

## INTRODUCTION

The Lincolnshire Wolds is a distinctive and working landscape, providing a wide range of habitats which all help to contribute to the special qualities of the area.

These places of interest, and the species that frequent them, are not only based on underlying geology and soils of the area but also on human influences on the landscape through the generations.

This leaflet provides a general guide to some of the wildlife habitats of the Wolds, which are commonly home to a wide range of plants and animals throughout the year.



Kingfisher

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED...

### Taking Part in Surveys and Recording:

Volunteer with the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project:  
[www.lincolnshirechalkstreams.org](http://www.lincolnshirechalkstreams.org)

Report your wildlife sightings to the Lincolnshire Naturalists Union:  
[www.lnu.org](http://www.lnu.org)

Or the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre:  
[www.glnp.org.uk/getting-involved/your-sightings/](http://www.glnp.org.uk/getting-involved/your-sightings/)

### Doing Something Yourself:

Why not provide food and shelter for birds during nesting season, make a bat box or create an insect hotel in your own garden?  
[www.bbc.co.uk/nature](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature)  
[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

### Helping to Improve the Environment:

Take part in practical conservation tasks with like-minded people, get fresh air and exercise at the same time  
[www.tcv.org.uk](http://www.tcv.org.uk)  
[www.lincolnconservationgroup.org.uk](http://www.lincolnconservationgroup.org.uk)  
[www.lincstrust.org.uk](http://www.lincstrust.org.uk)

## THE LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS

*The Lincolnshire Wolds is a nationally important and cherished landscape. Most of it was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1973. Covering an area of 558 square kilometres or 216 square miles, the AONB contains the highest ground in eastern England between Yorkshire and Kent, rising to over 150m along its western edge. Rolling chalk hills and areas of sandstone and clay underlie this attractive landscape.*

*The Lincolnshire Wolds has been inhabited since prehistoric times and the appearance of the countryside today has been greatly influenced by past and present agricultural practices.*

*A Countryside Service helps to protect and enhance the landscape through partnership projects with local landowners, farmers, parish councils, businesses and residents of the Wolds.*



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Produced in consultation with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership and the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

If you would like this leaflet in an alternative format please contact us.



## WONDERS of the WOLDS

# Wildlife of the Lincolnshire Wolds



One of a series of leaflets to help you get to know the Lincolnshire Wolds

Landscapes for life [.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk) LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS One of the AONB Family



# Wildlife *of the* Lincolnshire Wolds

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### 1 Swallow, near Daubers Wood – Roadside Verge

A diverse selection of wildflowers grow along this remnant of grassland including common knapweed, agrimony and goats-beard.

**Lady's Bedstraw** - The tightly packed yellow flowers smell of honey from June to September. In times past it was used for stuffing mattresses as it also keeps fleas away.

**Fairy Flax** - The stems of this delicate plant droop under the weight of the five white petals in the summer. It has been used to treat rheumatism.

### 2 Waithe Beck, Hatcliffe – Chalk Stream

A public footpath runs alongside this meandering, internationally important stream habitat. You may be able to spot the blue streak of a kingfisher darting along the bankside.

**'Ranunculus' Water Crowfoot** - A member of the buttercup family whose white flowers can be seen mid-stream in spring and summer.

**Otter** - One of our top predators; many believe otters used to be trained in this country to catch fish for their keepers.

### 3 Nettleton Nature Reserve – Neutral Grassland

This area was once a landfill site. Now it's a grazed species-rich wildflower meadow, home to the green woodpecker and cowslips.

**Skylark** - Their territorial call can be heard overhead when you walk through meadow or farmland. The song can last several minutes while the bird is so high it can't be seen; then it slowly descends to its nest on the ground.

**Oxeye Daisy** - It is easy to see how this flower got its alternative name of 'moonpenny' as its large face seems to glow in the moonlight.

### 4 Wold Newton, The Valley – Farmland

Look for ash and beech trees in this valley, cut as meltwater rushed through after the ice age. There are often kestrels hovering overhead as you walk east onto open farmland.

**Grey Partridge** - Gets its latin name (*Perdix perdix*) from Greek mythology. Perdix was thrown from a roof by Daedalus, his uncle. Athena saw this and turned Perdix into the first partridge to save him from death.

**Brown Hare** - Hares who gaze at the moon are said to bring new beginnings and growth, and to symbolise purity.

### 5 Tealby to Walesby – Farmland

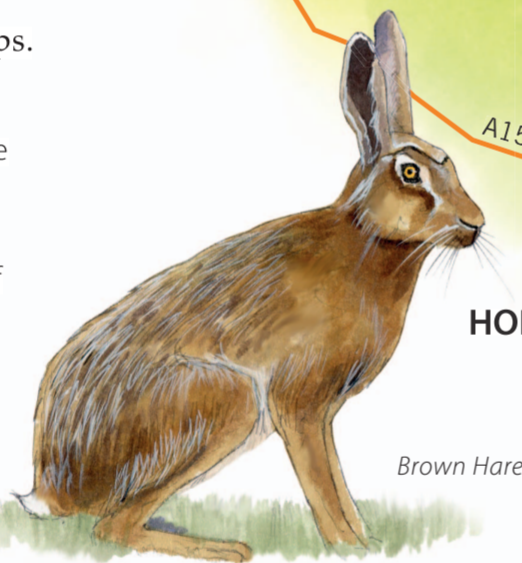
Walkers over this ancient farmed landscape may be fortunate to hear the melodious call of the skylark or see the flash of a linnets red breast.

**Yellowhammer** - The eggs of the yellowhammer look like they've been written on in felt tip pen; in fact the bird has an alternative name of 'scribble lark'.

**Barn Owl** - It used to be said that an owl feather hung in a doorway would keep illness and bad thoughts at bay.



Yellowhammer nest



Brown Hare

### 6 Great Tows Road – Roadside Verge

Green corridors like this can contain many species of wildflowers such as field scabious and meadow cranesbill.

**Quaking Grass** - This distinctive grass looks like miniature hops and literally quakes in the gentlest of breezes - commonly seen from June to September.

**Birds-foot-trefoil** - Another name is 'granny's toenails' which describes the seed pods, shaped like claws.

### 7 Legbourne Wood

The largest ancient woodland in eastern Lincolnshire; it can have over sixty different types of wildflower growing in it over the course of a year.

**Sweet Woodruff** - In the middle ages, this sweet smelling herb was used as an air freshener and was strewn on the floor of houses.

**Grey Heron** - Despite having a wingspan of six feet, they are surprisingly light, weighing about the same as the average duck.

### 8 Red Hill – Grassland

So called because of the distinctive colour of the underlying chalk, this remnant of ancient sheep grazing land is of national importance and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

**Marbled White Butterfly** - Look out for this butterfly amongst the purple flowers of basil thyme, pyramidal orchid and felwort.

**Bee Orchid** - The orchid has adapted itself to be attractive to bees in order to help pollination. Unfortunately the only bee species it actually attracts lives around the Mediterranean.

### 9 Calceby Beck and Marsh – Chalk Stream

Marshland and tussocky grassland; full of rushes and other marginal plants which are important breeding grounds for birds like lapwing and snipe.

**Meadow Sweet** - This member of the rose family has been used to treat indigestion, skin diseases and the common cold amongst others.

**Marsh Marigold** - Also known as 'Kingcups' the bright yellow flowers of this plant are seen besides streams. Their latin name translates as 'Goblet of the Marsh'.



Marble White

### 10 Salmonby – Alder Carr Woodland

Guelder rose, brambles, tall grasses and sedge thrive in these boggy conditions, hiding in the shade under alder, willow and birch trees.

**Kingfisher** - An ancient name for a kingfisher is the Halcyon. It used to be thought that they made their nests directly onto the surface of water. If the kingfisher stayed on the nest, the water would be calm and peaceful. Hence the term 'Halcyon Days'.

**Flag Iris** - In the language of flowers, the yellow iris symbolises passion.



Bugle

### 11 Hoplands Wood, near Willoughby

Mostly oak and ash with a hazel understorey, the hard clay soil here means this can be a damp wood, an advantage for mosses, ferns and moisture loving plants like primroses.

**Wych Elm** - The term 'wych' means pliant and refers to the trees bendy branches. It is a good wood for boatbuilding as it takes a long time to rot when wet.

**Bugle** - Bugle has been used as a poultice to staunch wounds and reduce bruising.

### 12 Keal Carr – Alder Carr Woodland

A very important site for the scarce plant opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage, and many rare insects who flourish in and around the decaying, dead wood and shaded areas.

**Moschatel** - Its alternative name is 'townhall clock' because of the square arrangement of its flower cluster.

**Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage** - It is said that the leaves can make a good addition to a wild salad in the early spring.



The Lincolnshire Wolds have been occupied since the end of the last Ice Age, over 10,000 years ago, when much of the ground was cleared of tree cover. The well drained soil encouraged people to settle here raising sheep, rabbits and planting crops - farming has subsequently shaped much of the landscape and wildlife that characterises the Wolds.

Modern intensive agriculture since the 1940's, often aided by government grants of the day, has significantly increased food production. During this time the countryside has also seen a dramatic loss of habitat that would commonly support a wide range of farmland wildlife. Landowners have, and indeed are still trying to redress the balance through for example planting trees, managing grassland and enhancing chalk streams.

## HABITATS OF THE WOLDS

### Farmland

Land used for growing crops creates much of the character of the open fields. Crops such as wheat and oilseed rape can provide cover for birds like finches, corn bunting and grey partridge. Around field edges, plants can sometimes be found that have long been associated with farming: cornflower, field poppy and corn marigold being three.

Hedgerows are an essential feature of the Wolds landscape; they enclose fields to keep cattle and sheep under control and help provide shelter from the wind.

### Grassland and Roadside Verges

Although much of the Wolds has long been under the plough, grassland remains a very important landscape and wildlife resource. The majority of the grasslands and rough pastures are found where it is hard to cultivate - on steep slopes, in valley bottoms and in disused quarries.

Grassed roadside verges and the wider network of green lanes are a distinctive landscape feature, with those found alongside the drovers roads and other ancient routes commonly providing the most flower-rich sites. They also create an important habitat; acting as wildlife corridors, often connecting pockets of otherwise isolated grassland and small woods.

### Chalk Streams

Below the soil, much of the Wolds is made of chalk. This acts like a sponge, soaking up and holding rainwater in the form of an aquifer. The water is filtered by the chalk and released eventually via natural springs to help supply streams. At its source, the water in the stream is pure and has a constant temperature. These linear habitats are of global importance and can support rare species such as the water vole, brown trout and scarce plants like *Ranunculus* (water crowfoot). In Lincolnshire, the chalk streams are also an ideal home for the endangered, native white-clawed crayfish.



### Woodland

Woodland cover is low but still an important habitat and landscape component, with the larger semi-natural woodland and actively managed plantations found in the south eastern area of the Wolds. Oak and ash are the major species here, with smaller shrubs like hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn frequently creating the lower level or understorey.

Beneath the trees you may find bluebells and early purple orchid in the spring, or honeysuckle in the summer. You are most likely to see carpets of woodland flowering plants from April to June, before the canopy takes hold and the leaves block light to the woodland floor.

### Alder Carr

The Wolds contain the nationally important alder carr woods of the Lymn valley, where the wet soil conditions have minimised opportunities for cultivation and grazing.

Consisting mostly of alder, willow and birch trees, these marshy areas are home to the uncommon lesser-spotted woodpecker, as well as the willow tit, redpoll and siskin. Patches of wet and damp habitats within the alder carrs support ferns, mosses, liverworts and many types of grass, rush and sedge.

