

Site Improvement Plan

Chilmark Quarries

Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) have been developed for each Natura 2000 site in England as part of the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS). Natura 2000 sites is the combined term for sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA). This work has been financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Community.

The plan provides a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the Natura 2000 features on the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. It does not cover issues where remedial actions are already in place or ongoing management activities which are required for maintenance.

The SIP consists of three parts: a Summary table, which sets out the priority Issues and Measures; a detailed Actions table, which sets out who needs to do what, when and how much it is estimated to cost; and a set of tables containing contextual information and links.

Once this current programme ends, it is anticipated that Natural England and others, working with landowners and managers, will all play a role in delivering the priority measures to improve the condition of the features on these sites.

The SIPs are based on Natural England's current evidence and knowledge. The SIPs are not legal documents, they are live documents that will be updated to reflect changes in our evidence/knowledge and as actions get underway. The information in the SIPs will be used to update England's contribution to the UK's Prioritised Action Framework (PAF).

The SIPs are not formal consultation documents, but if you have any comments about the SIP or would like more information please email us at IPENSLIFEProject@naturalengland.org.uk, or contact Natural England's Responsible Officer for the site via our enquiry service 0300 060 3900, or enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

This Site Improvement Plan covers the following Natura 2000 site(s)

UK0016373 Chilmark Quarries SAC

Site description

Chilmark Quarries SAC in Wiltshire comprises a series of disused mines, quarries and man-made follies which are used as hibernation roosts by an important assemblage of bat species, most notably Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii* and Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*. The surrounding woodland, grassland and open water habitats also provide a valuable roosting, breeding and feeding area for bats.

Plan Summary

This table shows the prioritised issues for the site(s), the features they affect, the proposed measures to address the issues and the delivery bodies whose involvement is required to deliver the measures. The list of delivery bodies will include those who have agreed to the actions as well as those where discussions over their role in delivering the actions is on-going.

Priority & Issue	Pressure or Threat	Feature(s) affected	Measure	Delivery Bodies
1 Public Access/Disturbance	Threat	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1308 Barbastelle bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Prevent unauthorised access through enforcement and use of bat grilles	Natural England
2 Natural changes to site conditions	Pressure/Threat	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1308 Barbastelle bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Improve stability, monitor conditions, investigate potential impacts of off-site activities	Natural England
3 Offsite habitat availability/ management	Threat	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1308 Barbastelle bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Research of bats in wider landscape to inform agri-environmental decisions	Natural England
4 Planning Permission: general	Pressure/Threat	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1308 Barbastelle bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Research and implementation into potential impacts of developments	Forestry Commission, Natural England, Wiltshire Council
5 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Pressure	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1308 Barbastelle bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts	Natural England

Issues and Actions

This table outlines the prioritised issues that are currently impacting or threatening the condition of the features, and the outstanding actions required to address them. It also shows, where possible, the estimated cost of the action and the delivery bodies whose involvement will be required to implement the action. Lead delivery bodies will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the action, but not necessarily funding it. Delivery partners will need to support the lead delivery body in implementing the action. In the process of developing the SIPs Natural England has approached the delivery bodies to seek agreement on the actions and their roles in delivering them, although in some cases these discussions have not yet been concluded. Other interested parties, including landowners and managers, will be involved as the detailed actions are agreed and delivered. Funding options are indicated as potential (but not necessarily agreed or secured) sources to fund the actions.

1 Public Access/Disturbance

Unprotected mine entrances on the site are vulnerable to unauthorised access which has the potential to cause direct/indirect harm to bats. Damage to/removal of bat grilles on entrances to follies at Fonthill Grottoes and resultant unauthorised access has potential for direct/indirect harm to bats.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Prevent unauthorised access by installing bat grilles to mine entrances at Chilmark Quarries SAC which are not yet protected.	£250,000	2015-25	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Natural England	n/a

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1B	Use third party enforcement, where appropriate, to deal with unauthorised access or vandalism.	Staff time	2015-20	Enforcement	Natural England, Staff time	Natural England	n/a

2 Natural changes to site conditions

Some of the mine structures are very unstable and subject to occasional rock falls. These could directly injure or trap bats, or indirectly affect them by blocking access or changing the conditions inside the mine.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Improve stability of unsound mine entrances as part of work associated with installation of grilles.	£250,000	2015-25	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Natural England	Natural England	n/a

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
2B	Investigate the potential impacts of off-site activities (explosives training) on internal stability of mines.	£10,000	2015-17	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	n/a
<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
2C	Carry out monitoring to identify any changes in air flow and conditions within the mines and record any fresh rock falls.	£2,000	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	n/a

3 Offsite habitat availability/ management

Lack of knowledge regarding usage of the wider landscape by SAC species, for example whether there are critical bat corridors which link the component sites, other bat SAC sites or non-designated roosts, or important areas/routes used for feeding, 'swarming' or other activity between sites. Lack of knowledge compromises the ability to respond appropriately to threats (such as development pressure) and opportunities (such as the use of agri-environment schemes in locations that will most benefit bats).

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
3A	Encourage and support research into how bat species use the wider landscape around the SAC.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Species Recovery Programme	Not yet determined	Natural England	n/a

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
3B	Use existing information and new research findings to inform selection of agri environment options to benefit SAC species.	£50,000	2015-25	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme)	Rural Development Programme (RDPE)	Natural England	n/a

4 Planning Permission: general

There is difficulty in determining the cumulative impacts of development, including operations carried out under a European Protected Species licence. This applies to developments themselves and to surveys which inform the planning application process or are permitted under NE project licences. There is currently no formal way of assessing the cumulative impacts of "high disturbance" level surveys (e.g. mist netting, radiotracking) being carried out inside or outside the SAC boundary which may have cumulative impacts on the target species .

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
4A	Ensure that existing information and new research findings inform planning decisions regarding potential impacts on the SAC species.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Advice	Not yet determined	Natural England	n/a
4B	Use existing information and new research findings to inform planning decisions regarding potential impacts on the SAC species.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Regulation: Grant Appropriate Planning Permission	Not yet determined	Wiltshire Council	n/a

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
4C	Use existing information and new research findings to inform permissions for land outside the SAC regarding potential impacts on the SAC species.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Regulation: Felling Licence	Not yet determined	Forestry Commission	n/a
4D	Develop and implement agreed methodologies to assess the cumulative impact of developments and survey work on bat species.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	n/a
4E	Develop and implement agreed methodologies to assess the cumulative impact of developments and survey work on bat species.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Species Recovery Programme	Not yet determined	Natural England	n/a

5 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads. There are currently no observed effects on SAC features.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
5A	Control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Site Nitrogen Action Plan	Not yet determined	Natural England	Not yet determined

Site details

The tables in this section contain site-relevant contextual information and links

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Chilmark Quarries SAC

S1303 *Rhinolophus hipposideros*: Lesser horseshoe bat

S1304 *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*: Greater horseshoe bat

S1308 *Barbastella barbastellus*: Barbastelle bat

S1323 *Myotis bechsteinii*: Bechstein`s bat

Site location and links

Chilmark Quarries SAC

Area (ha) **10.41** Grid reference **ST974310** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Wiltshire

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Chilmark Quarries SAC](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice [n/a](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [n/a](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan [n/a](#)

Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the main framework for managing the water environment throughout Europe. Under the WFD a management plan must be developed for each river basin district. The River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) include a summary of the measures needed for water dependent Natura 2000 sites to meet their conservation objectives. For the second round of RBMPs, SIPs are being used to capture the priorities and new measures required for water dependent habitats on Natura 2000 sites. SIP actions for non-water dependent sites/habitats do not form part of the RBMPs and associated consultation.

Chilmark Quarries SAC

<i>River basin</i>	South West RBMP
<i>WFD Management catchment</i>	Hampshire Avon
<i>WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)</i>	n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Chilmark Quarries SAC	Fonthill Grottoes SSSI Chilmark Quarries SSSI
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Chilmark Quarries SAC	n/a
Ramsar	
Chilmark Quarries SAC	n/a
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Chilmark Quarries SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	27/03/2015	

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