

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds:  
Special Protection Area

Wealden Heaths, Phase 1  
(Thursley, Hankley and Frensham, Surrey)

Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons together incorporate a heath and valley mire complex. Broadleaved and coniferous woodland covers large parts of the site, with scattered scrub and trees present over much of the heath, and several areas of permanent grassland. Areas of open water ranging from acidic boggy pools and ditches to large ponds also contribute significantly to the overall diversity of the site.

Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons qualify under Article 4.1, of the EC Birds Directive as a site of international importance by regularly supporting in summer the following populations of birds listed under Annex 1: about 20 pairs of nightjars *Caprimulgus europaeus*, (1% of the British breeding population), up to 27 pairs of woodlark *Lullula arborea*, (12% of the British breeding population) and in excess of 20 pairs of Dartford warblers *Sylvia undata*, (4% of the British breeding population in 1984). The numbers of these species fluctuate considerably from year to year; the figures given above relate to peak numbers recorded over the last 10-15 years. This site makes a substantial contribution to the maintenance of the traditional breeding ranges of these species within Britain, where habitat has become greatly fragmented and degraded in recent decades, and in the EC.

Notable also are regular breeding kingfishers *Alcedo atthis*, and wintering hen harriers, *Circus cyaneus*, species also listed under Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive.

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Signed B. J. C.  
on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Environment