats.	By 2010.	4.3	Offer support for Undergraduate/ Post Graduate research projects to carry out research into the ecology of reedbed species the effects of reed burning on species composition the reasons for extinction of some invertebrate species. The biodiversity and long-term future for saline/brackish reedbeds at Bell's Pond SSI.	DMBC, Yorkshire Naturalists' Union (YNU), Doncaster College, Local Universities (Nottingham/ Sheffield)

5 This habitat in Doncaster

The following describes where in the Doncaster Borough good examples of this habitat can be found, however, named sites may be privately owned and therefore are not publicly accessible. For further information about this habitat and where it can be found in Doncaster see the 'Reedbeds Habitat Action Plan'.

The low-lying 'wet' nature of much of the Doncaster Borough means that common reed and reedbeds are found in many areas within the Borough, the majority of larger reedbed sites are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and local Sites of Scientific Interest, although many smaller patches of reedbed are found in un-designated sites.

The best place to see reedbed habitat at its finest is at one of the three wetland SSSIs managed by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust; Potteric Carr SSSI, Denaby Ings SSSI and Sprotbrough Flash SSSI are all publicly accessible and have excellent visitor facilities to hep you enjoy the special wildlife they hold.

6 How to take part

'Backyard Biodiversity – Nature in your Neighbourhood'

This is a new initiative launched by Doncaster Council to enable local people to learn about, protect and enjoy nature where they live. Community Groups and Organisations can loan activity packs and equipment to enable them to take part in activities such as bird watching, pond-dipping, building bird and bat boxes and bug hunting. The service is available FREE of charge from selected Customer Service Centres in Doncaster. A pack of Wildlife Gardening fact sheets has also been produced, which provides advice and information on how you can help the wildlife in your own garden.

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