Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Pond Report for Wakelyns Organic Agroforestry

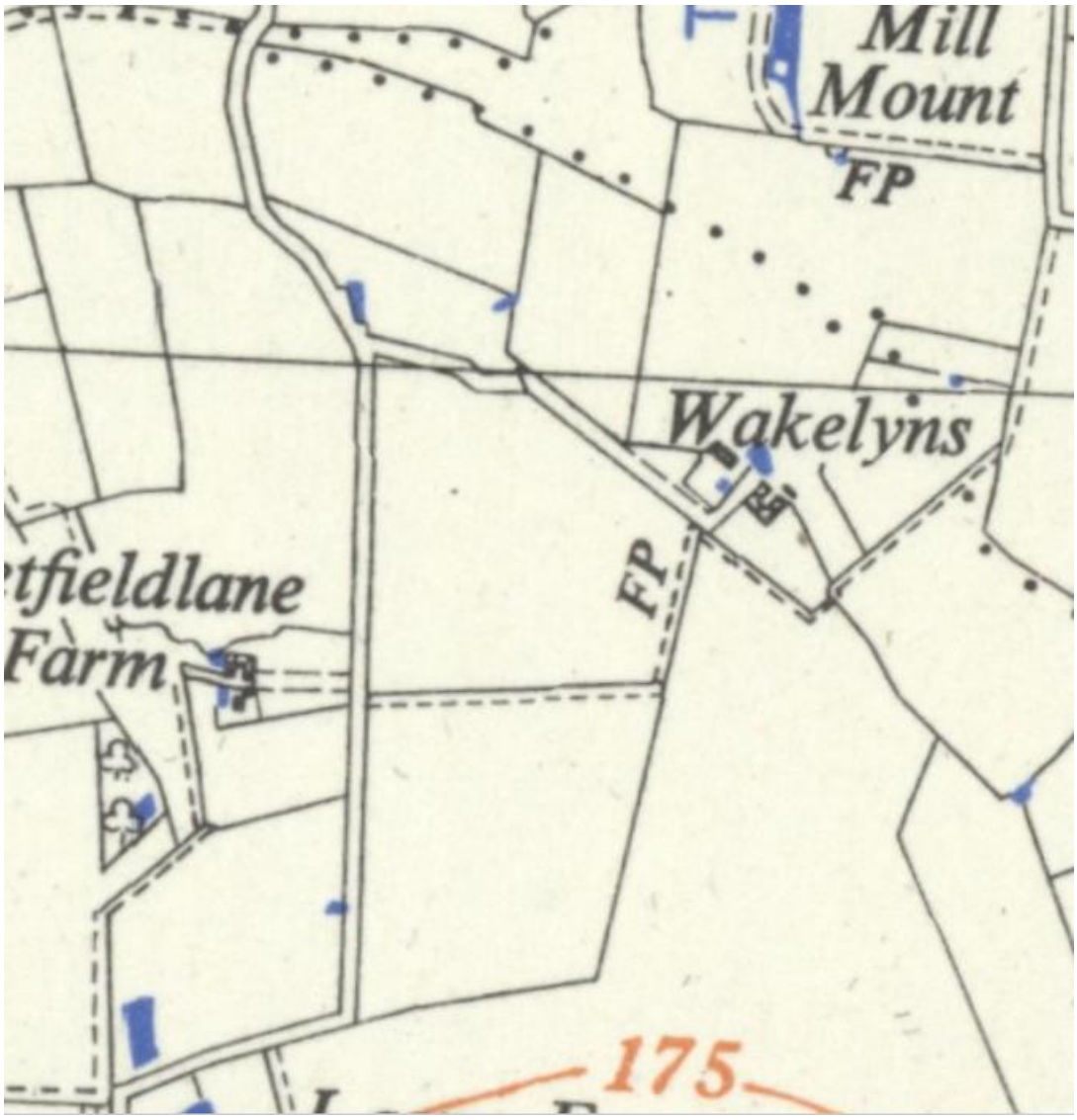
Visit conducted 4th June 2020.

Adviser: Sam Hanks

Introduction:

The four ponds at Wakelyns provide an important ecological component of the farm for a wide range of species, farmland ponds generally can be diverse and important areas for wildlife providing resources otherwise not available in the farmed environment. The best farmland ponds have a range of depths, shallow banks, some scrub, clean water, and an abundance of aquatic plants. All ponds progress, through the process of succession, to dry habitats; therefore, management is necessary to keep ponds in the best environmental condition. Historically this management would have been done as part of the farming year to keep ponds open for livestock or other agricultural use.

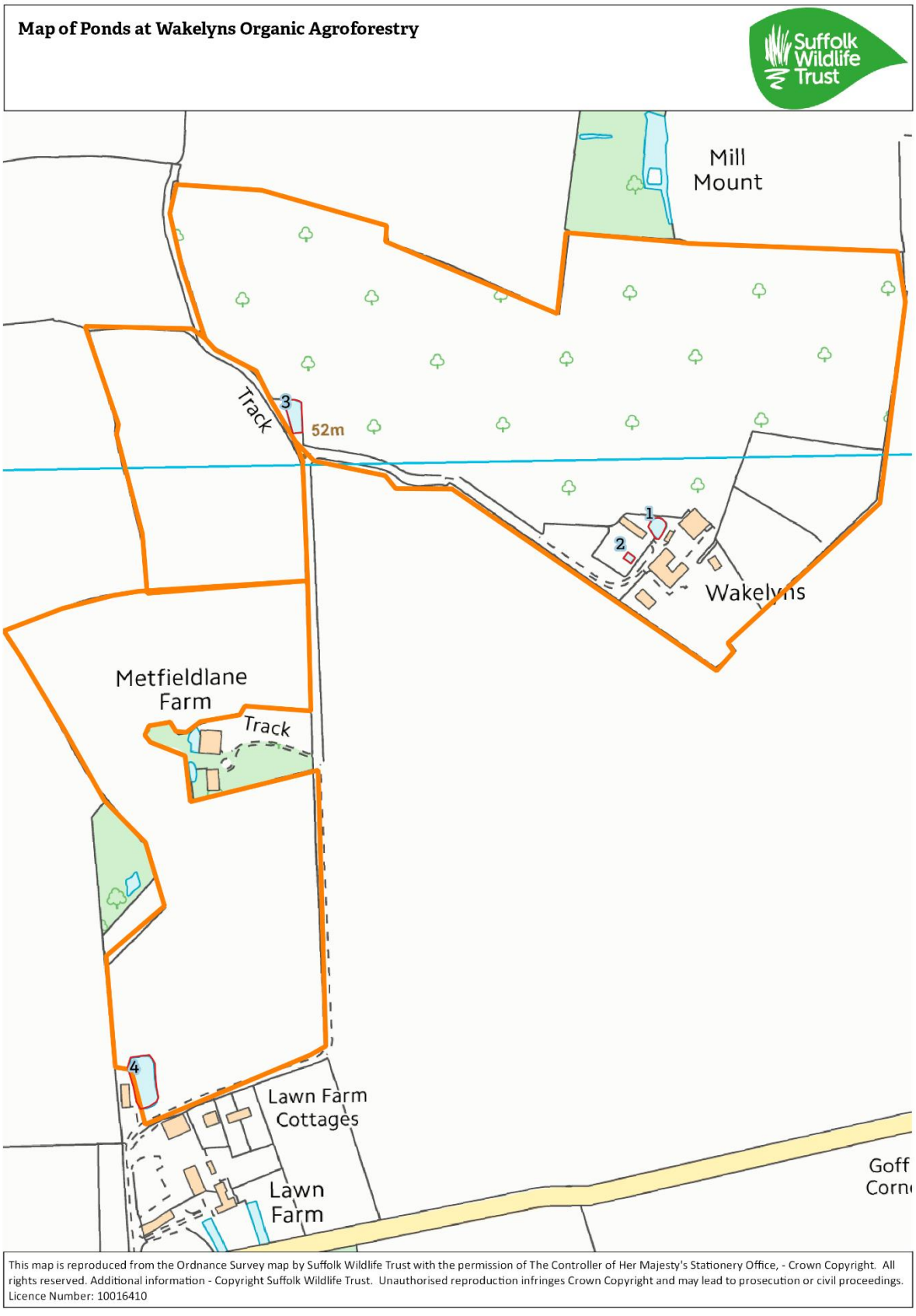
All four of the ponds dealt with here hold water year-round. There is another pond on the edge of the meadow area that appears to be normally dry – as this area is important for turtle dove no management is recommended here. There are an additional three ponds visible on early maps available on the National Library of Scotland website and reproduced below. These appear to be associated with field corners or trackways and are likely to have been used for drainage and stock watering.



Screen grab of OS 1:25000 1937 – 61. Available on National Library of Scotland website. (link above)

Management of the ponds described below should be prioritised to the ponds in the latest stage of succession first (3 then 4, 2 &1) and not all of the ponds here should be restored in the same year. Restoration should be undertaken by skilled machinery operators between September and December with favourable weather. Restoration can be completed between December and March, but conditions are often not favourable.

Map of Ponds:


Map of Ponds at Wakelyns Organic Agroforestry
Mill Mount
Track
3
52m
1
2
Wakelyns
Metfieldlane Farm
Track
4
Lawn Farm Cottages
Lawn Farm
Goff
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Pond Observations and Recommendations:

Pond 1:

Description: Large Farmhouse Pond, immediately adjacent to farmhouse access and farmyard. 0.02ha. the northern edge is bounded by the agroforestry operation. Pond is duckweed dominated with no visible aquatic macrophytes at the time of survey, some emergent aquatics on the pond edges create a little transitional habitat. The pond is eutrophic and likely has a high organic sediment load suppressing plant growth. Alternatively, there may be fish present, but none were seen on the survey visit – no netting was undertaken. These conditions could also be the result of significant polluted farmyard runoff, although this seems unlikely. The pond appears to be used occasionally for abstraction. The pond is steeply sided and appears to be quite deep, with banks dominated with bramble scrub.
Plant species: - Duckweed *Lemna minor* - Bullrush *Typha latifolia* - Great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum* - Creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* - Mares tail *Hippuris vulgaris*
Amphibian species: - None recorded
Other biological records: - Not made
Management recommendations: If cyprinid fish are not present, there would be some wildlife benefit to desilting this pond. However, it is likely to be difficult to access much of the ponds perimeter due to its location near the farmhouse and farm buildings. Given these factors and the fact that there are other ponds with greater potential here this pond is of a lower priority for restoration. Bullrush can become quite invasive, monitor its extent and consider management if becoming dominant. General management points that should be used here: - Maintain open sunny water by occasionally cutting back vegetation to the south. - Rotationally manage bankside vegetation to create a range of vegetation growth stages, retaining significant scrub and creating some low clear areas. - Consider creating shallow sloping banks or bays to provide warm shallow water, consider also historical context of this pond.
Images:

Pond 2:

Description: Small farm garden pond, visible in 1880's maps. Steep sided to N, E and W, with shallower slope on S. Entirely shaded by hedgerow and scrub.
Plant Species: Water starwort, *Callitriche sp.* Flag Iris, *Iris pseudacorus* Bittersweet, *Solanam dulcamara*
Amphibian Species: None recorded
Other Biological records: Not made
Management recommendations: The best approach to improve this pond will be to reduce shading from the garden side. It is another that is difficult to access to dredge out, so do this only if you have machinery on site that is able to, suggest first let the light in then reassess in the following years.
Images:

Pond 3:

Description: Large pond on corner of driveway, alongside green lane, possibly of some historical significance. The pond runs north to south on the eastern side of the green lane. There are steep sides to the N, E and W of the pond with a gently sloping aspect to the SW corner, which appears to link to the green lane, implying that this may have been access to the pond from the lane in its original use. Currently entirely shaded with blackthorn, sallow and elm, and almost completely silted up, just a few aquatic plants remain. The pond appears to be fed by a field drain that is linked to the organic land, there was clear water within the pond on this visit.
Plant Species: Water Mint, *Mentha aquatica.*
Amphibian Species: Not recorded.
Other Biological records: Not made.
Management recommendations: A high priority for restoration. Completely remove shading scrub around the S and E sides. Coppice (or high coppice) the hedgerow adjoining the green lane to the west and thereafter manage as a low hedgerow, retain significant field maple tree specimens. Thereafter desilt the pond to the original clay base – retaining interesting profiles of possible significance.
Images:

Pond 4:

Description: Large roadside pond between agroforestry and industrial unit. Bounded by mature scrub but large enough to be open in the middle. Appears to be deep and steep sided, with shallower aspect to the south. Several aquatic plants in evidence, much woody debris within pond.
Plant Species: Bittersweet, *Solanum dulcamara* Water mint, *Mentha aquatica* Water cress, *Nasturium officinale* Hoary willowherb, *Epilobium hirsutum* Bullrush, *Typha latifolia*
Amphibian Species: None recorded
Other Biological records: Willow warbler Greenfinch
Management recommendations: Medium priority for management – pond could be subject to polluted runoff from adjoining industrial area. Any restoration undertaken should account for the high quality of the surrounding scrub and be phased so only part of this is lost in any one year – cyclical management of this scrub would be beneficial. Pond holds a good amount of water; pumping would likely be necessary to facilitate effective restoration. Desilting should be considered in future years after pond 3 has been restored and allowed to regenerate for some years.
Images: