

Nature Conservation Designations in Hampshire

This crib relates to site designation, a different regime applies to species conservation. As with all cribs there are a great many details omitted.

Overview of statutory sites.

Statutory site designations are 'nested' with the basic unit, the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), being used to support notification of international sites. Each designated site, no matter what designation, will be accompanied by a map and a statement as to why that site has been selected. The regulatory regime focuses on those boundaries and reasons.

SSSI.

A statutory designation notified under various Acts of Parliament. When first introduced SSSIs intended to cover a representative selection of Britain's wildlife. After c.1981 the selection policy evolved to seek to include everything above a certain quality threshold. The policy was not fully implemented and so there are many sites which are not SSSI yet meet criteria for selection. In Hampshire the SSSI series substantially reflects the state of knowledge of the county in the late 1980's.

Natura 2000.

A statutory designation arising from European Union Directives and translated into UK law through Statutory Instruments. There are two designations under the heading of Natura 2000, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) which related to habitats and selected species and Special Protection Areas (SPA) which relate to birds, both individual species and assemblages. To be a Natura 2000 site a place must be an SSSI, many Natura 2000 sites are made up of a number of SSSIs.

In the New Forest area there are 9 Natura 2000 sites with c.60 qualifying features for which they have been selected.

Due to the history of SSSI designations there are populations of species for which Natura 2000 sites have been selected which are dependent upon land outside the designation. This is particularly the case with coastal birds.

Ramsar

This Treaty is named after the city in Iran where the Convention was concluded. Ramsar sites are selected to safeguard wetlands of international importance particularly where they support migratory bird species. In effect Ramsar sites are secured through SPA designations, though their reasons for selection are often much broader.

Non-statutory sites

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. (SINC)

These are sites identified by local government and supported by national policy, but not statute. In Hampshire SINC are administered by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC), housed at HCC. SINC selected seeks to include all habitats, and important sites for species, above a quality threshold. SINC are regularly reviewed and have a flexibility absent from the statutory designations. SINC have proved useful in giving formal status to sites which may well meet SSSI, Natura 2000 or Ramsar criteria but are not so notified at this time. SINC have no statutory protection.