




Dartmoor Habitat Action Plan for Woodland

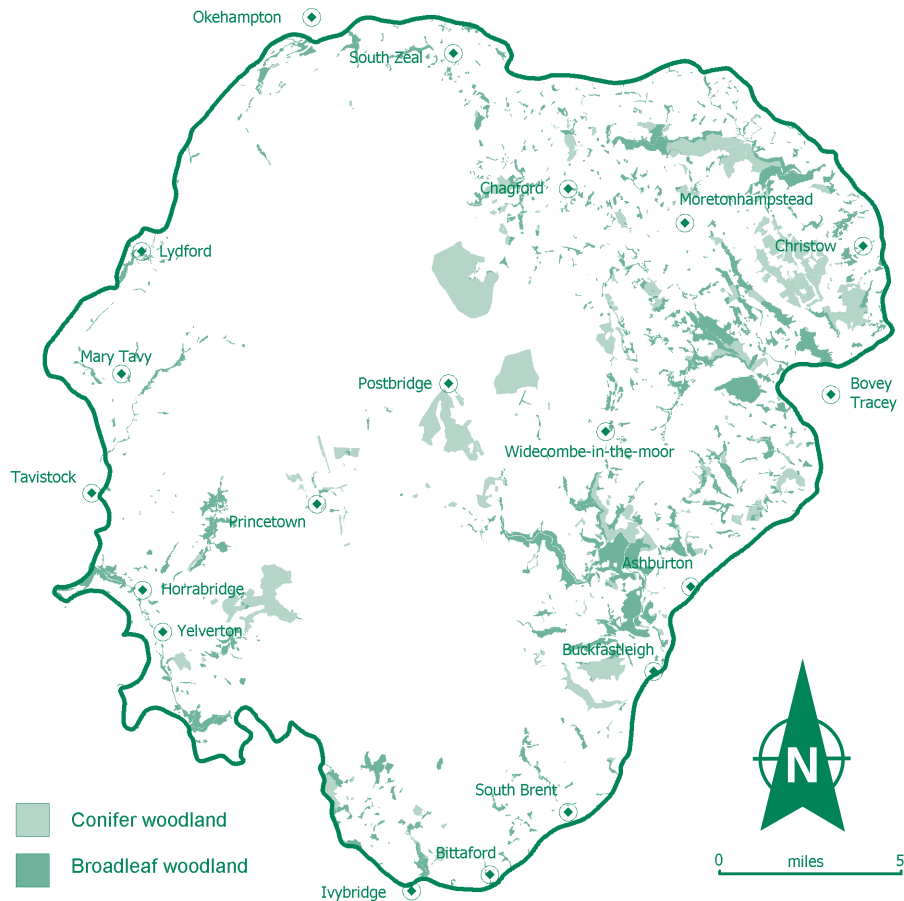
Dartmoor has 9,720 ha of woodland (10% of the National Park), of which 4,950 ha are broad-leaved woodland and 4,760 ha is coniferous forest. Ancient upland oakwood covers around 2,700 ha (37% of the broad-leaved woodland) and there are a further 753 ha of plantation woodland on ancient woodland sites. Much of the ancient upland oakwood is of international ecological importance, recognised in the designation of the South Dartmoor Woods as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the European Habitats Directive. Most of Dartmoor's ancient oakwoods have been coppiced in the past to produce charcoal and tan-bark, leaving charcoal burning hearths and pack horse tracks as archaeological features. Woodlands of more recent origin are also of ecological and landscape value, and include wet woodlands of willow and alder. Although the first attempts at afforestation on Dartmoor were in the 18th century, most of the major coniferous plantations were planted on former moorland earlier in the 20th century and still retain elements of this moorland habitat within them, together with streams, mires and many archaeological sites. Significant areas of broadleaf woodland have developed on parts of Dartmoor since the 1940s. Much of this naturally developed woodland is on the commons adjacent to valley-side ASNW.

A fuller description of the status, characteristic wildlife, special species, site protection and current factors affecting Dartmoor's woodland habitats can be found in *The Nature of Dartmoor: A Biodiversity Profile (2001)*, which also sets key woodland conservation objectives. Other relevant documents include the *Dartmoor Woodland Strategy* (which integrates biodiversity, landscape, recreational and archaeological objectives with forestry practice), the *UK Forestry Standard*, which sets out guidelines for sustainable woodland management, and the *England Forestry Strategy*, which sets out government policy on forestry and how this can be used to deliver biodiversity targets. Further information on Dartmoor's woodland resource has recently been gathered by DNPA in a woodland survey of the whole National Park.



