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Bra225. Coggeshall Hall Farm (30.3 ha), TL 863205

This river valley site comprises a mosaic of open Cricket-bat willow (*Salix alba* var. *caerulea*) plantations, with some flower-rich grassland and associated hedgerows. The adjacent sections of the River Blackwater are also included.

The Site is primarily identified as a key foraging area for the nationally rare bumblebee *Bombus ruderatus*. This bee has declined in Britain to the point of near extinction, and is now the subject of a national Biodiversity Action Plan in order to help stabilise and increase populations. Its key forage plants are thought to be Comfrey (*Symphytum* spp.), Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) and, later in the year, Bindweeds (*Calystegia* spp.), all of which are widespread here. Some areas of species-rich meadowland are included as additional foraging habitat for this and other scarce invertebrates. The fauna includes several other scarce Essex insects, listed on the provisional Essex Red Data List. These include the bumblebee *Bombus rupestris* and the bees *Sphecodes niger* and *Lasioglossum pauxillum*.

The marshy willow plantations also support an interesting and increasingly scarce flora, including Blue Water-speedwell (*Veronica anagallis-aquatica*), Pink Water-speedwell (*Veronica catenata*), Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). The river supports a good population of the Nationally Scarce River Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fluviatilis*). The fauna of the site includes Otters within the river corridor and several breeding populations of Red and Amber-listed birds of conservation concern.

Selection Criteria: HCr12, HCr23, HCr27, SCr12, SCr13

Equivalent Current Criteria: HC14, HC20, HC29, SC1, SC19

Commentary: selection needs to focus on the specific habitats being protected, which are those capable of supporting the bumblebee population. Riverine habitats need to be evaluated more critically.

Priority Habitats: Lowland Fens

(Priority Habitats or “Habitats of Principal Importance in England” are equivalent to the former status as “UK BAP Priority Habitats”)