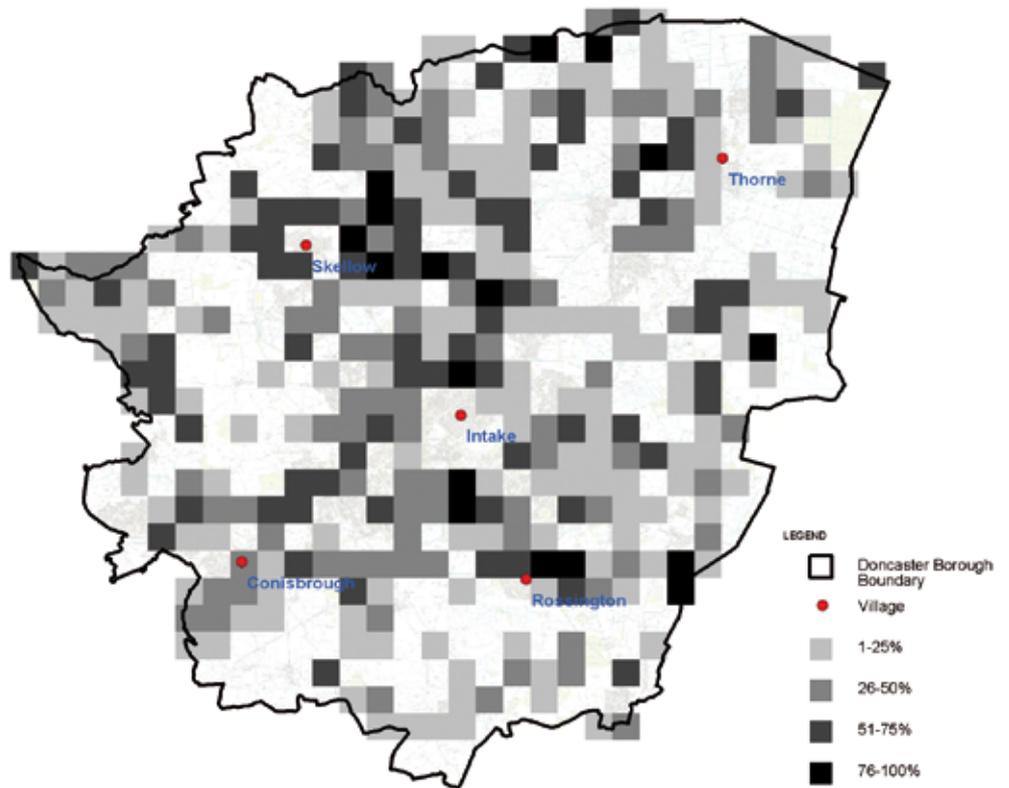


Wet Woodland

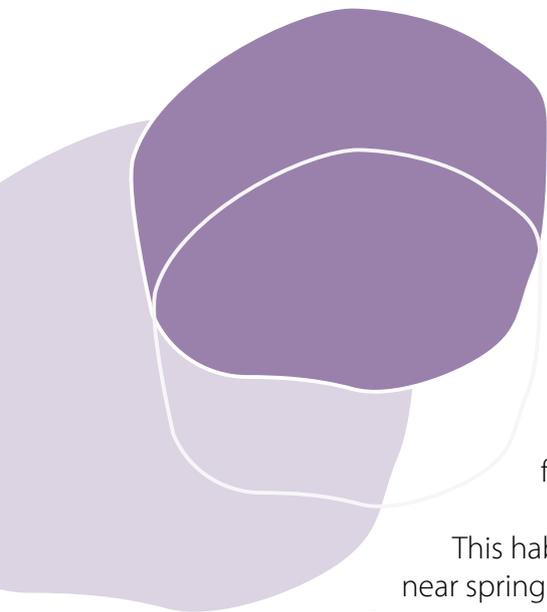
Summary Habitat Action Plan

Doncaster Local Biodiversity Action Plan
January 2007



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1 Habitat description

Wet Woodland occurs on soils that have a high water table or are seasonally wet. The dominant canopy species are alder, willow and birches and the high humidity tends to favour bryophyte growth. Wet Woodland combines elements of other ecosystems and is important for many groups of animals and plants. A large number of invertebrates are associated with damp and waterlogged dead wood, which is a habitat that is not found in other woodland types. Wet Woodland also provides cover and breeding sites for otter and may support plants that are a relict of former more extensive open wetlands.

