

Land designated for nature conversation in the New Forest National Park

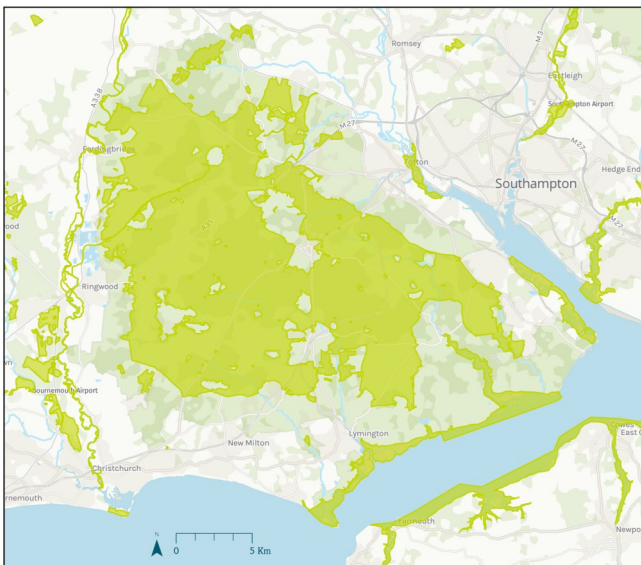
The New Forest has multiple conservation designations, find out more about the importance of these in relation to the unique freshwater habitats across the National Park.

Conservation designations mainly impact development and the management of land. The difference between each designation are based on laws either decided nationally or internationally. Areas of land can have multiple designations due to the protection required of specific features including habitat type or species, however this can also make the situation confusing.

Internationally or European protected sites

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

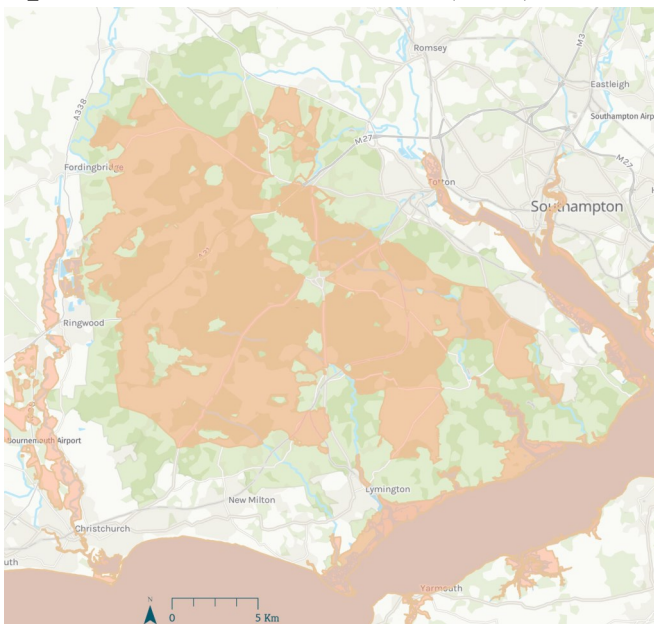
SAC's are strictly protected sites for habitat types and species that are **most in need of protection at a European level.**



The New Forest has many freshwater habitats that are strictly protected under the European Commission Habitats Directive known as SACs and these habitat types and species are those considered to be most in need of protection at a European level because of their rarity and fragility.

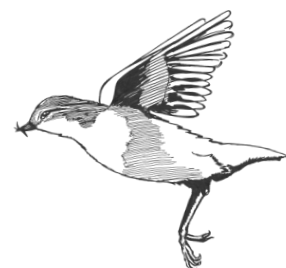
Under the EC Habitats Directive the [New Forest has eleven Annex 1 habitats](#) which are the primary reason for the selection of the New Forest SAC. **Out of the eleven, seven of these habitats have freshwater as a component.** Of these, oligotrophic waters and bog woodland are the rarest freshwater habitats in England. The Annex 1 habitats are dependent on clean freshwater and grazing, and include mires, wet heath, purple moor grass meadows, and wet woodlands.

Special Protection Area (SPA)



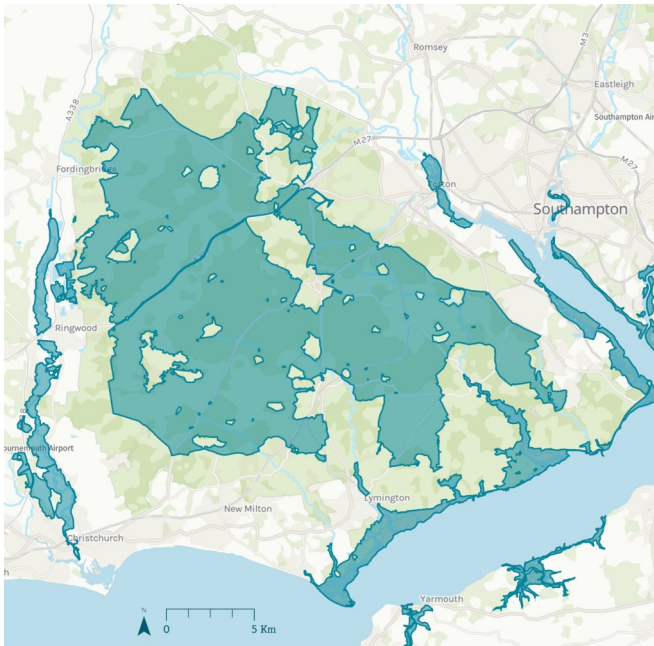
SPA's are strictly protected sites for rare and vulnerable birds, including migratory species.

Under the European Commission Habitats Directive, the [New Forest is designated as an SPA](#) for the specific wild birds. These include nightjar, hen harrier, hobby, woodlark, honey buzzard, wood warbler, and Dartford warbler. These birds are not exclusive to freshwater habitats but will most likely use these habitats as part of their ecological range.



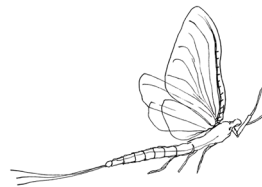
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance

Ramsar's are internationally significant wetland sites, initially selected for waterbirds however now accounting for non-bird species and some habitat features.



The [New Forest is a Ramsar site](#) under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The Ramsar citation describes the New Forest as:

'The suite of mires is regarded as the locus classicus of this type of mire in Britain. Other wetland habitats include numerous ponds of varying size and water chemistry including several ephemeral ponds and a network of small streams mainly acidic in character which have no lowland equivalent in the UK.'



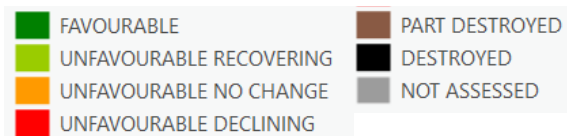
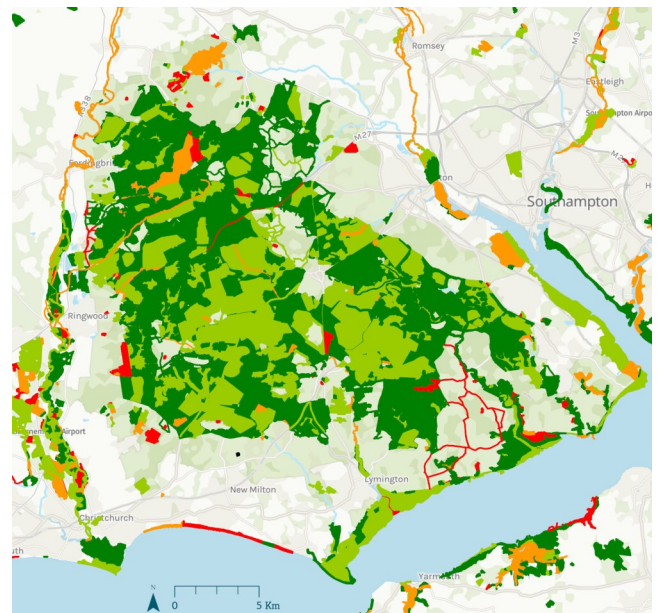
Nationally protected sites

Special Sites of Scientific Interest

Legally protected to maintain and protect a specific aspect of biological or earth heritage interest.

[Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#) designation also covers Crown Lands and other land holdings of the New Forest. SSSI is a national designation and sites are notified under section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside and Act 1981 and administrated by Natural England. There are 582 live units in the New Forest SSSI that are assessed for condition. The [New Forest citation](#) gives in-depth reference to the SAC Annex 1 freshwater habitats extended to other freshwater habitats of national importance and to the SPA designated features. **All seven sites of special geological or physiographic interest are in freshwater habitats.**

'This wide range of habitats support an assemblage of nationally rare and scarce plants and a nationally important assemblage of rare and scarce invertebrates.'



Marine Conservation Zones

Legally protected designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) for nationally important marine habitats and species such as cold water coral reefs.

There are no zones directly off the New Forest coastline. However, there are [three within the Solent](#) on the coast of the Isle of Wight.



Other land designations

Locally protected sites

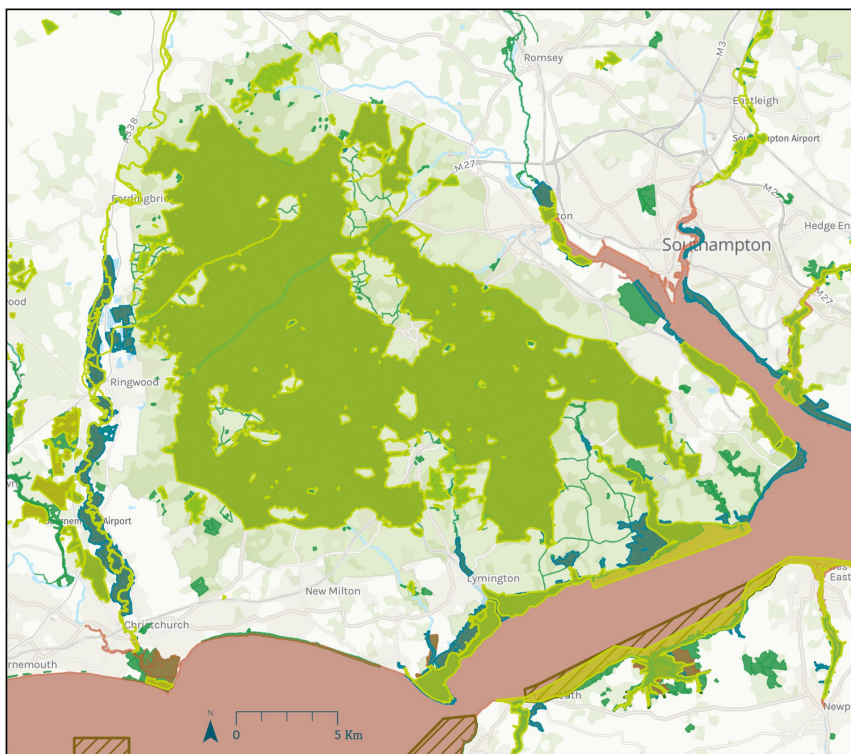
Created by local authorities, councils or charities based on the distinctive habitats or threatened species. These are not legally protected but some species within them may be. Often these sites are managed for multiple purposes. Within Hampshire these are called Sites Important for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

National Parks

Designed by the government as an area important to national heritage and therefore have greater planning controls and management, with objectives for nature and wellbeing.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Protected to conserve natural beauty. Similar to National Parks with extra statutory planning decisions but created at different times with a difference in original purpose and powers.



- Special Areas of Conservation (England) © Natural England selection selection
- Ramsar (England) © Natural England
- Special Protection Areas (England) © Natural England
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest Condition Units (England) © Natural England
- Marine Conservation Zone

This map demonstrates the complex crossover between the designations.

The core area of the New Forest classified as a SAC, Ramsar site, SPA and SSSI.



All these different designations recognise the idea of protecting the best. This is a vital concept when it comes to halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity; a flora and fauna source is needed to re-establish biodiversity in areas where it has been lost. The New Forest is wonderful for this, with the variety of different freshwater habitats supporting more than two-thirds of all the UK's freshwater species and more than a third of the UK's rarest plants and invertebrates. Protecting the landscape is part of the solution to ensure long-term survival of endangered species. Restoring and creating new habitats are also part of the solution to create a bigger, better, more joined-up landscape which will enable the movement and establishment of species beyond the Forest itself.