



## **Views About Management**

### **A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Inwood, Warleigh 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. The attached notes give broad views on a range of regimes that may be appropriate on your site.

Management should maintain a mature and diverse woodland structure that supports a range of woodland habitats including a well-developed under-storey and diverse ground flora. An uneven canopy height and a diversity of ages and species amongst trees within the same stand is desirable.

It may be appropriate to undertake woodland thinning, using a suitable regime, to maintain structural diversity whilst ensuring continuity of the mature woodland structure. Any necessary thinning can be used to target the removal of non-native species present on site and should be carried out between October and March, avoiding the bird breeding season. Care should be taken to minimise damage to the woodland soil and ground flora and works should avoid periods of soft ground conditions.

Natural regeneration of site-native trees should be promoted to maintain continuity of the woodland habitat. Some measure of deer control will usually be necessary for successful

natural regeneration. In the absence of natural regeneration some planting may be appropriate. However, this should be composed only of native species of local provenance.

The maintenance of a supply of dead and decaying wood is essential for providing valuable habitat for the associated invertebrate fauna. Standing dead wood, fallen trunks and limbs and a proportion of felled timber should be retained on site and left to decay *in situ*.

Work may, however, be needed to make safe dangerous trees where they occur in areas of high public access.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Parts of the wood may be left unmanaged to benefit species that do best under low disturbance. In addition, lack of management allows for the operation of natural processes such as windblow. Within these areas some trees will eventually die naturally and dead wood accumulate.

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.