

## Heathland Features – Associated Species

Full Species Action Plans have been prepared for two species groups which are generally associated with heathland habitats: narrow-headed ant and reptiles. The SAPs for these species/groups are colour-coded with the Heathland Features Action Plan.

The following represent other important species associated with heathland habitats on the Highways Agency soft estate, but for which a full Species Action Plan has not been produced at this stage.

### Nightjar

The nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) is a characteristic species of England's lowland heathland, which has declined in numbers and range during the 20th Century. Although breeding nightjars have been recorded scattered throughout England, the species is concentrated in the south, with major concentrations in the New Forest and Dorset, the Surrey/Hampshire borders, Sussex and Kent, and the East Anglian Brecks and Sandlings (network areas 3, 4, and 6). The nightjar is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments) and is listed on Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive and Appendix II of the Bern Convention. It is also a Priority Species in the UKBAP and numerous LBAPs. The loss of suitable nesting and feeding habitat, through development or unfavourable management, is the main cause of the nightjar's decline.

### Woodlark

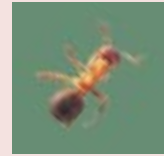
The woodlark (*Lullula arborea*) was formerly found across much of southern Britain, but is currently largely restricted to five main areas: Devon, east Dorset and south Hampshire (including the New Forest), the Surrey/Hampshire border, Breckland, and the Suffolk coast (network areas 1, 3, 5, 6, 13 and 16). The woodlark is protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments) and listed on Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive and Appendix II of the Bern Convention.

It is also a UKBAP Priority Species, and a Priority Species in three local BAPs: Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Staffordshire. Woodlarks nest in varied habitats across the country, including farmland, recently-felled forestry plantations and heathland. It is the loss and unfavourable management of these habitats, and the mosaic of bare ground for feeding and tussocky vegetation for nesting within them, which have caused the decline of the woodlark.

### Hen harrier

The hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) is a moorland bird which became extinct in England during the first half of the 20th Century, and has only returned to northern England since 1968. Hen harriers are largely restricted in England to Cumbria and Lancashire (network areas 17 and 19). They are specially protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments) and are listed on Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive and Appendix II of the Bern Convention. The hen harrier is not a UKBAP Priority Species but is included on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern. Hen harriers breed on moorland or in heather in young conifer plantations, and feed on small birds, grouse, rodents and young hares and rabbits. The main threats to hen harriers are persecution and the loss of large areas of heather moorland.

This leaflet is to be read in conjunction with the species Action Plans on:



Narrow-headed Ant



Reptiles

### Dingy mocha moth

The dingy mocha (*Cyclophora pendularia*) is a rare and localised moth species, confined to Dorset and west Hampshire, where it occurs on the Purbeck heaths between Studland and Wareham, the Ringwood area of the New Forest, and the Luscombe Valley nature reserve near the east Dorset border (Network Area 3). Whilst this species is not covered directly by any legislation, most of the remaining populations are within existing SSSIs. It is a Priority Species in the UKBAP. One of the major factors causing the decline of the species is the loss of heathland to developments such as road construction.

### Pearl-bordered fritillary

The pearl-bordered fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*) is a widespread butterfly species found in damp woodland, meadows and heathland. It is less common in the north than the south. It feeds on the foliage of violets, and hibernates in a curled up leaf. This species is not protected by any current legislation, but it is a Priority Species in the UKBAP owing to significant declines in its population in recent years.