

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

01: Faccombe

Landscape Character Area: Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Downland Mosaic and Assarts

Geology: Chalk bedrock overlaid in places with Clay-with-Flints deposits. Sand and Gravel river terrace deposits to the west.

Biodiversity: This area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB and consists of an undulating landscape of large areas of chalk capped by a superficial deposit of clay. There are numerous ancient semi-natural woodlands of oak-ash-hazel coppice, and remnant pockets of downland on the steeper slopes. Sites of significant nature conservation value include Linkenholt Hanging, Sidley Wood and the complex around Pilot Hill. The boundary had been determined by the county boundary, the geology and strong contour data and the clusters of both existing BAP habitats and number of high opportunity areas for downland restoration and reversion of planted ancient woodland back to semi-natural woodland. Key species include adonis blue butterfly, chiltern gentian and fragrant orchid.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

02: Vernham's Dean to Hurstbourne Tarant

Landscape Character Area: Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Downland Mosaic and Assarts / Major River Valleys

Geology: Chalk bedrock with Sand and Gravel river terrace deposits along the north-east boundary.

Biodiversity: This area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB and consists primarily of a chalk downland landscape on a steepish mostly north east facing scarp running along the west side of the Bourne Rivulet from Hurstbourne Tarrant to the county boundary at Vernham Dean and continuing into Wiltshire. Sites of significant nature conservation value include Rushmoor & Conholt Down SSSI and various remnant downland SINCs including Kiblet Down and Hurstbourne Tarrant Down. The boundary had been determined by the county boundary, the geology and strong contour data, the cluster of existing BAP habitats and the large area of land suitable for downland restoration.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

03: Northern Escarpment: West Woodhay to Watership down

Landscape Character Area: Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Greensand Terrace Major Scarps and Hangers / Downland Mosaic and Assarts

Geology: Chalk bedrock with some deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel

Biodiversity: This area comprises a steep north facing chalk scarp extending from West Woodhay SSSI on the western county border to Watership Down SINC and White Hill/Stubbington Down SINC in the east. The area supports many relic areas of unimproved calcareous grassland, in particular Burghclere Beacon SSSI and Ladle Hill SSSI and numerous downland SINCs, some of which once formed part of the once more extensive Cannon Heath Down, Great Litchfield Down and Upper Woodcott Down. The area is important for birds including stone curlew and lapwing

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

04: Silchester/Tadley (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: North Hampshire Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest / Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation

Geology: Clay, Silt and Sand bedrock in the eastern half with Sand bedrock for the western half. Deposits mainly consist of Sand and Gravel, and Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel.

Biodiversity: This extension into Hampshire from Berkshire includes the extensive ancient oakwood, Pamber Forest; two heathland Commons and a series of unimproved wet meadows. This association of ancient woodland, heath and grassland supports a diverse range of plants and animals. Pamber Forest is dominated by sessile oak with an understorey of coppiced hazel and a ground flora dominated by bracken with bilberry and heather locally frequent on the poor, acidic soils. To north of the site, woodland grades into the heathland of Silchester Common, which together with Tadley Common, represents the largest remnants of the once extensive north Hampshire heathland to the west of the River Loddon. The west side of Pamber Forest is bounded by a series of unimproved neutral to acid, wet unimproved meadows which support an outstandingly rich flora. The heathlands supports the silver-studded blue and grayling butterflies, both of which are declining nationally and the three bird species listed in Annex 1 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Birds: woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler. The BOA extends as far as Silchester Brook to take in the ancient woodlands surrounding the Roman Town of Silchester and the extensive oak and pine plantations within Benyon's Enclosure which support bilberry and heather in the ground flora.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Heath
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Meadow

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

05: Loddon Catchment

Landscape Character Area: North Hampshire Lowland and Heath / Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest / Open Downland and Downland Mosaic and Assarts in the southern reaches

Geology: A bedrock of mainly Clay, Silt and Sand, with areas of Sand in central and eastern regions and Chalk to the southern edges. River terrace deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel reach down through valleys and Sand and Gravel deposits occur around the valleys.

Biodiversity: The rivers arise from a line of chalk springs along the northern edge of the chalk outcrop east of Basingstoke and flow slowly northwards across the clays, sands and gravels of the Thames basin. The valleys are broad and shallow and so are liable to flood. Although much of these valleys now contain agriculturally improved grasslands there remains many relic areas of species rich grassland, swamp and fen including Basing Fen SINC, Mapledurwell Fen SSSI, Stanford End SSSI, Greywell Fen SSSI and many more SINCs. The headwaters of the Loddon, in particular, contain a nationally restricted type of chalk peatland which presents a high opportunity to restore to species-rich fen meadow. Odiham Common, Butter Wood and Hook Common SSSIs, all relicts of the ancient Odiham Forest are also included in the BOA along with numerous other important commons, village greens and ancient woodlands. The varied geology and wide floodplains have resulted in a matrix of different habitat types, supporting a diverse range of species.

Targets and opportunities:

- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Meadow
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Heath

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

07: East Woodhay to Headley

Landscape Character Area: North Hampshire Lowland and Heath / Hampshire Downs (small areas to south-west)

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation / Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest

Geology: Bedrock of Sand and Clay, Silt and Sand, with deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel and Sand and Gravel along the northern fringes.

Biodiversity: This area derives from the old Forest of Freemantle which originally formed a complex belt of forest lying across the north of the County, and may once have been part of the Great Forest of Windsor. It extends almost to the chalk escarpment where there are a number of medieval deer parks. The area contains a complex series of ancient commons which would once have been covered by heathland and acid grassland with a scatter of small woods. The BOA includes Highclere Park SSSI and an exceptionally high concentration and ancient woodland and unimproved grassland SINCs.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Heath
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Meadow
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

08: The East Hampshire Hangers

Landscape Character Area: Hampshire Downs, Western Weald Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Greensand Terrace Major Scarps and Hangers / Downland Mosaic. Assarts & Wooded Downland Plateau along western boundary

Geology: Predominantly Upper Greensand and Chalk bedrocks along with Mudstone along the eastern boundary. Some deposits of Clay-with-Flints on higher ground and Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel in river valleys.

Biodiversity: The Hangers ('hangra' meaning wooded slopes) lie on two scarp faces; one on upper greensand, the other on chalk. The scarp face which is on upper greensand is deeply dissected by small stream valley resulting in groups of Hangers commencing below the South Downs at Buriton and extending beyond the northern limit of the chalk scarp north of Binstead. The more spectacular chalk scarp, separated by a Gault Clay Vale, runs roughly parallel to the greensand with a plateau averaging half a mile between. The general aspect is south east or north east but the deep valleys produce south, north and east slopes with differences in climate and flora. The majority of the woodlands are SSSIs and support a wide range of woodland types including yew (in some cases developed over former juniper scrub), yew/beechness and beech/ash with beech/wych elm/field maple ash and oak /hazel on deeper soils, and moist ash/alder wood by escarpment-foot springs. Ash, beech and elm all occur in coppice forms. The ground flora of this series of woods is collectively rich and includes large populations of many rare or locally distributed species such as white helleborine, narrow-leaved helleborine, broad-leaved helleborine, and bird's-nest orchid. The many natural rock exposures on the Upper Greensand Hangers are of particular interest and support nationally rare mosses. The area has a long history of woodland management including pollarding and coppicing. It also supports nationally rare snails including *Helicodonta obvolvata* and *Ena montana*.

In addition to the woodland, the area is also important for chalk grassland, although many of the sites have been encroached by secondary woodland/scrub.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Lowland Meadow

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

09: Itchen Valley

Landscape Character Area: Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys / South Hampshire Lowland and Heath / Hampshire Downs / Mid Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Major River Valleys / Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest

Geology: Bedrock of Chalk to the northern half of the river valley, some Clay, Silt and Sand, and Sand in the central and southern areas. Deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel in the northern half, with desposits of Calcareous Tufa and Clay and Silt, and Sand and Gravels in the southern regions.

Biodiversity: The Itchen is a classic chalk stream and is botanically very important with extensive areas of unimproved vegetation along its length including fen, carr and herb-rich meadows, much of it on peat. Many of the meadows were managed as water meadows in the 19th century. The rich vegetation supports important populations of wetland birds and the river supports one of the few populations of the native white-clawed crayfish remaining in the rivers of southern England as well as breeding otters, nationally important populations of water vole and Southern damselfly, and freshwater fish including bullhead, brook lamprey and Atlantic salmon.

Targets and opportunities:

- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Meadow
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Reedbed

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

10: The Forest of Bere

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Lowland and Heath, Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest / Major River Valleys

Geology: Predominantly Clay, Silt and Sand and Sand bedrock with Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel river terrace deposits in the valleys.

Biodiversity: The core area of the Forest of Bere is centred around the Southwick Estate and includes the present Forest of Bere SINC, West Walk SINC, and Bishops' Inclosure (SINC) on the western boundary of the BOA, owned by the Bishop of Winchester in medieval times. This area contains high concentrations of ancient woodlands, wooded common, wood pasture, unimproved grassland and relic heath and is of particular importance for its small-leaved lime woods.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Heath
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Meadow

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

11: Portsdown Hill

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Open Downland

Geology: Chalk bedrock with no notable superficial deposits.

Biodiversity: Portsdown Hill SSSI is itself an isolated east-west chalk anticline with a long south-facing escarpment. Despite only limited grazing and extensive disturbance, these slopes still support a rich chalk grassland flora and a rich and diverse insect fauna. The BOA extends this area to include other relic fragments of specie-rich chalk grassland (SINCs) and areas of high suitability for restoration to chalk grassland.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

12: The South Downs (East Hampshire)

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Downs / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Downland Mosaic and Assarts / Major River Valleys

Geology: Chalk bedrock with some deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel

Biodiversity: This area covers the chalk downland on the predominantly north-facing escarpment of the South Downs between Coulters Dean SSSI in the west and Old Winchester Hill SSSI in the east, passing through Butser Hill SSSI. Butser Hill SSSI is a most dramatic chalk massif which has been eroded to leave a series of deep combs which on the south-east flanks support dense yew woods and sheep-grazed chalk grassland on the remaining slopes of the Hill. The calcareous yew woods are outstanding examples of a habitat with a very small representation in Britain and the downland flora is varied and rich with the north-facing escarpment supporting an exceptionally rich bryophyte flora. Old Winchester Hill SSSI is an Iron age hill-fort situated at the western extremity of the South Downs BOA overlooking the Meon Valley. Here all stages from open grassland through scrub to mature woodland are represented. The downland on the south-facing slope of the hill-fort in particular is renowned as one of the richest botanical sites in southern England, containing probably the largest population of the scarce round-headed rampion in the country. The SSSI also supports an extensive stand of juniper contains in excess of 5,000 bushes of varying ages, representing one of the largest stands in Hampshire and about 5% of the total population in southern England. Also of significance in this BOA are large tracts of ancient semi-natural and replanted woodland and secondary woodland which are designated SINCS; at Hen Wood, Hyden Woods, Ditcham Woods and Queen Elizabeth Country Park, plus relic areas of unimproved chalk grassland at Tegdown, Long Down, Hockham Down and Wether Down. The area is also important for rare arable flora and farmland birds including corn bunting.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

13: Blackwater Valley (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: North Hampshire Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation

Geology: Sand bedrock in the eastern and southern reaches with Clay, Silt and Sand in the western reaches. The whole area is overlaid with Sand and Gravel or Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel deposits.

Biodiversity: This area is a river valley in the far north-east of Hampshire. The Blackwater river has a number of tributaries each with its own character. The main one is Cove Brook, which contains a wide diversity of habitats and open spaces supporting a multitude of species, it supports extensive marginal vegetation beds in its lower reach. Streams draining into the river from the surrounding heathlands can be acid and fairly poor in plants, but a few of these support wild Brown Trout. The upper stretches of the Blackwater have luxuriant marginal vegetation dominated by reedmace and branched bur-reed. The river supports a healthy fish and Odonata population. The valley floor contains over 150 lakes and ponds mostly created by gravel workings. Gravel extraction is now confined to the north of the valley. Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers nest in these bare gravel conditions, and this area is important for breeding, wintering and migrant bird species in southern England including redshant and lapwing. The gravel pits at Eversley and Yatley hold a nationally important wintering population of Gadwall. Bats and great crested grebes thrive in the open conditions. Surrounding wetland areas include alder carr, reedbeds and marshland. Rowhill Copse constitutes one of the few ancient semi-natural woodland sites within the valley. The riverside meadows support species such as greater birds foot trefoil, bladder sedge and marsh stitchwort, whereas the drier neutral soils contain species such as sweet vernal grass and tormentil. There is a rich invertebrate fauna including several rare flies.

