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SPA: Thames Basin Heaths Component SSSI: Whitmoor Common

Conservation Objective for the European interest on the SSSI

The Conservation Objectives for the European interests on the SSSI are:

to maintain*, in favourable condition, the habitats for the populations of Annex 1 bird species+ of European importance, with particular reference to:

- lowland heathland
- + Nightjar

* maintenance implies restoration if the feature is not currently in favourable condition

The Conservation Objectives for the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area are, in accordance with para C10 of PPG 9, the reasons for which the SPA was classified.

The SPA includes land within: Ash to Brookwood Heaths SSSI, Bourley and Long Valley SSSI, Bramshill SSSI, Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI, Castle Bottom to Yateley Common SSSI, Chobham Common SSSI, Colony Bog and Bagshot Heath SSSI, Eelmoor Marsh SSSI, Hazeley Heath SSSI, Horsell Common SSSI, Ockham and Wisley Commons SSSI, Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths SSSI and Whitmoor Commons SSSI.

Favourable Condition Table for Whitmoor Commons SSSI

The Favourable Condition Table will be used by English Nature and other relevant authorities to determine if a site is in favourable condition. Favourable condition is achieved when the targets given below are met.

The favourable condition table should inform the scope and nature of any ‘appropriate assessment’ under the Habitats Regulations, but an appropriate assessment will also require consideration of issues specific to the individual plan or project. The favourable condition table does not by itself provide a comprehensive basis on which to assess plans and projects as required under Regulations 20-21, 24, 48-50 and 54 - 85. The scope and content of an appropriate assessment will depend upon the location, size and significance of the proposed project. English Nature will advise on a case by case basis.

Following an appropriate assessment, competent authorities are required to ascertain the effect on the integrity of the site. The integrity of the site is defined in paragraph C10 of PPG9 as the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified. The determination of favourable condition is separate from the judgement of effect upon integrity. For example, there may be a time-lag between a plan or project being initiated and a consequent adverse effect upon integrity becoming manifest in the condition assessment. In such cases, a plan or project may have an adverse effect upon integrity even though the site remains in favourable condition.

Annual counts for qualifying bird species will be used by English Nature, in the context of five year peak means, together with available information on UK population and distribution trends, to assess whether the SPA is continuing to make an appropriate contribution to the Favourable Conservation Status of the species across Europe.

Operational Feature	Criteria Feature	Attribute	Measure	Target	Comments
All habitats	Nightjar	Disturbance	Reduction or displacement of birds	No significant reduction in numbers or displacement of wintering birds from an established baseline.	All qualifying species
All habitats	Nightjar	Extent and distribution of habitat	Area:157.84ha	No decrease in extent from an established baseline.	All qualifying species
Heathland and woodland (D112/D22)	Nightjar	Food availability	Abundance of night-flying insects	Biomass should not deviate from an established baseline level during the breeding period, including e.g. moths,beetles	Breeding (summer) season
		Vegetation characteristics	Open ground with predominantly low vegetation (feeding), bare patches (nesting) and sparse woodland/scrub cover (feeding,roosting)	Vegetation mostly of 20-60cm with frequent bare patches of >2sq.m, 10-20% bare ground and <50% tree/scrub cover overall	Breeding (summer) season

