

NATURAL AREA 21 :
LINCOLNSHIRE CLAY VALES

ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :

SOME

General ornithological character: A natural area of rather limited ornithological interest, but with some semi-natural habitats remaining, notably deciduous woods and heathland. Conifer plantations have been established on much of the sandy areas but heathland species including Nightjar still occur on the remaining open heath and along rides and clear fells in the plantations. The extensive open areas of heather and bracken at Kirkby Moor also attract wintering Hen Harrier. The remaining areas of deciduous woodland support the typical species.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i> Grey Partridge Lapwing Golden Plover Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Snipe, Kingfisher, Corn Bunting, Nightingale. Wintering Hen Harrier.	
'Core Area' species		
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Nightjar, Woodlark, Hobby, Redstart.	
Key bird habitats	Lowland heath, conifer plantations, semi-natural woods, farmland.	
Species specific action	Encourage appropriate management of conifer plantations and remaining open heathland for breeding Nightjar.	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Opportunities for habitat (re-)creation on farmland.
- Lack of appropriate management of existing semi-natural habitats.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain present area of heathland through appropriate management including the removal of scrub and invading trees. Where possible, increase area of heathland using land presently planted with conifers or arable crops.
2. Maintain present area of broad-leaf woodland and encourage appropriate management to enhance bird interest.

**NATURAL AREA 22 :
LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

SOME

General ornithological character: This natural area consists largely of chalk and sandstone hill-land, much above 400 feet, which is intensively farmed. The majority of the bird interest centres on the remaining areas of rough grassland, which support a few pairs of Barn Owl, and broad-leaf woods, most of which are small. The area's arable fields support the typical species and remain a stronghold for the Corn Bunting.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i> Grey Partridge Lapwing Golden Plover
Other notable species	Breeding Buzzard, Turtle Dove, Kingfisher, Nightingale, Tree Sparrow, Corn Bunting, Linnet.	
'Core Area' species		
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Quail, Lapwing, Snipe, Barn Owl.	
Key bird habitats	Semi-natural woods, permanent pasture, arable farmland.	
Species specific action	Encourage the creation of rough grass strips for hunting Barn Owls; provide nest boxes as appropriate.	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Opportunities for habitat (re-)creation on farmland.
- Pressure for land use change on remaining semi-natural habitats.
- Lack of appropriate management of existing semi-natural habitats.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and, where appropriate, increase area of permanent, rough grassland with the appropriate management.
2. Manage remaining semi-natural woods to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance their breeding bird populations.

**NATURAL AREA 23 :
LINCOLNSHIRE MARSH AND COAST**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

NOTABLE

General ornithological character: This natural area formerly contained much inland marshland, which is now drained and intensively cultivated. Remaining semi-natural habitats include a few small woodlands, scattered permanent pasture, and sand dunes containing freshwater marsh and scrub. In winter, the permanent pasture (and some arable) supports large numbers of Golden Plover and the damp areas near the coast attract Curlew and a few Bewick's Swan. Clay and brick pits near the coast, especially at Barton, provide some of the most important bird habitats in the county. They support wintering wildfowl, including Pochard and breeding species such as Reed Warbler and Bearded Tit. The reservoir at Coveham also attracts significant numbers of wintering wildfowl. Pink-footed Geese from the Humber flock feed on arable land.

Internationally important species	Wintering Pink-footed Goose, Twite	
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i> Bearded Tit Pochard	<i>List 2</i> Pink-footed Goose Lapwing Grey Partridge Golden Plover Curlew Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Redshank, Snipe, Turtle Dove, Kingfisher, Yellow Wagtail, Nightingale, Lesser Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Linnet, Corn Bunting. (Small numbers of wintering Bewick's Swan, Hen Harrier, Merlin, Peregrine and Short-eared Owl.)	
'Core Area' species		
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Bittern, Marsh Harrier, Montagu's Harrier, Spotted Crake, Ruff, Curlew.	
Key bird habitats	Permanent pasture, sand dunes with scrub, flooded clay and brick pits, farmland.	
Species specific action		
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Opportunities for habitat (re-)creation on farmland.
- Changing nature of semi-natural habitats near coast as a result of relative sea level rise and associated sea defence work.
- Lack of appropriate management of existing semi-natural habitats.
- Recreational disturbance to rare breeding species at flooded clay and brick pits.

Key objectives:

1. Ensure effective management of artificial flooded pits near the coast in order to maximise benefits to birds, especially rare breeding species, such as Bearded Tit.
2. Maintain and, where possible, increase area of semi-natural woodland and permanent pasture with the appropriate management. Raise water levels on wet grassland where appropriate.
3. Manage sand dune scrub to benefit their bird populations, favouring rotational cutting to periodic 'scrub bashing'.

