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SKIMMINGDISH LANE, BICESTER

ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

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**Final Report
October 2005**



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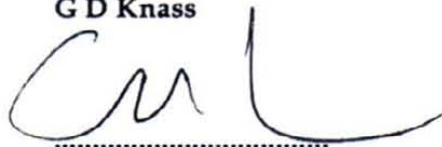
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SKIMMINGDISH LANE, BICESTER

ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

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SKIMMINGDISH LANE, BICESTER

ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Ecological Planning & Research Ltd was commissioned by Hives Planning, on behalf of the Diocesan Board of Finance, to carry out an ecological appraisal of land at Skimmingdish Lane, Bicester, Oxfordshire. The location of the site is shown on **Map 1**. The site consists of abandoned allotments and rough grassland, on the edge of Bicester.

The Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance are seeking planning permission for employment units at the site.

1.2 Survey Scope and Brief

The aims of the ecological appraisal were to:

- carry out an ecological survey of the site and assess the nature conservation value of its vegetation and fauna;
- advise on potentially occurring protected species;
- advise on potential nature conservation issues or constraints;

1.3 Relevant Designations

There are no nature conservation designations afforded to the site. One Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is present within 2km of the site, this is Straton Audley Quarries SSSI, designated for its geological interest. SSSIs are designated under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and are of national importance for biodiversity and geology.

Three Wildlife Heritage Sites (WHS) are within 2km of the site. These are listed in **Table 1** below, and highlighted in **Map 1**. Wildlife Heritage Sites are sites of county importance for wildlife.

Table 1: Wildlife Heritage Sites within 2km from Skimmingdish Lane

Site	Code	Location
Straton Audley Quarries	62C01	SP605246
Gavray Drive Meadows	52W01	SP595226
Meadows North West of Blackthorn Hill	62A02	SP613213

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Field Survey

Introduction

A walk over survey of the site was undertaken on 27 September 2005 by Gareth Knass of EPR. A visual assessment was made of the habitats present on the site for their potential to support interesting flora and/or protected fauna. Specific searches were undertaken for signs of species that had the potential to be present, including Badgers, bats, reptiles, amphibians, Dormouse and invertebrates.

Vegetation survey

Vegetation types were identified and mapped and a list of plant species recorded. Frequency of species over the site was estimated using the DAFOR scale (see Appendix 1). The vegetation on site was split into broad habitat types and mapped.

Bats

All trees on site were assessed for potential roost features including holes, split and torn limbs; cracks and crevices beneath peeling bark; and signs, such as rot, that a tree may have internal cavities. Bats also roost behind Ivy *Hedera helix*, and tree leaves may obscure roost sites. Foraging and commuting potential was also considered.

Badgers

The site was assessed for the presence of badgers, foraging activity and territorial behaviour. Such signs include foraging trails, foraging scrapes in short grass, which are commonly known as 'snuffle holes', footprints, hairs caught under fences, sett entrances, and latrine sites.

Dormice, Otter & Water Vole

The various habitats within the site were assessed for their suitability as dormouse habitat. Dormice require well-connected mature habitat that provides a continuation of seasonal food. Any aquatic habitat may hold Otter or Water Vole.

Reptiles & Amphibians

The habitat on site was assessed for the suitability of supporting reptiles and amphibians. In addition searches were made in suitable basking spots for reptiles, and by lifting tin, wood and carpet present on site as part of former allotment activities.

Birds

All birds present on site were recorded, including species only heard. The habitat present on site was also assessed for potential to support other species of bird.

Invertebrates

A general assessment of the value of the habitats on site was made in relation to invertebrates.

2.2 Desktop Study

The Thames Valley Records Centre (TVRC) was contacted to request data on rare and protected species and sites/habitats of interest within 2km of the site. The results of this search are provided at **Appendix 2**.

2.3 Legislation & Policy

2.3.1 Introduction

Legislation regarding protected species and habitats is summarised in **Appendix 3**. Some general provisions relating to protected species/habitats considered below and planning are also outlined in **Appendix 3**. The most important legislation for protection of wildlife in the UK is the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). Governmental policy guidance on how to apply the various tests outlined in legislation is provided in Planning Policy Statement 9 on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, and the accompanying Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 06/05 (see **Appendix 3**).

2.3.2 Local Plan Policy

The Cherwell District Council Draft Local Plan 2011, and the adopted Local Plan of 1996 have a number of general nature conservation related policies. The 2011 plan is to be replaced by a Local Development Framework Document, but has been adopted for development control at present.

2.4 Evaluation Methodology

The ecological features of the site are evaluated according to criteria developed in accordance with draft guidance from the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM). The evaluation criteria are provided at **Appendix 4**. The guidelines provide a framework for the valuation of ecological receptors based on well founded ecological principles and judgement. An ecological receptor is a species or habitat that has been identified and which may be potentially affected by the proposed project.

3.0 RESULTS AND EVALUATION

3.1 Habitats & Vegetation

3.1.1 Overview

The main features of the site are shown on **Map 2**. The vegetation of the site is described in further detail below. A list of species recorded is given in **Appendix 1**, however this is not considered a comprehensive site list.

Woodland

The woodland on the site is dominated by Grey Willow *Salix cinerea* scrub with occasional bushes of Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. A hedgerow occurs off site to the north east (see **Map 2**), and consists of Field Maple *Acer campestre*, and Oak *Quercus pedunculatus*.

