

North Ockendon Pit Proposed upgrade to Site of Metropolitan Importance

North Ockendon Pit lies on the border of Havering with Thurrock at TQ 591 844, running to 18.7 ha. Following gravel extraction it was partially infilled with building rubble and Thames dredgings. It was designated a Site of Borough Importance Grade II in 2003, identified as HvBII 38. The citation describes it as 'an area of capped land dominated by couch grassland with areas of tall herb'; 'areas of raised spoil supporting scrub ... and planted (trees)'; 'dry grassland' and 'ditches and pools full of brackish water'. Its biodiversity was summarised as 'moderately rich in plant species despite the dominance of couch' and 'undisturbed habitat for a variety of birds'.



Before and since then the site has been locked up and left to itself with no management and, because of access difficulties, largely undisturbed by man. Even so it appears to have suffered very little succession, still remaining largely open with significant scrub invasion only along the eastern and southern boundaries. It also remains 'moderately rich in plant species', due presumably to the nature of the soils and the absence of any seriously invasive plants, and the dominance of couch appears to be decreasing, thanks to grazing by rabbits. Even if this benign neglect continues, which seems likely, it looks as if the site will not deteriorate in terms of its biodiversity for many years.

Statement of significance

The significance of invertebrate populations in the East Thames Corridor has been recognised in recent years. Recent survey work (details below) show that this site has developed an invertebrate resource of national importance, and its geographical situation emphasises that importance. In its *Stepping Stones* project, BugLife has established a chain of good invertebrate sites across Thurrock. This site lies some 5km north of the western end of the chain (Chafford Gorges Nature Park, managed by Essex Wildlife Trust, which incorporates the former Grays Chalk Quarry), extending the chain into Havering and Greater London and towards other brownfield sites in the borough that have the potential to develop valuable invertebrate populations.

[REDACTED]

Finally, it is a valuable undisturbed breeding ground for a wide variety of birds in an area dominated by arable farming, including lapwing (red-listed) and reed bunting (amber-listed).

Survey details

Plants

A plant survey was carried out in summer 2015 by local naturalist [REDACTED], who has been recording plants in Havering and western Thurrock for 17 years. She reports:

“I have 148 taxa recorded at the Pit, of which the majority (just!) are natives but many are garden escapes or widespread aliens, such as Buddleja, Green Alkanet, Himalayan-Giant Bramble and many more. Severely invasive plants like Japanese Knotweed were not seen, generally there were very few invasive species. In the small ‘lawns’ (rabbit mown) mostly down the eastern side, close to the road, there were different plants because the ground is dry. Some native plants are of minor interest, but not rare: Pyramidal Orchid, Bee Orchid and the less common Fig-leaved Goosefoot (native in SE England, but I don't see it very often). I was very pleased to see Lesser Spearwort, lots of it in the wetter areas, mostly in the southern parts. I have only 5 records of this in the wild in 5 places ... Golden Dock was seen in the wet areas, and this is nationally fairly rare, but actually in our area this is more often found than in most of the London area: it might be classed as occasional. The grasses, rushes and sedges were not as varied as I might have hoped, with large areas of tough stuff that was well above my head in late July.”

Invertebrates

With no funds available for a full professional survey and limited access to the site, collection – via water traps and some netting, concentrating on areas 1 and 4 on the map – was carried out by [REDACTED] (professional ecologist) and [REDACTED] (experienced naturalist) in summer 2016, supported by [REDACTED], Essex recorder for hymenoptera and arachnida, who also made a personal visit to survey. Species were identified by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], Essex recorder for diptera, and other Essex recorders. Results can be summarised as follows (status in brackets):

- 8 arachnida (1 Na, 1 Nb, both also Essex Red Data, 1 Local)
- 1 dermaptera (Nb, Essex Red Data)
- 19 coleoptera (1 scarce, 3 local)
- 126 diptera (1 RDB3, 1 pRDB3, 3 N, 19 Local, 22 Unknown, including 1 Essex Red Data)
- 16 hemiptera (1 RDB3, 1 Local)
- 4 homoptera
- 51 hymenoptera (2 RDB3, 2 Na, 4 Nb, 20 Local, 2 Unknown, including 9 Essex Red Data)

- 4 orthoptera (1 Na, 2 Local)

██████████ entered these data into ISIS, developed by Natural England as a tool to define and recognise invertebrate assemblages in the UK. He reports:

“ISIS identifies the Specific Assemblage Type rich flower resource in favourable SSSI condition*, as well as well represented Broad Assemblage Types grassland & scrub matrix and unshaded early successional mosaic.

Of particular interest in the aculeate Hymenoptera are *Andrena alfkenella* (RDB3), *Lasioglossum pauperatum* (RDB3), *Andrena labiata* (Notable/Na), *Nysson trimaculatus* (Notable/Nb) and *Myrmica schencki* (Notable/Nb). However if an invertebrate specialist was to undertake survey at the site on a number of occasions during the season, there is no doubt that this would reveal a vastly greater number of species and importance to the fauna.”

* Assemblages identified as in favourable condition qualify as nationally important.

Reptiles

Herptile specialist [REDACTED] (London Essex & Herts Amphibian & Reptile Trust) visited in spring 2015 and reported large numbers of common lizard but [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. ([REDACTED] qualified his negative finding with the comment that this is a large site with parts very difficult to access, and plans a follow-up visit this spring.)

Birds

No systematic bird survey has been carried out, but local birders report that lapwing breed regularly in small numbers, and in late spring 2015 [REDACTED] observed 3 lapwing pairs around the lagoon in the NW, and 2 male reed bunting singing. [REDACTED] reported seeing “at least a dozen” snipe over-wintering.

Site Selection Panel

Havering Wildlife Project serves as the wildlife sites partnership in Havering. Set up by Havering Council in 2000 (as Havering Wildlife Partnership), it has developed a Biodiversity Action Plan for Havering (adopted in 2003) and contributed to Havering's local plans and strategies since then. Its membership consists of representatives of Havering Council's relevant departments, such as regeneration and parks, and of the Council itself; statutory bodies such as Environment Agency, Natural England and Forestry Commission; 'Friends of Parks' groups; conservation organisations such as Essex Wildlife Trust, Thames Chase Trust and Friends of the Earth; and local naturalists and ecologists.

for Havering Wildlife Project
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Order	Family	Taxon	Status	Essex Status	Essex Threat
Arachnida: Araneae	Araneidae	Larinioides cornutus			
Arachnida: Araneae	Araneidae	Zilla diodia	Notable/Nb	Essex Red Data species	Regionally Important
Arachnida: Araneae	Dictynidae	Dictyna uncinata			
Arachnida: Araneae	Dictynidae	Nigma walckenaeri	Notable/Na	Essex Red Data species	Regionally Important
Arachnida: Araneae	Linyphiidae	Entelecara acuminata			
Arachnida: Araneae	Lycosidae	Pardosa amentata			
Arachnida: Araneae	Philodromidae	Philodromus aureolus			
Arachnida: Opiliones	Leiobunidae	Dicranopalpus ramosus	Local		
Coleoptera	Apionidae	Aspidapion radiolus			
Coleoptera	Apionidae	Ceratapion onopordi			
Coleoptera	Apionidae	Ischnopterapion loti			
Coleoptera	Carabidae	Elaphrus riparius			
Coleoptera	Carabidae	Loricera pilicornis			
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	Altica lythri			
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	Bruchus rufimanus	Local		
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	Chaetocnema concinna			
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	Crioceris asparagi	Synanthropic		
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	Longitarsus fowleri	Scarce		
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	Psylliodes chrysocephala	Local		
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	Sphaeroderma testaceum			
Coleoptera	Coccinellidae	Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata	Local		
Coleoptera	Coccinellidae	Coccidula rufa			
Coleoptera	Coccinellidae	Propylea quattuordecimpunctata			
Coleoptera	Curculionidae	Anthonomus rubi			
Coleoptera	Curculionidae	Hadroplontus litura			
Coleoptera	Curculionidae	Sitona lineatus			
Coleoptera	Malachiidae	Anthocomus rufus	Local		
Dermaptera	Forficulidae	Forficula lesnei	Notable/Nb	Essex Red Data species	Essex Threatened?
Diptera	Agromyzidae	Agromyza nigripes	Unknown		
Diptera	Agromyzidae	Amauromyza chenopodivora	Unknown		
Diptera	Agromyzidae	Chromatomyia ramosa	Unknown		
Diptera	Agromyzidae	Liriomyza strigata	Unknown		

Diptera	Anthomyiidae	Anthomyia pluvialis	Unknown
Diptera	Anthomyiidae	Delia platura	
Diptera	Anthomyiidae	Eustalomyia hilaris	pRDB3
Diptera	Anthomyiidae	Paregle audacula	
Diptera	Asilidae	Leptogaster cylindrica	
Diptera	Bibionidae	Dilophus febrilis	
Diptera	Calliphoridae	Calliphora vicina	
Diptera	Calliphoridae	Lucilia caesar	
Diptera	Calliphoridae	Lucilia richardsi	Unknown
Diptera	Calliphoridae	Lucilia sericata	
Diptera	Calliphoridae	Lucilia silvarum	Local
Diptera	Calliphoridae	Melinda viridicyanea	
Diptera	Calliphoridae	Pollenia pediculata	
Diptera	Calliphoridae	Pollenia rudis	
Diptera	Chloropidae	Incertella zuercheri	
Diptera	Chloropidae	Meromyza femorata	
Diptera	Chloropidae	Meromyza zachvatkini	Local
Diptera	Chloropidae	Oscinella frit	
Diptera	Chloropidae	Oscinella nitidissima	
Diptera	Conopidae	Thecophora atra	Local
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Argyra argyria	
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Campsicnemus curvipes	
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Campsicnemus picticornis	Local
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Chrysotus blepharosceles	Local
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Chrysotus suavis	Local [Notable]
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Dolichopus festivus	
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Dolichopus latilimbatus	Local
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Dolichopus plumipes	
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Medetera saxatilis	Local
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Medetera truncorum	
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Poecilobothrus nobilitatus	
Diptera	Dolichopodidae	Sciapus platypterus	
Diptera	Drosophilidae	Scaptomyza flava	Unknown

Diptera	Drosophilidae	Scaptomyza pallida	
Diptera	Ephydriidae	Discocerina obscurella	Unknown
Diptera	Ephydriidae	Ephydra riparia	
Diptera	Ephydriidae	Hydrellia griseola	
Diptera	Ephydriidae	Hydrellia maura	
Diptera	Ephydriidae	Philotelma nigripenne	Unknown
Diptera	Ephydriidae	Psilopa leucostoma	
Diptera	Ephydriidae	Scatella paludum	Unknown
Diptera	Ephydriidae	Scatella tenuicosta	
Diptera	Ephydriidae	Scatophila despecta	Unknown
Diptera	Fanniidae	Fannia serena	
Diptera	Lauxaniidae	Sapromyza quadripunctata	Unknown
Diptera	Limoniidae	Symplecta stictica	
Diptera	Lonchopteridae	Lonchoptera lutea	
Diptera	Micropezidae	Neria cibaria	
Diptera	Muscidae	Hebecnema nigra	
Diptera	Muscidae	Hebecnema vespertina	
Diptera	Muscidae	Helina evecta	
Diptera	Muscidae	Helina impuncta	
Diptera	Muscidae	Helina reversio	
Diptera	Muscidae	Lispe tentaculata	
Diptera	Muscidae	Morellia aenescens	
Diptera	Muscidae	Musca autumnalis	
Diptera	Muscidae	Muscina levida	
Diptera	Muscidae	Muscina prolapsa	
Diptera	Muscidae	Phaonia rufipalpis	
Diptera	Muscidae	Phaonia tuguriorum	
Diptera	Muscidae	Phaonia valida	
Diptera	Opomyzidae	Opomyza florum	
Diptera	Opomyzidae	Opomyza germinationis	
Diptera	Perisclididae	Perisclis annulata	Notable/N
Diptera	Phoridae	Borophaga incrassata	
Diptera	Phoridae	Metopina oligoneura	Unknown

Diptera	Phoridae	Phora atra	Unknown
Diptera	Rhinophoridae	Rhinophora lepida	Unknown
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Brachicoma devia	Unknown
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Nyctia halterata	Local
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Ravinia pernix	
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga anaces	Unknown
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga carnaria	
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga crassimargo	
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga dissimilis	Unknown
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga haemorrhhoa	
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga incisilobata	
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga melanura	Local
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga nigriventris	
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga pumila	Local
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga subvicina	
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga teretirostris	Local
Diptera	Sarcophagidae	Sarcophaga vicina	RDB3
Diptera	Scathophagidae	Cleigastra apicalis	Local
Diptera	Scathophagidae	Norellisoma spinimanum	
Diptera	Scathophagidae	Scathophaga stercoraria	
Diptera	Scatopsidae	Reichertella geniculata	
Diptera	Scatopsidae	Thripomorpha coxendix	
Diptera	Sciomyzidae	Pherbellia cinerella	
Diptera	Sepsidae	Sepsis orthocnemis	
Diptera	Sepsidae	Themira annulipes	
Diptera	Sepsidae	Themira minor	
Diptera	Sphaeroceridae	Copromyza stercoraria	
Diptera	Sphaeroceridae	Ischiolepta denticulata	
Diptera	Sphaeroceridae	Ischiolepta denticulata	Local
Diptera	Sphaeroceridae	Rachispoda lutosa	
Diptera	Sphaeroceridae	Rachispoda lutoidea	
Diptera	Sphaeroceridae	Spelobia clunipes	
Diptera	Stratiomyidae	Chloromyia formosa	

Diptera	Syrphidae	Eristalinus sepulchralis	Local	
Diptera	Syrphidae	Eumerus funeralis		
Diptera	Syrphidae	Helophilus trivittatus	Local	
Diptera	Syrphidae	Melanostoma mellinum		
Diptera	Syrphidae	Melanostoma scalare		
Diptera	Syrphidae	Neoascia interrupta	Notable/N	Essex Red Data species
Diptera	Syrphidae	Neoascia podagrica		
Diptera	Syrphidae	Pipizella viduata		
Diptera	Syrphidae	Platycheirus albimanus		
Diptera	Syrphidae	Platycheirus manicatus		
Diptera	Syrphidae	Syritta pipiens		
Diptera	Syrphidae	Xylota segnis		
Diptera	Tachinidae	Dinera grisea	Unknown	
Diptera	Tachinidae	Eriothis rufomaculata		
Diptera	Tachinidae	Meigenia mutabilis	Unknown	
Diptera	Tachinidae	Phania funesta	Unknown	
Diptera	Tachinidae	Siphona geniculata		
Diptera	Tachinidae	Sturmia bella		
Diptera	Tachinidae	Voria ruralis	Unknown	
Diptera	Tephritidae	Anomoia purmunda	Local	
Diptera	Tephritidae	Sphenella marginata	Local	
Diptera	Tephritidae	Tephritis formosa	Local	
Diptera	Therevidae	Thereva nobilitata		
Hemiptera	Anthocoridae	Orius laevigatus		
Hemiptera	Anthocoridae	Orius majusculus		
Hemiptera	Lygaeidae	Chilacis typhae		
Hemiptera	Lygaeidae	Cymus melanocephalus		
Hemiptera	Lygaeidae	Heterogaster urticae		
Hemiptera	Miridae	Apolygus spinolae		
Hemiptera	Miridae	Dicyphus epilobii		
Hemiptera	Miridae	Dicyphus stachydis		
Hemiptera	Miridae	Liocoris tripustulatus		
Hemiptera	Miridae	Lygus pratensis	[RDB3]	

