

# The Hedgerows of Combe Hay Parish

## Cotswolds Hedgerow Project

The Cotswolds Hedgerow Project is a joint venture between the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre, South Gloucestershire Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council, and is funded by the Cotswolds Conservation Board's Sustainable Development Fund & the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.

This project builds upon the survey work of the Field Boundaries Project. The objective of the Cotswolds Hedgerow Project is to survey and map the hedgerows in ten parishes within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Hedgerows are an interlinked habitat, providing a corridor which allows species to move through the countryside. This helps to maintain the richness and diversity of our wildlife at both local and national levels. Hedgerows such as those in Combe Hay play an important role in this.



Roadside hedge-laying in Combe Hay.

- Hedgerows are a key landscape feature of your parish.
- Primrose, ferns, hedgehogs, dunnocks, gatekeeper butterfly, linnets, bats & voles (to name but a few) are all associated with hedges.
- Hedgerow fruits and seeds provide important food sources throughout the year for birds, small mammals and insects.
- Hedgerows and their associated trees can be hundreds of years old, forming an important part of the local heritage.

BRERC wish to thank all the landowners involved, the Cotswolds Hedgerow Project volunteers, the Field Boundaries Project volunteers & the Avon Wildlife Trust. BRERC also thank the CCB and ALSF for funding this project.



Rainbow Wood - typical of a "hanger" woodland found on the edge of Cotswolds hills



A close-up map showing the variation in hedges

Key to surveyed hedges  
Number of woody species identified per hedgerow

- 1 to 4
- 5 to 7
- more than 7

- In Combe Hay approximately 15% of the field boundaries are not hedgerows. These may be woodland edge, fences or walls etc. Of the remaining hedgerow field boundaries approximately 85% have been surveyed.

There are approximately 12 miles of surveyed hedges in the parish of Combe Hay. Of these hedges 66% have more than 7 woody species.

- 52% of the hedges have banks and 10% have ditches associated with them. These features provide extra habitat and potentially increase the importance of the hedgerow for wildlife.
- Of the hedges surveyed within this parish at least 70% have trees such as Ash and Oak.



Many of the hedges in Combe Hay have large trees. These trees provide resources for wildlife and help form the the character of the parish.



Compiled by BRERC Spring 2007  
[www.brerc.org.uk](http://www.brerc.org.uk)

Poster one of three

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# The Wildlife of Combe Hay Parish

## Cotswolds Hedgerow Project

Ancient and species-rich hedgerows are important habitats which support 47 nationally protected species, including 13 globally threatened or rapidly declining species.

Hedgerows are especially important for butterflies and moths, farmland birds, bats, amphibians, reptiles and dormice, and a range of wildflowers and ferns.

The hedgerows of this parish are very important for wildlife.

- Hedges provide home, shelter or food for half of all UK wildlife including over 600 plant species, 1500 insects, 65 birds and 20 mammals.
- Dense, bushy hedges linking to woodlands and watercourses provide 'wildlife corridors' enabling the movements of animals and plants and allowing dispersal and colonisation.
- The loss of these 'wildlife corridors' due to hedgerow loss and gappy neglected hedges is one of the biggest threats to our native wildlife.



Waxwings

- Both Greater Horseshoe Bats and Lesser Horseshoe Bats are recorded from Combe Hay. These animals have a very limited distribution in the UK and have specific habitat requirements which include those found in a traditional landscape such as grazed fields, tall hedgerows, watercourses and areas of old woodland.

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### Key to map

- ★ "Notable" species record
- Semi-natural / semi-improved habitats
- Site of Nature Conservation Interest
- Surveyed hedgerows

- Within the parish of Combe Hay there are eight Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. These include habitats like semi-natural grassland, ancient woodland, the old canal and Cam Brook.
- The parish's hedges contain many common shrub species, with Hawthorn being the most commonly recorded one. Hazel, Blackthorn, Elder and Field Maple are the next most common in descending order. Spindle was very frequently recorded in Combe Hay and was more abundant here than many other parishes.
- Below is a list of some of the less common or otherwise important plants and animals recorded in Combe Hay:

Greater and lesser Horseshoe Bats, Chalk Milkwort, Waxwing, Bath Asparagus and Green-winged Orchid.



Green-winged Orchid is a declining, locally scarce plant which is found scattered in some semi-natural grasslands.

Waxwings are rather scarce winter visitors from Scandinavia. In some years they move south in large flocks and may be seen in hedges feeding on berries, hips and buds.



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Waxwings - Richard Andrews

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# Hedgerow Diversity in Combe Hay Parish

## Cotswolds Hedgerow Project

Hedgerows can be enhanced for wildlife by:

- Cutting on three a year rotation to ensure a constant supply of hedgerow flowers and fruit for winter food and shelter for birds and small mammals is a good general guide. Records of bats in this parish may mean more specific advice should be sought.
- Leaving field side faces uncut where roadside faces are cut for safety.
- Cutting as late as possible, preferably January/ February, to allow maximum benefit to wildlife for food and shelter.
- Organising cutting to ensure some food and shelter is available at all times.





Breeding of farm birds, small mammals and insects can be encouraged by:

- Leaving some saplings, at intervals to grow into hedgerow trees which might then become future veteran trees.
- Never cutting hedges from the beginning of March to the end of July during the bird nesting season.
- Leaving old rotten or dying hedgerow trees, wherever safe, to provide shelter for bats, small mammals and insects.
- Leaving uncultivated buffer zones at the foot of hedges to increase habitat diversity.

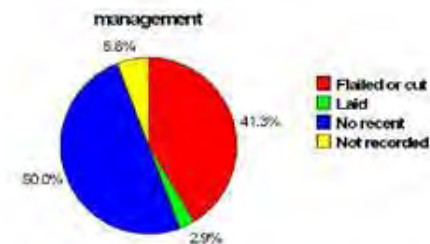
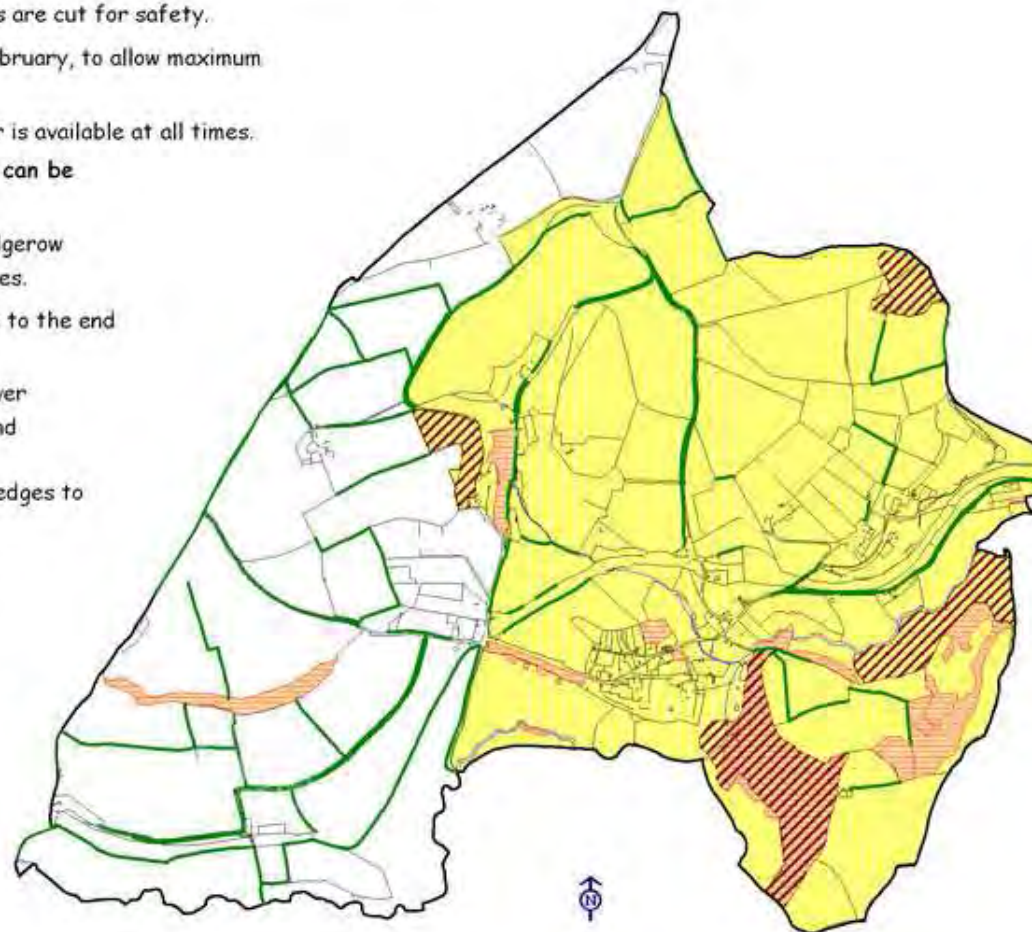
Wildlife value of hedgerows can be maintained by:

- Laying hedges traditionally to maintain a thick hedge base and reinvigorate the hedge.
- Planting up gaps to increase the existing network of hedges, copses and woodlands and form green corridors to support wildlife movement.
- Choosing a combination of shrub species which reflect the distinctive character of the nearby hedgerows; and by opting for plants of a local provenance.

### Key to main map

-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Site of ancient woodland
-  Semi-natural broadleaf woodland
-  Surveyed hedges

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The chart above shows the percentages of different types of hedgerow management in this parish.



Hedges shown above in blue are recorded as having gaps

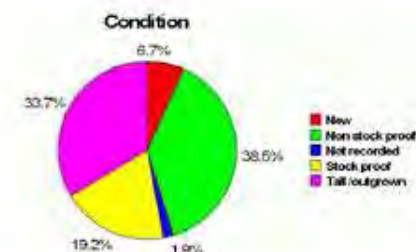


Chart showing the percentages of differing hedgerow conditions in this parish.



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