

RESEARCH: REGIONAL PARKLANDS INVENTORY

The site

Parklands in the East Midlands are considered to be an overlooked nature conservation resource and little wildlife survey work has been undertaken in many of the parks.

Parklands and wood-pasture habitats developed as the result of historic land management and, in many cases, landscape design. Such sites may once have been royal hunting forests, wooded pastures, commons or semi-formal parkland associated with large country houses. These sites often comprise a combination of scattered large old and veteran standard trees and high forest woodland blocks with a mixture of grazed grassland or heathland. In some circumstances the parkland or wood-pasture may also include ornamental or natural standing water bodies and flowing water habitats.

The combination of habitats and the presence of old and veteran trees provides a variety of habitat mosaics and structural diversity that supports a wide range of species. The close proximity of a range of habitats, including hard structures such as buildings and walls, provides habitat corridors, links, mosaics and stepping stones for species activity, movements, food and shelter.

The task

Baker Shepherd Gillespie was commissioned to produce a Regional Parkland Inventory for the East Midlands. This study involved the collation of baseline information on parkland characteristics such as location and ecological interest for the Parklands and Wood-Pasture resource of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Rutland.

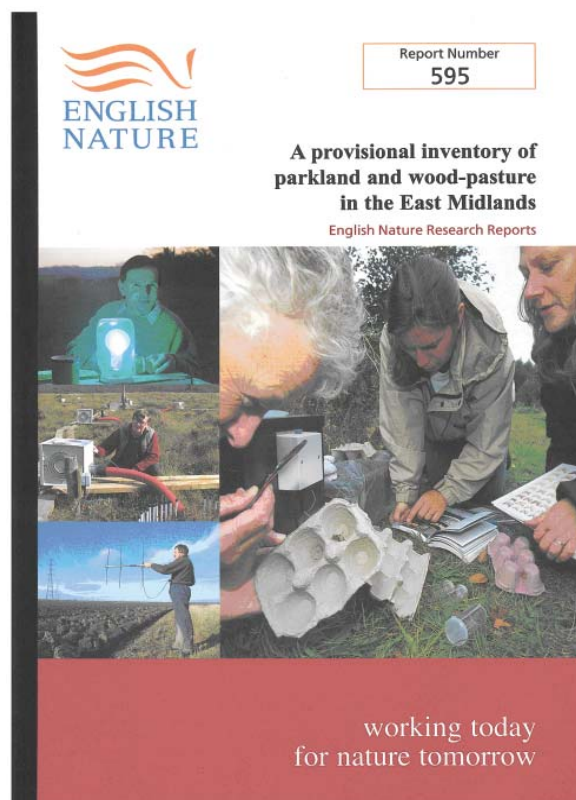
A desktop study was undertaken with information collected from a variety of sources including Local Records Centres, Local Studies and Archives, Wildlife Trusts and Countryside Management Services. Initially contact was made by telephone to collate information on English Heritage registered parklands, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other wildlife sites. Where necessary visits were made to Local Studies Libraries and Local Archives to collate information on parkland origins, ownership and landuse.

A GIS database of Parkland sites of conservation interest was created using digitally mapped information for the East Midland counties. The aim was to map and determine the extent, type and distribution of parkland resource across the five counties. The database collates the ecological and historical information on each parkland including the current state and use of the resource.

The results

The study identified 314 parklands and wood-pasture sites covering a combined area of over 32,000 hectares, with parklands widespread in all of the counties. Many of the parklands support a range of characteristic features of conservation interest and this study has highlighted the need for up to date survey work and data collation for many of the parklands.

The results of the research have subsequently been published as an English Nature Research Report: *A provisional inventory of parkland and wood-pasture in the East Midlands*.



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