

Summary of the RSPB's representations on HS2 Phase 1

When the Government announced its intention to proceed with HS2 and a Hybrid Bill to enable the works to take place began its journey through Parliament, we stressed the importance of recognising and dealing with its wildlife impacts appropriately. UK laws and planning regulations lay down strict tests for considering developments that may damage wildlife sites – we argued that no less must be demanded of national infrastructure projects like HS2.

Our assessment of Phase 1 of HS2 was that it was likely to damage important places for wildlife including three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and numerous local wildlife sites. Our responses to the various consultation documents since 2011 (see the downloads section of [our web page on HS2](#)) included details of the likely impacts on some of the worst affected sites, like Mid Colne Valley SSSI and Bechstein's bats in the Bernwood Forest area of Buckinghamshire.

In May 2014 we decided to safeguard our position by petitioning against the Hybrid Bill. Following extensive negotiations, in May 2015 we reached a point where we felt able to withdraw our petition, subject to several assurances by HS2 Ltd. In withdrawing our own petition we made it clear to the Select Committee that we would defer to our fellow-petitioner's evidence (and greater expertise) on a very small number of outstanding issues, such as impacts on bats.

We remained concerned that HS2, as designed, would not fulfil its potential to reduce carbon emissions because it had not been designed with this aspect in mind or brought forward as part of a coherent integrated UK transport strategy for long distance travel. We were advised this was not a petitionable issue, so we continued to advocate a more integrated approach to the UK's transport challenges outside the HS2 Bill process.