The ground flora is dominated by Ivy *Hedera helix*, with Nettles *Urtica dioica* present.

Grassland

The grassland is dominated by False Oat Grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* with abundant Cock's Foot *Dactyls glomerata*. It is species poor, with occasional Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea* and Mugwort *Artemisia vulgaris*. Other common species are present, but rare in the sward.

Scrub

Patches of scrub are developing within the grassland. These are dominated by Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. with Dog Rose *Rosa canina*, and some Hawthorn and Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*.

Allotments

The former allotments were checked for the presence of declining arable weeds, especially in view of an old record for the Nationally Scarce, Red Data, and Biodiversity Action Plan species Shepard's Needle *Scandix pectin-veneris* in what is now suburban Bicester. No scarce species were however recorded.

3.1.2 Evaluation

The vegetation and flora on site comprises species poor secondary habitat mostly growing on fertile soils of former allotments. No scarce species were recorded, and a number of introduced species were present (see **Appendix 1** for species list). The woodland is of most botanical interest, but is generally species poor Willow scrub that grades into an off site ditch and hedgerow. The ditch and hedgerow is potentially of conservation interest. The vegetation and flora of the site is considered to be of **negligible nature conservation value**.

3.2 Bats

3.2.1 Results

Trees present on the site were assessed for bat potential. The majority of the trees within the site are young and have little opportunities for roosting bats. There appear to be no natural decaying limbs or holes within the trees, and the only opportunities present appear to be from Ivy growing up the trees in the Willow scrub. This woodland is of low potential for roosting bats.

A Poplar *Populus sp.* tree is present along the southern boundary of the site. Little bat roosting opportunity was noted on the tree, i.e. no splits or woodpecker holes were noted, nor flaking bark. The Poplar is multi stemmed and although large, relatively young. Three trees along the north western hedgerow (two Oaks and a Willow) were of potential, but were not assessed because they are outside the site boundary.

The grassland, willow scrub and former allotments are likely to provide foraging potential for bats present in the local area.

3.2.2 Evaluation

The site is unlikely to hold trees with bat roosting potential. The Willow scrub has abundant Ivy, but the likelihood of a roost being present is considered low. The site is considered to be of **negligible nature conservation value** for bats.

3.3 Badgers

3.3.1 Results

A search was made for signs of presence of Badgers *Meles meles*. No signs were found, although the vegetation was too dense to enter some of the Willow scrub area. A number of animal tracks were present within the grassland, but these appear to be related to Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*. The grassland is of low value for badger foraging, but the unfenced allotment plots could provide potential foraging habitat.

3.3.2 Evaluation

There is suitable habitat for badgers to be present on the site, but no badger setts were noted, nor signs of their presence. The habitats on site are considered to be **negligible to local nature conservation value** for badgers.

3.4 Other Mammal Species of Conservation Concern

3.4.1 Results

The presence of other mammal species of conservation concern was considered during the site survey. The habitats on site and surrounding habitat continuity are not suitable for Dormouse given the lack of good habitat linkage, and size and low diversity of the woodland. Otter or Water Vole are also considered unlikely. The ditch just off site has the potential to provide habitat for Water Vole, but was dry during the time of survey, and is heavily shaded. If they use this ditch, it is likely to be to commute to and from more suitable habitat. The records centre search held records of Water Vole within 2km of the site.

3.5 Birds

3.5.1 Results

Birds recorded during the survey visit comprised common woodland and hedgerow species, including Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*, Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, Robin *Erithacus rubecula*, and Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Two species of conservation concern were noted on site, Dunnock *Prunella modularis* and Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*. Both species are still widespread and common in England and the local area, but are listed as being of conservation concern because of a decline in population levels by over 25% in the last 25 years (Gregory et al, 2002).

3.5.2 Evaluation

The habitats on site are not diverse but the scrub is likely to support common bird species, including a couple of species of conservation concern because of population declines throughout the UK (Dunnock was recorded, and Kestrel foraging habitat is present). The habitats are thus considered to be of **negligible value** for birds.

3.6 Reptiles

3.6.1 Results

The grassland and scrub habitats on site provide suitable habitat for commoner species of reptiles, including Slow Worm, Common Lizard or possibly Grass Snake. Searches were made for common reptiles during the visit of the 27 September. This involved careful observation of scrub edge and grassland habitats for reptiles, and lifting old carpet and allotment debris. No reptiles were recorded.

3.6.2 Evaluation

The habitat is of **negligible to local importance** for reptiles, and common species may be present.

3.7 Amphibians

3.7.1 Results

There are no waterbodies on site, however the woodland and grasslands are suitable habitat for amphibians, including the legally protected Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*. The desktop research has not revealed any populations of Great Crested Newt from within 1km of the site, and Ordnance Survey data does not show any ponds within 500m of the site. A couple of small water troughs were present for the allotments. Great Crested Newt has however been recorded to the south east of Bicester, just over 1km from the site, so is present in the wider area.

3.7.2 Evaluation

The habitats on site are potentially suitable as terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt, but the lack of breeding ponds in the vicinity of the site suggest that the presence of Great Crested Newt is considered unlikely. The site is therefore considered to be of **negligible importance** for Great Crested Newt.

