

RSPB Blackbushe Management Report

October 2025



By Mark Crisp - Warden

Heathland Restoration:

- Work has begun to link up open habitat between Blackbushe and Castle Bottom NNR.
- Areas designated to expand open habitat have also started.
- Trees with most wildlife value are being kept whilst also maintaining enough open areas to allow sunlight to reach ground.
- Use of heavy machinery will help to stir up soil and allow heather and smaller plant species to grow.
- Unfortunately signs with pre-commencement information on have been vandalized or removed so information reach has been limited.
- Happy to discuss works at meeting.
- Example of poster attached to report.

Wildlife:

- Over the summer, volunteers recorded a vast array of species on areas we had cut back to form the firebreak.
- Heath week we did a butterflies and reptiles walk, adders and plenty of butterflies spotted.
- Plant species benefitting from sunlight, therefore butterflies and other insects benefitting from increased nectar sources.
- Nice assemblage of birds on site.
- Winter thrushes arriving making use of berry trees.

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The RSPB is part of BirdLife International, a network of passionate organisations, working together to save nature across the world.

Upcoming Winter Work:

- As discussed in previous meetings and communications, tree felling to continue in order for us to achieve favourable status of site's heathland designations and improve condition of existing heathland and woodland scrub habitat. Felling will also ensure better connectivity between neighbouring heathland sites.
- Existing path flooding (that was present prior to felling) will be looked at by Wardening team to see if we can mitigate.
- Other areas of site will have path and potential fire vehicle access improved once culverts are installed – pipes purchased.
- At present, there is no concern from both RSPB and HCC over flooding, any concerns from locals have been acknowledged but we will monitor and mitigate if possible as we go through winter.
- Volunteer group to start every Thursday potentially once timber work has been completed.

Discussion Points Raised at Meeting

- Historic trail to be installed in conjunction with Blackbushe Airport.
- Contact details added to RSPB info share: David Taeger
- RSPB to meet neighbourhood watch on site for a tour and discussion.

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The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654.
Registered address: The Lodge, Potton Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL



Heathland Restoration

Why are we felling trees?

Throughout October and November we will be removing a significant number of trees from the site. This work will look very destructive initially, but it is essential work to restore the historic open heathland habitat, for which the site is designated a Special Protection area and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Removing the trees will allow sunlight to reach the ground, and allow the dormant seeds of heathland vegetation communities to germinate and grow.

The green hatching on the above map shows where 95% of the trees will be removed, blue where 90% will be removed and yellow where 80% will be removed. The yellow circle shows where timber will be stacked before being removed from the site.

Find out more

Email: farnham.heath@rspb.org.uk

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