This Woodland Habitat Action Plan sets targets and actions for Upland Oakwood and Parkland, Wet Woodlands, and Broadleaved and Conifer Plantations. The semi-natural broadleaved woodland habitats have been combined into one action plan because the major issues affecting them are shared, boundaries between different types of woodland are not always clear-cut and a joint working document will be much easier to use. Plantations have also been included in this Action Plan. The objectives are addressed under each woodland type in the order in which they appear in *The Nature of Dartmoor: A Biodiversity Profile*.

Dartmoor Woodland Distribution Map



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The key Dartmoor species present in broadleaved woodlands are **blue ground beetle** and **dormouse**, which have their own Species Action Plans, the lichens *Graphina pauciloculata* and **string-of-sausages lichen**, which are covered in the Mosses, Lichens and Ferns Species Action Plan, and **wild daffodil** and **buzzard** which are included in this Plan. The ecological significance of ancient Dartmoor woodland for lower plants is reflected in the high number of rare lichens and mosses found here, including the lichens *Bryoria smithii* (Red Data Book I/II), *Arthonia zwackhii*, *Graphina ruiziana*, *Microblastis affinis*, *Pannaria sampaiana* (the only site in England), *Parmelia horrescens*, *Ramonia nigra* (known from only one other site in England), *Schismatomma graphioides* and *Collema furfuracea*; the mosses *Leucodon sciuroides* and *Zygodon*

baumgartneri, and the liverwort *Jamesionella autumnalis*. Other rare species of conservation importance and worthy of note include the rove beetle *Velleius dilatatus*, the fungus gnat *Anatella lenis* (Red Data Book I/II), southern wood ant, wood cricket, hay-scented and filmy ferns, and bastard balm. Dartmoor's sessile oak woodlands support bird species that are currently experiencing severe national declines, such as spotted flycatcher, pied flycatcher, lesser spotted woodpecker, willow tit and wood warbler. Nightjar, crossbill and goshawk (the latter two species protected by Schedule 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act*) and Dorset heath (Red Data Book I/II) can be found in Dartmoor's conifer plantations. For further management advice and information contact the FC, DNPA, Defra or NE.

Woodland Key Conservation Objectives and Targets

Upland Oakwood & Parkland Objectives

Objective 1

Maintain the existing area of upland oakwood on Dartmoor.

Dartmoor targets

- A** Maintain the extent of the existing 2,700 ha of ancient semi-natural oakwood.
- B** Maintain the extent of 3,000 ha of other semi-natural woodland

Objective 2

Extend native woodland cover in appropriate places, particularly through the enlargement and linking of existing semi-natural woods, taking care to avoid afforestation of places that are already good for wildlife.

Dartmoor targets

- A** Create 100 ha of new native woodland by 2011, focusing on linking and enlarging existing ancient semi-natural woodland, using natural regeneration where possible.
- B** Create 150 ha of additional new native woodland elsewhere by 2011.
- C** Identify extent and distribution of emerging woodland on moorland at least every 10 years.

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

Objective 3

Restore native tree cover to areas of ancient woodland previously planted with conifers, where commercially practical.

Dartmoor targets

- A** Initiate restoration of conifer plantations to broadleaved woodland on ancient woodland sites where conservation is the prime objective of management (thought to be 110 ha) by 2011.
- B** Identify other conifer plantations on ancient woodland sites with good potential for restoration and prioritise 40 ha where management objectives are compatible with restoration to broadleaved woodland by 2005*; promote subsequent restoration to native tree cover.
- C** Secure all remnant ancient woodland communities under threat by 2016.

Objective 4

Diversify the age and species composition of upland oakwoods to restore natural conditions, through favourable management in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard.

Dartmoor targets

- A** 1,750 ha (90%) of ancient semi-natural woodland to come under favourable management, which promotes sustainable natural regeneration, including minimal intervention where appropriate, by 2011.
- B** 1,000 ha of other broadleaved woodland to come under similar favourable management by 2011.

Upland Oakwood & Parkland Objectives

Objective 5

Retain veteran trees and ensure the long term existence of such trees, especially in parkland.

Similar objectives are included in the Action Plan for Mosses, Lichens and Ferns, and the Action Plan for Field Boundaries and Isolated Trees. The latter also details Dartmoor targets and actions for veteran trees and includes a definition of veteran trees.

Objective 6

*Secure the long term future of rare species, in particular the blue ground beetle and the lichen *Graphina pauciloculata*, and also of characteristic and popular species such as the wild daffodil, string-of sausages lichen, buzzard and dormouse.*

See Action Plan for Blue Ground Beetle, Action Plan for Dormouse and Action Plan for Mosses, Lichens and Ferns.

- A** Maintain at least the same distribution of wild daffodil as that known in 1999 (fifteen 1km squares).
- B** Maintain a population of at least 300-400 pairs of buzzard within the National Park.
- C** Use both wild daffodil and buzzard to help promote greater involvement by the public in biodiversity conservation on Dartmoor.
- D** Establish monitoring programmes for rare and declining woodland bird species including willow tit, lesser spotted woodpecker and wood warbler by 2008, and instigate management at key sites by 2011.

Objective 7

Maintain and where possible improve air quality across Dartmoor.

Dartmoor targets – see the Freshwater and Mosses, Lichens and Ferns Action Plans.

Wet Woodland Objectives

Objective 8

Identify the most important wet woods on Dartmoor for biodiversity, and ensure that these are protected and managed appropriately.

Dartmoor targets

- A** Map distribution of known wet woodland and assess survey needed to determine the best sites by 2008.
- B** Promote site specific management (including minimal intervention) in the best wet woods and potential areas for expansion where appropriate by 2011.

Plantation Woodland (Broadleaved & Conifer) Objectives

Objective 9

Ensure that within commercial constraints, plantations are managed to encourage wildlife, especially birds of prey, crossbills and nightjars.

Dartmoor targets

- A** Achieve a 10% increase (250 ha) in area of actively managed plantations over 5 ha by 2011 (based on figures of 2,525 ha of areas under a management plan approved by the FC in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard in 2006).
- B** Maintain a stable and viable population of nightjars on plantation woodland (present population c. 50 pairs).

Objective 12

Encourage public understanding and appreciation of the wildlife resource of Dartmoor, where this does not conflict with its conservation.

Dartmoor target

- A** Continue to identify and monitor opportunities to promote good woodland management practice and public enjoyment of woods.

Objective 10

Ensure that no further plantations are created at the expense of important semi-natural habitats such as oakwood, upland heath, species-rich grassland or scrub.

Dartmoor target

- A** Include guidelines for the siting of further plantations in the *Dartmoor Woodland Strategy* by 2001.*

Objective 11

Encourage the creation or retention of semi-natural habitat within plantations.

Dartmoor target

See target 9A.

* 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 Woodland on Dartmoor

Monitoring responsibility: Dartmoor National Park Authority

| Action | Meets Objective/Target | Deliverer | | Complete by | | | | | Date achieved |
|--|-------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------|------|------|------|----------|---------------|
| | | Lead | Partners | 2007 | 2008 | 2011 | 2016 | On-going | |
| Policy and Legislation | | | | | | | | | |
| Include protection policies for woodland in statutory plans | 1 | DNPA, FC | EA | | | | | | ● |
| Ensure compliance with all relevant national legislation | 1 | FC | DNPA | | | | | | ● |
| Ensure UK Forestry Standard is implemented | 1, 3, 4, 9 | FC | | | | | | | ● |
| Implement <i>Dartmoor Woodland Strategy</i> | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 | DNPA, FC | | | | ● | | | |
| Secure funding to create 100 ha of new native woodland through planting and natural regeneration in identified locations | 2A | FC, DNPA | MT, WT | | | | | ● | |
| Create 150 ha of native woodland elsewhere | 2B | FC, DNPA | MT, WT | | | | | ● | |
| Site Safeguard | | | | | | | | | |
| Designate a new wet woodland SSSI, if necessary | 8B | NE | | | | ● | | | |

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Actions for Woodland on Dartmoor (cont.)

| Action | Meets Objective/ Target | Deliverer | | Complete by | | | | | Date achieved |
|--|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|------|------|------|----------|---------------|
| | | Lead | Partners | 2007 | 2008 | 2011 | 2016 | On-going | |
| Habitat Management | | | | | | | | | |
| Draw up and implement priority programmes for control of invasive species (including Rhododendron) in all SSSIs | 1, 4 | NE | FC, Owners | | | ● | | | |
| Continue to establish and implement woodland management agreements | 1, 4, 5 | NE, DNPA | Owners | | | | | ● | |
| Initiate restoration of first 110 ha to native tree cover | 3A | DNPA, FC | NT, WT | | | ● | | | |
| Promote restoration of further 40 ha to native tree cover | 3B | DNPA, FC | TGA | | | ● | | | |
| Manage all remnant ancient woodland communities under threat | 3C | DNPA, WT, NT, FC | | | | | ● | | |
| Ensure favourable management on 90% of ASNW | 4A | NE | FC, DNPA, Owners | | | ● | | | |
| Ensure favourable management of 1,000 ha of other broadleaf woodland | 4B | NE | FC, DNPA, Owners | | | ● | | | |
| Ensure appropriate management including minimal intervention in the best wet woods | 8B | DNPA, FC | Owners | | | ● | | | |
| Encourage owners to draw up and implement management plans for plantations which increase their species and structural diversity in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard | 9,10,12 | FC | Owners | | | | | ● | |

