

**COUNTY:** NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

**SITE NAME:** BANHAW, SPRING &  
BLACKTHORNS WOODS

**District:** East Northamptonshire

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

**Local Planning Authority:** East Northamptonshire District Council

**National Grid Reference:** SP 988876  
SP 967881  
SP 952880

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 141

**1:10,000:** SP 98 NE

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):**

**Date of Last Revision:**

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 1986

**Date of Last Revision:**

**Area:** 125.6 ha 310.4 ac

**Other Information:** This is a new site.

### **Description and Reasons for Notification**

Banhaw, Spring and Blackthorns Woods consist of three neighbouring blocks of semi-natural broadleaved woodland which together form one of the largest remnants of the ancient Royal Forest of Rockingham. The vegetation conforms to the wet ash-maple woodland type with a coppice and standards structure, overlying calcareous clay soils.

Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* both as standards and regrowth from old coppice, forms the main component of the canopy in both woods with pendunculate oak *Quercus robur* occurring infrequently. There is a strong secondary element of field maple *Acer campestre* and in some areas silver birch *Betula pendula*, willows *Salix* spp. and crab apple *Malus sylvestris* are also present.

The understorey is composed of derelict coppiced field maple, ash and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* with hazel *Corylus avellana*, Midland hawthorn *Crataegus oxyacanthoides*, wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus* also occurring.

The ground flora in all the woods is rich and varied with some areas dominated by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* with abundant enchanter's-nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*, yellow archangel *Limnium galeobdolon*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* and male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*. Other parts of the woods support a variety of grasses, including tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, wood millet *Milium effusum* and wood melick *Melica uniflora*. Notable woodland species occur throughout the site and include herb Paris *Paris quadrifolia*, sweet woodruff *Galium odoratum* and the orchids, early-purple *Orchis mascula*, common spotted *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and common twayblade *Listera ovata*. Sanicle *Sanicula europaea* and greater butterfly orchid *Plantanthera chlorantha* are also present.

The numerous and varied rides support a good range of plants including angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, yellow pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum* and the sedges *Carex sylvatica*, *C. pendula*, *C. remota* and notably *C. strigosa*. They provide valuable additional habitats for butterflies and other invertebrates.

Re-presentation of details approved by Council. Re-typed August 1999.