

Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC:

COUNTY: Berkshire/Surrey; **SITE. NAME:** Windsor Forest and Great Park

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

Local planning Authorities: Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey County Council

National Grid Reference: SU940730, SU970685, SU975725

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:175 **1:10,000:** SU96 NE, SU97 NW, SW, SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1973 **Date of Last Revision:** 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 **Date of Last Revision:** 24 October 2001

Area:.. 1777.23 ha

Reasons for Notification

Windsor Forest and Great Park forms part of the largest continuous tract of woodland and parkland in Berkshire. The site provides habitat for a range of rare species of invertebrate which include the internationally important violet click beetle *Limoniscus wolaceus* and stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* and a rich assemblage of other Red Data book beetles and flies. The range of provisional Red Data List fungi present includes *Buglossoporus pulvinus*, *Phelinus robustus*, *Boletus regius* and *Hericium coralloides*. In addition there are areas of unimproved acid grassland

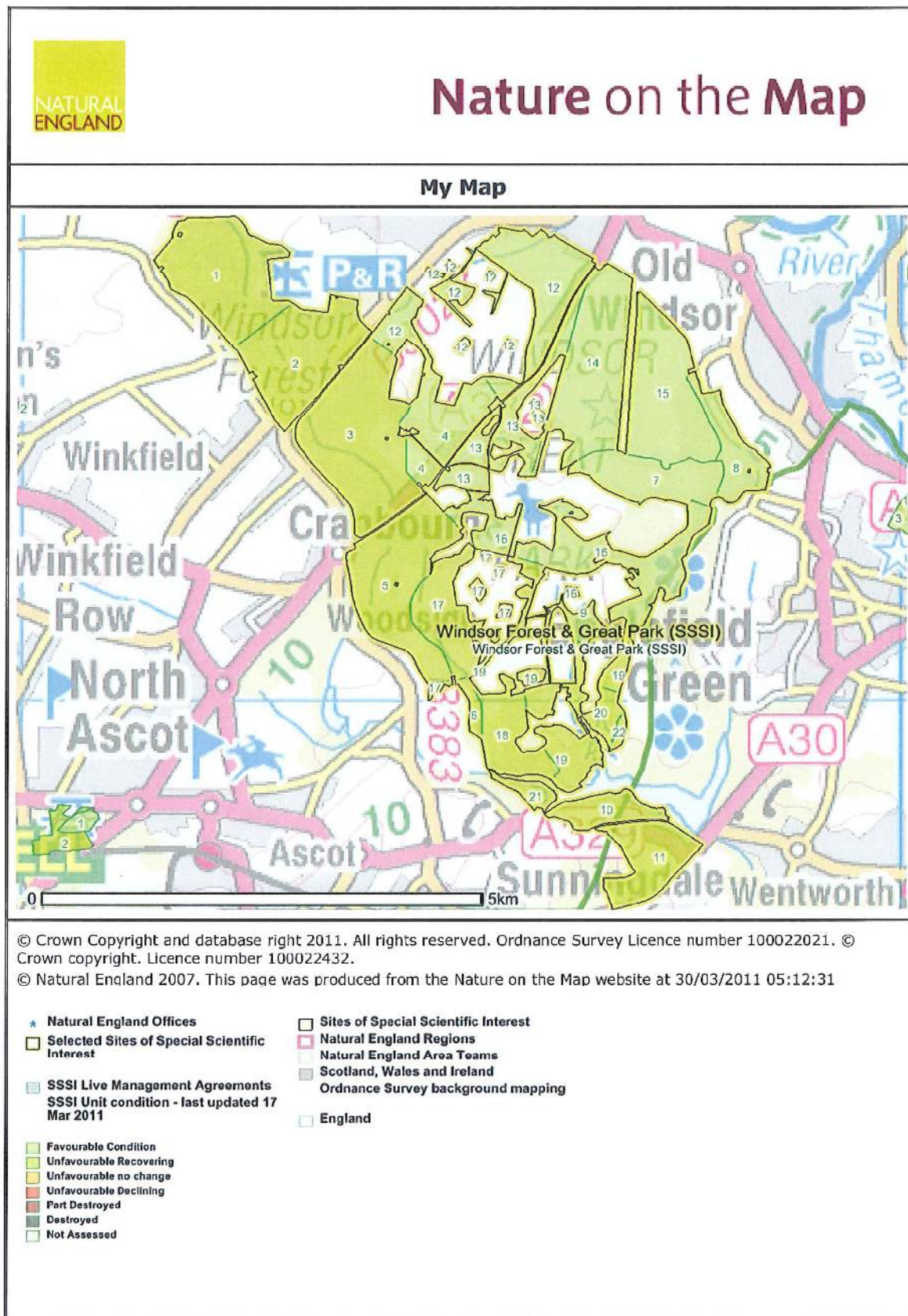
General description

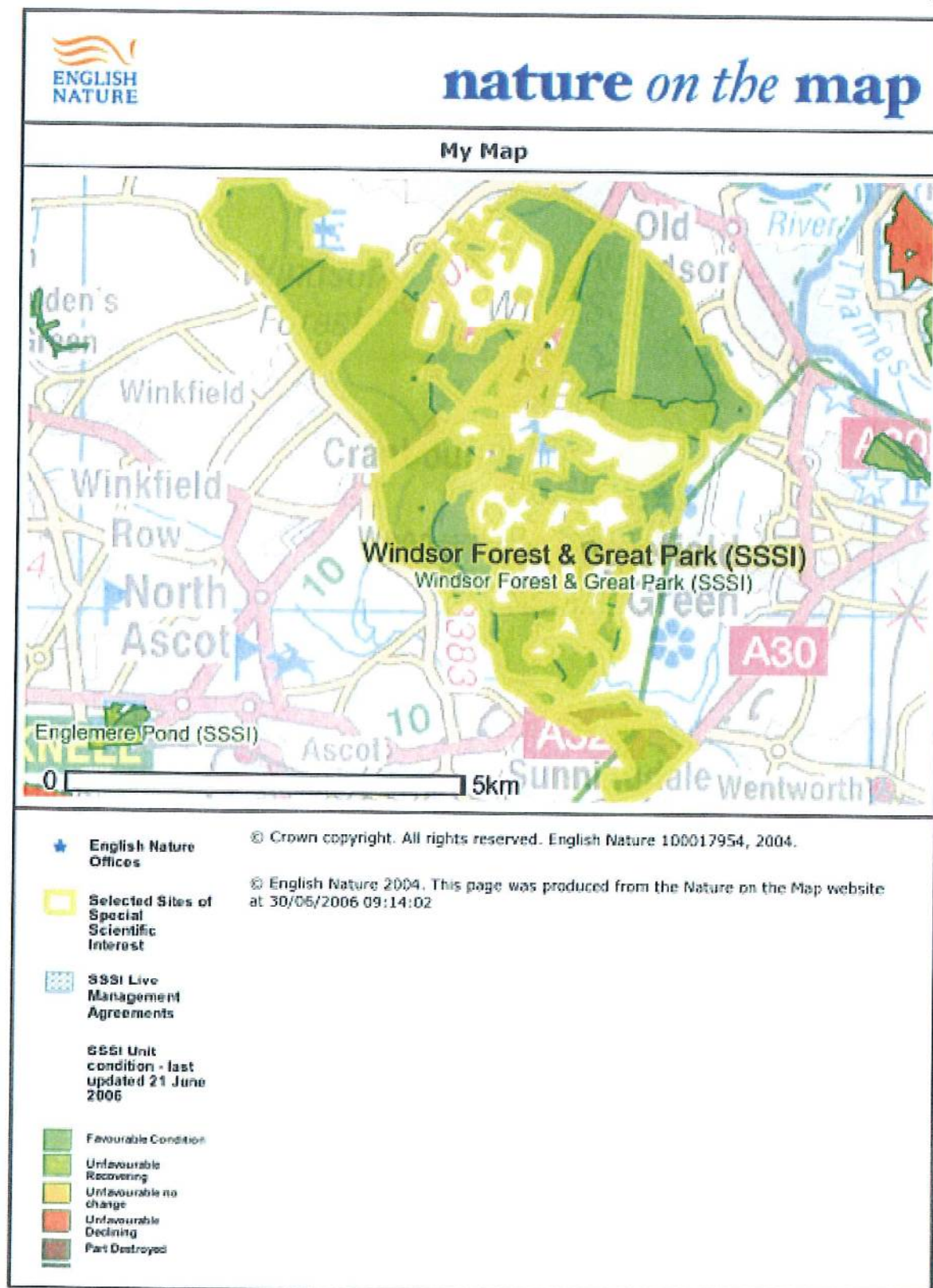
A range of habitats are represented, from coniferous and mixed plantations through mature and over-mature broadleaved woodland to wood pasture and parkland. Relicts of the primary forest still survive as ancient oak pollards scattered throughout the Park and Forest. Veteran trees occur with a mosaic of unimproved and semi-improved grassland and grass-heath. Many of these ancient trees are over 500 years old and some reputed to be up to 800 years. Of equal importance, although not reaching such a great age, are numerous over-mature beech trees *Fagus sylvatica*. Being partially hollow and decayed, the oaks and beech afford habitats for a number of extremely rare and specialised insects, particularly beetles, some of which are unknown elsewhere in the British Isles, as well as nesting sites for several species of hole-nesting birds. Groves of hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* are favoured by hawfinches *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* including one of the largest wintering flocks of this species in Britain.

Windsor Forest and Great Park is second only to the New Forest with regard to the diversity of its invertebrate fauna. It is particularly noted for its rare beetles and flies. An impressive list of nearly 2,000 species of beetles has been recorded in recent years, many of which are endangered and vulnerable. Importantly these include beetles which rely on old trees and dying and decayed wood. These include the violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus* and a number of other click beetles and stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*. Many species of fungi occur,

including some which are extremely rare such as *Buglossoporus pulvinus*, *Phelinus robustus*, *Boletus regius* and *Hericium coralloides*.

The site also includes Great Meadow Pond, a secluded lake of importance for waterfowl, and areas of unimproved species-rich acid grassland such as that around Snow Hill, with a diverse flora including adder's tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, mat grass *Nardus stricta*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, bitter vetch *Lathyrus montanus*, harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* and many other species in a mosaic of short, dry turf, tall grassland and wet flushes.





Register of European sites

Register entry UK0012586 under Regulation 11 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994

This is the register entry for the European site known as Windsor Forest and Great Park in the Region of Bracknell Forest, Surrey, Windsor and Maidenhead. This area has been designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to Article 4.4 of the "Habitats Directive" (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) as a Special Area of Conservation. The register reference number for this European site is UK0012586 and a folder, kept under this reference as part of this register, contains a map of the European site and a citation, both signed by me, giving the reasons for designation of the site as a Special Area of Conservation.

Other details of the European site are as follows:

Date designated as a Special Area of Conservation: 1 April 2005

Site centre location¹

Longitude: 00 37 24 W

Latitude: 51 26 08 N

Area: 1687.26

Priority status²: No

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

on behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

¹ This indicates the approximate centre of the site. Where the European site consists of several distinct areas, the co-ordinates of the most important sub-area are entered.

² Indicates whether the site has been identified under Article 4.2 of the Habitats Directive (Council directive 92/43/EEC) as hosting one or more priority natural habitat types or priority

10 FEB 2006

EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild
Fauna and Flora

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Windsor Forest and Great Park
Unitary Authority/County: Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest, Surrey
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: SU926743
SAC EU code: UK0012586
Area (ha): 1687.26
Component SSSI: Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI

Site description:

Windsor Forest contains dry oak-dominated woodland. Relicts of the primary forest still survive as ancient oak pollards scattered throughout the Park and Forest. Veteran trees occur with a mosaic of unimproved and semi-improved grassland and grass-heath. It has the largest number of ancient oaks *Quercus* spp. in Britain (and probably in Europe), a consequence of its management as wood-pasture. Many of these trees are over 500 years old and some reputed to be up to 800 years. Of equal importance, although not reaching such a great age, are numerous over-mature beech trees *Fagus sylvatica*.

Being partially hollow and decayed, the oaks and beech afford habitats for a number of extremely rare and specialised insects. The site is of importance for its range and diversity of saproxylic (dead wood) invertebrates, including many rare species (e.g. the violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*), and has recently been recognised as having rich fungal assemblages.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*). (Beech forests on acid soils)
- Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains. (Dry oak-dominated woodland)

Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

- Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register
of European Sites for Great Britain.

Register reference number: UK0012586

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *T. Salway*

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs