

Site Improvement Plan

Salisbury Plain

Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) have been developed for each Natura 2000 site in England as part of the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS). Natura 2000 sites is the combined term for sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA). This work has been financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Community.

The plan provides a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the Natura 2000 features on the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. It does not cover issues where remedial actions are already in place or ongoing management activities which are required for maintenance.

The SIP consists of three parts: a Summary table, which sets out the priority Issues and Measures; a detailed Actions table, which sets out who needs to do what, when and how much it is estimated to cost; and a set of tables containing contextual information and links.

Once this current programme ends, it is anticipated that Natural England and others, working with landowners and managers, will all play a role in delivering the priority measures to improve the condition of the features on these sites.

The SIPs are based on Natural England's current evidence and knowledge. The SIPs are not legal documents, they are live documents that will be updated to reflect changes in our evidence/knowledge and as actions get underway. The information in the SIPs will be used to update England's contribution to the UK's Prioritised Action Framework (PAF).

The SIPs are not formal consultation documents, but if you have any comments about the SIP or would like more information please email us at IPENSLIFEProject@naturalengland.org.uk, or contact Natural England's Responsible Officer for the site via our enquiry service 0300 060 3900, or enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

This Site Improvement Plan covers the following Natura 2000 site(s)

- UK9011101 Porton Down SPA**
- UK0012683 Salisbury Plain SAC**
- UK9011102 Salisbury Plain SPA**

Site description

Salisbury Plain SAC, which includes Porton Down and Parsonage Down, represents the largest surviving semi-natural dry grassland area within north-west Europe. It hosts the priority habitat type 'orchid-rich sites' and supports extensive areas of CG3 *Bromus erectus* grassland, which is the most widespread and abundant calcareous grassland found in the UK. Other grassland types, like the rare CG7 *Festuca ovina* – *Hieracium pilosella* – *Thymus praecox* grassland, are present. In addition, the site features the best remaining example in the UK of lowland Juniper scrub on chalk and a cluster of large Marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*, sub-populations where the species breeds on dry calcareous grassland.

Porton Down SPA and Salisbury Plain SPA support important breeding populations of Stone-curlew *Burhinus oediconemus*, Quail *Coturnix coturnix*, Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, and over-wintering Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*.

Plan Summary

This table shows the prioritised issues for the site(s), the features they affect, the proposed measures to address the issues and the delivery bodies whose involvement is required to deliver the measures. The list of delivery bodies will include those who have agreed to the actions as well as those where discussions over their role in delivering the actions is on-going.

Priority & Issue	Pressure or Threat	Feature(s) affected	Measure	Delivery Bodies
1 Changes in species distributions	Pressure	H5130 Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands, H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Conservation management to improve the juniper populations on Salisbury Plain and Porton Down towards favourable condition.	Ministry of Defence (MoD)
2 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Pressure	H5130 Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands, S1065 Marsh fritillary butterfly	Control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts	Not yet determined

Issues and Actions

This table outlines the prioritised issues that are currently impacting or threatening the condition of the features, and the outstanding actions required to address them. It also shows, where possible, the estimated cost of the action and the delivery bodies whose involvement will be required to implement the action. Lead delivery bodies will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the action, but not necessarily funding it. Delivery partners will need to support the lead delivery body in implementing the action. In the process of developing the SIPs Natural England has approached the delivery bodies to seek agreement on the actions and their roles in delivering them, although in some cases these discussions have not yet been concluded. Other interested parties, including landowners and managers, will be involved as the detailed actions are agreed and delivered. Funding options are indicated as potential (but not necessarily agreed or secured) sources to fund the actions.

1 Changes in species distributions

On Porton Down, the juniper population is judged to be in Unfavourable Condition due to a decline in the population level. A recent Wiltshire Botanical Society survey counted bushes according to age, health and sex. A new cohort of seedlings is developing at various locations across the site, some of which will be protected by rabbit enclosure. Success with bringing on cuttings means that this technique could potentially be extended to provide enough tall/rabbit-proof plants for planting out and restoring the population. *Phytophthora austrocedri* has caused dieback and mortality of juniper at a National Nature Reserve in the north Pennines; therefore, any plan to import juniper plant material onto the SAC, should consider the bio-security risk.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	On Porton Down, extend the cutting and seed propagation project to provide a new cohort of juniper on the SAC.	£10,000	2016-20	Major Landowner Group land ownership activities : Undertake Specific Management Works	Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl)	Ministry of Defence (MoD)	n/a

2 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

On Salisbury Plain SAC, nitrogen deposition exceeds the critical load for juniper *Juniperus communis subsp. communis*. There is a risk that this could contribute towards coarse grass dominance, decline in lichens, changes in plant biochemistry and an increased sensitivity to abiotic stress. Nitrogen deposition also exceeds the critical load for the Marsh fritillary population.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Site Nitrogen Action Plan	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	Not yet determined

Site details

The tables in this section contain site-relevant contextual information and links

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Porton Down SPA

A133(B) *Burhinus oedicnemus*: Stone-curlew

Salisbury Plain SAC

S1065 *Euphydryas (Eurodryas, Hypodryas) aurinia*: Marsh fritillary butterfly

H6210# Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*)

H5130 *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands

Salisbury Plain SPA

A133(B) *Burhinus oedicnemus*: Stone-curlew

A082(NB) *Circus cyaneus*: Hen harrier

A099(B) *Falco subbuteo*: Eurasian hobby

A113(B) *Coturnix coturnix*: Common quail

Site location and links

Porton Down SPA

Area (ha) **1562.32** Grid reference **SU227370** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Hampshire; Wiltshire

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Porton Down SPA](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice [n/a](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [Regulation 33/35 package link](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan [n/a](#)

Salisbury Plain SAC

Area (ha) **21438.1** Grid reference **SU077497** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Hampshire; Wiltshire

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Salisbury Plain SAC](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice [n/a](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [n/a](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan [n/a](#)

Salisbury Plain SPA

Area (ha) **19688.88** Grid reference **SU079506** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Hampshire; Wiltshire

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Salisbury Plain SPA](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice [n/a](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [n/a](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan [n/a](#)

Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the main framework for managing the water environment throughout Europe. Under the WFD a management plan must be developed for each river basin district. The River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) include a summary of the measures needed for water dependent Natura 2000 sites to meet their conservation objectives. For the second round of RBMPs, SIPs are being used to capture the priorities and new measures required for water dependent habitats on Natura 2000 sites. SIP actions for non-water dependent sites/habitats do not form part of the RBMPs and associated consultation.

Porton Down SPA

River basin	South West RBMP
WFD Management catchment	Hampshire Avon
WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)	n/a

Salisbury Plain SAC

River basin	South West RBMP
WFD Management catchment	Hampshire Avon
WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)	GB108043022360

Salisbury Plain SPA

River basin	South West RBMP
WFD Management catchment	Hampshire Avon
WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)	GB108043022360

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Porton Down SPA	Porton Down SSSI
Salisbury Plain SAC	Salisbury Plain SSSI Parsonage Down SSSI Porton Down SSSI
Salisbury Plain SPA	Salisbury Plain SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Porton Down SPA	n/a
Salisbury Plain SAC	Parsonage Down NNR
Salisbury Plain SPA	n/a

Ramsar	
Porton Down SPA	n/a
Salisbury Plain SAC	n/a
Salisbury Plain SPA	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Porton Down SPA	Salisbury Plain SAC
Salisbury Plain SAC	Salisbury Plain SPA Porton Down SPA
Salisbury Plain SPA	Salisbury Plain SAC

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	24/04/2015	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

