

Supported by  
*Essex*  
**Biodiversity**  
PROJECT  
*...Working for a better quality of life*



# BIODIVERSITY GUIDE

## TO THE DEDHAM VALE AONB AND STOUR VALLEY

# CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Barn Owl	5
Otter	7
Bats	9
Stag Beetle	12
Skylark	14
Native Black Poplar	16
Water Vole	18
Great Crested Newt	20
White Clawed Crayfish	22
Dormouse	24
Further Information	26
Where You Can Learn More About the Biodiversity in the Stour Valley	37
Map of Nature Reserves and Field Centres in the Stour Valley	42

## PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

Skylark  
Dormouse  
Daubenton's Bats  
Water Vole  
FLPA – Images of Nature

Stag beetle and larvae  
David Archer / PTES

Male Great Crested Newt  
Herpetological Conservation Trust

White Clawed Crayfish  
The Brecks Project

Children studying fresh water life  
Daws Hall Centre for Environmental Education

# INTRODUCTION

The Stour Valley on the Essex / Suffolk border is home to a wide range of wildlife some of which is protected in designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Wildlife Sites (formerly known as County Wildlife Sites or Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation). Wildlife is also in abundance in non- designated areas throughout the Stour Valley.

Within the Stour Valley lies the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is one of 49 AONBs within England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each AONB is a precious landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that they have been recognised as nationally important and given additional protection and funding. The Dedham Vale, as portrayed by John Constable 200 years ago, has come to represent many peoples idea of an idyllic lowland landscape.

The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project is a small team conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Stour Valley. We work closely with landowners and organisations to ensure the protection and recovery of species and habitats of importance.

The Project is guided in its nature conservation work by Biodiversity Action Plans, which identify habitats and species of national, regional and local importance and the actions required for their conservation.

This guide outlines the Project's work with its partners to improve the habitats and conditions for key biodiversity species within the Stour Valley. It includes suggestions as to how you can get involved with conservation work in the Stour Valley and further afield.

# WHAT IS THE ESSEX BIODIVERSITY PROJECT?



We are a partnership of more than forty organisations working to protect biodiversity in Essex. Our partners include Essex County Council, Essex Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Environment Agency, Essex Field Club, Essex & Suffolk Water, John Laing, district councils, RSPB, Butterfly Conservation, Royal Horticultural Society. We deliver direct action biodiversity projects; provide expert advice; help with practical work and highlight the importance of biodiversity. Since 1999, we have steadily built up a high profile within the nature conservation community, a reputation for 'getting the job done' and providing tangible outputs.

[www.essexbiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.essexbiodiversity.org.uk)

# BARN OWL



The Barn Owl was once a common sight on lowland farmland, hunting at dusk over rough grassland in search of its main prey, the short-tailed vole. Barn Owl numbers have been declining since the 1930s, in part due to reduction in rough grassland, but also due to the loss of old barns and hollow trees to nest in. The Barn Owl with its evocative ghostly form, is a key species for encouraging the maintenance and creation of rough grassland habitat.

## Objectives

The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project is working to expand the network of nest boxes in areas known to have barn owls present. Landowners are encouraged to create networks of rough grassland to increase vole and mice numbers.

## Target areas within the Project Area

- The Stour Valley flood plain: between Sudbury and Flatford
- Assington-Bures
- Alphamstone-Henny
- Kedington to Great Bradley
- The lower Brett Valley

## Achievements

A local representative from the Barn Owl Network is assisting the Project with advice on appropriate habitat management and locations for nest boxes to landowners. In 2005 he ringed the first brood of chicks to be successfully reared in one of the 20 boxes we had erected. Since then, the Barn Owl project has gone from strength to strength with over 50 boxes now erected and 22 chicks ringed in 2006 and 18 in 2007.

## What you can do to help

- If you are a landowner in the Stour Valley, and would like more information about the Barn Owl project, contact, the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project.
- Carry out a local Barn Owl survey in the winter looking for pellets<sup>1</sup> (in spring & summer you need a licence, in winter generally you don't), keep records of what you find AND what you don't find. Perhaps you could gather together a group of like-minded people to help you? Contact your local Barn Owl Conservation Network advisor for advice.
- Find out more from the Barn Owl Trust, or the Hawk and Owl Trust.

## Who to contact to find out more

David Wilkin, Voluntary Advisor for the Barn Owl Conservation Network For North-East Essex and South Suffolk.

Tel: 01255 862374  
Email: owlboxman@tiscall.co.uk  
Website: www.bocn.org

### Barn Owl Trust

Waterleat  
Ashburton  
Devon  
TQ13 7HU.  
Tel /Fax: 01364 653026  
Email: info@barnowltrust.org.uk  
Website: www.barnowltrust.org.uk

### The Hawk and Owl Trust

PO Box 100  
Taunton  
TA4 2WX  
Tel: 0870 990 3889  
Email: enquiries@hawkandowl.org  
Website: www.hawkandowl.org

### The Mammal Society

(To help with Owl Pellet surveys)  
2B, Inworth Street  
London  
SW11 3EP  
Tel: 020 7350 2200  
between 11am and 1pm on weekdays  
Fax: 020 7350 2211  
Email: survey@mammal.org.uk  
Website: www.abdn.ac.uk/mammal

<sup>1</sup> Owl pellets can often be found on top of fence posts or on the ground. They are regurgitated pellets of fur and small bones from small mammals that they have eaten. They can be dissected to find out exactly what they have eaten. This can also help determine which type of owl has produced the pellet.

# OTTER



The Otter is a large, semi-aquatic member of the Mustelid (stoat and weasel) family. It can be distinguished from other mustelids by its large size and flattened head.

The Otter suffered a rapid decline from the early 1960s. This was the result of a number of factors, including accumulation of pesticides in rivers, loss of suitable habitat, changes in river management, declining water quality and increased road traffic. As a top predator in the river ecosystem, Otters naturally occur at low densities, are particularly sensitive to changes in their environment and can take many years to re-build their population.