3.8 Invertebrates

3.8.1 Results

A number of common invertebrate species were recorded during the visit on the 27 September. These included two Nationally Scarce Orthoptera, Roesel's Bush Cricket *Metrioptera roeselii* and Long Winged Conehead *Conocephalus discolor*, which were widely distributed within the rough grassland.

The desktop research has shown the presence of Marsh Fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia* about 1km from the site. This species was considered extinct in Oxfordshire until this population was discovered in spring 2005, a little distance from its historical population centre. Although reasonably close to the site, it is unlikely that Marsh Fritillary would use the Skimmingdish Lane site as the habitats present are not suitable, and the larval food plant Devil's Bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* is not present.

3.8.2 Evaluation

The habitats are generally of poor quality for invertebrates with a lack of habitat structure and plant species diversity. The national range expansion and explosion in populations of the two Orthoptera species will see their scarcity status altered in future, and both species are now common in rough grassland habitats in the region. The habitats present are thus of **negligible importance** for invertebrates.

3.9 Results of Desktop Study

The desktop survey recorded a number of species of conservation concern including records of Great Crested Newt just over 1km from the site, Water Vole and Marsh Fritillary also about 1km from the site. A list of protected species within 2km of the site is provided in **Appendix 2**.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Summary

The site is considered to be of **negligible nature conservation value** for the majority of habitats and species considered. The grassland and scrub has developed over abandoned allotments, and is species poor. No legally protected species were found during survey work, and it is considered that the only potentially occurring protected species are likely to be common reptiles. There is also a low potential for badgers to be present in areas that could not be searched, however no signs were noted in surrounding areas.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Vegetation and Flora

A buffer zone from the built element of the proposed development and the off site ditch and hedgerow is present on the development scheme drawing. It is recommended that in order to avoid disturbance to this off site habitat, this area including the buffer, should be fenced and clearly marked as out of bounds during construction to avoid accidental intrusion by workforce and/or machines. The landscaping on site, and especially along the edge with the ditch and hedgerow, would benefit from native tree and shrub planting.

4.2.2 Reptiles & Badgers

Further reptile and badger survey work is recommended and this can be provided as an addendum to this report.

4.2.4 Bats

Mature trees with bat roosting potential to be removed as part of the proposals, should be checked again for bats prior to their removal. If bats are found at any stage in any of these trees a DEFRA licence will be needed before works can proceed. On submission of a detailed method statement and reasoned statement of application, a licence will be received in 30 working days.

4.2.4 Birds

It is recommended that any necessary vegetation clearance/demolition should not be carried out during the bird breeding season (considered to be March-July/August).

5.0 REFERENCES

English Nature (2004). Reptiles: guidelines for developers. English Nature, Peterborough.

Froglife (1999). Reptile survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. *Froglife Advice Sheet 10*. Froglife, Halesworth.

Gregory RD, Wilkinson NI, Noble DG, Robinson JA, Brown AF, Hughes J, Procter DA, Gibbons DW and Galbraith CA (2002) "The population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man: an analysis of conservation concern 2002-2007." *British Birds* 95: 410-450.

Herptofauna Groups of the British Isles (HGBI) (1998) "Evaluating local mitigation / translocation programmes: Maintaining Best Practise and lawful standards. HGBI advisory notes for Amphibian and Reptile Groups (ARGs). HGBI, c/o Froglife, Halesworth. Unpubl.

APPENDIX 1
PLANT SPECIES LISTS

Species Recorded during Visit of 27 September 2005

DAFOR

D = Dominant

A = Abundant

F = Frequent

O = Occasional

R = Rare

L = Locally

Species		DAFOR
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	O
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	R
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	R
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat Grass	D
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-Ladies	O
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Mugwort	LA
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	R
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's-purse	LF
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	O
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bind weed	O
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	O
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	A
<i>Daucus</i> sp.	Carrot	O
<i>Epilobium hirsutum/parviflorum</i>	Willowherb	VLD
<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Sun Spurge	O
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet	R
<i>Festuca gigantia</i>	Giant Fescue	R
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	R
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	R
<i>Galium mollugo</i>	Hedge Bedstraw	O
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	R
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	R
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Common Ivy	LA
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	O
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	Red Dead-nettle	LF
<i>Malus</i> sp.	Apple	R
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	R
<i>Populus</i> sp.	Popular	R
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	R
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	R
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak	R
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	O
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose	O
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble	VLD
<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Grey Willow	LD
<i>Salix fragilis/alba</i>	Willow	O
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	O

Scrophularia nodosa	Common Figwort	R
Senecio jacobea	Common Ragwort	O
Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel	O
Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet	O
Sonchus arvensis	Perennial Sow-thistle	O
Stachys sylvatica	Hedge Woundwort	R
Stellaria media	Common Chickweed	R
Taraxacum officinale agg.	Dandelion	R
Trifolium pratense	Red Clover	R
Trifolium repens	White Clover	R
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle	O
Veronica persica	Common Field-speedwell	LF

