

# WOOD PASTURE AND PARKLAND

Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Lowland wood pasture and parkland has been identified as a priority habitat by the UK Biodiversity Group. The South East of England is the most important area for this habitat, supporting 70% of the UK resource. Hampshire contains half of the south-east's total

## 2 CURRENT STATUS

### 2.1 Description of Habitat

Lowland wood pastures and parks are habitats where there is a long tradition of grazing deer and domestic livestock in amongst trees. The tree cover and age of individual trees may vary. Wood pastures and parks are frequently renowned for their high concentration of ancient trees and their rich associations of species.

Management practices such as pollarding are prominent but other traditions are also represented including selected felling and coppicing.

Wood pastures and parks can be particularly important for:

- structurally diverse woodland and open habitats;
- no consistent history of systematic intensive management of trees;
- an exceptionally rich lichen flora where there is a continuity of old growth;
- an exceptionally rich invertebrate fauna where there is a continuity of old growth;
- an exceptionally rich breeding bird fauna where there is old growth;
- an exceptionally rich bryophyte flora where there is a continuity of old growth;
- an exceptionally rich fungal flora where there is a continuity of old growth and dead wood;
- a rich vascular plant flora;

- a rich mammal fauna which can be exceptionally rich where there is old growth;
- their effective non recreatability in any reasonable time period.

Some sites support an intact habitat with the tradition of tree management, grazing deer and domestic livestock and the retention of natural grassland and scrub. These may be referred to as working wood pastures. In parks there has been a tendency for agricultural and landscape management to have modified the natural grassland and scrub, but retaining ancient trees. At its most extreme a parkland may persist as ancient trees without any associated natural vegetation. Many wood pastures outside the New Forest have fallen out of grazing management with the decline of common grazing. These wood pastures may now appear to be secondary, or even plantation woods interspersed with ancient trees.

Wood pastures often contain important and sensitive archaeological features; they may contain relic features of an ancient landscape such as medieval field systems

### 2.2 Distribution and Extent

Wood pastures and parks have been associated with most parts of Hampshire. They have survived in their greatest extent in the landscapes of the New Forest. Other former royal forest relics persist in the Weald (e.g. Woolmer and Binswood), south east Hampshire (e.g. Bere), Thames Basin (e.g. Bramshill and Highclere Parks and Odiham Common). Sites are also known from major river valleys (e.g. Bransbury Common) and scattered in a heavily modified and low density form across the Chalk (e.g. Selborne Common, Hurstbourne Park and Rotherfield Park).

A significant proportion of Britain's lowland wood pasture and parkland resource (estimated at 10-20,000 ha) is found within Hampshire. This is primarily a function of the survival of extensive areas of habitat within the New Forest. This resource is also regarded to be of significance within the context of lowland north west Europe.

HABITAT  
ACTION  
PLAN

There are currently no accurate data as to the exact extent of these habitats outside of the New Forest. Development of such an audit would pose significant difficulties, particularly where wood pasture and parkland relics are found at a low density within other land uses and hidden within other habitats. The current best estimate of these habitats in Hampshire is between 6,000 and 7,000 hectares. The majority of the habitats are found within the Ancient and Ornamental woodlands of the New Forest. The combined resource of Ancient and Ornamental woodlands on the Crown lands (both within the open Forest and within Inclosures) is 4,015 hectares. An additional 500 hectares of these habitats are estimated to be present elsewhere in the New Forest Heritage Area.

### 2.3 Legislation and Site Designation

The majority of the wood pasture and parkland resource, approximately 4,100 hectares, is included within the New Forest candidate Special Area of Conservation under the EC Habitats Directive. A selection of the wood pastures and parklands elsewhere in Hampshire are SSSI. The majority are however not SSSI but many of these are recognised as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

There are 15 SSSIs in Hampshire which contain a significant wood pasture and parkland element. Of these SSSIs, 5 are predominantly privately owned, the remainder being in the ownership, or management, of national government agencies, local government or conservation charities. The combined area of the parkland and wood pasture elements of these 15 SSSIs is estimated at 5,000 hectares.

## **3 CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE HABITAT**

- Changes in rural economies have led to withdrawal of grazing from commons, former royal forests and parks.
- Intensification of agricultural management has destroyed the open ground habitat interests on many sites.
- Large old trees are felled and removed from sites; cessation of pollarding may also have reduced the long term survival potential of many old trees.
- Improved recreational access often leads to the clearance, or modification, of ancient

trees to make the areas safe as public places. Recreation pressure can also lead to severe erosion of soils and vegetation of key sites.

- On many sites there is a large “generation gap” (very old and young trees present, but few of intermediate age) which leads to the loss of habitat continuity.
- A recent history of minimal, or no, management resulting in potential public resistance to change.
- The fragmentation of the historic resource resulting in biological isolation of sites.
- A lack of understanding of the traditional former management of the habitat, causing problems when wanting to reinstate management of derelict sites.

## **4 CURRENT ACTION**

### 4.1 Site and Species Protection

- See 2.3 for legislation and designation.
- The identification of SINCs in Hampshire is nearing completion and they are being incorporated into local plans.

### 4.2 Habitat Management and Programmes of Action

- Wood pasture SSSIs are all becoming subject to site management statements prepared by English Nature. The Wildlife Enhancement Scheme may assist funding the implementation of these plans.
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas have the potential to support and reinstate grazing in wood pastures within their areas.
- Within the New Forest cSAC there is a major initiative promoting wood pasture management within the context of the European Union LIFE programme, and as part of the Forestry Commission Forest Design Plan process.
- Countryside Stewardship is supporting management of existing parklands and the reinstatement of grazing of commons (i.e. Brockenhurst Park, Odiham Common, Pamber Forest)
- Capital Transfer Tax exemption schemes assist the appropriate management of sites (Highclere Park, Butter Wood).

- The Hampshire Heathland Project is encouraging the re-grazing of heathlands which may include a wood pasture element (Pamber Forest, Passfield Common).
- Private landowners are maintaining wood pastures and parklands as part of the normal estate management (Hurstbourne Park, Kilmeston Severals).
- Commoners are perpetuating traditional grazing management in certain wood pastures both including and outside the New Forest (Binswood, Bartley Heath, Hoegate).
- Local government and conservation charities are reinstating grazing of wood pastures and parklands within their ownership (Odiham Common, Bartley Heath, Pamber Forest, Binswood).

4.3 Action For Species

Table 1 (Appendix 1) gives details of priority species in Hampshire found primarily in wood pasture and parkland. All species in the table will have Hampshire species action plans (SAPs). In some cases additional action plans and programmes will also contribute to conserving priority species: for example, UK Species Action Plans (UK SAP).

Table 3 (Appendix 1) lists those Hampshire priority species that occur in wood pasture and parkland but whose main habitat is **not** wood pasture and parkland. Although action in this wood pasture and parkland HAP may contribute to the conservation of these species, other HAPs and SAPs have key responsibility for their conservation.

4.4 Survey, Research and Monitoring

- The level of survey and monitoring of Hampshire's wood pastures and parklands is good, and in some degrees excellent, but is still incomplete. Work centred on the New Forest has assisted in Hampshire being well placed to take a national and international lead in understanding the ecology and nature conservation management of wood pastures and parks. This research, when combined with that undertaken in systems elsewhere, is of value in addressing the general principles of wood pasture management. Further research is required into how to combine the requirements of parklands and wood pasture with historic landscape, aesthetic and agricultural practices.
- Further survey work is required outside the New Forest cSAC to determine the extent of these habitats, particularly where they survive as relics in other land uses.

## 5 OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this Plan is to protect and enhance the biodiversity of chalk streams in Hampshire. This broad aim translates into the specific objectives set out below. Where feasible, objectives have been allocated targets against which achievement can be measured: for example, total areas to be restored or dates for completion. The 'Proposed Action' table in section 6 identifies the action to be taken to meet these objectives.

### HABITAT ACTION PLAN

	OBJECTIVE	PROPOSED ACTIONS
<b>A</b>	Ensure no further loss or degradation of the wood pasture resource.	<b>1-4, 8-10, 25</b>
<b>B</b>	Achieve favourable management in all working wood pastures and parks through direct and indirect support to landowners, managers and commoners.	<b>5-13, 17, 22, 25</b>
<b>C</b>	Reinstate all relic, or sub-optimally managed wood pastures and parks, to sustainable management regimes, initially (first five years) concentrating on sites supporting ancient trees with their associated species.	<b>1, 2, 5-11, 22</b>
<b>D</b>	Ensure requirements of all priority species found in wood pasture are met.	<b>14-16</b>
<b>E</b>	Improve knowledge of distribution and status of wood pasture through survey, research and monitoring.	<b>4, 15, 17-21</b>
<b>F</b>	Promote the importance of wood pasture for biodiversity across different sectors, and ensure good communication links are developed and maintained.	<b>22-26</b>

**6 PROPOSED ACTION**

The following table lists the actions required to achieve the objectives set out in this Plan. Each action has been assigned to one or more 'Key Partners'. **Key Partners** are those organisations that are expected to take responsibility for the delivery of the actions assigned to them, according to the targets set in this Plan. Other organisations may also be involved in the delivery of action, and they have been indicated in the 'Others' column.

Key to symbols in Action Table:

- ◆ To be completed by the indicated year. Work can commence at any time before the due date, at the discretion of the Key Partner.
- ◆⇄ Design or production of a plan/strategy to be completed by this year and then followed by its implementation.
- ➡ To start by the indicated year and usually followed by ongoing work. A start arrow in year 2000, can indicate a new action or a new impetus to existing work.
- ⇄ Work that has already begun and is ongoing.

**HABITAT  
ACTION  
PLAN**

	ACTION	DELIVERY BY		YEAR						MEETS OBJ.		
		Key Partner	Others	◆ = complete by	◆⇄ = design by and implement	➡ = start by	⇄ = ongoing	2000	2001		2002	2003
<b>Habitat Protection</b>												
1	Review statutory status of wood pastures and parks using best available scientific data.	EN	HWT, FC	⇄						◆		A, C
2	Review SINC selection of wood pastures and parklands, ensuring criteria are appropriate and that suitable sites are covered.	HCC	HWT, EN	⇄					◆			A, C
3	Ensure that the consideration of wood pasture conservation is incorporated into and applied within the planning process.	HCC, LA's	HWT	⇄	⇄	⇄	⇄	⇄	⇄	⇄		A
<b>Habitat Management, Incentive Schemes and Other Resources</b>												
4	Ensure that all sites owned or managed by public bodies, local authorities and nature conservation organisations are subject to management plans supporting wood pasture and parkland interests within 5 years.	HCC, LA's, HWT, FC, WT				➡			◆			A, B, C

**Wood Pasture and Parkland**

5	Complete and implement a New Forest SAC management plan.	EN, HCC, NFC, NFDC, HWT			◆⇄					A, B, C
6	Complete a review of the management of all wood pasture sites outside of the New Forest cSAC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>private lands, particularly landscape parks containing wood pastures and parks in partnership with landowners, and landscape interests (30 potential sites).</li> <li>commons containing wood pastures and parks in partnership with landowners and commoners (6 potential sites).</li> <li>wood pastures owned or managed by public bodies, local governments and nature conservation organisations (23 potential sites).</li> </ul>	EN/HWT	HCC, FC, LA's	→		◆				A, E
7	On private lands offer specific advice to secure appropriate management on at least the 5 largest sites which cover some 200 ha.	FC, EN	HMAP, HWT							B, C
8	Identify and promote opportunities for supporting or revitalising commoning practices and provide support to secure appropriate management for all 6 commons which cover approximately 300 ha.		HGP, HMAP, HWT			→		◆		B, C
9	Identify and promote best practice for management to all those owning or managing sites.	FC/FE	HWT			→		◆		B, C
10	Ensure that all wood pasture SSSIs include appropriate wood pasture and parkland interests in their site management statements.	EN				→		◆		A, B, C
11	Seek to ensure appropriate targeting of incentive schemes, and to take into account the conservation requirements of wood pasture and parkland when reviewing and adjusting agri-environment schemes. Promote schemes to seek maximum uptake by wood pasture and parkland owners and managers.	MAFF/FR CA, FC		⇄	⇄	⇄	⇄	⇄	⇄	B, C

**HABITAT  
ACTION  
PLAN**

**Wood Pasture and Parkland**

12	Maintain and enhance partnership ventures to promote and support incentive schemes, including Habitat Management Advisory Project, Avon Valley Project, Hampshire Heathland Project, FWAG, AONB Project Officers, New Forest Committee Forest Friendly Farming.	HCC, HWT, FWAG, CA, NFC		↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	B
<b>ACTION</b>		<b>DELIVERY BY</b>		<b>YEAR</b>						<b>MEETS OBJ.</b>
		<b>Key Partner</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2010</b>	
		◆ = complete by    ◆↔ = design by and implement ➡ = start by        ↔ = ongoing								
13	Review the WGS to ensure objectives for wood pasture management are included, and that the funding available is attractive to landowners.	FC			➡	◆				B
<b>Species Action</b>										
14	Encourage landowners and advisors to ascertain as far as possible which priority species listed in this plan are found on individual sites, and promote/implement favourable management.	HWT	EN, HCC, FC, MAFF/FRCA			◆↔				D
15	Develop a strategy for monitoring priority species found in wood pasture and parkland	HWT, HCC	EN, FC			➡				D, E
16	Prepare species action plans for species associated with wood pasture that are not covered by this plan or other existing plans.	HWT, HCC	EN, FC			➡				D
<b>Survey, Research and Monitoring</b>										
17	Monitor sites managed under incentive schemes to ensure compliance and best practice.	MAFF/FR CA, FC	EN, HCC	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	B, E
18	Investigate what survey and monitoring is required to bring data on all wood pastures and parks in Hampshire to a common standard. Implement recommendations arising from this review.	EN, HCC	FC, HWT	➡		◆				E
19	Prepare and maintain an inventory of all wood pasture and parklands in Hampshire.	HCC	EN, HWT	➡		◆				E
20	Ensure that all relevant data on wood pasture is incorporated into the Hampshire Biological Record and fed into the National Biodiversity Network.	HCC			➡		◆			E
21	Undertake research into how to combine the requirements of parklands and wood pasture with historic landscape, aesthetic and agricultural practices.	HWT, HGP				➡		◆		E
<b>Communication and Publicity</b>										

**HABITAT ACTION PLAN**

**Wood Pasture and Parkland**

22	All interested parties to maintain communication over best practice and practical experience. Wherever practicable, best practice, practical experience and the results of research should be made available and circulated in written form.	All		↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	B, C, F
23	Ensure research arising from international, national and local studies are interpreted to the non-specialist and disseminated amongst all key owners and managers.	EN, FC, HWT		↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	F
24	Maintain and improve current level of communication between wood pasture and parkland owners and managers within Hampshire.	EN, HWT		↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	F
25	Ensure the dissemination of experience and research in wood pastoral parkland management in Hampshire is disseminated elsewhere in the UK and lowland western Europe.	EN		↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	A, B, F
26	Promote/raise awareness of the importance of wood pasture and parkland to landowners and the general public for example through locally orientated leaflets.	HWT, EN, HCC			➔					F

**HABITAT  
ACTION  
PLAN**

**KEY TO ORGANISATIONS**

CA	Countryside Agency	HMAP	Habitat Management Advisory Project
EN	English Nature	HWT	Hampshire Wildlife Trust
FA	Forest Enterprise	LAs	Local Authorities
FC	Forestry Commission	MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
FRCA	Farming and Rural Conservation Agency	NFC	New Forest Committee
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	NFDC	New Forest District Council

## APPENDIX 1

Key to abbreviations in Tables 1 and 2 – see ‘Action in addition to HAP’ and ‘Status/Protection’

Abbreviation	Definition
<b>ACTION IN ADDITION TO HAP (Other Plans Relevant to Priority Species)</b>	
UK SAP	Species Action Plan prepared under UK Biodiversity programme
UK Grouped SAP	Species catered for by a grouped Species Action Plan prepared under UK Biodiversity programme
UK Species Statement	Conservation of species generally achieved through HAPs. Statement prepared under UK Biodiversity programme to link the relevant Plans.
No Plan	Species removed from revised UK priority list. No Action Plan / Species Statement produced
BC RAP	Butterfly Conservation Regional Action Plan
BC NAP	Butterfly Conservation National Action Plan
<b>PROTECTION: European (EC Habitats Directive)</b>	
Annex II	Designation of protected areas for animals and plants listed
Annex IV	Special protection for animals and plants listed
Annex V	Control of exploitation of animals and plants listed
<b>PROTECTION: British (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)</b>	
Sch. 1	Special protection for birds listed
Sch. 5	Special protection for animals listed
Sch. 5 (sale)	Protection against sale for animals listed (Schedule 5 section 9 (5))
Sch. 8	Special protection for plants listed
<b>STATUS: International (International Union for the Conservation of Nature)</b>	
IUCN VU	Vulnerable – Species facing high risk of extinction
IUCN LR/cd	Lower Risk / conservation dependent species – Species that do not satisfy the criteria for ‘Critically Endangered’, ‘Endangered’ or ‘Vulnerable’. They are ‘conservation dependent’ if they are the focus of specific conservation programmes, which if stopped, would result in the taxon qualifying for one of the threatened categories within a period of five years.
IUCN LR/nt	Lower Risk / near threatened species – Species that do not qualify for ‘conservation dependent’ but are close to ‘Vulnerable’ status
IUCN DD	Data Deficient – Insufficient data to make a direct or indirect assessment of a species status, based on its distribution and/or population status.
<b>STATUS: British – Mammals (Red Data Book)</b>	
RDB	Mammal species listed in the British Red Data Book
<b>STATUS: British – Plant and Fungi (Red Data Book and associated)</b>	
RDB Cr	Critically Endangered – Extremely high risk of extinction in the near future
RDB En	Endangered – Very high risk of extinction in the near future
RDB V	Vulnerable – High risk of extinction in the medium-term future
RDB K	Insufficient data to assess status
NS	Nationally Scarce – Plants not on red list but occurring in 16 to 100 10x10 km squares
NT	Near Threatened – Plants not on red list but occurring in 15 or fewer 10x10 km squares
<b>STATUS: British – Invertebrates (Red Data Book and associated)</b>	
RDB En	Endangered – In danger of extinction
RDB V	Vulnerable – Declining or occurring in a vulnerable habitat. Usually occurs in less than 16 10x10 km squares
RDB R	Rare – Not declining but occurring in less than 16 10x10 km squares
RDB K	Insufficiently known – Suspected, but not definitely, Endangered, Vulnerable or Rare
NS (a)	Nationally Scarce – Occurring in 16 to 30 10x10 km squares (for well recorded species)
NS (b)	Nationally Scarce – Occurring in 31 to 100 10x10 km squares (for well recorded species)
<b>STATUS: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Birds of Conservation Concern)</b>	
Red List	Various criteria, including a 50% decline in breeding population or range over last 25 years
Amber List	Various criteria, including a 25-49% decline in breeding population or range over last 25 years

## Wood Pasture and Parkland

**Table 1 - Hampshire priority species found primarily in wood pasture and parkland**

Scientific name	Common name	Group	Status/Protection	Habitat/Ecology	Hants Distribution	Specific management requirements	Action in addition to HAP	Hants SAP?
<i>Agonimia allobata</i>	a lichen	Lichens	-	Mossy trunks, base rich bark in sheltered woodlands	National stronghold; New Forest	Retain older wood in managed woodlands	UK SAP	yes (g)
<i>Agonimia octospora</i>	a lichen	Lichens	NS	Mature Oak trunks in sheltered sites	National stronghold; New Forest	Management of holly invasion	0	yes (g)
<i>Bacidia incompta</i>	a lichen	Lichens	RDB V	On Elm on old New Forest Beech inside hollow Holly. Usually growing as uneven vertical streaks along nutrient-rich rain-seepage tracks or below wounds in bark	Declining, lost from some sites New Forest	Pollards to provide a continuity of veteran trees	UK SAP	yes (g)
<i>Caloplaca luteoalba</i>	orange-fruited elm-lichen	Lichens	Sch. 8, RDB V	Hedgerows and woodland with Elm; in dry, well lit situations	Last recorded at Blashford, Lymington	Maintain elm growth	UK SAP	yes (g)
<i>Lobaria virens</i>	a lichen	Lichens	-	On Oak, Beech, Ash in New Forest ancient woods	National stronghold; New Forest	Management of holly invasion	0	yes (g)
<i>Opegrapha fumosa</i>	a lichen	Lichens	RDB R	On Oak in sheltered, old growth woodland	National stronghold; New Forest	Management of holly invasion	No plan	yes (g)
<i>Phylopsora rosei</i>	a lichen	Lichens	NS	On Oak and Beech in old growth woodland	National stronghold; New Forest	Management of holly invasion	0	yes (g)
<i>Rinodina isidioides</i>	a lichen	Lichens	NS	On Oak in old growth woodland	New Forest	Management of holly invasion	UK SAP	yes (g)
<i>Strigula stigmatella</i>	a lichen	Lichens	RDB En	On Oak in old growth woodland	Restricted to Hampshire; New Forest	Maintenance of old growth woodland	UK SAP	yes (g)
<i>Zamenhofia rosei</i>	Francis' blue-green lichen	Lichens	NT	On Oak in base rich old growth woodland	National stronghold; New Forest	Management of holly invasion	No plan	yes (g)

**Table 2- Priority species, thought to be extinct in Hampshire, which are primarily associated with wood pasture and parkland.**

No extinct species primarily associated with wood pasture and parkland.

**Table – 3 Priority species, found primarily in other habitats, but which occur in chalk streams**

Scientific name	Common name	Group	Primary HAP	Hants SAP?
<i>Gnorimus nobilis</i>	noble chafer	Beetles	Ancient semi-natural woodland	yes
<i>Hydnellum conrescens</i>	a tooth fungus	Fungi	Ancient semi-natural woodland	yes (g)
<i>Sarcodon scabrosus</i>	a tooth fungus	Fungi	Ancient semi-natural woodland	yes (g)

**REFERENCES**

This Plan is one of many Habitat, Species and Topic Action Plans being prepared by the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership. It will be monitored by the Partnership and fully reviewed and updated in 2005.

This habitat action plan has been prepared by Clive Chatters on behalf of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership.

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**HABITAT  
ACTION  
PLAN**