

Views About Management

A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Hampstead Heath Woods 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 the 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

Broadleaved semi-natural woodland

There are many different ways in which broadleaved woodland can be managed to conserve its value for wildlife; however the following gives views on the regimes that are most appropriate on your site.

A diverse woodland structure, with an understory, and a more mature overstory is important at this site. A range of ages and species within and between stands is desirable. Some dead and decaying wood, such as fallen logs, can provide habitats for fungi and invertebrates. However, work may be needed to make safe dangerous trees in areas of high public access.

Non-native trees and shrubs should be removed from the site including invasive species, such as *Rhododendron* or Himalayan balsam.

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.

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

Protection from rabbits may be necessary at this site

Flush and spring fen

Groundwater sometimes breaks out on the surface, either as gentle seepages, which give rise to flushes, or through greater flows that are evident as springs. The plants and animals that occur in and around these habitats are dependent on the water chemistry and flow rate. Mosses, liverworts, sedges and rushes are common and often predominate, whilst several species of orchid are also associated with these communities.

The quantity and quality of the groundwater must be maintained, though the quantity is not likely to be naturally constant throughout the seasons or between wet and dry years.

Drainage schemes should not intercept the source of groundwater to springs or flushes, or reduce the area of surface they irrigate.

All habitats

The habitats within this site are highly sensitive to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides, applications of which should be avoided both within the site itself and in adjacent surrounding areas. Herbicides may be useful in targeting certain invasive species, but should be used with extreme care. Access to this site, and any recreational activities within, may also need to be controlled.