APPENDIX 2

DESKTOP DATA

Legally Protected & Notable/Rare Species Records

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance	Date	Grid Ref	Master Site	Substrate/Locality	IUCN Red List Status	UK Legislation	European Legislation	UKBAP Status	Notable Invertebrates	BOCC Status	Nationally Scarce Plants
Shepherd's-needs	Scandix peclian-venensis	Present	1987	SP597234	Bicester	area 17, Bicester airfield		Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Shepherd's-needs	Scandix peclian-venensis	Present	23-May-98	SP597234	Bicester	field 8, Gavray Drive fields 9-18				Priority Species	ND	Amber List	
Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	2	19-Aug-02	SP598222	Gavray Drive complex	Gavray Drive fields 9-18		Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species		Amber List	
Lucasella's Fly Beetle	Lytinus salicariae		28-Jun-02	SP598222	Gavray Drive complex	Gavray Drive fields 9-18		Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species		Amber List	
Duncock	Prunella modularis		28-Jun-02	SP598222	Gavray Drive complex	Gavray Drive fields 9-18		Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species		Red List	
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos		01-May-05	SP598223	Gavray Drive complex					Priority Species			
Marsh Frillfly	Eurodryas aurita	Larval web	01-Aug-05	SP598224	Gavray Drive complex					Priority Species	Notable		
Shepherd's-needs	Scandix peclian-venensis		23-May-87	SP597234	Manor Cottages, oxon leirad 5822					Priority Species	Notable		vascular plant
Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus		26-Oct-89	SP5925	private house, oxon leirad 5824					Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	26	04-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	51	04-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	21	11-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	14	11-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	15	21-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	26	21-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	69	28-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	29	28-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Smooth Newt	Triturus vulgaris	16	04-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Smooth Newt	Triturus vulgaris	6	11-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Smooth Newt	Triturus vulgaris	25	21-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Smooth Newt	Triturus vulgaris	4	28-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Common Toad	Bufo bufo	11	04-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Common Toad	Bufo bufo	9	11-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Common Toad	Bufo bufo	6	21-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Common Toad	Bufo bufo	15	28-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Common Frog	Rana temporaria	18	04-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Common Frog	Rana temporaria	6	11-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Common Frog	Rana temporaria	22	21-May-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Common Frog	Rana temporaria	11	28-Apr-03	SP601223	Bicester, oxon leirad 6022			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Minimum of 2 adults	13-Jan-93	SP604228	Launton, oxon leirad 6022	Water filled ditch		Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Smooth Newt	Triturus vulgaris	1 adult	2002	SP6052255	Sherwood Close, Launton	Water filled ditch and vegetated pond.		Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Common Frog	Rana temporaria	adult	20-Aug-02	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY	north west		Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Small Blue	Cupido minimus	adult	20-Aug-02	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY	north west		Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Small Blue	Cupido minimus	adult	20-Aug-02	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY	south		Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Green Woodpecker	Picus viridis		06-Aug-86	SP603251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY	south		Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species	Notable	Amber List	

Legally Protected & Notable/Rare Species Records

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance	Date	Grid Ref	Master Site	Subsite/Locality	IUCN Red List Status	UK Legislation	European Legislation	UKBAP Status	Notable Invertebrates	BOCC Status	Nationally Scarce Plants
a row beetle	<i>Haploglossa picipennis</i>	adult	27-Jul-88	SP603251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY		IUCN (pre 1994) - Vulnerable	Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)			Notable		
Small Blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>	adult	20-Aug-02	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
The Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Gliosia meyeri</i>		20-Aug-02	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
The Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Gliosia meyeri</i>		07-Jul-03	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Andrena varians</i>		20-Apr-03	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Andrena varians</i>		2003	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY		IUCN (pre 1994) - Rare				Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Halictus confusus</i>		2003	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
Yellow Footed Mining Bee	<i>Lasiglossa xanthopum</i>		13-Jun-03	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
Yellow Footed Mining Bee	<i>Lasiglossa xanthopum</i>		07-Jul-03	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Lasiglossa mactanensis</i>		2003	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Lasiglossa pascuorum</i>		18-May-03	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Lasiglossa pascuorum</i>		2003	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Lasiglossa leucopum</i>		2003	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Lasiglossa leucopum</i>		16-May-03	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Sphacodes crassus</i>		13-Jun-03	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
a solitary bee	<i>Osmia bicolor</i>		13-Jun-03	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
Two Coloured Mason Bee	<i>Osmia bicolor</i>		2003	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY						Nb		
Great Crested Newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>		20-Mar-88	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Immature	19-Jun-82	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY		IUCN (1984) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Great Crested Newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>		20-Mar-88	SP603251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Smooth Newt	<i>Triturus vulgaris</i>		28-Feb-91	SP603251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY			Schedule 5, parts 5(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)					
Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>		08-Jul-91	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY								
Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>	adult	08-Jul-91	SP603251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY								
Mole Shrew	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		15-Sep-82	SP603251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		23-Sep-87	SP603251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Grey Partridge	<i>Pardus perdix</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	3 presents	15-May-96	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Lewington	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Sincock	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Culver	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	possible breeding	1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		30-Aug-02	SP602251	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Slywack	<i>Alcedo arvensis</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Houss Martin	<i>Dalmanella arborea</i>		1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	possible breeding	1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP599252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	

