

Grazing marsh accounts for some 40% of the Broads executive area and is significant in terms of its biodiversity resource. Over the last 20 years the Broads Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme (preceded by the Broads Grazing Marsh Conservation scheme) has helped arrest the decline in biodiversity, providing long term protection, and increasing the wildlife value of the grazing marshes. The current Environmental Stewardship Scheme will continue to provide essential biodiversity improvements to grazing marshes via the Higher Level Stewardship.

Historically the Broads grazing marshes supported huge numbers of breeding and wintering birds in the more frequently flooded marshes. The water filled ditch networks contained a rich array of aquatic plants and invertebrates, attracting other species such as the water vole.

Today some areas of marsh still support considerable wildlife including internationally and nationally important populations of wintering wildfowl, breeding waders and aquatic ditch plants and invertebrates. However many marshes remain in poor ecological condition and require improvements to support healthy wildlife populations.

The Broads Authority, working with partners, has undertaken a preliminary biodiversity mapping project to assess the current wildlife value of grazing marshes in the Broads. Using the most recent comprehensive survey data available, the number and extent of breeding and wintering birds, and the location of high ecological quality ditches has been mapped. The mapping is a desk-based assessment of grazing marsh biodiversity in the Broads, however it is limited by the availability of comprehensive and current survey data. This data is essential to assess future biodiversity improvements and improve the efficient targeting of resources.

The grazing marsh mapping is intended to help conservation organisations, grazier's, land owners and advisors. Working together the Broads Conservation Partnership will continue to assess opportunities for biodiversity improvement and find additional funding for restoration in the marshes, connecting wildlife rich areas across the Broads.

For further information please contact the Broads Authority on 01603 610734 or email;

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If you can provide biodiversity records for the Broads please contact the [Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service](#)

Grazing Marsh Biodiversity Mapping Data Sources used:

BTO - Wetland Bird Survey (2000-2008)

BTO - Breeding Waders of Wet Meadows (2002)

RSPB - Broads ESA Breeding Wader Survey (1995)

RSPB - Broads ESA Wintering Waterfowl Survey (1997)

BESL - Wintering Bird Survey (2003-2010)

Natural England, Broads Authority, Environment Agency - Broads Dyke Survey (1997)

