

## **Oxford Heights West CTA (Conservation Target Area)**

This complex area encompasses the Oxford Heights from west of the city to Appleton in the west and Frilford in the south west. Includes Cumnor Hill, Boars Hill and the woodlands to the south.

**Joint Character Area:** Midvale Ridge

**Landscape Types:** Wooded Estateland (western slopes, south east woodlands and running from Cumnor to Frilford). Wooded Farmland at Boars Hill and Hurst Hill. Rolling Farmland west of Lashford Lane.

**Geology:** Boars Hill is topped with glacial sand and gravel and sandstone. The Amphill and Kimmeridge Clay band is found in the wooded area to the south where there are also further areas of glacial sand and gravel. On the western slopes there is a band of limestone and Oxford Clay mudstone towards the base. The northern escarpment is similar but also includes a band of sandstone. The area running from Cumnor to Frilford is sandstone with some limestone with alluvium along the stream valleys. Calcareous Grit, which is a mixture siltstone, sandstone and mudstone, is found at Appleton and in bands along the western streams.

**Topography:** The prominent hills west of Oxfordshire, sections of the Oxford Heights escapement to the north and near Appleton and the land running gently down to the Ock Valley to the south. This are is intersected by a number of streams including the Sandford Brook and brook flowing from Frilford to Cumnor. Three small valleys cut into the western slopes.

**Area of CTA:** 3297 hectares

### **Biodiversity:**

- Fen: this area has the main concentration of fen in Oxfordshire especially along the Sandford Brook. There is reed dominated fen in the valleys on the western slopes and flushes on the northern escarpment and in woodland near Appleton. Hurst Hill has remnant Sphagnum bog and there are other areas on Cumnor Hill associated with large flushes.
- Wet Woodland: found in association with the fens and in woodland near Appleton.
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland: Found in the woodlands to the south-east, some of the woodland along the Sandford Brook at Cothill, in woodland on the northern escarpment, Hurst Hill, in the woodlands at Appleton and in remnants in Tubney Wood.
- Acid grassland: there are patches of acid grassland in some sites on Boars Hill. It is also found at Frilford Heath golf course and in restored land at Sheepstead Farm. It is also found on rides in Tubney Wood and there is remnant habitat at Besselsleigh Common Wood.
- Heathland: some areas have been restored at Sheepstead Farm. Has been known from Frilford Heath in the past. It was also present at Hurst Hill.
- Limestone Grassland: on the northern escarpment and in the small western valleys.
- Lowland Meadow: found on northern escarpment. Remnants are found elsewhere including a meadow at Appleton and some fairly acidic examples are found on Boars Hill.
- Geology: geological SSSIs are found at Dry Sandford Pit, Cumnor, Hitchcopse Pit, Hurst Hill and there are also two Local Geological Sites.
- Other species: arable wildflowers are found on sandy soils for example at Tubney Manor Farm.

**Access:** Besselsleigh Common Wood, BBOWT reserves at Cothill, Oxford City Council land and a nature park on the western slopes. There are some accessible areas on Boars Hill.

### **Archaeology:**

## **Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan Targets associated with this CTA:**

1. Lowland heathland and lowland dry acid grassland – management<sup>1</sup> and restoration (on the sandstone).
2. Fen – management and restoration.
3. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland – management and restoration.
4. Lowland meadows – management and restoration (mainly on the northern escarpment).
5. Lowland calcareous grassland – management and creation.
6. Arable field margins – management and creation (particularly for arable wildflowers).

<sup>1</sup>“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”.

