

# Radnorshire Wildlife Trust

Habitat explorer

Species explorer

Species A to Z

Recording Wildlife

## Grassland

Join us

Protect local wildlife



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Grassland

### Next Event

Why Value Wildlife? Talk

Saturday 29th February 2020,  
2.30pm - 4.00pm

Venue: Kinnerton Village Hall

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Before the influence of humans, grasslands filled with billowing grasses, colourful wild flowers and the hum of insects were only found in natural clearings in woodlands, above the treeline and at the coast. But once people

**began clearing woodlands for farming, grasslands flourished and were used for grazing livestock and hay production.**

## **Grasslands aren't just grass...**

There are several different types of grassland, characterised by their soil types. Acid grassland can be found in both upland and lowland areas where fine-leaved grasses like red and sheep's fescues and common bent grow, alongside wild flowers like sheep's sorrel, heath bedstraw and pretty blue harebells.

Neutral grassland is associated with clays and silty soils. Green-winged orchids dot the grass with purple, and pepper saxifrage and adder's-tongue fern flourish here. The unforgettable song of the skylark fills the air and butterflies like common blue and meadow brown dance from flower to flower.

Chalk grassland develops on shallow, lime-rich soils that are poor in nutrients. In spring and summer, these special habitats come to life as swathes of wild flowers, such as cowslips, clustered bellflowers and bee orchids attract butterflies like striking Adonis blues and clouds of marbled whites.

## **Grasslands in decline**

As agriculture has intensified and grasslands have been developed, the traditional management techniques of ploughing, reseeding, cutting and grazing have declined. Coupled with the increased use of herbicides and fertilisers, our traditional grasslands are now under threat. For instance, it's estimated that we've lost 80% of our chalk grassland over the last 60 years, and only 1,600 hectares of precious floodplain meadows are left in the whole of the UK.

## **How we're helping**

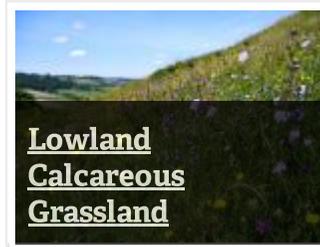
Across the UK Wildlife Trusts are working to ensure that traditional management techniques are not lost to the mists of time. Careful grazing with traditional breeds, hay-cutting at the right time and scrub clearance are just some of the ways our fragile grassland habitats are kept in good condition. We are also working closely with farmers and landowners to promote wildlife-friendly practices in these areas.

You can help too: volunteer for your local Wildlife Trust and you could be involved in everything from stockwatching to surveying meadow flowers.

## **Typical grassland wildlife**

Heath milkwort, common bird's-foot-trefoil, saw wort, common bent, sheep's fescue, mat grass, sheep's sorrel, heath bedstraw, harebell, green-winged orchid, bee orchid, pepper saxifrage, adder's tongue fern, woodlark, lapwing, nightjar, merlin, hen harrier, chough, common blue butterfly, orange tip butterfly, chalkhill blue butterfly, meadow brown butterfly,

## Other Grassland habitats



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