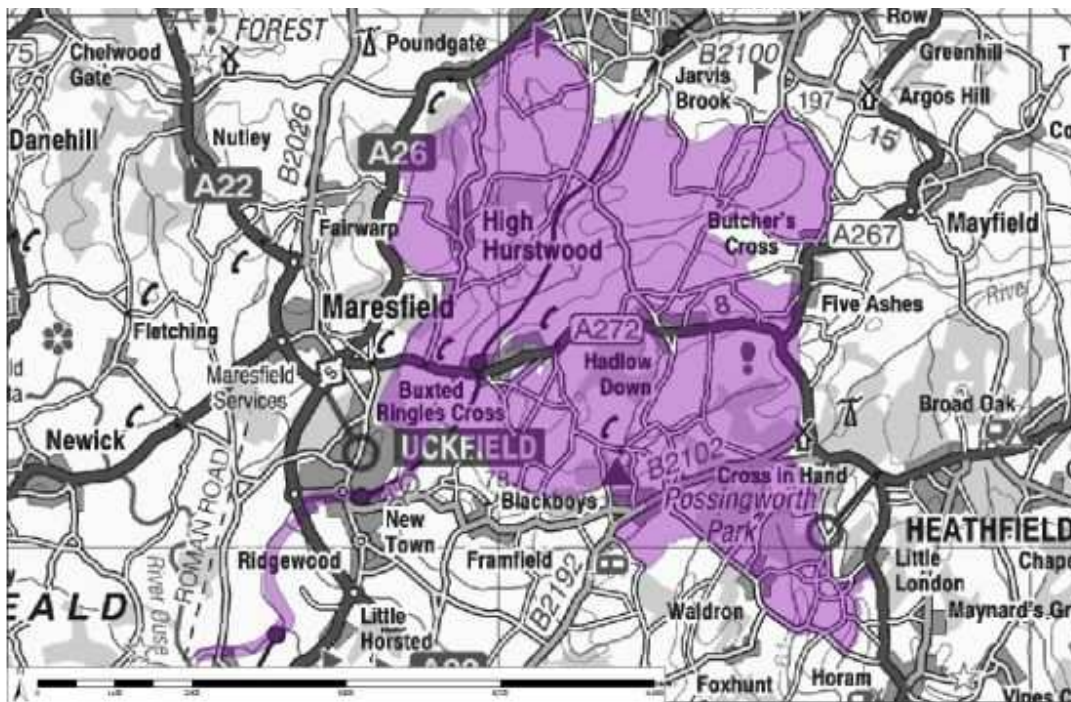


## River Uck and its headwaters Biodiversity Opportunity Area

**Joint Character Area** High Weald and Low Weald

**Geology** River Uck and its headwaters Biodiversity Opportunity Area lies on siltstone, mudstone and sandstone. There are various superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel in the river valley.



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

The River Uck and its headwaters 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 5918 hectares.

Uckfield is a town that has suffered extreme flood-events in recent years, and this area is considered important for flood alleviation. The area itself whilst containing many tributaries of the River Uck and has a scattering of ancient woodland, gill woodland and lowland meadows. The River Uck passes through the urban area of Uckfield and through the agricultural land of the Low Weald until the confluence with the River Ouse north of Lewes.