Happily their decline has now been halted, and Otters are once again establishing themselves along the Stour and it's tributaries.

## Objectives

To improve the habitat along the river corridor and extend the network of artificial holts.

## Target Area

Focusing on otter holt construction downstream of Nayland. Habitat work alongside the rivers Stour, Brett and Box.

## Achievements

The project has encouraged the return of the otter in several ways:

- The addition of "otter ledges" under bridges to encourage them not to cross busy roads when the river is in flood.
- Improvement of riverside habitat, e.g. encourage more scrub along river edges.
- Construction of twenty artificial holts along the valley to provide daytime refuges for otters. The holts have been built using a design not dissimilar to a low log cabin. Groups throughout the valley have been busy building them, including parties from local businesses, Community Payback Teams, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the Stour Valley Volunteers.
- Annual Essex Otter Survey with volunteers.

## What you can do to help

- If you are a land owner with land adjacent to the Stour and would consider having an artificial otter holt, contact the Project for more information.
- Inform the Project if you see signs of an otter (its tracks or spraints) or if you see an otter.
- Contact Essex or Suffolk Wildlife Trusts to find out how you can get involved in otter surveys.



## Who to contact to find out more

### Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Brooke House

Ashbocking

Ipswich

IP6 9JY

Tel: 01473 890089

Email: [info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

Website: [www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk)

### Essex Wildlife Trust

Darren Tansley

Water for Wildlife

Abbotts Hall Farm

Gt Wigborough

Colchester

Essex

CO5 7RZ

Tel: 01621 862960.

Email: [admin@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:admin@essexwt.org.uk)

Website: [www.essexwt.org.uk/main/welcome.htm](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/main/welcome.htm)

# BATS



There are more native species of bats in the UK than any other group of mammals. They have suffered a serious decline in recent years, with loss of habitats such as ponds, hedgerows, and old trees. Habitats which remain are becoming fragmented and insect availability is falling. Pipistrelle, Daubenton's and Brown Long-Eared bats have all been recorded feeding over the River Stour and adjacent pastures.

All bat species are protected by law. If you discover a bat colony in your house, do not disturb the bats and contact the protected species teams at Natural England.

## Objectives

- To work with landowners and other organisations to create diverse wildlife habitats along the River Stour that will attract bats.
- To provide secure winter hibernacula and summer roosting sites to complement the abundance of food for bats available along the river.
- To encourage local bat groups to undertake monitoring along the river.

## Target Areas

Bat hibernacula work in the middle reaches of the River Stour between Sudbury and Bures.

## Achievements

The Project obtained £5000 of funding from Essex and Suffolk Environmental Trusts in order to convert 10 Second World War pill boxes into hibernation sites for bats. During hibernation bats require constant air temperature and high humidity. These factors were born in mind when designing the hibernacula. The pill boxes were converted by shutting off most of the gun slits, to reduce air movement. Special bat bricks were installed to provide crevices for the bats to cling to. Finally, steel doors were fitted to reduce air movement preventing unwanted disturbance to bats.

The conversion of the pill boxes, on the Essex / Suffolk border has involved a number of partners. These include, the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project, Braintree Wildlife Group, the River Colne Countryside Project, Sudbury Common Land Charity, Essex and Suffolk Archaeology units and a number of private landowners.

## What you can do to help

- Attend a bat walk to learn more about bats.
- Build and put up bat boxes at appropriate sites (contact the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project for ideas).

- Help to monitor bat populations.
- Join your local bat group.
- Train to be a batworker.
- Join the Bat Conservation Trust.

## Who to contact to find out more

### Suffolk Bat Group

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Brooke House

Ashbocking

Ipswich

IP6 9JY

Tel: 01473 890089

Email: [info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

Website: [www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk)

The Suffolk Bat Group and Suffolk Wildlife Trust's  
Wildline 01473 890089

### Essex Bat Group

[www.essexbatgroup.org.uk](http://www.essexbatgroup.org.uk)

### The Bat Conservation Trust

15 Cloisters House

8 Battersea Park Road

London

SW8 4BG

Bat

helpline: 0845 1300228

Email: [enquiries@bats.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bats.org.uk)

Website: [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)

### Essex Biodiversity Project

Mark Iley

Biodiversity Project Officer

Abbots Hall Farm

Great Wigborough

Colchester

Essex

CO5 7RZ

Tel: 01621 862975

Email: [marki@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:marki@essexwt.org.uk)

Website: [essexbiodiversity.org.uk](http://essexbiodiversity.org.uk)

### **Natural England, Headquarters**

Wildlife Management and Licensing Service

Natural England

Northminster House

Peterborough

PE1 1UA

Tel: 01733 455136

Fax: 01733 568834

Email: [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)

Website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)



### **Natural England, Essex**

Harbour House

Hythe Quay

Colchester

Essex

CO2 8JF

Tel: 01206 796666

Fax: 01206 794466

Email: [enquiries.east@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries.east@naturalengland.org.uk)

Website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

### **Natural England, Suffolk**

Government Buildings

100 Southgate Street

Bury St Edmunds

Suffolk

IP33 2BD

Tel: 01284 762218

Fax: 01284 731490

Email: [enquiries.east@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries.east@naturalengland.org.uk)

Website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

## STAG BEETLE



The Stag Beetle is the largest terrestrial insect in Britain. Its name is derived from the large antler like jaws of the male, which are mainly used for wrestling with other males. Adults are black with chestnut wing cases and are most likely to be seen in the summer months when they fly to find mates and may be attracted to lights in houses. The species breeds in rotting tree stumps and other sources of decaying wood, where the larvae will remain for up to 5 years. This beetle is still quite common in parts of southern England, with the Colchester area being a notable stronghold.

## Objectives

- To maintain and increase breeding populations by ensuring continued supplies of suitable dead wood, set up woodpiles ("stag beetle pyramids") in appropriate sites and encourage planting of trees in new hedgerows.

