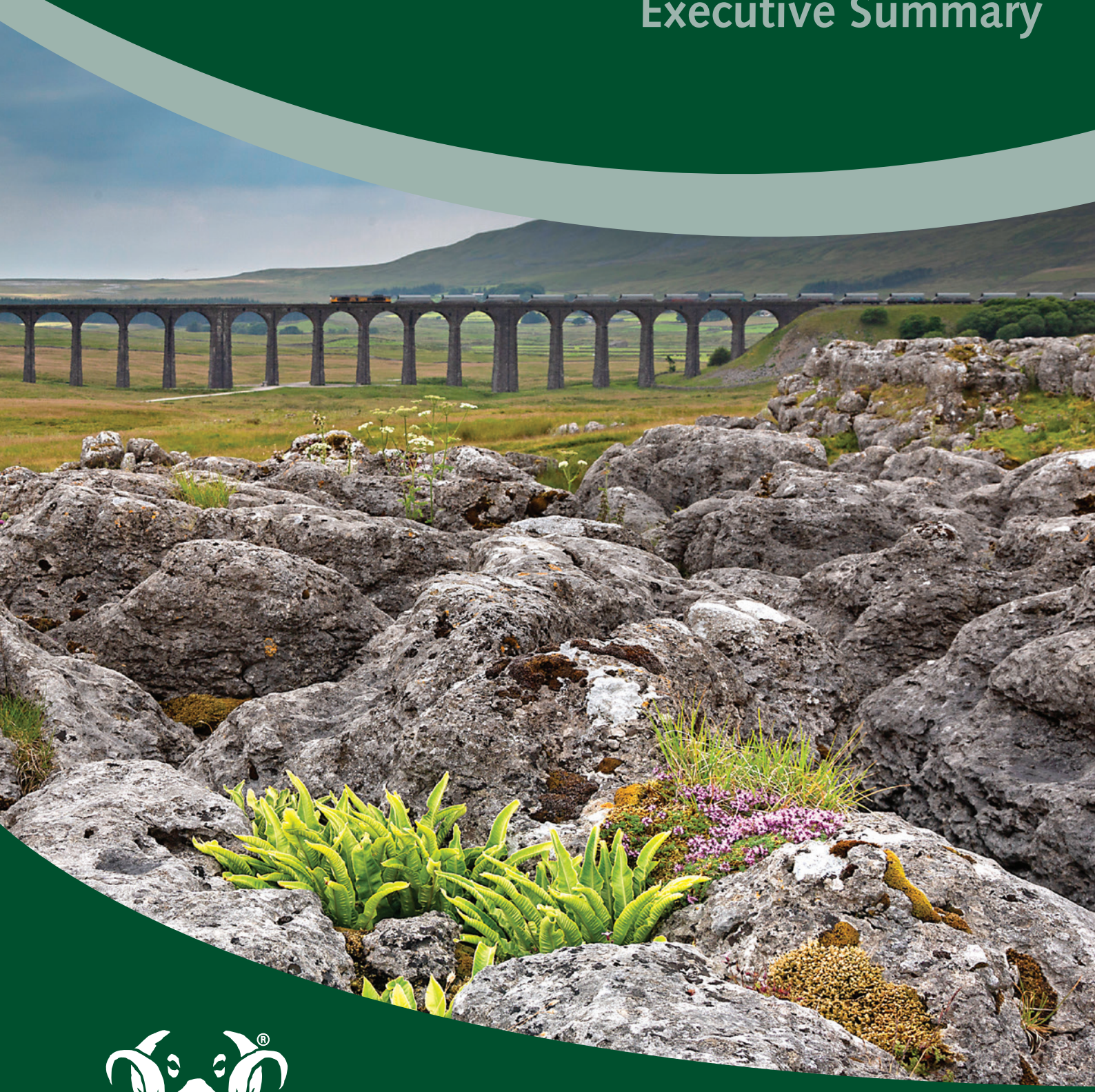
Nature Recovery Plan

for the Yorkshire Dales National Park: Executive Summary



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/nature-recovery-plan



Common frog and spawn © Robyn Guppy

Top left
Dormouse monitoring © Ian Court

Top Right
House martin © Whitfield Benson

Bottom
Mountain avens © Ken Readshaw







Why we need a Nature Recovery Plan

The world is facing climate and biodiversity emergencies, which are inextricably linked. Nature is in decline across the globe but research suggests that:

12th
Worst*

The UK has the twelfth worst ecological intactness rating out of 240 countries.

