

# Surfleet Lows

## Location & Access

**OS:** 131 • **GR:** TF 251 287 • 3.40ha (8.40 acres) • Leasehold 1967

**Habitat type:** Grassland

The reserve is situated on the east side of the old A16 Boston-Spalding road, about 300m north of Surfleet church. There is parking space on the opposite side of the road between the village and the reserve. Access is via a gate into the main meadow.

## Description & Management

The reserve consists of old grassland and is subject to winter flooding. The low-lying area is the course of an old creek, which joined the Old Beck in the field to the south of the reserve. Although there is some doubt about the past history of this area, it seems that it may have been saltmarsh within the tidal limits of the River Glen in the Middle Ages. The level of salinity in parts of the meadow is still remarkably high, supporting salt and brackish marsh species, such as sea-milkwort, distant sedge, glaucous rush and golden dock. In addition, there is a rich flora of grasses and sedges, and five species of buttercup, including the localised hairy buttercup.

The small area of damp woodland contains some old willows, and has been partially replanted with sallow, crack willow, ash, alder and oak to replace diseased elms. Nearby are small pools surrounded by a reedbed.

More than 50 species of birds have been recorded. Snipe occur in winter, when redshank, mallard, teal and wigeon are also attracted by flood water. There is a small colony of reed warblers in summer.

The meadow is grazed by cattle from

May to November to maintain its floristic interest. Along the roadside the hawthorn hedge was traditionally managed by cutting at 10-year intervals to provide river-training fascine, but more recently it has been laid to improve its function as a stock-proof boundary.