## Target Areas

The Stour Valley East of Bures.

## Achievements

The Project continues to work with landowners and community groups, to help with the construction of stag beetle pyramids in suitable habitats.

## What you can do to help

- Make your garden Stag Beetle friendly (contact the People's Trust for Endangered Species to find out more).
- Take part in the Great Stag Beetle Hunt.
- 'Bury a bucket' for Stag beetles – contact the People's Trust for Endangered Species to find out more.
- Report sightings to Essex Biodiversity Project.

## Who to contact to find out more

### People's Trust for Endangered Species

15 Cloisters House  
8 Battersea Park Road  
London  
SW8 4BG

Tel: 020 7498 4533

Fax: 020 7498 4459

Email: [enquiries@ptes.org](mailto:enquiries@ptes.org)

Website: [www.ptes.org/work/baps/stag-beetle.html](http://www.ptes.org/work/baps/stag-beetle.html)



### Essex Biodiversity Project

Mark Iley  
Biodiversity Project Officer  
Abbots Hall Farm  
Great Wigborough  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO5 7RZ  
Tel: 01621 862975  
Email: [marki@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:marki@essexwt.org.uk)  
Website: [essexbiodiversity.org.uk](http://essexbiodiversity.org.uk)



The Skylark is a common and widespread ground dwelling bird that occurs in a wide variety of farmland types. It is heavily streaked with a noticeable crest and is most often seen and heard during its characteristic escalating song flight in spring and early summer. There was a 54% decline in the breeding Skylark population on lowland farmland in the UK between 1969 and 1991. Despite conservation measures since 1991, the Skylark is still on the government's red list of species<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Red listed species are those that are globally threatened according to IUCN criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and are not shown a substantial recent recovery.

## Objectives

- Encourage landowners to use appropriate skylark-friendly options under Environmental Stewardship.

## Target Areas

Throughout the whole of the Project area.

## Achievements

- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has conducted breeding bird surveys in the Project area. This has identified three areas with several skylark territories.
- Some farms in the area are working towards providing more grassland sites for sky larks (under Environmental Stewardship – Higher Level Scheme agreements).

## What you can do to help

- The RSPB has produced a leaflet for farmers, landowners and managers giving advice on measures to take to help skylarks and other birds.

## Who to contact to find out more

### Suffolk Ornithology Group

Mike Wright (Projects Officer)

15 Avondale Road

Ipswich

IP1 3QN

Tel: 01473 710032

### Essex Biodiversity Project

Mark Iley

Biodiversity Project Officer

Abbots Hall Farm

Great Wigborough

Colchester

Essex

CO5 7RZ

Tel: 01621 862975

Email: [marki@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:marki@essexwt.org.uk)

Website: [essexbiodiversity.org.uk](http://essexbiodiversity.org.uk)

## RSPB Eastern Region

Stalham House

65 Thorpe Road

Norwich

Norfolk

NR1 1UD

Tel: 01603 661662

Website: [www.rspb.org.uk/england/eastanglia/index.asp](http://www.rspb.org.uk/england/eastanglia/index.asp)

If you are a landowner, and want to encourage skylarks to your land, the following links may be useful:

[www.rspb.org.uk/countyside/farming/advice](http://www.rspb.org.uk/countyside/farming/advice)

[www.farmwildlife.info/](http://www.farmwildlife.info/)

# NATIVE BLACK POPLAR



The Native Black Poplar was formerly a component of the floodplain woodland but now occurs as isolated trees in wet meadows, hedgerows, beside farm ponds and rivers. It has not reproduced naturally for many centuries and its current distribution reflects the once common practice of striking cuttings in damp places. It has been in decline for the last 200 years and is now rare in the UK. Most surviving trees have reached old age and mortality rates are high. Suffolk and Essex contain a significant proportion of the British population and these magnificent trees are still a feature of the Essex-Suffolk border.

## Objectives

- To plant about 30 new trees at appropriate sites in the valley each year.
- To maintain the clone bank and nursery beds (see below).

## Target Areas

Valley floor and other damp sites throughout the Project area.

## Achievements

The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project have been instrumental in setting up a native black poplar clone-bank containing cuttings from 150 Suffolk and Essex parent trees. We also grow-on new trees and make these available to landowners throughout the Stour Valley. To date 500 native black poplars have been planted in the Project area.

If you think you have or know of a suitable site for a native black poplar (damp sites such as riverbanks, or besides ditches etc) contact the Project for a leaflet or advice.

## What you can do to help

- If you own land in the Stour Valley, consider planting a black poplar. Contact the Project or the contacts below to find out more.

## Who to contact to find out more

### The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project

c/o Suffolk County Council  
8 Russell Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP1 2BX

Tel: 01473 264263

Email: [dedhamvale.project@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk](mailto:dedhamvale.project@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org](http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org)

**Essex:** Ken Adams

County Botanical Recorder  
63 Wroths Path Baldwins Hill

Loughton

Essex

IG10 ISH

Email: [ken.adams@virgin.net](mailto:ken.adams@virgin.net)

### Essex Biodiversity Project

Mark Iley

Biodiversity Project Officer

Abbots Hall Farm

Great Wigborough

Colchester

Essex

CO5 7RZ

Tel: 01621 862975

Email: [marki@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:marki@essexwt.org.uk)

Website: [essexbiodiversity.org.uk](http://essexbiodiversity.org.uk)

### Suffolk: Sue Hooton

Senior Ecologist

Suffolk County Council

Environment and Transport

8 Russell Road

Ipswich

Suffolk

IP1 2BX

Email: [sue.hooton@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk](mailto:sue.hooton@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk)

# WATER VOLE



The Water Vole is the largest of the British voles, with a head and body measuring about 20 cm. Due to its size and semi-aquatic lifestyle it is often confused with the brown rat when swimming, but the two can be distinguished quite easily as rats have more prominent ears, pointed snouts and hairless tails.

Water voles inhabit the banks of slow flowing rivers, streams and ditches as well as non-flowing water features such as lakes, ponds and dykes.