**NATURAL AREA 24 :
MIDDLE ENGLAND**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

NOTABLE

General ornithological character: Most of the ornithological interest of this large natural area is confined to the remnants of once extensive semi-natural habitats, principally wet meadows and woods, and the newly created flooded gravel pit complexes and reservoirs. These are set in an intensively-farmed landscape which supports the typical range of common farmland birds.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Gadwall Pochard Nightjar	Lapwing Golden Plover Grey Partridge Barn Owl Wigeon Teal Shoveler
Other notable species	Breeding Hobby, Little Ringed Plover, Snipe, Redshank, Kingfisher, Yellow Wagtail, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nightingale, Redstart, Whitethroat, Hawfinch, Corn Bunting.	
'Core Area' species	Gadwall (breeding), Yellow Wagtail.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Buzzard, Ringed Plover, Curlew, Oystercatcher.	
Key bird habitats	Flooded gravel pits and reservoirs, wet meadows, semi-natural woods, farmland.	
Species specific action		
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Hydrological threats and a lack of management of remaining wet meadows.
- Pressure for land-use change on remaining semi-natural habitats, especially gravel extraction in river valleys.
- Recreational disturbance to breeding and non-breeding birds on reservoirs and gravel pits.
- Opportunities for habitat (re-)creation on farmland.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and, where appropriate, restore traditional management to wet meadows. Re-create freshwater habitats on river floodplains, particularly wet grassland.
2. Manage semi-natural woods to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance their breeding bird populations (eg restoration of coppicing and ride management and maintenance of old/dead wood features).
3. Expand area and, where possible, link existing semi-natural habitats (especially fragmented grasslands).
4. Ensure habitat creation plans for disused gravel pits are appropriate (ie favour marginal habitats, such as reedbeds and wet grassland as opposed to deep, open water). Ensure such after-use plans form part of consents for future mineral extraction.

NATURAL AREA 25 :
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE UPLANDS

ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :

SOME

General ornithological character: A natural area of rather limited ornithological interest; the main bird habitats are provided by the remaining fragments of wet meadows (eg in the Cherwell Valley), broad-leaved woods (mostly on the hill tops) and reservoirs. These are set in a typical Midlands landscape of enclosed grass fields with well-developed hedgerow networks.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Gadwall	Wigeon Teal Shoveler
Other notable species	Breeding Snipe, Common Tern, Redstart, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.	
'Core Area' species		
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Buzzard, Hobby, Curlew.	
Key bird habitats	Wet meadows, reservoirs, semi-natural woods, farmland.	
Species specific action		
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Pressure for land-use change and a lack of management of remaining semi-natural habitats.
- Continued agricultural intensification.
- Opportunities for habitat (re-)creation on farmland.

Key objectives:

1. Manage wet meadows and semi natural woods to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance their bird populations. Restore/re-create wet meadows, extending or linking existing fragments where possible.
2. Manage reservoirs and farmland in a manner sympathetic to their bird populations.
3. Maximise opportunities for habitat creation.

**NATURAL AREA 26 :
BEDFORDSHIRE GREENSAND**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

SOME

General ornithological character: This narrow ridge of higher land is well-wooded in comparison to the surrounding countryside and supports a range of common woodland birds, some of which are not present elsewhere in Bedfordshire. The woods are set in an intensively-farmed landscape which supports the typical farmland species. There are also a number of flooded sand and gravel pits and a few remnants of lowland heath which add to the rather limited ornithological richness of this natural area, although the latter are too small and too isolated to support the typical heathland avifauna.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Nightjar	Grey Partridge Lapwing
Other notable species	Breeding Redstart, Hobby, Snipe, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nightingale, Hawfinch (breeding Teal, Shoveler, Pochard). Common species such as Woodcock, Tree Pipit and Nuthatch are present here but rarely elsewhere in the county.	
'Core Area' species	(Lady Amherst's Pheasant - introduced species!)	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Pochard, Barn Owl.	
Key bird habitats	Semi-natural woods, farmland, flooded sand and gravel pits.	
Species specific action	Encourage creation of uncultivated grass margins to provide hunting habitat for Barn Owls, with provision of nest boxes as appropriate.	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Pressure for development (urban, industrial, roads etc) on existing semi-natural habitats.
- Lack of management or inappropriate management of semi-natural woods.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and, where appropriate, enhance populations of woodland birds by encouraging sympathetic management (eg restoration of coppicing and ride management, and maintenance of old/dead wood features).
2. Expand the area and, where possible, link existing semi-natural woods by taking advantage of opportunities to plant new woodlands on intensively-managed farmland. Ensure these are managed to benefit a range of woodland birds.
3. Ensure consents for new sand and gravel extraction include after-use plans that contain appropriate habitat creation.

