

with hay or commercial sheep food. The health of the sheep was checked daily.

CONSEQUENCES

Vegetation development: Willow regrowth has totally been suppressed and establishment of new seedlings prevented since the introduction of the Hebridean sheep. At the site no willow shoot have been observed since the grazing sheep have been introduced. Wet grassland vegetation has established, with characteristic plant species including jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*, saw sedge *Cladium mariscus* and glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*.

Sheep management: The sheep are hardy enough to be left outside to graze year-round. They are easy to shepherd and can be excluded from areas where grazing is undesirable by erecting temporary electric fencing e.g. during the breeding season for breeding waders such as lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. Every year the sheep have successfully produced offspring.

Conclusions: The Hebridean sheep have effectively kept the site totally clear of newly



Figure 2. Hebridean sheep *Ovis aries* at Kingfishers Bridge.

sprouting willow shoots and willow seedlings. This area has now developed into a wet meadow supporting breeding waders and wintering wildfowl.

REFERENCES

Anon. (1995) *Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report - Volume II: Action Plans*. Tranche 1, Vol. 2, p.230.