

Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report 2011

Introduction

This document provides biodiversity information to be used by Wokingham Borough Council in the production of its Annual Monitoring Report. The biodiversity information in this report is based on figures from the 2011-12 business year unless otherwise indicated.

The approach of this report is to set Wokingham data in a unitary and Berkshire-wide context, with any national and regional perspective, where possible. The biodiversity information associated with each indicator is accompanied by a brief commentary, containing guidance on the interpretation of the information, issues of data quality and the sources of the data.

Whilst a large proportion of the information contained within the report is derived from TVERC sources, the report acknowledges the assistance provided by various individuals and recording groups in the updating and interpretation of the biodiversity information.

The information provided in this report is as follows:

- Changes in area of sites designated for their intrinsic environmental value (SPA, SAC, SSSI, LWS)
- Change in area of BAP Habitats
- Change in number of BAP species
- Change in condition status of Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- National Indicator 197 (Single Data List 160) – proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented

Summary

- **Changes in area of sites designated for their intrinsic environmental value (SPA, SAC, SSSI, LWS, LGS, LNR)**

There was a net decrease of nearly 25 hectares in the amount of Local Wildlife Site area in Wokingham Borough, as a consequence of two local wildlife sites being de-selected in April 2011.

There was a net increase of 2 hectares in the area of Local Geological Sites as a result of two new sites being designated.

- **Change in number of BAP species**

There was a decrease of two in the number of BAP priority species recorded in Wokingham Borough between 1991 and 2011 compared to the figures collected for the 1990-2010 period.

- **Change in area of BAP Habitats**

There was an overall increase in the UK BAP priority habitat resource of 184 hectares from 2010-11 to 2011-12.

- **Change in condition status of Sites of Special Scientific Interest**

The proportion of SSSIs in Wokingham in "Favourable" condition remains unchanged at 26% in 2011-12.

- **National Indicator 197 (Single Data List 160) – proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented**

The proportion of local sites where positive conservation management is taking place or has occurred in the last five years has increased from 40% in 2010/11 to 42% in 2011/12. This compares favourably with the Berkshire-wide figure of 39%.

1.0 Changes in area of sites designated for their intrinsic environmental value

Commentary

Table 1 provides details of the areas of the sites designated for their biodiversity importance. There has been no change in area in some of these sites between the 2010 figures and those in this year's report, as changes to them are infrequent.

The analysis of the changes in area of Local Wildlife Sites is really a measure of the impacts of the site selection panel decisions of that year; the figures for 2011 contained within the table below are the outcomes from the April 2011 site selection panel meeting (at which point the sites designated as LWS or de-selected were confirmed). There was a net decrease of approximately 25 hectares in the area of Local Wildlife Sites in Wokingham Borough in 2011, owing to two sites being de-designated and very minor changes being made to the boundaries of other sites:

Site	Ward/parish	Designated?	Reason
Norman's Shaw (0.91 hectares)	Swallowfield	Retain	A diverse area of Ancient Semi-Natural Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland BAP Habitat.
Wyvol's Copse (14.47 hectares)	Swallowfield	Retain	Site on AWI undergoing restoration to broadleaved canopy from conifers.
Park Place School (14.52 hectares)	Remenham	Defer	Additional information sought from Ecological Consultant reports
Woodland near Banister's Farm (7.17 hectares)	Finchampstead	De-select	Poor area of Ancient Woodland replanted with conifers.
Mill Bank (17.51 hectares)	Remenham	De-select	Woodland has a highly modified canopy so does not meet naturalness criteria 1

Two Local Geological Sites were added to the LGS resource in Wokingham, as a consequence of a site selection panel meeting in early 2011. These sites were Barkham Iron-Rich Streams and Longwater Road Gravel Pits. They formed a component of the net increase of just over 2 hectares in the county resource.

There were no changes to other designated sites in Bracknell Forest specifically or Berkshire as a whole.

The calculations of the percentage of designated sites within both Bracknell Forest and Berkshire as a whole are based on GIS determinations of geographic areas as follows:

- Area of Wokingham: 17,897 hectares
- Area of Berkshire: 126,029 hectares

The following table identifies the areas of sites designated for their environmental value within Wokingham Borough. A colour coding system has been used:

	A reduction in the resource
	No significant change in the resource
	An increase in the resource

Table 1 – Areas of sites designated for their intrinsic environmental value

Designated site	Area in hectares (2010)	Berkshire Area in hectares (2010)	Area in hectares (2011)	As % of Wokingham	Berkshire Area in hectares (2011)	As % of Berkshire
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	26.98	4,848.0	26.98	0.15	4,848	3.85
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	0.00	1,454.8	0.00	0.00	1,454.8	1.15
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	0.00	1,817.0	0.00	0.00	1,817.0	1.44
Local Wildlife Sites	1,318.09	9,637.0	1,293.0	7.22	9,557	7.58
Local Nature Reserves	93.49	487.4	93.49	0.52	487.4	0.39
Local Geological Sites	32.68 (3 sites)	185.73	34.86 (5 sites)	0.19	220.8	0.18

Information sources

Local Wildlife Sites TVERC maintains the Local Wildlife Site boundary information on GIS – alterations are made to these boundaries as decisions are made by the site selection panel during the course of the year, or as any remaining boundary errors are corrected. Figures for changes in area are derived from an analysis of digitised site boundary files following the site selection panel meeting of the AMR/SDL year of analysis. In this case, the figures presented are those resulting from the April 2011 site selection panel meeting.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest Data on SSSIs are derived from digitised site boundary layers obtained from Natural England.

Special Areas of Conservation Digital SAC data were obtained as downloaded site maps from the Natural England web site.

Local Nature Reserves Figures on areas of Local Nature Reserves are derived from the Natural England web site.

Local Geological Sites (formerly known as Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites) Site information was digitised in GIS using site documentation provided by Berkshire RIGS Group. The data is a result of site selection panel meetings, the latest of which occurred in 2011.

2.0 Change in number of UKBAP priority species.

Commentary

This indicator uses records of UK BAP priority species which have been reported in Wokingham Borough during the period 1991 – 2011. Anything prior to this data is thought unlikely to now be present in the district. The full list of species is given in Appendix 1 to this document. There was a fall in the numbers of species found within the TVERC database between 2010 and 2011. There have been no records for two butterfly species – Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper – on the TVERC database since 1990.

Table 2. Change in numbers of UKBAP Species

	Wokingham (2010)	Berkshire (2010)	Wokingham (2011)	Berkshire (2011)
Numbers of BAP priority species	108	178	106	177

Information sources

The list of BAP priority species in Wokingham and Berkshire as a whole are derived from the national list of species which is provided on the UK BAP website.

The main source of these data has been the TVERC Recorder database, with a threshold date of 1990 used to make a judgment; any records prior to this date were discounted. Local Recorders are responsible for the provision and verification of a great many of the records held on the TVERC database. A list of the main sources of information on these species is given below:

- Recorder 6 database for Berkshire unitaries held by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
- <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/species.aspx> National list of UK BAP priority species

Quality of the information

The list of UKBAP species is a reflection of recording effort and the speed at which TVERC can process results sent to it by individual recorders and recording groups. A BAP species may have been seen a number of years ago, but these records might only have been processed and added to the TVERC database since the production of the last report. In addition, the absence of species does not necessarily indicate that species are definitely not present, rather that they may yet be found. Even the absence of species since 1991 might not point to genuine extinction rather that no recorders are surveying for these species.

3.0 Changes in area of UK BAP priority habitat

Commentary

The following table identifies the UK BAP habitat resource within Wokingham, as maintained on the TVERC digital mapping system.

Table 3 provides details of the UK BAP priority habitats which have been identified within Wokingham. The changes in the UK BAP priority habitats are attributable to new information provided through Local Wildlife Site surveys and recent updates in habitat inventories (particularly heathland).

A colour coding system has been used:

	A reduction in the mapped habitat resource
	No significant change in the mapped habitat resource
	An increase in the mapped habitat resource

Table 3. UK BAP priority habitat resource in Wokingham

UK BAP priority habitat type	Area (hectares) 2010-11	Berkshire context 2010-11	Area (hectares) 2011-12	Berkshire context 2011-12
Arable field margins	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	455.84	2362.41	455.84	2362.87
Eutrophic standing water	177.07	1437.4	177.02	1445.14
Hedgerows	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
Lowland beech and yew woodland	38.86	502.19	38.86	497.47
Lowland calcareous grassland	3.43	208.99	3.43	208.97
Lowland dry acid grassland	0.86	117.82	0.86	128.74
Lowland Fens	18.4	87.32	18.45	92.19
Lowland heathland	13.48	469.82	20.04	391.3
Lowland meadows	9.52	225.17	9.52	228.41
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	844.05	8589.59	1006.89	8529.99
Mesotrophic Lakes	19.84	21.45	19.84	21.63
Oligotrophic and dystrophic lakes	Not known	Not known	Not known	3.07
Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land	Not known	Not known	Not known	8.52
Ponds	4.72	14.12	4.72	13.83
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	0.00	9.41	0.00	9.22
Reedbeds	0.63	40.59	1.04	40.34
Rivers	8.52	155.19	8.52	155.37
Traditional Orchards	27.47	145.92	27.47	145.92
Wet woodland	99.22	469.83	116.93	476.85
Wood pasture and parkland	193.96	1131.5	190.38	1173.43
Total area of BAP priority habitat	1915.87	15988.69	2099.81	15933.26

4.0 Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Commentary

There are 4 SSSIs wholly or partly within Wokingham Borough Council, representing <1% of the land area. Summary data for information collated up to March 2012, based on assessments carried out by Natural England between 2000 and 2012, are given below.

Condition of SSSI units

<i>Condition</i>	<i>Number of SSSIs units or part units</i>	<i>Area (ha) of SSSIs</i>	<i>% of Unitary resource 2010-11</i>	<i>% of Unitary resource 2011-12</i>
Favourable	7	7.06	26.10	26.10
Unfavourable declining	0	0	0.00	0.00
Unfavourable no change	2	8.23	30.42	30.42
Unfavourable recovering	1	11.76	43.48	43.48
Total	10#	27.05	100	100

#There are 10 SSSI units within the 4 sites which fall either wholly or partly within Wokingham Borough

There has been no change in the proportions of sites in varying management conditions between 2010 and 2011 as no condition monitoring visits took place to Wokingham SSSI in 2011.

Information Sources:

Natural England (NE) publish "condition assessments" for all SSSIs. These are an assessment, to a standard methodology, of the quality of these sites, describing the condition of the features for which the sites were originally scheduled. SSSIs are monitored over a 5-6 year period.

5.0 National Indicator 197 (Single Data List 160) – proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented

Commentary

This indicator calculates the number of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Local Geological Sites (LGS) that can be said to be in or have been in positive conservation management in the five year period to 31st March.

In Berkshire, a site was considered to be in positive management if at least 50% of the site was being managed in a way that protected or enhanced the biological or geological interest of that site.

There was an increase in the proportion of local sites in positive conservation management from 40% to 42% between 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Single Data List 160 data analysis for Wokingham Borough Council:

Wokingham Borough Council	Sites total	Sites qualifying under Criteria				Total	% Positive
		1	2	3	4		
2011/12	121	34	16	1	13	51	42%
2010/11	120	26	15		12	48	40%
2009/10	120	26	13		8	47	39%
2008/09 baseline	121	26	11		8	45	37%
Berkshire Total 11/12	773	229	57	1	47	301	38.9%

The change between the last two reporting years can be attributed to more sites entering into stewardship schemes – primarily Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship – and increases in site management work. The figures are set against a net increase in the number of designated sites in the Borough – one LWS (Park Place/Mill Bank) was de-designated, but two sites (Barkham Iron-Rich Streams and Longwater Road Gravel Pit) were designated as Local Geological Sites.

Appendix 1 UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species recorded in Wokingham (1991 – 2011)

Common Name	Scientific name	Year	Master Site (redacted)
Fly Orchid	Ophrys insectifera	2009	
Tubular Water-dropwort	Oenanthe fistulosa	2004	
Greater Water-parsnip	Sium latifolium	1994	
Least Lettuce	Lactuca saligna	1994	
Tower Mustard	Arabis glabra	1999	
Marsh Stitchwort	Stellaria palustris	2004	
Red Hemp-nettle	Galeopsis angustifolia	1994	
Copse-bindweed	Fallopia dumetorum	1998	
Freshwater Crayfish	Austropotamobius pallipes	1998	
Stag Beetle	Lucanus cervus	2008	
White-letter Hairstreak	Satyrrium w-album	1992	
White Admiral	Limenitis camilla	2006	
Wall	Lasiommata megera	1994	
Grayling	Hipparchia semele	2007	
Small Heath	Coenonympha pamphilus	2002	
Ghost Moth	Hepialus humuli	2003	
Forester	Adscita statices	1998	
Oak Hook-tip	Watsonalla binaria	2005	
Small Emerald	Hemistola chrysoprasaria	2001	
Blood-vein	Timandra comae	2004	
Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet	Xanthorhoe ferrugata	1996	
Shaded Broad-bar	Scotopteryx chenopodiata	2002	
Dark Spinach	Pelurga comitata	2002	
Spinach	Eulithis mellinata	2003	
Small Phoenix	Ecliptopera silaceata	2003	
Streak	Chesias legatella	2005	
August Thorn	Ennomos quercinaria	2003	
Dusky Thorn	Ennomos fuscantaria	2005	
September Thorn	Ennomos erosaria	2007	
Brindled Beauty	Lycia hirtaria	2004	
Figure of Eight	Diloba caeruleocephala	2002	
White Ermine	Spilosoma lubricipeda	2005	
Buff Ermine	Spilosoma luteum	2004	
Cinnabar	Tyria jacobaeae	2005	
Small Square-spot	Diarsia rubi	2003	

