

## Why are County Wildlife Sites so important?

County Wildlife Sites (CWS) can support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife species and habitats such as the marsh fritillary butterfly and heathland.

The network of CWS present in Devon provides refuge for the county's diverse flora and fauna. This network complements Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other nature reserves by helping to maintain links between them. Such connections are vital to allow wildlife to migrate and move through the county, ensuring a wildlife rich Devon.

The value of CWS for wildlife is very often a reflection of sensitive management practices, such as extensive grazing and cutting regimes and coppicing.



Anne Harvey

## Owning a County Wildlife Site: What does it mean to landowners and managers?



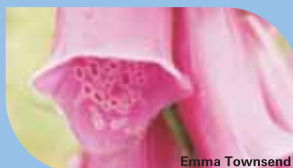
Emma Townsend

### If you own or manage a CWS you:

- Gain recognition that you successfully own and manage a site of significant importance to wildlife
- Receive **free** information about your CWS including a map, a detailed report and a species list. Please contact DBRC if you do not have this information for your site
- May be entitled to **free** management advice including aid with grant applications such as Environmental Stewardship
- Are likely to own/manage threatened habitat types which are likely to assist in attracting grants such as Higher Level Stewardship
- Having a CWS may help with 'green' marketing of your farm business



Emma Townsend



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## The County Wildlife Site system

- Aerial photos and information from a broad habitat survey of Devon carried out in the 1980s are used to identify sites that require further survey. Some landowners contact us directly if they have wildlife-rich sites
- Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC) contacts the relevant landowner asking for permission to survey each site. If permission is granted an experienced surveyor visits the site to map the habitats present and note the species present
- The results are used to indicate the value of the site for wildlife. Each site is assessed by a panel of experts (from a range of organisations) using strict criteria to determine if it qualifies as a CWS
- Landowners are informed if their site is a CWS or not and are sent a copy of the survey results and a habitat map of the surveyed land
- As part of a monitoring project DBRC may contact landowners to ask for permission to repeat the survey (this should not occur within five years of the original survey)
- Information gained during the survey may be used to inform local conservation projects and help monitor the health of the natural environment. DBRC will hold CWS boundaries on their database and may provide site boundary details to other organisations. Personal details will remain confidential. National Park Authorities also hold contact details of landowners located within National Parks.

Landowners have the right to decide if land belonging to them is surveyed by or on behalf of DBRC. We are really keen to work with landowners from all parts of the county and are flexible when carrying out surveys, being able to work around timescales of individual landowners and/or managers where necessary.



Stuart Coleman

### If you own a County Wildlife Site your land is:

- **Not** required to be managed in any particular manner. **No** compulsory extra work needs to be carried out and **no** changes to current management regimes are required. Our advice however, would aim to encourage wildlife-friendly management\*
- **Not** altered with regards to public access, although we may contact you to ask permission to re-survey at a later date
- **Not** restricted for shooting and other sporting activities
- **Not** submitted for consideration as a Site of Special Scientific Interest
- **Not** a legally designated site unlike Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Although County Wildlife Sites are not protected by legislation their importance is recognised by Local Planning Authorities

\* Landowners that receive support from the Single Payment scheme are required to comply with a set of statutory management requirements - please refer to [www.rpa.gov.uk](http://www.rpa.gov.uk) for more information.



Emma Townsend



Mary Breeds

## County Wildlife Sites in Devon

There are over 2,000 County Wildlife Sites in Devon covering nearly 30,000 hectares (approximately 4% of the county). Many owners of County Wildlife Sites are very proud of their sites:

‘Our County Wildlife Site makes the farm more appealing to the trainees who come on our various smallholding courses and we use it alongside our various Higher Level Stewardship interventions to show how we can support a species rich habitat. It also makes our lives and farm so much more interesting and we have learned and continue to learn a great deal from our site.’

Debbie Kingsley, South Yeo Farm West (farmer of rare and native breeds)

### Grants and funding may be available from:

- Natural England (Entry Level Stewardship / Higher Level Stewardship).  
Tel: 0300 0601110 or email: [devon@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:devon@naturalengland.org.uk)  
Website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk/information\\_for/farmers\\_and\\_land\\_managers/](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/information_for/farmers_and_land_managers/)
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) provide advice to landowners on wildlife issues across Devon.  
Tel: 01392 364392 or email: [devon@fwag.org.uk](mailto:devon@fwag.org.uk)
- Forestry Commission (English Woodland Grant Scheme).  
Tel: 01626 890666 or email: [fc.sweng.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fc.sweng.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)
- Devon Wildlife Trust. Project related funding may be available.  
Tel: 01392 279244 or email: [contactus@devonwildlifetrust.org](mailto:contactus@devonwildlifetrust.org)

Further advice and financial assistance may be available from organisations such as RSPB, Local Authorities and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) teams.

For further information about County Wildlife Sites contact Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (details below) or if located in a National Park contact Dartmoor National Park (on 01626 832093 or [hq@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk](mailto:hq@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk)) or Exmoor National park (on 01398 323665 or [info@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:info@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk))

**Devon Biodiversity Records Centre**  
27 Commercial Road,  
Exeter, Devon, EX2 4AE

Tel: 01392 274128  
Email: [countywildlifesites@dbrc.org.uk](mailto:countywildlifesites@dbrc.org.uk)  
[www.dbrc.org.uk](http://www.dbrc.org.uk)



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Devon  
Biodiversity  
Records  
Centre

# Devon's County Wildlife Sites



Simon Berry

## What are County Wildlife Sites?

County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are areas of public or private land that are rich in wildlife, often supporting rare or threatened habitats and species. They vary in shape and size and encompass a range of different habitat types such as marshy grasslands, flower-rich meadows, old broadleaved woodlands and orchards. CWS are present in urban and rural areas.

