

Oxford Heights East CTA (Conservation Target Area)

The section of the Oxfordshire Heights to the south of Otmoor covering the escarpment from Elsfield to Stanton St John and the land between.

Joint Character Area: Midvale Ridge

Landscape Types: Wooded Estatelands and Wooded Farmland

Geology: The escapement has narrow bands of mudstone and some sandstone. Beyond the escapement there are areas of sandstone and limestone. Alluvium, head (clay, silt and sand) and peat are found along the lines of streams flowing down the escapement.

Topography: On the west, north and east sides the escarpments slopes, quite steeply in places, to the flat valley land associated with Otmoor, the Holton Brook and the River Cherwell. To the south-west a small valley cuts into the area. Beyond the escarpment the land is much flatter.

Area of CTA: 997 hectares

Biodiversity:

- Woodland: There are numerous areas of ancient woodland on the escarpment. These include Woodeaton Wood SSSI as well as Noke Wood, Cookes Copse and Long Wood, which are Local Wildlife Sites. Woodland is also found at Sydlings Copse and College Pond SSSI along the valley to the south west. Stow Wood is at the head of this valley, and lies largely on the plateau.
- Fens and flushes: Fen is found along the south western valley in Sydlings Copse and College Pond. There are many springs and flushes along the escapement, especially associated with the junction between the mudstone and sandstone. These are extensive in Cookes Copse and can be seen in such sites as the Local Wildlife Sites of Beckley Pasture and Park Farm.
- Lowland Meadows: Found in a few sites on the mudstone near Beckley and the alluvium at Park Farm.
- Limestone grassland: found in small patches largely where the limestone occurs on or near the escarpment and in the south-west valley at Sydlings Copse. It has also been found at the old Beckley Airfield site in the past.
- Acid grassland: Remnants of this habitat are found on the sandstone in the south-west valley at Sydlings Copse, though bracken dominates.
- Species: Arable wildflowers – this area is important for arable wildflowers, particularly on the sandy soils.

Access: Largely restricted to bridleways and footpaths. The Oxfordshire Way crosses the area at Beckley. Sydlings Copse and College Pond is a BBOWT nature reserve.

Archaeology: Beckley Palace, Dark Dale at Beckley, fishponds east of Beckley. A roman road crosses the area.

Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan Targets associated with this CTA:

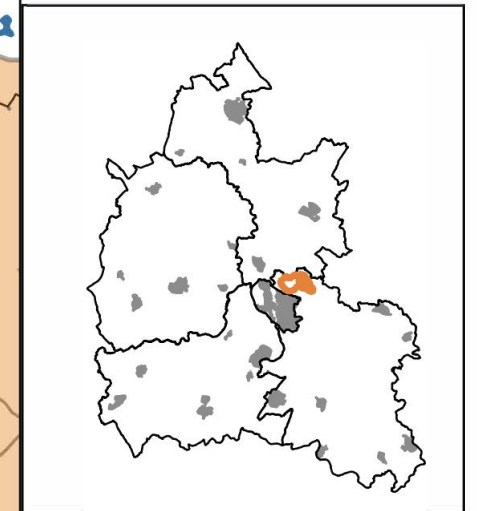
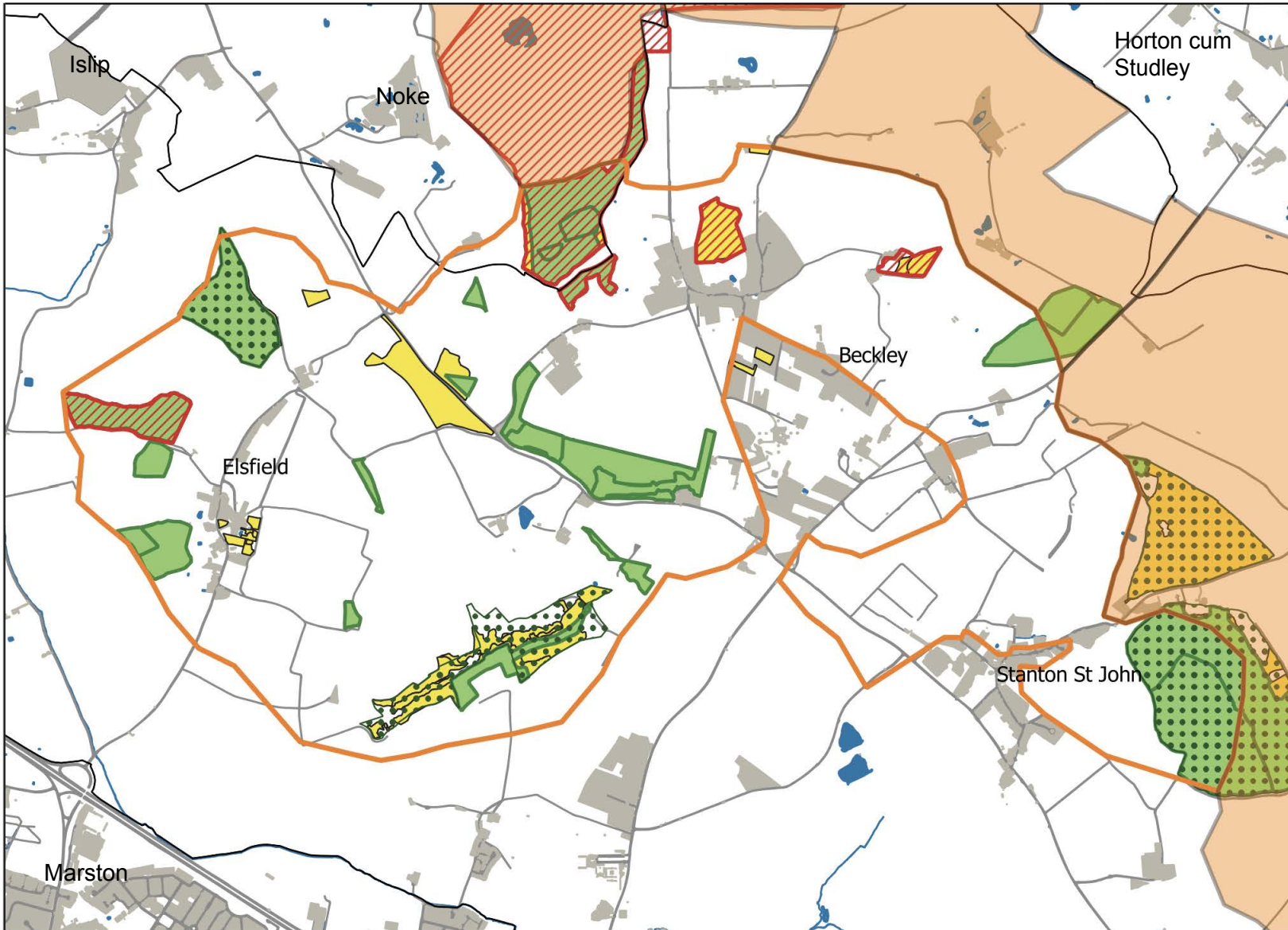
1. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland – management¹.
2. Fens (and flushes) – management.
3. Lowland meadow – management and restoration.
4. Arable field margins – management and creation (particularly for arable wildflowers).
5. Limestone (lowland calcareous) grassland – management and restoration.
6. Lowland dry acid grassland – restoration.








¹ "Management" implies both maintaining the quantity, and maintaining and improving the quality of existing BAP habitat and incorporates the following target definitions: "Maintaining extent" and "Achieving Condition".

Oxford Heights East Conservation Target Area



Thames Valley
Environmental Records Centre



-  CTA Boundary
-  Local Wildlife Sites
-  SSSIs
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Priority Habitats
-  Water
-  Other CTAs

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Area of BAP habitat present in CTA (from TVERC BAP Habitat GIS layer 5/2010)

Oxford Heights East CTA	Lowland Calcareous Grassland	Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	Lowland Meadows	Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	Eutrophic Standing Waters	Lowland Fens	Reedbeds	Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland	Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	Wet Woodland	Wood - Pasture and Parkland	Traditional Orchards
Area of BAP Habitat in CTA (ha)	1.6		6.8			2.2		0.6	107.8	4.5		1.1
% of CTA area	0.2		0.7			0.2		0.1	10.8	0.5		0.1
% of county resource	0.2		0.6			1.9		0.1	2.3	3.2		0.3