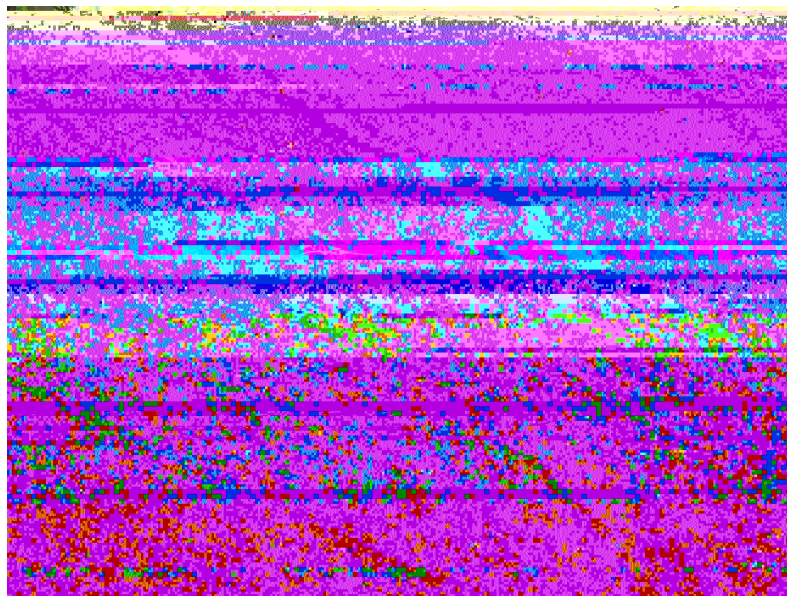


**CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE (SNCI)
& WILDLIFE SITES REVIEW**

***DOLPHIN ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS
SEPTEMBER 2010***



**Dolphin Ecological Surveys
6a Northfield Cottages
Isfield
Uckfield
East Sussex
TN22 5XN**

**01825 750645
info@ecodolphin.co.uk**

List of Sites

1. [Broadfield Playing Field Wood & Rathlin Road Flood Meadow and Pond](#)
2. [Crabbet Park](#)
3. [Ewhurst Wood SNCI](#)
4. [Goffs Park](#)
5. [Hawth Woods SNCI](#)
6. [Ifield Mill Pond and Water Gardens SNCI](#)
7. [Maidenbower Pond](#)
8. [Manor Royal Flood Pond \(also known as Crawters Brook\)](#)
9. [Target Hill LNR](#)
10. [Tilgate Golf Course SNCI and LNR](#)
11. [Tilgate Park SNCI](#)
12. [Woldhurstlea Wood SNCI](#)
13. [Worth Park \(including Gratton Pond SNCI\) & Gratton Park LNR](#)
14. [Worth Way SNCI](#)

Broadfield Playing Field Wood & Rathlin Flood Meadow and Pond

Survey date & weather

6th

The northern woodland grades into the wetland habitats within the floodplain of the stream and there is a dense, scrubby woodland edge habitat along the break of slope with banks of bramble and willows. This type of ecotone is of great value to a range of fauna.

The wetland area includes a valuable mosaic of vegetation including developing willow carr with some poplars in the north, the stream, the shallow pond and an area of wet grassland and fen vegetation.

The wet grassland appears to be largely unmanaged and there are stands of tall wetland

3. Continue to manage and maintain paths and rides through the woodland but avoid opening up scrubby, inaccessible areas that act as wildlife refuges.
4. Carry out rotational mowing of the wet grassland/fen area to prevent succession to woodland. Cut and remove vegetation from alternate

Crabbet Park

Survey date & weather:

19th May 2010 in warm and sunny conditions and 3rd August in cloudy weather.

Ewhurst Wood SSCI

Survey date & weather:

4th May 2010. Cold and cloudy weather conditions.

Site summary and current condition

There are three parts of Ewhurst Wood, separated by major roads and there is considerable public access especially into the two northern sections of woodland. The wood is a valuable area of urban habitat, but suffers from high levels of litter and disturbance. Managing this site needs to take into account the amount of use it receives and should focus on access needs and control of abuses.

The woodland appears to be little changed from the previous survey in 1992, though the amount of disturbance and litter may be greater than in the past.

All three areas of woodland have a reasonably diverse structure and patches of good ground flora with ancient woodland indicator species present. There are also non-native, invasive species present across the site.

General description (with common and notable species)

The eastern part of Ewhurst Wood, adjoining West Green Park and the ambulance station, comprises oak, birch and occasional ash with holly and hazel dominating the shrub layer. The ground flora has carpets of bluebell and wood anemone with some patches of bramble. Rowan and wild cherry are also present and occasional cherry laurel. There is an old wood bank and ditch along the eastern edge of the wood and abundant deadwood present. A dense, unmanaged area of planted trees adjoins the northern edge of the ancient woodland area.

The southern part of Ewhurst Wood suffers

Ifield Mill Pond and Water Gardens SNCI

Maidenbower Pond

Survey date & weather:

19th May 2010. Hot and cloudy conditions.

Bladder sedge is a notable species within this area of wetland habitat. The invasive and non-native Indian balsam is present across much of the site, but especially in the fen area.

In the southern part of the site it appears that the ground is drying out and young oak trees are becoming established in the sward along with dense stands of bramble and bracken. This will eventually cause a loss of the wetland habitats if remedial management is not carried out.

In the south of the site, adjoining the main road, there is a mown picnic area with a coarse, ruderal sward and young mixed hedgerow shrubs and some older oak, hornbeam and horse chestnut trees on the edges of it. This area is separated from the rest of the site by an earth bund, which has much rubbish on it.

The site has good potential to support a range of breeding birds, invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles. Rabbit grazing is very evident across the site.

Management recommendations and further surveys needed

1. Remove the clump of Japanese knotweed and dispose of the material appropriately.
2. Control Indian balsam by pulling up plants before they set seed.
3. Remove rubbish and metal debris from site edges.
4. Institute rotational fen management by cutting and removal in sections on a 4-year rotation.
5. Deepen the northern, shallow pond and create a new pond in the south.
6. Remove young regenerating oak trees in the south.
7. Carry out a reptile and amphibian survey.
8. Promote the development of more continuous, dense scrubby margins.
9. Plant additional pollen, nectar and fruit bearing shrubs on the margins of the picnic area.

Target Hill LNR

Survey date & weather:

27th May 2010. Cool and drizzly/cloudy conditions.

Site summary and current condition

Target Hill LNR has a mosaic of grassland, scrub and woodland habitats with a network of surfaced and mown grassy paths. There is a pond in the south of the site and wet flushes in the grassland and woodland nearby.

The habitats on Target Hill are of relatively recent origin but nevertheless are of high

Tilgate Golf Course SNCI and LNR

Survey date & weather:

25th June 2010. Hot and sunny conditions.

Site summary and current condition

Tilgate Golf Course forms the eastern part of the larger Tilgate Park SNCI. The Golf Course includes areas of semi-natural habitat of high biodiversity value including broadleaved and coniferous woodland, acid grassland, heathland and ponds.

The site is primarily used for recreation including golf, cycling and walking but the extensive areas of high value habitat make it an important addition to the SNCI and an area rich in wildlife. There is a designated cycleway through the site as well as public footpaths.

The condition of this site is mixed. Some areas are well managed and there has been heathland restoration work in parts of the plantation woodland, but there is considerable scope for more removal of invasive species and better management of the woodland and the heathland areas. Less intensive, more wildlife-friendly management of the golf course rough would also be beneficial.

General description (with common and notable species)6141()-4.60815.3s.66 38.4802 Tm ()Tj ET Q Q q 8

The central part of the golf course has the best areas of acid grassland and heathland vegetation. Whilst blocks of ling have been retained within the playing area they are now rather even-aged and would benefit from management to enhance their age structure. The edges of the fairways across the golf course are quite close

Tilgate Park SNCI

Survey date & weather:

25th June 2010. Hot and sunny conditions.

Site summary and current condition

Tilgate Park SNCI is a large and very important site within Crawley Borough for its wildlife, educational facilities, formal parkland landscape and as an area for recreation. Adjoining areas of semi-natural habitat complement the Park and add to its overall biodiversity potential.

The Park contains many different habitats, from formal parkland to ancient woodland, large open waterbodies and small shaded ponds, with areas of unimproved acid grassland, heathland and scrub. The wildlife found within these habitats is already well documented by CBC staff and others and the site is known to be particularly rich in birdlife (especially wetland species), reptiles and amphibians.

The focus of this SNCI review was on the potential for Tilgate Park to support dormice. There are records of this legally protected species from woodland on the site and from the adjoining motorway embankment. Survey effort was therefore concentrated on the woodland areas in the western and southern parts of the site and the parkland areas were largely excluded. Woodland to the east of Tilgate Lake was not accessible for survey due to ongoing construction work during summer 2010.

To the southeast of the Nature Centre there is a further substantial block of woodland with parkland and formal gardens on its margins. The woodland includes extensive pine plantation as well as areas of sweet chestnut, beech, birch and varied amounts of rhododendron throughout. Willows are present in wet f

areas management for dormice may be a lower priority than heathland recreation or management for reptiles.

Management priorities to enhance all the woodland for dormice should be:

- To promote connectivity of suitable structurally diverse habitat across the whole site.
- To continue gradual removal of rhododendron.
- To promote the development of a structurally complex and diverse shrub layer.
- To promote species within woodlands that provide important resources to dormice, especially bramble, honeysuckle and hazel.
- Deer browsing may be a problem with regrowth if coppicing or thinning is carried out to promote dense natural regeneration. It may be necessary to use brash piles or tree tubes in the short term to protect young tree or shrub growth.

The western wood is currently too even-aged, the shrub layer is very sparse and there is a lack of temporal continuity of dormouse food and habitat connectivity. The wet areas have the best semi-natural character and potential to support dormice, so management work should radiate outwards from this core area, aiming to enhance woodland structure and diversity. Sycamore is present at low levels and care should be taken to avoid its dominance when light levels increase through management. Selective removal of sycamore may be necessary in future (though it is valuable for dormice so shouldn't be eliminated).

Specific recommendations for the western wood are:

- Thin even-aged beech and birch to enhance structural diversity.
- Create glades to promote more prolific ground flora and shrub layer growth.
- Remove rhododendron especially in southwest where old sweet chestnut dominates.
- Selectively cut large sweet chestnut coppice stools.
- Restore areas of pine plantation to mixed broadleaved woodland.
- Promote growth of the existing occasional hawthorn seedlings and other shrub species.

Other management recommendations for Tilgate Park are:

- Remove the small stand of Japanese knotweed west of Titmus Lake.
- At the GCN pond south of Silt Lake, remove the area of small, dense conifers on the northern edge of the pond. Increase open water by partial clearance of vegetation.

A good range of common woodland bird species is present considering the urban setting of the woodland and the site has the potential to support a variety of small mammals and invertebrates.

includes typical plants of neutral grassland such as common knapweed, common birds-foot-trefoil, germander speedwell, lady's bedstraw, field woodrush, common sorrel, sweet vernal-

- Selectively cut large sweet chestnut stools along the stream to open up small glades

Worth Way SNCI

There are non-native garden escapes throughout the site, some of them arising from dumped garden waste and some deliberately planted. These include Montbretia, daffodil, cyclamen, Wilsons honeysuckle, cotoneaster, fringe cups and kerria. Many of these species