Legally Protected & Notable/Rare Species Records

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance	Date	Grid Ref	Master Site	Subsite/Locality	IUCN Red List Status	UK Legislation	European Legislation	UKBAP Status	Notable Invertebrates	BOCC Status	Nationally Scarce Plants
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY					Priority Species		Red List	
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Amber List	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>		1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>		1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>		02-Jun-04	SP602261	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	possible breeding	1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Corn Bunting	<i>Milvina caledonia</i>	proved breeding	1977	SP560252	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY							Red List	
Brown Hare	<i>Lepus capensis</i>	2	02-Jun-04	SP602261	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY	SW detached part						Amber List	
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		02-Jun-04	SP602261	STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY	SW detached part						Red List	
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>												
Great Crested Newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>		1996	SP59972220	Unipart Development Site		IUCN (1994) - Lower risk - conservation dependent	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	Conservation Regulations 1994	Priority Species			
Anicola terrestris	Water Vole	19990929	28-Sep-99	SP579236	Ray Catchment			Schedule 5, parts 4(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Anicola terrestris	Water Vole	19990408	08-Apr-99	SP590236	Ray Catchment			Schedule 5, parts 4(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Anicola terrestris	Water Vole	20000201	Feb-00	SP599226	Ray Catchment			Schedule 5, parts 4(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Anicola terrestris	Water Vole	20030601	Jun-03	SP599230	Bicester			Schedule 5, parts 4(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			
Anicola terrestris	Water Vole	20030901	Sep-03	SP591228	River Bure Stream, Bicester			Schedule 5, parts 4(a) and (b) (W&C Act 1981)		Priority Species			

APPENDIX 3

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Relevant Legislation and Policy

UK Legislation Relating to Bats

All native species of bat in the UK are afforded full legal protection via:

- The Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended), through inclusion on Schedule 5;
- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c) Regulations 1994 (The Habitats Regulations), which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC in the UK.

In addition, The Countryside & Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, has amended the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981.

In summary, these legislative instruments make it an offence, with certain exceptions, to carry out the following:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats;
- deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats while it is occupying a bat roost;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost.

A bat roost may be any structure a bat uses for breeding, resting, shelter or protection. It is important to note that since bats tend to reuse the same roost sites, legal opinion is that a bat roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time.

(For full details and exact wording of the legislation refer to: Habitats Regulations 1994, The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and The Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000).

DEFRA licences for development-related activities

Where a lawful operation (e.g. development work which has full planning permission) is required to be carried out but which is likely to result in one of the above offences, a licence may be obtained from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to allow the operation to proceed. However, in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations 1994, a licence can only be issued where the following requirements are satisfied:

- The proposal is necessary 'to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment';

- 'There is no satisfactory alternative';
- The proposals 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

Full planning permission is required to apply for a DEFRA licence (where such a consent is necessary for the work to be carried out). In addition, a method statement which details the survey results, methodology of work to be undertaken, mitigation and compensation measures, must be submitted to DEFRA with the licence application.

Bats which are Incidentally Discovered During Works

Where a satisfactory survey has resulted in no evidence of bats being found so that a DEFRA licence (or English Nature advice, if a dwelling house) is not deemed necessary, and bats are then incidentally discovered during work, it is a legal requirement that the activities are halted immediately and English Nature consulted.

Great Crested Newts

Great Crested Newts are fully protected under National and European legislation, under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Regulation 39 of the Habitats Regulations 1994. The legislation protects Great Crested Newts from harm, injury and deliberate capture, killing, disturbance, damage and destruction of eggs, breeding site or resting place. This includes deliberate or reckless damage or disturbance. However, licences can be issued to allow otherwise prohibited actions, with DEFRA the licensing authority.

It is generally regarded that developments within 500m of any given Great Crested Newt breeding ponds need to be assessed for their impact upon the population.

Legislation Relating to Reptiles

All of the native reptile species native to Britain are protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). The adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow-worm are all protected species, but unlike the rarer protected species (sand lizard and smooth snake) their habitat is not protected. This legislation makes it illegal to intentionally kill or injure a common reptile.

However, disturbing or destroying their habitat while they are present may also lead to an offence, although the death (by way of a body) or presumed death (evidence to prove their presence immediately before site destruction) may be necessary to prove an offence.

As a result, should development be permitted and their habitat is to be affected, reptiles should be translocated and relocated onto suitable release sites before any site works can commence.

Legislation Relating to Badgers

Although the badger is not a species of conservation concern it has both recently and historically suffered from a high level of persecution, primarily from badger baiting, which has led to concerns regarding issues of animal welfare rather than those relating to the conservation of a declining species.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it currently illegal to:

- wilfully kill, injure or take any badger or attempt to do any of these things;
- cruelly ill-treat badgers, or to dig for them;
- have in your possession any dead badger or part of one, or an object derived from one;
- have in your possession or control a living, healthy badger or sell one or offer one for sale.

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any part of a badger sett, to cause a dog to enter a sett or to disturb a badger while it is in a sett.

Legislation Relating to Birds

Birds receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from harm or disturbance by way of inclusion in either Article 1 (birds), and Schedule 1 (specially protected birds).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act provides protection to birds from intentionally killing, injuring or taking any wild bird or taking, damaging or destroying the nest or eggs of a wild bird. All bird species, their nests and eggs are protected. Under Section 1 it is an offence to intentionally: kill, injure or take any wild bird; take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built, take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird.

Legislation Relating to Dormouse

The dormouse is protected by UK and European law as listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. They have also been identified as a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP).

Taken together the protection afforded by the Act and Regulations make it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture dormice;
- Intentionally disturb dormice (whether in a nest or not);
- Damage or destroy dormouse breeding sites or resting places;
- Posses or transport a dormouse or any part of a dormouse, unless acquired legally;
- Sell, barter, or exchange dormice, or parts of dormice.

The Countryside & Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 has added a further level of protection by including the term 'reckless' when referring to intentional acts of disturbance.

The legislation protects Dormouse from harm, injury and deliberate capture, killing, disturbance, to breeding site or resting place. This includes deliberate or reckless damage or disturbance. However, licences can be issued to allow otherwise prohibited actions, with DEFRA the licensing authority.

Planning and Protected Species/Habitats

Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9, 2005) and circular 06/2005 of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) provides guidance for decision making in planning. Local planning authorities are required to have regard to a variety of nature conservation interests through the development plan process and in determining planning applications as nature conservation can be a material consideration in determining many planning applications.

Protected Species

Paragraph 16 of PPS 9 states that Local Authorities should take "...measures to protect the habitats of these species [protected species] from further decline through policies in local development documents. Planning authorities should ensure that these species are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations. Planning authorities should refuse permission where harm to the species or their habitats would result unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh that harm".

APPENDIX 4
EVALUATION CRITERIA

The IEEM guidelines set out a number of criteria that can be used to select the ecological receptors that should be considered:

- the presence of animal or plant species, subspecies or varieties that are considered to be rare or uncommon, either internationally, nationally or more locally;
- the occurrence of notably large populations of animals or concentrations of animals considered uncommon or threatened in a wider context;
- the presence of species rich communities of animals and plants;
- the occurrence of plant communities (with their associated fauna) that are considered to be good examples of valued natural/semi-natural vegetation types;
- species distribution, particularly as a result of global trends and climate change.

The approach taken for this evaluation, and the one which IEEM guidance is moving towards, is a less prescriptive, more descriptive approach. However in order to be workable the assessment still needs to fit into defined categories. These categories are outlined below. Because rarity is often the main criterion used in the nature conservation evaluation the nature conservation values described below are based primarily on rarity within different geographical units. This geographical distinction is also useful in placing the values in the context of nature conservation designations, which tend to be ranked according to geographical importance.

International Importance - A feature for which the site is either unique or sufficiently unusual to be considered as being one of the highest quality examples in an international context and is therefore likely to be designated as an SPA or SAC, or it meets the published selection criteria for such designation irrespective of whether or not it has yet been designated. The site may support an internationally important population of rare or threatened species or a significant population of an internationally important species or habitat (e.g. listed on Annex I and/or II of the Habitats Directive). The loss of, or significant impacts on, such a feature would be to the detriment of the international resource.

National Importance - A feature for which the site is either unique or sufficiently unusual to be considered as being one of high quality examples in a national context and is therefore likely to be designated as an SSSI. The site may support a nationally important population of rare or threatened species. The loss of, or significant impacts on, such a feature would be to the detriment of the national resource.

Regional Importance - A feature for which the site is important in the regional context. This may include for example a viable area of key habitat of regional importance as identified in Natural Area Profile or regional Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), or a significant population of a regionally important species.

County Importance – A feature for which the site is important in the County context. Such a feature may be designated as a non-statutory Site of Nature Conservation Importance, or a local nature reserve. The loss of such a feature would have nature conservation implications and should be avoided where possible. Examples of such a feature may be:

- A viable area of habitat identified in the County BAP;
- Semi-natural ancient woodland greater than 0.25 ha;
- Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species which is listed in a County/Metropolitan Red Data Book or BAP on account of its regional rarity or localisation.

Local Importance - Feature of nature conservation value in a local context only, which does not have a sufficient value to merit a nature conservation designation. The nature conservation value of such a feature is likely to be based on a degree of local rarity, and it may be widespread outside the local area. Its loss, therefore, would be unlikely to have nature conservation implications other than at the local or site level. Examples of such a feature may be:

- Areas of habitat considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource within the context of the local resource, e.g. species-rich hedgerows;
- Semi-natural ancient woodland less than 0.25 ha.

The term Local is used in this assessment to include anywhere from site level to District level to overcome the inherent problem of trying to compartmentalise features within such a restricted geographical framework when reference information is largely unavailable at such a scale.

Negligible Importance – A feature for which the site is not considered important. This will generally be a feature that is either of detriment to wildlife (for example non native and invasive plant species), or a feature that is very common place, easily created, or easily re-creatable, with sufficient resources to achieve such a goal. This ranking may be given even if a species or habitat has a specific nature conservation rating in legislation or policy. For example, if the species was not utilising the site, or needed the site as part of its functioning.

COUNTY: OXFORDSHIRE

SITE NAME: STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRIES

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

Local Planning Authorities: Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council

National Grid Reference: SP60052545, SP602250

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 164 1:10,000: SP52 NE & SE, SP62 NW & SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1975 Date of Last Revision: 1977

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 Date of Last Revision:

Area: 8.7 ha 21.5 ac

Description and Reasons for Notification

A large part of the Jurassic White Limestone, as well as the entire Forest Marble and the Lower Cornbrash (*hodsoni* Zone-*discus* Zone) have been exposed by quarrying at Stratton Audley. The quarry is an important location for studying facies changes which occur in the upper part of the White Limestone and in the Forest Marble, when these two formations are traced from Oxfordshire eastwards towards the 'London landmass' and north-eastwards into Buckinghamshire. Micritic limestones ('lime mudstones') developed within the Forest Marble between Bicester and Milton Keynes, and well displayed in this section, are distinctly different to limestones found within the Forest Marble elsewhere. They were probably deposited as lime-muds in restricted, brackish to freshwater lagoons. The Stratton Audley section affords an excellent opportunity to study the sediments and faunas which characterised such environments in Upper Bathonian times, as well as those of the more marine and fossiliferous Lower Cornbrash above.

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Oxfordshire Wildlife Site Citation

SITE NAME: Gavray Drive Meadows

SITE CODE: 52W01

AREA: 15.6 ha

GRID REF: SP595226

DISTRICT: Cherwell

EN NATURAL AREA: Thames and Avon Vales

SITE DESCRIPTION:

These meadows form a mosaic of small damp fields with ponds, divided by thick hedges with old trees. Most of the fields are probably former hay meadows over medieval ridge and furrow field patterns, and have a sward mostly dominated by tufted hair-grass with some meadow foxtail and meadow barley. However, fields 5 and 6 appear to be old pasture, with ragged robin, dropwort, devil's-bit scabious and common spotted orchid. Fields 7, 11 and 12 contain devil's-bit scabious and betony. Great burnet is frequent in fields 7 and 11, and scattered in fields 12, 14 and 16. Sneezewort and pepper saxifrage were only found in field 11. Common marsh bedstraw, bugle, greater bird's-foot trefoil, common knapweed and short-fruited willowherb are occasional throughout the fields. There is a very good range of rushes and sedges across the site, with nine species of sedge: glaucous, common, carnation, brown, hairy, false fox, spiked, slender tufted and oval. Grasses include yellow oat-grass, sweet vernal grass, tall fescue, meadow fescue and red fescue. In the drier areas, slightly acid conditions are indicated by frequent tormentil, lesser stitchwort and sweet vernal grass, especially in fields 5, 6, 14 and 15.

Most of the ponds in the western half of the site are shaded and/or only damp in summer. They have a species-poor vegetation of compact rush, plicate sweet-grass and tufted water-forget-me-not. CPM surveyed the ponds on the west side of the north-south road and reported great crested newt (a priority Biodiversity Action Plan species) in 3 ponds and a channel. Smooth newts were found in all ponds and the channel, and one palmate newt was recorded in field 9. The large water-filled pond in field 14 (on the eastern side of the road) contains greater reedmace, gypsywort, marsh foxtail, tufted water-forget-me-not, sharp-flowered rush and soft rush. The brook running along the western margin of the County Wildlife Site contains reed canary-grass, redshank, water chickweed and greater water plantain.

The hedges across the entire site are mostly tall and thick, and contain hawthorn with bramble, blackthorn and elder, as well as occasional crack willow, field maple, oak, ash, crab apple, English elm, dogwood, holly, wayfaring tree, guelder rose, buckthorn, hop and honeysuckle. They are probably post-medieval, as they dissect the ridge and furrow pattern that runs through most of the fields. The hedge that separates fields 5 and 6 from fields 7 and 12 is a double hedge, with black bryony, mature oak, ash and crack willow, including one large collapsed crack willow pollard. The hedge that runs along the eastern edge of fields 11 and 12 is also double. These double hedge lines include Midland hawthorn, wood meadow-grass, great hairy brome and three-nerved sandwort; all four are ancient woodland indicator species (characteristic of woodlands more than 400 years old). The gappy hedge line between fields 11 and 12 contains five large mature oaks. The hedges around fields 8 and 9 contain abundant English elm suckers, as well as hawthorn and bramble. The bullace plum (*Prunus domestica* ssp. *insititia*), a rare and declining species in the county, is found in the hedge between fields 8 and 9.

Numerous birds are using the proposed County Wildlife Site, including reed bunting (which was seen flying across the road between fields 14 and 4), willow warbler, garden warbler, blackcap, whitethroat, lesser whitethroat, chiffchaff, bullfinch, linnet, song thrush, yellowhammer, sedge warbler, hobby and kestrel. Common pipistrelle, noctule, *Myotis* sp. and, possibly, serotine bats were recorded foraging over the site (CPM). Butterflies include large skipper, ringlet, common blue, small heath and marbled white. Twenty-six species of ground beetles were found in fields 5, 6, 11 and 12, including the nationally scarce *Bembidion gilvipes*.

UK PRIORITY BAP HABITATS: lowland meadows (hay meadow)

UK PRIORITY BAP SPECIES: Reed bunting (3 or 4 singing males), song thrush (2 or 3 singing males), bullfinch, linnet; great crested newt.

RED DATA BOOK SPECIES:

NATIONALLY SCARCE SPECIES: *Bembidion gilvipes* a ground beetle

BIRDS OF CONSERVATION CONCERN:

Red list: Bullfinch, reed bunting, song thrush, yellowhammer, linnet.

Amber list: Dunnock, willow warbler.

TYPICAL SPECIES: Great burnet, greater bird's-foot trefoil, betony, cuckooflower, devil's-bit scabious, sneezewort, pepper saxifrage, brown sedge, carnation sedge, common sedge and meadow barley. Midland hawthorn, bullace plum, black bryony, honeysuckle, wood meadow-grass, three-nerved sandwort. Sedge warbler, chiffchaff, willow warbler, whitethroat, lesser whitethroat, blackcap, yellowhammer, linnet, kestrel. Marbled white butterfly.

Oxfordshire Wildlife Site Citation

Site Name: STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY	
Site code: 62C01	Grid ref: SP 605246
Area: 6.5 ha (was 32.4 ha, less 25.9 ha exclusion)	District: Cherwell
Parish: Stratton Audley	
EN Natural Area: Thames and Avon Vales	

SITE DESCRIPTION:

This limestone quarry became a lake following the cessation of quarrying; it was well used by birds and also held a rich invertebrate fauna. Since infilling, there are now only two small lakes, both much used for fishing, and areas of thin soil, some with impeded drainage. Part of the site is still being actively quarried. The open areas have some very interesting plants, including large areas of slender bird's-foot trefoil, common centaury, fern grass, bee orchid and common spotted orchid. There is more established calcareous grassland along the eastern boundary of the southern part, with field scabious and greater knapweed. The northern damp area has the rare grey club-rush in the small ditches. The scrub includes buckthorn and aspen.

UK PRIORITY BAP HABITATS: **lowland calcareous grassland**

UK PRIORITY BAP SPECIES: (dates unknown) **brown hare; skylark, linnet, reed bunting, corn bunting, tree sparrow, grey partridge, bullfinch, turtle dove, song thrush**

RED DATA BOOK SPECIES: none

NATIONALLY SCARCE SPECIES: **ruddy darter (1987), ground beetles *Harpalus azureus* (1988), *Lebia chlorocephala* (1991) and bombardier beetle (1988), a rove beetle *Haploglossa picipennis* (2000)**

LOCAL SPECIES: (dates unknown) **a pond snail *Lymnaea auricularia*, a snail *Candidula intersecta*, banded demoiselle, black-tailed skimmer, little pondskater, a froghopper *Aphrophora salicina*, leafhoppers *Macropsis prasina* and *Limotettix striola*, ground beetles *Notiophilus substriatus*, *Olisthopus rotundatus*, *Agonum micans*, *A. moestum*, *A. obscurum*, *Harpalus rubripes*, *Stenolophus mixtus*, *Acupalpus dubius* and *Chlaenius vestitus*, a crawling water beetle *Halplus obliquus*, a water beetle *Laccophilus minutus*, a rove beetle *Lathrobium multipunctum*, a click beetle *Hemicrepidius hirtus*, a soldier beetle *Cantharis lateralis*, glow-worm, a ladybird *Chilocorus bipustulatus*, 19-spot ladybird, 16-spot ladybird, 11-spot ladybird, a leaf beetle *Phyllodecta laticollis*, large flax flea beetle, a weevil *Hypera suspiciosa*, Essex skipper, marbled white, a woodlouse *Trachelipus rathkei***

BIRDS OF CONSERVATION CONCERN: (dates unknown)

Red list: **common scoter, grey partridge, turtle dove, skylark, song thrush, house sparrow, tree sparrow, linnet, bullfinch, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting**

Yellow list: teal, pochard, kestrel, lapwing, snipe, curlew, green sandpiper, lesser black-backed gull, stock dove, cuckoo, sand martin, swallow, house martin, tree pipit, yellow wagtail, grey wagtail, dunnock, willow warbler

TYPICAL CALCAREOUS GRASSLAND SPECIES:

field scabious, greater knapweed, fairy flax, common centaury

TYPICAL WETLAND SPECIES:

yellow flag, water mint, pink water-speedwell, water forget-me-not, gypsywort, common reedmace, Nuttal's pondweed, grey clubrush

Citation

Note: this site has recently changed to include a number of other meadows with similar habitat to the north and west of the original site. This change is not yet reflected in this description.

NAME: Meadows north-west of Blackthorn Hill

SITE CODE: 62A02

GRID REF: SP613213

DISTRICT: Cherwell

AREA: 3ha

This hay meadow has escaped agricultural improvement through the use of herbicides and fertilizers or through ploughing and reseedling. Consequently it is rich in wildflowers. The field is quite wet and has ridge and furrows which are a sign of medieval ploughing but also a sign of a long period without disturbance. Ridge and furrow is an important historical landscape feature. Meadows such as this are a national priority for nature conservation.

Wildflowers found here include an abundance of yellow rattle, common spotted orchid, oxeye daisy and knapweed. In the wetter areas there are many sedges and rushes and wetland wildflowers such as marsh bedstraw and tubular water-dropwort.

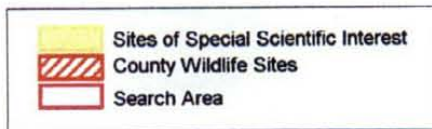
Data Search Skimmingdish Lane. Designated Sites



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Scale 1:25000





MAP 1 Site location



Ecological Planning & Research

CLIENT: Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance

PROJECT: Skimmingdish Lane

DATE: September 2005

P05/54

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MAP 2 Vegetation



Ecological Planning & Research







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CLIENT: Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance

PROJECT: Skimmingdish Lane

DATE: September 2005

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-  Scrub
-  Rough Grassland
-  Current or recently abandoned allotments
-  Salix Woodland and scrub
-  Ditch line
-  Larger trees



