

PRIORITY HABITAT FACTSHEET



*Hedgerow with additional ditch habitat (Gary Battell),
Bullfinch (Neil Rolph), Dusky Thorn (Paul Kitchener)*

Hedgerows

A boundary of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide with gaps of less than 20m between trees or shrubs.

Banks, walls, ditches, trees and herbaceous vegetation within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow are part of the habitat.

Climbers such as honeysuckle and bramble are important, but woody plants must be present to form a distinct woody boundary feature.

IMPORTANCE FOR WILDLIFE

Hedgerows act as wildlife corridors, linking habitats and providing cover for safer movement. A mix of hedgerow types provides habitats for a greater variety of species. For example, some birds prefer hedgerows lower than 2m with grass margins while others birds prefer them wide and over 4m. Hole-nesting birds will make use of old hedgerow trees. Dense cover at the base protects nesting birds from predation. Mature and dying trees provide habitat for invertebrates, fungi and lichens and dead wood provides habitat for stag beetle larvae.



IMPORTANT ASSOCIATED SPECIES

Birds

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*
Corn bunting *Emberiza calandra*
Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*
Hedge Accentor (Dunnoch) *Prunella modularis*
Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*
Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*
Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*
Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*
Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*
Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*
Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*
Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*
Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Mammals

Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus*
Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*
Harvest Mouse *Micromys minutus*
Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*
Water shrew *Neomys fodiens**
Barbastelle Bat *Barbastella barbastellus*
Daubentons Bat *Myotis daubentonii**
Brandts *Myotis brandtii**
Common Pipistrelle Bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus**
Soprano Pipistrelle Bat *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
Natterer's *Myotis nattereri**

Reptiles and Amphibians

Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*
Grass Snake *Natrix natrix*
Slow worm *Anguis fragilis*
Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*
Common Toad *Bufo bufo*

Beetles

Stag Beetle *Lucanus cervus*

Butterflies

White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrrium w-album*
(elm trees)

Moths

Sloe Carpet *Aleucis distinctata*
Horehound Long-horn Moth *Nemophora fasciella*
Barberry Carpet *Pareulype berberata*
Grey Dagger *Acronicta psi***
Brown-spot Pinion *Agrochola litura***
Centre-barred Sallow *Atethmia centrago***
Figure of Eight *Diloba caeruleocephala***
Dusky Thorn *Ennomos fuscantaria***
August Thorn *Ennomos quercinaria***
Dot Moth *Melanchra persicariae***
Pale Eggar *Trichiura crataegi***
Dusky Lemon Sallow *Xanthia gilvago* (**)

Antlion

Antlion *Euroleon nostras**

Fungi

Sandy Stilt Puffball *Battarraea phalloides*
Pepper Pot *Myriostoma coliforme*

Lichens

Bacidia incompta (mainly on elm, sometimes ash, holly, beech, sycamore and hornbeam)
Orange-fruited Elm-lichen *Caloplaca luteoalba*
(on mature elm and sycamore)
Caloplaca virescens

Plants

Crested Cow-wheat *Melampyrum cristatum*
Native Black Poplar *Populus nigra spp betulifolia**

*Suffolk Priority species

** Priority - Research Only. Common and widespread, but rapidly declining.



Images: Top – Grass Snake (Neil Rolph). Bottom, left to right – Horehound Long-horn Moth (Martin Cooper), Dormouse (Simon West) Corn Bunting (Neil Rolph).

FACTORS AFFECTING HABITAT IN SUFFOLK

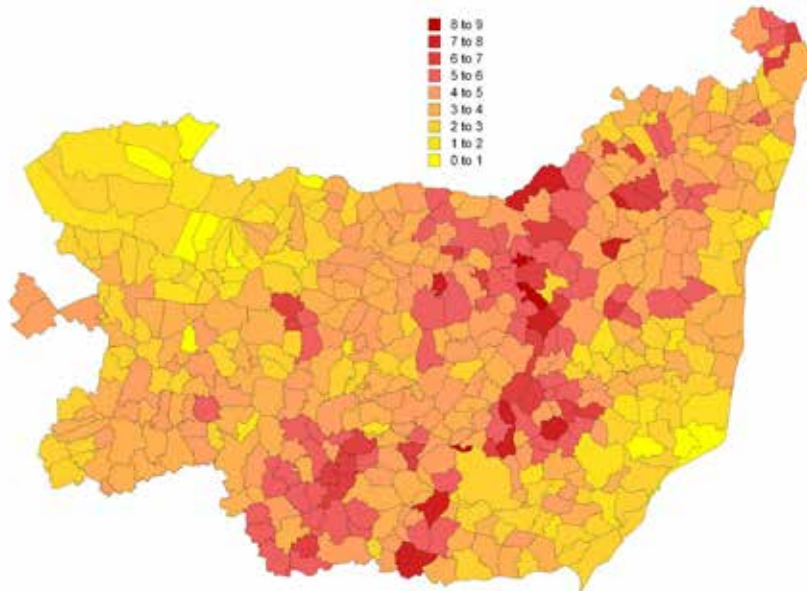
- Lack of maintenance such as cutting, which allows trees to grow taller and gaps to form.
- Inappropriate cutting regime i.e. too frequently or at the wrong time of year. This leads to a decline in habitat quality, the development of gaps, changes in species composition and loss of biodiversity.
- No replacement of fallen trees, so changing the vegetation composition and reducing habitat diversity.
- Agricultural activity (such as ploughing) too close to hedges and so damaging tree roots; inappropriate ditch management that lowers the surrounding water table.
- Use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers close to hedgerows leading to nutrient enrichment and a decline in species diversity.
- Removal of hedgerows for agricultural and building development purposes.



HABITAT MANAGEMENT ADVICE

- Maintain a range of different types of hedgerows with varying sizes and ages in order to support the widest variety of species.
- Maintain hedges with continuous, dense bases and adjacent grass margins to provide cover for nesting birds.
- Maintain any dead wood in the hedgerow bottom (stumps and roots) for stag beetles and other saproxylic insects.
- Cut hedges in October through to February to avoid the bird nesting season. If possible, cut in a mix of January/February (which allows birds to feed on the berry crop in autumn/early winter) and in October which avoids the loss of moth and butterfly eggs.
- Trim hedges on a 2 or 3-year rotation.
- Use agri-environment funding to restore hedges (Higher Level Stewardship, Countryside Stewardship).
- The felling of hedgerow trees may need approval from the Forestry Commission - www.forestry.gov.uk/felling
- Restore losses by replanting locally sourced trees and shrubs (preferably on lines of former hedges) and also look to improve connectivity by planting new hedges. These should include some hedgerow trees which preserve local character e.g. field maple.
- Cut hedges on rotation and no more than once every three years to maximise berry and blossom production. (Ideally cut some hedges on a 3 year rotation, and some on a 2 year rotation.)

Hedge and ditch (Emma Aldous).



Hedgerow density km/km² for parishes in administrative Suffolk (from 1999 aerial photo survey, age and species content have not been analysed, domestic and garden hedges have not been included).



VISION FOR SUFFOLK

1. Improve knowledge of extent and quality of hedgerows.
2. Maintain the existing extent of hedgerows to ensure no net loss.
3. Re-create hedgerows as opportunities arise.
4. Encourage the restoration and improvement of degraded hedgerows.

WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION

Buglife – advice on managing BAP habitats

- <https://www.buglife.org.uk/resources/habitat-management/ancient-and-species-rich-hedgerows>

Buglife – Notable invertebrates associated with hedgerows (pdf)

- https://cdn.buglife.org.uk/2019/07/0120Notable20invertebrates20associated20with20ancient20and20species_0.pdf

Farm Wildlife – developed with farmers for farmers • <https://farmwildlife.info>

Hedgelink – Management of hedgerows: information on all aspects of hedgerow management

- <https://hedgelink.org.uk>

Hedgerow Regulations – protects some hedgerows of archaeological, historical, landscape or wildlife value, administered by the Local Planning Authority

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-hedgerows-regulation-and-management>

JNCC Habitat Description (pdf)

- <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/ca179c55-3e9d-4e95-abd9-4edb2347c3b6/UKBAP-BAPHabitats-17-Hedgerows.pdf>

MAGIC website – interactive mapping information including designations • <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>

Making Space for Nature, a Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network 16 Sep 2010.

- Chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS. Defra website (pdf) • <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130402151656/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

Natural Environment White Paper June 2011 – *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature* (pdf)

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf

Suffolk Wildlife Trust Habitats Explorer • <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/habitats/farmland/hedgerow>

CONTACT

Emma Aldous, Communications Officer, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service
 emma.aldous@suffolk.gov.uk
 www.suffolkbis.org.uk