Targets and opportunities:

- Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Wet Woodland
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Lowland Meadow
- Reedbed
- Enhancement of gravel pits for biodiversity following mineral extraction

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

14: Ashford Hill (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: North Hampshire Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation / Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest

Geology: Clay, Silt and Sand and Sand bedrock with Sand and Gravel deposits in the north east and a combination of Sand and Gravel with Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel deposits in the river valley.

Biodiversity: This extension into Hampshire from Berkshire forms part of the same Opportunity Area in Berkshire called the Burghfield to Tadley Heaths encompassing all the gravel soils that overlie much of the area. The extension covers the Ashford Hill Woods and Meadows SSSI and several ancient woodland SINCs which border the SSSI. The Ashford Hill Woods and Meadows SSSI comprises an extensive and varied complex of ancient species-rich coppice woodland, secondary woodland on former common land, hay meadows, grazed meadowland and peaty flushed areas, drained by a clear unpolluted small river. The intimate juxtaposition of habitats within a small area gives rise to great biological richness.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Meadow
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

15: Wealden Heaths

Landscape Character Area: Western Weald Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation

Geology: A bedrock predominantly of Sandstone with Sandstone, Siltstone and Mudstone running through the central regions of the area. Deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel run through the area with Sand and Gravel featuring in the central regions.

Biodiversity: The Wealden Heaths BOA comprises the old hunting forest of Woolmer which lies predominantly on the Folkstone beds of the Western Weald and has a long history of management as wood pasture and heathland. Much of the area was managed as common land although Woolmer itself was finally enclosed in 1864 and passed into military occupation where much of the heathland still survives. Other heathland commons SSSIs include Bramshott and Ludshott Common, Shortheath Common and Broxhead Common. They have mostly passed into public ownership and are being managed sympathetically. Part of the area forms the Wealden Heaths SPA. The Woolmer Forest SSSI contains the largest and most diverse area of lowland heathland habitats in Hampshire (outside the New Forest) and is considered the most important area of heathland in the Weald of southern England. It is the only site in Britain known to support all twelve native species of reptiles and amphibians and supports a nationally important heathland flora, with associated birds and invertebrate fauna. In addition, Woolmer Forest is an important area for roosting wintering hen harriers. The SSSI includes the watersheds of two major drainage systems. The largest of these flows north to Holly Water, which forms a tributary of the River Wey and the smaller flows south from Longmoor Inclosure to form a tributary of the River Rother. Areas of open water occur within the Woolmer Forest SSSI including Woolmer and Cranmer Ponds which are rare dystrophic lakes fed by ground water poor in mineral nutrients. All the heathlands are of international importance for their rich diversity of breeding and wintering heathland birds including nationally important breeding populations of nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler. This is the only site away from the New Forest which supports breeding curlew. Small relic areas of heathland, ancient woodland, wet woodland and lowland meadow are scattered across the BOA and are designated SINCS. The ancient semi-natural woodland would have been traditionally managed as wood pasture in the past and the resulting woodland has a distinctive structure and species composition dominated by beech and pedunculate oak with many old pollards.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland • Lowland Heath • Lowland meadows
- Wet Woodland • Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Wood pasture Buffer zones • Bare ground on infertile sand
- Dystrophic lakes • Enhancement of sand/gravel pits for biodiversity following mineral extraction

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

16: Rother Valley (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: Western Weald Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation / Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest

Geology: The bedrock in the southern and north-eastern reaches is predominantly Mudstone, with the central region predominantly Sandstone. Clay Silt Sand and Gravel deposits are the main deposits found along the length of the area, with some Sand and Gravel deposits to the north and south-east reaches.

Biodiversity: The majority of the Hampshire Rother Watershed lies on mudstone thus making soils prone to erosion which has a high impact on river ecology. There are many SINC's within the Rother valley, in particular a series of wet woodlands and rushy fen meadows between Petersfield and Liss and extending into the Wealden Heaths BOA.

The wet woodlands are of particular botanical interest supporting species such as Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage and Large Bitter-cress. This stretch of the Western Rother is also thought to be an important in-migration route for otters from Hampshire.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Meadow
- Wet Woodland
- Reedbed
- Lowland Fen

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

17: Northern Wey Valley (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: Western Weald Lowland and Heath and partly Hampshire Downs (to the west)

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest / Greensand Terrace Major Scarps and Hangers

Geology: Calcareous Sandstone and Siltstone is the bedrock in the western reaches (with Chalk on the western fringe) and Mudstone bedrock for the rest of the area. Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel and Sand and Gravel river terrace deposits run through the valley.

Biodiversity: The northern tributary of the River Way rises on the chalk at Alton and flows north east towards Farnham in Surrey. There are frequent gravel beds and riffles and a good diversity of stream/streamside flora and fauna particularly freshwater molluscs. Areas of rushy pasture & wet woodland occur in the Mill Court to Froyle Mill area.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Meadow
- Wet Woodland
- Reedbed

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

18: Chichester/Langstone Harbours & Hayling Island

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Coast, partly South Hampshire Lowland and Heath to the north-east

Landscape Types: Harbours / Settled Coastal Plain

Geology: The bedrock is predominantly chalk in the northern half, with Sand and Clay, Silt and Sand in the southern half, with deposits of mainly Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel.

