

BACKGROUND

Situated in Rutland not far from Geoff Hamilton's famous garden at Barnsdale, Seaton Meadows are two adjacent species-rich ancient hay meadows. A rich variety of meadow flowers and grasses are found there thanks to the traditional techniques used to manage them. The high nature conservation value of the site was recognised when it was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1990.

WILDLIFE

A number of plant species which are uncommon in Rutland occur at Seaton Meadows. These include the common meadow-rue and slender tufted-sedge. The lowest lying parts of the meadows flood regularly during the winter. These areas are home to many species that are characteristic of flood meadows including great burnet, meadowsweet, meadow vetchling, yellow-rattle, greater bird's-foot-trefoil, common sorrel and meadow buttercup. Grass species found in these areas include meadow foxtail, yorkshire-fog and red fescue. The area of the meadows least influenced by floodwater is characterised by pignut, lady's bedstraw and oxeye daisy. Grasses such as common bent and sweet vernal grass are found there. The seepage areas of the meadows are very noticeable in spring/summer due to flowering marsh-marigold. There is a wet/dry transition area marked by ragged-robin, creeping buttercup and white clover.



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Tufted vetch at Seaton Meadows

In the wettest parts of the seepage area, common spike-rush and creeping bent are dominant. On the more level ground, soft rush is characteristic.

MANAGEMENT

Seaton Meadows contain important landscape and historical features. Their conservation depends on the maintenance of traditional farming practices. Plants flower in mid summer and the meadows are left to grow and flower between November and July. During or after July, when the bulk of species have set seed, they are cut for hay and then grazed by sheep and cattle. Seaton is the last surviving wildlife-rich meadow in Rutland and will be valuable in assisting in the restoration of similar meadows elsewhere in the Welland Valley.

Seaton Meadows are managed by Plantlife.



Seaton Meadows

RUTLAND, Leicestershire

GRID REFERENCE

SP 915 979

DIRECTIONS

From Peterborough take the A47 to Morcott and turn left on the B672 towards Caldecott. About 2 miles along this road, park under the viaduct and the entrance to Seaton is through a gate on the left. The nearest train station is Oakham, which is approximately 10 miles from the reserve.

To avoid damaging the hay crop please keep to the edge of the fields.

