Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales

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SURVEY DETAILS FOR WRXHMLH031 - 2024-03-06

Area Unique ID: WRXHMLH031

Aspect:Landscape Habitats

Area:Talwrn Grassland

Region:Wrexham

Survey Date:2007-08-10

- Level 1: Dry (Relatively) Terrestrial Habitats
- Level 2: Mosaic
- Level 3: Mosaic

Monitoring

Q1 - Date of monitoring?

- 2016-03-10

Q1a - Monitoring undertaken by

- Stages 1, 2 and 3 change detection, field verification and amendment completed by Environment Systems in conjunction with the local planning authority. Quality Assurance completed by TACP

Q1b - Has this record been updated following monitoring work?

- This record has been updated following monitoring work, there was a real change in the aspect area

Q1c - Change indicated by

- OS Data, Aerial Photographs
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey & Seasonal Change Maps

Q1d - What has changed?

- Classification
- Boundaries

Q1e - Has the information ever been verified in the field?

- No

Q2 - Does this area have a special or functional link with an adjacent area?

- Yes
  - Many small streams link through this Aspect Area to the east, in particular the River Clywedog links through into WRXHMLH033 (Erddig Parkland Mosiac).

Q3 - What is the total land area within the boundary (in hectares)?

- 5387

Description

Q4 - What are the dominant soil types? (specify up to 3 types)

- Brown soils
- Surface-water gley soils

Q5 - What Phase 1 habitat types are present? Only select the five most dominant types and, for each of these, specify below what percentage of the Aspect Area is made up of these.

- Semi-natural Broadleaved Woodland
  - 4
- Improved Grassland
  - 67
- Arable
  - 5
- Buildings
  - 3
- Semi-improved Neutral Grassland
  - 4

Q6 - Does the area contain habitats of international importance?

- Yes

Q7 - If yes, which habitats of international importance?

- Lowland hay meadows
- Western acidic oak woodland
- Alder woodland on floodplains

Q8 - Does the area contain BAP habitats?

- Yes

Q9 - If yes, which BAP habitats?

- Upland Oakwood
- Upland Mixed Ashwood
- Wet Woodland
- Cereal Field Margins
- Lowland Meadows

Q10 - Does the area contain protected sites?

- Yes
  - SAC(70.77ha) SSSI(75.51ha) Local Wildlife Site(251.96ha)

Q11 - If yes, which ones?

- SAC
- SSSI
- Local wildlife site

Q12 - Approximately what proportion of the Aspect Area is within the protected site?

- 1-10%
  - 6.08%

Q13 - Does the area support important species?

- Yes

Q14 - If yes, which species? (for each of the species, also note the source of information)

- This area is most notes for its population of great crested newt, Triturus cristatus, which is why the SAC has been designated. The newts use the ponds and waste ground surrounding Johnston, as do other commoner amphibian insect and bird species. CCW records and the previous survey record a very large number of different bat species using this area. Within the streams otter, Lutra lutra: water vole, Arvicola terrestris and several bird species such as linnet, Carduelis cannabina are recorded form the area. There are also other specific records for certain areas which we have not space to cover in this report.

Q15 - Are there any significant threat species present in abundance? (Field visit required)

- Not known

Q16 - What other features significantly influence the biodiversity in this area?

- Streams
- Hedgerows
- Veteran Trees
- Ponds

Q17 - Are any of these features in a very good condition? (Field visit required)

- Unknown

Q18 - Are any of these features in a poor condition? (Field visit required)

- Unknown

Q19 - What are the main land management activities taking place in the area? (Field visit required)

- Cultivation
- Stock grazing

Q20 - Do any of the above appear to have an appreciable positive impact on biodiversity? (Field visit required)

- No Answer

Q21 - Do any of the above appear to have an appreciable negative impact on biodiversity? (Field visit required)

- No Answer

Q22 - Is the biodiversity in the area in any way threatened?

- Not known

Q23 - Are there clear opportunities to improve the biodiversity aspect of this area?

- Yes
  - Maintaining the ponds without allowing them to silt up, also maintain and enhancing hedgerows, scrub and woodland will help enhance and preserve this important area for the many species which use it.

Q24 - Summarise the key features that define this area's biodiversity character

- A very large area of mixed agriculture, mainly grassland but with some arable cropping. Fields are small to medium sized with hedges, and scattered trees, with some small woodlands. The area borders on Ruabon mountain SSSI to the west, and contains a number of SSSI"s itself, and a PSAC (Stryt Las A"r Hafod), as well as a number of local wildlife sites, including woodland, wetlands, rivers and water bodies.

