

SISTON COMMON

A brief history of cattle on the Common

Siston Common has a long history of livestock grazing, with cattle shaping its landscape for hundreds of years and helping to create the species-rich mosaic of grassland and wildflowers that the area became known for.

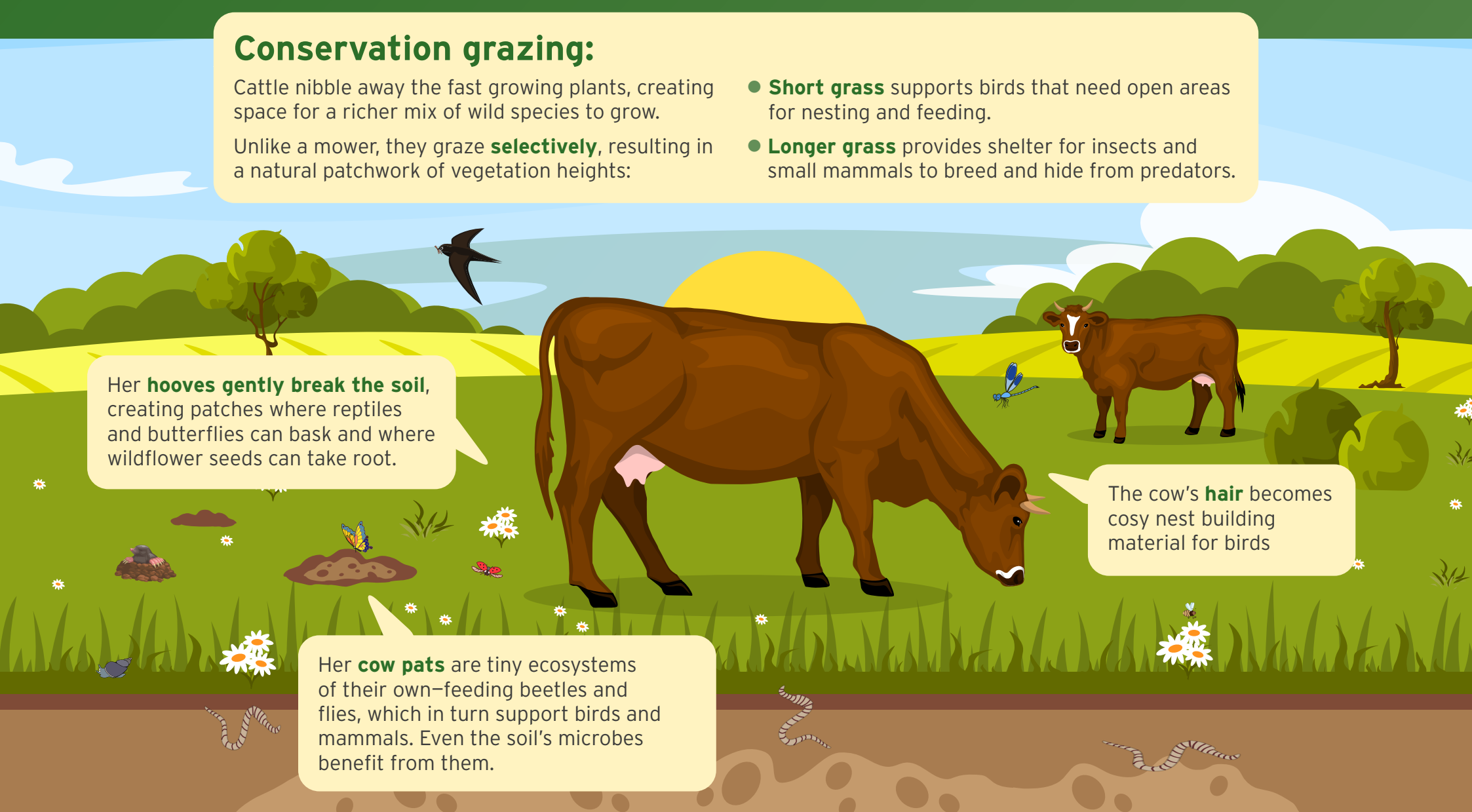
Local farmers once grazed a variety of animals here - including cattle, goats, horses, ducks and chickens - making the common a lively agricultural centre of rural life. Old photographs and local accounts describe herdsman guiding cattle across the open land, reflecting traditional pastoral practices that kept scrub at bay and maintained the Common's diverse ecosystem.

Conservation grazing:

Cattle nibble away the fast growing plants, creating space for a richer mix of wild species to grow.

Unlike a mower, they graze **selectively**, resulting in a natural patchwork of vegetation heights:

- **Short grass** supports birds that need open areas for nesting and feeding.
- **Longer grass** provides shelter for insects and small mammals to breed and hide from predators.



Her **hooves gently break the soil**, creating patches where reptiles and butterflies can bask and where wildflower seeds can take root.

The cow's **hair** becomes cosy nest building material for birds

Her **cow pats** are tiny ecosystems of their own—feeding beetles and flies, which in turn support birds and mammals. Even the soil's microbes benefit from them.

Thanks to grazing cattle, biodiversity blossoms.