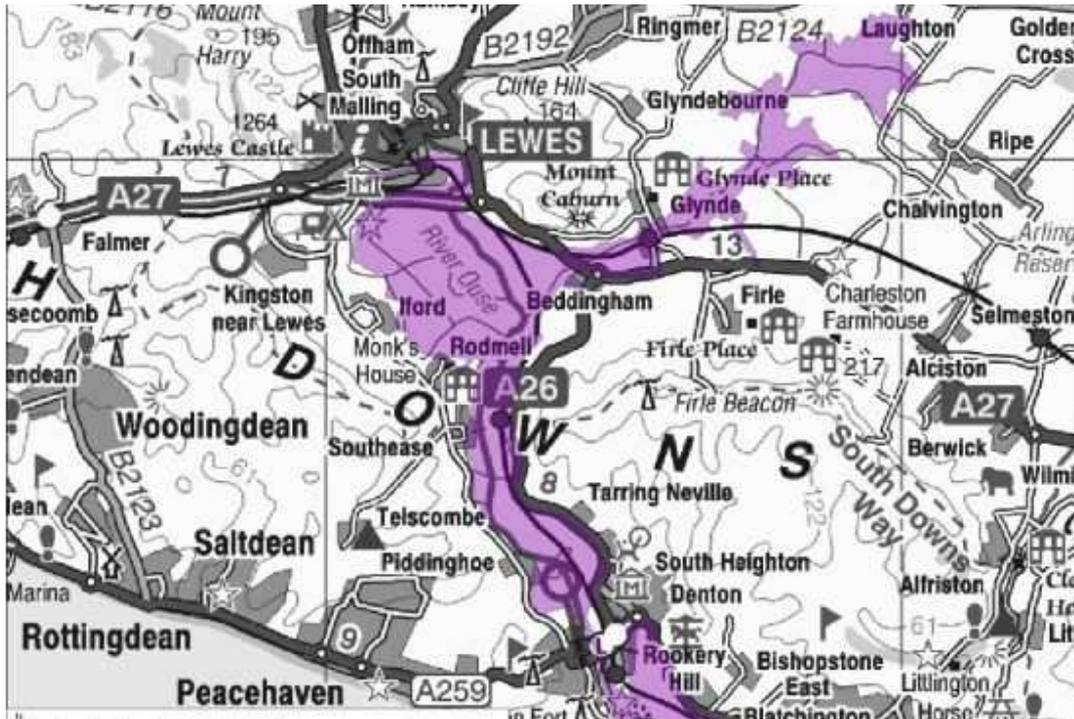


## Lewes Brooks and the Ouse Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area

### Joint Character Area South Downs

**Geology** Lewes Brooks and the Ouse Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area sits on chalk with an area of Gault formation mudstone in the north of the area.



The Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) are the regional priority areas of opportunity for restoration and creation of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats. They are a spatial representation of BAP targets and are areas of opportunity, not constraint. The BOAs are the property of the South East England Biodiversity Forum [www.sebiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.sebiodiversity.org.uk). Contains Ordnance Survey data Crown copyright and database right 2010

Lewes Brooks and the Ouse Valley has been recognised as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) as it represents a priority area for the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets. This is one of 75 such areas across Sussex. The BOA covers approximately 1976 hectares.

At the north of this area lies the Lewes Railway Land Local Nature Reserve. To the east lies Lewes Brooks, an area of wet grassland, some of which is managed by the RSPB. Further south, the River Ouse is heavily embanked, which is currently protecting freshwater habitats in a tidal floodplain. The area around Iford has good ditch ecology being particularly rich in dragonflies.

## BAP Habitat

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

Coastal saltmarsh

Coastal vegetated shingle

Intertidal mudflats

Reedbeds

Wood-pasture and Parkland

Woodland

BAP Species 62 species recorded, with the following recorded in the last ten years:

Species	Habitat Requirements
Slow-worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i>	Open habitats, gardens, heathland, cliff, mixed deciduous woodland, structural variation
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Newly planted conifers or open heath, mixed deciduous woodland
Dusky Brocade <i>Apamea remissa</i>	Woodland, marsh, chalk and other grassland
Garden Tiger <i>Arctia caja</i>	River valleys, gardens and parks
Water Vole <i>Arvicola terrestris</i>	Rivers, ponds, canals and drainage ditches, reedbeds, fens, grazing marsh, banks, slow-flowing waters
Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>	Lakes, bogs and rivers, estuaries
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Wet reedbed and marshland
Common Toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>	Scrub, rough grassland, fens, reedbed and wet woodland, dense ground vegetation or litter, ponds, large water bodies, hedgerows
Mottled Rustic <i>Caradrina morpheus</i>	Suburban areas, hedgerows, Nettle and Dandelion
Lesser Redpoll <i>Carduelis cabaret</i>	Birch and Alder woods, most common in the north in the summer
True Fox-sedge <i>Carex vulpina</i>	River banks, ditch sides and damp meadows on heavy clay soils, standing water, open conditions are required
Cornflower <i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Arable and disturbed land on sandy, loamy soils.
Small Heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	Dry grassland, heathlands, short turf, parks and gardens
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Woodland, scrub, marshes, heathland, reedbed
Small Square-spot <i>Diarsia rubi</i>	Prefers damp and marshy places
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Open countryside, scrubby areas, woodland edges, hedgerows, insect-rich grassland, seed-rich areas
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Wetlands including reedbeds, tall rushes and wet grassland with good vegetation cover, gardens, farmland, hedgerows, ditches
Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Woodland, farmland, urban areas, hedgerows
Black-throated Diver <i>Gavia arctica</i>	Breeds on freshwater, winters around sheltered coasts and occasionally at inland freshwater
Rustic <i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>	Gardens, grassland and heathland, docks, plantains
Rosy Rustic <i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	Marshy areas, waste ground
Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	Mainly on the ground in open woodland, farmland, occasionally seen in gardens
Wall <i>Lasiommata megera</i>	Short, open grassland, gardens, sand dunes, vegetated undercliffs and rocky foreshores
Brown Hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Open farmland and grassland, habitat mosaic
Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	Scrub, thick grassland, reedbeds, forestry and gravel pits