19%
Decline*

The abundance of studied species in the UK has on average fallen by almost 20% since 1970.

16%
Decline*

Nearly one in six species in Great Britain are now threatened with extinction.

54%
Decline*

Since 1970, the distribution of 54% of flowering plants has decreased across Great Britain.

Biodiversity in the Yorkshire Dales National Park is in somewhat better health than in many other parts of the country. Nonetheless a huge amount remains to be done to achieve a better functioning network of habitats and improving populations of key species.

The Nature Recovery Plan (NRP) for the Yorkshire Dales National Park sets out a vision for an enhanced natural environment in the National Park and includes a plan that describes what is needed and what could be achieved by 2040.

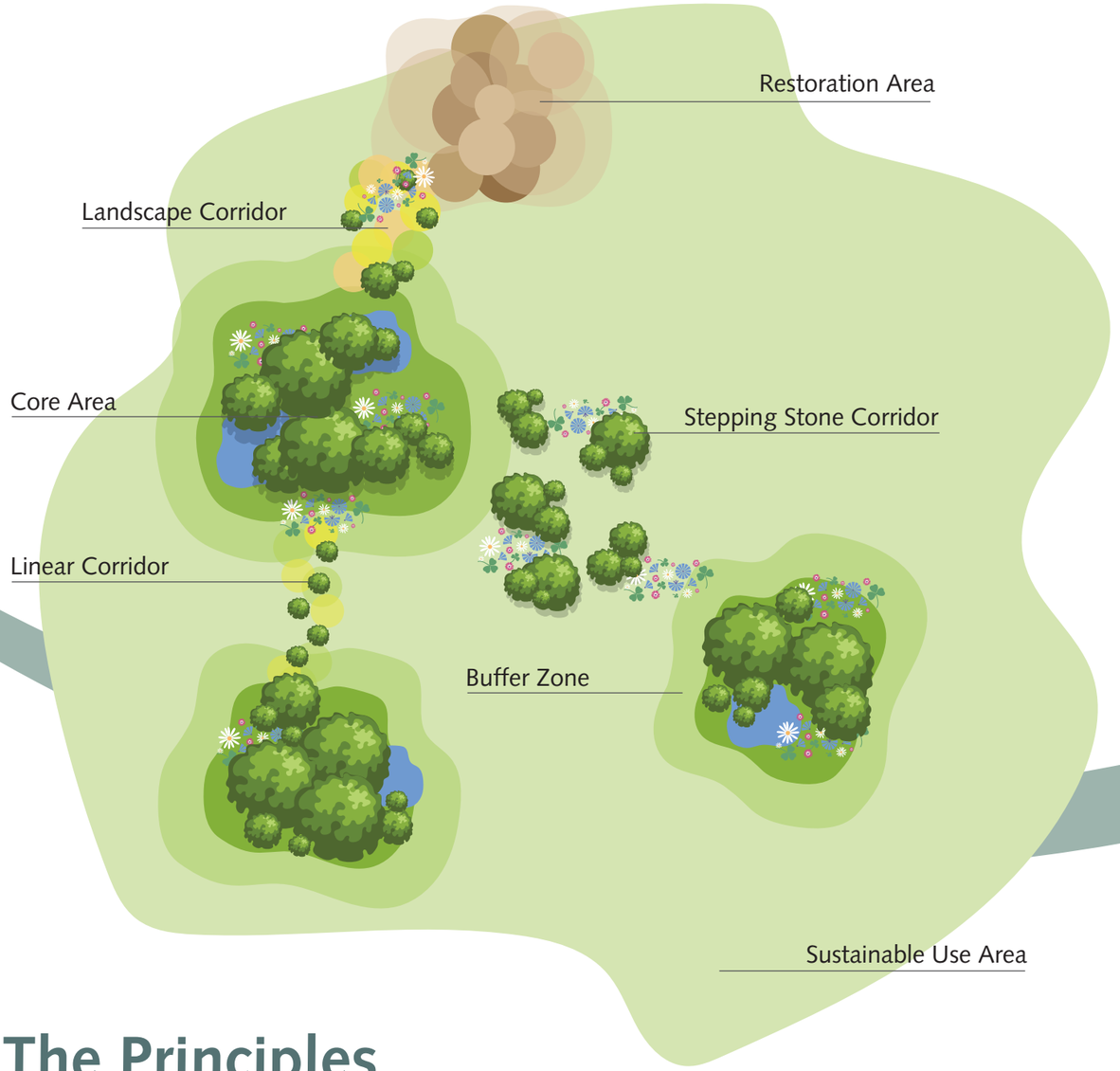
The Plan has been prepared by the Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum working with a range of partners and it is endorsed and published by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

It is intended the Plan should be shared, developed and agreed with stakeholders and made accessible for a wide range of audiences. Foremost amongst the stakeholders are the individual farmers and land managers across the National Park, without whose involvement we can make no progress.

To see the full NRP, go to **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/nature-recovery-plan**

* figures come from 'State of Nature 2023'

Lawton Principle diagram - adapted
© Recreated for YDNPA



The Principles

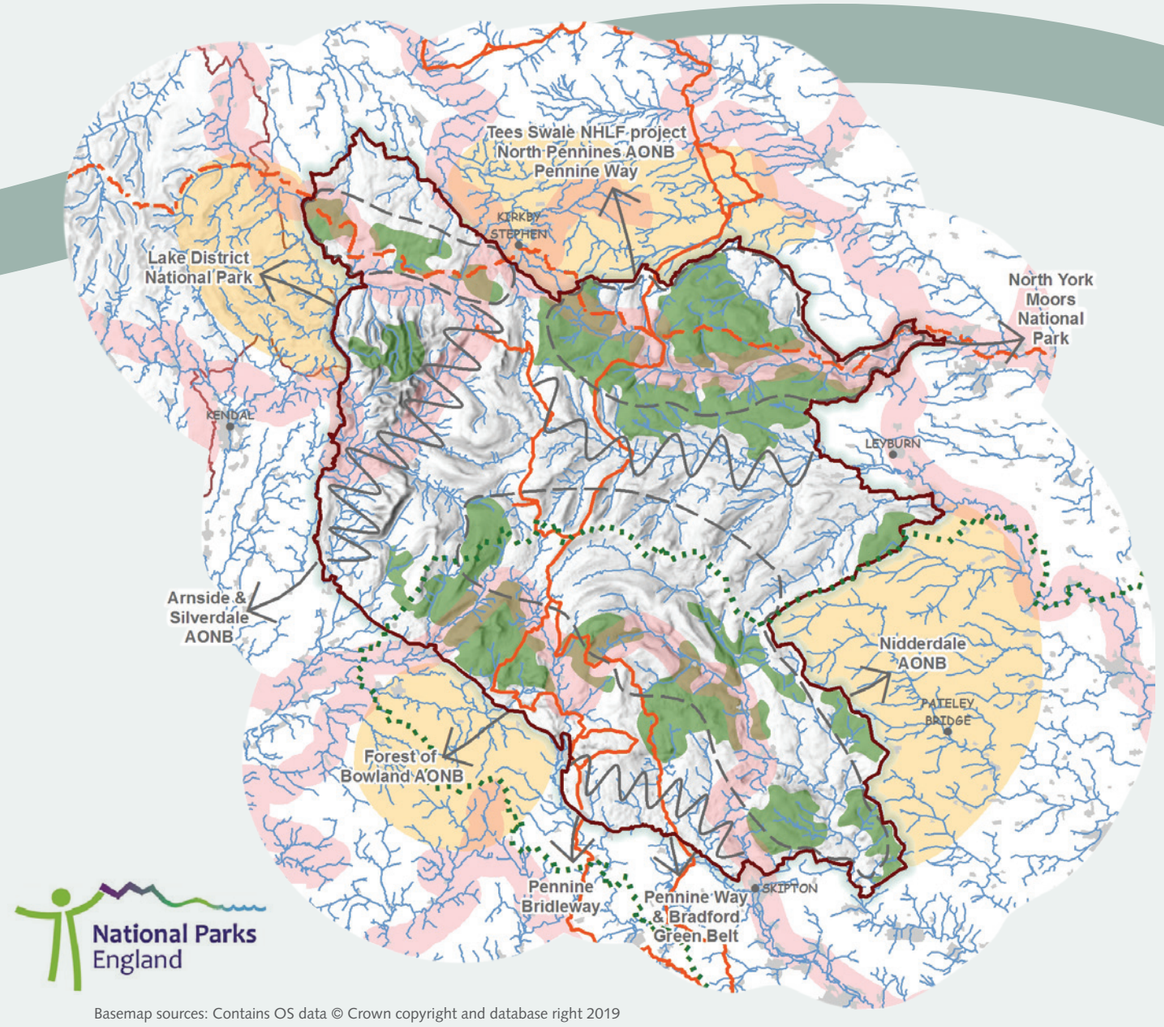
More, bigger, better and more joined-up wildlife habitats

Past nature conservation work has focussed too much on individual habitats and species. Many good things have been achieved, but we now have, for example, isolated areas of hay meadow, wetland or woodland confined within their own fenced or walled boundaries. Nature recovery requires a more dynamic, joined-up, landscape-scale approach.

Illustrative Opportunities Map, Yorkshire Dales National Park

Key

- Opportunities to retain and improve core nature areas (SSSI)
- Opportunities to create new habitat and increase diversity
- Opportunities to enhance connectivity and join up habitats
- Opportunities beyond the National Park Boundary
- Wider Connections for people and nature
- Northern Forest
- National Trails
- Coast to Coast Path – proposed new national trail
- B lines – Buglife insect pathways linking wildlife areas specifically for pollinators
- Rivers
- Urban areas



National Parks England

Basemap sources: Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2019



Curlew © Ian Court

Greater structural complexity within habitats

Many of the larger areas of semi-natural habitat are missing a more natural diversity of structure. The transitions between habitats, such as scrubby and wetland edges, can be some of the richest and most important areas for many of our scarcer species. Arguably, the most widely distributed, yet most abused and overlooked in terms of value, is the riparian zone – the transition between aquatic and terrestrial habitat beside rivers.

Connections outside the National Park

A key part of achieving nature recovery within the National Park is to work with neighbours to make sure there are positive links and connections to the land bordering the National Park especially where that land is functionally linked.

There are important existing and potential habitat networks and habitat connections allowing for flows of species – which will become increasingly important with the developing pressures induced by climate change.



West Burton Cauldron Falls © Wendy McDonnell



Red squirrel © Paul Fowlie

Home to the finest variety of wildlife in England

By 2040 our ambition is for the Yorkshire Dales National Park to be home to the finest variety of wildlife in England. Our aim is to work with farmers and landowners to recover a richer, dynamic and more connected natural environment and, as a minimum, we have identified the measurable targets for each of the landscape types.

Maps indicating the existing habitat network and where it could be enhanced can be found at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/recover-habitat-network-map** All objectives below are for 2040 unless otherwise indicated.

Moorlands

- Convert or restore 2,250ha of fragmented heath, rough grazing and severely degraded peatland to moorland priority habitats
- Restore and enhance an additional 8,000ha of upland heath, bog, and flush to good condition
- By 2030, identify, survey and map calaminarian* grassland to better understand how it grades into the surrounding landscape, and where it is in need of restoration

Freshwater

- Carry out works along 1,000km of river to protect or enhance ecological condition (including reconnecting 100 km of rivers to their floodplain; riparian tree planting along 500km of rivers to increase riparian habitat & shade; controlling Invasive Non-native Species; and removing 80% of artificial barriers to fish migration)
- Create 100 new wildlife ponds, scrapes or other wetland features
- Carry out work to bring the three upland lakes (Malham Tarn, Semer Water & Sunbiggin Tarn) into good ecological condition

