



ENGLISH HERITAGE

MONUMENTS AT RISK

EAST OF ENGLAND

MONUMENTS AT RISK

Scheduled monuments are our most cherished, nationally important archaeological sites and landscapes. In the East of England they include prehistoric burial mounds and hill forts; Romano-British forts and villas and Saxon dykes; medieval settlements and moats; castles, abbeys and the industrial and military structures of our more recent past.

They constitute a unique inheritance that tells the story of many generations of human endeavour and life. Scheduled monuments create our sense of time and place, and add greatly to the distinctiveness of our towns and countryside and to our enjoyment of our surroundings.

Although protected by law, scheduled monuments are threatened by a wide range of human activities and natural processes. Survey in the East of England region has shown that 1025 (60%) of its 1706 monuments are at risk from damage, decay or loss, unless action is taken. The absence of effective woodland management as well as arable agriculture, natural processes, development and neglect are the main threats.

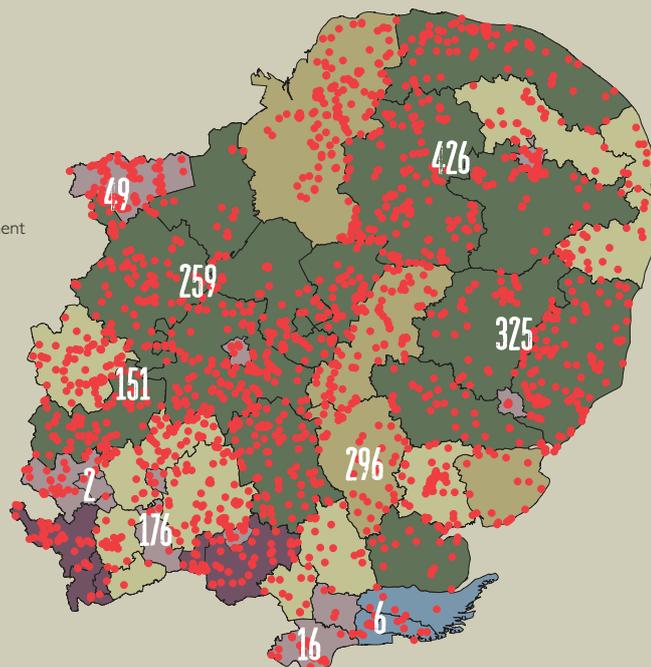
When damaged or lost, scheduled monuments cannot be replaced. Careful management is needed if we are to pass them on to future generations in good condition. This requires close co-operation between the owners of scheduled monuments, government, and all organisations charged with caring for the environment.

NUMBER OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS BY ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

Bedfordshire	151
Cambridgeshire	259
Essex	296
Hertfordshire	176
Luton	2
Norfolk	426
Peterborough	49
Southend	6
Suffolk	325
Thorrock	16

Urban and rural land classifications

- Major Urban
- Large Urban
- Other Urban
- Significant Rural
- Rural 50
- Rural 80
- Scheduled Monument



SCHEDULED MONUMENTS AT RISK: EAST OF ENGLAND

1 Visitor erosion at Baconsthorpe Castle in Norfolk.

In 1998 English Heritage published a national Monuments at Risk Survey (MARS). This showed that since 1945, an average of one archaeological site had been destroyed every day. These losses include scheduled monuments – historic sites designated as being nationally important. As a follow up, English Heritage has now undertaken a more detailed assessment of the risks currently facing scheduled monuments in the East of England region.

The survey had two main objectives:

- to evaluate the condition, amenity value and setting of scheduled monuments in the region and the extent to which they are at risk
- to establish priorities for action and monument management.

Following the completion of the pilot study, surveys have been carried out in all the other English regions. The East of England survey found that with 60% of the region's monuments at risk, there is an urgent need for action before more of our heritage is damaged or lost.



FACTS & FIGURES

The East of England region encompasses 19,110km² of land and has a population of approximately 5.5 million people. The average density of scheduled monuments is 1 per 11km².

OWNERSHIP

77% (1317) of scheduled monuments are in private ownership, just under 16% (271) are owned by local authorities, 5% (91) by government or their agencies, and less than 1% (6) by utilities. The remaining 1% (21) are in other forms of ownership, largely that of the Crown or Crown Estate (18).

FORM AND DATE

67% of scheduled monuments are wholly or partly earthworks, mostly of prehistoric or medieval date. 27% consist of or include a structure, mainly of medieval and later date. 18% include buried archaeology with nothing visible above the ground surface and may be of any period.

1317
SCHEDULED
MONUMENTS ARE IN
PRIVATE
OWNERSHIP

LAND USE

28% of the region's monuments are under grass or heathland, 15% on land in cultivation, and 12% in woodland. 11% are used as gardens or orchards, and 8% are dominated by scrub. There is considerable variety, however, in land use between counties in the region.

2 Beech trees, planted for furniture wood but never harvested, threaten the bank of this Iron Age fort near Sharpenhoe, Bedfordshire.

3 Graffiti and vandalism at Clophill Church, Bedfordshire, greatly reduces the amenity value of this landmark monument.

4 Illegal metal detecting on the site of this Roman Villa in Suffolk led to a landmark prosecution.



MEASURING THE RISKS

The survey assessed not only the condition of each monument's fabric (whether its remains are buried or upstanding), but also included an initial evaluation of its setting and amenity value. The setting of a monument is usually fundamental to forming an understanding and appreciation of the site itself. Amenity value is what the visitor can appreciate of the monument when visiting the site. Inappropriate development or land use next to a scheduled monument can be an eyesore, or can lead to the site becoming an island, cut off from its surroundings. Other impacts such as traffic noise and dust from nearby mineral extraction can also spoil the enjoyment of visitors.



KEY FINDINGS

CONDITION

Significant problems were noted on 54% of the region's scheduled monuments. At 9% of them, the problems were both major and extensive, while at the remaining 43% they were more localised but nonetheless a cause for concern. Condition is in decline for more than a quarter of monuments, and only 7% are improving.

RISK

17% of monuments are at high risk (in the short term) and 43% are at medium risk. Consequently, over half need urgent action to prevent deterioration, loss or damage.

39% OF
MONUMENTS ARE
HIGHLY
VISIBLE

RISK AND LAND USE

66% of high-risk monuments are on arable land, another 11% are on heathland and grassland, 8% are in woodland and 7% are on developed or urban land. Cambridgeshire has the greatest number (89) of high-risk monuments, perhaps reflecting the concentration of high-quality arable land in the county.

VULNERABILITY

26% scheduled of monuments are vulnerable to unmanaged tree, scrub and plant growth, 17% are at risk from agriculture (mainly ploughing and erosion caused by stock and drainage), 12% are threatened by dumping, vandalism and neglect, 4% are prone to damage by burrowing animals, 4% are under threat from development, 2% are prone to natural decay. Other threats include vehicle damage, visitor erosion and metal detecting.



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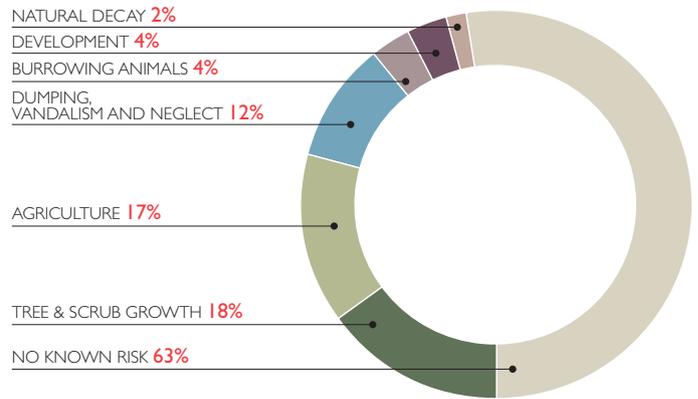
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RISK BY TYPE OF DESIGNATION	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK
	SCHEDULED MONUMENTS		
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY	1	13	26
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST	6	8	16
NATIONAL PARK	1	5	8
SITES IN MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS	3	35	76

