

Broads Authority advice to the Environment Agency on the report 'Condition Assessment at Catfield Fen: consideration of recent trends in distribution of Potamogeton and Liparis in Unit 3'. Provided by Mr Harris 24 June 2014 and undertaken by the Landscape Partnership

Having considered the Landscape Partnership report the Broads Authority can advise on the following points:

1. The new evidence regarding the Potamogeton's and pH values are supportive of previous evidence submitted from Mr Harris, RSPB and BA.
2. The report provides further evidence that the direction of change of the vegetation community is negative and away from the base-rich community. This further information of ecological change is of concern for the Broads Authority. It is worth noting that not only are the Catfield fens some of the most important examples of unpolluted valley fen habitat in Western Europe, but support c. 95% of the fenland *Liparis loeselii*. This feature requires that any acceleration in acidification or increase in area of acid transition mire is understood and controlled where possible. Although acid transition mire is a feature of interest and small areas have been found at Catfield over many decades, the Broads Authority considers that its expansion is likely to be negative for Broads species of conservation concern. At Catfield any expansion in acid transition mire is likely to threaten a critical species *Liparis loeselii* which occurs almost nowhere else in the UK, making this an issue of national concern.
3. The report confirms the concern about hydro-ecological environment.
4. The report confirms the shortcomings in condition monitoring and assessment that have already been raised previously by the Broads Authority and others.
5. Finally on the basis of this information the Broads Authority support a reclassification of Unit 3 to 'unfavourable declining' on the basis of this evidence if NE considers this relevant.