

[Home \(/\)](#)

NCA Profile:147 Blackdowns (NE566)

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[General publications \(/category/8005\)](/category/8005)

[National Character Areas \(/category/587130\)](/category/587130)

Long, dark ridges, deep valleys and dynamic cliffs are the essence of the Blackdowns National Character Area (NCA). The ridges create prominent backdrops from afar and offer far-reaching views. Flat plateaux, large, regular fields and long, straight roads create a sense of openness and uniformity on the ridges. Beech hedgerows and avenues enclose the grazed landscape, although areas of remnant common, lowland heath and scrub still exist, providing open access.



Woodland, much of semi-natural origin, dominates the steep valley tops, creating sinuous dark edges to the ridges; some conifer plantations also exist and intrude onto the plateaux. Below the wooded edge pastoral valleys feature with a medieval field pattern of small, irregular fields bounded by dense species-rich hedgebanks and hedgerow trees, creating an enclosed, tranquil setting. A myriad of springs and streams flow south through the valleys and can often be traced by semi-natural habitats: springline mires, rush pasture and carr woodland. Some valley floors widen and provide an opportunity for arable production, notably the Axe Valley which is characterised by a much wider flood plain. The entire River Axe within the NCA is designated for its biodiversity value, notably lamprey and bullhead fish.

[Further information \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making)

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