Once a common and frequently seen species throughout the UK, the Water Vole has declined in distribution and numbers in recent years. The main factors affecting its decline are habitat loss, population fragmentation, water level fluctuations, predation by mink, pollution and indirect poisoning.

## Objectives

- Improve wildlife habitats along watercourses for the water vole.
- Support efforts by landowners to control mink numbers.

## Target area

- The Stour and its tributaries.

## Achievements

- A mink control scheme commenced in 2001 along the River Stour.

## What you can do to help

- Help with survey work to monitor the water vole.
- If you are a landowner with land adjacent to the River Stour consider how you can improve the riparian habitat for the water vole.
- Contact Essex or Suffolk Wildlife Trust if you spot a water vole.

## Who to contact to find out more

### Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Penny Hemphill  
Water for Wildlife Officer  
Brooke House  
Ashbocking  
Ipswich  
IP6 9JY  
Tel: 01473 890089  
Email: [info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)  
Website: [www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk)

### Essex Wildlife Trust

Water for Wildlife Officer  
Darren Tansley  
Abbotts Hall Farm  
Gt Wigborough  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO5 7RZ  
Tel: 01621 862960  
Email: [darrent@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:darrent@essexwt.org.uk)  
Website: [www.essexwt.org.uk](http://www.essexwt.org.uk)

# GREAT CRESTED NEWT



The Great Crested Newt is the largest of the three native newt species occurring in Britain. It is still quite widespread in Britain but has suffered a decline in recent years with studies in the 1980s indicating a national rate of colony loss of 2% over 5 years. The exact number of ponds available for newts to breed in unknown. The British population is amongst the largest in Europe, it is threatened in several countries.

This species has declined through the loss of suitable breeding ponds, degradation and fragmentation of suitable terrestrial habitats and through pollution. Newts live most of their lives away from ponds, relying on sufficient areas of connected rough grassland, scrub and hedgerows and woodland, where they can hunt before returning to the ponds to breed in spring-time.

## Objectives

- Support efforts to survey ponds for great crested newts.
- Advise on appropriate management.
- Encourage landowners to create groups of ponds connected by good habitat.

## Target Area

Ponds and associated habitat throughout the valley.

## Achievements

Investigating the feasibility of Great Crested Newt survey in the AONB.

## What you can do to help

- Make new ponds.
- Restore degraded ponds. (However, special care must be taken when working on ponds where great crested newts may live. They are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, so seek specialist advice).
- Manage terrestrial habitats for newts.
- Help with Great Crested Newt surveys.

## Who to contact to find out more

### Suffolk Amphibian and Reptile Group

(Via Suffolk Wildlife Trust)

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Brooke House

Ashbocking

Ipswich

IP6 9JY

Tel: 01473 890089

Email: [info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

Website: [www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk)

## The Herpetological Conservation Trust

655A Christchurch Road

Boscombe,

Bournemouth

Dorset BH1 4AP

Tel: 01202 391319

Fax: 01202 392785

Website: [www.herpconstrust.org.uk/](http://www.herpconstrust.org.uk/)

## Natural England

Wildlife Management and Licensing Service

Natural England

Northminster House

Peterborough

PE1 1UA

Tel: 01733 455136

Fax: 01733 568834

Website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

## Froglife

White Lodge

London Road

Peterborough

PE7 0LG

Tel: 01733 558444

Email: [info@froglife.org](mailto:info@froglife.org)

Website: [www.froglife.org/about\\_froglife.htm](http://www.froglife.org/about_froglife.htm)

## Essex Biodiversity Project

Mark Iley

Biodiversity Project Officer

Abbots Hall Farm

Great Wigborough

Colchester

Essex

CO5 7RZ

Tel: 01621 862975

Email: [marki@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:marki@essexwt.org.uk)

Website: [essexbiodiversity.org.uk](http://essexbiodiversity.org.uk)

# WHITE-CLAWED CRAYFISH



The White Clawed Crayfish is the only native species of freshwater crayfish in the UK. It is found in clean streams, rivers and lakes in England and Wales and occurs in a few areas in Northern Ireland.

The habitat requirements of this species are very vulnerable to modifications through the management of rivers and changes in water quality. Native crayfish are also out-competed by non native crayfish (Signal and Turkish) which are present in several rivers in Essex, including the Stour.

## Objectives

Assist the Environment Agency in their efforts to control non native crayfish in areas where the white-clawed crayfish survives.

## Target Areas

In the Chad Brook.

## Achievements

- Trapping for research by the Environment Agency, mainly at Wixoe abstraction works.

## What you can do to help

- Contact the Environment Agency to see if you can help with the survey of non-native signal crayfish in the River Stour.
- Report to Suffolk Biological Records Office or Environment Agency (within Essex and Suffolk) if you spot a native white-clawed crayfish.

NB: It is illegal to intentionally catch crayfish without a licence from the Environment Agency. However, if you do accidentally catch crayfish when you are fishing, be careful as they do have a nasty nip! Then, inform the Environment Agency.

## Who to contact to find out more

### The Environment Agency

James Carr  
Technical Officer (South Suffolk)  
Fisheries, Recreation and Biodiversity Team  
Environment Agency  
Cobham Road  
Ipswich  
IP3 9JE  
Tel: 01473 706777  
Email: james.carr@environment-agency.gov.uk  
Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

### Essex Biodiversity Project

Mark Iley  
Biodiversity Project Officer  
Abbots Hall Farm  
Great Wigborough  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO5 7RZ  
Tel: 01621 862975  
Email: marki@essexwt.org.uk  
Website: essexbiodiversity.org.uk

# DORMOUSE



The Dormouse with its characteristic furry tail and orange/brown fur, is a nocturnal, tree-dwelling rodent that lives in mixed broad-leaved woodland, hedgerows and orchards. The decline in traditional coppice management of our woodlands, removal of hedgerows and fragmentation of woodlands have caused an alarming decline in the numbers of dormice. Apart from small populations in Northumberland and Cumbria, Suffolk marks the northern boundary of the Dormouse in Britain.

## Objectives

To encourage the survival and expansion of known dormice populations within the Project area.

## Target area

Tiger Hill-Arger Fen-Spouses Vale.

## Achievements

The Project has been working with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and with local landowners to monitor dormice numbers, provide nest boxes and make improvements to existing habitats. This includes positive management on sites where there are known to be dormouse populations and creating links to nearby sites to encourage the spread of this protected species.

## What you can do to help

- Help with Dormouse surveys in the Project area.
- Build Dormice boxes and put up in appropriate areas.
- Report any sightings of Dormice to Essex or Suffolk Wildlife Trusts and the Project team.

## Who to contact to find out more

### Mammals Trust UK

15 Cloisters House  
8 Battersea Park Road  
London  
SW8 4BG

Tel: 020 7498 5262

Fax: 020 7498 4459

Email: [enquiries@mtuk.org](mailto:enquiries@mtuk.org)

Website: [www.mtuk.org/](http://www.mtuk.org/)

**The Mammal Society** (for all training in survey techniques)

2B, Inworth Street

London

SW11 3EP

Tel: 020 7350 2200

between 11am and 1pm on weekdays

Fax: 020 7350 2211

Email: [enquiries@mammal.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@mammal.org.uk)

### Suffolk Wildlife Trust

(Mammal group)

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Brooke House

Ashbocking

Ipswich

IP6 9JY

Tel: 01473 890089

Email: [info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

Website: [www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk)

### Essex Mammal Group

Louise Wells

113 Westwood Road

Seven Kings

Ilford

Essex

IG3 8SD

Email: [lwells@wildlondon.org.uk](mailto:lwells@wildlondon.org.uk)

### Essex Biodiversity Project

Mark Iley

Biodiversity Project Officer

Abbots Hall Farm

Great Wigborough

Colchester

Essex

CO5 7RZ

Tel: 01621 862975

Email: [marki@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:marki@essexwt.org.uk)

Website: [essexbiodiversity.org.uk](http://essexbiodiversity.org.uk)

# FURTHER INFORMATION



## Nature Reserves in the Stour Valley

To retain the quality of the nature reserves, consider using public transport or travelling by bike to reach them. Many of the reserves are accessible by public transport, details of which are supplied in the following pages.

# LOSHES MEADOW

The reserve lies on the side of an attractive valley in low hills rising from the River Stour flood plain. It was farmed until the mid-50s then left to 'go wild' until leased by the Essex Wildlife Trust in 1974. Its contains grassland, woodland, new plantations, thick hedgerows and a marsh.

Look out for: nightingale, willow tit, golden saxifrage, yellow archangel and butterflies such as the ringlet and white-letter hairstreak.

<b>Ownership:</b>	Essex Wildlife Trust
<b>Location:</b>	To the West of Henny Road between Lamarsh and Henny Street
<b>Getting there:</b>	Limited parking on road near the entrance
<b>Opening times:</b>	Open all year
<b>Prices:</b>	Free
<b>Disabled access:</b>	No special facilities for disabled persons
<b>Dogs allowed:</b>	Yes
<b>OS map:</b>	Explorer 196 Sudbury, Hadleigh and Dedham Vale
<b>OS grid reference:</b>	TL873369
<b>Contact:</b>	Robin Hart
<b>Telephone:</b>	01787 269613
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:robinhart@hotmail.co.uk">robinhart@hotmail.co.uk</a>
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.essexwt.org.uk/Sites/Loshes%20Meadow.htm">www.essexwt.org.uk/Sites/Loshes%20Meadow.htm</a>
<b>Public Transport:</b>	Accessible by bus from Sudbury, or by train to Bures or Sudbury, then cycling. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 <a href="http://www.traveline.org.uk">www.traveline.org.uk</a>

# DAWS HALL

The Daws Hall Centre is an Essex County Council Outdoor Centre, situated in the Stour Valley, between Bures and Sudbury, just a few miles from Halstead and Colchester. The teaching centre, open throughout the year to School and Youth groups (no general public access), is set on a 30 acre nature reserve owned and managed by the Daws Hall Trust.

The Centre runs a variety of events and courses, including: adult courses, family days and popular 'Wild and Crafty' days for children in school holidays.

We also run tree planting sessions throughout the winter time from November to February. Plant trees in your school or club grounds.

<b>Ownership:</b>	Daws Hall Trust
<b>Location:</b>	Approach Daws Hall from the minor road between Bures and Sudbury, on the Essex side of the River Stour and close to the village of Lamarsh.
<b>Opening times:</b>	Varies according to course / open days – check centre for details
<b>Prices:</b>	Depends on course
<b>OS map:</b>	Landranger 196 Sudbury and Dedham
<b>Disabled access:</b>	No special facilities for disabled persons
<b>Dogs:</b>	Not allowed
<b>OS grid reference:</b>	TL886367
<b>Contact:</b>	Simon Perry
<b>Tel/Fax:</b>	01787 269766
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:s.d.perry@essexcc.gov.uk">s.d.perry@essexcc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.dawshall-fsnet.co.uk">www.dawshall-fsnet.co.uk</a>
<b>Public Transport:</b>	Accessible by bus from Sudbury, or by train to Bures or Sudbury, then cycling. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 <a href="http://www.traveline.org.uk">www.traveline.org.uk</a>

# CORNARD MERE

Barely a stone's throw from its urban neighbours this reserve, lying near the banks of the River Stour, is special for its mix of open water, fen and wet scrub. This variety of habitat makes it an invaluable resource for a wide variety of wildlife.

Look out for reed bunting, sedge and reed warbler, sand martin, Noctule bat, dragonflies such as the ruddy darter and four-spotted chaser. Interesting plants include: bogbean, skullcap and greater birds foot trefoil.

**Ownership:** Cornard Mere is cared for by Suffolk Wildlife Trust and is jointly owned by the Trust and Cornard Parish Council

**Location:** B1508 near Kedington Hill

**Getting there:** Limited parking on road opposite entrance.

**Opening times:** Open all year

**Prices:** Free

**Disabled access:** No special facilities for disabled persons

**Dogs allowed:** Yes

**OS map:** Explorer 196 Sudbury, Hadleigh and Dedham Vale

**OS grid reference:** TL887338

**Contact:** Suffolk Wildlife Trust

**Telephone:** 01473 890089

**Email:** [info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

**Website:** [www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/suffolk/nr/sites/corn.htm](http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/suffolk/nr/sites/corn.htm)

**Public Transport:** Accessible by bus from Sudbury or train to Sudbury, then cycling. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

# ARGER FEN

This beautiful ancient woodland has many paths for you to explore. Apart from the trees and bluebells normally expected in a traditional Suffolk wood, there is an unusually large number of wild cherry trees. On the field edge, you'll find a magnificent wild service tree.

The perfect place for a gentle stroll or picnic. It is also on the route of the Bures Arger Fen circular walk available free from the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project's website. In order to protect the delicate nature of the wood please keep to the paths and do not cycle on the site.

The wood is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Some species to look out for include Nightingales, Grasshopper Warbler and Hawfinch.

- Ownership:** Suffolk County Council
- Location:** Between Bures and Nayland, 2 miles south of Assington
- Getting there:** A134, take the turning to Assington. Once through the village, turn left and follow the road until you reach the car park at Arger Fen
- Opening times:** Open all year
- Prices:** Free
- Disabled access:** Some paths may be unsuitable for wheelchair use.
- Dogs allowed:** Yes
- OS map:** Explorer 196 Sudbury, Hadleigh and Dedham Vale
- OS grid reference:** TL930352
- Contact:** Nick Dickson, Countryside Officer
- Telephone:** 01473 264782
- Email:** [nick.dickson@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk](mailto:nick.dickson@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk)
- Website:** [www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/countryside/argerfen.htm](http://www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/countryside/argerfen.htm)
- Public Transport:** Buses from Bures, Sudbury, Nayland and Stoke by Nayland to Assington. Then about 1.5 miles walk or cycle to the reserve. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

# TIGER HILL LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

A secluded site, which forms part of the Arger Fen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It's varied habitats include the only heathland left in SW Suffolk, wet meadows, hedgerow, streams, pond and woodland. The hedges and woodland support one of the largest populations of the endangered Dormouse in Suffolk.

Educational and research visits are welcome, volunteers can join work parties to help conserve this special site.

Parts of the site can be seen from the public footpath. Elsewhere please contact reserve warden for consent first.

**Contact:** Nick Miller, Reserve Warden

**Location:** Between Nayland and Bures 1.5 miles south of Assington

**Opening times:** No public access without prior consent. The site can be viewed from a public footpath running through the site.

**Prices:** Free

**Disabled access:** No special facilities for disabled persons.

**Dogs allowed:** No

**OS map:** Explorer 196 Sudbury, Hadleigh and Dedham Vale

**OS grid reference:** TL928353

**Contact:** Nick Miller

**Telephone:** 01787 227359

**Public Transport:** Buses from Bures, Sudbury, Nayland and Stoke by Nayland to Assington. Then about a mile walk or cycle to the reserve. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

# SPOUSE'S VALE

Spouse's Vale is a fascinating mosaic of ancient woodland alongside fen meadow. The interesting mix of trees includes oak, ash, field maple, holly and crab apple with some wild cherry, superb large alder and old hazel. It's best to visit in spring when you will be greeted with a fabulous show of bluebells accompanied by the magical song of nightingale. You may also be lucky enough to flush a woodcock from the undergrowth.

Survey work has revealed the presence of the yellow-necked mouse and rare dormouse here. Also look out for basking common lizards and grass snakes.

**Ownership:** Suffolk Wildlife Trust

**Location:** Between Nayland and Bures, 1.5 miles South of Assington

**Getting there:** A134, take the turning to Assington. Once through the village, turn left and follow the road until you reach Spouse's Vale. Park on roadside at field entrance or at lay-bys next to Arger Fen. There is a short walk down to Spouse's Vale from the road.

**Opening times:** Open all year

**Prices:** Free

**Disabled access:** No special facilities for disabled people.

**Dogs allowed:** Yes

**OS map:** Explorer 196 Sudbury, Hadleigh and Dedham Vale

**OS grid reference:** TL936363

**Contact:** Suffolk Wildlife Trust

**Telephone:** 01473 890089

**Email:** [info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

**Website:** [www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/suffolk/nr/sites/spous.htm](http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/suffolk/nr/sites/spous.htm)

**Public Transport:** Buses from Bures, Sudbury, Nayland and Stoke by Nayland to Assington. Then about a mile walk or cycle to the reserve. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

# EAST TOWN PARK

East Town Park is a country park on the east side of Haverhill. The park is at the centre of a network of footpaths which will extend around Haverhill and along the old railway track, linking up with the Haverhill circular walk. East Town Park has many beautiful mature trees which have been supplemented with a programme of new tree-planting. Facilities include the visitor centre, car park, children's play area for 2 to 12 year-olds, a circular walk and old railway walk.

Regular guided walks are organised around the park on subjects such as local and natural history. Contact rangers for more information.

<b>Ownership:</b>	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
<b>Location:</b>	Coupals Road, Haverhill
<b>Getting there:</b>	A1071, turn left into Chalkstone way, then right into Coupals Road
<b>Opening times:</b>	Open all year - 8.30 to dusk
<b>Prices:</b>	Free
<b>Disabled access:</b>	Yes
<b>Dogs allowed:</b>	Yes
<b>Facilities:</b>	Toilets, visitor centre, childrens play area, car park
<b>OS map:</b>	Explorer 210 Newmarket and Haverhill
<b>OS grid reference:</b>	TL686447
<b>Contact:</b>	The Park Rangers
<b>Telephone:</b>	01440 710745
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:parks@stedsbc.gov.uk">parks@stedsbc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.haverhill-uk.com/pages/east-town-park-819.htm">www.haverhill-uk.com/pages/east-town-park-819.htm</a>
<b>Public Transport:</b>	Easily accessible on foot or by bike from the centre of Haverhill.

# CLARE CASTLE COUNTY PARK

Park contains the remains of the 13th Century stone castle set upon its 70ft high motte overlooking the town. The park also contains the former Clare railway station and the goods yard, which operated for over 100 years, with the goods shed now housing displays and a railway goods van on a stretch of track. A 'history trail' reveals the park's secrets to visitors.

A nature trail takes in the River Stour and the Railway Walk, as well as other areas of the park. Walkers may wish to continue along the railway walk from the heart of the park into the wider farmed landscape, or take in the Clare Circular Walk through the town. The more hardy walkers may wish to follow the Stour Valley Path, or the Bury St Edmunds to Clare Walk.

Many events are organised in the Park throughout the year, from practical conservation work to medieval recreations. Contact rangers for details.

**Ownership:** Suffolk County Council

**Location:** Maltings Lane, Clare

**Getting there:** Follow the road through the centre of Clare to reach the Country Park

**Opening times:** Open all year

**Prices:** Pay and Display Car Park

**Disabled access:** Yes

**Dogs allowed:** Yes

**Facilities:** Toilets, visitor centre, childrens play area, self guided trails, interpretation boards

**Leaflet:** Various leaflets available about the history and wildlife of the area

**OS map:** Explorer 210 Newmarket and Haverhill

**OS grid reference:** TL771452

**Contact:** John Laws, Countryside Ranger

**Telephone:** 01787 277491

**Email:** [john.laws@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk](mailto:john.laws@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/countryside/counyparks/clare/index.html](http://www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/countryside/counyparks/clare/index.html)

**Public Transport:** Buses from Haverhill, Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

# CORNARD COUNTRY PARK

Great Cornard Country Park is owned and maintained as an amenity for all residents and visitors to Great Cornard by Cornard Parish Council.

The park has fine views over Sudbury and the Stour Valley. Habitats include: wild flower meadows, ancient woodland and there is a picnic area.

<b>Ownership:</b>	Cornard Parish Council
<b>Location:</b>	Black Horse Lane, Great Cornard
<b>Opening times:</b>	Open all year
<b>Prices:</b>	Free
<b>Disabled Access:</b>	No special facilities for disabled people
<b>Dogs allowed:</b>	Yes
<b>OS map:</b>	Explorer 196 Sudbury, Hadleigh and Dedham Vale
<b>Os grid ref:</b>	894903
<b>Contact:</b>	Michael J Fitt, Council Manager
<b>Telephone:</b>	01787 373212
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:greatcornardpc@tiscali.co.uk">greatcornardpc@tiscali.co.uk</a>
<b>Public Transport:</b>	Buses from Sudbury. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 <a href="http://www.traveline.org.uk">www.traveline.org.uk</a>

# SUDBURY COMMON LANDS

The Sudbury Common Lands are an important wetland area in South Suffolk. They are well-used by local people for recreation and are also managed for wetland flora and fauna. They have the longest recorded history of continuous grazing in East Anglia, and were recorded as water meadows in the Domesday survey of 1086.

The site includes grasslands rich in flora, important wetland wildlife habitats and has connections both with the local medieval textile industry and with Thomas Gainsborough, the painter, who grew up in Sudbury.

<b>Ownership:</b>	Sudbury Common Lands Charity
<b>Location:</b>	South–East side of Sudbury
<b>Opening times:</b>	Open all year
<b>Prices:</b>	Free
<b>Disabled access:</b>	No special facilities for disabled people
<b>Dogs allowed:</b>	Yes
<b>Facilities:</b>	Interpretation boards,
<b>Leaflet:</b>	Yes, and book available from Sudbury Visitor Information Centre
<b>OS map:</b>	Explorer 196 Sudbury, Hadleigh and Dedham Vale
<b>Contact:</b>	Adrian Walters
<b>Telephone:</b>	01284 828219 or 07971 665870
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:adriansclc@aol.com">adriansclc@aol.com</a>
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.sudburysuffolk.com">www.sudburysuffolk.com</a>
<b>Public Transport:</b>	Easily accessible on foot or by bike from Sudbury town centre.

# WHERE YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BIODIVERSITY IN THE STOUR VALLEY



# FLATFORD MILL FIELD STUDIES CENTRE

The Field Studies Council offer over 300 residential and day activities each year for people of all ages at Flatford. The centre buildings, particularly the Mill and Willy Lott's House, are instantly recognisable since they feature in many paintings by John Constable. Only an hour from London and with excellent road and rail access, the centre is at the end of a lane which has no through traffic. It offers visitors of all ages a much sought-after sense of tranquillity to complement a unique learning environment.

## What courses are available?

Contact the centre or visit the Field Studies Council website for further information on the courses and activities available.

**Contact:** Head of Centre - Edward Jackson

**Location:** Flatford

**Address:** Flatford Mill Field Centre  
East Bergholt  
Suffolk  
CO7 6UL

**Telephone:** 0845 330 7368

**Email:** [enquiries.fm@field-studies-council.org](mailto:enquiries.fm@field-studies-council.org)

**Website:** [www.field-studies-council.org/flatfordmill/](http://www.field-studies-council.org/flatfordmill/)

**Public Transport:** Buses from Hadleigh and Ipswich to East Bergholt. Then walk or cycle for 1.5 miles. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

# ASSINGTON MILL

Assington Mill is managed as a nature reserve. The farm has an unusually wide range of diverse habitats arable land, unimproved pasture, woodland, wetland and scrub. In 2003/4, 900 metres of new hedging and one acre of woodland was planted.

A new eleven acre woodland was planted in December 2004 to join nature reserve Spouses Grove with another private nature reserve, Tiger Hill. It contains a high proportion of hazel for the benefit of the local dormice.

