

GMPC Nature 2021 phase 1

Desk top study key findings.

January 2021 V1.2

“Audit, preserve, protect, enhance, promote and enjoy GMPC wildlife”.

This summary report has come about via the Bucks Berks Milton Keynes Environmental Record Centre (BMERC) data that GMPC purchased and had analysed by Alex Cruickshank MSc MCIEEM in consultation with Nick Horslen GMPC councillor. Alex full report is available as a separate document. “Great Marlow Nature2021 Initial biodiversity audit” ***Sundew Ecology report, Great Marlow Parish Wildlife Audit.pdf***

The overriding caveat to this report is that the data stretches from the 1960’s to today, it covers only the notable species i.e., of wildlife interest to BMERC. Many more species are out there including the common blackbird and sparrow classed as not “notable” and so not recorded or provided to us. As with things like invertebrates and plants the numbers we mention are tiny in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of species out there in the world if not our parish, too many to ever record locally.

However, now we can at least say what is noted and notable and that can influence the forward view of what we might want to see more of in future.

For this project it is clearer now that habitat is as important as species. So, the importance of the Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), the Parkland and the Woodland designations of which there are many, should not be underestimated.

If the parish were to do just one thing and that was to promote better woodland management then that would be a key win for the parish and its wildlife. From that many programs for the parishioner and visitors could grow.

With important organisations like the Buck Berks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), the Woodland Trust, Chiltern rangers and others active already, the opportunities to liaise and follow through on new activities are quite real.

Certain farmers can also be seen to be active already. Widmer Farm (William White) and the Carington estate appear to have access to funding designed to encourage landowners to manage their land to benefit the environment. The primary scheme for this is Environmental Stewardship (ES).

These various organisation and family farms may be important first movers or quick wins for us to follow through on. Other slower burn type activities will need time and attention to plan and resource.

So GMPC - Did you know?

- GMPC land has in the past recorded just **4 species of amphibian** and **2 species of reptile**.
- GMPC land has recorded **57 species of “notable” birds**.

- GMPC land has records for **94 higher plant species, including Bluebell, Sanicle, Bird's-nest Orchids and Chiltern Gentian the county flower of Buckinghamshire.**
- GMPC land has **97 species of invertebrates recorded**, including stag beetles and increasingly rare woodland butterflies like the Purple Emperor, White Admiral and Chalkhill Blue. BMERC also has records of **72 species of moth** in GMPC.
- GMPC land has recorded **5 species of Bat** which is encouraging, but more of the 17 UK species would be expected in ancient woodlands.
- Only **6 species of other mammals** have been recorded including badger, water vole and dormouse, but these latter two date back to 1999 and 1970 and as endangered species would be a key find today and one most likely is no more.

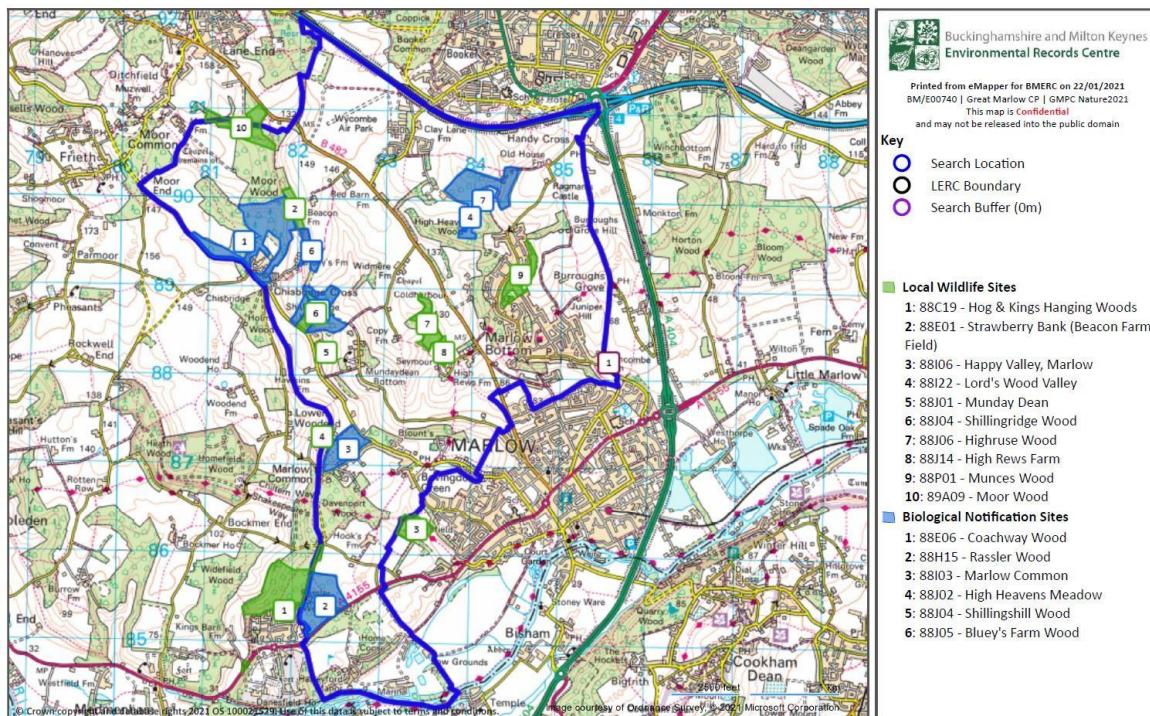
It is also important to note:

- There are **10 LWSs** (local wildlife sites) in GMPC, covering 71ha.
- There are **7 BNSs** (Biological notification sites) within GMPC.
- Much of **GMPC is included in the “Medmenham BOA”** i.e. Biodiversity Opportunity Area. The BMK Biodiversity Partnership produce a statement for the Medmenham BOA and that focuses resources into habitat management and species management.
- GMPC has **170 individually mapped areas of “priority habitat”** totally over 3000ha. Mainly broadleaved woodland and orchards.
- GMPC has **26 “Traditional orchards”** covering 5ha.
- **There are 32ha of registered parkland in Great Marlow Parish.**
- There are **7 main areas of Ancient Woodland**, mapped on the national register, within Great Marlow Parish, **totalling 250ha**. There is relatively little non-ancient woodland within the Parish, **covering an area of 100ha**.
- Approximately **45ha (less than 3%) of Great Marlow Parish is taken with urban land**, a combination of residential, industrial and farm units. Urban habitats like **gardens and parks can provide important spaces for wildlife, often better than intensively farmed agricultural land**.
- **Wycombe air park is a large (67ha) area of grassland and has the potential to be an important resource for wildlife.** Many other airfields are home to special flora and fauna such as butterflies and other pollinators.

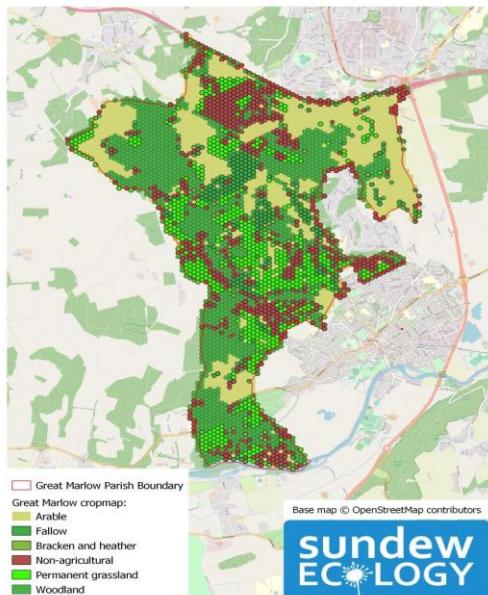
Area	
Great Marlow Parish	1700 ha
Agriculture – arable	Approx. 440ha
Agriculture – pasture	Approx. 240ha
Ancient Woodland	250ha
Non-ancient woodland (includes broadleaved, mixed and coniferous)	100ha
Priority Habitat – Broadleaved Woodland (includes ancient and non-ancient)	270ha
Priority Habitat – Lowland Meadow	1ha
Priority Habitat – Traditional Orchard	5ha
Priority Habitat – Calcareous Grassland	2ha
Parkland	32ha
Urban area	Approx. 45ha

As an overview of the GMPC ecology and wildlife please glance at the following map images:

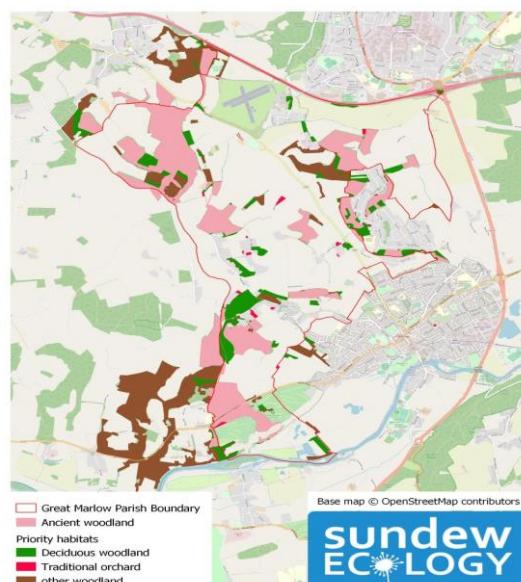
Map 1: Local Wildlife Sites and Biological Notification Areas



Map 2: Land Use with Crop map data



Map 3: Notable habitats



Key recommendations and next step considerations:

These are projects identified from the findings of the desk study and based on the presence of certain habitats and species. These are very broad, and further investigation and research is needed.

Nature conservation in the UK should aim to make existing wildlife sites ‘bigger better and more connected’.

A ten-point plan:

1. **Explore** the GMPC BOA involvement and contributions.
2. **Consider** a network of connections between the neighbouring LWSs, BNSs and LNRs
3. **Encourage** more landowners to enter Environmental Stewardship Schemes.
4. **Engage** with the owners of Wycombe Air Park to encourage wildlife friendly management of the airfield.
5. **Encourage** local wildlife recorders to submit their records to BMERC. In the process document, photograph and record new and existing species that are likely to be important and of interest.
6. **Drive** awareness of the habitats and species for the benefit of the local community.
7. **Facilitate** coppicing and other beneficial woodland management through the promotion of local woodland products.
8. **Ensure** that the owners of LWSs understand the importance of their land and are aware of how they can be managed to benefit wildlife.
9. **Promote** good hedgerow maintenance across the Parish.
10. **Identify** more wildlife-rich road verges and work with the highways authority to encourage beneficial management.

Key:

BOA – Biodiversity Opportunity Area statement.
LWS – Local Wildlife Site.
BNS – Biological Notification Site.
LNR – Local Nature Reserve.
BMERC – Bucks Milton Keynes Environmental Record centre.

Next step - three things are proposed immediately:

1. Explore the interest of all external parties.
2. Develop a more detail understanding of the species and habitats with BMERC and other online sources to see how we can improve the data and the use of the data.
3. Build and articulate a vision for the Parish and how the wildlife, habitat and ecology play an important part for all within the parish today and in the future.

If this report is of interest and you would like to know more please contact
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