SOURCE OF RISK



- 5 Sited to defend the nation against invasion, this Martello Tower on the Suffolk Coast now lies only 10m from the eroding cliff line.
- 6 & 7 Damage caused to a Bronze Age bowl barrow on Harpley Common, Norfolk by motocross cyclists (1) and deer (2).
- 8 Burnt-out cars dumped into the ditch of a hillfort near Totternhoe, Bedfordshire in an ill-conceived attempt to protect the monument from trailbike riders.
- 9 Discussions are currently underway for the repair of this final unconsolidated stretch of the Roman Town wall at Colchester.

LEGISLATION

Current ancient monument legislation permits potentially damaging activities (ploughing, horticulture, unmanaged woodland, gardening) on all or parts of 45% of scheduled monuments in the East of England.

17% OF MONUMENTS ARE AT HIGH RISK

AMENITY VALUE

39% of monuments are highly visible and 48% are partly visible. Buried remains alone survive for 13%. 14% are fully accessible to the public, and 66% have limited public access. Only 20% have no access. Developed interpretation is available at only 5% of monuments, 11% have some interpretation, and 75% have no on-site interpretation.

SETTING

An initial appraisal suggests that 25% of monuments include many features of more recent date, 70% have some modern features, and only 5% have few or no modern features. In 25% of cases the monument's setting has changed substantially since it was constructed or in use. Partial changes in setting have occurred in 69% of cases. In 6% of cases it can be considered to be unchanged.

DESIGNATION

Monuments within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are at lower risk than the regional average. Risk is slightly higher on land holdings designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

MANAGEMENT

Sites with recent and active Management Agreements highlight the beneficial effect of concentrated efforts to secure better monument management: only 3% are at high risk and 61% at low risk.

IMPROVED AREA CONSERVATION

Many of our landscapes and townscapes are recognised as being of special importance because of their historic, natural, or aesthetic qualities – or because they are in need of economic regeneration. These areas normally benefit from strong safeguards against unsympathetic development, and can be eligible for grant schemes that could significantly help to reduce the extent to which scheduled monuments within their boundaries are at risk.

In some cases the risks to scheduled monuments can be reduced simply by good land management, or by informed planning policies and decisions that take full account of the national importance of historic sites. However, some monuments do require significant resources in order to stabilise their condition, to carry out repairs, or to change the way in which the land on and around the monument is used.

As a result of the Scheduled Monuments at Risk survey, the priorities for improved scheduled monument management have been identified throughout the East of England region for the first time. At a strategic level, the major threats to the condition of monuments in the region have been identified. In addition, practical management requirements have been identified for individual monuments.

Under Section 17 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 English Heritage is empowered to enter into short-term agreements with landowners or tenants to promote the preservation and good management of scheduled monuments. County-based monument management projects have been particularly successful in negotiating such agreements.

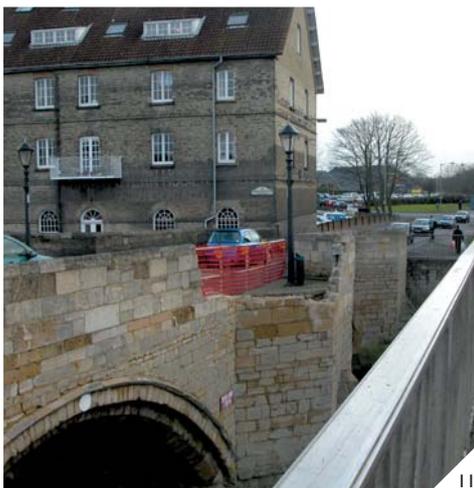
However, some monuments have required more significant resources to stabilise their condition, to carry out repairs or to change the way in which the land on and around the monument is used. We have worked with partners to attract major lottery grants and other sources of funding that have been successfully used to improve the condition of many of the region's monuments.

10 Inter-tidal sites such as this late Saxon fish trap on the Essex coast are vulnerable to both natural and human actions.



Practical advice on the management of scheduled monuments is available from the Historic Environment Local Management website at www.helm.org.uk

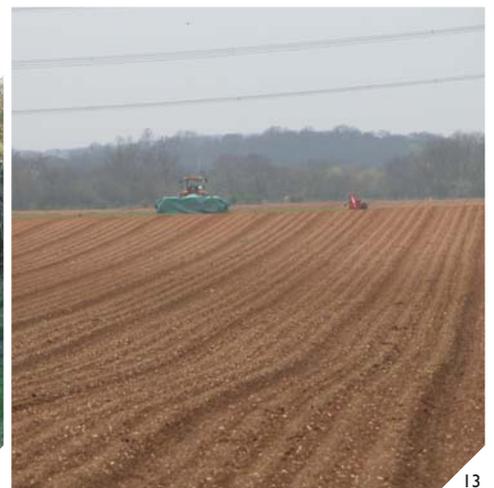
11 Historic bridges, like this one over the River Ouse at Huntingdon, are particularly susceptible to crash damage in heavy traffic.



12 A leaking water trough leads to stock erosion at this medieval settlement site near Cambridge.



13 Organic vegetable production requires deep digging to control weeds on this Roman Villa site near Peterborough.



THE RISKS TO SCHEDULED MONUMENTS CAN BE REDUCED BY GOOD LAND MANAGEMENT

The Devil's Dyke in Cambridgeshire is an 11km-long Saxon earthwork that once guarded a major trade route into East Anglia. Today it is a scheduled monument, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a public right of way. The Devil's Dyke Restoration Project has recently allowed a partnership of agencies to improve the way in which the monument is used, managed and enjoyed.

THE WAY FORWARD

There will be no easy or overnight solution to the issues identified by the East of England Scheduled Monuments at Risk survey. Although English Heritage has a statutory duty to promote the conservation of ancient monuments, our financial resources can only solve a small fraction of the problems. Other partners must also make a commitment to play a vital role in improving the condition of these important sites. In some cases, legislative change is required.

The current level of risk to scheduled monuments in the East of England must be reduced if future generations are to enjoy this fragile heritage. Over half of our monuments are in need of management action to prevent further deterioration, loss or damage. English Heritage believes that no monuments that are legally protected in the public interest should be at high risk.

One of the impediments to efficient and effective management of scheduled monuments has until now been England's overly complicated system of heritage legislation. We therefore welcome government's commitment to reform the current arrangements for the protection of the historic environment in the context of the draft Heritage Protection Bill presented to Parliament in April 2008.

English Heritage believes that a concerted effort by landowners, local and national government, and the organisations that make decisions about our environment, can make a real difference. We particularly encourage public sector funding bodies to achieve a balance between historic, natural and other environmental issues when deciding grant priorities and we welcome the enhanced profile accorded to our heritage within Defra's Environmental Stewardship Scheme for agricultural land.

We believe that reducing the risk to scheduled monuments should be accorded a similar priority to the achievement of biodiversity targets, and that these efforts can often be mutually supportive.

English Heritage is committed to measuring its success as an organisation by securing a year-on-year reduction in the number of buildings, monuments and landscapes at risk throughout the country. Clear targets will therefore be set for reducing the types and degree of risk to scheduled monuments in the East of England region as well as throughout the country. To achieve this we need the help and support of not only our stakeholder partners, but also the wider public for whom scheduled monuments are a vital part of their surroundings.



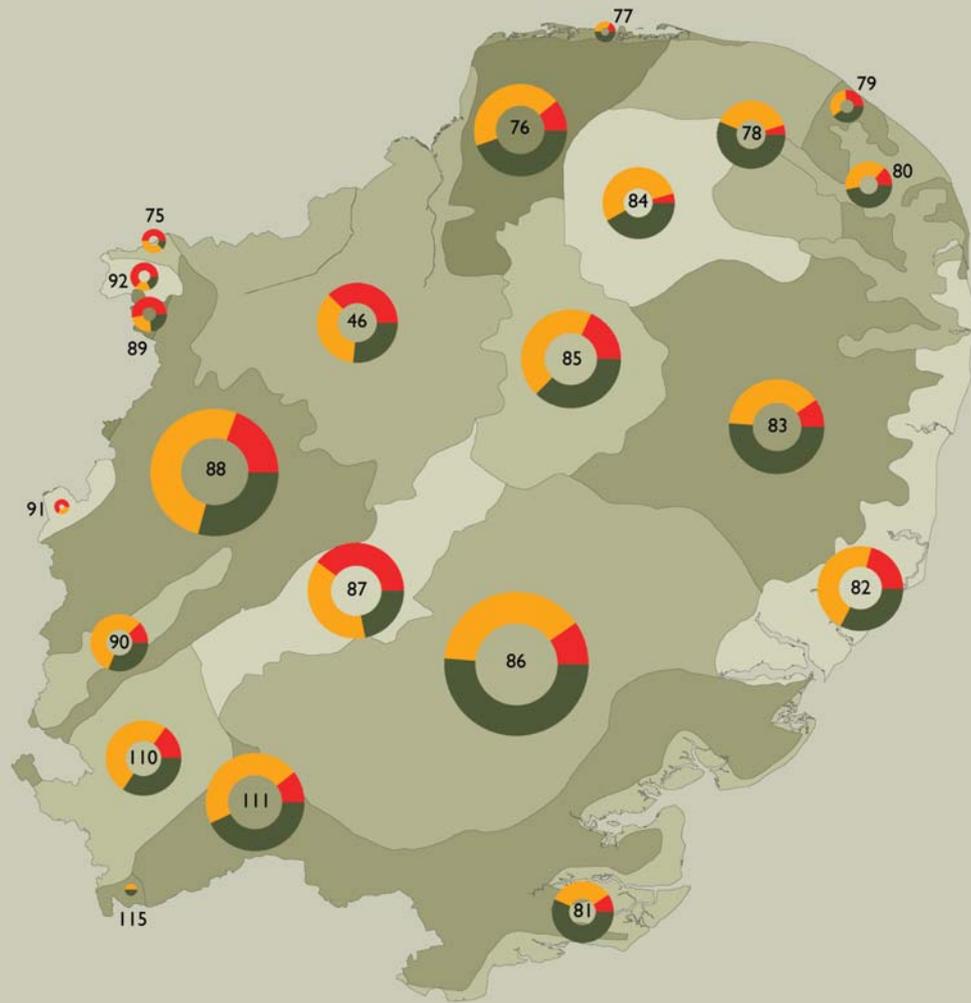
The distribution of scheduled monuments at risk in the East of England analysed using Countryside Character Areas. The Joint Character Areas, defined jointly by the statutory conservation agencies, are used alongside other datasets in the targeting of environmental farming schemes.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS RISK CATEGORY

- High Risk
- Medium Risk
- Low Risk

COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER AREAS
Number refers to CCA reference code

46	The Fens
75	Kesteven Uplands
76	North West Norfolk
77	North Norfolk Coast
78	Central North Norfolk
79	North East Norfolk and Flegg
80	The Broads
81	Greater Thames Estuary
82	Suffolk Coast and Heaths
83	South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands
84	Mid Norfolk
85	Breckland
86	South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
87	East Anglian Chalk
88	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands
89	Northamptonshire Vales
90	Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge
91	Yardley-whittlewood Ridge
92	Rockingham Forest
110	Chilterns
111	Northern Thames Basin
115	Thames Valley



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This document is one of a series of publications produced as part of English Heritage's new national Heritage at Risk campaign. More information about Heritage at Risk and other titles in the series can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk

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