

## **Upper Windrush CTA (Conservation Target Area)**

The valley of the Windrush from Witney to the Oxfordshire border. Much of the area is the flat riverside land but includes some of the steeper valley slopes where limestone grassland is found. The area includes the numerous small valleys that run north of the main valley and cut into the Cotswold plateau.

**Joint Character Area:** Cotswolds

**Landscape Types:** River Meadowlands along the main valley. Farmland Slopes and Valley Sides in places on the main valley and in some of the northern valleys. Wooded Valleys, Pasture and Slopes in other northern valleys. The small valley at Crawley is classed as Settled Ancient Pastures.

**Geology:** Alluvium on the flat riverside land extending along the base of some of the smaller northern valleys. Limestones are found on the valley sides along with some Forest Marble limestone and mudstone, and also along most of the smaller northern valleys. To the west there is Lias mudstone and some Lias siltstone at the valley edge and in the valley north of Taynton along with iron rich limestone (Marlstone Rockbed).

**Topography:** Flat riverside land with some adjacent steep banks along with narrow steep sided valleys running north.

**Area of CTA:** 1280 hectares

### **Biodiversity:**

- Lowland Meadows: The main sites are at Crawley, where there are particularly rich sites, and at Worsham. There are remnants of this habitat elsewhere in the meadows at Minster Lovell and near Burford.
- Wet grassland/floodplain grazing marsh: There is some wet grassland near Burford where shallow pools have been created and in a number of other riverside meadows such as Minster Lovell Marsh, Crawley Mead and some meadows between Crawley and Witney.
- Lowland fen and swamp: The main swamp sites are at Minster Lovell Marsh, Crawley Mead and Minster Lovell Fishponds. Remnants of this habitat are found elsewhere on islands near Witney. Fen is found along the narrow valleys that run north at Swinbrook and Taynton Quarries SSSI. The valley north of Taynton has many spring sites at the southern end.
- Limestone grassland: On the main valley limestone grassland is restricted to the steeper banks such as the meadow above the pumping station at Worsham and on some road verges. Taynton Quarries SSSI has the most extensive area of limestone grassland. Smaller banks are found along some of the other valleys including a number of Local Wildlife Sites. Remnant limestone grassland is found in other valleys.
- Woodland: There is one important site along the main valley near Crawley. It is more common in the northern valleys especially at Taynton where there are substantial areas, in a valley near Asthall Leigh and in the wider area north of Swinbrook.
- The main river valley has good numbers of willow pollards.
- Species: the area has been important for breeding waders and has potential for restoration of suitable habitat.
- Geology: The dry valley of Dean Bottom is an interesting geomorphological site

