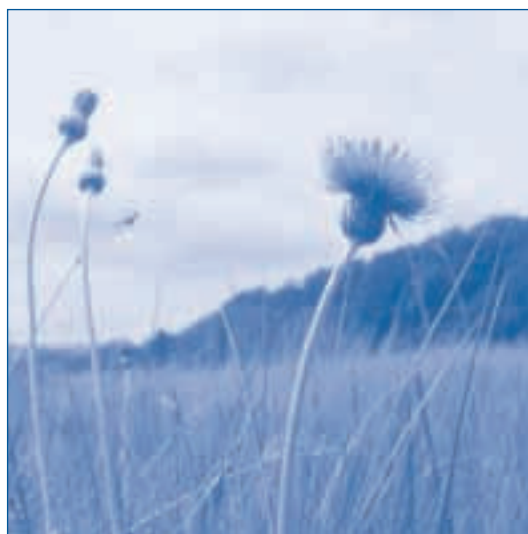


Dartmoor Habitat Action Plan for Rhôs Pasture

Rhôs pastures (species-rich purple moor grass and rush pastures) are an internationally rare habitat. On Dartmoor, there are 1,100 hectares of Rhôs pasture, representing about 20% of the total English resource. They are found within enclosed farmland, mainly in valley bottoms (see distribution map), and often incorporate a mosaic of mire, scrub and dry grassland habitats.

Maintenance of the inherent high ecological value relies on controlled grazing, especially by cattle and/or ponies in the summer and autumn months. A fuller description of status, characteristic wildlife, special species, site protection and current factors affecting Rhôs pastures on Dartmoor can be found in *The Nature of Dartmoor: A Biodiversity Profile*.

Key species present in this habitat are **marsh fritillary** and **narrow-bordered bee hawk-moth** (which are covered in the Action Plan for Marsh Fritillary and Narrow-Bordered Bee Hawkmoth), **bog hoverfly** (covered in the Action Plan for Bog Hoverfly), **southern damselfly** and **keeled skimmer** (covered in the Action Plan for Scarce Dragonflies). The habitats of both marsh fritillary and southern damselfly require special site protection under the EC Habitats and Species Directive.