**NATURAL AREA 27:
FENLAND**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

OUTSTANDING

General ornithological character: Presently a large, flat area of intensively-managed agricultural land, almost all of which is cultivated, supporting a range of common and less common breeding and non-breeding birds closely associated with farmland. The presence of internationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl is dependent on two large washlands (the Ouse and Nene Washes, in addition to the smaller Cam Washes), which also support a number of rare breeding birds. The area is also heavily influenced by its proximity to the Wash. Although very few remnants of the formerly more extensive Fenland habitats now exist, there is great potential for re-creating the true character of this natural area.

Internationally important species	Wintering Bewick's Swan, Whooper Swan, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Pintail, Shoveler.	
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Bewick's Swan Marsh Harrier Garganey Ruff Pochard Black-tailed Godwit Montagu's Harrier Golden Oriole	Whooper Swan Shoveler Pink-footed Goose Grey Partridge Wigeon Lapwing Teal Golden Plover Pintail Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Redshank, Little Ringed Plover, Snipe, Kingfisher, Yellow Wagtail, Reed Warbler, Corn Bunting, Tree Sparrow, Linnets.	
'Core Area' species	Bewick's Swan, Whooper Swan, Wigeon, Pintail, Shoveler, Pochard, Montagu's Harrier, Barn Owl, Golden Oriole, Garganey, Marsh Harrier, Corn Bunting, Black-tailed Godwit, Grey Heron, Yellow Wagtail.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Bittern, Black Tern, Montagu's Harrier, Garganey, Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit, Golden Oriole, Ringed Plover, Spotted Crake.	
Key bird habitats	Washlands/wet meadows, farmland, swamp/fen/carr.	
Species specific action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure continued wardening of harriers breeding on arable land. 2. Encourage creation of uncultivated grass margins to provide hunting habitat for Barn Owls, with provision of nest boxes as appropriate. 3. Implement Golden Oriole Action Plan. 	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Hydrological management of wetlands.
- Creation of Fenland habitats on farmland.
- Species protection and management for rare breeders.
- Continued declines of farmland species.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and, where possible, increase populations of rare breeding birds within the natural area by implementing the appropriate habitat based and species-specific management.
2. Maintain and, where possible, improve the management of remnant semi-natural habitats and man-made washlands, to benefit their key bird species.
3. Create habitats that were formerly characteristic of Fenland (swamp/fen/wet grassland) on farmland of low existing wildlife interest.
4. Seek to reverse the declines in key farmland bird species by encouraging sympathetic management of agricultural land.

NATURAL AREA 28 :
EAST ANGLIAN SOUTHERN CHALK

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

SOME

General ornithological character: This natural area comprises the north-eastern end of the Chiltern Hills which decrease in altitude towards the north east. Only the remnants of formerly more extensive broadleaved woodland and unimproved grassland remain; the area is now dominated by intensively managed agricultural land, mainly arable, of limited ornithological importance. A few pairs of Stone Curlew still breed on arable farmland where sufficient bare ground remains by April-May.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i> Grey Partridge Golden Plover Lapwing
Other notable species	Breeding Hobby, Kingfisher, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Yellow Wagtail, Whitethroat, Tree Sparrow, Corn Bunting.	
'Core Area' species		
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Quail, Barn Owl, Stone Curlew, Wheatear, Woodlark.	
Key bird habitats	Deciduous woodland, farmland.	
Species specific action	Maintain and increase the breeding Stone Curlew population with the appropriate species protection and habitat management measures.	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Loss of semi-natural deciduous woodland.
- Loss of unimproved chalk grassland through encroachment of scrub.
- Opportunities for habitat creation on farmland.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and manage appropriately remaining areas of deciduous woodland and unimproved chalk grassland.
2. Improve opportunities for range of farmland birds by encouraging use of appropriate set-aside options (eg creating conditions suitable for colonization by breeding Stone Curlew).

**NATURAL AREA 29 :
BRECKLAND**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

OUTSTANDING

General ornithological character: This natural area supports a unique suite of dry grass heath species, dependent on a short vegetation and bare ground, many of which are becoming increasingly dependent on artificial habitats that mimic their breeding requirements (ie sugar beet/carrot fields for Stone Curlew and rides/clear-fells/replants in conifer forests for Nightjar and Woodlark). Although only a fraction of the formerly extensive semi-natural habitats remain, there is great potential for re-creating the true character of this natural area.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Gadwall Stone Curlew Nightjar Woodlark	Hen Harrier (wintering) Grey Partridge Ringed Plover Curlew Barn Owl Goshawk
Other notable species	Breeding Little Ringed Plover, Stonechat, Whinchat, Wheatear (Crossbill).	
'Core Area' species	Stone Curlew, Woodlark, Barn Owl, Nightjar, Grey Partridge, Gadwall.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Red-backed Shrike and many of the high priority species listed above. (Great Bustard, Red Kite)	
Key bird habitats	Dry grass heath, clear felled and replanted conifer plantations and their rides, arable fields.	
Species specific action	Urgent implementation of action plans for Stone Curlew, Nightjar and Woodlark.	
Additional monitoring required	Ringed Plover, Curlew. (Maintain ongoing work on Stone Curlew, Woodlark, Nightjar and Harrier roosts.)	

Key issues:

- Lack of appropriate management on traditional dry heath sites, some of which is now being addressed.
- Highly fragmented nature of existing semi-natural habitats, and the need for habitat (re-)creation to reverse this.
- Much of bird interest currently using wholly artificial habitats (sugar beet fields and forest clear-fells/replants), although the numbers of key species nesting on dry heathland has increased in recent years.
- Ongoing implementation of Breckland ESA.
- Need for an effective, co-ordinated monitoring programme for Breckland birds.

Key objectives:

1. Increase populations of the key breeding species within the natural area, also increasing the number of semi-natural sites that are occupied.
2. Sites occupied by high priority breeders should preferably be within areas of semi-natural habitat. The proportion of key species nesting within such habitats should, therefore, be progressively increased by a combination of improved management of existing sites and habitat (re-)creation/restoration.
3. Maximise benefit to rare breeding birds of the Breckland ESA and ensure that agricultural schemes (eg set-aside) are designed to enhance the ornithological interest of the natural area.

**NATURAL AREA 30 :
NORTH NORFOLK**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

NOTABLE

General ornithological character: A dispersed suite of species typical of arable farmland, with occasional islands of greater ornithological interest provided by fragmented remnants of lowland heath.

Internationally important species	Wintering Pink-footed Goose.	
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i> Nightjar Woodlark	<i>List 2</i> Pink-footed Goose Grey Partridge Golden Plover Lapwing Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Corn Bunting, Linnet, Tree Sparrow, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat.	
'Core Area' species	Grey Partridge, Barn Owl, Pink-footed Goose.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Stone Curlew, Buzzard, Woodlark, Honey Buzzard.	
Key bird habitats	Arable farmland, lowland heath.	
Species specific action	Implement Stone Curlew and Woodlark Action Plans.	
Additional monitoring required	Annual census required for Nightjar and Woodlark.	

Key issues:

- Intensification of farming practices.
- Persecution of raptors.
- Poor management or highly fragmented nature of 'rough' ground and heaths.

Key objectives:

1. Reverse steep downward trends in populations size of key farmland species.
2. Increase area of lowland heath supporting Nightjar and Woodlark.
3. Manage areas to encourage Stone Curlew, Lapwing and other species to breed again in good numbers.

**NATURAL AREA 31 :
BROADLAND**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

OUTSTANDING

General ornithological character: A natural area of outstanding ornithological interest, containing extensive tracts of two of England's most important bird habitats; reedbeds and lowland wet grassland. Broadland is a core area for several vulnerable species. The open broads themselves contribute to the overall ornithological richness of the area by supporting large numbers of wintering waterbirds.

Internationally important species	Wintering Bewick's Swan, Wigeon, Gadwall, Shoveler.	
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Bittern Bewick's Swan Bean Goose Gadwall Garganey	Pochard Marsh Harrier Cetti's Warbler Savi's Warbler Bearded Tit Whooper Swan Wigeon Teal Shoveler Golden Plover Lapwing Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Snipe, Redshank, Common Tern, Kingfisher, Yellow Wagtail, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Crane (Winter roosts for Hen Harrier and Merlin, and important population of wintering Ruff).	
'Core Area' species	Savi's Warbler, Bearded Tit, Bittern, Bean Goose, Garganey, Pochard, Crane, Marsh Harrier, Cetti's Warbler, Shoveler.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Bittern, Marsh Harrier, Savi's Warbler.	
Key bird habitats	Reedbeds, stillwaters (open Broad), grazing marsh/wet meadows.	
Species specific action	Seek to increase the number of breeding Bitterns through the appropriate management of large existing reedbeds, particularly those occupied by wintering birds.	
Additional monitoring required	Periodic breeding censuses of bearded tits.	

Key issues:

- Ongoing implementation and success of Broads ESA.
- Threats to freshwater wetlands habitats from saline inundation due to relative sea-level rise and coastal defences.
- Eutrophication.
- Threats to stillwater habitats from increasing recreational pressures.
- Lack of management of reedbed and open fen habitats leading to scrub encroachment.

Key objectives:

1. Maximise benefits to both breeding and non-breeding waterfowl populations from the Broads ESA.
2. Maintain and, where possible, enhance the management of existing reedbeds to benefit reedbed birds.
3. (Re-)create extensive reedbeds (>20 ha) at suitable sites. Expand area of existing reedbeds and fen habitats; including ditch systems and turf ponds.
4. Maintain and, where possible, enhance the management of existing lowland wet grassland. Re-create new areas, extending or linking existing sites as appropriate.
5. Work with others to improve water quality of stillwater wetlands.

**NATURAL AREA 32 :
SUFFOLK COAST & HEATHS**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

CONSIDERABLE

General ornithological character: This natural area is characterised by many fragments of lowland heath interspersed by more extensive areas of intensively managed farmland and commercial forestry. Whilst some of the larger heathland islands retain some bird species typical of lowland heath, most are now too small, and a large proportion of the populations of Nightjar and Woodlark now reside in clear-felled/re-stocked conifer plantations. Stone Curlew, once characteristic of the area, are all but extinct. Woods and unimproved grasslands, as well as newly created flooded gravel pits add to the ornithological interest of the area. Together with the adjacent maritime natural area, M8, these form one of the most ornithologically rich areas of England.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Nightjar Woodlark	Grey Partridge Lapwing Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Hobby, Snipe, Redshank, Stonechat, Whinchat, Redstart, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nightingale.	
'Core Area' species	Woodlark, Nightjar.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Stone Curlew, Whinchat, Stonechat, Firecrest.	
Key bird habitats	Lowland heath, farmland, forestry plantations, semi-natural woods.	
Species specific action	Encourage return of breeding Stone Curlew with the appropriate management. Undertake nest protection should Stone Curlews return.	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Lack of management of existing heathland fragments and a lack of incentives for heathland (re-)creation to link them up.
- Pressure for land-use change on all semi-natural habitats.
- Increasing recreational pressures on lowland heath.
- Ongoing implementation of the Suffolk River Valleys ESA and the CSS on heathland sites.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and, where possible, restore traditional management to existing fragments of lowland heath.
2. Restore or re-create lowland heath habitats on farmland/forestry of low existing wildlife interest. Where possible, expand or link up existing heathland fragments.
3. Maintain, enhance or restore active management on other remaining semi-natural habitats.
4. Ensure forestry plantations are managed in a manner sympathetic to Nightjar, Woodlark and other important bird species.
5. Maximise benefits to breeding birds of the Suffolk River Valleys ESA.

**NATURAL AREA 33 :
EAST ANGLIAN PLAINS**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

SOME

General ornithological character: An intensively-managed agricultural landscape supporting a range of common birds typical of lowland farmland. Much of the ornithological interest of this natural area reflects the occurrence of islands of remnant semi-natural habitats, principally woods and wet meadows, and reservoirs.

Internationally important species	Wintering Teal, Shoveler.	
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i> Pochard	<i>List 2</i> Wigeon Teal Shoveler Grey Partridge Lapwing Golden Plover Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Redshank, Snipe, Nightingale, Whitethroat, Linnet, Tree Sparrow.	
'Core Area' species		
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Ringed Plover.	
Key bird habitats	Wet meadows, reservoirs, semi-natural woods, farmland.	
Species specific action		
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Lack of or inappropriate management of existing semi-natural habitats.
- Pressure for land-use change on remaining semi-natural habitats.
- Recreational disturbance to breeding and non-breeding birds on gravel pits and reservoirs.
- Habitat creation on farmland.
- Ongoing implementation of Suffolk River Valleys and Broads ESAs.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and, where appropriate, enhance/restore traditional management to existing semi-natural habitats.
2. Re-create freshwater habitats, particularly wet meadows. Where possible, expand or link existing wetland habitats.
3. Ensure habitat creation plans for disused gravel pits are appropriate. Ensure such after-use plans are included in the consents for new mineral extraction sites.
4. Maximise benefits of Suffolk River Valleys and Broads ESAs to breeding and wintering birds, where they enter the natural area.

NATURAL AREA 34 :
CHILTERN

ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :

SOME

General ornithological character: A mosaic of bird habitats consisting of fragmented chalk grassland with associated mixed scrub, semi-natural woodlands and intensively managed farmland supporting a small number of farmland species.

Internationally important species	Breeding Red Kite (globally threatened).	
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i> Golden Plover Lapwing Grey Partridge Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nightingale, Redstart, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, Linnet, Hawfinch, Turtle Dove	
'Core Area' species	Red Kite (recently re-introduced)	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Stone Curlew, Wheatear, Buzzard, Firecrest	
Key bird habitats	Chalk grassland and associated scrub, semi-natural woods	
Species specific action	Red Kite: continued involvement in reintroduction project.	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Lack of grazing on existing semi-natural grasslands.
- Periodic 'scrub bashing' causing local declines in scrub breeding bird populations.
- Deterioration/simplification of habitat structure of semi-natural woodlands.
- Intensification of farming practices causing declines of farmland birds.

Key objectives:

1. Manage open chalk grassland to enhance its ornithological interest (eg creating areas of bare stony ground in association with short turf to encourage the return of breeding Stone Curlew), such that this does not conflict with the wider nature conservation interest of sites (rare plants and invertebrates etc).
2. Manage grassland scrub and woodland to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance their breeding bird populations (eg rotational scrub management and restoration of coppicing).
3. Expand the area and, where possible, link remnants of semi-natural habitats (particularly grassland) along the escarpment.

NATURAL AREA 35 :
OXFORD CLAY VALES

ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :

SOME

General ornithological character: An area of intensively-managed farmland but with a large number of remnant semi-natural woods and a growing network of man-made wetlands including the Cotswold Water Park, probably the largest complex of flooded gravel pits in the country. There are also a small number of fragmented wet meadow habitats in the Upper Thames Valley and its tributaries.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Gadwall Pochard	Golden Plover Curlew Lapwing Wigeon Grey Partridge Teal Barn Owl Shoveler
Other notable species	Breeding Snipe, Redshank, Kingfisher, Yellow Wagtail, Sedge Warbler, Little Ringed Plover, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nightingale, Redstart, Hawfinch, Hobby. (Also breeding Ringed Plover.) (Wintering Tufted Duck.)	
'Core Area' species		
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Nightjar, Red Kite, Pochard (breeding), Ringed Plover.	
Key bird habitats	Semi-natural woods, reservoirs and flooded gravel pits, wet meadows, farmland.	
Species specific action		
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Hydrological threats to and a lack of management of remaining wet meadows.
- Recreational disturbance to breeding and non-breeding birds on reservoirs and gravel pits.
- Pressure for development (urban, industrial, roads) on existing semi-natural habitats.
- Implementation of the Upper Thames Tributaries ESA.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and, where appropriate, enhance/restore traditional management to wet meadows to benefit breeding and wintering birds.
2. Re-creation/restoration of freshwater wetland habitats, particularly wet meadows (and reedbeds) on river valley floodplains. Expand area and, where possible, link remnants of existing habitats.
3. Minimise recreational disturbance to both breeding and wintering birds on man-made water-bodies.
4. Maximise benefits to breeding and wintering birds of the Upper Thames Tributaries ESA.
5. Ensure habitat creation plans for disused gravel pits and redundant reservoirs are appropriate (eg favour marginal habitats as opposed to deep, open waters). Ensure appropriate after-use plans are contained in consents for new mineral extraction sites.
6. Manage semi-natural woodland to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance their breeding bird populations (eg restoration of coppicing, ridge management and maintenance of old/dead wood features).

**NATURAL AREA 36 :
OXFORD HEIGHTS**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

SOME

General ornithological character: This natural area consists of a narrow, well-wooded limestone ridge of rather limited ornithological interest, rising out of the Oxford Clay Vales. Only a few fragments of the once more extensive limestone grassland and wood pasture still remain. The succession from these more open habitats to woodland and scrub has meant the loss of several key species which favour open habitats, such as Nightjar and Woodlark. The natural area does, however, support a rich assemblage of breeding birds associated with lowland deciduous woodland and scrub.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i> Grey Partridge Lapwing
Other notable species	Breeding Hobby, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Whitethroat.	
'Core Area' species		
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Nightjar, Woodlark, Buzzard, Barn Owl.	
Key bird habitats	Semi-natural woods and wood pasture/parkland, soils, calcareous grassland.	
Species specific action		
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Loss of limestone grassland and wood pasture to scrub and woodland.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain/restore traditional management to remaining limestone grassland and wood pasture.
2. Manage scrub to benefit breeding birds, eg favouring rotational management rather than periodic 'scrub bashing'.

NATURAL AREA 37 :
WESSEX DOWNS

ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :

SOME

General ornithological character: An extensive area of undulating chalk downland, now largely converted to arable farmland supporting the typical range of bird species, together with a few pairs of Stone Curlew (and Quail in some years). Limited areas of remaining unimproved chalk grassland are important for Stone Curlew, and support high densities of small mammals, preyed upon in winter by small numbers of Short-eared Owl and Hen Harrier. Where scrub has encroached on undergrazed downland these species are lost and replaced by more widespread lowland species. Riparian habitats along the Kennet Valley support Kingfisher and some breeding waders.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Stone Curlew	Grey Partridge Quail Lapwing
Other notable species	Breeding Kingfisher, Snipe, Redshank, Whitethroat, Linnets, Corn Bunting. Small numbers of wintering Short-eared Owl, Hen Harrier and Green Sandpiper.	
'Core Area' species		
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Montagu's Harrier, Stone Curlew, Quail, Barn Owl, Nightjar, Wheatear, Stonechat.	
Key bird habitats	Unimproved chalk downland, arable farmland, riparian habitats.	
Species specific action	Protect rare breeding birds from disturbance (especially Stone Curlew). Increase population of breeding Stone Curlew through restoration of chalk grassland, the appropriate management of set-aside and arable crops, and protecting nest sites.	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Continuing loss of unimproved chalk grassland through scrub encroachment.
- Disturbance of rare breeding species.
- Ongoing implementation of South Wessex Downs ESA.
- Water quality/quantity.

Key objectives:

1. Increase numbers of breeding Stone Curlew through the appropriate species protection and habitat management measures, such as rotovation, to create suitable nesting areas on semi-natural grasslands.
2. Maintain and, where possible, enhance management of remaining unimproved chalk downland. Restore/re-create a grassland sward on former grassland, expanding the area or linking up existing fragments where possible.
3. Manage grassland scrub to maintain their bird populations, favouring rotational cutting to periodic scrub 'bashing'.
4. Maximise benefits to rare breeding birds of the South Wessex Downs ESA.
5. Enhance management of riparian habitats to benefit breeding birds.

**NATURAL AREA 38 :
LONDON BASIN**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

CONSIDERABLE

General ornithological character: This natural area is characterised by a few fragmented islands of remaining semi-natural habitats (including ancient woods, wet meadows and lowland heath) with remnant bird populations, together with extensive areas of both mature and newly created man-made wetlands, many of which are still being colonised by birds. These exist within the densely-populated urban and industrial framework of Greater London and the Home Counties commuter towns, with fringing farmland in the Green Belt and in the Thames Valley. The 'considerable' significance rating of this natural area is largely a reflection of its size and the inclusion of a number of internationally important bird sites.

Internationally important species	Wintering Gadwall, Shoveler. (Moulting Tufted Duck).	
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Gadwall Pochard Nightjar	Woodlark Dartford Warbler Black-necked Grebe Teal Shoveler Grey Partridge Golden Plover Lapwing Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Hobby, Little Ringed Plover, Common Tern, Kingfisher, Nightingale, Hawfinch, Black Redstart, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. Small numbers of breeding Shelduck and Ringed Plover, and wintering Wigeon, Smew and Green Sandpiper. (Breeding, moulting and wintering Tufted Duck).	
'Core Area' species	Gadwall (wintering), Pochard (breeding), Tufted Duck (moulting), Black Redstart.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Garganey, Woodlark, Dartford Warbler. Firecrest, Redstart, Wood Warbler, Tree Pipit.	
Key bird habitats	Flooded gravel pits and reservoir complexes, wet meadows in Thames Valley and tributaries, ancient woods and parkland (eg Epping Forest), lowland heath.	
Species specific action	Species protection/management for Nightjar in forestry plantations. Opportunistic nest protection for rare breeders as appropriate.	
Additional monitoring required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance to breeding, moulting and wintering waterbirds on reservoirs and gravel pits with recreation. • Monitor breeding success of wetland species vulnerable to disturbance such as Little Ringed Plover, Common Tern and Kingfisher. 	

Key issues:

- Recreational and industrial/commercial disturbance to breeding and non-breeding birds.
- Pressure for development on Green Belt and other areas within London Basin, threatening both isolated remnants of semi-natural habitats (eg ancient woods and meadows) and both mature and newly created man-made habitats.
- Lack of management of semi-natural habitats.
- Opportunities for 'showing birds to people'.

Key objectives:

1. Re-creation/restoration of freshwater wetland habitats, particularly wet grassland and reedbeds, in the Thames Valley and those of its tributaries.
2. Maintain and, where appropriate, restore traditional management to lowland heaths.
3. Ensure habitat creation plans for disused gravel pits and redundant reservoirs are appropriate (ie favour marginal habitats as opposed to deep, open waters). Ensure such after-use plans form part of the consents for future mineral extraction.
4. Link together or expand existing fragments of semi-natural habitat as far as possible.
5. Minimise disturbance to waterbirds from a variety of recreational and industrial activities.

**NATURAL AREA 39 :
THAMES MARSHES**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

NOTABLE

General ornithological character: This natural area abuts the coastal habitats of the greater Thames Estuary, Essex coast and the Swale and Medway estuaries in Kent (maritime natural area M9). It mostly consists of former saltmarsh that was converted to grazing marsh with the construction of sea walls. Much of the grazing marsh has been further drained and cultivated for arable. The remaining grazing marsh and its network of drainage ditches are of high ornithological importance, especially for breeding birds. Large numbers of wintering waterfowl also fly in from the adjacent intertidal habitats to feed and roost on both the grazing marsh and arable land.

Internationally important species	Wintering Dark-bellied Brent Goose.	
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Bewick's Swan Dark-bellied Brent Goose Gadwall Pochard Ruff Avocet	Shelduck Wigeon Teal Shoveler Grey Partridge Oystercatcher Golden Plover Lapwing Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Snipe, Redshank, Short-eared Owl, Kingfisher, Yellow Wagtail, Reed Warbler, Corn Bunting. Wintering Hen Harrier, Merlin, Peregrine.	
'Core Area' species	Dark-bellied Brent Goose.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Garganey, Marsh Harrier, Montagu's Harrier, Black-tailed Godwit, Mediterranean Gull.	
Key bird habitats	Grazing marsh, arable farmland, disused industrial sites.	
Species specific action		
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Loss of grazing marsh habitats through drainage, agricultural improvement, built development and relative sea level rise.
- Recreational and industrial/commercial disturbance.
- Implementation of Essex Coast and North Kent Marshes ESAs.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and, where possible, enhance management of grazing marsh to benefit breeding and wintering waterfowl.
2. Create new freshwater habitats, especially large, wet reedbeds. Ensure no net losses in semi-natural freshwater habitats within the natural area.

**NATURAL AREA 40 :
NORTH KENT PLAIN**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

NOTABLE

General ornithological character: The ornithological interest of this natural area is centred on the remnants of formerly more extensive freshwater wetlands (eg Stodmarsh NNR) and semi-natural woods, as well as new areas of open freshwater habitats resulting from the flooding of gravel pits and coal mining subsidence. The agricultural land in between is generally of an intensive nature, and supports the typical range of lowland farmland species.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Gadwall Pochard Marsh Harrier (?) Nightjar Cetti's Warbler Savi's Warbler Marsh Warbler Bearded Tit	Wigeon Teal Shoveler Grey Partridge Golden Plover Lapwing Barn Owl
Other notable species	Breeding Redshank, Hobby, Snipe, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Yellow Wagtail, Nightingale, Redstart, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Hawfinch, Corn Bunting, Wintering Hen Harrier.	
'Core Area' species	Marsh Warbler, Savi's Warbler, Cetti's Warbler, Bearded Tit.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Bittern, Woodlark, Spotted Crane, Savi's Warbler, Marsh Harrier, Marsh Warbler.	
Key bird habitats	Semi-natural woods, reedbeds, flooded gravel pits, lowland wet grassland, fen/carr.	
Species specific action	Undertake species-specific management for rare reedbed-breeding birds and Marsh Warbler.	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Hydrological threats and lack of management of wetlands.
- Lack of management of semi-natural woods.
- Pressure for land-use change on remaining semi-natural habitats.

Key objectives:

1. Maintain and, where possible, increase populations of reedbed-breeding birds by implementing the appropriate species-specific and habitat-based management prescriptions to existing reedbeds, and by creating new reedbeds. Regain the Bittern as a regular breeder within the natural area.
2. Manage semi-natural woods to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance breeding bird populations (eg restoration of coppicing and ride management, and maintenance of old/dead wood features).
3. Maintain and enhance management of other semi-natural habitats. Where possible, expand or link existing fragments of good wildlife habitat.
4. Maximise opportunities for habitat creation from disused gravel workings.

**NATURAL AREA 41 :
NORTH DOWNS**

**ORNITHOLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE :**

SOME

General ornithological character: This natural area consists of a chalk escarpment along which most of the bird habitats have been markedly changed by agricultural intensification. Much of the land is cultivated for cereals and of limited value to most bird species. Small areas of unimproved chalk downland remain, although scrub encroachment has occurred in areas with insufficient grazing pressure. Small beech, oak and ash woods occur, mainly on the steep scarp slopes where difficult topography has prevented clearance. Together with the downland scrub, these woodlands support the typical range of common species.

Internationally important species		
EN high priority	<i>List 1</i>	<i>List 2</i>
	Nightjar Marsh Warbler	Grey Partridge Lapwing
Other notable species	Breeding Hobby, Nightingale, Whitethroat, Turtle Dove, Linnet, Corn Bunting.	
'Core Area' species	Marsh Warbler.	
Extinct/very rare breeding species	Quail, Stone Curlew, Wheatear, Stonechat, Marsh Warbler.	
Key bird habitats	Farmland, chalk downland and associated scrub, semi-natural woods, riparian habitats.	
Species specific action	Undertake the appropriate species protection and habitat management measures for Marsh Warbler.	
Additional monitoring required		

Key issues:

- Lack of management of existing chalk downland.
- Periodic local declines in scrub bird populations due to 'scrub-bashing'.
- Continuing declines in farmland birds.

Key objectives:

1. Manage unimproved chalk grassland to maintain or restore a short sward and prevent further loss to scrub. Re-create areas of grassland; where possible, expand/link-up existing fragments of unimproved downland.
2. Manage grassland scrub to maintain and, where appropriate, increase breeding bird populations; favour rotational scrub management as opposed to periodic 'scrub-bashing'.
3. Maintain the natural area as a core area for breeding Marsh Warbler.