## BAP Habitat

Lowland dry acid grassland

Lowland fens

Lowland heathland

Reedbeds

Traditional orchards

Wood-pasture and parkland

Woodland

BAP Species 59 species recorded, with the following in the last ten years:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Habitat Requirements</b>
Knot Grass <i>Acronicta rumicis</i>	Meadows, gardens and hedgerows, larvae feed on a range of herbs
Mouse Moth <i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>	Grassland, heathland, wetland, hedgerows and some woodland
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
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Newly planted conifers or open heath, mixed deciduous woodland
Water Vole <i>Arvicola terrestris</i>	Rivers, ponds, canals and drainage ditches, reedbeds, fens, grazing marsh, banks, slow-flowing waters
Common Toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>	Scrub, rough grassland, fens, reedbed and wet woodland, dense ground vegetation or litter, ponds, large water bodies, hedgerows
Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Heathland, moorland, open woodland, recently felled conifer plantations, mosaic of bare ground, low vegetation, scrub and trees
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.
Chamomile <i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>	Heathlands, commons, cliffs and slopes, short turf, also found in areas of temporary inundation
Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	Woodland, good supplies of fruit, seeds and keys, drinking pools
Small Heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	Dry grassland, heathlands, short turf, parks and gardens
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Woodland, scrub, marshes, heathland, reedbed
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Open countryside, scrubby areas, woodland edges, hedgerows, insect-rich grassland, seed-rich areas
Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Woodland, farmland, urban areas, hedgerows
Glandular Eyebright <i>Euphrasia anglica</i>	Short grazed acid grasslands, and heathlands including wet heathland
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
White Admiral <i>Limenitis camilla</i>	Woodlands, sunny glades, Bramble, Honeysuckle, partially-shaded locations

Wood Lark <i>Lullula arborea</i>	Heathland, woodland, mosaic of scattered trees, bare ground, short vegetation and taller vegetation, open seed-rich areas
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, hedgerows, grazing marsh, gardens, fish, amphibians
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
Spiked Rampion <i>Phyteuma spicatum</i>	Woodland glades, hedgerows and meadows with damp, acid soils, summer shading
Silver-studded Blue <i>Plebejus argus</i>	Chalk grassland and heathland, mosaic of bare ground and vegetation, sheltered locations, larvae feed on heathers, Bird's-foot-trefoil and Common Rock-rose
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
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Woodland edges, hedgerows and open land with scattered bushes
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
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
Common Lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Open woodland, moorland, heathland, fens, sand dunes, rocks, gardens and cliffs

**Invasive Non-native Species** 14 species recorded, with the following in the last ten years:

New Zealand Pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii*  
Nuttall's Waterweed *Elodea nuttallii*  
Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*  
American Mink *Mustela vison*  
Parrot's-feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*  
Winter Heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*  
Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*  
Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum*

## Designated Sites

Buxted Park SSSI an old deer park with parkland trees, areas of woodland, acid grassland, marshy grassland, fen communities and neutral grassland. The park is exceptional for invertebrates especially beetles and flies.

Stockland Farm Meadows SSSI consists of two grazed meadows and a hay field where over 80 plant species have been recorded, and a small pond provides additional interest with five amphibian species present.

Cantersand Meadows SNCI two neutral meadows with a more acidic area and an area of species-rich gill woodland with abundant bryophyte interest;

Crowborough Common SNCI a mosaic of habitats including woodland, heathland and acid grassland, which is managed as a golf course.

Hastingford Meadow SNCI a species-rich unimproved meadow with a number of notable species and an abundance of old ant hills.

Land at Isfield Church SNCI a range of habitats including rush pasture, ditches, wet woodland and scrub. The whole site is rich in fungi of grassland and dead wood habitats.

Lodge, Wet and Trebler's woods SNCI woods situated on the valley sides of numerous streams, including vertical sandstone cliffs that support numerous mosses and liverworts.

Popeswood Marsh SNCI a flushed central slopes with an open and wet habitat dominated by sedges and a high cover of bryophytes.

Selwyns Wood Meadow SNCI a wet and boggy meadow with a good mixture of species.

Southern Part of Hadlow Deep Wood SNCI old Hornbeam coppice, with a stream crossing through the woodland.

Stonehouse Wood SNCI a strip of ancient woodland, consisting mainly of Hornbeam coppice along either side of a small stream.

Wildings and Scolcus Wood Complex SNCI a large area of ancient woodland and numerous streams crossing the site, which have a rich bryophyte and lichen flora.

## Opportunities Identified

- Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation
- Woodland management and restoration
- Control of non-native invasive species
- Water quality improvement
- Botanical interest
- Education and community engagement
- 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)