

## BRENT ISLAND PLANT SURVEY 2016

Dates of recent surveys are as follows:

2015	EARLY	3 & 5 June
	LATE	27 July
2016	EARLY	3 & 8 June
	LATE	29 July and 1 August

The areas covered and methodology were the same as those in 2015, and more fully described in the 2015 report. However, it has now been decided to amalgamate Areas 1 and 2 to create a Lower Meadow, and Area 3 becomes the Upper Meadow. The dividing line runs from the bridge to the seat opposite. Results from all surveys have been adjusted accordingly.

Since the 2015 surveys, two management activities have been carried out:

1. **Introducing Yellow-rattle.** Small areas within both Lower and Upper Meadow were sown with seeds of Yellow-rattle on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015, perhaps accompanied by seeds of other species, in order to try increase the occurrence of forbs and reduce the occurrence of grasses in the vegetation. The yellow rattle was sown in two 10m squares centred on grid references SX69587 60303 and SX69504 60283. The seed was donated by Devon Wildlife Trust from a local source.
2. **Mowing.** The annual mowing and raking occurred in September 2015, though much of the Lower Meadow was, for the first time, left uncut.

The 2016 results are shown in the Table below, along with those for 2015 for comparison. In general, the two years are similar in terms of number of species, the list of species and their abundance, but there are some differences:

- **Overall number of species.** This increased from 32 to 37, mainly due to a net increase in the number of forbs.
- **Missing species.** Two species were found in the Meadow in small quantities in 2015, but not in 2016, Ground-elder and Meadow Foxtail, but both were present outside the Meadow.
- **New species.** Eight new species comprised: Yellow-rattle, from introduced seed; Wood Dock, Meadow Buttercup and Southern Marsh-orchid, which may have come in with the Yellow-rattle, or could have been overlooked in 2015; Oxeye Daisy, which may also have been introduced with the Yellow-rattle, or could be a survivor from an earlier introduction; and Angelica, Bluebell and Dandelion, which probably arrived naturally or were overlooked in 2015.
- **Changes in abundance.** The crude measure of abundance revealed few changes. However, flowering Common Sorrel seemed to be more conspicuous in the unmown area of the Lower Meadow in 2016, and this could possibly be the result of the change in mowing regime.

As in 2015, the Late Survey revealed several species not apparent in the Early Survey such as Creeping Soft-grass and Timothy, while others prominent in the Early Survey, such as Pignut, were not found in the Late Survey. It is hoped that all species present in the Meadow will be found in at least one of the surveys.

Thanks to Lesley Austin and Phil Dean for assisting with the Meadow Surveys.

Peter Reay, 18 August 2016

**Brent Island Meadow Survey. The abundance of forbs ('wild flowers'), grasses and other plants in the Lower (formerly Areas 1 & 2) and Upper (Area 3) in 2015 and 2016 using the Domin scale. The abundance given is the maximum recorded in either of the two surveys carried out each year - Early (early June) and Late (late July).**

Overall occurrence		Species	Common name
2015	2016		
<b>Forbs</b>			
♦	♦	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
♦		<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground-elder
	♦	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Angelica
♦	♦	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed
♦	♦	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear
♦	♦	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
♦	♦	<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut
	♦	<i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i>	Southern Marsh-orchid
♦	♦	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
	♦	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scriptus</i>	Bluebell
♦	♦	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear
	♦	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy
♦	♦	<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil
♦	♦	<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	Hemlock Water-dropwort
♦	♦	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
♦	♦	<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain
	♦	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup
♦	♦	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
	♦	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle
♦	♦	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel
♦	♦	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
	♦	<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	Wood Dock
♦	♦	<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser Stitchwort
	♦	<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.	Dandelion
♦	♦	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
♦	♦	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
♦	♦	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle
♦	♦	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell

2015	
LOWER	UPPER

O	O
R	
LF	O
R	O
	O
LF	F
LA	F
LF	O
LF	O
R	R
F	A
LF	LA
F	F
F	F
O	
O	O
O	F
LA	A
R	O
F	F

2016	
LOWER	UPPER

R	R
R	
LF	O
O	R
	LF
LF	F
	R
LA	F
R	
LF	O
R	
LF	O
	R
F	F
LF	LA
R	O
F	F
LF	LF
F	F
O	R
O	R
R	R
O	F
LA	A
	LF
LF	F

**Grasses**

♦	♦	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent
♦		<i>Alopecurus pratense</i>	Meadow Foxtail
♦	♦	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass
♦	♦	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass
♦	♦	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail
♦	♦	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
♦	♦	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog
♦	♦	<i>Holcus mollis</i>	Creeping Soft-grass
♦	♦	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass
♦	♦	<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy
♦	♦	<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass
♦	♦	<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass

A	A
R	
A	A
O	
O	F
F	F
A	A
F	A
LF	LA
F	F
LF	LF
LF	LF

A	A
A	A
O	
O	F
F	O
A	A
LA	A
LF	LF
F	F
LF	LF
F	LF

**Other relevant species**

♦	♦	<i>Luzula campestris</i>	Field Wood-rush
♦	♦	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
32	37	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF SPECIES</b>	

LF	
LA	
33	28

LF	
LA	R
35	35