

Ardley and Heyford. CTA (Conservation Target Area)

The Conservation Target Area (CTA) encompasses a limestone plateau between Ardley and Upper Heyford which includes the Upper Heyford Airfield, several quarries near Ardley and the railway line and some trackways. The CTA supports about 50% of the calcareous grassland in Cherwell District and shows considerable species interest, in particular great crested newts, birds and butterflies. The area also has a lot of geological interest with its exposures of Jurassic rocks and pre-historic trackways. The airfield from the cold war also contains several structures such as bomb stores, which are of heritage importance. There is little tree cover apart from Ardley Cutting & Quarry SSSI, Ardley Wood and Kennel Copse, which are also Ancient semi-natural woodlands.

The CTA includes two SSSIs (Ardley Cutting and Quarry; Ardley Trackways), two LWS (Upper Heyford Airfield; Trow Pool) and one proposed LWS (Ardley Fields Quarry). It further includes Local Geological Sites (Ardley Quarry North; Ardley Fields Quarry), two District Wildlife Sites (The Heath; Trackway adjacent to The Gorse) and one road verge nature reserve.

Joint Character Area: Cotswold's

Geology: Mainly chalk but includes some clay-with-flints on the plateau to the north. The area contains two geological SSSIs, Ardley Quarry and Ardley Trackways, and a large Local Geological Site, Ardley Fields Quarry. These areas have important exposures of limestone and fossilised trackways.

Topography: Relatively flat but cut into by quarries and the railway.

Area of CTA: 1186 hectares

Biodiversity:

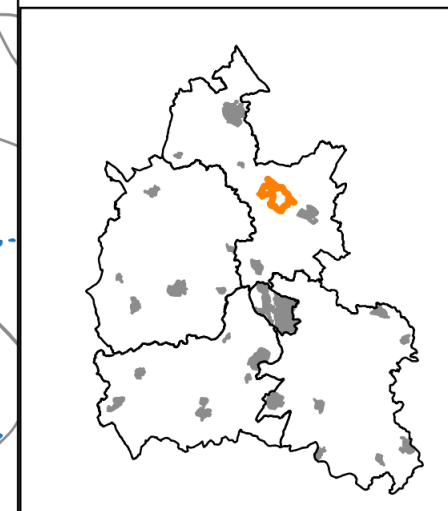
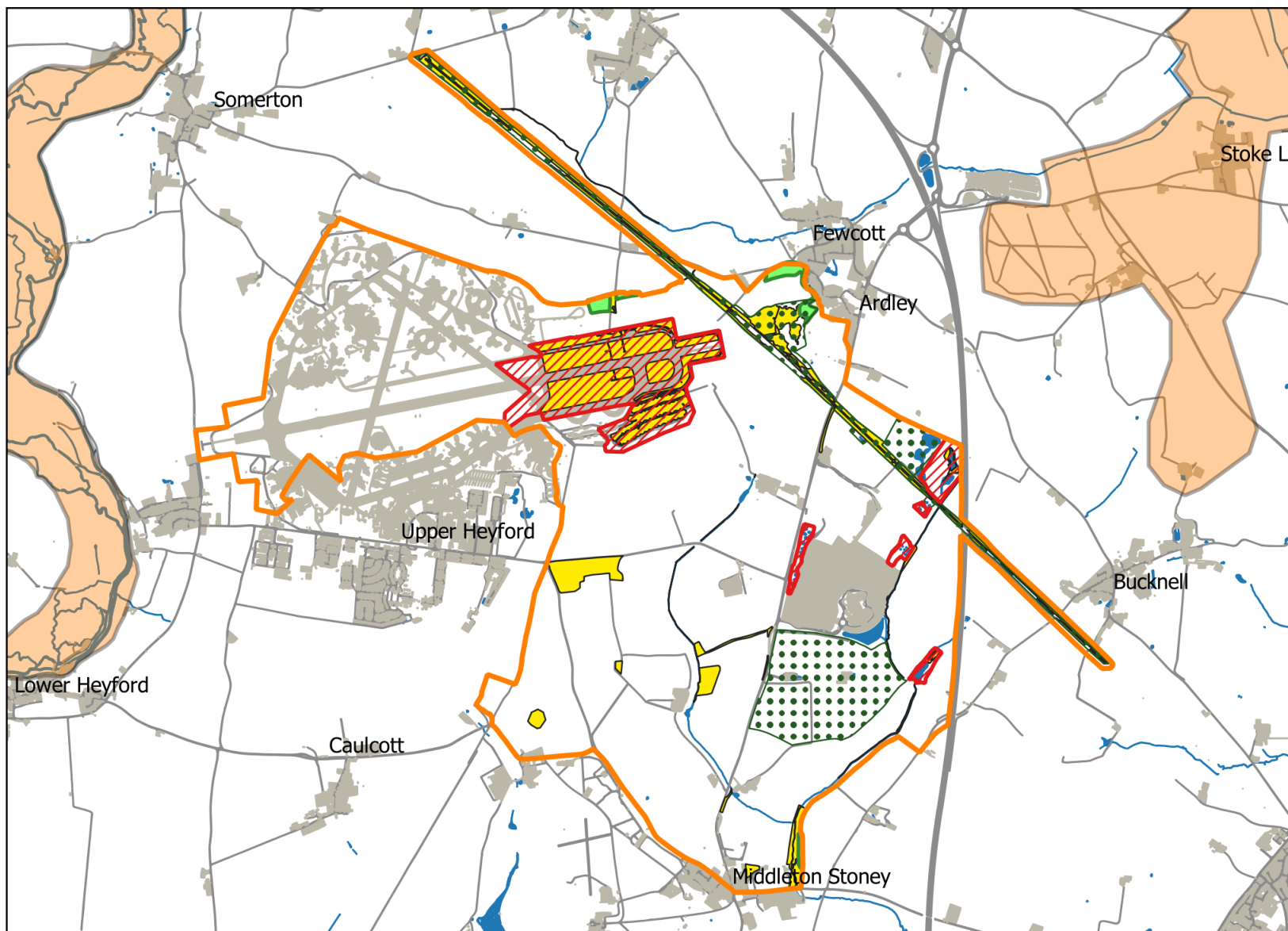
- Lowland calcareous grassland: extensive areas are found at Upper Heyford Airfield with other areas at Ardley Quarry and along Ardley Railway Cutting. A small area supporting meadow clary is present in a road verge nature reserve.
- Other grassland habitat – extensive areas of more neutral grassland at Upper Heyford provide valuable nesting areas for birds such as skylark and meadow pipit.
- Woodland: small areas of woodland are found at Ardley Quarry and in Kennel Copse
- Species: The area supports a number of priority (UKBAP) and rare species including great crested newts (large populations), ground nesting birds and butterflies/moths (including small blues, duke of burgundy and green hairstreaks at Ardley Wood Quarry)

Archaeology: The various Cold War structures at Upper Heyford airbase are Scheduled Monuments.

Access: Public access to Ardley Quarry (BBOWT Nature Reserve) and Trow Pool (Cherwell District Council). The airfield has restricted access. Aves Ditch, a pre-Saxon ditch and route crosses the CTA in north-southerly direction.

- Targets:**
1. Calcareous grassland – management, restoration and creation;
 2. Hedgerows – management and restoration;
 3. Grassland management including buffering to support ground nesting birds;
 4. Great crested newts (GCN) – conserve conservation status; manage ponds and terrestrial habitat such as copses and wooded strips;
 5. Geological conservation (Ardley Trackways, Ardley Cutting & Quarry, Ardley Fields Quarry)

Ardley and Upper Heyford Conservation Target Area



- CTA Boundary
- Local Wildlife Sites
- SSSIs
- Ancient Woodland
- Priority Habitats
- Water
- Other CTAs

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