
Nationally rare species: recorded from 1-15 10x10 km squares in Britain, and listed in one of the draft or published Red Data Books

Nationally scarce species: recorded from 16-100 km squares in Britain
valley bogs have developed.

Large areas of dry heath and acid grassland occur on the higher ground along with extensive areas of bracken, gorse, birch scrub and invasive pine. Depressions in the southern part of the Common contain bog, carr, wet heath and acidic marshy grassland communities. Extensive areas of secondary mixed woodland occur around the margins of the site and at Gracious Pond, a former mediaeval fish pond. There are several small acidic ponds on the common, but these are of recent origin.

**Dry Heath**

The dry heath and acidic grassland complexes contain heather *Calluna vulgaris*, bell heather *Erica cinerea*, dwarf gorse *Ulex minor* and bristle bent grass *Agrostis curtisii* (for which Chobham is the most easterly location in Britain). Most of the purer heather stands are even-aged; these are prevented from reaching maturity by frequent accidental fires. Purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* is an important component of the bristle bent grassland and tolerates all but the driest areas. A colony of Deptford pink *Dianthus armeria* (which is very rare in Surrey) occurs on a small patch of grassland at the eastern edge of the site.

**Wet heath and bog**

The wet heath areas are dominated by cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and purple moor-grass. The more boggy areas support round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, oblong-leaved sundew *Drosera intermedia*, cross-leaved heath, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, common cotton grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, bog pimpernel *Anagallis tenella* and heath spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*. Several rare Surrey species also occur in these bogs, including hare’s tail cotton grass *Eriophorum vaginatum*, bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, royal fern *Osmunda regalis*, the scarce marsh gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe* and the rare marsh clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*.

**Woodland and scrub**

Silver birch *Betula pendula* and Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* have invaded large areas of dry heath. Areas of more mature mixed woodland contain oak *Quercus robur*. Alder *Alnus glutinosa* dominates the carr woodland at Gracious Pond and smaller areas of willow carr (*Salix* species) occur throughout the Common. Gracious Pond also contains two ponds, a stream and some drier oak woodland, and supports rich and varied populations of fungi, mosses and ferns.

**Open water**

There are several areas of standing water on Chobham Common which are of importance primarily for the rich invertebrate fauna they support. A pond in the north-east of the site has recently been created and some of the shallower ones fill only erratically. The largest water body, adjacent to Sunningdale golf course, is used as a reservoir and is too deep to support an extensive aquatic flora. The larger pond margins are dominated by rushes (*Juncus* species).

**Bryophytes and lichens**

The Common has a rich bryophyte (mosses and liverworts) and lichen flora. Bog mosses, including *Sphagnum compactum*, *S. palustre*, *S. recurvum* and *S. papillosum* are locally abundant in the boggy
areas. Other heathland species include the moss *Dicranum spurium* and the lichens *Cladonia strepsilis* and *C. arbuscula*.

**Invertebrates**

The Common is a very important national site for invertebrates, particularly ants, bees and wasps (Hymenoptera), aquatic beetles (Coleoptera), flies (Diptera), butterflies and moths (Lepidoptera) and spiders (Araneae). Sixty-four scarce or rare species have been recorded. Rarities include the ant *Formica rufibarbis*, known elsewhere in Britain only in the Isles of Scilly, the robber fly *Eutolmus rufibarbis*, the saladid bug *Micranthia marginalis* and sizeable colonies of the silver-studded blue butterfly *Plebejus argus*. Chobham Common has the largest known spider fauna in Britain (approximately 50% of all British species have been recorded here), including the rare *Oxyopes heterophthalmus, Cheiracanthium pennyi, Araneus alsine* and *Uloborus walckenaerius*.

**Birds**

The extensive open heath and scrub within the site support many species of characteristic birds, often at high densities. The population of nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* is particularly large. Other rare species include woodlark *Lullula arborea*, Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata* and hobby *Falco subbuteo*; the diverse bird community includes more than 80 species: more common birds include stonechat *Saxicola torquata*, tree and meadow pipits *Anthus trivialis* and *A. pratensis* and yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*.

Chobham Common SSSI forms part of Thames Basin Heaths pSPA, which consists of a group of heathlands extending from Wisley in Surrey to Tadley in Hampshire and Bracknell in Berkshire, supporting nationally important populations of a number of bird species. These include nightjar, woodlark, dartford warbler (all listed on Annexe 1 of the Birds Directive as being rare and in need of protection) and hobby. Thames Basin Heaths pSPA, taken as a whole, supports an estimated 9.0, 29.2, 16.3 and 3.2% respectively of the British breeding populations of these species.