Common Name	Scientific name	Year	Master Site (redacted)
Dot Moth	Melanchra persicariae	2005	
Broom Moth	Melanchra pisi	2003	
Feathered Gothic	Tholera decimalis	2002	
Powdered Quaker	Orthosia gracilis	2003	
Shoulder-striped Wainscot	Mythimna comma	2003	
Deep-brown Dart	Aporophyla lutulenta	2007	
Green-brindled Crescent	Allophyes oxyacanthae	2002	
Flounced Chestnut	Agrochola helvola	2004	
Brown-spot Pinion	Agrochola litura	2004	
Beaded Chestnut	Agrochola lychnidis	2005	
Centre-barred Sallow	Atethmia centrigo	2003	
Sallow	Xanthia icteritia	2005	
Grey Dagger	Acronicta psi	2003	
Knot Grass	Acronicta rumicis	2005	
Ear Moth	Amphipoea oculatea	2003	
Rosy Rustic	Hydraecia micacea	2002	
Rustic	Hoplodrina blanda	2004	
Mottled Rustic	Caradrina morpheus	2002	
Common Fan-foot	Pechipogo strigilata	2003	
Hornet robberfly	Asilus crabroniformis	1996	
European Eel	Anguilla anguilla	2009	
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	2009	
Common Toad	Bufo bufo	2009	
Slow-worm	Anguis fragilis	2009	
Common Lizard	Zootoca vivipara	2010	
Grass Snake	Natrix natrix	2009	
Adder	Vipera berus	2007	
Tundra Swan	Cygnus columbianus	1994	
Greater White-fronted Goose	Anser albifrons	1994	
Greater Scaup	Aythya marila	1994	
Common Scoter	Melanitta nigra	1994	
Grey Partridge*	Perdix perdix	1998	
Black-throated Diver	Gavia arctica	1994	
Great Bittern	Botaurus stellaris	1994	
Northern Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus	2009	
Black-tailed Godwit	Limosa limosa	2007	
Eurasian Curlew	Numenius arquata	2007	
Arctic Skua	Stercorarius parasiticus	1994	
European Turtle Dove	Streptopelia turtur	1994	
Common Cuckoo	Cuculus canorus	2008	
European Nightjar	Caprimulgus	2006	

Common Name	Scientific name	Year	Master Site (redacted)
	europaeus		
Eurasian Wryneck	Jynx torquilla	1994	
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos minor	2005	
Wood Lark	Lullula arborea	1999	
Sky Lark	Alauda arvensis	2007	
Tree Pipit	Anthus trivialis	1999	
Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava	2003	
Hedge Accentor	Prunella modularis	2009	
Ring Ouzel	Turdus torquatus	1994	
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	2010	
Common Grasshopper Warbler	Locustella naevia	2007	
Marsh Warbler	Acrocephalus palustris	1994	
Wood Warbler	Phylloscopus sibilatrix	1994	
Spotted Flycatcher*	Muscicapa striata	2001	
Willow Tit	Poecile montanus	1994	
Marsh Tit	Poecile palustris	1994	
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	2007	
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	2007	
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	1994	
Common Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	2007	
Common Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	2007	
Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella	2007	
Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	2007	
European Water Vole	Arvicola amphibius	2003	
West European Hedgehog	Erinaceus europaeus	2010	
Noctule Bat	Nyctalus noctula	2008	
Soprano Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pygmaeus	2008	
Brown Long-eared Bat	Plecotus auritus	2008	
European Otter	Lutra lutra	2011	
Harvest Mouse	Micromys minutus	2006	
Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	2006	