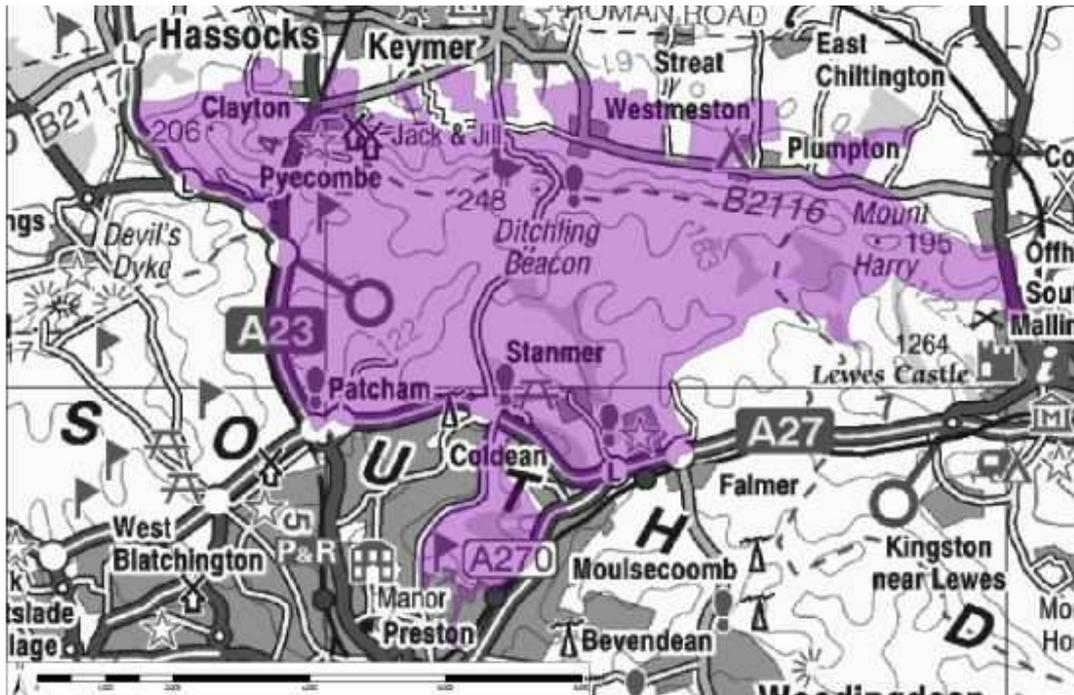


## Stanmer and Ditchling downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area

**Joint Character Area** South Downs

**Geology** Stanmer and Ditchling downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area lies on chalk



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

Stanmer and Ditchling downs has been recognised as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) as it represents a priority area for the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets. It is one of 75 such areas across Sussex. The BOA covers approximately 4533 hectares.

This area is dominated by the South Downs, from the steep scarp to the north heading south in to the urban area of Brighton. The area contains Stanmer Park which has historic interest as well as ancient woodland, and it is a popular destination for day visits and, more frequently, large events. There are many community projects based in Stanmer Park. To the far south the area includes Hollingbury and the downs around Moulsecomb. These areas contain chalk grassland relicts, but are predominantly agricultural land on the urban fringe. There are some important arable plant areas on the urban fringe.

## BAP Habitat

Lowland calcareous grassland

Lowland heathland

Traditional orchards

Wood-pasture and Parkland

Woodland

BAP Species 97 species recorded, with the following in the last ten years:

Species	Habitat Requirements
Man Orchid <i>Aceras anthropophorum</i>	Chalk grassland and verges, often found on steep inclines, old quarries
Slow-worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i>	Open habitats, gardens, heathland, cliff, mixed deciduous woodland, structural variation, hedgerows
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Newly planted conifers or open heath, mixed deciduous woodland
Garden Tiger <i>Arctia caja</i>	River valleys, gardens and parks
Common Toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>	Scrub, rough grassland, fens, reedbed and wet woodland, dense ground vegetation or litter, ponds, large water bodies, hedgerows
Lesser Redpoll <i>Carduelis cabaret</i>	Birch and Alder woods, most common in the north in the summer
Cornflower <i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Arable and disturbed land on sandy, loamy soils.
White Helleborine <i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>	Woodlands, particularly Beech on chalk or limestone soils, low ground cover, shaded habitat
Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	Woodland, good supplies of fruit, seeds and keys, drinking pools
Frog Orchid <i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Chalk grassland, meadows
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 Blue <i>Cupido minimus</i>	Chalk grassland, chalk cliffs, Kidney Vetch, sheltered conditions, mosaic of short and tall vegetation with scrub
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
Galium Carpet <i>Epirrhoe galiata</i>	Coastal habitats such as vegetated shingle and cliffs, chalk downland, grassy heathland, hedgerows, larvae feed on bedstraws
Slender Bedstraw <i>Galium pumilum</i>	Species-rich calcareous grassland with a short, open sward
Musk Orchid <i>Herminium monorchis</i>	Chalk grassland, short turf, steep, sunny slopes
Juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i>	Chalk grassland, heathland, maritime cliffs, exposed areas, rocky slopes, unshaded locations
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
Wood Lark <i>Lullula arborea</i>	Heathland, woodland, mosaic of scattered trees, bare ground, short vegetation and taller vegetation, open seed-rich areas
Pretty Chalk Carpet <i>Melanthia procellata</i>	Hedgerows, scrub, woodland edges, Traveller's-joy
Hazel Dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	Woodland, overgrown hedgerows, Honeysuckle, Bramble, Hazel and Ash, well-structured woodland with a well-developed understorey and scrubby areas
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
Fly Orchid <i>Ophrys insectifera</i>	A plant of chalk and limestone soils usually found in open woodland and scrub, often in deep shade, also occurs on grassland and fens
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
Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Mixed deciduous woodland, even age-canopy, little understorey, patchy ground cover
Brown Long-eared Bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	A widespread bat of open woodlands, hedgerows, parks and gardens, it roosts in old buildings and trees in the summer, moving to caves and underground sites in the winter.
Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus malvae</i>	Grassland, quarries, embankments, woodland rides, larvae feed on Agrimony and <i>Potentilla</i> species, requires warmth and shelter
Chalk Carpet <i>Scotopteryx bipunctaria</i>	Chalk grassland, larvae feed on bird's-foot trefoil and clover, undercliff
White Ermine <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>	Gardens and hedgerows
Field Fleawort <i>Tephroseris integrifolia</i>	A plant of unimproved calcareous grassland, favouring warm, dry sites with a short, open sward.
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
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Farmland, grazing marsh, wet meadows, seeds and insects
Adder <i>Vipera berus</i>	Open heathland, woodland and moors, fens, cliff
Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet <i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>	Coastal sandhills, limestone and chalk downlands, hedgerows
Common Lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Open woodland, moorland, heathland, fens, sand dunes, rocks, gardens and cliffs

**Invasive Non-native Species** 16 species recorded with the following in the last ten years:

Horse Chestnut Leafminer *Cameraria ohridella*  
Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*  
Wall Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*  
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*  
Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*  
False-acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia*

## Designated Sites

Clayton to Offham Escarpment SSSI extensive chalk grassland with a good representation of woodland and scrub. Orchids are well represented, including Musk Orchid, Burnt Orchid and Fragrant Orchid, and there is a good community of breeding birds.

Wolstonbury Hill SSSI is species-rich chalk grassland with several uncommon species including Fly Orchid.

Hollingbury Industrial Estate SNCI a mosaic of scrub, trees and species-rich grassland including species such as Kidney Vetch and Adonis Blue.

Pangdean downland SNCI herb-rich chalk grassland, with areas of storm-damaged Beech woodland and an area of chalk heath - a very rare habitat in Sussex.

Pangdean Farm SNCI two areas of chalk grassland with a rich flora including Round-headed Rampion and Dwarf Thistle.

Pyecombe Bank SNCI an area of south-facing chalk grassland with increasingly rich ground flora since the introduction of grazing and scrub clearance. Adonis Blue butterfly breeds on the site.

Tenant, Lain and Moon's Gate Woods SNCI in an area of semi-natural ancient woodland, which is rare in Brighton and Hove.

## Opportunities Identified

- Ecological networks
- Policy integration
- Education and community engagement
- Chalk grassland management, restoration and creation
- Grazing management
- Urban biodiversity
- Farmland bird interest
- Volunteer opportunities
- Chalk grassland butterfly interest
- Aquifer protection
- Access improvements
- Working with and attracting new businesses

**Sussex Biodiversity Partnership**

c/o Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woods Mill, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9SD.

01273 497551

[www.biodiversitysussex.org](http://www.biodiversitysussex.org)