

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Tortoiseshell Wood and Porter's Lodge Meadows



Location & Access

OS: 130 • **GR:** SK 963 197 • 21.2ha (52.60 acres) • Freehold 1972 and 1989

Habitat type: Grassland/Woodland

The reserve lies about 2.5km (1.5 miles) east of the A1 road some 15km (9.4 miles) south of Grantham. From the A1 take the Castle Bytham road, approximately 5km (3.1 miles) south of Colsterworth. The reserve entrance is about 2km (1.25 miles) from the A1 on the north side of the road through a field gate. Park on the roadside and follow the track on foot to enter the meadows reserve known as Porter's Lodge Meadows. To access the wood, keep going straight along the track. Visitors are requested to keep to the waymarked route in the wood. Wheelchair access to the meadows is possible, but the woodland paths are not suitable. Porter's Lodge Meadows are adjacent to Tortoiseshell Wood.

Description & Management

Porter's Lodge Meadows, which have been traditionally managed, possess a rich and varied flora, characteristic of old calcareous clay meadows, including a wide range of grasses, abundant bird's-foot-trefoil, rough hawkbit, bulbous buttercup, cowslip, oxeye daisy, common knapweed, meadow vetchling and, in the damper furrows, water avens and cuckooflower. There are also rarer meadow plants: adder's-tongue, pepper-saxifrage, betony, great burnet, sawwort and common cow-wheat. A small pond adjoining the wood supports several aquatic and marginal plants. The meadow/woodland edge habitat is one of the best remaining examples in Lincolnshire.

The entrance to the wood is through a small paddock, with much less floristic

variety than the meadows but which is being improved by grazing.

Tortoiseshell Wood is a fine example of Kesteven boulder clay primary woodland. The calcareous clay gives rise to a rich and varied ground flora. There is a typical three-layer coppice-with-standards structure. The predominant standard trees are oak and ash. The coppice consists of ash, hazel and field maple. Some of the oaks are over 150 years old and are exceptionally fine specimens.

The wood is notable also for the large number of fine wild service trees. In spring and early summer the ground flora is dominated by carpets of bluebell and dog's mercury, with large scattered clumps of primrose, wood anemone and several species of violet. Enchanter's nightshade, sweet woodruff, yellow archangel, ramsons,

wood-sorrel, wood melick, wood millet, sanicle, herb-Paris, twayblade, butterfly-orchid and early purple orchid are all to be found. Among birds are green and great spotted woodpeckers, nightingale and nuthatch - a rare species in Lincolnshire confined largely to the south-west corner of the county. Fallow deer are frequently seen in the wood.

Traditional coppice management on a 15 to 20-year rotation is being perpetuated in the main central part of the wood, while the eastern side and the perimeter are managed as high forest. There are special management difficulties associated with the restoration of coppice working. Regrowth from neglected coppice stools is poor, and deer grazing, together with invasion by brambles, exacerbates the problem.

Porter's Lodge Meadows

GR at E SK 963197