Limestone country

- Create or restore 700ha of species-rich calcareous grassland (containing proportions of scrub/wood pasture in places)
- Enhance an additional 1,500ha of existing limestone pavement, limestone grassland and flush habitats to good condition

Valleys

- Create 1,300ha of species-rich grassland, such as meadow, pasture or wood-pasture
- Restore and enhance 350ha of species-rich meadow, pasture & semi-improved grassland habitats to good condition
- Create 250km of species-rich hedgerow
- By 2030, survey and map the National Park's hedgerow network
- By 2030, identify, survey and map waxcap-rich grasslands, to confirm where this habitat exists and plan appropriate measures to protect it

Trees and woodlands

- Increase woodland cover in the National Park by 6,000ha (including wood pasture, scrub and parkland)
- By 2030, in addition to woodland, plant 6,000 trees either as individual specimens or in small groups
- By 2030, survey and map all existing wood pasture and parkland habitat and identify sites in need of restoration
- Improve the condition of all types of native woodland so that 75% of the total area is in good condition by 2042
- Get 70% of woodland in active management by 2030

Species

- Undertake conservation projects to ensure 90% of species in category 1 (as listed in Table below) occur in the National Park in stable or increasing populations
- By 2025, draw up and adopt a plan for monitoring taxa that are sensitive to landscape-scale changes in habitat
- By 2025, identify the 'top 5' Invasive Non-Native Species most threatening wildlife in the National Park and draw up plans to eradicate or control these in a systematic and coordinated fashion.

* 'Calaminarian Grassland' is a habitat characteristic of metal-rich soils such as are found in association with old mine spoil

Category 1 Species

Where bespoke conservation action above and beyond habitat / site management is required

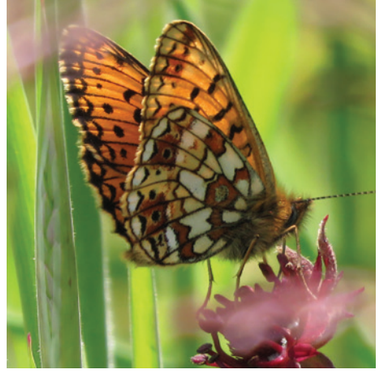
Species	Common Name	Taxon
Apus apus	Swift	bird
Circus cyaneus	Hen harrier	bird
Delichon urbicum	House martin	bird
Falco peregrinus	Peregrine	bird
Milvus milvus	Red kite	bird
Motacilla flava	Yellow wagtail	bird
Numenius arquata	Curlew	bird
Passer domesticus	House sparrow	bird
Sturnus vulgaris	Starling	bird
Tetrao tetrix	Black grouse	bird
Turdus torquatus	Ring ouzel	bird
Vanellus vanellus	Lapwing	bird
Juniperus communis	Juniper	conifer
Austropotamobius pallipes	White-clawed crayfish	crustacean
Arabis hirsuta	Hairy rock-cress	flowering plant
Cypripedium calceolus	Lady's-slipper	flowering plant
Dryas octopetala	Mountain avens	flowering plant
Gentianella campestris	Field gentian	flowering plant
Neotinea ustulata	Burnt orchid	flowering plant
Polygala amarella	Dwarf milkwort	flowering plant
Salix repens	Creeping willow	flowering plant
Saxifraga hirculus	Marsh saxifrage	flowering plant
Aricia artaxerxes	Northern brown argus	insect - butterfly
Boloria selene	Small pearl-bordered fritillary	insect - butterfly
Adscita statices	The forester	insect - moth
Entephria flavicinctata	Yellow-ringed carpet	insect - moth
Perizoma minorata	Heath rivulet	insect - moth
Photedes captiuncula	Least minor	insect - moth
Thera cognata	Chestnut-coloured carpet	insect - moth
Trichopteryx polycommata	Barred-tooth stripe	insect - moth
Arvicola amphibius	European water vole	terrestrial mammal
Muscardinus avellanarius	Hazel dormouse	terrestrial mammal
Myotis brandtii	Brandt's bat	terrestrial mammal
Myotis daubentonii	Daubenton's bat	terrestrial mammal
Myotis mystacinus	Whiskered bat	terrestrial mammal
Myotis nattereri	Natterer's bat	terrestrial mammal
Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Common pipistrelle	terrestrial mammal
Pipistrellus pygmaeus	Soprano pipistrelle	terrestrial mammal
Plecotus auritus	Brown long-eared bat	terrestrial mammal
Sciurus vulgaris	Eurasian red squirrel	terrestrial mammal



