

**County Wildlife Site
(Ref No: 1467)**

Site Name: West of Wensum Park (Train Wood)

District: Norwich

Grid Reference: TG 224 096

Area: 5.1 ha

Site Description:

An urban site on the northwestern fringe of Norwich city centre, adjacent to the River Wensum, where secondary habitats have developed on the former city railway station site north of Barn Road.

The site lies on the west riverbank and is surrounded by light industrial and commercial land-use. There is open access and the site is used predominantly by anglers and as a pedestrian route to and from the city centre. A surfaced cycle-track/footpath, constituting the first leg of the Marriott's Way, runs through the western side of the site. The site is managed for nature conservation and management is co-ordinated by the Wensum Valley Project.

A narrow, linear mosaic of wet woodland and drier scrub are dominant. Wet woodland with alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) crack (*Salix fragilis*) and white willow (*Salix alba*) dominates large patches of the site. Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is abundant on the undulating woodland floor, with stands of lesser pond-sedge (*Carex acutiformis*) in the damp hollows. Grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) occurs along the riverbank and there is a narrow fringe of tall marginal and emergent vegetation, including reed sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), wild angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), water mint (*Mentha aquatica*), purple-loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and occasional green figwort (*Scrophularia umbrosa*).

Areas of scrub are dominated by goat willow (*Salix caprea*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), with a ground layer dominated by dense bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). Butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*) is also abundant in places, forming dense patches and colonising the remaining open areas.

At the southern end of the site, parts of the former railtrack bed remain exposed or close to the surface. These support an ephemeral, pioneer plant assemblage that includes mosses and lichens. Higher plants include buck's-horn plantain (*Plantago coronopus*), common stork's-bill (*Erodium cicutarium* ssp. *cicutarium*), hop trefoil (*Trifolium campestre*), cut-leaved crane's-bill (*Geranium dissectum*), mouse-ear hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*), common cudweed (*Filago vulgaris*), vervain (*Verbena officinalis*) and the nationally-scarce hoary mullein (*Verbascum pulverulentum*).

Small patches of light, well-drained, unimproved grassland occur along the sides of the surfaced track, including where nutrient-poor soils have been mounded, and in the southwestern corner of the site. These areas support common bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), wild carrot (*Daucus carota* ssp. *carota*), black medick (*Medicago lupulina*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), red bartsia (*Odontites verna*) and perforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), as well as coarse grasses, including cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*).



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