Lackey <i>Malacosoma neustria</i>	Gardens, hedgerows, Hawthorn, Blackthorn
Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Breed around mesotrophic waters, blanket bog and heathland, winters around inshore waters
Harvest Mouse <i>Micromys minutus</i>	Arable margins, hedgerows, meadows, scrub, reedbeds, tall grass
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava subsp. flavissima</i>	Wet meadows and pastures with ponds or ditches and a mosaic of short swards and tussocks
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Open woodland and woodland edges, parks and gardens
Grass Snake <i>Natrix natrix</i>	Water, reedbed, ponds, heathland, grazing marsh, gardens, fish, amphibians
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	Reedbeds, estuaries, damp grassland, heathland, mosaic of tall vegetation for nesting with short vegetation and open habitats for feeding
Tubular Water-dropwort <i>Oenanthe fistulosa</i>	Floodplain meadows, fens, shallow water in ditches, streams, ponds and canals, open areas
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Urban areas, farmland, hedgerows
Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	Farmland, woodland edges, hedgerows with mature trees, wetland edges
Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	Farmland, rush pastures, moors, mosaics of bare ground and cover, hedgerows, uncultivated margins
Red-necked Phalarope <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Breed around shallow often vegetated coastal pools, or grassy areas surrounding open water, winter mainly at sea
Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Mixed deciduous woodland, even age-canopy, little understorey, patchy ground cover
Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass <i>Puccinellia fasciculata</i>	A grass of bare places by the sea, in grazing marshes around cattle-poached pools and depressions and on earthen sea walls
Shining Ram's-horn Snail <i>Segmentina nitida</i>	Well-vegetated ditches on grazing marshes, lakes and ponds, that have unpolluted, often calcareous water
Buff Ermine <i>Spilosoma luteum</i>	Gardens and hedgerows
Arctic Skua <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Breeds on coastal moorland, winters at sea
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Woodland edges, hedgerows and open land with scattered bushes
Blood-Vein <i>Timandra comae</i>	Gardens, fields and waste ground
Great Crested Newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Breeding sites are mainly medium-sized ponds, although ditches and other waterbodies may be used, ponds with ample aquatic vegetation, do not require very high water quality, but usually a neutral pH. Hedgerows, mixed deciduous woodland
Ring Ouzel <i>Turdus torquatus</i>	Short grassy areas
Cinnabar <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>	Meadows, wasteland, road verges and downland, Ragwort
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Farmland, grazing marsh, wet meadows, seeds and insects
Common Lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Open woodland, moorland, heathland, fens, sand dunes, rocks, gardens and cliffs

**Invasive Non-native Species** 11 species recorded, with the following recorded in the last ten years:

Water Fern *Azolla filiculoides*

Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*

Wall Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*

Nuttall's Waterweed *Elodea nuttallii*  
Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*  
Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*  
Hybrid Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta x hispanica = H. x massartiana*  
Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*  
American Mink *Mustela vison*  
Parrot's-feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*  
Winter Heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*

## Designated Sites

Lewes Brooks SSSI - On the floodplain of the River Ouse, the site has a mosaic of habitats and ditches vary in salinity from fresh spring-fed to brackish water. The site has a good botanical diversity and also supports a wide variety of invertebrates.

Beddingham Grazing Marsh and Glynd Reach SNCI - A semi-improved meadow with ditches containing a diverse range of aquatic plants.

Newhaven Refuse Tip SNCI - The site consists of disturbed ground, meadows and brackish pools and ditches. The site includes 17 vascular plant species that are rare or uncommon in East Sussex.

Tidemills SNCI - An important feeding ground for a number of ducks and wading birds, the site is made up of a shingle beach with a good variety of shingle flora, saltmarsh, ditches and marshy meadows.

## Opportunities Identified

- Coastal habitat management, restoration and creation
- Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation
- Education and community engagement
- Policy integration
- Landowner advisory and agri-environment schemes
- Floodplain restoration and reconnection
- Working with and attracting new businesses
- Chalk grassland butterfly interest
- Volunteer opportunities
- Ecological networks
- Water quality improvement