

West Oxfordshire Heights CTA (Conservation Target Area)

A complex area encompassing the majority of important habitat in the Oxfordshire Heights in the west of the county. It includes a number of stream valleys, including the outlying Pennyhooks Brook, some land between these valleys, a number of hills and parks and the northern escapement of the Oxfordshire Heights from Faringdon to Littleworth.

Joint Character Area: Midvale Ridge.

Landscape Types: Wooded Estatelands, Rolling Farmland (mainly along the Pennyhooks Brook), a small area of Clay Vale at Stanford-in-the-Vale.

Geology: Complex though largely sandstone, limestone and mudstone clay. Sandstone and limestone to the east, alluvium along the valleys, hills of Greensand sandstone, Calcareous Grit sandstone, siltstone and mudstone in bands on the hills and extending along the northern escarpment along with some Amphill Clay mudstone, Oxford Clay mudstone at the base of the escarpment and some hills and at Buscot Park. Pennyhooks Brook Valley is siltstone, sandstone, mudstone and limestone with alluvium.

Topography: To the east there are narrow stream valleys cutting through gently rising land along with some land between. To the west the area encompasses a series of hills and the between. To the north there is north facing escarpment.

Area of CTA: 2631 hectares

Biodiversity:

- Wet woodland: Found in small sites along the stream valleys.
- Acid grassland: there are small remnant patches of acid grassland, sometimes with lichen heath, often associated with quarries. Although small and scattered, these areas often support an interesting invertebrate fauna.
- Fen: small areas are found along the stream valleys often in association with wet woodland sites some of which have developed on once open fen. This is the case at Buckland Warren Woods. The main site is along the Pennyhooks Brook at Shrivenham.
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland: Found in numerous sites including Buckland Warren Woods and Badbury Forest.
- Lowland Meadow: restricted to one site at Faringdon and along the Pennyhooks Brook although there are remnants in wet grassland near Stanford-in-the-Vale.
- Parkland: There are many areas of parkland. The value of some sites have yet to be investigated. Coleshill Park and Buscot Park are the most important sites. Other sites are found at Faringdon, Barcote and Pusey.
- Calcareous grassland – although the north east of the area has been suggested as a target area for calcareous grassland it is only found on the ramparts of Cherbury Camp. The only other site is at Tuckmill Meadows.
- Geology: There are three geological SSSI's near Faringdon and a number of Local Geological sites.

Access: Mainly restricted to bridleways and footpaths. National Trust woodland at Badbury Camp has access along tracks.

Archaeology: Badbury Fort, Cherbury Camp

Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan Targets associated with this CTA:

1. Wet woodland – management¹.

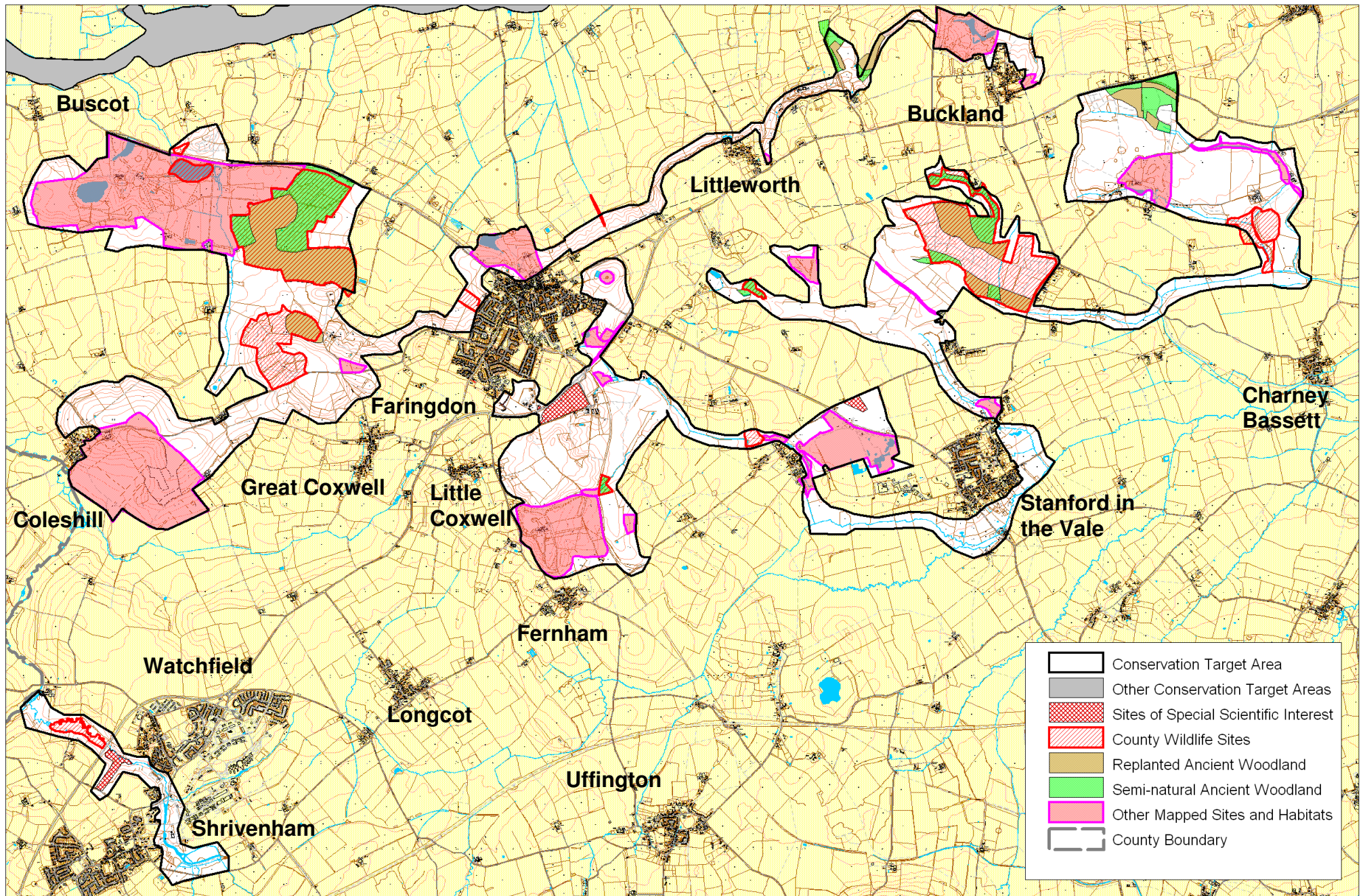
2. Fen – management.
3. Lowland dry acid grassland – management and restoration.
4. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland – management.
5. Parkland (including veteran trees) – management and restoration.

¹ “Management” implies both maintaining the quantity, and maintaining and improving the quality of existing BAP habitat and incorporates the following target definitions: “Maintaining extent” and “Achieving Condition”.

Other targets:

Management of geological interest.

West Oxford Heights Streams, Hills, Woods and Parks Conservation Target Area



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Scale 1:60000

Area of BAP habitat present in CTA (from TVERC BAP Habitat GIS layer 5/2010)

West Oxfordshire Heights Streams, Hills, Woods and Parks CTA	Lowland Calcareous Grassland	Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	Lowland Meadows	Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	Eutrophic Standing Waters	Lowland Fens	Reedbeds	Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland	Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	Wet Woodland	Wood - Pasture and Parkland	Traditional Orchards
Area of BAP Habitat in CTA (ha)	3.2	0.4	4.4		8.9	1.9			39.7	10.5	89.5	1.7
% of CTA area	0.1	0.0	0.2		0.3	0.1			1.5	0.4	3.4	0.1
% of county resource	0.4	0.8	0.4		1.0	1.6			0.9	7.6	4.8	0.5