



## Dartmoor Habitat Action Plan for Hay Meadows and Species-rich Dry Pastures

This action plan covers all species-rich meadows that are found on enclosed, dry land on Dartmoor. Enclosed wet grasslands are incorporated into the Rhôs Pasture Action Plan, and grasslands on unenclosed land are included in the Moorland Action Plan. Traditional hay meadows and species rich grasslands are now rare habitats on Dartmoor. Different types of grassland are characterised by the underlying soil type, which on Dartmoor may be either neutral or acidic. Hay meadows are found on the more neutral soils and perhaps the most striking feature is the sheer diversity of plants, including greater butterfly, southern marsh and heath spotted orchids, as well as other characteristic plants such as hay rattle, eyebright and ox-eye daisy. About 20 ha of these hay meadows remain on Dartmoor. On permanently grazed pastures, a similar abundance of species may be found, but these sites are less obvious due to a generally close-cropped sward.

Key species associated with this habitat are the **greater horseshoe bat** and **Deptford pink** (which are included in the Action Plan for Bats and the Action Plan for Deptford Pink), and the **large blue butterfly**, **woodlark** and **cirl bunting** (all included within this action plan). The last two are listed as birds of high conservation concern due to major contractions in their range during the last century. Another key species, **the skylark**, is also found within this habitat and should benefit from this Plan. However, actions for this bird are incorporated within the Moorland Action Plan, because this habitat contains the vast proportion of the skylark population.

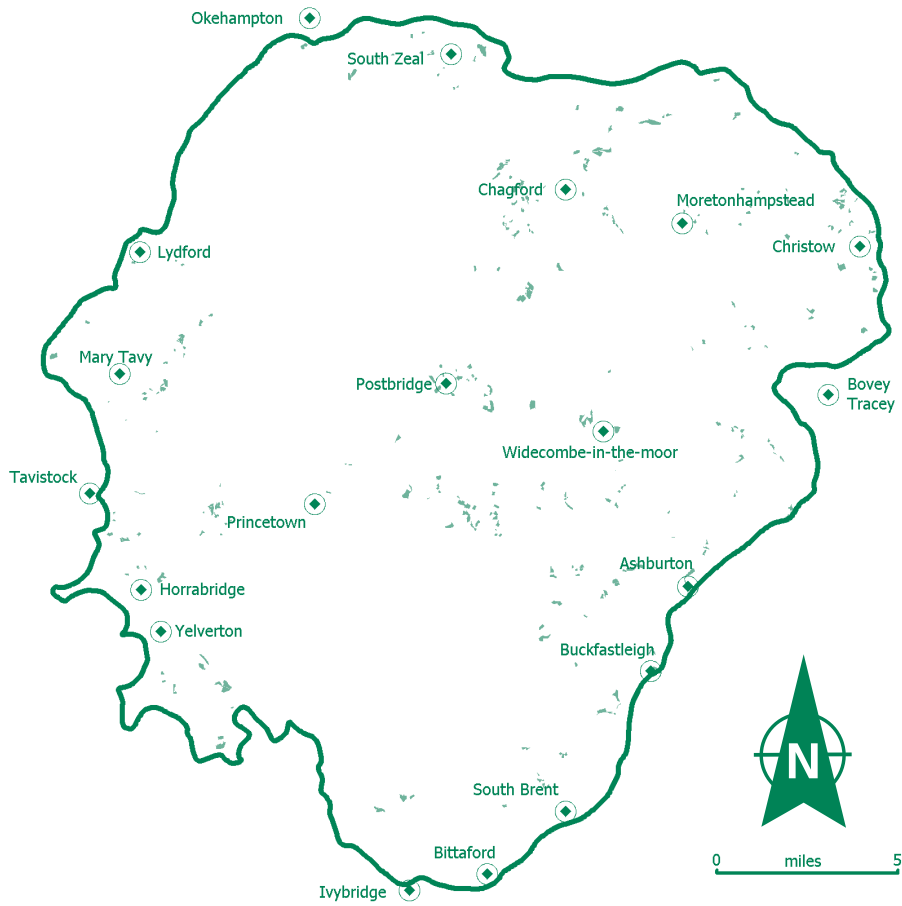
A fuller description of the hay meadows and species rich grasslands of Dartmoor can be found in *The Nature of Dartmoor: A Biodiversity Profile*.

The latter half of the 20th century has seen significant losses in the area of species rich grasslands through intensification of farming practises. The remaining resource is small and fragmented. This Action Plan aims not only to safeguard all the existing resource, but also to enhance areas of semi-improved grassland in order to improve their biodiversity value.

For further management advice and information contact DNPA or NE.

The grassland survey of 2003/4 produced the most recent coverage of this habitat and the map shows the distribution of these sites.

## Distribution Map



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Dartmoor National Park Authority Licence No 100024842 2007.

## Hay Meadows and Species-rich Dry Pastures Key Conservation Objectives and Targets

### Hay Meadows and Species-rich Dry Pastures Objectives

#### Objective 1

*Maintain and where possible enhance all remaining species-rich hay meadows, especially those with greater butterfly orchids, and restore the habitat in carefully targeted locations.*

##### Dartmoor targets

- A** Ensure favourable management on all existing species rich hay meadows which have greater butterfly orchid (around 20 ha).
- B** Establish hay meadow management on 100 ha of meadows identified as having potential for enhancement, by 2005, and on a further 50 ha by 2010.

#### Objective 3

*Maintain at least one viable population of large blue butterfly on Dartmoor.*

##### Dartmoor targets

- A** Consolidate the population on the re-introduction site.
- B** Identify the potential for re-establishment of a further two populations on Dartmoor by 2005.\*
- C** Identify the potential for re-establishment of a further three populations on Dartmoor by 2010.
- D** Establish and consolidate a further two populations on Dartmoor by 2010.

#### Objective 2

*Identify the best sites for enclosed species-rich dry grassland, and ensure that they are protected and managed appropriately.*

##### Dartmoor targets

- A** Establish the extent and distribution of this grassland type on Dartmoor by 2002.\*
- B** Ensure all high quality species-rich grasslands (including hay meadows) are under favourable management by 2005.\*
- C** Maintain, as far as practical, a balance between hay meadows and permanently grazed sites, to ensure that both forms of management are perpetuated on Dartmoor.
- D** Establish favourable management on 100 ha of permanently grazed meadows identified as having potential for enhancement, by 2005, and on a further 50 ha by 2010.
- E** Establish favourable condition on at least 85% of the A grade sites from the 2003/4 survey (a total of 15 sites covering 24 ha), by 2008.

#### Objective 4

*Increase the numbers and range of ciril bunting and woodlark on Dartmoor.*

##### Dartmoor targets

- A** Establish the distribution of ciril bunting and woodlark within the National Park at six-year intervals.
- B** Through contact with landowners seek opportunities for habitat management for ciril buntings and woodlark on Dartmoor by 2001.\*
- C** Through favourable habitat management, increase numbers and range of ciril buntings in the Teign valley to 10 pairs within the National Park boundary by 2010.
- D** Increase the woodlark population to 10 pairs and expand the range in the National Park by 2010.

**Objective 5**

*Encourage greater appreciation and understanding of flower-rich meadows on Dartmoor.*

**Dartmoor target**

- A** Produce articles and run guided walks promoting the wildlife value of flower-rich meadows.

\* Target from original (2001) version of the BAP that has already been achieved and therefore not taken forward in the revised Action Plan.

