

# **DERBYSHIRE**

# **WILDLIFE SITES**

# **HANDBOOK**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2005**

***This Handbook  
sets out the development, administration of and selection  
guidelines for Wildlife Sites in Derbyshire  
(outside the Peak District National Park).***

**March 2005**

***Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.***

***Approved by the Derbyshire Wildlife Sites Panel.***



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To obtain a copy of this Handbook please contact Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

A pdf copy of this document can be downloaded from the Derbyshire Biodiversity website at **[www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk)**.



## Preface

This is the third major publication since 1985 relating to the Derbyshire Wildlife Sites system.

The first two were:

- 1985: 'Derbyshire Wildlife Habitat Assessment Report of Survey';
- 1996: 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Derbyshire Handbook'

Over the past 20 years these publications have aimed to set out the development of the Wildlife Sites system and its uses. As individual Wildlife Site systems for areas (usually administrative areas) have become nationally recognised, the emphasis for the Derbyshire Wildlife Sites system has been on establishing administrative systems in which all users can have confidence.

This second edition of the Handbook incorporates:

- those sections of the 'Derbyshire Wildlife Habitat Assessment Report of Survey 1985' which are still relevant and replaces those sections which are now outdated;
- those sections of the 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Derbyshire Handbook 1996' which are still relevant and replaces those sections which are now outdated.

A considerable amount of detailed information has been placed in the appendices, so that the main body of the text sets out the issues to be dealt with, the policies adopted and the principles for administration. The Appendices provide information about the historical development of the Wildlife Sites system, and the detailed day-to-day administration.

Volume 2 of the Handbook sets out the guidelines for the selection of Wildlife Sites in use since September 2003. These form a major piece of work in themselves.

The Wildlife Sites Panel, including representatives from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, English Nature, Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Biological Records Centre, hope that this updated publication will provide added transparency to, and confidence in, this system, for all those who use it.

*The Panel welcomes constructive comments from the users of this Handbook, to assist in the future development of the Wildlife Sites system.*

September 2004



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## Volume 2 *(separate document)*

### Guidelines for the selection of Wildlife Sites September 2003





**DERBYSHIRE  
WILDLIFE  
SITES  
HANDBOOK**

**Volume 1**

**Development and Administration  
of the Wildlife Sites system**



## What are Wildlife Sites?

### Statutory and non-statutory designations

**Wildlife Sites** sit within a system of *statutory* and *non-statutory* nature conservation designations in the United Kingdom, set out in **Fig. 1**. Statutory sites are designated under powers granted by Acts of Parliament.

A small number of statutory sites in Derbyshire, outside the Peak District, are designated due to their international importance (**Special Protection Areas** and **Special Areas of Conservation**) or their national importance (**Sites of Special Scientific Interest** and **National Nature Reserves**). There are a very small number of **Local Nature Reserves** (LNRs) in Derbyshire which are also statutorily designated (designation is dependent upon ownership or control of land by the designating local authority); they are usually of at least regional or local importance.

**Fig. 1 Statutory & non-statutory nature conservation site designations**

IMPORTANCE	SITE DESIGNATION & EXPLANATION	Abbreviation
<b>Sites of International Importance</b> <i>(all statutory)</i>	<b>Ramsar Sites</b> listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.	
	<b>Special Protection Areas</b> classified under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.	SPA
	<b>Special Areas of Conservation</b> designated under the EC Directive on the Conservation of natural habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Habitats Directive).	SAC
<b>Sites of National Importance</b> <i>(all statutory)</i>	<b>National Nature Reserves declared</b> under section 19 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or section 35 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.	NNR
	<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)</b> declared section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.	SSSI
<b>Sites of regional/local importance</b>	<b>Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)</b> declared by local authorities under section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. <b>Statutory.</b>	LNR
	<b>Non-statutory nature reserves</b> established and managed by a variety of public and private bodies e.g. county wildlife trust or RSPB. <b>Non-statutory.</b>	NR
	<b>Sites of Nature Conservation Importance</b> or equivalent. These are usually adopted by local authorities for planning purposes and include ecological and geological sites. The name and status of this type of site varies in different administrative areas. In Derbyshire the term "Wildlife Sites" is used to encompass the ecological sites within this designation. <b>Non-statutory.</b>	e.g. SINC

The successful conservation of Derbyshire’s biological diversity depends upon a strategy that addresses the needs of wildlife both within statutory sites and in the wider environment.

The current suite of 109 Sites of Special Scientific Interest designated by English Nature and protected under the provisions of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) cover over 30,000 ha of land within Derbyshire. However, the 53 sites inside the Peak District National Park account for over 95 % of this area whilst the remaining 57 sites cover only 1368 ha of land outside of the PDNP. Sites of international or European importance are also located predominantly within the boundaries of the Peak Park although part of one Special Protection Area (Birds Directive) and one Special Area of Conservation (Habitats and Species Regulations. 1994) are found in Derbyshire Dales and North-east Derbyshire. The River Mease, forming the boundary between Derbyshire and Leicestershire in South Derbyshire is also an SAC.

The **Derbyshire Wildlife Sites Register** is a *non-statutory* system for identifying sites of ecological value in the wider environment in the county and addressing their protection, enhancement and management. Nationally, many similar systems are recognised by Government, through guidance given in the Town and Country planning system and by grant aiding agencies, such as DEFRA and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Selection as a **Derbyshire Wildlife Site** is influential in providing protection and resources for management and enhancement of these valuable ecological sites.

**Wildlife Sites within the planning system**

Planning authorities adopt policies to protect locally important sites as well as nationally important statutory sites and protected species. In the Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan ‘**Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation**’ (**SINC**) is the name given to non-statutory sites of ecological or geological importance and incorporates sites selected as ‘Wildlife Sites’. The term ‘SINC’ is recognised throughout Britain by planning authorities, English Nature and the Wildlife Trusts to encompass all such sites, but locally differing terminology may be used. The Local Development Framework will take these policies forward to the more local level.

**Fig. 2 Non-statutory nature conservation site designations in Derbyshire**

	<b>SITE DESIGNATION &amp; EXPLANATION</b>	
<b>Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Derbyshire:</b>	<b>Wildlife Sites</b> selected by Wildlife Sites Panel	WS
	<b>Regionally Important Geological Sites</b> selected by Derbyshire RIGS Steering Group	RIGS

'SINC' implies elements common to the large majority of systems nationally:

- the system is based on **SITES**;
- sites identified are **IMPORTANT** to biodiversity and nature conservation;
- the system is based on **NATURE CONSERVATION**, ie it has a scientific (biological and geological) base but may also attach weight to social community and amenity values associated with biodiversity.

## **The Derbyshire Wildlife Sites partnership**

In 1979 the First Structure Plan for Derbyshire included policies for nature conservation, including protection of areas of particular natural history importance outside statutory sites ie SSSIs, NNRs and LNRs. To implement these policies there was a need, recognised by both the County Council and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, to identify these "areas of importance ". In 1982 the County Council and DWT co-operated in an assessment of all wildlife habitats in the county outside the Peak National Park. A report, published jointly by the County Council and DWT in 1985<sup>1</sup>, identified the current extent of all wildlife habitats and the problems and opportunities for conservation of wildlife in the County.

As a result of this assessment, over 1800 sites of wildlife value were selected to form the '**Derbyshire Biological Sites Register**'. In 1984 the Register was formally recognised by the County Council as the principal means of identifying sites of wildlife importance in the County. DWT recognised Biological Sites as a focus for action in respect of protection from threat, provision of appropriate management advice and potential acquisitions as nature reserves. The Register, refined and renamed the **Wildlife Sites Register** in 1994, was maintained as a co-operative venture by County Council and DWT between 1984 and 1999, since when DWT has been responsible for this work, funded by local authorities.

**Continued liaison** between DWT, local authorities and English Nature aims to ensure that maintenance and development of the Wildlife Sites Register meets recognised national standards and takes account of new scientific findings and survey methods. An agreement made between the County Council and DWT in 1994 ensures clarity in relation to ownership and uses of the information.

Since 1999 **Service Level Agreements** have been made between DWT and local authorities in the county, identifying the responsibility of each party in relation to periodic updating and ongoing maintenance of the database, provision of information and associated matters.

A **Derbyshire Wildlife Sites Panel** endeavours to ensure best practice and continued development of a Wildlife Sites system to meet user's needs.

**Appendix A provides more information about the development of the Wildlife Sites system since 1979.**

## **Government policy & guidance**

The importance of non-statutory sites is recognised in the **Government's UK Biodiversity Action Plan**<sup>2</sup> and in its **Planning Policy Guidance on Nature Conservation**<sup>3</sup>. These recognize the value of 'Wildlife Sites Systems' as a mechanism for identifying Wildlife Sites within an administrative area and protecting and enhancing the wildlife interest of these sites.

Government policy and guidance on biodiversity is influenced by the UK's commitments to international conventions and agreements on the environment, biological diversity and sustainable development.

- In 1992 the UK Government signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (Biodiversity) which requires that biodiversity should be used sustainably in order that the development of human society does not lead to its long-term decline. The UK Government was also required to draw up a Biodiversity Action Plan as to how biodiversity would be maintained. This plan was published in 1995 (HMSO, 1994) and subsequently detailed action plans for priority habitats and species have been produced.
- The UK Government is also committed to the concept of sustainable development. The White Paper 'This Common Inheritance' confirmed the Government's commitment and in 1994 (HMSO, 1994) a strategy for sustainable development in the UK was published. This strategy embodies the need to wisely use our environmental resources.

The commitments made by the UK Government to sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity are reflected in a variety of Government policies and planning policy statements and guidance. These are the principle mechanisms through which non-statutory sites are protected. They are updated from time to time. Details can be found in other documents.

## **Functions of the Wildlife Sites system in Derbyshire**

The Wildlife Sites system fulfills a number of important functions:

- Wildlife Site selection enables the most important nature conservation sites within an administrative area, outside of the statutory site designation systems, to be identified for protection and thus fulfills the requirements of the ***UK Biodiversity Action Plan*** and ***Planning Policy Guidance on Nature Conservation***.
- Wildlife Site selection provides a tool for achieving objectives of plans and strategies such as local and countywide development plans, sub regional strategic partnerships, conservation strategies, Biodiversity Action Plans, community strategies and environmental sustainability.
- ecological survey undertaken to identify potential Wildlife Sites and to monitor existing Wildlife Sites contributes towards the local authority Local Plan requirements under sections 11 and 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- *“to ensure that the plans are based on fully adequate information about local species, habitats, geology and landform. Plans should be concerned with not only designated areas but also with land of other conservation value...”* (Paragraph 24 PPG9, DoE, 1994).
- Wildlife Sites, together with statutory sites, Biodiversity Action Plans and local Red Data Books assist local authorities, organisations and communities in understanding the character and value of the nature conservation resource in Derbyshire.
- selection allows prioritisation of advice, practical assistance and financial support for landowners and managers.
- Wildlife Sites provide baseline data for local authorities and other partners to monitor the success of nature conservation activity.
- the process of site evaluation associated with Wildlife Site selection, aids identification of gaps in knowledge about the conservation resource of an area or site which informs further survey, research or monitoring.

## **Biodiversity Action Plans & Wildlife Sites systems**

The **UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994)** aims to:

- identify national priorities for protecting and restoring habitats and species
- identify targets for action to achieve this
- raise public awareness of biodiversity and encourage action
- promote Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) as a method of delivering the national plan.

The importance of those aspects of the natural environment that cannot readily be replaced once lost is reflected in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan that states:

*“While some habitats, particularly those populated by mobile species which are good colonisers, have some potential for re-creation, the majority of terrestrial habitats are the result of complex events spanning many centuries which defy re-creation over decades. Therefore the priority must be to sustain the best examples of native habitats where they have survived rather than attempting to move or re-create them elsewhere when their present location is inconvenient because of immediate development proposals”.*

Derbyshire and the Peak District National Park (which includes areas outside the county of Derbyshire) are covered by two Local BAPs:

- **Lowland Derbyshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan** (1997, revised 2001/4) (previously called the Mid Derbyshire LBAP) covers the Natural Areas outside the Peak District;
- **Peak District Biodiversity Action Plan** (2001): covers the four Natural Areas that define the Peak District and includes land outside the National Park Boundary.

The LBAPs comprise a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity in Derbyshire:

- identifying priority species and habitats; those which are locally, nationally or globally threatened and in need of action;
- transforming national targets into effective action at a county level, set out a plan of action to achieve them, identifying the lead agencies responsible;
- raising awareness about conserving biodiversity and developing effective local partnerships, so that the process can be maintained in the long term and effective monitoring and recording of achievements can be made.

The Wildlife Sites system, in identifying areas of wildlife of county importance, is an increasingly important mechanism for delivering the objectives of national and local biodiversity action plans:

- maintaining and enhancing key sites;
- monitoring and reporting on changes in the state of Derbyshire’s biodiversity resource.



The selection guidelines for Wildlife Sites in Derbyshire draw heavily on habitat and species priorities identified in national and Local BAPs, usually in the context of a site making “a significant contribution to biodiversity” either in Derbyshire or in one of its component Natural Areas (see below):

***Appendix B provides further information about the relationship between BAPs and Wildlife Sites in Derbyshire***

## **Selection of Derbyshire Wildlife Sites**

### **Derbyshire Wildlife Trust**

#### **Survey & evaluation of sites:**

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) undertakes survey and evaluation against the guidelines for:

- 'Candidate Wildlife Sites' for which the potential value has been flagged up (eg where a planning application provides ecological information or allows access to areas previously inaccessible, or where an additional ecological survey undertaken by DWT or voluntary wildlife recorders may indicate previously unrecognised value of a site.
- existing Wildlife Sites for which an annual programme of resurveys are undertaken, prioritised by the habitat type and degree of threat. The aim is to resurvey 10-20% of sites each year, subject to resources.

For each site surveyed a recommendation is made to the Wildlife Sites Panel:

- for Candidate Sites the recommendation indicates whether the site should be selected as a Wildlife Site or not. The accompanying report identifies the details e.g. boundary, interests etc.
- for existing Wildlife Sites the recommendation can include either ratification of selection, deletion of site from Register, amendment to boundary or reason for selection.

### **Derbyshire Wildlife Sites Panel Terms of Reference**

#### **Membership:**

The Panel is selected for its technical expertise in ecology and nature conservation and operates strictly within a technical remit. It consists of the Conservation Manager for DWT, a Conservation Officer from English Nature, the County Council Ecologist and the manager of the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre, and meets regularly to endeavor to ensure best practice and continued development of the Wildlife Sites system to meet users needs. Each local authority has the opportunity to attend Panel meetings to discuss individual sites or issues of concern or may provide written comments. A quorum is three Panel members. The Panel regularly reviews its membership.

#### **Role of the Panel:**

It's collective role is to:

- set, publish, monitor and review the Wildlife Sites criteria;
- ensure that the criteria and principles of the WILDLIFE SITES system follow national guidelines;
- oversee the WILDLIFE SITES system and establish the guidelines for managing the system, reviewing as necessary e.g. landowner contact policy;
- advise on application of criteria and ensure consistency of application;

- advise on the maintenance of the WILDLIFE SITES database and records;
- consult outside organizations on the criteria and system;
- vet proposals from a scientific perspective and advise planning authorities and other bodies accordingly.
- recommend to local authorities to apply appropriate policies for the protection of WILDLIFE SITES once these have been selected.

The Panel does not have any formal planning responsibility.

### **Role of the individual members:**

Individual members will:

- represent their organisations on the Panel, in respect of the organisation's functions related to nature conservation and ecology;
- scrutinise the scientific content of the information used in Wildlife Sites proposals for accuracy and precision and assess whether criteria have been applied correctly;
- the local planning authority representatives will liaise with the planning service within the LA that they represent in relation to the selection of Wildlife Sites and their protection.

### **Role of the local planning authorities:**

- to consider the recommendations of the Panel in relation to Wildlife Sites that have been selected;
- decide how the development Plan policies will be applied for each Wildlife Site within respective administrative areas;
- be responsible for all planning matters related to individual Wildlife Sites within their respective administrative areas, including defending individual Wildlife Sites at planning inquiries, hearings etc.;
- to make arrangements for supplying information on Wildlife Sites within their administrative areas to members of the public, according to their statutory duties.

Wildlife Sites selection by the Panel is advisory. It is a way of alerting planners, landowners and developers to the fact that there is a nature conservation interest on the site, which in accordance with development plan policies should be taken into account when considering planning applications (along with other planning matters). Selection of a Wildlife Sites by the Panel is not an automatic barrier to development and does not over-ride other planning considerations.

The application of development plan policies to individual Wildlife Sites selections is a matter for the individual local planning authority, not the Wildlife Sites Panel.

### **Procedure for selection, deletion or amendment**

Panel members and relevant local authorities are usually provided in advance of meetings with details of designations, deletions and amendments.

- the Panel considers DWT's proposals for Wildlife Sites priorities for selection of sites to be surveyed, designations, deletions and amendments.
- the Panel considers for each site the report and recommendation of the field surveyor; the field survey and appropriate background materials can be made

available for inspection.