**Access:** restricted to footpaths and bridleways.

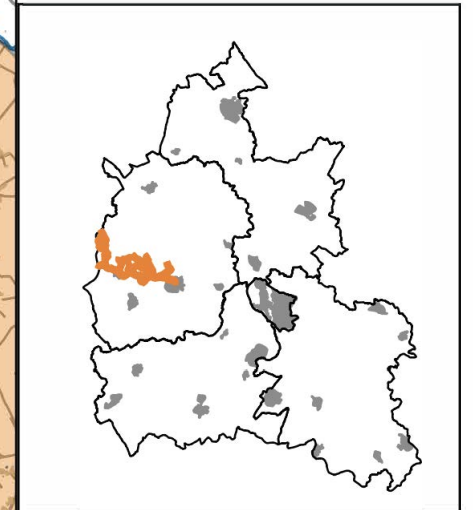
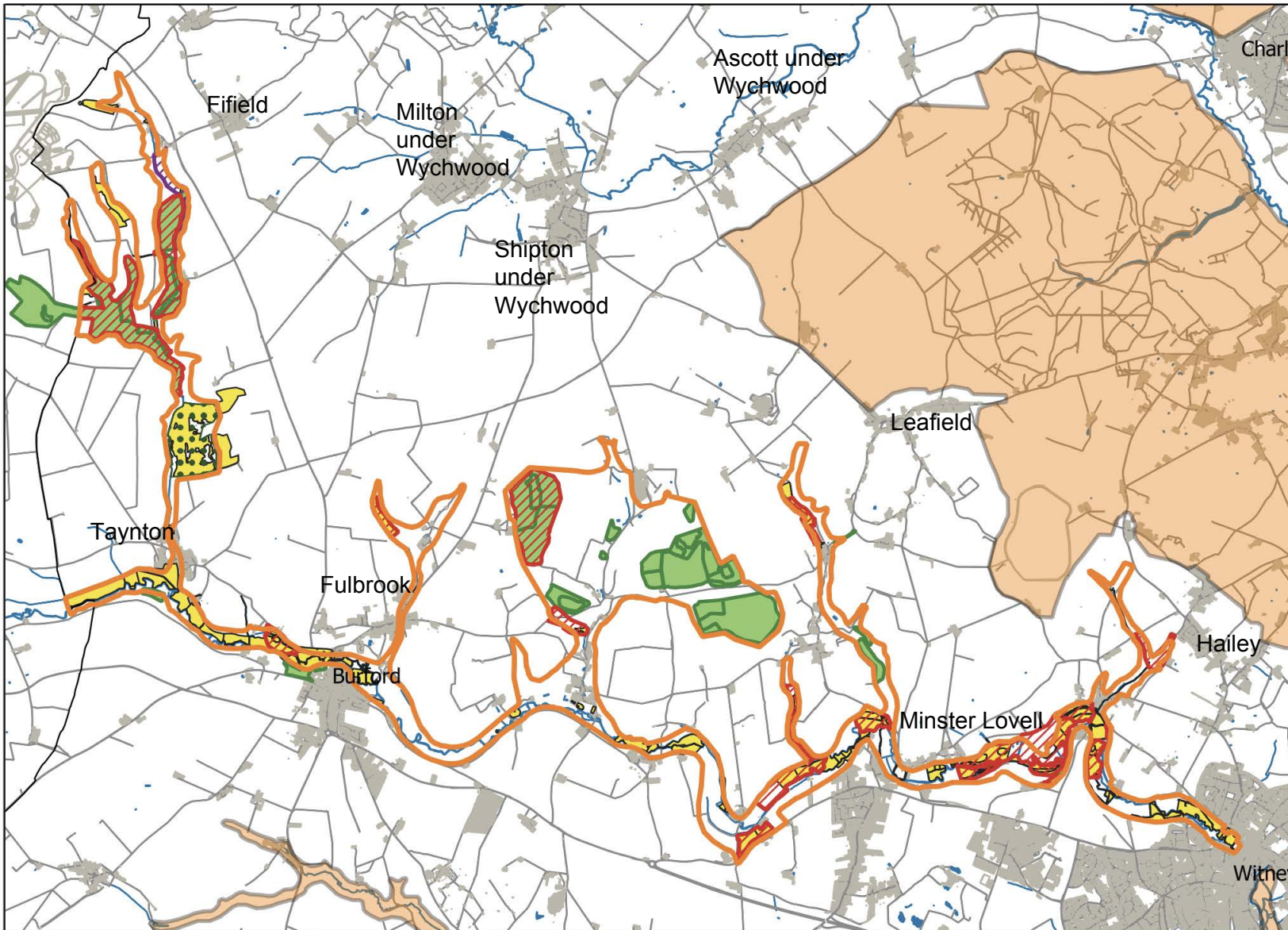
### **Archaeology:**

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

1. Lowland meadows – management<sup>1</sup>, restoration and creation.
2. Floodplain grazing marsh – management, restoration and creation (for breeding waders in particular).
3. Fen – management, restoration and creation.
4. Mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland – management, restoration and creation.
5. Parkland (including veteran trees) – management.
6. River – management and restoration (river corridor management and resource protection).

<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”.

# Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area



- 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>Upper Windrush Valley 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)	45.6		17.2	158.2	3.4	3.6			128.4		1.0	1.3
% of CTA area	3.6		1.3	12.4	0.3	0.3			10.0		0.1	0.1
% of county resource	6.2		1.6	3.2	0.4	3.1			2.8		0.1	0.4
<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	1		43		-	2	-	24			-	-
Creation	5		31	47	-	-		3			-	-