

Lowland meadows provide an important habitat for a variety of animal life, including insects, small mammals, and birds, for example:



▲ Brown Hare  
Photo: Kenny Crooks



▲ Harvest Mouse  
Photo: Darin Smith



▲ Skylark



▲ Burnet Moth



▲ Comma Butterfly



▲ Ringlet

The 'Hunt for Lost Meadows' project was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund and was carried out by the Wildflower Ark and local Volunteers.

The Wildflower Ark would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this project and all the farmers who have kindly allowed access to their land.

Further information is available from

The Wildflower Ark, Nature's World, Ladgate Lane, Acklam, Middlesbrough TS5 7YN.

Tel: 01642 576611 : email [wildflowerark@hotmail.com](mailto:wildflowerark@hotmail.com)

More information about the Wildflower Ark  
is available from our web-site

[www.wildflowerark.org.uk](http://www.wildflowerark.org.uk)



# Lowland Meadows of Redcar and Cleveland



Discover more about lowland meadows, their character and the wildflowers that grow in them.

Take a walk passing through three local wildflower meadows with tips on what to look for.

# Lowland Meadows in Redcar and Cleveland

Lowland meadows have become a rare habitat in the UK, suffering a massive decline (95%) in the 20th Century due to changes in farming practice. Only 5-10,000 hectares are thought to be left in England and Wales.



The Wildflower Ark, with the help of local volunteers, have searched for lowland meadows in Redcar and Cleveland during a one-year project, 'Hunt for Lost Meadows'. Sixty nine sites were visited and thirty nine were found to be lowland meadows containing areas of wildflower-rich grassland. All but one of the sites recorded are grazing pasture, rather than hay meadows, and they mainly occur on steep-sided slopes where it has not been possible to plough the soil or spray with fertiliser. Some are unimproved grassland and others are semi-improved grassland (that is they have had some fertiliser application, but they are still relatively wildflower-rich).



Many of the meadows are under threat from the encroachment of scrub (usually Gorse or Bramble - pictured right), or from no longer being used for grazing.

**Lowland meadows** are grasslands that consist of a rich mixture of native grasses and wildflowers and are generally enclosed meadow or pasture land occurring below 350 metres.

Where they still exist they provide a living connection with the past, with traditional farming methods that were used for centuries and that helped to create the character of our local landscape.

## Traditional Management

**Hay Meadows** have an annual hay cut followed by late summer or autumn grazing with occasional dressings of well-rotted manure.

**Grazing Pastures** have a low intensity livestock grazing over long periods of the year.



The UK Biodiversity Action Plan identifies a number of plants associated with lowland meadows that have undergone a serious decline in recent decades and are now of particular conservation importance. Two of those, **Pepper-saxifrage** and **Dyer's Greenweed**, have been found on several of the grassland sites surveyed during the 'Hunt for Lost Meadows' project.



Dyer's Greenweed, pictured left with Bramble, has narrow leaves and small bright-yellow pea-like flowers.

Pepper-saxifrage, pictured right, has a cream lacy flower and can be seen here amongst the purple flowers of Common Knapweed.



A number of grassland plants of importance locally were also recorded during the survey, for example, Saw-wort, pictured left.