Biodiversity: Chichester/Langstone Harbours and Hayling Island BOA contains the Chichester/Langstone Harbour SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, and Chichester Harbour and Langstone Harbour SSSIs. The area is a large estuarine basin with extensive mud and sandflats exposed at low water and abundant eelgrass beds. The site is of particular significance for wintering wildfowl and waders, and breeding birds within the harbour and surrounding permanent pasture and woodlands. There is a wide range of habitats and important plant communities. Tongues of land intrude into the harbour, giving a long and varied coastline, and producing a large volume of sheltered saline water. The extensive intertidal mudflats are feeding grounds for internationally important numbers of waders such as ringed plover, grey plover and black-tailed godwit. The area is the overwintering site for 5% of the world population of dark-bellied brent geese, while the unimproved pastures behind the sea wall provide alternative feeding sites for the geese and major high tide roosts. Some of this pasture is floristically rich and species such as green winged orchid can occur. The lower saltmarsh habitat is dominated by cord grass, but includes species such as sea purslane and sea lavender. Langstone Harbour SSSI includes Farlington Marshes which is a vital high water roost and brent geese feeding ground. This area also includes the coastal shingle and grassland habitats around Hayling Island, including the Sinah Common SSSI, noted for the endangered childing pink and an outstanding assemblage of nationally scarce plants.

Targets and opportunities:

- Coastal Grazing Marsh
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Coastal Salt Marsh
- Vegetated shingle

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

19: Portsmouth Harbour

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Coast

Landscape Types: Harbours / Settled Coastal Plain

Geology: The bedrock is predominantly chalk in the northern half, with Sand and Clay, Silt and Sand in the southern half. There are deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel in northern and central regions, Sand and Gravel to the south-west and north-east, and Sand, Silt and Clay to the north and eastern fringes.

Biodiversity: This area is centred on Portsmouth Harbour SSSI which is the westernmost of the three extensive and connected tidal basins - Portsmouth, Langstone and Chichester Harbours. The harbour receives some fresh water from springs arising in the intertidal zone, and from a number of small streams, the largest of which is the River Wallington, which flows into Fareham Creek, the westernmost channel of Portsmouth Harbour. The intertidal area of Portsmouth Harbour includes 776ha of mudflats & eelgrass beds and about 173ha of cord-grass *Spartina* marshes. At the uppermost levels of the *Spartina* marshes is replaced locally by saltmarsh which then grades into tussocky grassland dominated by sea couch. The biological richness and productivity of Portsmouth Harbour is reflected in the nationally important numbers of several wetland birds including grey plover, black-tailed godwit and dark-bellied Brent geese which overwinter there. The SSSI includes two brackish lagoons adjoining Haslar Lake in the south-west of the Harbour; Little Anglesey Lake and Cockle Pond. The SSSI also includes a small area of terrestrial habitat extending along the southern side of Horsea Island, where chalk spoil dumped early in the 20th century supports a rich chalk grassland flora. The BOA has been extended to include further coastal habitats (many SINCs) along the perimeter of the harbour where opportunities exist to enhance and expand certain habitats.

Targets and opportunities:

- Coastal Grazing Marsh
- Coastal Salt Marsh
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

20: The Solent

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Coast

Landscape Types: Major Estuary and Solent / Settled Coastal Plain / Major River Valleys

Geology: A bedrock of Sand, Silt and Clay with just Clay to the north-west of the area. Clay and Silt and Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel deposits run along the length of the coastal edges with Sand and Gravel river terrace deposits found further inland. Gravel deposits are found at the south-eastern end of the area and Peat occurs in the Alver valley.

Biodiversity: This area extends along the eastern shore of Southampton Water from Lee-on-the-Solent to the mid-Itchen estuary and includes the lower estuary of the River Hamble. The area comprises extensive intertidal muds with a littoral fringe of vegetated shingle, saltmarsh, reedbed, marshy grasslands, soft rock cliffs and deciduous woodland. The site is an integral part of Southampton Water which is of international importance for over-wintering dark-bellied brent geese, and of national importance for three species of wildfowl (great-crested grebe, teal and wigeon) and five species of wader (black-tailed godwit, dunlin, grey plover, ringed plover, redshank). The area also supports an outstanding assemblage of nationally scarce coastal plants. In addition, the cliffs at Brownwich and the foreshore at Lee-on-The Solent are of national geological importance. SSSIs include the Lee on Solent to Itchen Estuary, which includes Hamble Common, a mosaic of acidic grassland and wet heath, with neighbouring SINC supporting species-rich grassland, secondary woodland with relic heath, also grazing marsh and a reed-fringed freshwater fleet at Hook Lake and ancient deciduous woodland extending inland along a former tidal re-entrant. Vegetated shingle, a nationally restricted habitat, is found fronting the reed bed at Hook Spit. Other SSSIs include Titchfield Haven which was formerly the estuary of the River Meon, and comprises an extensive freshwater marsh, supporting large reed beds, wet, unimproved meadows, pools and patches of fen. The area is important for surface-feeding ducks and possesses a rich wetland breeding bird community. Browndown Common SSSI, the Wild Grounds SSSI, other SINC in the Alver Valley floodplain and at Gilkicker Point SINC are included, and include important areas of vegetated shingle/grass heath, acid oak woodland, wet woodland, swamp & reed beds and brackish grassland. Areas of less interesting vegetation are included where they are known to support over wintering Brent geese and other waders or are of high potential for re-creation of semi-natural coastal habitats.

Targets and opportunities:

- Coastal Grazing Marsh • Coastal Salt Marsh
- Managed shore realignment • Vegetated shingle
- River valley flood plain • Wet woodland/alder carr
- Reedbeds • Acid grassland
- Unimproved neutral grassland • Heathland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

21: The Hamble Catchment

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Lowland and Heath / South Hampshire Coast / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest / Major River Valleys / Settled Coastal Plain

Geology: The bedrock for the area consists of Clay Silt and Sand in the south and north with Sand scattered throughout the area. There is Chalk bedrock at the far north-eastern and eastern fringes. Deposits of Silt and Clay, Sand Silt and Gravel and Clay run through the river valley.

