



Bunkers Park

Wildflower Meadows and Pastures

Grasslands provide feeding and breeding habitats for a wide range of birds, small mammals and insects. These are also important for wildflowers.

On Bunkers Park, varying the management of the grasslands by having both meadow and pastures creates an important role in the wildlife interest of the park.

Meadows are the name given to grasslands that are traditionally cut for hay. Meadows are valued for their aesthetics as well as for their wildlife interest. With their tall grasses and colourful flowers waving in the wind during the early summer months before being cut for hay they have inspired many writers and artists as they characteristically represent a English landscape.

Meadows contain a great variety of wildlife interest. A profusion of wildflowers adds colour to the grassland with butterflies and other insects searching these out for the nectar that they provide. Small mammals such as Mice and Voles inhabit the meadows of Bunkers Park and on a sunny day the air is filled with the sound of grasshoppers. Also seen inhabiting these grasslands are ground nesting birds such as the Skylark.

Pastures are grasslands that are typically grazed by sheep or cattle. These animals have a different effect on the grasslands by being more selective in the grasses they eat. This creates a variety of grass heights which can benefit a wide range of species such as spider populations. The dung from the sheep and cattle are also important for species such as Dung Beetles.

Grasses within Bunkers Park comprise a range of grasses typical of meadows and pastures. These include Crested Dogs Tail *Cynosaurus cristatus*, Red fescue *Festuca rubra*, Common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and Smooth –stalked meadow grass *Poa pratensis*.

Wildflowers within these grasslands include Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Ox-eye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, and Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*.