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Actions for Woodland on Dartmoor (cont.)

| Action | Meets Objective/ Target | Deliverer | | Complete by | | | | | Date achieved |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|------|------|------|----------|---------------|
| | | Lead | Partners | 2007 | 2008 | 2011 | 2016 | On-going | |
| Key Species Management and Protection | | | | | | | | | |
| (For lichens, blue ground beetle, and dormouse see separate Species Action Plans) | | | | | | | | | |
| Liaise with daffodil site owners to promote appropriate management | 6A | DNPA | AfW | | | ● | | | |
| Monitor numbers of buzzard through analysis of BBS and other data, seeking appropriate measures should numbers fall significantly | 6B | DBWPS, DNPA | RSPB, NE | | | ● | | | |
| Involve the public in monitoring for wild daffodil within the National Park | 6C | DNPA | AfW | | | | | ● | |
| Ensure continuity of habitat for nightjars, by including appropriate felling rates in Forest Design Plans and other plantation management plans | 9B | FC | Owners | | | | | ● | |
| Monitor nightjar numbers at least every five years | 9B | RSPB, FC, DSG, DBWPS | DNPA | | | ● | ● | | |
| Advisory | | | | | | | | | |
| Provide woodland management and grant advice on request to landowners | 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 | FC | DNPA, Con For, NE | | | | | ● | |
| Approach owners of plantations over 5 ha and promote solutions to lack of management where appropriate | 9A, 12 | DNPA | Con For, FC, ST | | | ● | | | |
| Use grant system to promote use of approved sources for plants and correct methods of establishment | 2, 3 | FC | | | | | | | |
| Encourage all woodland owners to undertake long-term forestry plans (WGS where appropriate) | 1, 4 | FC, DNPA | Owners, Con For, ST | | | | | | |

(cont.)

Actions for Woodland on Dartmoor (cont.)

| Action | Meets Objective/ Target | Deliverer | | Complete by | | | | | Date achieved |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------|------|------|----------|---------------|
| | | Lead | Partners | 2007 | 2008 | 2011 | 2016 | On-going | |
| Research and Monitoring | | | | | | | | | |
| Identify extent and distribution of emerging woodland on moorland | 2C | DNPA | | ● | | | ● | | |
| Establish monitoring programmes for willow tit, lesser spotted woodpecker and wood warbler | 6D | RSPB, DBWPS | DNPA | | ● | | | | |
| Seek opportunities for management for willow tit, lesser spotted woodpecker and wood warbler at key sites | 6D | RSPB, DBWPS | DNPA | | | ● | | | |
| Map and assess all wet woods identified in Dartmoor Woodland and Rhôs pasture surveys | 8A | DNPA | FC, NE, DBWPS | | ● | | | | |
| Carry out additional survey work if necessary | 8A | DNPA, NE | FC, DBWPS | | | ● | | | |
| Communication and Publicity | | | | | | | | | |
| Disseminate existing advice and technical information on creation and management of native woodlands and plantations, including their wildlife | 2, 3, 10, 12 | FC | DNPA, Con For | | | | | ● | |
| Promote activities of the South West Forest Project | 2, 10, 12 | FC, Con For | DNPA, NE | | | | | ● | |
| Seek opportunities for explanatory signing of woodland management work in public areas | 12 | DNPA, NE | Con For, DWT | | | | | ● | |
| Use NNRs to promote 'best practise' in woodland management for wildlife and the importance of Dartmoor's Atlantic oakwoods | 12 | NE | | | | | | ● | |
| Promote community woodland initiatives close to towns and large villages | 12 | DNPA | FC, ST | | | | | ● | |

Abbreviations used in this table:

AfW – Action for Wildlife, ASNW – Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, Con For – Confederation of Forest Industries, DNPA - Dartmoor National Park Authority, DBWPS - Devon Preservation and Birdwatching Society, DSG – Dartmoor Study Group, DWT - Devon Wildlife Trust, EA - Environment Agency, FC - Forestry Commission, MT – Moor Trees, NT - National Trust, NE – Natural England, RSPB - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest, ST – Silvanus Trust, WT - Woodland Trust.