Biodiversity: This area comprises the Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods SSSI, the Hamble river valley, its main tributaries and headwaters which extend to the Moors SSSI at Bishop's Waltham to the north and Botley Wood SSSI to the east. The upper section of the Hamble estuary supports a narrow zone of mudflats, saltmarsh, reedswamp and ancient semi-natural woodland. Twelve types of ancient broad-leaved woodland occur within the Upper Hamble SSSI. Of particular interest is the transition between zones of pedunculate oak/birch/hazel through sessile oak/birch/hazel to sessile oak/birch in response to changes from heavy London Clay soils to light, well-drained valley sands and gravels and the gradation from ancient semi-natural woodland to estuarine saltmarsh. The Hamble woodlands are also notable for their stands of small-leaved lime. A number of small unimproved neutral/wet grassland SINCs occur further along the river valley & its tributaries, including complexes at Calcott Farm and Ford Lake. Unimproved wet meadows, draining into a central pool with associated mature alder can be found in the headwaters of a tributary of the River Hamble at the Moors SSSI which lies near the junction of the Chalk and Reading Beds. The meadows are fed by a series of springs which may yield water of differing base status since the vegetation exhibits both acid and basic elements. Another tributary of the Hamble drains from a dense concentration of ancient semi-natural & replanted woodland SINCs at Biddenfield, arising further along at Shedfield Common, an area of relic heath, valley mire and species rich grassland. A third tributary drains from Botley Wood SSSI though an area of species-rich rushy pasture & wet woodland SINCs at North Whiteley. Botley Wood SSSI itself comprises a large tract of ancient semi-natural and replanted woodland in a poorly-drained low-lying hollow. Despite the coniferisation it is of exceptional importance for its rich insect populations, particularly Lepidoptera, which depend upon the mosaic of habitats including woodland clearings, broad herb-rich rides and relict stands of semi-natural deciduous woodland. Where undisturbed, the semi-natural woodland cover consists largely of hazel coppice with oak/alder standards on the drier, acidic soils, grading to damp alder woodland on the poorly-drained clay. The alder is mostly grown from old coppice and supports a lush, species-rich ground flora. The ride vegetation is very varied and supports abundant herbs, sedges and rushes.

Targets and opportunities:

- Wet Woodland • Lowland Meadow • Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland • Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures • Ponds
- Hedgerows and other ecological corridors

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

22: St Catherine's Hill to Beacon Hill

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Downs / Mid Hampshire Downs / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys (western fringe)

Landscape Types: Major River Valleys / Downland Mosaic and Assarts / Open Downland

Geology: A bedrock of chalk with some deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel

Biodiversity: The St Catherine's Hill – Beacon Hill area lies just east of Winchester and comprises in part of a series of steep chalk scarp slopes facing south, north, east and west. Around Preshaw the BOA comprise gently undulating chalk plateau in a highly arable setting but with an exceptional concentration of ancient semi-natural and replanted woods, secondary woodland and relict chalk downland, offering high opportunity for woodland restoration and re-linking woodland and downland fragments. The BOA supports two SSSIs one at Cheesefoot Head and one at St. Catherine's Hill. These sites comprise species rich turf dominated by fescues and bents and with a wide range of calcicole species such as dwarf thistle, small scabious and dropwort. Beacon Hill (Warnford) SSSI occurs at the eastern end of the BOA on a chalk spur capped with clay-with-flints, overlooking the Meon valley. The steep north- and south-facing slopes of the SSSI support a herb-rich chalk grassland flora and beech/ash/hazel woodland. A number of SINC's are scattered throughout area containing extensive remnants of unimproved chalk grassland. Some like Magdalen Hill and The Dongas contain high numbers of chalk grassland indicator species. Others are a mosaic of improved or semi-improved grassland with encroaching scrub. The whole area is important for a diverse range of butterfly species, farmland birds and rare arable plants.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

24: Ampfield - Baddesley - Chilworth - Lordswood

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Lowland and Heath / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest / Major River Valleys

Geology: Bedrock predominantly Clay, Silt and Sand with Sand and Pebbly Sand scattered throughout the central regions. Deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel, and Sand and Gravel, are scattered through the area.

Biodiversity: This is an important complex of ancient semi-natural woodland, relic heath and species-rich neutral grassland overlying the tertiaries. The area supports dense concentrations of SINC's and several notable SSSIs including Baddesley Common & Emer Bog SSSI/SAC, an incredibly important area of valley bog and associated damp acidic grassland, heathland and wet woodland with considerable invertebrate interest. Also Trodds Copse SSSI and many other ancient woodland SINC's such as Ampfield Wood which supports an important small leaved lime population, plus a number of woodland SINC's overlying relic heathland, extending down to Lord's Wood a large Forestry Commission conifer plantation on a former heath and common which retains significant semi-natural interest.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Heath
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Meadow

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

25: Bere Ashley

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Downs / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Downland Mosaic and Assarts / Major River Valleys

Geology: Chalk bedrock with some deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel.

Biodiversity: The Bere Ashley BOA lies on the Hampshire Upper Chalk plateau. It contains the Crab Wood SSSI in the east, and several ancient semi-natural woodland and relic downland SINCs. Crab Wood is dominated by oak standards over a hazel shrub layer. Part of the site is still in coppice rotation with other areas last coppiced about 20 years ago. The site also supports large numbers of yew, both within the woodland and the hedgerows. The woodland ground flora is particularly rich and dominated by either bluebell or dog's mercury. The site is entomologically rich and includes species such as the purple emperor. The wood is thought to be of considerable antiquity. The SINCs are a mixture of relic downland and remnant ancient semi-natural woodland, and plantations on ancient woodland sites which retain a good ground flora.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

26: Tytherley Woods

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Lowland and Heath / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation / Major River Valleys / Downland Mosaic and Assarts (tiny corner to the north)

Geology: A bedrock of Clay, Silt and Sand with deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel, and Sand and Gravel, are scattered throughout the area.

Biodiversity: The Tytherley Woods Area comprises a dense concentration of ancient semi-natural woodlands extending from the Wilts border to the grasslands of the Test Valley. At the extreme west lies Bentley Wood on the Hants/Wilts border, an SSSI notified for its exceptionally rich butterfly and moth fauna. The complex and neighbouring woods support one of the largest populations of Pearl-bordered Fritillary in England, making it a high priority for safeguarding the future of this species. To the east of the site is a network of smaller woodlands in conservation or private ownership which have the potential through restoration to form a more connected wooded landscape, in particular the Mottisfont Estate woods which contains a mix of woodland types including hazel coppice with standards, broadleaved plantation and coniferous plantation and are designated SSSI and SAC for the nationally rare Barbastelle Bat.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Meadow

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

27: Somborne Woods

Landscape Character Area: Mid Hampshire Downs / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Major River Valleys

Geology: Chalk bedrock with some deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel

Biodiversity: The Somborne Woods comprise the Windovers Farm Woodlands & the Heath House Estate Woods and sit adjacent to Stockbridge Down SSSI. Together these woods form the largest concentration of worked hazel coppice in south east England and have had a history of continuous coppice management for at least several centuries. Some areas have become derelict in recent years. The woodlands are all SINCs and are also important for Pearl-bordered fritillary, Duke of Burgundy and Grizzled skipper. Relic areas of chalk grassland occur and there is a large area of chalk downland which supports over 30 species of butterfly. Part of the area is also important for rare arable weeds.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

28: Dean Hill (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: South Hampshire Downs / South Hampshire Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Major River Valleys / Downland Mosaic and Assarts

Geology: Chalk bedrock with some deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel

Biodiversity: This area comprises part of Brickworth Down and Dean Hill SSSI which occupies a long north facing scarp of Upper Chalk in the extreme west of the county, bordering Wiltshire. The SSSI comprises high quality chalk grassland with nationally restricted plant and invertebrate species, extensive and healthily regenerating juniper scrub, and the largest yew wood in Wiltshire and Hampshire. The site has long been recognised as important for insect populations. Butterflies occurring include chalkhill blue, grizzled skipper, Duke of Burgundy and green hairstreak. The BOA extends around the northern slopes of Dean Hill to include relic downland on the old MOD railway sidings and unimproved downland further along at Curlew Farm Down, all Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

29: Salisbury Plain (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Open Downland

Geology: Chalk bedrock with no notable superficial deposits.

Biodiversity: Salisbury Plain occupies a plateau of Upper and Middle Chalk which rises in the heart of Wiltshire, and extends only marginally into Hampshire. It supports the largest known expanse of unimproved chalk downland in north west Europe, and represents 41% of Britain's remaining area of this rich wildlife habitat. Salisbury Plain was acquired by the Ministry of Defence for military training early this century, and this large expanse of lowland grassland has not been subject to intensive farming methods. As a result, 12933 ha of chalk downland remains which supports 13 species of nationally rare and scarce plants, 67 species of rare and scarce invertebrates and forms a site of international importance for birds. In addition to chalk downland, this site supports scrub and woodland habitats, and temporary and permanent pools and the Nine Mile River winterbourne. The BOA in Hampshire includes opportunity to extend this habitat where there is high suitability.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

30: Martin Down - Bouldsbury - Toyd Down

Landscape Character Area: Cranborne Chase

Landscape Types: Open Downland

Geology: Predominantly Chalk bedrock with some Pebbly Sand towards the south. Deposits of Silty Clay and Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel.

Biodiversity: Martin Down –Bouldsbury – Toyd Down form an extensive tract of chalk downland, chalk heath and chalk scrub on the Hampshire/Wiltshire Border. The area includes the SSSI site of Martin and Tidpit Down where the chalk flora is exceptionally rich and includes species such as bastard toadflax, field fleawort, early gentian and at least eight local orchid species including Burnt Orchid. The downland comprises grassland of varying ages from ancient herb-rich swards to recent turf ploughed in the 1940's and now reverting. Superficial Eocene deposits have resulted in less alkaline conditions, and unusual associations of calcicole and calcifuge species regarded as the best of their type in England. The open grassland is used for feeding by several birds of prey including hen harrier, hobby and barn owl. There is an outstanding assemblage of butterflies with 36 species recorded including adonis blue, marsh fritillary and Duke of Burgundy. To the east is Toyd Down and Quarry SSSI with a good range of chalk turf plants, and considerable entomological interest including a relic population of the grayling butterfly in its chalk form. Also to the east are scattered remnants of chalk grassland, now designated SINCs, that have a good range of chalk grassland species. To the south are the woodland complexes around Bouldsbury Wood SSSI and associated SINCs which straddle the Hampshire/Dorset boundary. These are characteristically oak standards with hazel coppice, but rarer wych elm or small-leaved lime also occur. At least 60 woodland vascular plants occur in Bouldsbury Wood, making it the single most species rich wood in Hampshire. It is also the only known Hampshire locality for meadow saffron and wood vetch.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

31: New Forest

Landscape Character Area: New Forest Lowland and Heath / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys / New Forest Coast

Landscape Types: Lowland Heath and Ancient Forest / Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation / Major River Valleys / Settled Coastal Plain

Geology: Bedrock made up of a mosaic of Clay, Sand, Clay Silt and Sand, and Sand Silt and Clay. Some Chalk bedrock occurs in a tiny corner in the north-west of the area. Deposits of Sand and Gravel dominate much of the area but are less frequent in north-eastern corner. Clay and Silt deposits run down the eastern side, and Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel river terrace deposits occur along the valleys. Silty Clay deposits are found in the north-western river valleys, and a large area of Gravelly Sand occurs in the central-western area.

Biodiversity: The New Forest embraces the largest area of 'unsown' vegetation in lowland England including lowland heath, valley and seepage step mire, or fen, and ancient pasture woodland, including riparian and bog woodland. Nowhere else do these habitats occur in combination and on so large a scale. There are about 4,600 hectares of pasture woodland and scrub dominated by oak, beech and holly; 11,800 hectares of heathland and associated grassland; 3,300 hectares of wet heath and valley mire-fen and also 8,400 hectares of plantations dating from various periods since the early 18th century. Within this matrix of habitats are a range of acid to neutral grasslands where the vegetation owes much to the local geology and continuous grazing, a situation which is uncommon in lowland England. A network of small streams draining the Forest and a series of ponds of varying sizes and water chemistry including numerous ephemeral ponds add to the wide range of habitats which support an outstanding assemblage of nationally rare and scarce plants, bryophytes, lichens, fungi and rare and scarce invertebrates. The area also supports internationally important breeding populations of certain bird species and the wintering population of another as well as an assemblage of birds associated with specific habitats such as old woodland or wetlands. Scattered around the New Forest within the BOA are areas of enclosed farmland which support many unimproved meadows, both SSSIs and SINCs which form valuable backup grazing for New Forest livestock. The area delineated within the BOA also indicates high opportunity for restoring/linking heathland, grassland and woodland habitats and linking to the coastal habitats.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Heath
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Lowland Meadow
- Wet Woodland
- Pasture woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

32: New Forest Coast

Landscape Character Area: New Forest Coast / New Forest Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Settled Coastal Plain / Major Estuary and Solent

Geology: Bedrock made up of a mosaic of Clay, Sand, Clay Silt and Sand, and Sand Silt and Clay. Tidal flat and river terrace deposits of Clay and Silt occur in the western corner, the central southern coastline and along the eastern edge. Sand and Gravel deposits occur along the south-western stretch of coast running up to Hurst Spit, and also further inland for much of the rest of the area. Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel deposits occur at the south-eastern edge.

