

STEYNING DOWNLAND SCHEME

Publicising Rare or Unusual Species Policy

INTRODUCTION

From time to time, a rare or unusual species may be discovered on the Steyning Downland Scheme (SDS). The presence of these species may attract attention from people, whether to legitimately observe, or to illicitly collect them. Such attention could damage the site and/or result in the loss of the species concerned.

For this reason, it might sometimes be appropriate to keep the presence of these species confidential. However, the unknown presence of a rare or unusual species may also lead to their loss, through neglect or inappropriate site management.

This note describes a consistent procedure for managing the discovery of a rare or unusual species on the SDS. The aim of this note is to:

1. Provide clarity for people who discover a rare or unusual species about how the SDS will use their information.
2. Minimise confusion and misunderstandings amongst SDS staff, volunteers, Friends and others about who should be informed and for what purpose.
3. Ensure that the species concerned has the best possible opportunity to thrive on the SDS.

PROCEDURE

In the event of a rare or unusual species being discovered on the SDS, the following procedure should be applied:

1. The person who discovers what they believe to be a rare or unusual species should notify the Project Manager and the Data Manager by e-mail, giving:

- The name of the species, or a description
- A description of its location (ideally with a photograph or a sketch map)
- If possible a photograph of the species concerned
- Their name and phone number
- Date seen
- Names of anyone else who is aware
- Any other relevant / useful information

2. As soon as possible after being notified, the Project Manager will notify the Trustees and the members of the Land Management Group by email. In his absence, the Data Manager will do so.

3. The Land Management Group will make a collective decision about the next steps. They may choose to do any one or more of the following:

a) Arrange a site meeting with the person(s) who first discovered the species, to verify its identity.

b) Involve specialist species recorders to seek their advice (particularly for some species which may be hard to identify or have specialist needs). These may not be SDS volunteers.

c) Ensure the relevant County Recorders are notified, either directly or via the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre/ BirdTrack.

d) Notify specified other SDS volunteers in confidence, if they may otherwise inadvertently affect the species, for example through habitat management or by organising events.

e) Modify the Site Management Plan, the annual Conservation Volunteers Task Plan and any other relevant plans, as appropriate.

The SDS will only publicise the presence of a rare or unusual species after discussion with the person who first discovered it.

END

ANNEX 1: KEY CONTACTS

SDS Project Manager: Matthew Thomas, sds@wistonesatte.co.uk tel: 01903 817996

SDS Data Manager: Bob Platt, bobplatt69@gmail.com tel: 01903 812404

3. SDS Trustees:

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4. Members of the SDS Land Management Group:

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5. The Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre: <https://sxbrc.org.uk/about/contact.php>

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