

Millhams Mead

Local Nature Reserve

Introduction

Prior to 1960 and due to regular flooding much of this area used to be water meadows. The nutrient rich grasslands were cut for hay or grazed.

Tipping began on the land in the early 1960's and continued until the mid-1970s, although this had a severe detrimental effect on the ecological quality of the site, there is still a remarkably diverse vegetation structure present with approximately 200 species of flowering plant recorded to date. Most of these species are common and widespread, but there are some that have a more localised distribution such as corky-fruited water dropwort. Since then the land has been managed for nature conservation and amenity, then in 2003 the area now known as Millhams Mead was designated a Local Nature Reserve.

Most of the site is grassland but there is an interesting area of oak woodland, locally known as Cudnell Woods Millhams stream flows through the site joining the River Stour at the north end of the site.

Conservation

Non-native tree species are gradually being removed from the plantation areas. These are being replaced by native species with the aim of developing an area of deciduous woodland. It is proposed to manage the grasslands through cattle grazing, which will gradually improve the wildlife value.

We manage Cudnell Woods by coppicing, this encourages classic woodland flowers such as bluebell and wood anemone.

Dragonflies and Damselflies

There are numerous species of dragonflies and damselflies on Millhams they all need the water to lay their eggs. Once the eggs hatch the nymphs can spend up to 3 years below water before emerging as fully formed adults.

The two largest British species can be found here they are the golden-ringed and the emperor dragonfly.



Golden-ringed dragonfly



Emperor dragonfly



Emerging dragonfly



Great spotted woodpecker



Kingfisher

Birds

In Britain, we only have two resident warbler species, one of which is the Cetti's warbler. You can usually hear its loud musical call before you see it.

There are two species of woodpecker here at Millhams. Look out for the green woodpecker as it feeds on the ground picking up ants with its long sticky tongue. The great spotted woodpecker can be heard tapping at the trees in the wooded areas.

If you stand on the bridge you will often see a flash of green and red as the kingfisher whizzes by, sometimes it can be spotted perched on low hanging branches by the rivers edge waiting for small fish.



Green woodpecker



Cetti's warbler

Plants

The rare and beautiful bee orchid can be found here it is most evident during spring when it flowers.

Look out for the bright yellow flowers of birdsfoot trefoil, a magnet for the many species of butterfly which visit Millhams Mead.



Bird's-foot trefoil



Key	
	Mature Woodland
	Plantation
	Rough Grassland
	Grazed Grassland
	Hedgerow

Herb Robert with its delicate tiny purple flowers can be seen growing abundantly along the path edges.

The diminutive moschatel can be seen growing in the woodland. Its green flower head has four sides and hence it is known commonly as the 'town clock'.



Herb Robert



Bee orchid



Adder



Slow worm



Grass snake

Reptiles

Common lizards can sometimes be seen basking in the early spring sunshine at the edges of the pathways. There are lots of slow worms here but they are rarely seen, slow worms are the gardener's friend as their favourite food is slugs.

Adders and grass snakes also live here.



Common lizard