Biodiversity: The New Forest Coast BOA possesses a remarkable diversity of habitat ranging from coastal mudflats and saltmarshes, shingle beaches and spits, soft rock cliffs, fresh and brackish marshland and pools, maritime grassland, species rich neutral and acidic grassland, valley mire, heathland and a range of ancient semi-natural woodlands. This wide range of habitats support a rich flora and an equally rich and diverse insect fauna and many areas are of international importance for populations of overwintering and migratory wildfowl and wading birds and of national importance for populations of breeding gulls, terns and waders. Many of the rivers draining from the New Forest support extensive areas of reedbed and alder woodland developed on fen peat. The following SSSIs are present within the coastal BOA; North Solent SSSI, Lymington River Estuary SSSI, Highcliffe to Milford Cliffs SSSI, Sowley Pond SSSI, Hythe to Calshot Marshes SSSI and Dibden Bay SSSI, along with numerous SINCs representing ancient woodland, unimproved grassland, ponds and relic areas of mudflat and saltmarsh outside the SSSI series.

Targets and opportunities:

- Coastal Grazing Marsh
- Coastal Salt Marsh
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

33: Avon Valley

Landscape Character Area: Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys / New Forest Lowland and Heath / Cranborne Chase

Landscape Types: Major River Valleys / Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation / Open Downland

Geology: Sand bedrock occurs in the southern half and eastern and northern reaches of the area. Sand, Silt and Clay bedrock dominates the central region, and Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel runs south-west in a band across the northern half of the area. Chalk bedrock occurs in the north and north-western corner. Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel river terrace deposits run down through the valley. Silty Clay deposits are found around the river valley in the north-western and eastern reaches of the area, with Sand and Gravel occurring in the rest of the area.

Biodiversity: The River Avon is a classic chalk stream of European importance (Ramsar/SAC/SPA/SSSI) meandering across a broad flood plain between North Charford in the north and Christchurch Harbour in the south and forms part of a much wider river system. The valley is dissected by numerous side channels, ditches and dykes (relicts of an historic water meadow system) and rivulets, and forms part of the county boundary for some of its length. To either side of the flood plain the land rises in a series of river terraces to the extensive heathlands of southeast Dorset and the New Forest. To the north of Ringwood lies Blashford Lakes, a series of lakes created by gravel excavation from the river terraces. The Avon valley shows a greater range of habitats and a more diverse flora and fauna than any other chalk river valley in Britain. The habitats range from extensive areas of unimproved grasslands, through a range of fens and mires to riparian woods, and heathland. The grasslands support internationally important assemblages of breeding and wintering birds including large flocks of European white-fronted geese, Bewick's swans, gadwall, wigeon, teal, shoveler, golden plover, pintail and black-tailed godwits (although the numbers of white-fronted geese and Bewick's swans have decreased in recent years) The river has a very diverse fish fauna including important populations of Atlantic salmon and brown trout. Molluscs are particularly abundant including the rare water snail *Valvata macrostoma* and the pea mussel *Pisidium tenuilineatum*. The River Avon also supports otter and is an important corridor for migration..

Targets and opportunities:

- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Meadow
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Floodplain Grazing Marsh and water meadows
- Enhancement of lowland open waters

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

34: Test Valley

Landscape Character Area: Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys / Mid Hampshire Downs / South Hampshire Lowland and Heath

Landscape Types: Major River Valleys / Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation / Settled Lowland Mosaic Ancient Forest

Geology: Chalk bedrock dominates the northern two-thirds of the area; Clay, Silt and Sand and Sand bedrock around the southern regions. River terrace deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel occur all the way down the valley. Sand and Gravel deposits occur mainly in the northern regions, and small deposits of Calcareous Tufa and Peat occur in the central region.

Biodiversity: The Test Valley supports a complex system of chalk streams (mostly SSSI), with several major tributaries; the Anton, Dever, Wallop and Blackwater. Soils in the valley derive from alluvium, peat and 'tufa' (calcareous marl). These, combined with the networks of ridges and drains, result in complex mosaics of dry grassland, rush pasture, fen-meadow, flood pasture and swamp communities. The floristic diversity of these unimproved meadows is high and species-rich communities typical of wet, calcareous, pastures are well represented at the following SSSIs at Bere Mill Meadows, Bransbury Common, East Aston Common, Chilbolton Common, Stockbridge Fen and Stockbridge Common Marsh. Numerous SINC's supporting fen meadow, wet woodland and further stretches of chalk stream add to the interest of the BOA. Significant efforts are being made in this area to support dragonfly/damselfly habitat and populations, particularly for the Southern damselfly.

Targets and opportunities:

- Wet Woodland
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Lowland Meadow
- Reedbed
- Chalk grassland
- Heathland
- Winterbournes and springs
- River banks and beds

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

35: Meon Valley

Landscape Character Area: Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys / South Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Major River Valleys

Geology: Chalk bedrock occurs in the north-western half of the area, the south-eastern half made up of Clay Silt and Sand, Sand Silt and Clay, and Sand bedrock. Deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel run through the river valley, with Gravel, Silt and Sand deposits occurring in some central and northern areas.

Biodiversity: The River Meon arises on the chalk and supports a classic chalk stream flora. From its source south of the village of East Meon the River Meon forms a narrow, visually enclosed valley with only one principal water course and few meanders. Whilst much of the upper floodplain has been agriculturally improved there are a few fragmentary areas of ecological value, particularly at the lower end where there are several unimproved wet SINC meadows between Titchfield and Fareham. Titchfield Haven SSSI lies at the southern end of the river and comprises freshwater marsh with reedbeds, unimproved wet meadow and fen.

