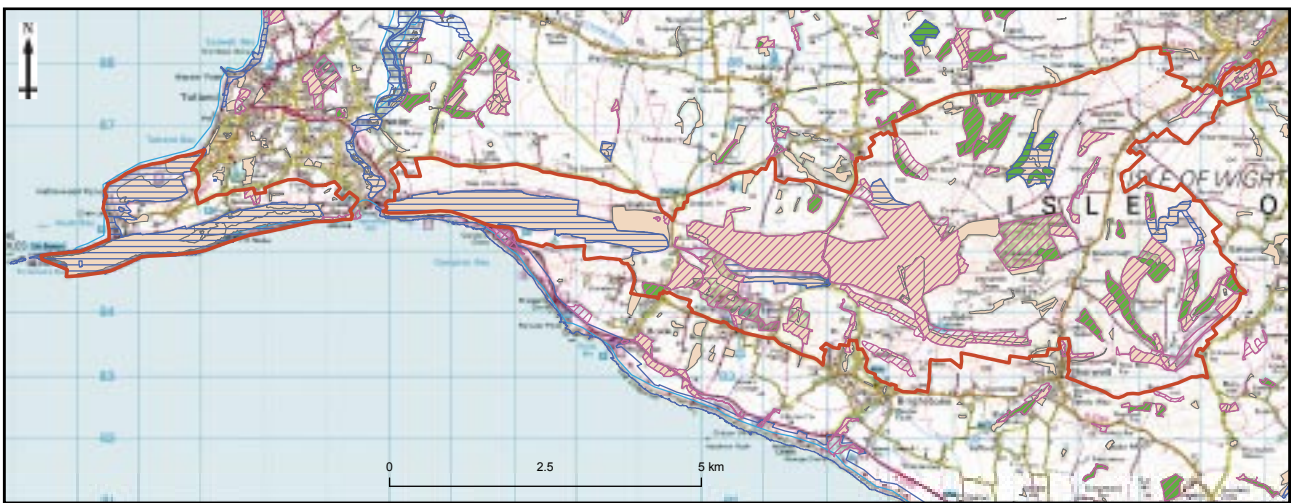


Isle of Wight Biodiversity Opportunity Areas







Western Central Ridge



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Key

-  Western Central Ridge
-  SINC
-  SSSI
- Terrestrial habitat**
-  <all other values>
-  Ancient woodland
-  AncientWoodPlant

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

Western Central Ridge



Opportunity area description

The Needles headland and Headon Warren as far east as Freshwater Bay, where the chalk is breached by the Western Yar valley. Afton Down eastwards to Carisbrooke Castle, including Compton, Brook and Mottistone Downs and Brighstone Forest, an area of secondary woodland.

Joint Character Area

Landscape descriptive unit

IW Joint Character Area: principally chalk downs but some elements of sandstone hill gravel ridges, and northern coastal cliffs.

Landscape types

Rolling chalk downland with northern slopes well-wooded, giving way to pasture land. Lower sandstone hills giving way to arable fields to the south.

Geology (bedrock)

Chalk with some areas of ferruginous sands to the south, and clay silt and sand to the north at the base of the slopes.

Geology (superficial)

Clay with flints on the chalk.

Topography (landform)

Stacks at The Needles and sheer chalk cliffs west of Freshwater Bay. The ridge runs west-east across the Island with shallow valleys (Western Yar, Chessell, Rowridge, and Bowcombe) running north-south.

Biodiversity (BAP habitat, Designated sites UK BAP Species)

SSSIs: Headon Warren and West High Down, Compton Down, Mottistone Down, Calbourne Down, Rowridge Valley, Garston's Down

SINCs: Moon's Hill, Freshwater Bay Cliffs, Shalcombe Down, Brook House Wood, Brighstone Forest, Grammar's Common, Row Down, Buddle Brook, Limerstone Down, Calbourne Pumping Station, Newbarn Down, Westover Copse, Little Down, High Wood, Round Copse, Apsedown Copse, Top Barn Copse, Idlecombe Down, Idlecombe Farm Down, Bowcombe Wood, Dukem Copse, Westridge Copse, Lorden Copse, Mount Ararat, Barcham's Copse, Plaish Copse, Plaish Meadows, Carisbrooke Castle, Mount Joy.

BAP habitat

- Chalk downland: extensive area of unimproved maritime influenced chalk grassland.
- Chalk heath on West High Down where superficial deposits overlie the chalk.
- Heathland: on Headon Warren. Small areas of heathland also on Brighstone Down.
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland.

UK BAP Species

Early gentian; Wood calamint; Scrambled egg lichen; Duke of Burgundy fritillary; Grayling; Small blue; Grizzled Skipper; Dinky Skipper.

Access

Tennyson Trail runs along the length of this area.

Targets – main opportunities

- Restoration and re-creation of chalk grassland.
- Acid grassland/Heathland mosaic re-creation in Brighstone Forest.
- Habitat management for butterflies.