Hemiptera	Miridae	Lygus rugulipennis			
Hemiptera	Miridae	Phytocoris varipes			
Hemiptera	Miridae	Plagiognathus chrysanthemi			
Hemiptera	Miridae	Stenodema calcarata			
Hemiptera	Miridae	Teratocoris antennatus	Local		
Hemiptera	Nabidae	Himacerus mirmicoides			
Homoptera: Auchenorrhyncha	Aphrophoridae	Neophilaenus campestris			
Homoptera: Auchenorrhyncha	Cicadellidae	Eupteryx aurata			
Homoptera: Auchenorrhyncha	Cicadellidae	Eupteryx urticae			
Homoptera: Auchenorrhyncha	Cicadellidae	Euscelis incisus			
Hymenoptera	Allantinae	Ametastegia glabrata	Local		
Hymenoptera	Allantinae	Athalia rosae	Local		
Hymenoptera	Cephinae	Hartigia linearis	Unknown		
Hymenoptera	Selandriinae	Selandria serva			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Andreninae	Andrena alfkenella	RDB3	Essex Red Data species	Essex Endangered
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Andreninae	Andrena bicolor			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Andreninae	Andrena chrysosceles	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Andreninae	Andrena dorsata	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Andreninae	Andrena flavipes	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Andreninae	Andrena haemorrhoa			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Andreninae	Andrena labialis	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Andreninae	Andrena labiata	Notable/Na	Essex Red Data species	Essex Threatened
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Anthophorinae	Nomada ruficornis	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Apinae	Apis mellifera			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Apinae	Bombus lapidarius			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Apinae	Bombus pascuorum			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Apinae	Bombus terrestris			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Chrysididae	Pseudomalus auratus			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Colletinae	Hylaeus brevicornis	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Crabronidae	Crossocerus nigratus	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Crabronidae	Nysson trimaculatus	Notable/Nb	Essex Red Data species	Regionally Important
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Crabronidae	Oxybelus uniglumis			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Crabronidae	Stigmus solskyi	Local		

Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Crabronidae	Trypoxylon attenuatum			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Crabronidae	Trypoxylon medium			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Eumenidae	Gymnomerus laevipes	Local	Essex Red Data species	Essex Threatened
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Formicidae	Formica cunicularia	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Formicidae	Lasius niger sens. str.			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Formicidae	Myrmica rubra			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Formicidae	Myrmica ruginodis			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Formicidae	Myrmica sabuleti	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Formicidae	Myrmica scabrinodis			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Formicidae	Myrmica schencki	Notable/Nb	Essex Red Data species	Regionally Important
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Halictus rubicundus			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Halictus tumulorum			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Lasioglossum calceatum			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Lasioglossum malachurum	Notable/Nb		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Lasioglossum minutissimum			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Lasioglossum morio			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Lasioglossum pauperatum	RDB3	Essex Red Data species	Regionally Important
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Lasioglossum pauxillum	Notable/Na		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Lasioglossum smeathmanellum	Unknown		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Halictinae	Sphecodes crassus	Notable/Nb	Essex Red Data species	Regionally Important
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Megachilinae	Hoplitis spinulosa	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Megachilinae	Osmia leaiana			
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Pompilidae	Agenioideus cinctellus	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Pompilidae	Anoplius nigerrimus	Local	Essex Red Data species	Essex Threatened
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Pompilidae	Arachnospila anceps	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Pompilidae	Arachnospila spissa	Local	Essex Red Data species	Essex Threatened
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Pompilidae	Evages crassicornis	Local		
Hymenoptera: Aculeata	Pompilidae	Priocnemis pusilla	Local		
Lepidoptera	Lycaenidae	Celastrina argiolus	Local		
Lepidoptera	Nymphalidae	Polygonia c-album			
Lepidoptera	Nymphalidae	Vanessa atalanta	Migrant		
Orthoptera	Conocephalidae	Conocephalus discolor	Notable/Na		
Orthoptera	Conocephalidae	Conocephalus dorsalis	Local		

Orthoptera	Meconematidae	Meconema thalassinum	
Orthoptera	Tetrigidae	Tetrix subulata	Local