

Birch Coppice Business Park – Ecology Report

Middlemarch Environmental undertook a walkover survey of Birch Coppice on 7th September 2018. The walkover focused on key habitat features within the site; most notably:

- Penmire Brook Corridor
- Penmire Lake
- Reedbed Lake
- Spoil Mound Mosaic

The ecological status of each of these areas is described below:

Penmire Brook Corridor –

A common snipe was flushed from this channel towards the eastern end, and it is considered that the presence of running water provides potential refuge for wading bird species during winter months when bodies of standing water may be frozen over.

A broad green corridor comprising of English oak, goat willow and alder is located next to the brook. These trees are of intrinsic value and provide a valuable contribution to the landscape character of the site.

The trees also support a range of bat roost boxes.

To the south of the grassland strip is a strip of young plantation woodland and scrub. This area of vegetation provides nesting habitat for bird species and cover for small mammals, and is likely to increase in value as it matures.

The corridor is unlit, which means it provides a valuable wildlife corridor that is likely to be used by a range of faunal species including nocturnal animals such as bats and badgers.

Summary:

Tree species – oak, goat willow and alder

Green corridors provide connectivity for wildlife – which is beneficial due to semi-natural habitats becoming increasingly fragmented in the modern landscape

The following bat species all have potential to use the bat boxes on the trees – common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and Daubenton's bat

Penmire Lake -

Penmire Lake is a large manmade waterbody located in the central region of Birch Coppice. The lake contains typical swamp vegetation such as greater reedmace and common club-rush. The lake is surrounded by scattered trees including alder, birch and pine. and extensive hazel. Several of these trees also support bat roost boxes.

The waterbody also supports a small number of common wildfowl species, including mute swan, mallard and tufted duck. During the winter months the waterbody also supports species such as pochard and shoveler.

Summary:

Standing water is a valuable habitat

The network of pools on site provide supporting habitat for other significant wetland habitats in the area, including Kingsbury Water Park, RSPB Middleton Lakes and Alvecote.

The area provides foraging for bat species.

Reedbed Lake –

Reedbed Lake is a large, shallow waterbody to the west of Penmire Lake. It is fringed by a band of dense common reed, which is rare in North Warwickshire. Shallow waterbodies fringed by reeds are of ecological value because they support a range of specialist species including breeding reed warbler and reed bunting. During the winter the waterbody also has the potential to support water rail, common snipe and various dabbling duck species.

The pond is also known to support common amphibian species such as smooth newt, common frog and common toad, and a range of dragonflies and damselflies including migrant hawkler, brown hawkler, common darter, broad-bodied chaser and common blue damselflies.

Mature pollarded willow trees, some of which contained numerous woodpecker holes, can also be found around the lake. Both green woodpecker and great spotted woodpecker have been observed.

Summary:

Reedbed is a very valuable habitat

The network of pools provide supporting habitat for other significant wetland habitats in the area

Provides foraging for bat species

Reedbed Lake is the most value feature on site for bird species, including species that do not occur elsewhere on site

The waterbody is valuable for invertebrate species, particularly dragonflies

Spoil Mound –

The spoil mound is located along much of the western boundary of the site, and supports a mosaic of habitat types including mixed plantation woodland, semi-improved grassland, bare ground and native scrub. The mound has created a series of ecotones and interesting microhabitats that support a variety of invertebrate, mammal and bird species.

Summary:

Valuable habitat mosaic

Frequent foraging site for raptor species including kestrel and common buzzard, which is indicative of a healthy population of small mammals e.g. mice and voles

Areas of bare substrate are of value for invertebrate species such as solitary bees and wasps

The location of each of these key areas is shown on the Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Drawing – see below:

