ENGLISH NATURE

Views About Management

A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Binglett's Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

This statement represents English Nature's views about the management of the SSSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the site's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. English Nature has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of SSSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the SSSI. Also, there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation. English Nature's written consent is still required before carrying out any operation likely to damage the features of special interest (see your SSSI notification papers for a list of these operations). English Nature welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the SSSI to ensure that the management of this site conserves and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

Management Principles

There may be several different ways in which the wood can be managed to best conserve its value for wildlife - by promoting an appropriate woodland structure, by ensuring regeneration and by looking after the things that make this wood special.

A diverse woodland structure with some open space, some areas of dense understorey, and an overstorey of more mature trees (which may be the standard trees under a coppice-with-standards regime) is important. A range of ages and species within and between stands is desirable.

Some dead and decaying wood such as fallen logs, old hollow trees or old coppice stools is essential for providing habitats for fungi and dead wood invertebrates. Work may, however, be needed to make safe dangerous trees where they occur in areas of high public access.

Open spaces, either temporary gaps created by felling or coppicing or more permanent areas such as rides and glades, benefit other groups of invertebrates such as

butterflies. They should be of sufficient size to ensure that sunny conditions prevail for most of the day. Rides and glades may require cutting to keep them open.

Felling, thinning or coppicing may be used to create or maintain variations in the structure of the wood, and non-native trees and shrubs can be removed at this time. To avoid disturbance to breeding birds the work is normally best done between the beginning of August and the end of February. Work should be avoided when the ground is soft, to prevent disturbing the soil and ground flora. Wet woodland by streams and other waterbodies is often best left undisturbed. Normally, successive felling, thinning or coppicing operations should be spread through the wood to avoid too much disturbance in one area. However, where there is open space interest (e.g. rich butterfly populations) adjacent plots may be worked to encourage the spread of species that are only weakly mobile.

Natural regeneration from seed or stump regrowth (as in coppice) is preferred to planting because it helps maintain the local patterns of species and the inherent genetic character of the site.

Deer management and protection from rabbits or livestock are often necessary. Whilst light or intermittent grazing may increase woodland diversity, heavy browsing can damage the ground flora and prevent successful regeneration.

Where they are a threat to the interest of the wood, invasive introductions such as *Rhododendron ponticum* or Himalayan balsam should, where practical, be controlled.

The attached notes give further details of the management that may be appropriate for your site.

Coppice and coppice-with-standards

Woodlands with a recent history of active coppice management should continue to be managed in this way. Continued coppice management will maintain the characteristic fauna and ground flora associated with traditionally managed coppice. Stools should be cut using a suitable rotation to periodically open up the canopy and create a succession of conditions at any one time ranging from open ground to dense pole-stage crops.

Coppicing should be carried out between October and March to avoid disturbance to breeding birds and minimise damage to the emerging ground flora. The size of coupes should be related to the woodland area and the length of the rotation. For weakly mobile species, coupes should be cut successively adjacent to one another to allow them to colonise new habitat easily. A more dispersed pattern is appropriate where dormice are an important component of the woodland. Significant areas of coppice between the first cut and ten years growth should be maintained as many species depend on the early stages of the coppice cycle. New coppice re-growth

usually requires protection from deer browsing or rabbit grazing. A hedge around coppice at the edge of the wood provides useful shelter for warmth-loving animals inhabiting the compartment.

In areas of coppice-with-standards, a low density of standard trees should be maintained as these provide mature timber habitats and increase structural and species diversity within coppice. They should not, however, be sufficiently numerous as to shade the site. The succession of replacement standards should be ensured either by singling the underlying coppice or retaining maiden stems arising from natural regeneration.

Old coppice stools and over mature standards should be retained to provide a supply of dead and decaying wood to provide suitable habitat for associated invertebrate fauna.

Streams and ditches

Woodland streams and gills add to the habitat diversity of the woodland and result in increased humidity in areas adjacent to them making then important sites for mosses and liverworts and a range of invertebrate fauna. Particular care should be taken to avoid over-shading of streams and ditches to maintain the distinctive flora and fauna these habitats support (though long-shaded woodland streams have their own distinctive fauna and should not be opened up). Care should be taken when carrying out woodland management operations in the vicinity not to cause any damage to or obstruct the watercourses or any of the associated communities they support.

Rides, glades and open spaces

Rides and glades are important for the distinctive flora and fauna that compose the grassland and tall herb communities they support. The maintenance and continuity of open spaces is critical for light-demanding grassland species and management should maximise light conditions in these areas. Mowing is usually necessary unless grazing pressure is sufficient to maintain open areas. Ride side vegetation should be cut on rotation to provide a graded woodland edge from tall trees to shrubs to tall herb and grass layers. Rides should ideally have a scalloped edge to create areas of warm and sheltered habitat for invertebrates. Rides should be wide enough to provide open, sunny conditions for the majority of the day.

Ponds

Woodland ponds add to the habitat diversity of the woodland and should be well maintained to benefit the range of associated invertebrate species they support. Pond-side vegetation should be managed to create a combination of shaded and light conditions. Particular care should be taken to avoid over-shading of ponds to maintain the distinctive flora and fauna these habitats support (though long-shaded woodland ponds have their own distinctive fauna and should not be opened up). Whenever woodland management is carried out, care should be taken to avoid damaging ponds and their associated habitats. Old ponds should not be dredged

where there is a risk that this will disrupt sediment layers that can be valuable for tracing the history of the wood.