

Bourley to Long Valey SPA:

File ref:

**County:** Hampshire      **Site Name:** Bourley and Long Valley

**Status:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

**Local Planning Authority:** Hampshire County Council, Surrey County Council, Hart District Council, Rushmoor Borough Council, Waverley Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SU 835515      **Area:** 819.70 (ha) ? (ac)

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 186      **1:10,000:** SU 85 SW, SU 85 SE, SU 84 NW

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 15 Oct. 1993      **Date of Last Revision:** -

**Date Confirmed:** 15 June 1994

**Other Information:**

This site includes land proposed for designation as a Special Protection Area under the EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

**Description and Reasons for Notification:**

The site comprises a diverse mosaic of heathland, woodland, mire, scrub and grassland habitats. Such habitat diversity supports a rich flora and fauna including nationally scarce plants, nationally rare insects and three bird species listed in Annex 1 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. The majority of the site is underlain by gently undulating deposits of gravels and sands from the Tertiary era, with Quaternary gravel deposits forming a high ridge to the south of the site and Quaternary Barton sand deposits exposed in Long Valley. Wetter areas such as Bourley Bottom and Long Bottom are underlain by Bagshot Beds.

The dry heathland areas are dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris*, bell heather *Erica cinerea* and dwarf gorse *Ulex minor* with bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* a frequent associate. Extensive patches of dodder *Cuscuta epithymum* occur on dense heather areas. Cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* is found in more humid heathland areas, with purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* dominating locally. The acidic grassland includes areas dominated by bristle bent *Agrostis curtisii*, a grass with a restricted distribution in south-east England. Scrub, dominated by gorse *Ulex europaeus*, forms part of this habitat mosaic.

Springs and ditches, and valleys where drainage is impeded, support valley mire communities. Here, cross-leaved heath and bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp., dominate, with other typical bog plants occurring including common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* and the nationally scarce marsh clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*. The nationally scarce pale dog-violet *Viola lactea* is also found on the site.

The rich invertebrate fauna includes three nationally rare species,\* ruby-tailed wasp *Chrysis fulgida* and the heathland flies *Pelecocera tricineta* and *Thyridanthrax fenestratus*. Three nationally scarce heathland insects include the potter wasp *Eumenes coarctatus*, silver-studded blue butterfly *Plebejus argus* and downy emerald dragonfly *Cordulia aenea*.

The mixture of open heathland, scrub, sandy areas and clearings in the coniferous woodland provide habitat for heathland birds including three particularly vulnerable species on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive; woodlark *Lullula arborea*, nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*. The site also supports a small breeding population of hobby *Falco subutteeo* which is important in a British context,\*\* and on a European basis as a migratory species. Nationally important populations of the adder *Vipera berus* are also found.

\* Nationally rare species are equivalent to those listed in the British Red Data Book which includes those considered endangered, vulnerable or rare.

\*\* Schedule 1 birds as listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended).





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updated 17 Mar  
2011

Condition	Count
Favourable Condition	1
Unfavourable Recovering	1
Unfavourable	1
Unfavourable Declining	1
Part Destroyed	1
Destroyed	1
Not Assessed	1

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## EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds Special Protection Area (SPA)

**Name:** Thames Basin Heaths

**Unitary Authority/County:** Bracknell Forest; Hampshire; Surrey; Windsor and Maidenhead.

**Site description:** The Thames Basin Heaths SPA is a composite site that is located across the counties of Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire in southern England. It encompasses all or parts of Ash to Brookwood Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Bourley and Long Valley SSSI, Bramshill SSSI, Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI, Castle Bottom to Yateley and Hawley Commons SSSI, Chobham Common SSSI, Colony Bog and Bagshot Heaths SSSI, Eelmoor Marsh SSSI, Hazeley Heath SSSI, Horsell Common SSSI, Ockham and Wisley Commons SSSI, Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths SSSI and Whitmoor Common SSSI.

The open heathland habitats overlie sand and gravel sediments which give rise to sandy or peaty acidic soils, supporting dry heathy vegetation on well-drained slopes, wet heath on low-lying shallow slopes and bogs in valleys. The site consists of tracts of heathland, scrub and woodland, once almost continuous, but now fragmented into separate blocks by roads, urban development and farmland. Less open habitats of scrub, acidic woodland and conifer plantations dominate, within which are scattered areas of open heath and mire. The site supports important breeding populations of a number of birds of lowland heathland, especially nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and woodlark *Lullula arborea*, both of which nest on the ground, often at the woodland/heathland edge, and Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*, which often nests in gorse *Ulex* sp. Scattered trees and scrub are used for roosting.

Together with the nearby Ashdown Forest and Wealden Heaths SPAs, the Thames Basin Heaths form part of a complex of heathlands in southern England that support important breeding bird populations.

**Size of SPA:** The SPA covers an area of 8274.72 ha.

### Qualifying species:

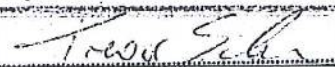
The site qualifies under article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I in any season:

Annex 1 species	Count and season	Period	% of GB population
Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	264 churring males – breeding	1998/99	7.8%
Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>	149 pairs – breeding	1997	9.9%
Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>	445 pairs – breeding	1999	27.8%

**Non-qualifying species of interest:** Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, merlin *Falco columbarius*, short-eared owl *Asio flammeus* and kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* (all Annex I species) occur in non-breeding numbers of less than European importance (less than 1% of the GB population).

### Status of SPA:

Thames Basin Heaths was classified as a Special Protection Area on 9 March 2005.

This citation/map relates to a site entered in the Register of European sites for Great Britain.	
Register reference number	UK
Date of registration	9 March 2005
Signed	
On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs	