SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CROMWELL'S BUSH FEN

SITE CODE: 001576

Cromwell's Bush Fen Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is a small wetland lying some 6km south-west of Duleek in a pastoral/arable setting over poorly draining glacial drift.

A wide range of fen communities are represented on site, from open water to relatively dry coarse grassland. The open water in the northern end is fringed by bulrush (*Typha* spp.). Much of the rest of the northern end of the wetland is occupied by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) in a reed-bed formation with other wetland plants such as Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and stools of Greater Tussock-sedge (*Carex paniculata*). Drier areas are dominated by coarse grasses such as Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) with Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and Hard Rush (*J. inflexus*). Drier areas again have Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), and are being colonised by shrubs and trees such as Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), willows (*Salix* spp.) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).

Large inland wetland areas are not a typical feature of the east midlands. Although small, this wetland contains a diversity of wetland habitats in transition that are unusual in the locality. The site supports an equivalent diversity of wetland waders and ducks such as Teal, Woodcock, Snipe and Mallard. Although the site is showing signs of nutrient enrichment around its edges, this is to be expected from a site situated in arable fields, otherwise the wetland is in a fairly natural state.

The rare floating plant Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*) has been recorded from the site; this is probably found in the ditches. Drainage and major nutrient input from adjacent land should be avoided on this site.

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