This habitat is found on river floodplains or in localised waterlogged areas near springs. It is the climax habitat of fens, mires, bogs, along streams, hillside flushes and in peaty hollows. The boundaries of wet woodland habitats are determined by hydrological conditions and management; therefore, it often occurs in a mosaic with other woodland types and open habitats such as fens.

2 Characteristic species

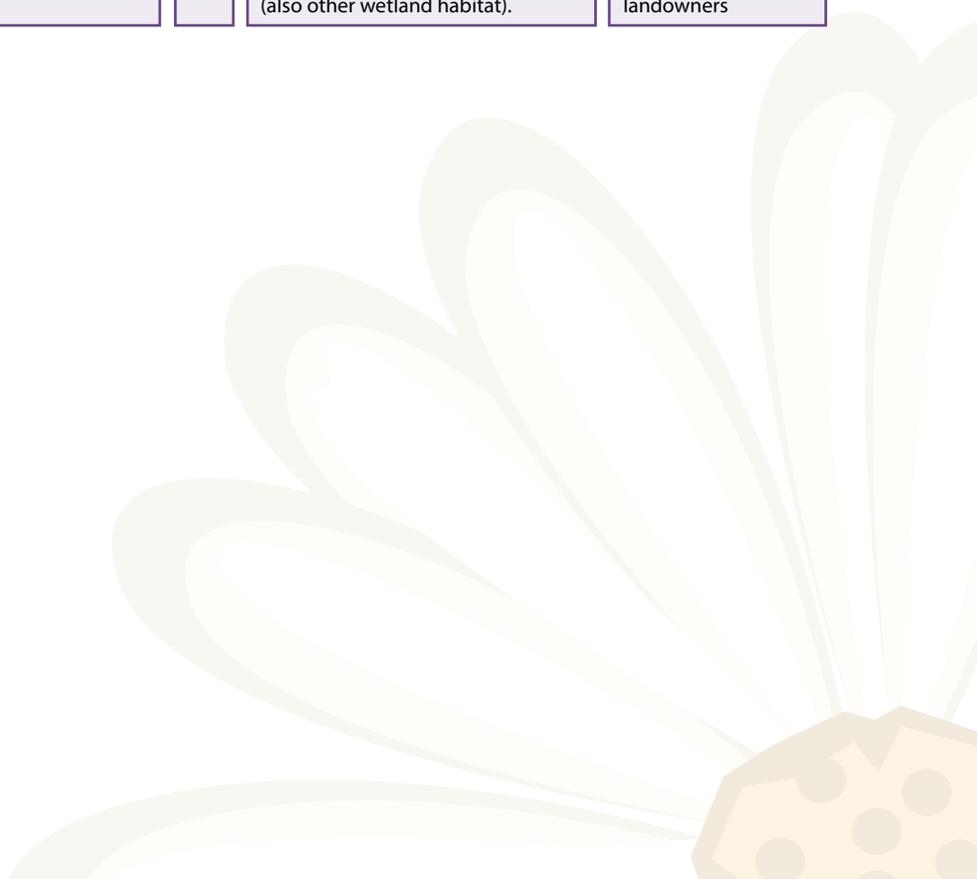
Grey willow	Alder buckthorn	Hemp agrimony
Goat willow	Greater tussock sedge	Wild angelica
Crack willow	Tufted sedge	Marsh marigold
White willow	Remote sedge	Bugle
Osier	Greater pond sedge	Meadowsweet
Downy birch	Lesser pond sedge	Marsh bedstraw
Aspen	Iris	Gipsywort
Guelder rose	Small reed	Bittersweet

3 Current factors causing loss or decline

- Historic navigation works coupled with more recent flood prevention measures isolate wet woodlands from the natural floodplain. Conversely sea level rise may influence the frequency of flooding in the lower reaches of the Don.
- Fragmentation and loss caused by draining and conversion to other land uses.
- General lowering of water tables caused by abstraction for drinking water.
- Natural spread of woodlands into transition habitats.
- There is a lack of traditional woodland management on many sites. Uncontrolled grazing can decrease structural diversity and reduce natural regeneration.
- There are few markets for the products of coppicing and pollarding.
- Poor water quality in watercourses and historic use of some areas of wet woodland for dumping sewage sludge.
- Invasion on non-nature Himalayan Balsam reduces the diversity of the herb layer in wet woodlands.
- Alder is also threatened by Phytophthora root disease, which can kill whole stands of trees.

4 Objectives, targets & proposed actions

Objective	Target	Ref	Action	Lead & Partners
2) To restore degraded sites and ensure appropriate management of Wet Woodland.	3 additional sites with management plans by 2008 and a further 3 by 2010.	2.1	Develop/review and implement site management for woodlands in public ownership. Ensure compatibility with HAPs and SAPs. Review site plans on a minimum 10 year cycle.	DMBC, Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE), Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT), Forestry Commission (FC)
	2 sites with active management by 2008 and a further 2 by 2010.	2.2	Identify land owners of existing SSI wet woodlands. Provide guidance to owners seeking funding and/or assistance for appropriate nature conservation and woodland management operations, e.g: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raising of water levels where possible, reinstating natural flood regimes removing invasive species replanting of native species re-introduction of traditional management (e.g. Coppicing) promotion of natural regeneration by preventing grazing by herbivores. Monitor the effectiveness of the management by regular assessment of critical habitat features and selected key or indicator species. Review the management regime as necessary.	DMBC, EA, NE Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), FC, Private landowners
	1 habitat improvement site for otter by 2010.	2.8	Work with the Don Gorge Strategic Partnership to make improvements to the management of wet woodland sites along the gorge corridor, including specific habitat improvements for otter.	DMBC, Don Gorge Strategic Partnership (DGSP), YWT, relevant landowners
3) To create 3ha of wet woodland linked to existing woodlands and wetland habitats within the Humberhead Levels and Magnesian Limestone Natural Area.	By 2010.	3.2	Promote the creation of wet woodland in order to provide a valuable wildlife refuge and a natural flood defence.	Environment Agency (EA), Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), DMBC
	By 2010.	3.3	Use new woodlands to link existing wet woodland and wetland sites (also other wetland habitat).	DMBC, EA, IDBs, YWT, FWAG, FC, NE, Private landowners



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 'Wet Woodland Habitat Action Plan'.

The river floodplains of Doncaster have been highly modified by historic navigation and recent flood defence work, causing fragmentation and isolation of wet woodlands. Interesting sites include the old River Don oxbows at Wheatley, scattered locations beside the River Don and Canal near Mexborough, at Black Pond and Hexthorpe Ings, on the Dearne at Denaby Ings and around the subsidence flashes of the Don Gorge at Sprotbrough, the habitat is almost entirely absent from the lower river downstream of Long Sandall.

Small areas of wet woodland are to be found in the former River Torne floodplain at Holmes Carr Great Wood and Holmes Carr Little Wood but this site is now separated from the natural floodplain. Wet woodland is also found at Finningley Big Wood and Gravel Pits, Ash Holt (Finningley) and Crow Wood, Great Wood and Spen Close Plantation where gravel extraction has created ponds and lower ground levels within the Sherwood Sandstone lowlands. Potteric Carr SSSI contains a significant area of the wet woodland resource within the Doncaster Borough, and as a reserve managed by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is easily accessible by the public.

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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