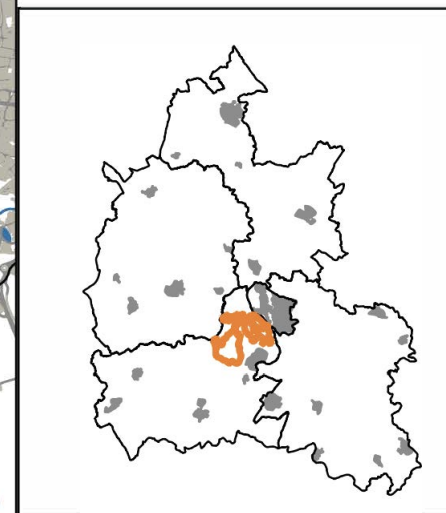
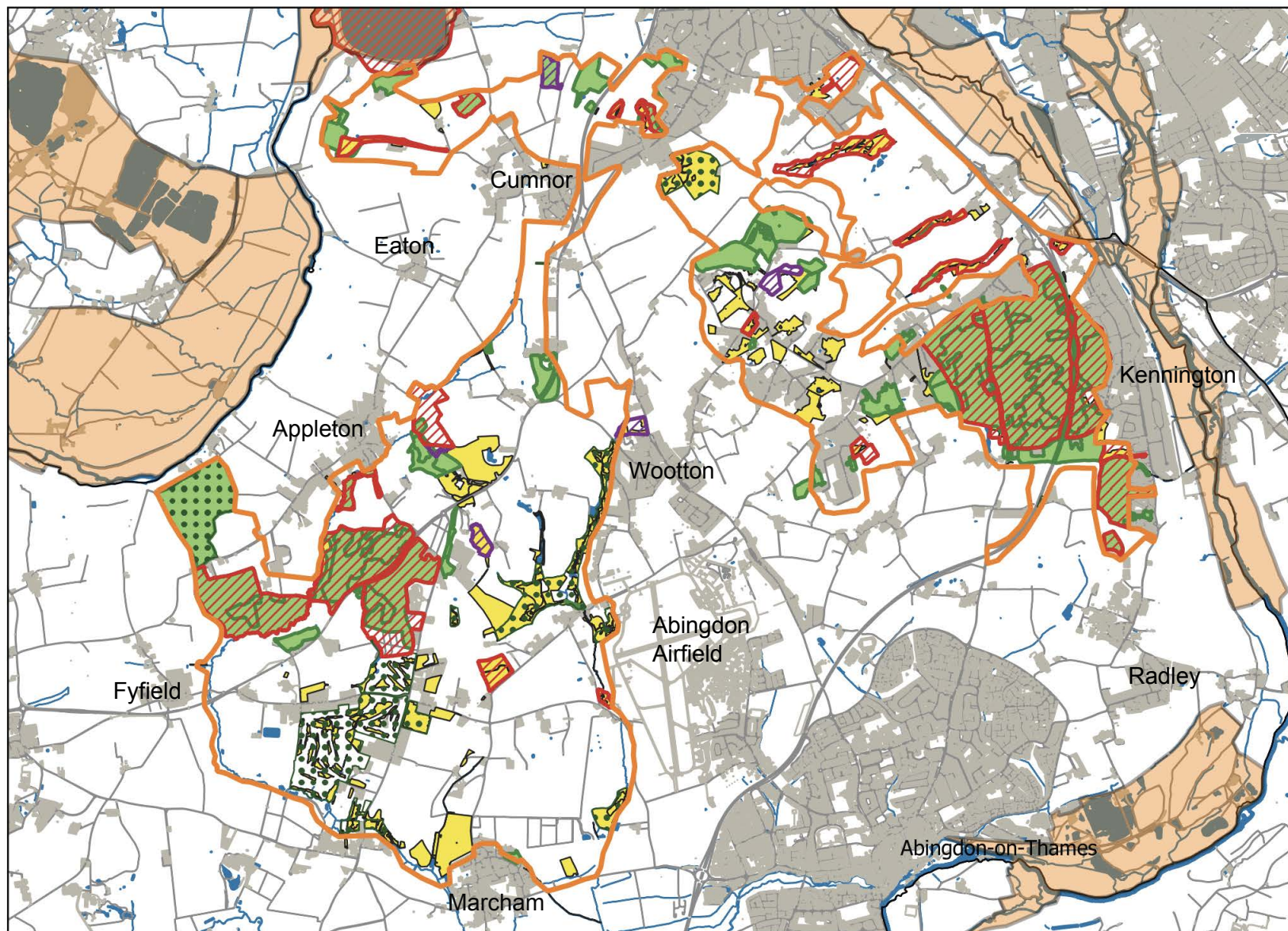
Other targets:








Management of geological interest.

# Oxford Heights West Conservation Target Area



**Thames Valley**  
Environmental Records Centre



-  CTA Boundary
-  Local Wildlife Sites
-  Proposed 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) and 2015 BAP Habitat Targets for this CTA**

<b>Oxford Heights West CTA</b>	<b>Lowland Calcareous Grassland</b>	<b>Lowland Dry Acid Grassland</b>	<b>Lowland Meadows</b>	<b>Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh</b>	<b>Eutrophic Standing Waters</b>	<b>Lowland Fens</b>	<b>Reedbeds</b>	<b>Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland</b>	<b>Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland</b>	<b>Wet Woodland</b>	<b>Wood - Pasture and Parkland</b>	<b>Traditional Orchards</b>
Area of BAP Habitat in CTA (ha)	5.9	18.2	6.1		5.7	12.3	1.3		440.7	33.7	51.0	7.2
% of CTA area	0.2	0.6	0.2		0.2	0.4	0.0		13.4	1.0	1.5	0.2
% of county resource	0.8	37.1	0.6		0.6	10.5	5.0		9.6	24.3	2.7	2.2
<b>2015 BAP targets</b> (hectares)	<b>Lowland Calcareous Grassland</b>	<b>Lowland Dry Acid Grassland</b>	<b>Lowland Meadows</b>	<b>Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh</b>	<b>Eutrophic Standing Waters – No targets for 2015</b>	<b>Lowland Fens</b>	<b>Reedbeds</b>	<b>Native Woodland</b>			<b>Wood - Pasture and Parkland</b> Targets not divided by CTA	<b>Traditional Orchards - No targets for 2015</b>
Maintenance (to be determined)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-
Achieving Condition (to be determined)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-
Restoration		67	4		-	11	-	43			-	-
Creation	2				-	-		11			-	-