## Actions for Hay Meadows and Species-rich Dry Pastures

Monitoring responsibility: Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA)

Action	Meets Objective/ Target	Deliverer		Complete by					Date achieved
		Lead	Partners	2007	2008	2011	2016	On-going	
<b>Policy and Legislation</b>									
Ensure that appropriate tiers and payments for species-rich grasslands and hay meadows remain in the Dartmoor ESA scheme/HLS	1, 2B, 2C, 2D	NE	DNPA, RSPB						●
Include protection policies in all relevant statutory plans when reviewed	1A, 2B	DNPA	EA						●
<b>Site Safeguard</b>									
Safeguard against direct threats, including inappropriate tree planting, through consultation procedures and planning controls	1A, 2B	DNPA, FC	NE						●
<b>Habitat Management</b>									
Establish management agreements to cover all high quality, species-rich meadows (MG5 grassland), maintaining a balance between hay meadow management and permanently grazed sites	1A, 2B, 2C	DNPA, NE				●			

(cont.)

# Dartmoor Habitat Action Plan for Haymeadows and Species-rich Dry Pastures

## Actions for Hay Meadows and Species-rich Dry Pastures on Dartmoor (cont.)

Action	Meets Objective/ Target	Deliverer		Complete by					Date achieved	
		Lead	Partners	2007	2008	2011	2016	On-going		
<b>Habitat Management</b>										
Establish hay meadow management agreements on 100 ha of meadows with potential for enhancement by 2005, and on a further 50 ha by 2010	1B	NE	DNPA			●				
Establish management agreements on 100ha of permanently grazed meadows with potential for enhancement by 2005, and on a further 50ha by 2010	2D	NE	DNPA			●				
Consider the need for a hay meadow enhancement project and implement as appropriate	1, 2	DNPA	NE		●					
<b>Key species management protection</b>										
<b>(For greater horseshoe bat and Deptford pink, see separate Action Plans)</b>										
Identify opportunities for habitat management to favour cirl buntings and woodlarks	4A	RSPB, DNPA		●						
Encourage spring-grown cereals and winter stubbles on existing arable land where this will benefit woodlarks and cirl buntings	4B, 4C, 4D	RSPB, NE	DNPA					●		
Identify opportunities for establishment of further populations of large blue butterfly	3B	BC, CEH	NT, NE, DNPA			●	●			
Monitor the large blue site annually	3A	BC, CEH	NT					●		
Undertake habitat restoration on potential large blue sites	3D	NT, CEH	BC, NE				●			
Establish 2 further large blue populations	3D	NT, CEH	BC, NE				●			
Monitor the populations of woodlark and cirl bunting in the Teign valley at six-year intervals	4A, 4C, 4D	RSPB	DNPA, DBWPS			●	●			
Survey the areas around Ilington, Ashburton and Holne for cirl buntings	4A	RSPB	DNPA, DBWPS			●				

Actions for Hay Meadows and Species-rich Dry Pastures on Dartmoor (cont.)

Action	Meets Objective/ Target	Deliverer		Complete by					Date achieved	
		Lead	Partners	2007	2008	2011	2016	On-going		
<b>Advisory</b>										
Hold events for land managers to demonstrate new techniques in practical grassland management eg. establishing new meadows and enhancing species diversity	1, 2B, 2C, 2D	DNPA, NE	NT, NFU						●	
Review the current understanding of traditional hay meadow management	1	NE	DNPA, NE	●						
<b>Research and Monitoring</b>										
Monitor all high quality species-rich meadows at least every five years	1, 2	DNPA, NE				●	●			
<b>Communication and Publicity</b>										
Publicise the need for positive management of farmland for ciril buntings and woodlark	4	RSPB	DNPA, NE						●	
Produce <i>Dartmoor Biodiversity Newsletter</i> articles on Dartmoor's species-rich hay meadows and grasslands, and on the status of ciril buntings, woodlarks and the large blue butterfly	5	DNPA	RSPB, NE, NT						●	
Provide at least one guided walk to one or more flower rich meadows on Dartmoor annually	5	DNPA							●	

Abbreviations used in this table:

BC - Butterfly Conservation, CEH – Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, DNPA - Dartmoor National Park Authority, FC – Forestry Commission, NFU - National Farmers' Union, NT - National Trust, NE – Natural England, RSPB - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds