



Wet lowland meadows include unimproved neutral grasslands which flood and are either cut for hay, or grazed. This plan concentrates on meadows and pastures associated with low-input nutrient regimes including NVC communities - MG4 floodplain meadow (great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*) and MG8 (marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, Crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*). Associated with these communities are rare vascular plants such as snake's head fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*, fine leaved water dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*, orange foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis* and meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*.

Fens occur on peatlands with either base-poor or mineral enriched calcareous waters. These fragmented sites require grazing and/or cutting. In Herefordshire most remaining fens are small and isolated but they support a rich diversity of plant species such as butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris*, cotton grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, bog pimpernel *Anagallis tenella* and marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris*.

Wet lowland meadows and pastures are important habitats for snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* and curlew *Numenius arquata*. Many are also of cultural and historic importance. The Lugg Meadow is the largest surviving Iammas meadow in the country, where the management remains unchanged since Domesday. Other sites include The Flits NNR, Hampton Meadow, The Sturts, Byton and Combe Moor, Moseley Common, Leintwardine fisheries, and the Wigmore basin. The few remaining fens are dispersed across the county and represented by Upper Welson Marsh and small areas within The Flits and Haugh Wood

Threats

- Agricultural intensification:
 - Shift from hay making to silage production
 - Application of fertiliser, herbicides and pesticides
 - Supplementary stock feeding leading to eutrophication of soil
 - Arable conversion
- Deposition of phosphorus and nitrogen from flood water
- Inappropriate grassland management:
 - Over grazing, poaching and soil compaction
 - Under grazing or neglect
- Decline in the perceived value of species-rich pasture
- Hydrological changes:
 - Water abstraction
 - River engineering preventing seasonal flooding
 - Mineral extraction
 - Flood alleviation lowering the water table

Current Action

- Some sites designated as SSSI and NNR (NE)
- Some sites are managed for biodiversity (NE, HWT)
- Aspiration to undertake a review of Local Wildlife Sites (HC, HWT & Herefordshire Wildlife Link)
- Herefordshire Water Meadow Identification Project (David Whitehead Associates)
- Snake's-head fritillary project (FMP, HWT)
- Consents for abstraction and land drainage required (EA)
- Water Framework Directive require all river catchments to be in good ecological condition (EA)
- Environment Impact Assessment Regulations (DEFRA)
- Lugg Living Landscape Project (HWT, EA, NE, WUF, Tarmac)
- Agri-Environment Schemes, Herefordshire Meadows Network and Farm Herefordshire advise land managers (WUF, NE, CFE, HWT)

	Objective	Action
A	Locate and map existing habitat extent	3,5
B	Maintain the total extent and distribution	2,4,9
C	Assess condition of sites through surveys	5
D	Ensure access to appropriate management advice	1,2,4,8
E	Increase markets for hay, particularly for green hay as a seed source	1,6
F	Increase availability of appropriate machinery	7,8

	Actions	Target
1	Increase awareness of the significance and rapid decline of this habitat	Annual
2	Maintain existing sites through encouraging uptake of Agri-Environment Schemes	Annual
3	Map the extent and quality of this habitat in order to secure designation of further Local Wildlife Sites	2020
4	Provide advice, set up demonstration events and workshops.	2020
5	Undertake biodiversity surveys	2020
6	Develop green hay as a seed crop and promote hay making events	2020
7	Gain funding for meadow restoration and creation	2020
8	Promote grazing by traditional breeds	2020
9	Where there is a threat to the resource, make better use of Environment Impact Assessment Regulations	2020

Lead Partner	NE
Key Partners	HWT, BSBI, HMN