- if queries are raised about supporting data, the final decision is either referred to a future meeting, or the Panel indicates how DWT should proceed upon receipt of that information. A clear note of the issues, or additional data required, will be made.
- the Panel will make a consensus decision. Clear reasons for rejection of any proposed site are noted, with the proposals form and this is kept by DWT.
- where an urgent decision is required about the status of a site, all panel members will be sent a report and recommendations and asked for their views.

The views of the Panel members will normally be ratified at the next meeting.

## **Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites**

Revised guidelines for the selection of Wildlife Sites in Derbyshire were developed during 2002-3 and subject to wide consultation. *These are set out in Part 2 of this Handbook.*

The selection guidelines will be applied to new sites and to existing Wildlife Sites as these are resurveyed over the next few years. Therefore, until all existing Wildlife Sites have been resurveyed, the Wildlife Sites Register will include sites assessed against either the current or previous guidelines.

*An account of development of the Wildlife Sites system (1982-2003) and the previous guidelines used for the selection of Wildlife Sites is set out in Appendix 2.*

## **Sites awaiting survey and evaluation**

A site will only be selected as a "**Wildlife Site**" once it has been formally assessed against the guidelines. Wildlife Sites have a code numbering system; once a site has been formally assessed and found to meet the guidelines it will be assigned a unique code.

A site identified as having potential value but awaiting full evaluation against the guidelines is referred to as a "**Candidate Wildlife Site**". Records of all "**Candidate Wildlife Sites**" are kept by DWT; each Candidate Wildlife Site is assigned a name by which it is identified until it is formally evaluated

## **Notification of Amendments to the Wildlife Sites Register**

Notification of amendments to the Wildlife Sites Register eg a selection of new sites, deletions of existing sites, or changes to boundaries of sites, are notified by DWT annually each spring to partners with Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with DWT. This system has been established to address the following considerations:

- **Government guidance:** PPG 9 requires local authorities to be aware of sites of importance for nature conservation and show these on their Local Plan proposals map. The protection via the planning process of additional Wildlife Sites identified after the preparation of Local development Framework are thus a formal concern. A recognised annual date for notification of changes to the Register assists this

process.

- **National recognition:** The increased national recognition of wildlife site systems by local authorities, statutory undertakers, landowners, developers, consultants, and local communities suggests that a formal approach should be adopted.
- **Annual Service level agreements** with partners require targets to enable monitoring.

**APPENDIX C** provides an historical account of the selection of Derbyshire Wildlife Sites.

## **Liaison with Wildlife Site Owners**

The Wildlife Sites Panel recognises the importance of initiating and maintaining contact with owners and occupiers of Wildlife Sites. This liaison should enable:

- permission to be sought for access to a site for detailed survey;
- feedback to the owner/occupier about the biodiversity value of the site and its management needs
- advice to the owner/occupier about implementing management, available grants etc.
- advice concerning enhancement or proactive work or even limitation of impacts and damage if a site might be impacted by development or other activity;
- the owner or occupier to be made aware that their land is to be recommended for selection as a Wildlife Site, which might result in their land being subject to a development constraint if the local authority chooses to apply relevant policies for its protection.

Unfortunately, until resources permit, a comprehensive identification of owners of all existing Wildlife Sites cannot be undertaken and initial contact must be tackled on a needs basis as sites are resurveyed. DWT will maintain records of all attempts to identify and contact land owners and of all contact undertaken with owners and occupiers.

### **Seeking permission for access**

When wishing to survey a Candidate Wildlife Site or a Wildlife Site, DWT will ALWAYS make every effort to identify both the owner and occupier to seek permission for access and survey. Where access is denied following an approach to a landowner or occupier, those wishes will be respected.

### **Where permission for access is not obtained**

Though preferable, it is not always necessary to enter a site to undertake a sufficiently detailed survey to assess whether a site would meet the selection guidelines (e.g. for large, well known ancient woodlands or species rich fields that can be viewed from close quarters through binoculars). Where it has not been possible to make contact with an owner or occupier, in some exceptional circumstances, a survey may therefore be undertaken from other land.

Where DWT has information supplied by a third party in good faith which might identify a site as of value for wildlife, in most cases no final decision would be made concerning Wildlife Site selection until a survey has been undertaken by a suitably qualified person acting for DWT in accordance with policies and procedures. In the interim the site would be recorded as a Candidate Wildlife Site.

### **Powers of the local authority**

Where there is a potential threat to a Wildlife Site or Candidate Wildlife Site, DWT, having been consulted by the planning authority, may be required by the Local authority to undertake a survey. Such instances would include:

- a development proposal in a Local Plan;
- a planning application on a Wildlife Site.

In all such cases, where the land owner or occupier cannot be contacted or does not

wish to grant access, DWT would look to local authority to make arrangements for access using their own powers:

Sections 324 and 325 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provide for access to land to be gained for survey in connection with the approval, making, alterations to a Local Plan, Structure Plan etc and, as such, the preparation of an ecological survey would be included. Access is not only afforded to the employees of the local authority but to any person duly authorised in writing by a planning authority. That authorisation may be given by local authorities to the Wildlife Sites Officers of DWT who would carry identification/authorisation with them whilst undertaking surveys.

### **Advising land owners on Wildlife Site status**

Once a survey is completed and any other necessary information gathered, DWT will supply the owner/occupier with:

- a description of the site's biodiversity and reasons why it is considered to be of importance;
- notification that the site is to be recommended for selection as a Wildlife Site to the Panel;
- map showing the boundary of the proposed Wildlife Site;
- a leaflet explaining the purpose, significance and consequence of Wildlife Sites selection;
- an outline of the basic management required to retain or optimise the wildlife value of the site;
- an opportunity to seek further advice from DWT.

Owners and occupiers are provided with at least four weeks to comment on the recommended selection. Any comments will be reported to the Panel.

Currently owners who have been identified and informed in this way are:

- owners of all sites surveyed since 1998 where ownership is known;
- most large estates;
- most owners of Wildlife Sites in Amber Valley;
- owners of large potential development sites considered in Local Plans since 2001.

The Wildlife Sites Panel welcomes Government Guidance in PPG9 that sites of substantive nature conservation value should be shown on Local Plan proposals maps. By this means it is hoped that landowners and developers will become aware of potential constraints on development, and will have the opportunity to challenge this through the Local

### **Advice to Land Owners on Management of Wildlife Sites**

The Wildlife Sites Panel recognises Wildlife Sites as a priority for management as do other advisory bodies. In addition to advice provided by DWT's own Wildlife Sites Officers, DEFRA's Rural Development Service, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, the County Council's Countryside Service, Groundwork Trust, FWAG and the National Forest will advise owners and occupiers of Wildlife Sites, as resources allow.

## **Wildlife Sites System Administration**

### **Introduction**

With over 1100 sites plus several hundred Candidate Sites in the system and 500,000 species records, administering the Wildlife Sites system is a major task, undertaken by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

DWT maintains a GIS system, plotting all Wildlife Sites at 1:10,000 scale and a database and paper filing system providing an outline of the interest of each Wildlife Site and detailed records for each Wildlife Site, e.g. species lists, surveyor's notes, correspondence etc. Species information is being entered onto the Recorder database in line with national best practice. In response to enquiries DWT can provide information in relation to the detailed interest of each Wildlife Site.

DWT is developing detailed data management aims and objectives and management procedures. In the long term the adoption of a formal quality assurance system maybe considered. This section sets out the principles and practices being pursued. Whilst every attempt is made to maintain and develop the highest standards, these are related to resources available. Some of these administrative procedures currently still in development.

### **Ownership of Information**

During the first ten years of development of the Wildlife Sites system in partnership between DWT and the County Council, the data was considered to be the joint property of both partners. In 1994, to enable further development and provide clarity, a legal agreement was made between the County Council and DWT, setting out the ownership, use of and access to the Derbyshire Wildlife Sites Register database.

Under this agreement DWT is the owner of all base data and survey data relating to any site which is included on the Register. DWT grants the County Council the rights:

- to have access to all survey data;
- to be provided with current base data for all Wildlife Sites at every update of the survey data;
- to supply the base data to other organisations and individuals;
- to incorporate the information into any GIS which may be developed or utilised.

In return:

- the County Council will provide to DWT all information and materials necessary to enable DWT to provide base data to the Council e.g. OS bases or tiles ( in agreement with the DCC OS licence)
- DWT shall have the right to provide access to or sell data to other organisations or individuals.

Since the late 1990's, these provisions are now largely covered in the annual service level agreements made between DWT and local authorities.



All data originating from Wildlife Site surveys is the property of DWT. Other data supplied by organisations or individuals remains in their ownership.

## **Components of Data**

Responsibility for data organisation and storage lies with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. Since 1999 DWT has undertaken a considerable amount of work to update the original system dating from 1984, which was primarily paper based, with a limited GIS system and database maintained by the County Council. DWT has concentrated on developing new GIS and Access data bases systems enabling a variety of retrieval mechanisms and provision of electronic information to organisations with Service Level Agreements.

The main components of the data comprise:

**1:10,000 Ordnance Survey Maps:** The boundaries of each site are recorded at 1:10,000, held on a GIS system linked to a set of key site attribute data, previously on paper maps. Organisations with Service Level Agreements with DWT receive an annually updated overlay. Candidate Sites are similarly recorded

**Microsoft Access database:** Site details are recorded on a database of approximately 1200 sites. This can be updated and interrogated in a variety of ways to provide information about individual sites or suits of sites e.g. sites in an area or sites with a particular habitat type.

**Paper based Wildlife Sites Registers for each administrative area:** Individual site record sheets are prepared for Wildlife Site, showing the boundary plotted at 1:10,000 scale on an OS base and basic information drawn from the Access database.

**Survey Record Cards and files for individual sites:** Detailed ecological information collected during surveys including geology, topography, habitats, flora, fauna, special points of interest, degree of survey, sketch map of habitats, management or uses, criteria scoring, comments, species lists, planning history and other relevant information.

**Species records:** Since 2000 DWT has entered all species information gathered during surveys onto the "Recorder" software package, linked to individual Wildlife Site records, or in the case of larger sites, compartments within the Wildlife Site. This species data is regularly provided to Derbyshire Biological Records Centre at Derby City Museum and the BRC provides DWT with key species records with which it has been provided. This system ensures that DWT holds the maximum amount of data concerning each site, whilst the BRC holds most species data.

## **Policies for Data Storage & Management**

The policies are designed as guidance for Trust staff in undertaking their own roles. They also provide a degree of certainty for service level agreement clients, owners and managers of Wildlife Sites, commercial clients seeking guidance, and for information providers e.g. voluntary biodiversity recorders. They are subject to continual review in the light of best practice and available resources.

***APPENDIX D sets out the procedures required to implement these policies.***

## **1. Quality Assurance Policy**

It is the long-term aim of DWT to collate, manage and disseminate information on Wildlife Sites, their flora and fauna, in line with a formally documented system of Quality Assurance (QA). The QA system will comply, where relevant, with appropriate national and internationally recognised quality systems.

The current QA system is documented by data management aims and objectives and associated protocols/procedures. The QA system shall be mandatory on all employees, each of whom shall bear responsible for the quality of their work.

The QA system shall be reviewed and audited at regular intervals to a defined programme. Clients shall be involved in this audit. This will work towards a formally recognised system in the long term.

Aims and Procedures will be further developed periodically for the following areas:

- *Organisation and management*
- *Management Review*
- *Quality System*
- *Contract Review and Control*
- *Product, process and Testing.*
- *Document Control*
- *Non conformance and Corrective action*
- *Quality Audits and Review.*

## **2. Data Collection Policy**

Data will be collected to aid the evaluation of:

- existing Wildlife Sites;
- Candidate Wildlife Sites.
- impact of alterations to management regime or development

Data will be collected from one of three sources:

- by survey by DWT staff;
- by receipt of survey information from other projects, organisations or individuals (see relevant policies below) ;
- by exchange of survey information from others (see relevant policies below).

Site survey will be undertaken and data collected in line with nationally recognised best practice and guidance provided by English Nature, The Wildlife Trusts, Association of Local Government Ecologists, Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and similar.

In all cases data will only be collected and incorporated if it contains appropriate elements to meet the specifications of the Wildlife Sites Record Data Standard.

### **3. Data Exchange Policy**

DWT will, when appropriate, establish data exchange agreements with individuals and organisations actively involved in biological recording relating to Wildlife Sites and the identification of Candidate Wildlife Sites.

Data exchange will be subject to formal written agreement and safeguards. An approved list of individuals and agencies with whom data may be exchanged will be maintained and reviewed on an annual basis as an Appendix to this Manual.

Transfer of data from DWT to external organisations and individuals will be subject to the terms of the '*Data ownership and confidentiality policy*' and the Data Protection Act.

All transfers of data will be recorded. Data transferred into the Wildlife Sites system will only be accepted where it meets the Wildlife Sites Record Data Standard.

Examples of data exchange:

- with surrounding counties re sites on boundaries;
- with County Recorders where the Wildlife Sites system gives site information e.g. maps in exchange for additional site records;
- with statutory agencies e.g. Environment Agency or English Nature to enable strategic work or additional surveys to be undertaken to put sites in context or provide more detailed habitat or species records for Wildlife Sites.

DWT may charge for the staff time involved in generating, collating and supplying information.

### **4 Data Receipt policy**

DWT will, when appropriate, receive and incorporate into its records data from other organisations or individuals, but only where these meet internal standards.

Vague or suspected erroneous records will be excluded from the data sets unless they provide important historical or contextual information and their inadequacies are clearly indicated.

All receipt of data into the Wildlife Sites system will be recorded.

Examples of data which would be acceptable, in principal, for receipt:

- current data collected for individual Wildlife Sites without prior discussion with the Wildlife Sites system and offered to the Wildlife Sites system e.g. butterfly or moth records.
- historical records.

### **5 Data Supply Policy**

DWT will supply information in the form of maps, reports, site directories and species lists derived from its manual and computer files to sponsor organisations in respect of specific data supply agreements. In response to written requests made by other individuals and organisations it may provide information if priorities permit (where a charge will be made in line with DWT's charging policy).

Raw data may be supplied to organisations where data exchange agreements have been made.

The decision to release information will be made in accordance with written agreements, priority levels set by management and policies on ownership and confidentiality. Supply of data will be subject to provisions of the charging policy.

***Guidelines:***

- all enquiries by phone, letter or personal visit and the subsequent supply of information will be logged. A summary of data supply enquiries will be presented in the Annual report.
- priorities will be set by management .
- information will be provided to funding partners in accordance with service level agreements.
- requests for information or services outside the scope of SLA must be made in writing and will be subject to separate charging arrangements.
- information will normally be extended to all enquiries having regard to priorities, confidentiality and ownership restrictions.

***Conditions:*** Data will be supplied subject to a set of standard conditions concerning use, copyright, publication etc, together with any other specific conditions which are deemed to be required by the request.

***Reasons for refusal to supply data:***

- where release of data may be prejudicial to the conservation of threatened species or biotopes, or expose a vulnerable species to unauthorised collection;
- where data has been submitted in confidence and the owner is unwilling to supply it;
- where data has been collected by DWT under contract to another organisation unless that organisation gives permission;
- where the data refers to private land and the owner gave consent to the survey on the understanding that the information will remain confidential;
- where the data owner does not wish to release it;
- where information is incomplete, not fully validated or the work is still underway.;
- where the enquirer will not abide by the conditions of the Wildlife Sites system or is unwilling to pay the set charges, or has not paid the invoice relating to a previous request.
- names and addresses of landowners and other personal information will not be released save to the individuals concerned under the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

**6. Data Management Policy**

Due attention will be paid to data attribution, validation, security and management. Data will be stored using appropriate and documented techniques including registers, filing systems, summary maps, computer databases.

The procedures for managing original records and computer data sets and map sets are

laid down in the attached Procedures and data base user manuals.

This policy interrelates with policies on QA, Data Collection, Data Exchange, Ownership and Confidentiality, Data Entry, Data Update and Maintenance, Data Supply and Data Security.

## **7. Data Entry policy**

All data entry will be logged in the data register, checked and approved by the nominated quality officer prior to incorporation in the manual filing system or being entered onto computerised data bases.

### ***Guidelines:***

- incoming data will be kept secure and separate from Wildlife Sites system working files until processed.
- incoming data sets will be documented in the data register
- incoming data sets will be checked by the Quality Officer and signed off prior to incorporation into manual or computerised systems. Individual site folders will be marked for the presence of confidential records and taxon records will be checked for reliability, attribution and confidentiality.
- incorporation of records will be undertaken by authorized staff or trained volunteers under their supervision
- entry of data onto computerised data bases will use appropriate validation and syntax control
- errors discovered in original records will be marked accordingly and where possible referred back to the originator for correction.
- grid references will be kept intentionally vague e.g. to 1km, to distinguish between those site records where an individual grid ref is specifically recorded, by GPS or other means.

## **8. Data update and maintenance policy**

Addition to data sets or update of existing records will be controlled to ensure that all such changes are authorised and identifiable to date and origin. Integrity of historical data will not be lost or overlooked in the update process.

### ***Guidelines:***

- data sets will be updated to a rolling programme agreed with clients and reviewed annually.
- data sets will be maintained in an accessible and reliable form .
- data update will only be carried out by authorised Wildlife Sites Initiative personnel or trained volunteers under their supervision
- any significant alteration to records will be identified by physically marking the record.
- all significant alterations to records will be identifiable to source of change and date of change
- records will not be altered in such a way that important historical information is lost.

## **9. Data control policy**

All data and data products will be controlled to ensure that only the most recent versions are used and that changes can be maintained in line with Quality Assurance document control policy.

### ***Guidelines:***

- all data sets will have a data set record showing dates and versions.
- each record in computerised data sets will be version controlled by means of a record update field, previous versions may be maintained in a transaction log.
- all documents, internal and external, will include version control information and date.

## **10. Data ownership and confidentiality policy**

DWT will comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Attention will be paid to Intellectual Property Rights, including copyright and moral rights, associated with all data holdings in the care of DWT. This will include recording the source of all records and restrictions placed upon their use. DWT will encourage donors of information to assign or licence the copyright of their records to it.

DWT recognises the desirability of freedom of access to information and will operate on this assumption within the constraints of the need to maintain confidentiality as stipulated in transfer agreements or where the conservation of threatened species or biotopes is likely to be compromised.

## **11. Data security policy**

DWT will ensure that the data resource in its care is safeguarded from physical loss or deterioration and from unauthorised alteration.

### ***Guidelines:***

- all paper and computerised data must be kept in a physically secure store and provision made against theft, fire, flood etc. so far as resources permit.
- offices should be locked when no staff in attendance
- list of personnel authorised to access the data should be made and reviewed annually.
- clients will be informed annually of the primary contact point within DWT for Wildlife Sites data, together with other staff authorised to access the material.

### ***Manual records: papers files, maps:***

- any showing locations of vulnerable sites should be stored in locked filing cabinets or similar.
- site folders will include a list of contents for documents control purposes. Those containing confidential information will be marked accordingly on the outside.
- archive copies will be made of all unique data sets and stored in a secure place at a different location.
- only authorised personnel may remove files from the office having first registered them.

**Computer data bases:**

- All computerised data bases must be regularly archived onto backup tapes etc and kept in a secure place in a separate location.
- Access to data bases must be controlled by the use of passwords for authorised users.
- Any removable media used for importing or exporting data will be virus checked first.
- All anti-virus programmes, operating systems and related internal software will be regularly updated to ensure maximum system security.

**12. Charging policy**

DWT will supply information as detailed in the Service Level Agreements to clients. Charges may be made for information supplied in response to requests made by others according to its current charging rates.

## **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

### **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act (DPA) covers personal information that can be processed automatically, ie in a computerised form. The DPA is of relevance to the Wildlife Sites Register because DWT holds computerised data on the interest of each Wildlife Site, together with owner and occupiers name and address where known (approximately 33% of Wildlife Sites only). DWT is registered with the Data Protection Registrar as the holder of this information.

It is a requirement of the DPA that those covered by personal records are aware of this record and have the opportunity to request that their details are removed from the record. It is the intention of DWT to inform all those for whom personal information is held and provide the opportunity for amendment or request that the record be deleted.

### **Freedom of Access to Information on the Environment**

The Regulations on freedom of access to environmental information which implement the EC Directive came into force on 31st December 1992 - Environmental Information Regulations EIR (SI 1992 No. 3240). The Regulations require all "public authorities" to make information they hold relating to the environment available to those requesting it.

Local authorities recognise that information held concerning the Wildlife Sites Register is covered by these regulations. The Regulations place duties on organisations to 'define the practical arrangements under which information is effectively made available'. Those aspects of the Wildlife Sites Register held by local authorities should therefore be available for inspection, as long as reasonable prior notification is given.

### **Charging for Information**

The Legal Agreement between the County Council and DWT allows the latter to charge for Wildlife Sites information and under the Environmental Information Regulations a charge may be made by local authorities to defray the costs incurred in supplying information; this may include the costs of copying, postage and staff time in retrieving and preparing information.

In practice DWT is now the main provider of Wildlife Sites information. Charges will be made in line with the current charging policy of DWT and may include elements relating to the OS licence agreement, costs of undertaking the original survey, handling and management of data, collation, retrieval and presentation of data, analysing and interpreting data, photocopying, handling and postage and packing. A scale of charges will apply in relation to a various requests.

### **Confidentiality**

DWT may consider data confidential if:

- it is of a sensitive nature e.g. a rare or threatened species or habitat;
- the owner of the record wishes it to remain confidential;
- the data is of a personal nature and covered by the DPA.

In such cases information will not be supplied as requested but DWT will put in writing the reason for not supplying this.



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### The development of Derbyshire Wildlife Sites system

A chronological history of the development of the Wildlife Sites system in Derbyshire:

**1979:** The First Structure Plan for Derbyshire incorporated policies for nature conservation, including policies for the protection of areas of particular natural history importance outside the statutorily defined sites.

**1982 - 1984:** To implement the Structure Plan policies there was a need to identify these "areas of importance". As the first step towards the effective long term protection of the County's wildlife the County Council and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust co-operated in a comprehensive assessment of all wildlife habitats in the county. The Report of Survey, finalised in 1985 identified the current situation in relation to all wildlife habitats and identified problems and opportunities in relation to the conservation of wildlife in the County.

As part of the assessment over 1800 sites of wildlife value were identified as contributing towards the maintenance of a mosaic of differing habitats on which successful wildlife conservation depends. These sites were considered to represent in their location, diversity of habitat, and populations of flora and fauna the absolute minimum which should be retained if a diverse and viable wildlife was to be maintained in Derbyshire. The sites totalled approximately 10,500 hectares and represented about 5% of the land area of the County. The sites were collectively identified as the '**Derbyshire Biological Sites Register**'.

Each Biological Site was graded to reflect its ecological significance. The grading system was relative rather than absolute and attempted to reflect the principal that whilst Grade 1 sites were of very great natural history importance, the value of a mosaic of relatively less important Grade 2 sites was also of importance and individual sites worthy of protection. It was recognised that the grading of a site could be modified in the light of further information. The approximate distribution of sites was as follows:

Grade 1 sites of county importance	13.5%
Grade 2 sites of district importance	48.0%
Grade 3 sites of local or parish value	38.5%.

**1984:** The Register was formally recognised by the County Council as the principal means of identifying sites of wildlife importance in the County<sup>4</sup> outside the Peak National Park. The County Council resolved to give protection to sites on the Register, and to request district councils to formally adopt the Register. The majority of local planning authorities acted upon these recommendations.

**1984:** Information concerning Biological Sites was distributed by the County Council to all local planning authorities and other relevant agencies in the county.

**1987-1988:** Amber Valley Wildlife Project, an MSc scheme established by DWT, with the involvement of Amber Valley Borough Council resurveyed all Biological Sites, identified 300 site owners, provided information on site management and carried out some management. The scheme finished after changes in Government funding.

**1987:** A similar Community Programme (MSc) scheme was set up in Derby. The Derby City Wildlife Project resurveyed the habitats in the City and all the identified Biological Sites. The project also developed community action within the City.

**1990: Derby City Council “*Sites of Wildlife Interest In Derby*”**

Following the distribution of Biological Site information to all district councils in 1984, Derby City chose not to recognise the Register as the principle means of identifying sites of importance. After the Derby City Wildlife Project closed in 1989 DWT, under contract to the Nature Conservancy Council, and working with the City Council produced a document “*Sites of Wildlife Interest In Derby*” which the City Council subsequently resolved to recognise. The City Council have since pursued work with DWT on the conservation of these sites, including a Nature Conservation Strategy in 1990, updated in 1995, and incorporation in Local Plan proposals and has employed the Wildlife Trust to work on further surveys.

**1990:** The Derbyshire County Council Countryside and Nature Conservation Strategies<sup>5</sup> were produced, including policies for the conservation of Biological Sites and other ecological features.

**1990:** The Derbyshire Approved Structure Plan<sup>6</sup> gave specific recognition to Biological Sites within the county and their protection through the planning process (SP Environment Policies 11 and 12). Local planning authorities in the preparation of Local Plans have developed policies taking forward these policies.

**1990:** A desktop survey of all Biological Sites was undertaken and records updated accordingly, utilising data concerning loss of or damage to habitats and other information affecting Biological Sites. A new ***1990 Edition of the Biological Sites Register*** was distributed to all local planning authorities and other relevant agencies in the county.

**1991-92:** A resurvey of Grade 1 and 2 Biological Sites was undertaken by DWT with grant aid from English Nature, for all districts except Amber Valley and the City of Derby. A Report of the findings was produced by DWT and the County Council<sup>7</sup>. Survey methodology and criteria for site evaluation were revised in consultation with English Nature.

No review of grade 3 sites was undertaken; a lack of resources together with the recognition during the eight years since the Register was established that the coverage and original choice of Grade 3 Sites had not been fully comprehensive, suggested that an alternative method of protection for sites of local value should be considered in the future.

**1993:** Following the resurvey the opportunity was taken to rename Biological Sites, '**Wildlife Sites**', bringing them into line with the Wildlife Trust Partnership's newly developed national policy for the establishment of such systems countrywide<sup>8</sup>.

**1994-5:** A **1994/5 Edition of the Wildlife Sites Register** was produced by DWT and the County Council, incorporating the 1991-92 resurvey together with a desk top survey of all sites and other relevant data, such as the English Nature second edition of its Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland Inventory. The opportunity was also taken to build on experience which had been gained in operating the Register for 10 years; elements of good practice guides recently published by the Local Government Nature Conservation Initiative<sup>9</sup> and The Wildlife Trusts<sup>10</sup> were incorporated. Two particular issues were addressed in the preparation of the new edition<sup>11</sup>:

- **Exclusion of Grade 3 sites from the Register**

Following recommendations that non-statutory sites systems be confined to sites of high local importance to nature conservation and experience of having maintained a graded system, the decision was made to confine the Register to Grade 1 and 2 sites, excluding the approximately 700 Grade 3 sites. The County Council resolved however that importance would still be laid on the protection of all sites of local wildlife value.

- **Abolition of the grading system**

The decision was made to incorporate the recommendation that there should be a single category of sites of importance for nature conservation, rather than graded sites, since all these are considered as of importance for maintaining the biodiversity within a county or district area.

*The 1994/5 Edition of the Wildlife Sites Register thus comprises approximately 925 sites in a single category, comprising previously Grade 1 and 2 sites, and other sites subsequently identified, all of which have been surveyed since 1990.*

**1982 - 1995:** The Wildlife Sites Register was maintained as a co-operative venture by County Council and DWT. Close liaison was maintained between the two organisations to identify Wildlife Sites, to seek to protect them, and to encourage their appropriate management. Continued liaison between the County Council, DWT, and English Nature aimed to ensure that maintenance and development of the Wildlife Sites Register met recognised national standards and took account of new scientific findings and survey methodologies.

**1994:** The County Council and DWT signed a legal agreement making DWT the owners of all the Wildlife Sites information. It also established that it is their joint responsibility to undertake every three years an assessment of the need for a comprehensive update of the survey data and to consider the provision of resources to carry out such updates.

**1996:** The distribution of the 1994/5 edition of the Register to all local authorities and major agencies was completed.

**1996:** The term '*Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation*' was adopted in April 1996 by Derbyshire County Council to cover both Derbyshire Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geological Sites (Minute 33/96 Planning and Countryside Committee). The aim, in adopting this term, was to clarify the sites concerning which planning policies are formulated and relate more clearly to national guidance published in recent years<sup>12</sup>.

**2003:** Criteria replaced by 'Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites'. (See Handbook Part 2).

**2003:** Revised Wildlife Sites Register format developed and first tranche of new paper registers produced.

**2003:** Revised format for GIS and database completed.

## APPENDIX B

### The relationship between BAPs and Wildlife Site distribution in Derbyshire

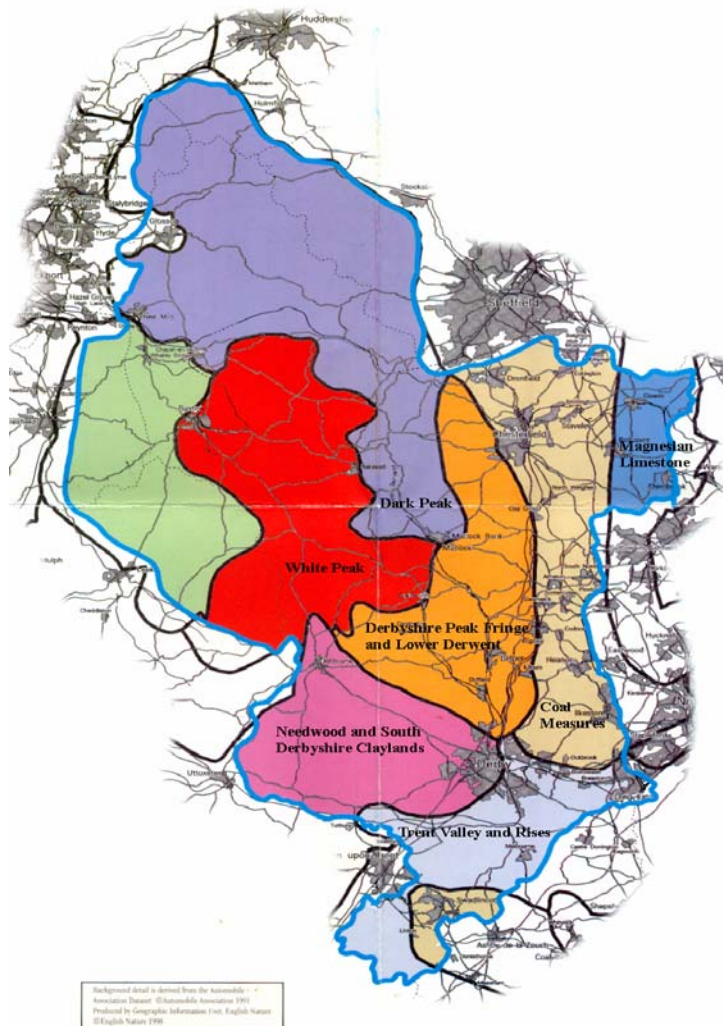
#### Biodiversity Action Plans

In 1995 English Nature and the Countryside Commission produced a map of England depicting the natural and cultural dimensions of the landscape. The map comprised:

- Natural Areas;
- Countryside Character Areas.

English Nature has identified eight distinctive 'Natural Areas' within Derbyshire, highlighting the wide range of physical variety in the county in terms of geology, climate, ecology, land-use and culture. The choice of area coverage for the development of Local Biodiversity Action Plans in Derbyshire and the Peak District has been guided by the boundaries of Natural Areas. The boundary of the Peak District LBAP is delineated by the Natural Areas which encompass the area. This area is slightly larger than the national park itself.

**Fig. 1** Location and extent of Natural Areas in Derbyshire.



**Table 1: Relationship between Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Natural Areas**

<b>Biodiversity Plan</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Natural Areas covered (within Derbyshire)</b>
Lowland Derbyshire LBAP		Coal measures, Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent, Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands, Southern Magnesian Limestone Trent Valley and Rises
Peak District LBAP		White Peak Dark Peak Upper Mersey Basin South west Peak

### Distribution of Wildlife Sites

In 2003 there were 1117 Wildlife Sites covering an area of 8700 ha. A further 476 sites have been identified as Candidate Wildlife Sites and these cover a further 3456 ha., though it does not include the majority of potentially valuable grassland sites which are identified on the DWT grassland survey.

Table 2 compares these figures with statutory sites in the county.

**Table 2: Statutory and non-statutory sites in Derbyshire (outside Peak District National Park) 2003.**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>No. of sites*</b>	<b>Area (ha)</b>	<b>% of total land area in Derbyshire outside of the Peak District National Park***</b>
Special Protection Area (SPA)	(1)	(127) **	(0.08)
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	(5)	(351) **	(0.21)
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	58	1,368	0.78
Wildlife Site (WS)	1117	8,700	5.02
Candidate Wildlife Site (CWS)	477	3487	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1651</b>	<b>13,524</b>	<b>7.80</b>

\* The number of sites includes several SSSIs, SPAs and SACs with boundaries that extend beyond the boundary of the Peak District National Park.

\*\* SPA and SAC boundaries are all within existing SSSI boundaries.

\*\*\* The area covered by Derbyshire excluding land in the National Park is 173,433.7 ha (DCC, 2002)

Table 3 sets out the distribution of Wildlife Sites between Natural Areas.

**Table 3: Natural Areas and Wildlife Sites distribution (at January 2005).**

<b>Natural Area</b>	<b>Total area (ha) of NA in Derbyshire outside the National Park</b>	<b>No of Wildlife Sites</b>	<b>Area (ha) of land designated as Wildlife Site</b>	<b>Proportion of NA (within Derbyshire) with Wildlife Site designation</b>	<b>% of total area (ha) of Wildlife Sites in each Natural Area</b>
Derbyshire Peak Fringe & Lower Derwent	37650	267	2490.77	6.6	26.4
White Peak	8624	72	413	4.7	4.38
Potteries & Churnet Valley	580	4	15.5	0	0
Coal Measures	45424	321	2261	4.97	24
Dark Peak	6700	51	466.2	6.95	4.95
South West Peak	3534	24	362.59	10.26	3.8
Southern Magnesian Limestone	9744	58	766.57	7.86	8.14
Urban Mersey Basin	1887	20	141.75	7.5	1.5
Trent Valley Washes	26570	166	1743.4	6.5	18.5
Needwood & South Derbyshire Claylands	32330	128	736.53	2.27	7.8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>173043</b>	<b>1112</b>	<b>9400</b>	<b>57.61</b>	<b>99.47</b>

**Table 4: Distribution of Wildlife Sites between local authorities.**

<b>Local Authority Area</b>	<b>Total area (ha) within LA boundary</b>	<b>No of Wildlife Sites</b>	<b>% of Wildlife Sites in each LA</b>	<b>Area of land designated as Wildlife Site</b>	<b>Proportion of LA area designated as Wildlife Sites</b>
Amber Valley	26538.6	169	15.1	984.62	3.57
Bolsover	16033.1	111	9.9	1161.61	7.25
Chesterfield	6602.9	26	2.3	239.26	3.63
Derbyshire Dales	33220*	196	17.5	1621.47	3.74
Derby City	7803	64	5.7	554.09	7.21
Erewash	10962.8	97	8.6	526	4.79
High Peak	13140*	109	9.7	943.76	7.18
North East Derbyshire	25125.8	192	17.1	1738.1	6.9
South Derbyshire	33812.1	154	13.7	1646.86	4.87

*\*Area estimated using GIS (DWT, 2003). All other LA or unitary areas provided by DCC (2002).*

**Table 5: Total Wildlife Site resource**

<b>Local Authority Area</b>	<b>Area (ha) of Derbyshire outside the National Park.</b>	<b>No of Wildlife Sites</b>	<b>Area (ha) of land designated as Wildlife Site</b>	<b>Proportion of land in Derbyshire (outside the National Park) designated as a Wildlife Site.</b>
All Derbyshire outside Peak Park Total	173433.7**	1118	9415.78	5.43

**\*\*** The area of land in Derbyshire outside of the National Park (DCC, 2002)



## APPENDIX C

### **Historical account of the selection of Derbyshire Wildlife Sites**

*This appendix provides an account of the methodologies used for the selection of Wildlife Sites between 1982 and 2003. Volume 2 of this Handbook sets out the current guidelines for the selection of Wildlife Sites.*

#### **Pre 1982 identification of sites of wildlife importance**

In 1971 a preliminary survey of sites of wildlife interest in the county was undertaken by the Derbyshire Naturalists Trust (now DWT); 300 sites of local and county significance were located and notified to the County Council 'County Treasures' system. This was a desk study using existing information from local naturalists. Whilst it produced a number of key sites there was no systematic attempt to survey the whole county at a detailed level. The effective long-term management of the county's ecological resources required up-to-date objective data and a clear indication of priorities for conservation. In order to obtain this data a comprehensive wildlife habitat assessment was required. It was agreed that an assessment would benefit both the County Council and DWT.

#### **Derbyshire Wildlife Habitat Assessment**

In May 1982 the Derbyshire Naturalists Trust (now DWT) in conjunction with the County Council sponsored an MSc Community Programme Scheme to undertake *the Derbyshire Wildlife Habitat Assessment* for the area outside the Peak National Park. The objectives were:

- to assess the quality and quantity of natural and semi-natural habitats and particularly those habitats which it had been adjudged were most under threat e.g. permanent pasture, ponds, marshes, woodlands, and naturally colonised derelict land;
- to assess the degree of change, ie loss or conversion of habitats, where possible, using a comparison of the existing and earlier series of Ordnance Survey maps;
- to assess wildlife habitat and botanical and zoological diversity throughout the county and to assess the significance of the principle components of countryside landscape in Derbyshire for the county's ecological resources.

The benefits of the assessment were the identification of key sites and provision of data for the development of policies relating to:

- the County Council's involvement in nature conservation, particularly the protection of wildlife habitats under pressure from agricultural change, development and mineral extraction;
- resolution of conflicts between nature conservation and other land uses, the preparation of Local Plans, consideration of planning applications and the development of the County Council's own projects;
- provision of guidance and assistance to independent environmental groups and identification of educational potential of habitats.

It was also anticipated that the survey would be of assistance to district councils in the formulation of Local Plans and in the development control process.

The Habitat Assessment involved several areas of work, outlined in the following sections:

- habitat survey to map all existing wildlife habitats;
- assessment of habitat types in the county;
- ecological assessment of divisions of the county.
- compilation of a record of individual sites of wildlife value - the Derbyshire Biological Sites Register (in 1993 changed to the Wildlife Sites Register).

### **Habitat Survey: Mapping and Classification**

The system of habitat classification used was based on the Phase I Habitat Mapping system originated by the Nature Conservancy Council in 1980, subsequently revised. This system has been adapted to local circumstances throughout Britain and allows for habitat mapping at a variety of scales. For resurveys of Wildlife Sites from 1991 onwards the revised Phase I system has been used.

- the list of habitat classifications used prior to 1991, together with the abbreviations used on the survey maps is given in Fig. 5. Fig. 6 provides an example of a completed survey map.
- details and discussion of the 1982/3 habitat classifications can be found in the Derbyshire Wildlife Habitat Assessment Report of Survey 1985, reprinted in the Derbyshire SINC Handbook 1996.

Whilst, ideally, habitat assessment should be based on all groups of both animals and plants, in practice this would be too onerous a task. Habitat surveys therefore rely heavily on flowering plants for two reasons:

- classification and definition of habitats is itself based largely on flowering plants;
- plants are the most conspicuous, the most regularly present and the most easily identifiable of the living components of any habitat. They are always present, even if more prominent at some times of the year than others, a hand lens is the only equipment normally needed for identification, and a leaf can always be taken away for identification if there is doubt.

Plants can be used as indicators of habitat quality and a good botanical site is likely to be correspondingly good, for instance, entomologically. An ancient woodland is identifiable from its flowering plants and will show greater entomological diversity than a recent plantation. However care must be taken not to overlook sites which are primarily of entomological or ornithological interest e.g. scattered old oaks in parkland or species poor wet meadows.

The level of detail for the Derbyshire survey was affected by the following considerations:

- chosen scale for the survey was 1:10,000 OS base;
- mapping habitats in blocks is a simplification of reality e.g. managed grassland was largely classified and assessed on a field by field basis; though some fields are

uniform in structure and species composition, others will vary considerably within themselves. It was possible to record extreme differences e.g. the occurrence of wet flushes or the presence of a bank of species rich grassland in an otherwise improved pasture, but for the most part an entire field was given a single category;

- though grassland fields are convenient for mapping in that they have neatly defined edges and can be fairly easily viewed, the same simplification is unusual in other habitat types;
- some habitats were identified and assessed at a distance, this can often be done with precision e.g. in areas dominated by arable land, in other areas it may result in the omission of some habitats, e.g. a pond may be hidden in trees or scrub;
- surveying was from rights of way only; inaccessible private property was not surveyed unless landowners were immediately available and permission obtained to enter. As a result there are omissions. However these are fewer than might be expected and most are small. In total the survey team recorded habitats for approximately 90% of the county.

### **Assessment of Habitat Types**

The initial habitat survey made possible an informed assessment of the quantity and quality of habitats represented in the county. The Report of Survey of the Derbyshire Wildlife Habitat Assessment examined the importance of each habitat type within Derbyshire in national and local terms, and its location and abundance as compared with other habitat types. Principle causes of habitat decline and change were identified and implications drawn for future maintenance and development of habitats. This work assisted in the later choice of sites for the Wildlife Sites Register.

the Assessment of Habitat Types from the 1985 Report of Survey is to be found in the Derbyshire Wildlife Habitat Assessment Report of Survey 1985 and reprinted in the Derbyshire SINC Handbook 1996.

The initial survey and the assessment of habitats very clearly indicated that the extent and quality of existing habitats differed greatly across the county, as did problems and opportunities associated with their maintenance and creation. The report of survey therefore provided ecological assessments of twelve divisions of the county, differentiated by their geological base, principle land uses and characteristic habitats which together imparted a particular ecological character to each division. These assessments assisted in the choice of sites for the Wildlife Sites Register.

the Assessment of Ecological Divisions from the 1985 Report of Survey is to be found in the Derbyshire Wildlife Habitat Assessment Report of Survey 1985 and reprinted in the Derbyshire SINC Handbook 1996.

### **Compilation and refinement of the Derbyshire Wildlife Sites Register**

During the course of the Habitat Survey 1982-83 the opportunity was afforded to record all sites which the surveyors considered to be of ecological significance. A small number of surveyors worked in the same area and reviewed results in order to achieve compatibility. To this record was added all sites previously known to DWT together with records held by other natural history organisations. These sites were evaluated against criteria (discussed below) and those meeting the criteria were identified as Biological Sites (now Wildlife Sites) and became part of the Biological Sites Register (now Wildlife Sites Register). Such a compilation will never be exhaustive; additional sites are added

to the Register from time to time, for instance those where access was impossible or where the interest was not apparent at the season of survey.

Selection of sites worthy of recording for assessment against the criteria rested with the individual field surveyors; this might have resulted in variation between surveyors but in practice there is no evidence that this is so. Surveyors selected sites as being of ecological value on the basic principle that effective wildlife conservation requires the preservation of a mosaic of scattered habitats as well as of large reserves of high species diversity or containing one rare species only. Failure to maintain this scattering of habitats leads to:-

- isolated and vulnerable populations;
- a landscape lacking in features of interest;
- inaccessibility of even the most common flora and fauna to the general public;
- excessive concentrations of the amenity and educational uses of semi-natural habitats in a relatively few potentially sensitive areas e.g. nature reserves.

Sites were initially selected for potential inclusion in the Biological Site Register (now Wildlife Sites Register) if:

- they were of high ecological quality and/or diversity;
- they contributed to the maintenance of a mosaic of habitats by providing a linear feature, a stepping stone or a link between other sites;
- even if isolated and/or of poor quality, the site represented one of the very few remaining habitats of ecological interest in an area which was otherwise highly developed for intensive agriculture, industry or residential development.

### **Wildlife Site Criteria and selection 1982 - 2002**

During the Derbyshire Wildlife Habitat Assessment in 1982-83 twelve criteria were used to assess sites for inclusion on the Register, and to grade sites, i.e. provide an indication of relative worth of sites. These criteria continued to be used until 1990 for further evaluation of newly identified sites and additions to the register, or reassessment of grades.

These criteria were:	
<i>Occurrence of rare species</i>	<i>Diversity of habitats</i>
<i>Botanical diversity within habitats</i>	<i>Evidence of faunal interest</i>
<i>Quality of representation of habitat type</i>	<i>Educational value</i>
<i>Sensitivity of disturbance</i>	<i>Replaceability</i>
<i>Frequency of habitat type in the area</i>	<i>Proximity to urban areas</i>
<i>Size</i>	<i>Potential for improvement</i>

For the resurvey of sites in 1991-92 and assessments of sites after that date, it was agreed between English Nature, the County Council and DWT that:

- the criteria should be revised to reflect more closely the issues of concern which, from seven years experience of protection of sites on the Register, are known to most frequently arise: and

- each site should be formally scored against the new criteria, thus producing a clear record for the future, and the grade of each site awarded in line with the results of that scoring.

The number of criteria was reduced from twelve used in 1982-83 to ten:

<i>Diversity of habitats</i>	<i>Evidence of faunal interest</i>
<i>Botanical Diversity within each habitat</i>	<i>Size</i>
<i>Occurrence of rare or protected species</i>	<i>Fragility/sensitivity to disturbance</i>
<i>Quality of representation of habitat type</i>	<i>Viability</i>
<i>Amenity and educational value</i>	
<i>Frequency of habitat type within the area/contribution to genetic pool</i>	

***The details of these criteria are set out in the Derbyshire SINC Handbook 1996.***

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## APPENDIX D

### Procedures required to implement data storage & management policies

#### Procedures to fulfil policies

To implement the data storage and management policies it is necessary to introduce a set of clearly defined procedures. These are being worked up in detail and include procedures to establish and maintain:

- record of Data exchange agreements
- record of transfers of data into and out of the Wildlife Sites Initiative
- record of receipt of data into the Wildlife Sites Initiative
- record of supply of information conforming to and within agreed Service Level Agreements
- record of supply of information to organisations and individuals and for services not covered by Service Level Agreements
- metadata register, identifying all the databases incorporated into the Wildlife Sites Initiative, including both existing records and newly transferred or derived data.
- data set records to record dates, versions, updates, additions etc.
- data Protection Act registration.
- document control procedure including lists of all data in each manual Wildlife Site file and indication of confidential records.

#### Procedures for maintenance of the Wildlife Sites system

A number of additional procedures are required for the ongoing maintenance of individual elements of the Wildlife Site record. These are linked to the tasks to be completed in fulfilment of Service Level Agreements.

##### 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey Wildlife Site maps sets

**Objective:** To maintain a GIS layer of 1:10,000 maps showing Wildlife Site boundaries: Amendments should be made to this record only in response to changes agreed by the Wildlife Sites Panel.

**Procedure:** Regular amendment of GIS layer with associated amendments to indices, site sheets etc. All implications for Ordnance Survey licences for the use and provision of copies of OS maps must be identified.

##### Wildlife Site Database

**Objective:** To maintain a Wildlife Site database of summary information, which provides the base data to be interrogated, highlighting chosen fields in a variety of formats and analyses.

This is the primary database for the provision of summary information. Maintenance to a high standard is vital. Its individual fields provide the initial information to be viewed by clients, and interrogation will provide indices of Wildlife Sites, ownership information, summaries for site sheets to accompany maps of individual Wildlife Sites. Individual

Wildlife Site records should be updated/amended as soon as relevant reliable information is received, but all such updates should be indicated by date.

Updates/amendments should be made to individual Wildlife Site records only in response to:

- reliable desk top study information which may become available at any time;
- formal surveys undertaken to the agreed programme.
- receipt of reliable survey information undertaken by a third party
- queries, informal proposals or comments concerning sites

The 'comments' and 'notes' fields provide an important overview of the value and planning/ management history of a site.

It is recognised that at present in many cases information in the 'comments' field does not provide a reliable description, but these should not be altered unless a site visit has been made. Field surveyors should be instructed to review the 'comments' and ensure that these comprise an appropriate description of the site when the site is resurveyed.

The 'notes' section logs queries about or proposals for a site. This section should also note the last update of information. Where Wildlife Sites are reviewed the opportunity should be taken to review documents in the site file, ensure that all significant developments are listed in date order in the 'comments' field, together with particular concerns about the site, e.g. if a wetland a buffer zone should be considered, or management to maintain interest is critical.

#### **A. Site Indices**

**Objective:** To maintain two sets of indices for each district:

- by number order of site;
- by alphabetical list by name.

These indices will be provided to agencies with all regular updates of information and can be provided for policy documents which deal with Wildlife Sites protection e.g. Local Plans. They may also be provided to individuals or consultants who are making general enquiries about Wildlife Sites where it is not thought appropriate to provide details of Wildlife Sites.

#### **B. Historic Indices**

**Objective:** To record changes in the Register over time, particularly the removal of sites from the Register and the reasons for removal e.g. amalgamation, destruction, down grading etc.

#### **C. Ownership information**

Information is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act; it must be registered and maintained under the terms of the act.

**Objectives:**

- to gather and maintain ownership and tenancy details for Wildlife Sites to enable appropriate contacts to be made concerning survey and management;
- to maintain a record of ownership contacts to demonstrate that contact with owners is a regular undertaking as part of surveys;
- to monitor numbers of owners contacted about management advice.

## **D. Register of owners/occupiers**

Two formats exist:

- to update ownership information as part of individual site files
- to print out a register of all owners.

An annual review and update of this information should be made, as well as immediate updates where information comes to hand during the course of the year. Print outs of the Register should be kept together in a locked cabinet, not with individual Wildlife Site records.

Once the Wildlife Site is established and existing ownership information has been assessed, it will be a priority for all owners to be contacted and given the opportunity of requesting that their details be not kept. See Data Protection Act for necessary action.

### **Paper based Wildlife Sites Registers**

**Objective:** To maintain basic data in hard copy form combining 1:10,000 maps with boundaries of individual Wildlife Site with selected fields from the database. This is the principal means of providing hard copy to clients including occasional and annual updates and amendments.

Two sets should be maintained:

- one working set for update, annotation and analysis
- one 'clean' copy for provision to clients or surveyors as required.

### **Wildlife Sites GIS overlays**

**Objective:** To maintain regularly updated overlays providing centroid OS Grid Reference data, boundaries and site size for each Wildlife Site and to ensure that the overlays are correct at April each year to allow provision to clients in file form.

In conjunction with the database the GIS overlays form the primary database for the provision of summary information to clients and for the other purposes of the Wildlife Sites Initiative.

### **Individual Wildlife Site files (Manual)**

**Objective:** Provide the working file for each individual site, including details of all surveys, species lists, correspondence, relevant surveyors etc.

Most of the site files are held in manila A4 envelopes, apart from those for which large amount of information exists. The files are arranged in site number order by district.

**Work still to do:** Each site file requires a 'list of contents' to be initiated for document control purposes. These should be kept with the folder and any removal of or addition to the information recorded here. Enclosure of any confidential information should be highlighted outside folder.

### **Candidate Wildlife Site database**

**Objective:** To provide a formal record of those sites which come to the attention of DWT as having potential for designation as Wildlife Sites. The Candidate sites will be surveyed as opportunities arise.

The files consist of a database providing basic information, a GIS file and site files providing all the information so far available. Each site is given a candidate identifying number.



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