Targets and opportunities:

- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Meadow
- Reedbed
- Lowland Fen

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

36: Ringwood Forest (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: New Forest Lowland and Heath, Avon / Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation / Major River Valleys

Geology: Sand bedrock with mainly Sand and Gravel deposits

Biodiversity: Ringwood Forest is an extension of the Dorset Heaths and is a block of coniferised heathland situated on the Hampshire/Dorset border. The underlying geology of plateau gravel, bagshot sands and bracklesham beds leads to acid soils. The site displays an excellent diversity of habitats, species and structure, and is designated a SINC because of this. Unplanted areas of clearfell support important bird populations including sand martins. The extensive network of forestry rides are extremely diverse in species, including silver-studded blue butterfly, annual knawel, southern wood ant, wood lark, common cudweed, coral necklace, sand lizard and smooth snake.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Heath
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

37: Thames Basin Heaths (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: North Hampshire Lowland and Heath / Hampshire Downs (in extreme south of area)

Landscape Types: Settled Lowland Mosaic Heath Plantation

Geology: Sand bedrock dominates most of the area, with Clay, Silt and Sand occurring in western and southern regions. A thin band of Clay bedrock runs through the south-eastern corner and Chalk occurs at the extreme south. Sand and gravel deposits occur frequently throughout the area, with Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel deposits occurring in the river valleys.

Biodiversity: This area of the Thames Basin Heaths is of international biodiversity importance (SPA) and was originally a Royal Hunting Forest with a legally defined boundary within which the king had the right to hunt deer and other animals. It was by no means all woodland and would have included large tracks of heathland many of which exist today amongst the conifer plantations; including Castle Bottom to Yateley & Hawley Commons SSSI, Hazeley Heath SSSI and Bourley & Long Valley SSSI, three of the largest remnants of lowland heathland in the Thames Basin today, situated on gently undulating plateau gravels and sands and supporting internationally important populations of Dartford warbler woodlark and nightjar. The BOA in general comprises a diverse mosaic of heathland, woodland, mire, scrub and grassland habitats supporting a diversity flora and fauna including nationally scarce plants, nationally rare insects and the three bird species mentioned above.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Heath
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Lowland Meadow

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

38: Tidworth (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: Hampshire Downs / Mid Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Open Downland

Geology: Chalk bedrock with a small area of Sand and Gravel deposits to the north-east.

Biodiversity: Tidworth Extension is located in the north-west of Hampshire to the east of Salisbury Plain, on the Hampshire/Wiltshire border. This chalk downland area contains several small unimproved chalk grassland and scrub SINCs. Notable species such as juniper, frog orchid and purple milk vetch occur. More sheltered sites have good butterfly assemblages. Woodlands within this area are species rich with oak, ash and field maple canopy and hazel understorey.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

39: Porton Down (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: Hampshire Downs / Mid Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Open Downland

Geology: Chalk bedrock with some deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel

Biodiversity: Porton Down extends into Wiltshire on a gently undulating plateau of Upper Chalk incorporating several shallow dry valley. It comprises an extensive area of grassland, scrub and woodland and constitutes one of the largest uninterrupted tracts of semi-natural chalk grassland in Britain. It supports rare grassland and scrub communities, together with significant populations of uncommon plants (including rare arable plants), invertebrates and birds including the corn bunting, lapwing, grey partridge, barn owl and Stone curlew.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

40: Broughton Down (Hants)

Landscape Character Area: Mid Hampshire Downs / South Hampshire Downs / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Open Downland / Downland Mosaic and Assarts / Major River Valleys

Geology: Chalk bedrock with some deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel

Biodiversity: Broughton Down SSSI is situated on a mainly north-east-facing chalk escarpment exhibiting a succession of chalk vegetation stages from open, grazed chalk grassland, through scrub of hawthorn, elder, buckthorn and dogwood, to mature beech, ash and yew woodland. Although the chalk grassland flora is not consistently rich in species, the site as a whole includes a large assemblage of plants characteristic of thin chalk soils, including a population of rare field fleawort. The insect fauna includes colonies of chalk carpet moth, silver spotted skipper, the Essex skipper, and Duke of Burgundy fritillary. The site includes important examples of almost the complete range of chalk habitats, with the exception of juniper scrub, which is represented by only a few bushes. The BOA has been drawn to include other relic areas of chalk grassland and numerous ancient woodlands which link back to Bentley Wood in the north and hence back into Wilts.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

41: Harewood Forest

Landscape Character Area: Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Open Downland Major River Valleys

Geology: Clay-with-flints & River terrace deposits

Biodiversity: Much of the BOA is covered by Harewood Forest (SINC), lying south-east of Andover and directly adjoining the Test Valley BOA. Harewood Forest covers 670 hectares of mainly ancient semi-natural woodland with extensive areas of (now derelict) oak coppice. The Forest is of great antiquity, being referred to in Saxon Chronicles of the 10th Century when it was part of the Forest of Chute. It has been managed as traditional coppice since at least the 13th Century. Despite about 20 percent coniferisation, Harewood is probably the second largest block of ancient woodland left in Southern England and is of outstanding ecological value for its semi-natural distribution of tree species reflecting the diverse mix of soils within the Forest. It is also one of the richest woodlands in the country for several groups of invertebrates including butterflies & moths. Outside of the woodland the area has a strong hedgerow and tree structure, which gives it an enclosed character. The area drains to the River Test but has an absence of streams and waterbodies. There are a small number of relic downland SINC's and one very important rare arable plants SINC

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Rare arable plants

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

42: Longparish Important Arable Plants Area

Landscape Character Area: Hampshire Downs / Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon Valleys

Landscape Types: Open Downland

Geology: Mainly chalk bedrock with some Clay-with-flints

Biodiversity: This area has been identified by Plantlife as an Important Area for Arable Plants (IAPA) of European Importance. The western half of the area is also exceptionally important for farmland birds whilst the eastern half supports a number of important ancient woodland SINC's many with in-cycle coppice.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Rare arable plants

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - Statements

43: Herriard Wooded Downland Plateau

Landscape Character Area: Mid Hampshire Downs

Landscape Types: Wooded downland plateau

Geology: Clay-with-fints

Biodiversity: The BOA comprises an exceptional dense concentration of ancient semi-natural and replanted woodland SINC's on the clay cap, supporting important rare plant populations. Several of the woods have in-cycle coppice.

Targets and opportunities:

- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Meadow
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland