

SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION IN HAMPSHIRE

Protecting Hampshire's Wildlife



Hampshire has a wealth of wildlife habitats, including heathland, old meadows, ancient woodland, chalk streams, wetlands and coastal habitats.

Some of the most important sites in the county are already protected by national or international designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

However, a large number of other sites in Hampshire are also important for wildlife. Many contain habitats or features that cannot be recreated. It is important to ensure that these sites are not lost and that they continue to be managed for their wildlife interest.

To help safeguard these sites for the future, they are identified and recorded as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), also known as Local Sites or Local Wildlife Sites¹.

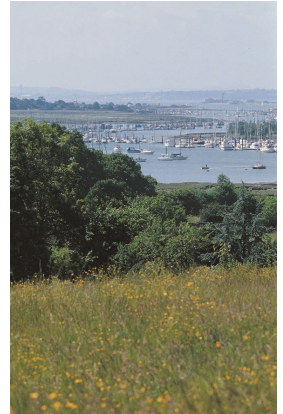
SINCs represent a legacy of good management and rely upon continued stewardship by landowners and managers.

Together with designated sites such as SSSIs, SINCs form a vital component of the biodiversity of Hampshire.



The Purpose of SINCs

- Designating a site as a SINC helps raise awareness of its importance for wildlife and makes it a focus for nature conservation.
- Identification as a SINC highlights the importance of a site when applying for funding from Environment Stewardship and can assist in a successful application. It may also enable access to other sources of grant aid for management. Owners and managers of SINCs can obtain advice and support (see separate factsheet on sources of advice).



- Local authorities hold information on SINCs within their area and include policies in their Local Plans and Local Development Frameworks to safeguard these sites from inappropriate development. If you would like to know how SINCs are being considered in the local plan for your area, please contact your local planning authority.
- Selection as a SINC does not impose restrictions on agricultural management or allow public access on a site where none exists. Under national legislation, agricultural projects that affect any uncultivated land or semi natural vegetation may require an Environmental Impact Assessment. Information is available through the EIA Unit at Natural England. Woodland operations are dealt with by the Forestry Commission.
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/eia/>
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-74adb6>

¹Local Sites; Guidance on their identification, Selection and Management, Defra 2006. See

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130402151656/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/protected/localsites.pdf>

Identifying and Selecting SINCs

- SINCs are identified using data gathered from a variety of sources. These may include biological surveys (conducted with permission from the owner), records from voluntary recording groups or existing documents, such as the Provisional Inventory of Ancient Woodland for Hampshire.
- Sites are assessed against detailed criteria. Sites which qualify for designation are agreed by a SINCs Advisory Panel (comprising officers from Natural England, The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Hampshire County Council), and submitted to the Local Planning Authority.
- A site may qualify as a SINC due to the presence of an important habitat or notable listed species, many of which are Priority Habitats and Species under the NERC Act, 2006. A site may also qualify if it supports a rich assemblage of species.



- Almost 4000 sites in Hampshire have been recorded as SINCs.
- Detailed data on the wildlife interest of SINCs is held by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre. This information is readily available to all owners and managers of SINCs.

Habitat Management Advice

There are a number of Land Management Advisors based within: Natural England, Forestry Commission, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), New Forest National Park Authority, South Downs National Park Authority and the local district/unitary Councils, who are able to:

- Inform land-owners and managers about SINCs and their value for wildlife;
- Provide advice on management;
- Assist land managers with applications for appropriate grant aid.

See separate factsheet for the contact in your area.



If you would like further information on SINCs or wish to know whether your land has been recorded as a SINC, please contact :

The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre

Elizabeth II Court West, 1st Floor

The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UD

Tel : 01962 832320 / 22

Email : enquiries.hbic@hants.gov.uk