

County: Greater London **Site Name:** Fray's Farm Meadows

District: Hillingdon

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: Hillingdon

National Grid Reference: TQ 057861 **Area:** 28.2 (ha) 69.8 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 176 **1: 10 000:** TQ 08 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1981 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

Fray's Farm Meadows are one of the last remaining examples of relatively unimproved wet alluvial grassland in Greater London and the Colne Valley.

The meadows contain a variety of grassland communities which range from the grazed grassland of sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* through to areas of tall sedge dominated marshy grassland with lesser pond sedge *Carex acutiformis* and reed-grass *Glyceria maxima*. The linear features of the site - ditches, hedges and railway embankment - add further habitat diversity, and contribute to the richness of plants and animals present.

In addition to the commoner sedges and grasses the meadows contain a number of species characteristic of old grassland such as lady's smock *Cardamine pratensis* and large bird's trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*. Also found are plants like ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, and marsh marigold *Caltha palustris* which are becoming increasingly uncommon in the London area due to habitat destruction. Purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria* and common skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata* grow along ditch banks while water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, water cress *Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum*, water forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides* and amphibious bistort *Polygonum amphibium* are amongst the common plants in the ditches. The Fray's River has a similar flora to the ditches but also includes arrow-head *Sagittaria sagittifolia*.

The entomological interest of the site is well documented with a good variety of dragonflies and butterflies recorded from this section of the Colne Valley. The meadows also provide good cover for waders and wildfowl throughout the year and wintering species include Jack snipe, snipe, lapwing, teal

and shoveler. With the loss of washland areas throughout London the site becomes increasingly valuable as a relict habitat.