At Assington Mill there is ample opportunity to try a whole range of art and craft courses.

## What courses are available?

Assington Mill offers a wide range of traditional craft courses and several natural history courses. Contact the Assington Mill, or view their website for more information.

**Contact:** Anne Holden

**Location:** Assington

**Address:** Assington Mill  
Assington  
Sudbury  
Suffolk  
CO10 5LZ

**Telephone:** 01787 229955

**Email:** [info@assingtonmill.co.uk](mailto:info@assingtonmill.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.assingtonmill.com](http://www.assingtonmill.com)

**Public Transport:** Buses from Bures, Sudbury, Nayland and Stoke by Nayland to Assington. For up-to-date journey times contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

# DAWS HALL, ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL OUTDOORS CENTRE

The Daws Hall Centre is an Essex County Council Outdoor Centre, situated in the Stour Valley, between Bures and Sudbury, just a few miles from Halstead and Colchester. The teaching Centre, open throughout the year to School and Youth groups, is set on a 30 acre nature reserve owned and managed by the Daws Hall Trust.

## What courses are available?

Daws Hall runs a variety of events and courses with a natural history theme. These include adult courses, family days and 'Wild and Crafty' days for children in school holidays.

<b>Contact:</b>	Simon Perry
<b>Location:</b>	Lamarsh
<b>Address:</b>	Daws Hall Centre Henny Road Lamarsh Suffolk CO8 5EX
<b>Tel:</b>	01787 269766
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:s.d.perry@essexcc.gov.uk">s.d.perry@essexcc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.dawshall.fsnet.co.uk">www.dawshall.fsnet.co.uk</a>

# LOSHES MEADOW, ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST RESERVE

The reserve lies on the side of an attractive valley in low hills rising from the River Stour flood plain. It was farmed until the mid-50s then left to 'go wild' until leased by the Essex Wildlife Trust in 1974.

Its main part, east of the road and south of Loshes Brook, contains grassland, woodland, new plantations of hardwood trees, thick hedgerows and a marsh. The higher ground is on a considerable depth of coarse sand; the lower on chalky boulder clay, with a high water table. As often happens, this situation gives rise to spring flushes.

## What courses are available?

Courses for 6th form students, college students and adults. These are run in conjunction with Daws Hall.

**Contact:** Robin Hart

**Location:** Lamarsh

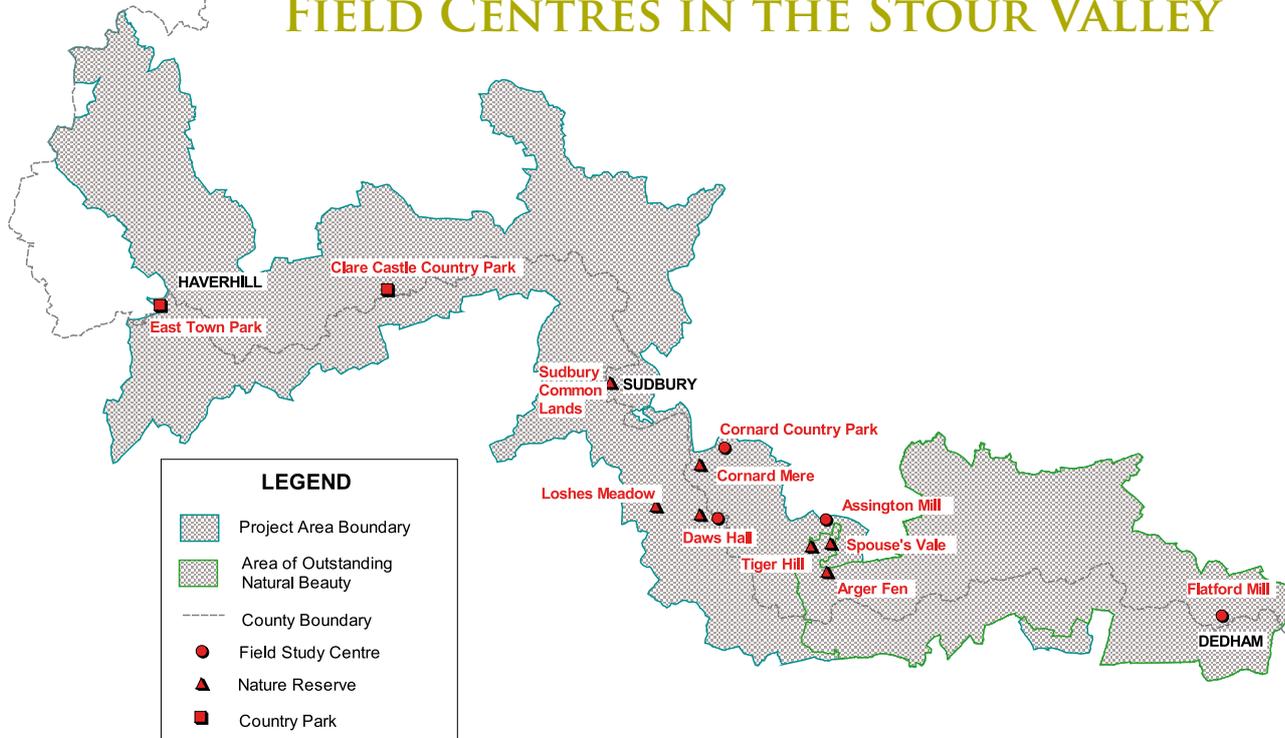
**Address:** Loshes Meadow  
Great Henny  
Ipswich  
Suffolk

**Tel:** 01621 862960

**Email:** [robinhart@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:robinhart@hotmail.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.essexwt.org.uk/Sites/Loshes%20Meadow.htm](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/Sites/Loshes%20Meadow.htm)

# MAP OF NATURE RESERVES AND FIELD CENTRES IN THE STOUR VALLEY



1:125000

Ordnance Survey Landline 29 March 2001

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil pr Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2007