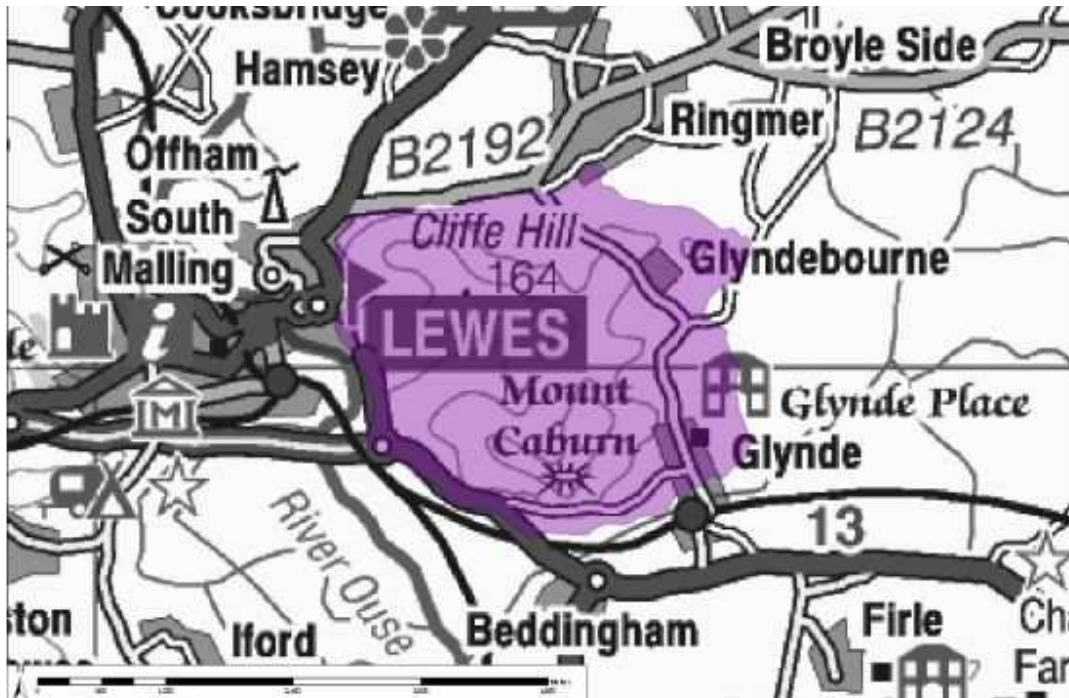


Lewes downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area

Joint Character Area South Downs

Geology Lewes downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area sits 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. Contains Ordnance Survey data Crown copyright and database right 2010

Lewes 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 1010 hectares.

The Lewes Downs covers the Sussex Wildlife Trust reserves of Malling Down and Southerham as well as the National Nature Reserve of Mount Caburn. The internationally recognised area is famed for its species rich chalk grassland. The area has been extended north to follow the geological extent of the chalk and to the west and south is bordered by roads and the urban edge of Lewes.

BAP Habitat

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

Lowland calcareous grassland

Lowland meadows

Reedbeds

Traditional orchards
Wood-pasture and Parkland
Woodland

BAP Species 45 species recorded, with the following in the last ten years:

Species	Habitat Requirements
European Eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>	Sea, freshwater rivers, eutrophic standing waters, moderate water quality
Slow-worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i>	Open habitats, gardens, heathland, cliff, mixed deciduous woodland, structural variation, hedgerows
Red-tailed Carder Bee <i>Bombus ruderarius</i>	Flower-rich tall grasslands with areas of scrub and tussocks for nesting
Minor Shoulder-Knot <i>Brachylomia viminalis</i>	Damp woodland, hedgerows, heathland and fens, Willow
Mottled Rustic <i>Caradrina morpheus</i>	Suburban areas, hedgerows, Nettle and Dandelion
Basil Thyme <i>Clinopodium acinos</i>	Hedgerows, scrub, dry grassland, chalk grassland
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
Galium Carpet <i>Epirrhoe galiata</i>	Coastal habitats such as vegetated shingle and cliffs, chalk downland, grassy heathland, hedgerows, larvae feed on bedstraws
Dingy Skipper <i>Erynnis tages</i>	Chalk grassland, woodland rides, cliffs and embankments, mosaic of bare ground, shorter sward and sheltered areas, Bird's-foot Trefoil
Small Emerald <i>Hemistola chrysoprasaria</i>	Chalk downland, hedgerows, woodland edges, larvae feed on Traveller's-joy
Ghost Moth <i>Hepialus humuli</i>	Grassy areas, hillsides, waste ground
Musk Orchid <i>Herminium monorchis</i>	Chalk grassland, short turf, steep, sunny slopes
Rustic <i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>	Gardens, grassland and heathland, docks, plantains, hedgerows
Wall <i>Lasiommata megera</i>	Short, open grassland, gardens, sand dunes, vegetated undercliffs and rocky foreshores
Dot Moth <i>Melanchra persicariae</i>	Gardens, verges, waste ground, hedgerows
Pretty Chalk Carpet <i>Melanthia procellata</i>	Hedgerows, scrub, woodland edges, Traveller's-joy
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Open woodland and woodland edges, parks and gardens
Burnt Orchid <i>Orchis ustulata</i>	A plant of unimproved calcareous grasslands it requires warm and dry conditions and is often found on south-facing slopes
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Urban areas, farmland, hedgerows
Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	Farmland, rush pastures, moors, mosaics of bare ground and cover,

	hedgerows, uncultivated margins
Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus malvae</i>	Grassland, quarries, embankments, woodland rides, larvae feed on Agrimony and <i>Potentilla</i> species, requires warmth and shelter
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Woodland edges, hedgerows and open land with scattered bushes
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
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 in the last ten years:

Three-cornered Leek *Allium triquetrum*
 Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*
 Wall Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*
 Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*
 Spanish Bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica*
 Hybrid Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta x hispanica = H. x massartiana*
 Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*
 Winter Heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*
 Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*

Designated Sites

Lewes Downs SAC an isolated block of species-rich chalk grassland with an important assemblage of rare and scarce orchids including Burnt Orchid and Musk Orchid. The site is also important for its rich invertebrate fauna and an important breeding community of downland birds including Corn Bunting and Grasshopper Warbler.

Southerham Machine Bottom Pit and Southerham Works Pit SSSI are important for the diversity of fossil fishes found.

Cuilfail Down and Southerham Farm SNCI a series of unimproved grasslands on steep slopes on the East Sussex Downs, with species such as Squinancywort, Dwarf Thistle and Marjoram.

Opportunities Identified

- Policy integration
- Education and community engagement
- Landowner advisory and agri-environment schemes
- Farmland bird interest
- Chalk grassland management, restoration and creation
- Volunteer opportunities
- Access improvements