

BIODIVERSITY ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2016



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Wokingham



Sharing environmental information in Berkshire and Oxfordshire



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 2015-16 business year unless otherwise indicated.

The approach of this report is to set Wokingham data in a unitary context, with further national or regional perspectives where appropriate. 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 areas of biodiversity importance (LWS/LGS)
- Change in areas of UK S41 priority habitats
- Change in number of UK S41 priority species
- Change in condition status of Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Distribution and status of farmland birds

HIGHLIGHTS

- A slight decrease in area for LWS
- An increase in the area of priority habitats
- Eleven new species were added to the priority species list for Wokingham and 14 removed
- No changes to SSSI condition
- There was a small increase in the farmland bird index compared to 2014. Populations of most species are similar to the previous year..

ABOUT THIS INDICATOR

This indicator analyses the changes in the area of sites which are recognised for their intrinsic environmental value, specifically those sites designated for their local significance.

The calculations of the percentage of designated sites within Bracknell Forest are based on GIS determination of the geographic area as follows:

17,897 hectares

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 year of analysis.

Local Geological Sites (formerly known as Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites)

Site information was digitised in GIS using site documentation provided by Berkshire Geoconservation group.



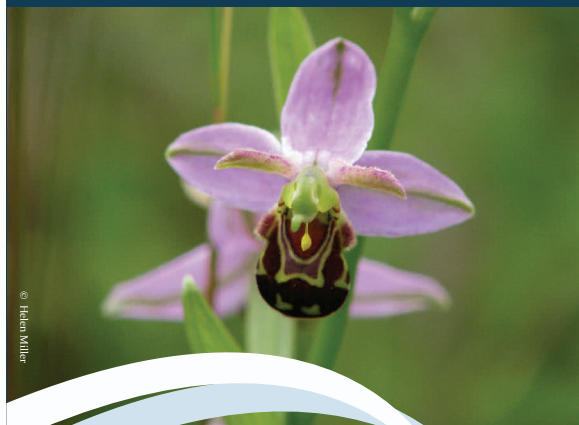
CHANGE IN AREAS OF BIODIVERSITY IMPORTANCE

There are 111 Local Wildlife Sites within Wokingham, with a further one overlapping with Bracknell Forest.

- The area of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) has decreased by 1 ha since 2013. One site was selected (Barkham Iron Rich Streams) and two were deselected (Charvil Meadows, Bulmershe College).
- The area of Local Geological Sites (LGS) has remained the same as in 2013.

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

Designated site	Area in hectares (2013)	Area in hectares (2016)	As % of Wokingham	No. of sites
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	1,246	1,245	7%	111
Local Geological Sites (LGS)	35	35	<1%	5



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CHANGES IN AREAS OF UK PRIORITY HABITAT

The changes largely represent an improved understanding of the habitat resource in Wokingham, rather than the creation or loss of habitat.

The changes are largely due to new aerial photographs allowing better interpretation, as well as new information regarding the extent of traditional orchards from PTES.

ABOUT THIS INDICATOR

This indicator identifies the UK NERC Act section 41 habitats of principal importance (priority habitats) within Bracknell Forest, as maintained on the TVERC digital mapping system.

Table 2 provides details of the UK priority habitats which have been identified within Wokingham. The changes in the UK priority habitats are mostly attributable to new information such as confirmation of boundaries or habitat types.

Table 2: UK priority habitat resource in Wokingham

UK priority habitat type	Area (ha) 2012-13	Area (ha) 2015-16
Arable field margins	Not known	Not known
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	424	465
Eutrophic standing water	179	287
Hedgerows	Not known	Not known
Lowland beech and yew woodland	38	80
Lowland calcareous grassland	4	6
Lowland dry acid grassland	0.9	8
Lowland fens	18	19
Lowland heathland	21	19
Lowland meadows	4	14
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	994	1,306
Mesotrophic lakes	20	20
Oligotrophic and dystrophic lakes	Not known	Not known
Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land	Not known	Not known
Ponds	5	6
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	0.3	0.3
Reedbeds	1	1
Rivers	9	9
Traditional orchards	27	28
Wet woodland	111	120
Wood pasture and parkland	170	174
Total area of priority habitat	2,026	2,599

ABOUT THIS INDICATOR

This indicator uses records of UK NERC Act s41 species of principal importance (priority species) which have been reported in Bracknell Forest during the period 1995–2015

INFORMATION SOURCES

The main sources of information on these species include:

- National list of UK priority species <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5717>
- Recorder database for Berkshire unitary authorities held by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
- Contributions from county recorders, conservation professionals and recording groups, providing additional information on species status.
- Local recorders are responsible for the provision and verification of many of the records held on the TVERC database.



CHANGES IN NUMBER OF UK PRIORITY SPECIES

The number of priority species listed in Wokingham is 106. Eleven new species have been added to the list. Fourteen species were removed as no new records had been made since 1996. Species new and removed from the Wokingham list are in Appendix 1.

Table 3: Change in numbers of UK priority species

	Wokingham 1992-2012	Wokingham 1996-2016
Number of UK priority species	109	106

QUALITY OF INFORMATION

The list of priority species is a reflection of recording effort and the speed at which TVERC can process results sent by individual recorders and recording groups. A priority 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 1996 might not point to genuine extinction, rather that no recorders are surveying for these species.





CONDITION OF SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

There are four SSSI's wholly or partly within Wokingham, representing less than 1% of the land area.

Summary data for information collated up to March 2016, based on assessments carried out by Natural England between 2006 and 2016, are given below.

Table 4: SSSI condition data for 2014-2015

Condition	No. of units or part units 2015/16	Sum of hectares 2015/16	% in Wokingham
Favourable	7	7	26%
Unfavourable declining	0	0	0%
Unfavourable no change	2	8	30%
Unfavourable recovering	1	12	43%
Destroyed	0	0	0%
Total	10	27	

No sites were assessed during 2015-2016. Longmoor Bog was assessed in 2013 and the condition remained unchanged as Unfavourable Recovering

ABOUT THIS INDICATOR

Natural England publishes "condition assessments" for all SSSI's.

These are assessments, to a standard method, of the quality of these sites, describing the condition of the features for which the sites were originally scheduled. SSSI's are monitored every 5 - 6 years.

ABOUT THIS INDICATOR

This indicator uses an established list of 19 species, identifiable as farmland birds, compiled by the RSPB.

Survey data were generated by British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), survey volunteers and compiled by BTO officers in Thetford from the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Surveys, in specific 1km by 1km squares and then used to determine a farmland bird index. These records were then made available to TVERC for processing at a district-specific level, using the methodology established by RSPB Central England Office staff.

To establish a timeframe from which any kind of meaningful trend can be identified, a shifting baseline has been used and changes in bird populations in subsequent years (over a 10 year window) are then stated relative to that baseline year. This latest assessment of the farmland bird index trend uses a baseline of 2006.

QUALITY OF THE DATA

The reliability of the species records is dependent on the number of 1km squares which have been surveyed in a season. This varies from year to year. As a consequence, the reliability of the resulting farmland bird figures is open to debate.



DISTRIBUTION & STATUS OF FARMLAND BIRDS

There was a small increase in the index compared to 2014 and survey effort was the same as last year. Despite the index increase, many species showed declines compared with last year including Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Starling and Turtle Dove. Some species showed significant increases, particularly Rook and Woodpigeon. Several species have not been recorded at all, including Corn Bunting, Grey Partridge, Tree Sparrow and Yellow Wagtail. See appendix 2 for total numbers.

Table 5: Mean counts per squares (i.e. density per square kilometre) of farmland birds in Wokingham. Results generated from data supplied by the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey.

Species	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Bunting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Goldfinch	3.00	2.80	2.33	3.60	4.45	5.36	6.00	5.93	5.27	4.64
Greenfinch	7.89	5.30	5.56	7.10	5.27	4.82	4.43	3.57	3.73	3.64
Grey Partridge	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Jackdaw	9.78	12.40	9.89	9.90	9.09	11.09	13.21	13.21	18.00	13.73
Kestrel	0.44	0.30	0.89	0.30	0.55	0.73	0.36	0.36	0.18	0.45
Lapwing	3.33	2.50	0.56	0.40	0.91	1.45	1.07	1.64	2.82	2.73
Linnet	0.33	0.70	0.67	0.30	1.27	0.73	0.71	0.86	0.45	0.73
Reed Bunting	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.09	0.18	0.29	0.14	0.18	0.27
Rook	0.89	7.30	2.22	7.80	2.73	9.27	7.64	17.64	6.09	10.73
Skylark	3.00	2.20	2.78	2.20	4.09	4.73	3.71	2.86	2.27	2.09
Starling	8.67	10.20	5.78	8.60	12.45	7.82	7.21	9.57	7.18	5.09
Stock Dove	1.22	1.70	0.78	1.60	1.09	1.82	1.21	1.29	0.91	4.27
Tree sparrow	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Turtle Dove	0.11	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.09	0.00
Whitethroat	1.00	1.30	1.67	1.00	1.73	2.64	2.00	1.64	2.45	2.36
Woodpigeon	38.11	52.50	48.78	38.30	32.18	42.18	37.86	32.00	27.27	31.55
Yellow Wagtail	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yellowhammer	1.11	0.80	0.56	0.40	0.27	0.55	0.43	0.14	0.18	0.55
Total suite density	79.00	100.20	82.56	81.60	76.18	93.36	86.14	91.00	77.09	82.82
Index	1.00	1.27	1.05	1.03	0.96	1.18	1.09	1.15	0.98	1.05





APPENDIX 1

UK NERC Act Section 41 species of principal importance (priority species).

New species added to the Wokingham List

Common Name	Scientific Name	Year
Autumnal Rustic	<i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>	2009
Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>	2013
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	2007
Broad-leaved Cudweed	<i>Filago pyramidata</i>	2015
Centre-barred Sallow	<i>Atethmia centrargo</i>	2003
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	2015
Cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	2014
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	2005
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	2009
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	2015
Marsh Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria palustris</i>	2004

Species removed from the list—no new records since 1996

This does not mean that they are not present in Wokingham but that no records have been recorded on our database since 1996.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Year
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	1994
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	1994
Greater Water-parsnip	<i>Sium latifolium</i>	1994
Least Lettuce	<i>Lactuca saligna</i>	1994
Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	1994
Mountain Hare	<i>Lepus timidus</i>	1992
Red Hemp-nettle	<i>Galeopsis angustifolia</i>	1994
Red-tipped Cudweed	<i>Filago lutescens</i>	1993
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	1994
Tundra Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>	1994
Wall	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	1994
White-letter Hairstreak	<i>Satyrrium w-album</i>	1992
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>	1994
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	1994



APPENDIX 2

Breeding bird survey results from BTO (2006–2015)

Total numbers of recorded farmland birds in Wokingham 2006-2015

Species	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Bunting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Goldfinch	27	28	21	36	49	59	84	83	58	51
Greenfinch	71	53	50	71	58	53	62	50	41	40
Grey Partridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jackdaw	88	124	89	99	100	122	185	185	198	151
Kestrel	4	3	8	3	6	8	5	5	2	5
Lapwing	30	25	5	4	10	16	15	23	31	30
Linnet	3	7	6	3	14	8	10	12	5	8
Reed Bunting	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	2	2	3
Rook	8	73	20	78	30	102	107	247	67	118
Skylark	27	22	25	22	45	52	52	40	25	23
Starling	78	102	52	86	137	86	101	134	79	56
Stock Dove	11	17	7	16	12	20	17	18	10	47
Tree sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turtle Dove	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Whitethroat	9	13	15	10	19	29	28	23	27	26
Woodpigeon	343	525	439	383	354	464	530	448	300	347
Yellow Wagtail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellowhammer	10	8	5	4	3	6	6	2	2	6
No of squares surveyed	9	10	9	10	11	11	14	14	11	11

Data supplied by the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey.

Thames Valley

Environmental Records Centre

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