

KENT LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE

KWT File No: 844539

Site Name:	Warren Wood etc., Eyhorne Street	Site Ref. No:	MA15
LPA:	Maidstone	Central Grid Ref:	TQ843539
Parish:	Broomfield & Kingswood/ Hollingbourne	Category:	Woodland, scrub
Owner:	Private	Natural Area:	Wealden Greensand
Area:	51.27 ha	AONB:	Yes
Date first notified:	1986	TPO:	No
Dates revised:	1995, April 2017 (Coombe Wood & The Chestnuts)	Landscape Character Area:	Greensand Belt, Hollingbourne Vale West
Date last approved:	March 2019		

REASON FOR DESIGNATION

A large woodland predominantly shown on the ancient woodland inventory. Some areas are plantation on ancient woodland soils, the ground flora remains though dominated by a small number of species.

RATIONALE FOR SITE BOUNDARY

The boundary surrounds the habitats of interest.

DESCRIPTION

Most of the woodland is on very acid sands of the Folkestone Beds and has been subject to varying management over the years. Parts of the original sessile oak *Quercus petraea* woodland remain, particularly along the margins, but much has been converted to conifer plantation or pure sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* coppice, and some oak high forest has developed where the original shrub layer has been removed. However, there are still many very large mature oak and the occasional beech *Fagus sylvatica* within the complex. The M20 motorway & CTRL now run through Warren Wood, and there is only a small remnant to the south of the motorway. However, this is an important area, as the sweet chestnut coppice supports a good colony of the native wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*. This colony has been known for many years and, although part of it was destroyed when the road was built, some plants were lifted and are now found along the southern margin of the main part of Warren Wood to the north of the division. Another small colony was recorded in a small part of Ash Shaw south of Coombe Wood, at TQ841539.

The main area of Warren Wood is a mosaic of relict mixed broadleaved woodland with hazel *Corylus avellana*, hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* and sweet chestnut coppice and large mature oaks interspersed with oak plantations, oak/cherry *Prunus* sp. plantations. However, it retains much of its original ground flora in most places with wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa* dominant in the relict woodland areas. Bluebell ¹ *Hyacinthoides non scripta* is locally frequent. Other species are rather scarce, mostly confined to the woodbanks and marginal areas. Wood sorrel ² *Oxalis acetosella*, wood rush *Luzula pilosa*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea*² are present with common dog



violet *Viola riviniana* and wood sedge *Carex sylvatica*. Cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratense* is frequent in the damper areas at the eastern end of the wood under old hazel coppice.

Combe Wood is a mosaic of relic hornbeam, hazel and sweet chestnut coppice with oak standards and large areas of broadleaved and conifer plantation. The woodland slopes down to the northwest and damper areas are present throughout with dense pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* and meadow sweet *Filipendula ulmaria* recorded as a feature of some rides. An area of dense, damp scrub, once pasture, is present in the north western corner. Willow *Salix* spp and young alder *Alnus glutinosa* are the principle trees but young ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus* are also recorded.

Small, open, grassy areas supported tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, ragged robin *Silene flos-cuculi*, meadow sweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, primrose *Primula vulgaris* and common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* when last visited.

An area called The Chestnuts of managed, pure sweet chestnut coppice at TQ837539 contains an old sand quarry with a bare sand cliff which once held a colony of sand martins³. The woodland itself is dominated by bluebell, with wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, wood sorrel² *Oxalis acetosella* and many other common woodland species are recorded.

The bryophyte flora is rich in the ancient woodland areas and along layered edges and woodbanks, and the sallow scrub supports a good variety of species reflecting the different soil types. Over 40 species have been recorded including both corticolous and terricolous species.

On the northern side of the railway line, an area of alder/willow carr previously recorded to hold pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, southern marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and common spotted-orchid adds interest to the site.

The whole site is rich in bird life, including all woodpecker species^{3, 4, 5, 6, 7}, nuthatch, buzzard and hawfinch^{4, 6, 7, 8}, in addition to most common warblers.

Thirteen species of butterfly have been recorded, including ringlet, orange tip, speckled wood, and brimstone

A badger⁹ sett is present in Coombe Wood. Rabbits are fairly common, especially in the more open woodland.

¹ Protected under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

² Kent Rare Plants Register v12.

³ Amber List. Birds of Conservation Concern 4. 2015.

⁴ Red List. Birds of Conservation Concern 4. 2015.

⁵ Kent Red Data Book Status 2. A. Waite (Ed.) 2000.

⁶ S.41 species NERC Act 2006.

⁷ UK BAP Priority Species as identified by the JNCC.

⁸ Kent Red Data Book Status 1. A. Waite (Ed.) 2000.

⁹ Protection of Badgers Act. 1992