

Midland Metro

G2.5 Ancient Countryside

Special importance attaches to ancient semi-natural habitats that owe their character to long-term freedom from major change and usually to the long continuance of traditional kinds of land management as well, eg coppice woodlands, water meadows, lowland heaths, chalk downlands. These habitats cannot be recreated quickly (if at all) or transplanted and neither can the special assemblages of plants and animals they support (including species not found elsewhere). Most habitats in this category have suffered large-scale reductions in the post-war period due mainly to agricultural intensification. They are discussed in Rackham (1986). There are no widely accepted rules for quantifying the significance of ancient countryside loss, but any such loss would be deemed significant in the context of this assessment.

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