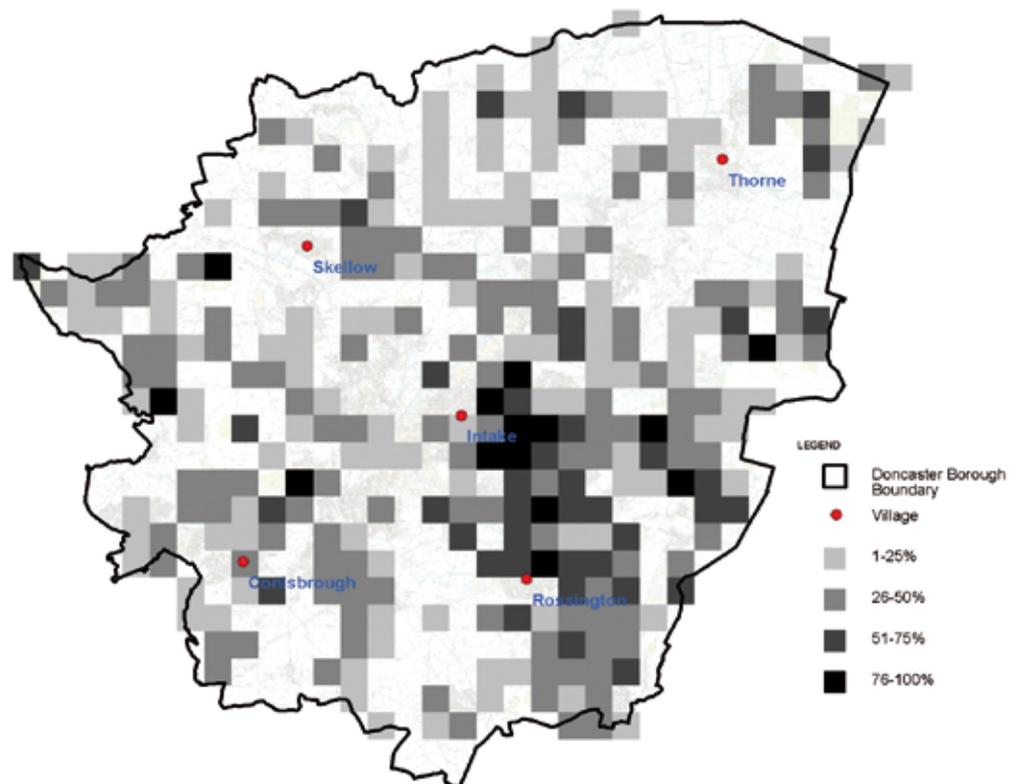


# Lowland Heathy Oak Woodland

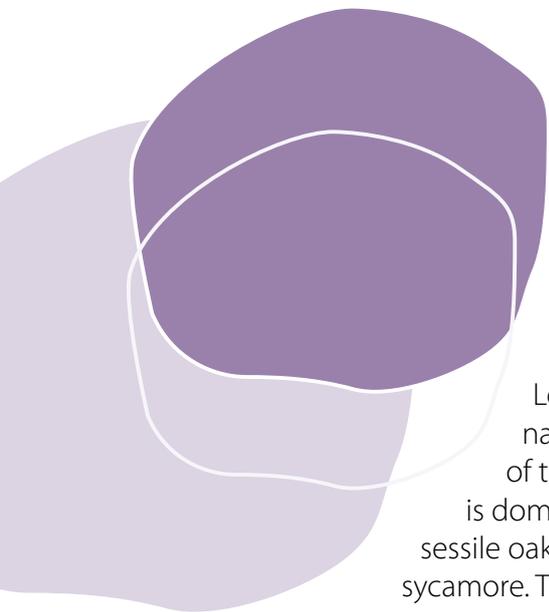
## Summary Habitat Action Plan

Doncaster Local Biodiversity Action Plan  
January 2007



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## 1 Habitat description

Lowland Heathy Oak Woodland is characteristic of base-poor soils (pH between 4 and 5.5) and forms one of the major kinds of woodland in lowland Britain. Britain is one of the least-wooded countries within Europe; therefore any remaining areas of ancient semi-natural and replanted ancient woodland are of great significance to the biodiversity of the UK.

Lowland Heathy Oak Woodlands are the commonest form of semi-natural woodland in the drier, neutral to slightly acidic soils of many of the eastern parts of the Doncaster Borough. This heathy woodland is dominated by a canopy of pedunculate oak and its hybrid with the sessile oak, together with birch, occasional ash and variable amounts of sycamore. The understorey tends to include an abundance of holly, wych elm, rowan and scattered hazel.

The woodland edges tend to have a dominance of scrubby thorns including the rare midland hawthorn. Gorse, broom and the lower-growing wood sage can also be found in woodland edges and transitions to heathy areas with more open ground.

## 2 Characteristic species

Honey suckle

Bracken

Bramble

Bluebell

Wood anemone

Greater stitchwort

Creeping soft grass

Wood sorrel

Wood melic

Wood meadowgrass

Wood millet

Foxglove

Red campion

Lesser celandine

Male fern

Broad buckler fern

Lady fern

Hard fern

Wavy hair-grass

Common bent

Heath woodrush

Tormentil

Sheep's sorrel

Heath bedstraw

Heather

Scaly male fern

Wood speedwell

## 3 Current factors causing loss or decline

- There is a lack of traditional woodland management on many sites.
- Uncontrolled grazing by deer and rabbits can deplete populations of bluebell.
- There are few markets for the products of coppicing and pollarding.
- Fragmentation and loss caused by development.
- Uncontrolled access and inappropriate recreational use.
- Formal recreational activities can also have an effect on the quality of woodland habitats by causing noise, littering and disturbance.
- Major disruption to woodland can be caused by large-scale harvesting techniques.
- Replanting using non-native trees reduces habitat quality.
- Dead wood habitats are lacking in many public woodlands, where standing dead trees or dead limbs are often removed for reasons of public safety.
- Invasion by non-native species.

## 4 Objectives, targets & proposed actions

Objective	Target	Ref	Action	Lead & Partners
2) To restore degraded sites and ensure appropriate management of Lowland Heathy Woodlands.	3 additional sites with management plans by 2008 and a further 3 by 2010.	2.1	Develop/review and implement Site Management Plans for woodlands in public ownership. Ensure compatibility with HAPs and SAPs. Review Site Management Plans on a minimum 10 year cycle.	DMBC, Natural England (NE), Forestry Commission (FC), Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT)
	6 sites with active management for specific species by 2008 and a further 6 by 2010.	2.3	Identify all Lowland Heathy Oak Woodland sites where Priority Species are present and implement appropriate specialist management schemes to benefit these species.	DMBC, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), FC, NE, Private landowners  NE able to incorporate into Environmental Stewardship once sites have been identified
3) To create 8.5ha of heathy woodland linked to existing woodlands grassland and heathlands within the Coal Measures and Humberhead Levels Natural Areas.	By 2010.	3.2	Use new woodlands to link existing Lowland Heathy Oak Woodland sites (and also acidic grassland and heathland sites).	DMBC, FWAG, FC, NE, Private landowners
4) Raise public awareness of the importance and special characteristics of Lowland Heathy Woodland.	1 per year.	4.2	Run species survey and identification workshops open to the general public.	Doncaster Naturalists' Society (DNS)
	1 demonstration by 2008.	4.4	Promote good practice through the use of demonstration sites and workshops.	DMBC, NE, Linking the Environment And Farming (LEAF), YWT, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)

## 5 This habitat in Doncaster

The following describes where in the Doncaster Borough good examples of this habitat can be found, however, named sites may be privately owned and therefore are not publicly accessible. For further information about this habitat and where it can be found in Doncaster see the 'Lowland Heathy Oak Woodland Habitat Action Plan'.

Howell Wood is one of Doncaster's few examples of heathy acidic woodland on the Coal Measures although this woodland together with woodlands such as Challenger Wood (with Spring Wood), Hooton Thorn Covert and Hooton Pagnell Wood and the woodlands of Frickley Park (including Whin Covert) have been modified by coniferous plantation.

Bawtry Forest covers an extensive area of the Sherwood Sandstone ridge which although highly modified through coniferous plantation retains many elements of heathy woodland ground flora. Kings Wood is an excellent example of heathy woodland with very old sweet chestnut and oak coppice. On the Triassic Sherwood Sandstone ridge Hagg Wood, Shaw Wood, Heather Wood, the wooded roughs of Wheatley Golf Course, Pot Hill, Sandall Beat Wood and the plantation woodlands associated with Cantley Hall Park are heathy woodlands. Further to the east are Barnby Dun Station Wood, Brecks Plantation, Brecks Common, Tranmoor Wood, Ox Carr Wood, New Close Wood, Wyndthorpe Hall, and Holme Wood. The last remnants of birch-oak woodland are still to be found at Cozen Croft Wood.



## 6 How to take part 'Backyard Biodiversity – Nature in your Neighbourhood'

This is a new initiative launched by Doncaster Council to enable local people to learn about, protect and enjoy nature where they live. Community Groups and Organisations can loan activity packs and equipment to enable them to take part in activities such as bird watching, pond-dipping, building bird and bat boxes and bug hunting. The service is available FREE of charge from selected Customer Service Centres in Doncaster. A pack of Wildlife Gardening fact sheets has also been produced, which provides advice and information on how you can help the wildlife in your own garden.



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