Peregrines at Malham © David Higgins



Cattle grazing dense wood pasture© Peter Welsh



Top left
Small pearl-bordered fritillary
© Ian Court



Top Right
Lapwing © Ken Readshaw



Bottom
Haymeadow, Wensleydale
© Ken Readshaw

High Nature Value Farming

An environmentally sustainable and profitable farming sector is crucial to the Nature Recovery Plan's success. Not only will 'High Nature Value Farming' drive the changes in land management that are needed but also the land uses outside of the 'core areas' and other elements of the nature recovery network must be complementary and supportive of the measures being proposed inside the network.

What we term **'High Nature Value Farming' (HNVF)** is low intensity farming systems that are particularly valuable for wildlife, the environment and people. Such farming borrows heavily from the techniques belonging to 'regenerative agriculture':

- Less ploughing and greatly reduced use of chemical fertilisers to benefit soils and improve overall biodiversity;
- More rotational grazing to mimic the effects of wild herds of grazing animals (which would enable areas of grassland to improve soil condition and develop more diverse swards);
- 'Herbal leys' to create forms of grassland that are richer in plant species and which fix nitrogen and need much reduced inputs;
- Meadow diversity enhanced through established techniques such as green-hay strewing, plug planting and wildflower seeding;
- 'Silvo-pastoral' systems with low density tree planting to provide shelter and browse for livestock.

Grazing
The Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum advocates for the nature benefits of mixed stocking at levels appropriate to low-input systems and in particular encourages moves towards a greater proportion of cattle grazing for the more natural habitats.

We recognise that large herbivore grazing is (and always has been) a key natural process and we cannot achieve nature recovery without it. There is a climate change challenge regarding livestock and methane, but we believe there are ways to minimise (or neutralise) the impacts.



Hay meadow, Askrigg © Ken Readshaw

Top left
Red kite © Ken Readshaw

Top Right
Burnt orchid © Ken Readshaw

Bottom
Northern brown argus © Ian Court







Public benefits

The actions we are seeking for nature recovery are designed to provide many additional benefits for people. These include:

- vibrant local communities because sustainable farming, sporting, woodland, tourism and other businesses are supported;
- high-quality food from the farmed land;
- cleaner water and soils with improved fertility;
- enhanced carbon storage and reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
- natural flood management reducing flood risk in settlements inside and outside the National Park;
- maintaining archaeological features and cultural histories;
- beautiful landscapes with access for relaxation and inspiration promoting recreation, health & well-being;
- opportunities for volunteering, education & citizen science;
- help for people living in and visiting the National Park to connect to nature, be inspired by its special wildlife, and get actively engaged in its conservation.

With thanks to:

Aire Rivers Trust

Cumbria Wildlife Trust

Eden Rivers Trust

Environment Agency

Forestry Commission

Friends of the Dales

Lune Rivers Trust

National Trust

Natural England

Ribble Rivers Trust

RSPB

Upper Wharfedale Field Society

Wharfedale Naturalists' Society

Wild Trout Trust

Wildlife Trust for Lancashire Manchester & North Merseyside

Woodland Trust

Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

Yorkshire Peat Partnership

Yoredale Natural History Society

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust

Yorkshire Dales Farming and Land Management Forum

The Dales Woodland Forum

and all individuals who contributed comments during consultations on the drafts of the Plan.



Want to find out more?

Contact Tony Serjeant on 01756 751627
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Visit our website at

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/nature-recovery-plan

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