

Vascular Plant Records for Larkhill Dune Heath, Formby

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Introduction

A visit to the heath was made on 2nd July 2004. A list of vascular taxa was made to compare with one compiled in early October 1982 (Table 1). An asterisk indicates a non-native taxon.

Table 1. Vascular plants recorded on Larkhill Dune Heath in 2004 and 1982.

Vascular taxon	2004	1982
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	+	+
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	+	+
<i>Amelanchier lamarkii</i> *	+	
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	+	+
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	+	+
<i>Betula pendula</i>		+
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	+	
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	+	+
<i>Calystegia silvatica</i> *	+	
<i>Carex arenaria</i>	+	+
<i>Carex hirta</i>	+	+
<i>Carex nigra</i>	+	+
<i>Carex ovalis</i>		+
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	+	
<i>Chamaerion angustifolium</i>	+	+
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	+	+
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	+	
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	+	
<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	+	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>		+
<i>Danthonia decumbens</i>	+	
<i>Daucus carota</i>	+	+
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	+	+
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	+	
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	+	
<i>Festuca ovina</i>	+	+
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	+	
<i>Galium palustre</i>	+	
<i>Galium verum</i>	+	

Hieracium umbellatum	+	+
Holcus lanatus	+	+
Hypochaeris radicata	+	+
Juncus articulatus	+	
Juncus bufonius		+
Juncus conglomeratus	+	+
Juncus effusus		+
Juncus squarrosus	+	+
Juncus tenuis*	+	
Lathyrus pratensis	+	
Leontodon saxatile	+	
Lotus corniculatus	+	
Lotus pedunculatus	+	+
Luzula multiflora	+	+
Lysimachia vulgaris	+	
Lythrum salicaria	+	
Malus domestica*	+	
Nardus stricta	+	+
Ononis repens	+	
Ornithopus perpusillus		+
Persicaria amphibia		+
Pinus sylvestris	+	+
Plantago lanceolata		+
Plantago major	+	
Poa humilis	+	
Prunus sp.*	+	
Ranunculus acris	+	+
Ranunculus repens	+	
Rubus caesius	+	
Rubus fruticosus agg.	+	+
Rumex acetosa	+	+
Rumex acetosella	+	+
Rumex crispus	+	
Salix aurita	+	
Salix cinerea	+	
Salix repens	+	+
Salix x sericans	+	
Salix x smithiana	+	
Senecio jacobaea	+	+
Senecio sylvatica	+	
Silene latifolia	+	
Solidago gigantea*	+	
Sorbus aucuparia	+	
Sorbus intermedia*	+	+

Trifolium campestre		+	
Trifolium repens		+	+
Ulex europaeus		+	+
Vicia cracca		+	+
Vicia sativa		+	

Totals 78 69 40

Discussion

A total of 78 vascular taxa was recorded during the two surveys. It is likely that a few more would be added with further visits later in the season. Only seven species seen in 1982 were not refound in 2004, but 38 new taxa were added, probably reflecting the increasing maturity of the vegetation. In particular, ten of the new plants are shrubs or trees which, according to Smith (1982) were hardly present then.

Only seven non-native taxa were found, representing 9% of the total flora. This compares favourably with the 28.9% introduced vascular taxa for the Sefton Coast dune system as a whole (Smith 2003).

The most notable taxa on the site include *Salix aurita*, for which this is the only known locality on the Sefton Coast. Also, *Amelanchier lamarkii*, although an introduced shrub, is rare on the dune coast. Only one plant, *Ornithopus perpusillus*, is listed as a Species of Conservation Importance in North West England (Regional Biodiversity Steering Group 1999). This was not found in July 1994, but a more thorough search would probably relocate it.

Gateley (1995) recorded 31 vascular taxa on Larkhill Dune Heath but his field survey was carried out from December 1993 to February 1994, so many species would have been missed. He lists only five species not found in the current survey, namely *Aira praecox*, *Pinus nigra*, *Poa pratensis*, *Trifolium pratense* and an introduced *Spiraea* sp. None is particularly notable.

References

Gateley P.S. 1995. Sefton Coast Dune Heath Survey 1993-1994. Report to Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.

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