

LURGAN RIVER WOOD

Views About Management

The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Article 28(2)

A statement of Environment and Heritage Service's views about the management of the Lurgan River Wood Area of Special Scientific Interest ("the ASSI")

This statement represents the views of Environment and Heritage Service about the management of the ASSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the area's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Environment and Heritage Service has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of the ASSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the ASSI and there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. It is also very important to recognise that management may need to change with time.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation or activity. The written consent of Environment and Heritage Service is still required before carrying out any operation or activity likely to damage the features of special interest (see the Schedule on pages 3-4 for a list of these operations and activities). Environment and Heritage Service welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the ASSI to ensure that the management of this area maintains and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Management principles for the Woodland

Woodland is an excellent habitat for wildlife. It provides food and shelter for a wide variety of mammals, birds and invertebrates. Environment and Heritage Service would like to see the habitat and its species continue to be conserved and enhanced.

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the woodland, through the development of its structure and the conservation of its associated native plants and animals. Specific objectives include:

Encourage the woodland to become more "mature" by avoiding disturbance to the trees. The structure of the wood will gradually become more diverse, with well-developed canopy, shrub and ground layers, and an abundance of species like Ivy, mosses, liverworts and lichens that live on the trees themselves.

Encourage the retention of dead wood, both on the woodland floor and still standing in the canopy. Dead wood is a very important habitat for some of the less conspicuous woodland species, such as fungi and invertebrates.

Encourage regeneration of woodland through the control of grazing and browsing. In general, natural regeneration is preferable to planting.

Where necessary, encourage the blocking of drains to prevent the wood from drying out.

Discourage non-native species, especially those that tend to spread at the expense of native wildlife.

Maintain the diversity and quality of habitats associated with the woodland, such as river-side habitats and species-rich grassland. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife.

Management principles for the Grassland

Wet grasslands are an important habitat for wildlife. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the grassland, through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals.

Many of the more sensitive species can be quickly lost through intensive management treatments, such as fertiliser and herbicide application. However, grassland generally needs some management to retain its interest. Although occasional small patches of scrub can be valuable in providing additional habitat niches for birds and invertebrates, in the absence of management, coarse grasses can quickly take over and ultimately woody species may become dominant.

Grazing by cattle is the most effective way of controlling the growth of more vigorous species and helping to maintain open areas and a diverse sward structure, although overgrazing should be avoided as the wet soils are particularly susceptible to poaching. In the absence of grazing, cutting of the vegetation to create open areas and reduce the dominance of coarse grasses is desirable.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment
hereunto affixed is authenticated
by



Dr J-S Faulkner
Senior Officer of the
Department of the Environment

Dated the 30th of MARCH 2005