



WN3 Ditch, Dyke and Rhine restoration assessment

Assessment of existing biological interest

Biological Interest Survey Questionnaire

Yes No

Advice

The ditch is in arable land, intensive grassland or an urban setting. It has few, if any, plants evident in the summer months (June-Sept).

The chance that the ditch has a rich plant community or currently supports anything very special is quite low. May be suitable for restoration where adequate supply of good quality water can be secured.

The ditch exhibits dark murky water or water green with prolific duckweed or algal cover in the spring/summer

Duckweed and macroalgae should not exceed a cover of 30% in summer. May be suitable for restoration where adequate supply of good quality water can be secured.

The ditch is heavily overgrown with emergent and bankside plants and/or woody growth.

Normally less than 20% of the ditch length should be in heavy shade (unless the ditch is adjacent to a hedge or within established woodland). Ditch may be suitable for restoration where an adequate supply of good quality water can be secured.

The ditch appears dry or with little water for all or parts of the year

Ditches should be able to support water levels no more than 45 cm below the mean field level and a minimum depth of 30 cm throughout the year. Ditches may be suitable for restoration where adequate inputs of good quality water can be secured.

The ditch is steep sided with limited marginal habitat

Normally more than 25% of the ditch length should support a gently sloping profile or berms and shelves. Restoration may be appropriate where an adequate supply of good quality water can be secured.

Biological Interest Survey Questionnaire

Yes No

Advice

The ditch is in arable land or improved grassland, and has stands of wetland plants evident in the summer months including a mix of floating and emergent plants (June-Sept))

The ditch is likely to have existing interest and may support some uncommon species. Restoration work will need to be approached cautiously to protect existing features. A management option rather than restoration capital item may be more appropriate. Consult your Natural England advisor.

The pond is located in semi-natural habitat (e.g. old woodland, heathland, unimproved grassland), or in or adjacent to long established wetland areas like river valleys, fens, grazing marsh.

These ditches have a high probability of supporting significant interest including endangered or rare species – even if the ditch looks uninteresting! A management option rather than restoration capital item may be more appropriate. Consult your Natural England advisor.

The ditch is important for the management of the wet grassland options GS9-12, wetland options WT6- 10 or management of rough grazing for birds UP2

Restoration and/or management options may be appropriate even if the ditches themselves are of limited biological interest.

Existing records are available for species of interest recorded in the ditches

Existing records may identify biological interest associated with the ditches. Records may be available from:

- Local Environmental Record Centres (www.alerc.org.uk/)
- Local Internal Drainage Boards (www.ada.org.uk)
- Local Environment Agency area teams
- Local Wildlife Trusts (www.wildlifetrusts.org)
- Other recent local surveys or observations

Species Records are also collated and available online from the National Biodiversity Network Gateway (<http://www.nbn.org.uk/>)

Include information from any biological surveys completed on the ditch.

Biological Interest Survey Questionnaire

Yes No

Advice

A check for signs of water vole activity has been undertaken (e.g. burrows, latrine areas, feeding stations, footprints, runs and slipways)

Include any observations with your assessment.

The ditch contains Non Native Invasive Species such as Parrot's Feather, Water Fern, Floating Pennywort etc.

Identify the species present and submit this information with the assessment. Further information about identifying and recording non-native species can be found on the GB non-native species website. (www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=81)