



The site supports a variety of butterflies typical of ancient woodland in lowland England. Noteworthy species include white admiral, purple hairstreak, holly blue, wood white and black hairstreak. Both wood white and black hairstreak have declined recently in Britain and occur in only a few sites elsewhere in the county. Wood white feeds on woodland legumes whilst black hairstreak relies on the blackthorn which forms a boundary to parts of the wood. Other woodland insects include the hoverflies *Criorhina ranunculi* and *Didea fasciata* and moths such as brindled white-spot, green arches and lilac beauty.

The SSSI includes an area to the south of the wood supporting a variety of habitats including a blackthorn hedge, scattered scrub, rough grassland and a dry herb-rich bank. The grassland is dominated by tufted hair-grass and other tall-growing species including hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, hoary ragwort *Senecio erucifolius* and false fox sedge *Carex otrubae*. The bank supports a variety of herbs often associated with calcareous soils including abundant glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, spring sedge *C. caryophylla*, dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaule*, cowslip *Primula veris* and fairy flax *Linum catharticum*. Another chalk plant, rest-harrow *Ononis repens* grows along the gravel track at the entrance to the wood. Further diversity is provided by the River Ray which supports a number of wetland plants along its banks. These areas support a wide variety of insects and other animals. Butterflies have been well recorded, and include dingy and grizzled skippers, common blue, orange-tip, small heath and marbled white. The uncommon dark green fritillary has also been seen.

The site supports a wide range of birds including many which are local in the county. Resident woodland specialists include nuthatch, treecreeper, woodpeckers and tits. The scrub habitats support breeding nightingales and a variety of warblers including whitethroat, lesser whitethroat, garden warbler and the declining grasshopper warbler. Other noteworthy species include tawny owl, sparrowhawk, turtle dove and woodcock. The site is visited by large numbers of wintering birds, particularly thrushes such as redwing and fieldfare and finches.