

LBS and SACs, SPAs and SSSIs

Sites already given a national biodiversity designation (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protected Areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest) do not require to be assessed as LBS. However, the wildlife aspects of geological SSSIs may justify being assessed as LBS as may important habitats which are adjacent to a SSSIs .



The Wildlife Information Centre

The Wildlife Information Centre (IWIC) is the biological records centre for the Lothians and the Scottish Borders. The Centre is a not-for-profit company with charitable status which, as a 'one-stop-shop', provides an objective, independent wildlife information service for people and organisations from all sectors.

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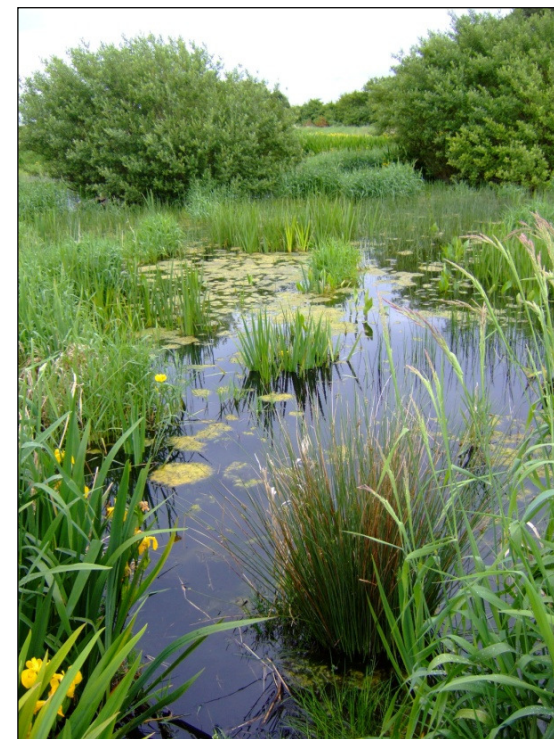
*For more information about our
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Imogen German Records Ecologist

The Wildlife Information Centre

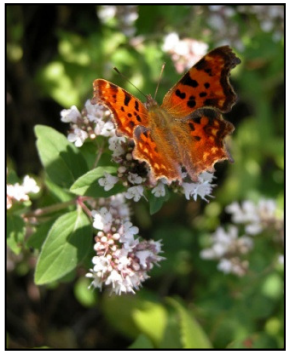
for the Lothians and the Borders

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY SITES



Local Biodiversity Sites in the Lothians and Borders

The purpose of Local Biodiversity Sites



The network of Local Biodiversity Sites (LBS) in the Lothians aims to ensure the conservation, maintenance and enhancement of species and habitats of substantive nature conservation value.

The system identifies and selects all areas of

value, including the most important, and the most distinctive, species and habitats within a national, regional, and local context. Sites within the series also have an important role to play in contributing to the public enjoyment of nature conservation.

The LBS System

The LBS system was established in 2008 following the recommendations in the report produced by a partnership between Scottish Natural Heritage, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Wildlife Trust, which gave guidance to Local Authorities in Scotland on how to fulfil their biodiversity duty as far as the local biodiversity heritage is concerned. The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC), working to the recommendations in the report produced a system for identifying, assessing and conserving local sites which are important to wildlife based on existing data, additional survey work and aerial photographs using the database of information held by TWIC about the wildlife of the south-east of Scotland. Our starting point was to collect and collate all of the knowledge about existing wildlife sites along with any other proposals in their assessments.

LBS systems in the Lothians and the Borders

The LBS systems that are currently underway or in development are organised by Local Authority Area: The City of Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian and the Scottish Borders. The systems used follow national guidance¹ and are run by the Local Authority and coordinated by TWIC, who provide the specialist technical support. The LBS Group, set up by the council, is responsible for managing the LBS system, and oversees the identification of selection criteria, selection of sites, review and monitoring of sites and development of projects to ensure the conservation of sites. The LBS group is composed of representatives of various organisations including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Botanical Society of the British Isles, Scottish Natural Heritage, and Butterfly Conservation.



¹ *Guidance on Establishing and Managing Local Nature Conservation Site Systems in Scotland*
<http://www.snh.org.uk/publications/online/heritagemanagements/LNCS/default.asp>

Site Selection Process

Existing data on potential sites is collated by TWIC and an assessment made, provided that sufficient current data are available to make one. For an assessment there must be a recent plant survey for the site and normally additional species records for other groups. Where there is insufficient data, the site will require further survey prior to assessment.

The site selection criteria for LBS are grouped into six categories, five relating to the sites biodiversity, and an additional category for social factors:

1. *Species status*: This is an assessment of the combination of the rarity of a species and its association with the site (e.g. are they resident, are there significant populations etc).
2. *Species diversity*: This refers to the number of different species found on a site, and is usually based on the number of plants found on the site for each broad habitat type (e.g. woodland, wetland, grassland).
3. *Habitat importance*: This considers habitat rarity, naturalness and extent as a single criterion.
4. *Connectivity to a habitat network or corridor*: This takes into context the wide landscape context of the site, in the context of relevant habitats.
5. *Biodiversity feature*: This allows for extra weighting to be given to a site that have species biodiversity features not fully taken into account in the other criteria such as the presence of great crested newt populations, bat roosts etc.
6. *Social factors*: In this section an assessment is made of the site's value for enjoyment, value for education and community involvement and its contribution to landscape quality.

The scores for the five biodiversity criteria are combined to give an overall biodiversity score. The score allocated for the social factors is only taken into consideration if a site's biodiversity value is considered to be borderline for it qualifying as an LBS.