Evaluation

Q25 - Value

- High
  - This mosaic of pasture, woodland and water contains a variety of habitats, and many interesting species including the largest known breeding population of great crested newts at Stryt Las A"r Hafod. It also provides a buffer to the Ruabon Mountain SSSI. The area is of high value as a landscape habitat.

Q26 - Condition

- Unassessed

Q27 - Trend

- Declining

Recommendations

Q28 - Existing management

- Generally Appropriate

Q29 - Existing management remarks:

- The small fields are mainly grazing or cut for hay and silage.

Q30 - Principal management recommendations

- Maintain the ponds. Enhance gappy hedges and plant woodland to aid biological connectivity.

Q31 - Guideline

- Immediate
  - Protect hydrology of the area.
- Medium Term
  - Where hedges are gappy, replant and lay.
- Medium Term
  - Retain potential green networks particularly ponds, hedges and scrub.

Aspect Area Boundary

Q32 - To what level was this information site-surveyed?

- Level 3

Q33 - At 1:10,000, how much of the Aspect Area boundary is precise?

- All

Q34 - What baseline information source was used for Aspect Area boundary mapping?

- Aerial photographs

Q35 - If OS Data was used, what was the scale?

- 1:25,000

Q36 - What is the justification for the Aspect Area boundaries?

- The boundary to the east is marked by a change in slope and the A483 road which forms a hard barrier generally on this break of slope and marks a change in field pattern. To the west the boundary is formed with the upland of Eglwyseg and Ruabon mountain. To the north the upland grassland of WRXHMLH036 (Four Crosses Upland Grassland) forms the boundary. The southern boundary follows the edge of the county boundary.

Evaluation Matrix

Q37 - Evaluation Criteria: Priority Habitats

- High
  - The area contains a small area of internationally important habitat supported by a range of locally significant habitats giving a high value overall.

Q38 - Evaluation Criteria: Significance

- High
  - The traditional field pattern, with hedges, trees and small wooded copses plus the numerous locally significant sites and the small area with a nationally significant site gives this area a high value.

Q39 - Evaluation Criteria: Opportunity

- High
  - With active management of the landscape, creating more ponds and more work on hedges, the biodiversity of the area would be enhanced.

Q40 - Evaluation Criteria: Expansion rates

- Unassessed

Q41 - Evaluation Criteria: Sensitivity

- Moderate
  - The ponds would be sensitive to an increase in agricultural inputs.

Q42 - Evaluation Criteria: Connectivity/Cohesion

- High
  - The small field pattern with many hedges and mature trees provides a good degree of connectivity.

Q43 - Evaluation Criteria: Habitat Evaluation

- High
  - The small fields bounded by hedges with scattered trees, together with a number of small woods, and the very many small but significant pond site gives this area a high evaluation.

Q44 - Evaluation Criteria: Importance for key species

- Outstanding
  - The area is of fundamental importance for the the great crested newt, Triturus cristatus, which is an internationally significant species protected under both European and UK designations. The newts use the many ponds, hedges and woodlands, and therefore the area has been graded as outstanding for species.

Q45 - Evaluation Criteria: Overall Evaluation Habitat and Species

- High
  - A moderate to high biodiversity landscape that supports some important national and international species giving a high overall value.

Q45a - Justification of overall evaluation

- This mosaic of pasture, woodland and water contains a variety of habitats, and many interesting species including the largest known breeding population of great crested newts at Stryt Las A"r Hafod. It also provides a buffer to the Ruabon Mountain SSSI. The area is of high value as a landscape habitat.

Bibliography

Q46 - List the key sources used for this assessment

- Wales Vexcel photography (2006), Getmapping - Millennium Map digital aerial photography (2000). CCW - Phase 1 Habitat vector GIS data set. Wrexham County Borough Council 2004. Wrexham LANDMAP Volume 3: Biodiversity Technical Appendix (Please note BAP habitat information has largely been obtained from this survey). Countryside Council for Wales Species Information. Wrexham County Borough Council digital data set of Local Wildlife Sites. Wildlife Site/SINC data used within this project were collated by Local Environmental Records Centres Wales on behalf of the various Local Authorities and Wildlife Trusts involved in the site designation process.

Assessment

Q47 - Additional Assessments

- A large area of small and medium sized fields, bounded by hedges with an internationally significant ponds which support a wide range of species including great crested newt, Triturus cristatus and is of high to outstanding value.

Q48 - Additional Comments

- Species records used in the study are not comprehensive and the absence of species in an area may well be an indication of incomplete records rather than a true lack. Land managers, developers, planners and other land users will need to satisfy themselves as to the occurrence of such species within the area if existing land management or management changes might affect these species in the future. A first step to procuring this data will be to consult with the local biodiversity records centre.