



Local Wildlife Sites 2024 season

Rob Curtis



Thames Valley
Environmental
Records Centre

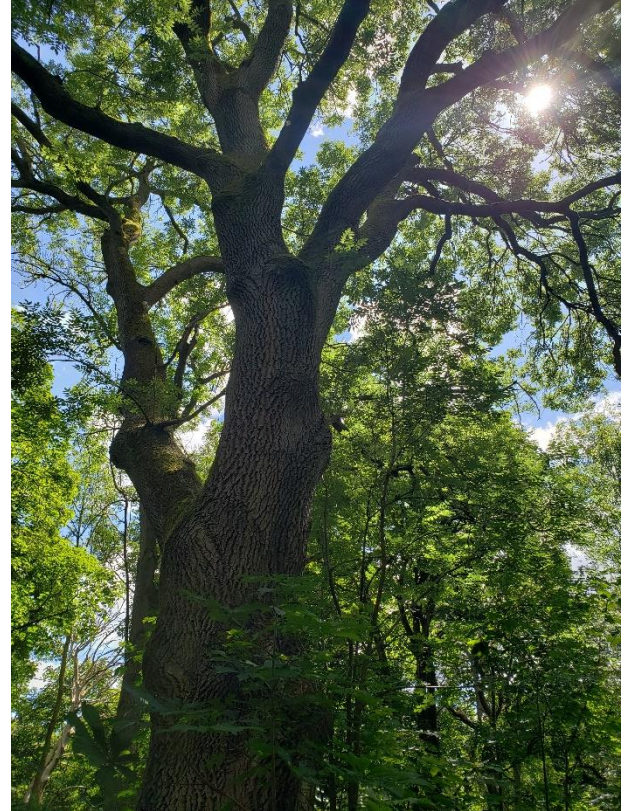
Introduction

- What are Local Wildlife Sites?
- Highlights of 2024
- Your involvement



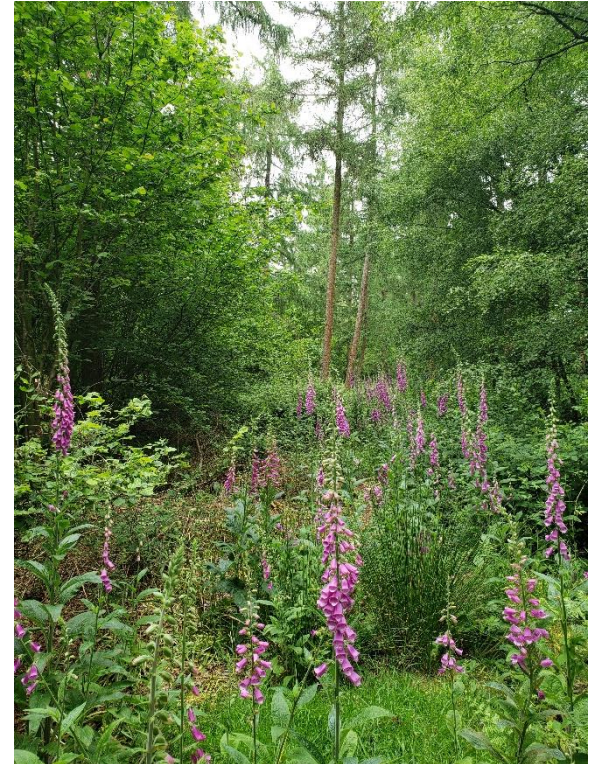
What are Local Wildlife Sites?

- Public and private land with high wildlife value (priority habitats and/or species).
- Non-statutory designation. But listed in the relevant planning authority's local plan. Must be taken into account when considering planning applications.
- Can form vital links with other legally protected sites to create essential networks of habitats.

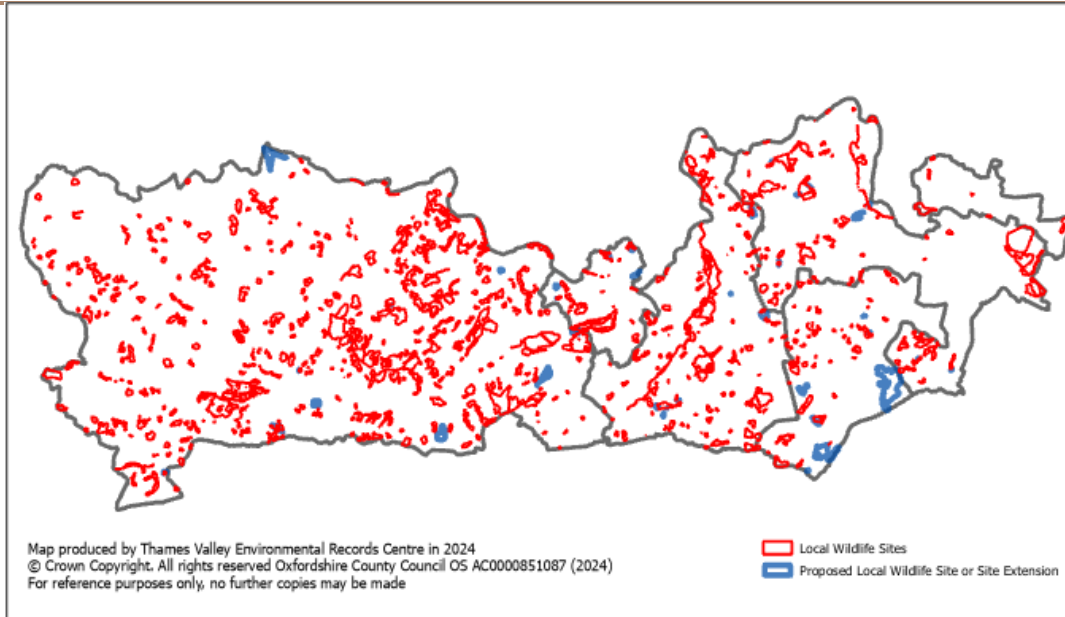


LWS Project

- In Berkshire – entirely run by TVERC and funded by district councils
- Sites chosen per district with assistance of district ecologist
- Permission sought from landowners
- Survey local wildlife sites and writeup reports
- Site selection panel decides site status based on reports and landowners informed of decision



Berkshire LWS



- 722 LWS (& 41 proposed)
- 8% of county land area
- Between 29-34 sites surveyed since 2022

Berkshire – Highlights of 2024

- 34 sites surveyed
- 7 of these are proposed LWS and extensions to existing sites
- Size varied between 0.13 ha to 276 ha
- Habitats: mainly woodland.
1 primarily grassland,
1 contained wetland,
1 contained scrub,
1 had some heathland.



A copse in West Berkshire

- 5.6 ha -privately owned
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Actively managed with a variable structure. Comparatively rich ground flora. 19 indicators included Bluebell, Wood-sorrel, Woodruff, Moschatel, Pignut, and Early Dog-violet.



Buttersteep Forest, Bracknell

- 276 ha - publicly accessible owned by Crown Estate
- Conifer plantation with open heathland, acid grassland and some ponds. 11 heath & 12 wetland species included Heath Wood-rush, Sheep's-sorrel, Cotton-grass, Sphagnum and all the heathers
- Originally proposed for good numbers of Nightjar & Woodlark. So, I'll check heathland bird assemblage.



Potential LWS in West Berkshire

- 15.6 ha - private farmland
- Restored calcareous grassland (over 10 years).
- 23 typical and indicator plant species including Oxeye Daisy, Greater Knapweed and Rough Hawkbit, Kidney Vetch, Salad Burnet and Small Scabious.



Dinton Pastures Country Park

- 125.3 ha – publicly accessible owned by WBC
- A variety of habitats including lakes, woodland with some wetter elements, scrub, grassland and swamp fen.
- Indicator species included Wood Melick, Wood-sedge, Reed Canary-grass and Water Mint. Plus Lodden Lily
- Faunal records will aid re-designation, so I'll check WeBS data. Also, the many records from BENHS via Jon Cole.



Your Involvement

- Help identifying new sites
- Do you know the landowner?
- Continue or start recording species especially on publicly accessible sites with a mixture of habitats.
- Recent records of faunal indicator species can help designate a site.



Thank you for listening

More about Local Wildlife Sites including the selection criteria:

<https://www.tverc.org/data-hub/local-wildlife-sites-lws>

Rob.Curtis@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

<http://www.tverc.org/>



/tverc1



@tverc1



@tverc1



/tverc1



Thames Valley
Environmental
Records Centre