

Parish
Biodiversity
Audit 2022

Huish



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Introduction

As part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project -Conservation Communities - the original parish audits completed in 2015 have been updated, recognising the new biodiversity information that has been generated by the individuals and groups that have participated since it began.

Huish is a small parish of just 410ha located between Merton, Dolton and Meeth priority parishes. The majority of Huish parish is dominated by Heanton Satchville park; an extensive area of parkland with veteran trees. The River Torridge forms the eastern boundary of the parish and the Little Mere River the western. This becomes the River Mere at Kingsford Bridge and travels north along the parish boundary.

The main land use within the parish was found to be agriculturally improved grassland grazed by cattle (some traditional breeds), and arable land. There was approximately 70ha of woodland in the parish. This included conifer plantation, broadleaved semi-natural woodland and broadleaved plantation. Some of this woodland was listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

The main biodiversity feature of the parish was the parkland and associated veteran trees of Heanton Satchville Park. There were approximately 168 veteran trees which were mainly oaks, and also at least 5 ancient trees.

Other features of interest included species-rich hedgerows with some veteran oaks, species-rich road verges supporting unimproved grassland and extensive areas of woodland on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Otters were recorded from the River Torridge at Newbridge and several species of bat from across the parish. Brown hares were also recorded from fields in the south of the parish. Barn owls were said to use one of the old oak trees in the park.

One footpath and one bridleway cross the parish joining Huish Barton to the village of Merton to the north, and travelling east towards Newbridge. These make a pleasant walk through the parklands and alongside the plantations. Part of the Tarka Trail cycle route crosses the south-west tip of the parish.

Huish Parish falls within the North Devon Biosphere Reserve. Biosphere Reserves are places with world-class environments that are designated by the United Nations to promote and demonstrate a balanced relationship between people and nature. They are places where conservation and sustainable development go hand in hand.

Most of the information used to create this report and land use map was secured from aerial photograph interpretation together with historical data collected with access permission. Occasionally vantage points within the parish would have been used to help to map habitats and establish land use.

The fact that potential and confirmed wildlife-rich land is mapped does not imply any right of access and does not change any existing rights or use of the land.

Key species and habitats listed in the Devon and North Devon Biosphere Reserve Biodiversity Action Plans are indicated in bold italic text throughout the report.

Designated / Non-designated sites

Designated statutory/non-statutory sites

There is one designated site within Huish parish - Heanton Satchville Park County Wildlife Site. This parkland site covers a large proportion of the small parish meaning that 33% (133ha) of the parish is covered by a designated site. A small part of the Tarka Trail crosses south-west tip of the parish. This is part of a large County Wildlife Site which includes part of the Tarka Trail and Meeth Ball Clay works.

Site Name	Habitat Description	BAP habitat	Status
Heanton Satchville Park	Parkland with veteran trees and lichen interest	Parkland and woodpasture - Devon BAP and ND Biosphere BAP	CWS
Meeth Ball Clay Works and Tarka Trail	Abandoned railway line with woodland, unimproved acidic grassland & butterfly interest, and clay works with dragonfly interest and associated habitat interest.		CWS

County Wildlife Sites (CWS): these are sites of county importance for wildlife, designated on the basis of the habitat or the known presence of particular species. This is not a statutory designation like SSSIs, and does not have any legal status. The National Planning Policy framework requires local authorities to identify and map locally designated sites of biodiversity importance (such as County Wildlife Sites) as part of the Local Plan process and to draw up criteria based policies against which proposals for development affecting them will be judged. CWS recognition does not demand any particular actions on the part of the Landowner and does not give the public rights of access. However, it may increase eligibility for land management grants.

Parklands and wood pasture are habitats listed on the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan and the North Devon Biosphere Reserve Biodiversity Action Plan. The parklands and wood pastures of Devon are ancient places, some of which date back to mediaeval times or even further.

The main interest of parklands and wood pastures are the trees - often several centuries old and mainly oak, but also beech, ash and other long-lived species. It is thought that the oak supports more species of organism than any other tree in Britain. The parkland trees may provide habitat for invertebrates, lichens, and mosses and fungi. Dead and fallen limbs of trees are the habitat to a specialised invertebrate fauna which feed on decaying wood.

Mammals, such as bats may roost in old trees and a variety of birds use parklands and wood pastures for nesting and feeding.

There are also three blocks of woodland which are listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory within the parish. These are Long/Shotslade Woods, Chelly/Huish Woods and Huish Wood. Long/Shotslade Woods is predominantly replanted ancient woodland (coniferous), Chelly/Huish Woods is part replanted ancient woodland (coniferous) and part ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland, and Huish Wood which is predominantly ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland.



Ancient Woodland is a term applied to woodlands which have existed from at least Medieval times to the present day without ever having been cleared for uses other than wood or timber production. A convenient date used to separate ancient and secondary woodland is about the year 1600. In special circumstances semi-natural woods of post-1600 but pre-1900 origin are also included. The Devon Ancient Woodland Inventory was prepared in 1986 by the Nature Conservancy Council.

DBRC is currently working on an update to the AWI which will be released in the new year.

The project page can be found here:

<https://www.dbrc.org.uk/projects-surveys/current-projects-and-surveys/#AWI>

Broadleaved woodland or lowland mixed deciduous woodland is on the North Devon Biosphere Biodiversity Action Plan and is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland includes woodland growing on the full range of soil conditions, from very acidic to base-rich, and takes in most seminatural woodland in southern and eastern England, and in parts of lowland Wales and Scotland. It occurs largely within enclosed landscapes, usually on sites with well-defined boundaries, at relatively low altitudes, although altitude is not a defining feature.

Many are ancient woods and they include the classic examples of ancient woodland studied by Rackham (1980) and Peterken (1981) in East Anglia and the East Midlands. The woods tend to be small, less than 20 ha. Often there is evidence of past coppicing, particularly on moderately acid to base-rich soils; on very acid sands the type may be represented by former wood-pastures of oak and birch.

There is great variety in the species

composition of the canopy layer and the ground flora. *Quercus robur* is generally the commoner oak (although *Quercus petraea* may be abundant locally) and may occur with virtually all combinations of other locally native tree species. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland may form a mosaic with other woodland types, including patches of beech woodlands and small wet areas. Rides and edges may grade into grassland and scrub types. There are no precise data on the total extent of lowland mixed deciduous woodland in the UK, but in the late 1980s the Nature Conservancy Council estimated the total extent of this type to be about 250,000ha. There is however no doubt that the area of this priority type on ancient woodland sites has declined in area by clearance, overgrazing and replanting with non-native species, by about 30-40% over the last 50 years.



Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Other habitats

Species-rich hedges

Species rich hedges are listed on the North Devon Biosphere Reserve Biodiversity Action Plan, Devon Biodiversity Action Plan and UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Hedgerows are often an essential corridor for the movement of wildlife and may support many animals and plants. Berries provide an important food source for birds, and flowers and are an important nectar source for butterflies. Hedgerows and hedgebanks represent continuity as features in the landscape and provide a significant wildlife resource at a time when the fields themselves are being more intensively used. Most of the hedges occurring in Huish parish were a mixture of medieval and 18th and 19th century hedges, with oak (some veteran), blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel and ash being the main trees but also holly, field rose, birch, willow and beech were recorded.

The location of the hedge within the landscape gives an indication of the age. A helpful explanation can be found here <https://devonhedges.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Interactive-Distinctive-Hedge-Map-Devon.pdf>



Species-rich hedgebanks along bridleway

Species rich hedges are a wildlife feature of Huish parish. During the parish visit in 2015 there was recorded a 'species-rich' hedge as being one that has eight or more woody species in a 30 metre length. A public bridleway from Newbridge to Huish Barton had attractive Devon hedgebanks, though these had been trimmed quite closely at the time of the visit. The flora on the banksides included wall pennywort, vetches, violets, hawkbits, polypody, foxglove, honeysuckle and bilberry.

Parts of this bridleway had the feeling of a sunken green lane with high hedges. A green lane can be defined as an unmetalled track with field boundaries either side. These boundaries may be banks, hedges, woodland edge, stone walls or fences and often features such as ditches or streams are incorporated within the lanes. The combination of the track, its boundaries and associated features create a landscape unit with its own microclimate and ecology. These sheltered conditions within lanes are of great importance to butterfly populations and may be more botanically species-rich than single hedge boundaries.

Further down the same Bridleway there was a species-rich hedge with an attractive field margin.

Species recorded from the hedge included sycamore, blackthorn, ash, hazel, oak, hawthorn and dogwood. Along the field margin there was abundant common knapweed, hawkbit and crested dog's-tail. Butterflies were frequent along this hedgerow with speckled wood and wall brown as well as banded demoiselle and many day flying moths.



Field margin and species-rich hedge along bridleway

Cemetery/churchyard



The churchyard at Huish Barton had some nice wild flowers and an old yew tree which was possibly a veteran. The grassland was mown, semi-improved and moderately species rich with species recorded including cock's-foot, ribwort plantain, daisy, speedwell, bugle, cat's-ear, fescues and bird's-foot trefoil.

Recreation areas and public open spaces

There is one public footpath and one public bridleway in the parish which run from Huish Barton. One travels north to the village of Merton, and the other to the east towards Newbridge. Both of these make a pleasant walk with views over the parkland and alongside the woodland plantations.

The Tarka trail cycle route crosses the south-western tip of the parish. This part of the route has been designated as part of a larger County Wildlife Site. This section of the Tarka trail supports woodland and unimproved acidic grassland.

Allotments and gardens

Gardens are a haven for wildlife and can provide links to other areas of wildlife habitat. Devon Biodiversity Records Centre does not hold any records for gardens in the parish, but there are several records for bats from buildings in Huish.

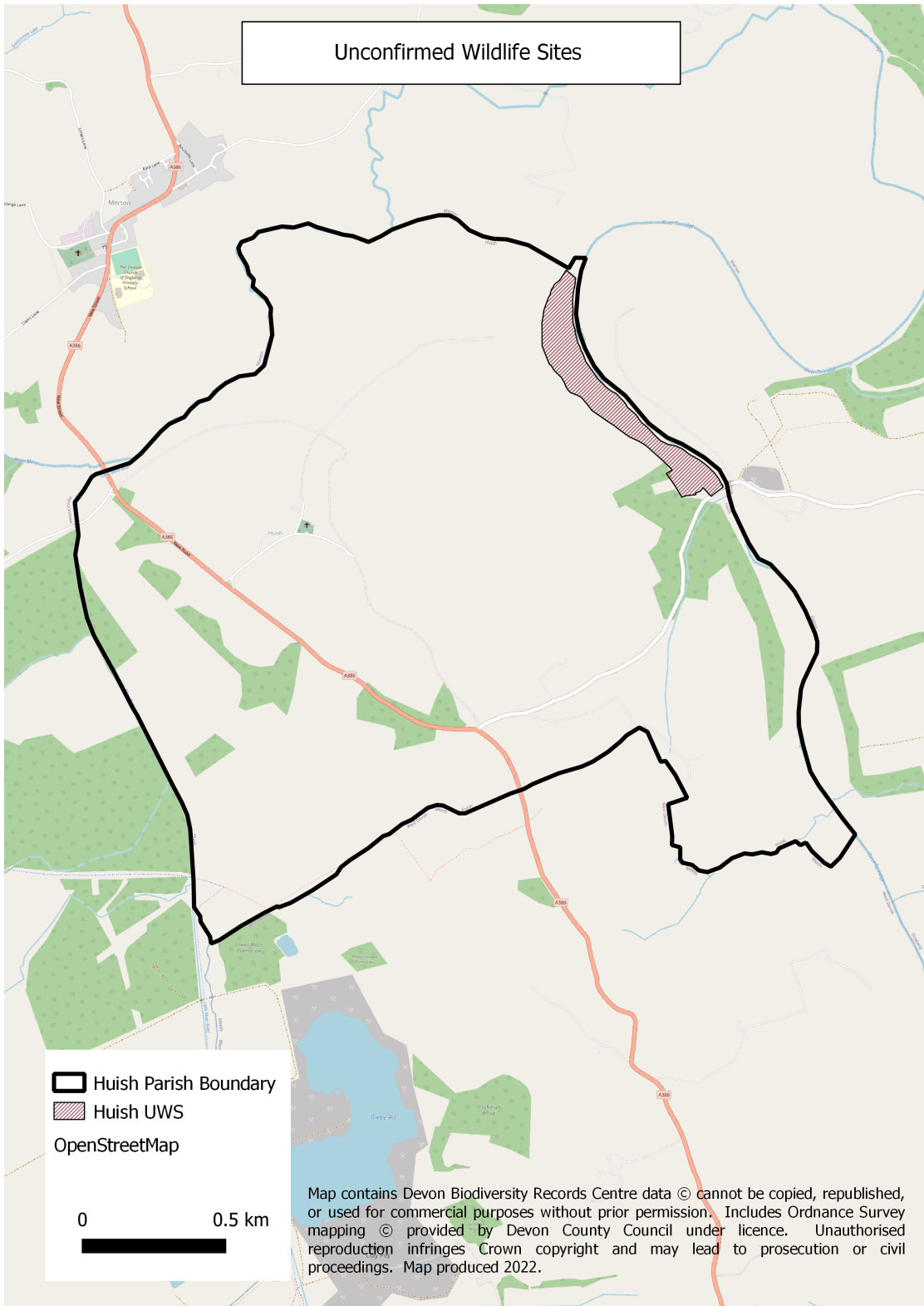
The old buildings at Huish Barton were good for swallows and house martins with many seen around this area during the survey.



Unconfirmed wildlife sites

There is one Unconfirmed Wildlife Site in Huish parish

Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites (UWS): these are sites identified as having possible interest but not fully surveyed. Some of these sites will be areas of significant wildlife interest. The UWS dataset may also contain Proposed County Wildlife Sites (pCWS): these are usually sites that have been surveyed but are awaiting consideration from the CWS Designation Panel, or sites that have been surveyed at an unfavourable time of year and are awaiting a re-survey.



Types of habitat found in the parish

Arable Land: There was a lot of arable land in the parish. Some of this may be managed under rotation between arable crops and grass and clover leys. Some of the fields fall within the County Wildlife Site due to the presence of veteran trees.

There are a number of rare arable weeds associated with spring cereals and winter stubble including cornflower, corn marigold, shepherd's-needle and weasel's-snout. Arable land in Britain has lost most of its arable plants over the last 50 years; several species have become extinct and there are many more that are now rare.

Changes in arable farming practice are thought to be responsible for the losses. Technology that allowed more effective seed-cleaning caused an initial decline, but herbicide development was catastrophic for many plants.

Nowadays, arable plants are generally confined to the strip along the field edge, which provides a home to many animals, invertebrates and plants.

Brown hares have been recorded from arable land in the south of the parish. The brown hare is listed on the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan. The brown hare was probably introduced to us by the Romans and is fairly common in areas of arable crops and grass leys. The hare is listed on the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan as it has undergone a significant decline in the last 50 years, probably associated with changes in farming practice and increased use of pesticides.



Veteran Trees

Veteran trees were the main interest of Huish parish due to the parkland of Heanton Satchville. There were over 100 veteran in-field trees in the park, as well as many in the hedgerows along the lanes.

English Nature (now Natural England) have defined veteran trees as: “trees that are of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of their age, size or condition”. In relation to oak it has been taken that trees with a diameter of more than:

- 1.0meter are potentially interesting
- 1.5meters are valuable in terms of conservation
- 2.00meters are truly ancient.

Veteran trees will be at least as big as these measurements:

- 1 metre - Hawthorn, blackthorn
- 2.5 metres - Field maple, rowan, yew, birch, holly
- 3 metres - Oak, ash, scot's pine, alder
- 4.5 metres - Sycamore, limes, chestnuts, elms, poplars, beech, willows, pines, non-native trees.

It has been estimated that Britain may be home to around 80% of Europe's ancient trees. Veteran trees are large old trees found in wood-pasture and parkland, but also in a number of other locations: ancient yews in churchyards; mature oaks in hedgerows; black poplars along stream-sides; and many noble trees in ancient woodlands. Ancient trees support particularly rich assemblages of invertebrates, fungi, mosses and lichens. Several species of bat may use hollow trees as roosting sites and birds such as tree creepers and woodpeckers feed on the insects living in the bark. Insects such as stag beetles and hornets are associated with old trees.



Veteran trees in the parish

Nature recovery networks

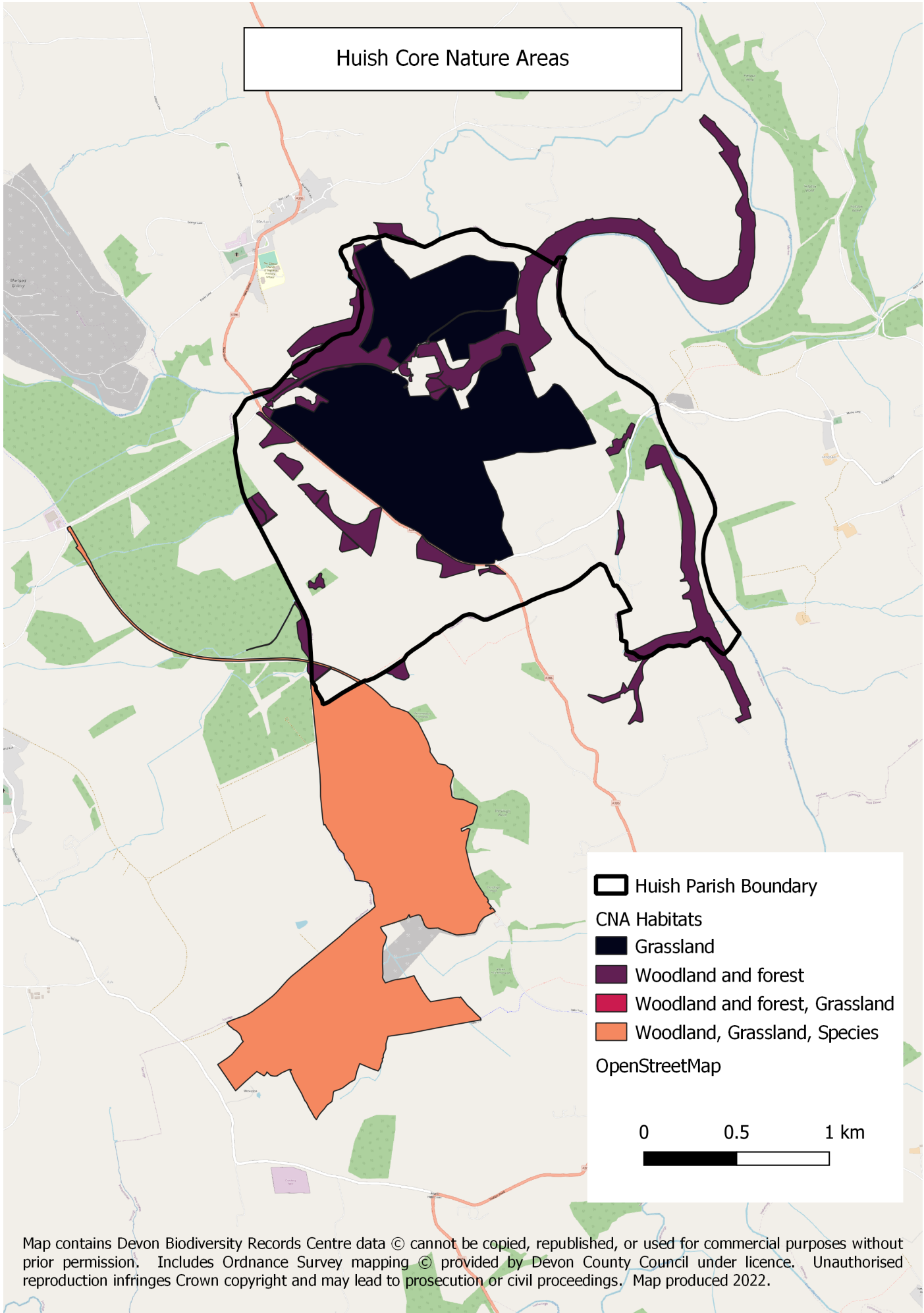
Details of the nature recovery networks can be found here - <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/our-work/nature-recovery-network/>

The following two maps show Core Nature Areas as well as Other Nature Areas along with their associated habitats.

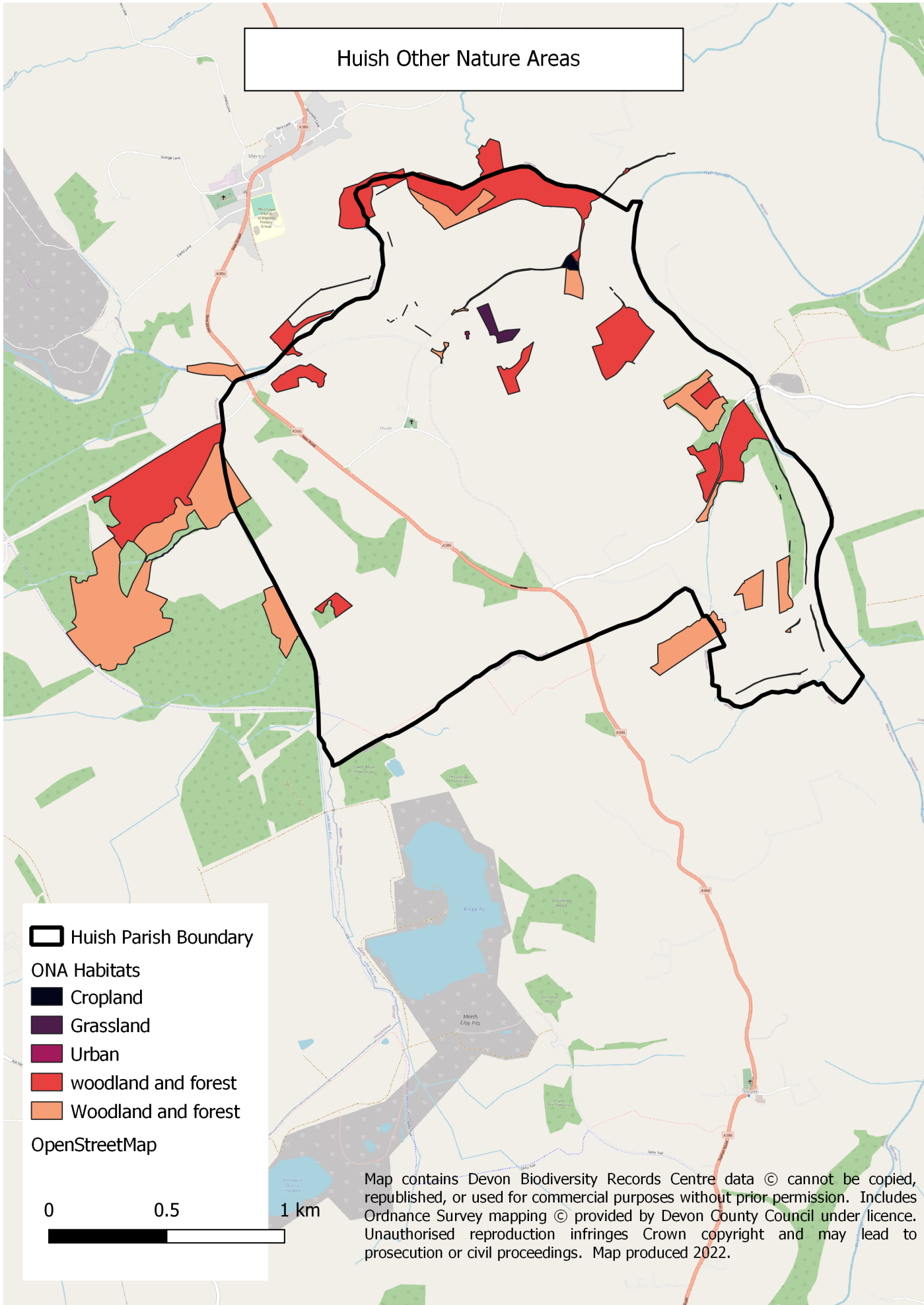
Core Nature Areas are our richest wildlife habitats. They include Priority Habitats (excluding hedges and arable margins) and statutory and non-statutory designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves and Ancient semi-natural woodlands.

Habitats are grouped together and mapped as Broad Habitats (grasslands, woodlands, wetlands etc).

Other Nature Areas are existing habitats which have wildlife value (or potential value) but which are not Priority Habitats or designated sites. These currently include: Other Sites of Wildlife Importance, parks, urban greenspaces, some churchyards, National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves and non-Priority Habitats on the National Forest Inventory. Other habitats will be included in future iterations when data is available.

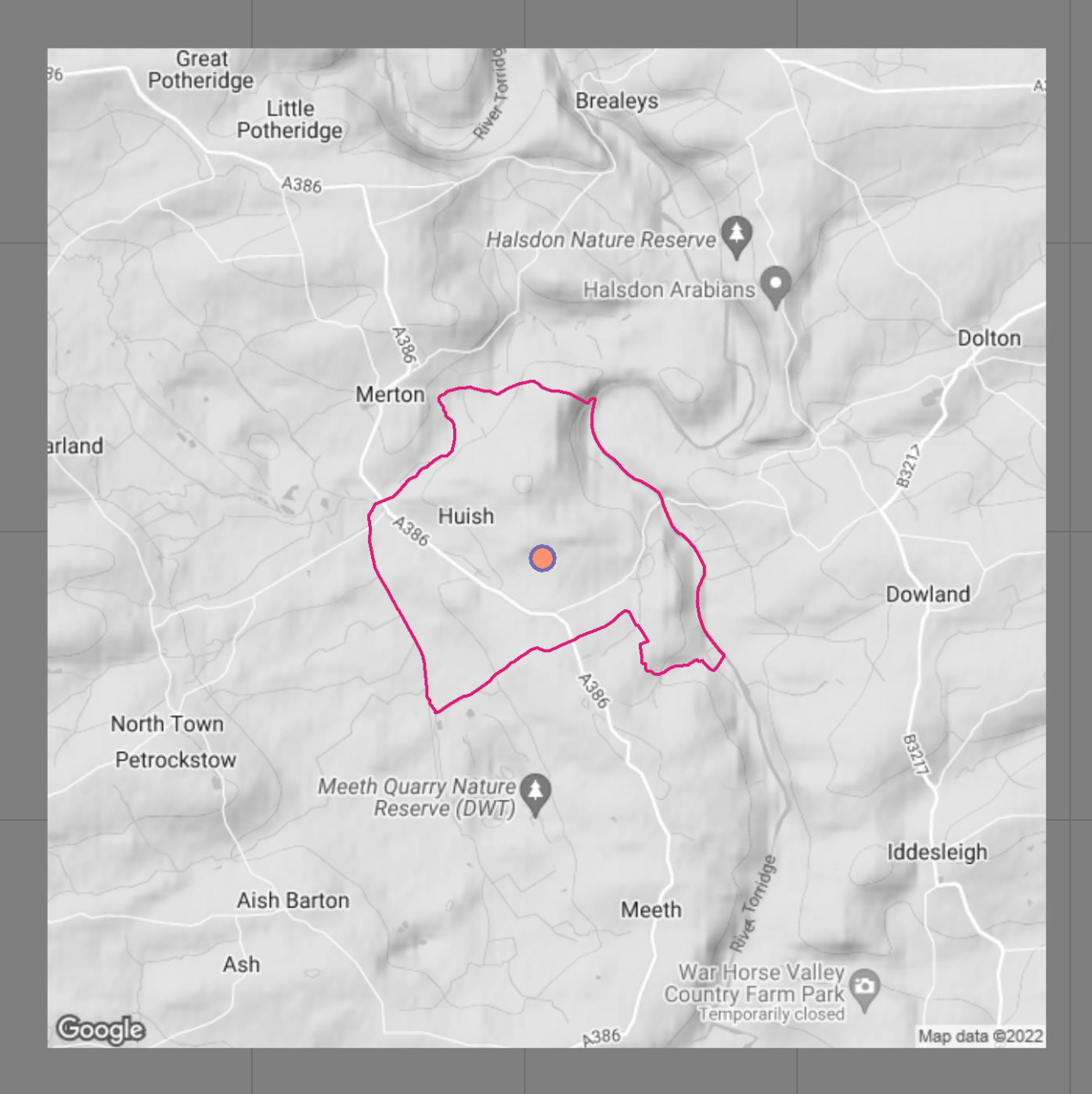


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Species found in the parish

The map below shows the location of recording within the parish boundary over the lifetime of the Conservation Communities project



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Species records

Listed below are the species records held by DBRC for the parish of Huish The list is broken into three tables. The first table holds Section 41 species, the second Priority species, and the third common species. The table shows the number of records we hold per species in our database (1968 - 2022). As well as the number of records per species collected over the period of this project (2020 - 2022).

Species of principle importance found in the parish.

These are the species that normally are the most likely to affect development and are taken into account when planning.

Taxon Group	Records added during project
insect - moth	7
7 new section 41 species	

Summary of section 41 species recorded during project.

- Records added during Conservation Communities
- New records added during Conservation Communities

Taxon Group	Common name	Scientific	Other Status	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
bird	Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	UKBAP (P); Amber		1	1
insect - moth	Buff Ermine	Spilosoma lutea	UKBAP (P)	1		1
insect - moth	Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet	Xanthorhoe ferrugata	UKBAP (P)	1		1
insect - moth	Knot Grass	Acronicta rumicis	UKBAP (P)	1		1
insect - moth	Minor Shoulder-knot	Brachylomia viminalis	UKBAP (P)	1		1
insect - moth	Shaded Broad-bar	Scotopteryx chenopodiata	UKBAP (P)	1		1

Taxon Group	Common name	Scientific	Other Status	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
insect - moth	Small Emerald	Hemistola chrysoprasaria	UKBAP (P)	1		1
insect - moth	Small Phoenix	Ecliptopera silaceata	UKBAP (P)	1		1

Priority species found in the parish.

These are the species that have been identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)

Taxon Group	Records added during project
insect - moth	2
2 New priority species records	

Summary of priority species recorded during project.

- Records added during Conservation Communities
- New records added during Conservation Communities

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific	Status	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
bird	Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	Bern II		1	1
bird	Great Black-backed Gull	Larus marinus	Amber		1	1
bird	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos major	Bern II		1	1
bird	Green Woodpecker	Picus viridis	Bern II		1	1
bird	Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	Red		1	1
bird	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus fuscus	Amber		1	1
bird	Red Kite	Milvus milvus	WCA 1, 9		1	1
bird	Robin	Erithacus rubecula	Bern II		1	1
bird	Swallow	Hirundo rustica	Bern II		1	1
bird	Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus	Amber		1	1
bird	Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	Bern II, Amber		1	1
insect - moth	Devon Carpet	Lampropteryx otregiata	Nb	1		1
insect - moth	Silver Y	Autographa gamma	Migrant	1		1

Common species

All other species found in the parish.

Taxon Group	Records added during project
insect - moth	67
67 New species records	

Summary of common species recorded during project.

 New records added during Conservation Communities

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
bird	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		1	1
bird	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		1	1
bird	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		1	1
bird	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		1	1
bird	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		1	1
bird	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		1	1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Agapeta hamana</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Agriphila straminella</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Anania crocealis</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Bryotropha terrella</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Carcina quercana</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Catoptria falsella</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Cydia splendana</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Depressaria daucella</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Epinotia nisella</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Eucosma cana</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Eudonia lacustrata</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Eudonia mercurella</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Gypsonoma sociana</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Phycita roborella</i>	1		1
insect - moth	a Moth	<i>Udea prunalis</i>	1		1
insect - moth	Black Arches	<i>Lymantria monacha</i>	1		1
insect - moth	Bordered Beauty	<i>Epione repandaria</i>	1		1
insect - moth	Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua fimbriata</i>	1		1

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific	2020 to 2022	1968 to 2019	1968 to 2022
insect - moth	Buff Arches	Habrosyne pyritoides	1		1
insect - moth	Buff Footman	Eilema depressa	1		1
insect - moth	Chevron	Eulithis testata	1		1
insect - moth	Clay	Mythimna ferrago	1		1
insect - moth	Cloaked Minor	Mesoligia furuncula	1		1
insect - moth	Clouded Border	Lomaspilis marginata	1		1
insect - moth	Common Footman	Eilema lurideola	1		1
insect - moth	Common Rustic agg.	Mesapamea secalis agg.	1		1
insect - moth	Common Wave	Cabera exanthemata	1		1
insect - moth	Coronet	Craniophora ligustri	1		1
insect - moth	Coxcomb Prominent	Ptilodon capucina	1		1
insect - moth	Currant Pug	Eupithecia assimilata	1		1
insect - moth	Dark Arches	Apamea monoglypha	1		1
insect - moth	Dingy Footman	Eilema griseola	1		1
insect - moth	Dingy Shell	Euchoeca nebulata	1		1
insect - moth	Dotted Clay	Xestia baja	1		1
insect - moth	Double-striped Pug	Gymnoscelis rufifasciata	1		1
insect - moth	Drinker	Euthrix potatoria	1		1
insect - moth	Dun-bar	Cosmia trapezina	1		1
insect - moth	Early Thorn	Selenia dentaria	1		1
insect - moth	Elephant Hawk-moth	Deilephila elpenor	1		1
insect - moth	Fan-foot	Herminia tarsipennalis	1		1
insect - moth	Flame Shoulder	Ochropleura plecta	1		1
insect - moth	July Highflyer	Hydriomena furcata	1		1
insect - moth	Large Emerald	Geometra papilionaria	1		1
insect - moth	Large Yellow Underwing	Noctua pronuba	1		1
insect - moth	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	Noctua janthe	1		1
insect - moth	Light Emerald	Campaea margaritaria	1		1
insect - moth	Mother of Pearl	Patania ruralis	1		1
insect - moth	Nut-tree Tussock	Colocasia coryli	1		1
insect - moth	Pale Prominent	Pterostoma palpina	1		1
insect - moth	Pebble Prominent	Notodonta ziczac	1		1
insect - moth	Purple Thorn	Selenia tetralunaria	1		1
insect - moth	Red Twin-spot Carpet	Xanthorhoe spadicearia	1		1
insect - moth	Riband Wave	Idaea aversata	1		1
insect - moth	Ringed China-mark	Parapoynx stratiotata	1		1
insect - moth	Rosy Footman	Miltochrista miniata	1		1
insect - moth	Ruby Tiger	Phragmatobia fuliginosa	1		1
insect - moth	Scalloped Hook-tip	Falcaria lacertinaria	1		1
insect - moth	Sharp-angled Peacock	Macaria alternata	1		1
insect - moth	Single-dotted Wave	Idaea dimidiata	1		1
insect - moth	Slender Pug	Eupithecia tenuiata	1		1
insect - moth	Small Fan-footed Wave	Idaea biselata	1		1
insect - moth	Small Rufous	Coenobia rufa	1		1
insect - moth	Small Wainscot	Denticucullus pygmina	1		1
insect - moth	Smoky Wainscot	Mythimna impura	1		1
insect - moth	Spectacle	Abrostola tripartita	1		1
insect - moth	Willow Beauty	Peribatodes rhomboidaria	1		1

Some ideas for local action

This section of the report is provided by Devon County Council (contact: nature@devon.gov.uk).

A major step to knowing what you can do for your local wildlife and geology is to know what you have already got. This report will help you in this, but it is just a start. Ultimately, the protection and enhancement of the local natural environment requires the interest and enthusiasm of the local community.

There follows some initial ideas for local nature conservation action. Many of them will directly help to achieve the objectives of the habitat and species action plans contained in the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan. It is by no means an exhaustive list. As a community, you may have many more ideas for action that you would like to take forward in the coming years.

1 Further survey:

This report is just a beginning. Carrying out further survey within your area will help build a better picture of the wildlife present, and of the opportunities for enhancement. Gaining a better understanding of the resource is usually a key objective of the Devon BAP's habitat and species action plans.

Specific features to survey in huish might include species-rich hedgerows and flower-rich road verges. The last two actions would directly contribute to the Species-rich hedgerow Action Plan and the Flower-rich meadows and pastures Action Plan.

One example of survey work that might usefully be undertaken would be to produce a hedgerow appraisal for your local area. Comparing the current distribution of hedges against boundary lines shown on old maps will give a clue as to how this important resource has changed over recent years. It may also highlight opportunities for restoring hedges in your area. It might also be possible to assess the condition of hedges and this may, in turn, give some ideas about improving their future management to benefit wildlife.

Survey work could be undertaken as a community group or in liaison with conservation groups active in the area.

Help to build up a picture of the state of Devon's environment by sending your wildlife records to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre <https://www.dbrc.org.uk/wildlife-sightings/> where they can be properly collated.

2 Influence the management of Public Open Space:

Creating areas of more species-rich grassland will help to reduce the isolation of the remaining fragments of traditionally managed agricultural land, contributing to the Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Action Plan.

Churchyards have often received less intensive management than the surrounding land and can provide good opportunities for wildlife.

Planting up areas that are currently of little wildlife interest with new copses of native trees and shrubs will also help to attract wildlife. Suitable sites might include unused areas of playing fields, for example.

3 Build relationships with local landowners:

Encourage the adoption of more wildlife-friendly land management. For example, hedges which are cut only every other year will provide an autumn and winter source of nuts and berries for birds and small mammals (and can save the landowner money in management costs). The improved management of hedgerows is a key objective of the Species-rich Hedges Action Plan. If the owner is willing, why not get involved with practical management, such as traditional hedge laying or pond restoration? Devon County Council's website has some very good resources for hedge management and ideas for community involvement <https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/wildlife/habitats-and-species/hedges>

4 Adopt a road verge:

Many verges can have a significant value for wildlife because they have escaped the intensive management of the surrounding farmland. Ensuring such verges are managed for their wildlife is a very positive step, again contributing to the Flower-rich Meadows and Pastures Action Plan.

There are, of course, obvious health and safety implications to roadside management. It is an action that would need to be undertaken in close liaison with the relevant highways authority (generally, this is the Highways Agency for motorways and trunk roads, and Devon County Council for all other roads).

5 Wildlife gardening:

Green up your garden! Collectively the gardens of Huish represent a significant area that could be used to benefit wildlife. Large or small, you can turn your garden (or a part of it!) into a haven for wildlife. A very good source of information on wildlife gardening is the Devon Wildlife Trust web site: <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/take-action/garden-wildlife>

6 Contact the North Devon Biosphere Reserve:

The North Devon Biosphere reserve has a number of initiatives running to enable communities within the North Devon Biosphere Reserve to improve wildlife. On their website <https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/> you can get ideas of how to improve nature in your area including tips on wildlife gardening and details of community initiatives in your area.

7 Japanese Knotweed:

Not something to cherish, but it can't be ignored! Unfortunately Japanese Knotweed is present in several locations in Huish. Introduced into Britain by the Victorians, Japanese Knotweed is a native of Japan, north China, Korea and Taiwan. It flourishes in Britain's mild and fertile environment and has no natural biological enemies here. Consequently, it is very invasive and can overrun large areas, replacing our native flora. It is a serious pest which can be so vigorous as to cause significant damage to buildings and roads. It is also a difficult plant to eradicate.

For these reasons Japanese Knotweed is listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as a plant that is not to be planted or otherwise introduced into the wild. In addition, all parts of the plant are considered as controlled waste under the Waste Regulations.

Fortunately, a great deal of advice (including an Environment Agency Code of Practice) is available on the Devon Knotweed Forum's web pages. You are recommended to view these at: <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/invasive-species/japanese-knotweed/>

8 Himalayan Balsam:

Himalayan or Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is another very invasive plant. A relative of the busy Lizzie, it is known by a wide variety of common names, including Indian balsam, jumping jack

and policeman's helmet. It was introduced to Britain in 1839, but escaped from gardens and rapidly colonised riverbanks and areas of damp ground.

Himalayan balsam grows in dense stands that suppress the growth of native grasses and other flora. In the autumn, the plants die back, leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. It is sometimes seen in gardens, either uninvited or grown deliberately, but care must be taken to ensure that it does not escape into the wild.

It is a tall, robust, annual producing clusters of purplish pink (or rarely white) helmet-shaped flowers. These are followed by seed pods that open explosively when ripe, shooting their seeds up to 7m (22ft) away. Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds.

Although Devon Biodiversity Records Centre does not hold any official records of Himalayan Balsam in Huish it is known to be widespread along rivers and water courses.

A useful leaflet on Himalayan Balsam can be viewed by following this link: <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/invasive-species/>



Japanese Knotweed

Useful sources of further information

Northern Devon Nature Improvement Team www.devonwildlifetrust.org
(Tel: 01392 279244)

Devon Biodiversity Records Centre www.dbrc.org.uk/ (Tel: 01392
274128)

Devon Wildlife Trust: www.devonwildlifetrust.org

Devon Birdwatching and Preservation Society: www.devonbirds.org

Natural England: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Plantlife: www.plantlife.org.uk

RSPB: www.rspb.org.uk

The Woodland Trust: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

Butterfly Conservation <https://butterfly-conservation.org/>

Environment Agency <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

Devon Hedge Group <https://devonhedges.org/>

Forestry Commission <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission>

Guidance

<https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/>

<https://www.dbrc.org.uk/information/sites-and-habitats/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions#ancient-and-veteran-trees>

UKBAP-BAPHabitats-65-WoodPastureParkland-2011

UKBAP-BAPHabitats-29-Lowland-Meadows

UKBAP-BAPHabitats-56-TraditionalOrchards

UKBAP-BAPHabitats-64-WetWoodland

UKBAP-BAPHabitats-30-LowlandMixedDecWood

UKBAP-BAPHabitats-02-ArableFieldMargins

UKBAP-BAPHabitats-07-CoastFloodGrazingMar

<https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/our-work/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network-map/>

<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-species/>

<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/2829ce47-1ca5-41e7-bc1a-871c1cc0b3ae>