

Appendix 8.1 Habitat Survey Target Notes

1 Hedgerow

Roadside hedgerow along southern boundary of site, with a mature ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) tree located ca. 83m east of the woodland.

Shrub species include the following:

		Abundance
blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	a
elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	a
wild privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	f
dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	f
Midland hawthorn	<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	o
hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	o
field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	r
hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	r
ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	r
dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	r

There are at least 7 species recorded in a 30m sample section near the central-western part of the hedge, and the hedge is quite well-structured for most of its length. It becomes gappy to the east of the ash tree, with scattered elder (*Sambucus nigra*) bushes interspersed with tall herbs such as stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), and barren brome (*Anisantha sterilis*).

Scramblers in the hedge include abundant bramble (*Rubus fruticosus s.l.*) and ivy (*Hedera helix*), with occasional white bryony (*Bryonia dioica*).

The hedge bottom flora includes abundant cleavers (*Galium aparine*), ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), stinging nettle and barren brome; frequent false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), rough meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*), burdock (*Arctium minus*), hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) and white dead-nettle (*Lamium album*). The road side of the hedge supports tall false oat-grass grassland, with abundant stinging nettle; other species include tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), couch (*Elytrigia repens*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), mallow (*Malva sylvestris*) and smooth sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*).

2 Tall ruderal

Broad band of tall-herb vegetation and tall grasses at the edge of the field, dominated by stinging nettle and cleavers, with abundant false oat-grass and creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), and frequent barren brome and rough meadow-grass.

3 Broad-leaved plantation woodland

Birch Wood has a very dense canopy and shrub layer, leading to a suppressed understorey vegetation.

The canopy includes abundant sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ash, with frequent downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) and occasional silver birch (*Betula pendula*). There are also a number of standing dead birch boles in the woodland, providing a habitat for fungi and deadwood-feeding invertebrates.

The shrub layer is dominated by elder, with rare guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*); the woodland margins also support abundant elder, together with occasional Midland hawthorn and blackthorn, and rare hawthorn.

The field layer includes locally dominant stinging nettle and abundant cleavers and ground-ivy in areas with slightly greater light penetration; other species include frequent arum lily (*Arum maculatum*) in more shaded areas, and frequent sycamore seedlings. The ground layer includes a locally abundant weft of the moss *Eurhynchium praelongum*.

4 Mixed plantation woodland

Narrow shelterbelt, consisting of a line of tall (>20m) western balsam poplar (*Populus trichocarpa*), with two lines of Lawson's cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) either side.

The dense canopy has resulted in a very suppressed shrub layer of occasional elder, with occasional stinging nettle in the field layer.

The western margin of the shelterbelt supports a shrub edge with some smaller trees, including abundant elder; frequent blackthorn and hawthorn; occasional ash, wild privet and Midland hawthorn; and rare grey willow (*Salix cinerea ssp. cinerea*) and spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*).

The field margin adjacent to the shelterbelt supports tall herbs and grasses, including abundant stinging nettle, ground-ivy and barren brome; frequent white bryony, burdock, creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), white campion (*Silene latifolia*) and broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).

5 Ditch / neutral grassland

Recently re-profiled ditch, with very shallow water, on the northern boundary of the site. The north side of the ditch supports tall false oat-grass grassland; the south bank is largely bare, with a newly-planted (2005-06?) hedge at the top. A ca. 4m wide grassy track to the south of the ditch separates it from the adjacent arable field. A series of 3 recently constructed field drains run north across this field, and discharge into the ditch; these were running at the time of survey.

The newly-planted hedgerow on the southern margin includes hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose, sweet briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*) and sycamore. The grassy track supports grasses including barren brome, creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), soft-brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), false oat-grass, rough

meadow-grass, and cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*); herbs include hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and creeping thistle.

6 Ditch / neutral grassland

Vegetated ditch running north from the site, very little or no standing water at the time of survey, but saturated, with water table at or just below the surface.

The aquatic and marginal flora of the ditch includes abundant thread-leaved water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus trichophyllus*) and jointed rush (*Juncus articulatus*); locally frequent flote-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*); occasional water-cress (*Rorippa nasturtium-aquatica*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), water plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and bulrush (*Typha latifolia*); and rare reed canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*).

The ditch banks support tall grassland which is dominated by false oat-grass, with abundant rough meadow-grass, Yorkshire fog and cock's-foot; occasional stinging nettle, hogweed, cleavers and field horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*); and rare tor-grass (*Brachypodium pinnatum*).

A newly-planted hedge along the top of the west bank includes a similar range of species to the adjacent new hedge, including frequent sweet-briar. A ca. 5m-wide grass verge separates this hedge from the adjacent field, and supports abundant tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), cock's-foot, and field horsetail.

7 Ephemeral – short perennial vegetation

Fallow arable field, in the process of being ploughed at the time of survey. Supported a diverse range of ruderal (disturbed-ground) species typical of uncultivated arable land. The most abundant included annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*) and scented mayweed (*Matricaria recutita*); other species included volunteer carrot (*Daucus carota* spp. *sativa*) and potato (*Solanum tuberosum*), scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*), groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), field poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), fat-hen (*Chenopodium album*), bristly ox-tongue (*Picris echioides*), hairy sedge (*Carex hirta*) and black-grass (*Alopecurus myosuroides*).