Marsh plume thistle

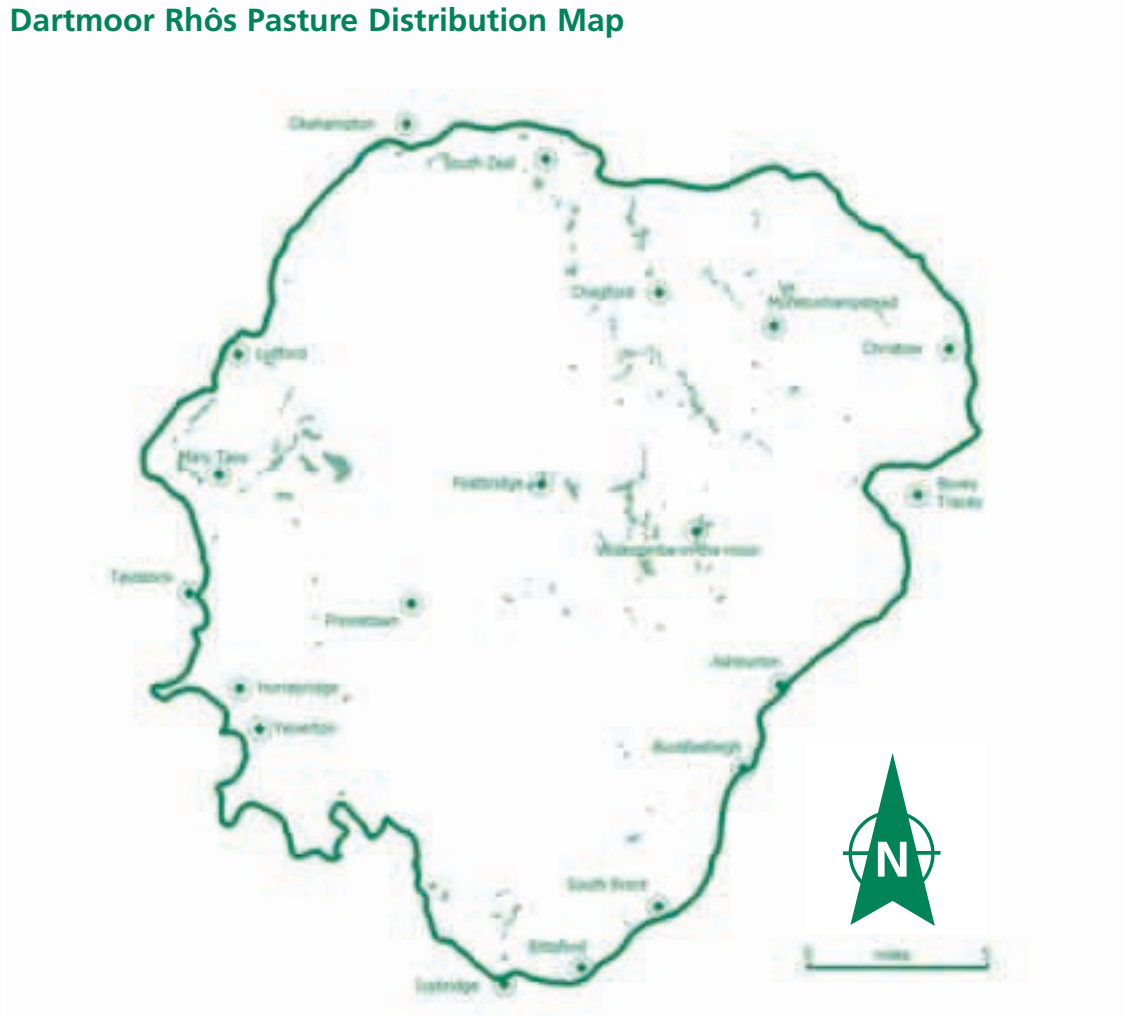
© N. Baldock. DNPA



Heath spotted orchid and marsh fritillary

© N. Baldock. DNPA

Dartmoor Rhôs Pasture Distribution Map



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



© N. Baldock. DNPA

Rhôs pasture

Other species of conservation importance found within this habitat include cranberry, small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly, double line moth, reed bunting, grasshopper warbler, snipe and, on the scrubby fringes, **dormice** (see Action Plan for Dormouse).

Rhôs Pasture Key Conservation Objectives and Targets

Rhôs Pasture Objectives

Objective 1

Maintain and where possible enhance the current extent and condition of Rhos pasture within Dartmoor.

Dartmoor targets

- A** Maintain a minimum of 1,100 hectares of Rhos pasture.
- B** Assess the strategic biodiversity value of all valley systems by 2001 and co-ordinate management within each system to maintain its important conservation features.
- C** Achieve a minimum of 75% (825 hectares) of Rhos pasture under management agreements with NE/DNPA by 2001, with 90% (990 hectares) by 2011.
- D** Implement management plans for 50% of NE/DNPA management agreement areas by 2005 and 100% by 2011.
- E** Assess the potential for restoration of Rhos pasture by 2001.*
- F** Assess the potential for access and ensure that at least one site has access and interpretation facilities developed by 2002.*
- G** Achieve favourable condition on at least 50% of A and B graded sites by 2011 and 75% by 2016.

Objective 2

Ensure that Dartmoor National Park remains a national stronghold for the marsh fritillary.

See **Marsh Fritillary and Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth Action Plans**.

Objective 3

Establish the distribution of southern damselfly colonies within Dartmoor National Park by 2000 and ensure they remain viable.

See **Action Plan for Scarce Dragonflies for targets and actions**.

Objective 4

Maintain the keeled skimmer as a common and widespread species within Dartmoor Rhos pastures.

See **Action Plan for Scarce Dragonflies for targets and actions**.

Objective 5

Consider the notification of further Rhôs pasture SSSIs within Dartmoor National Park, especially where key species are present.

Dartmoor target

- A** Assess the need for further Rhôs pasture SSSIs by 2001.*
- B** Seek to achieve at least one Rhôs pasture valley system SSSI by 2011 and three by 2016.

* 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 Rhôs Pasture 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										
Ensure agri-environment schemes maintain support for appropriate management of Rhôs pasture	1C/1G	NE	DNPA							●
Include protection policies in all relevant statutory plans and LEAPs when reviewed	1A	DNPA, EA								●
Site Safeguard										
Safeguard sites against direct threats through planning controls and other consultation procedures	1A	DNPA/ EA/ FC								●
Assess Rhôs pastures for CWS status	1	DNPA/ DBRC	DNPA	●						
Seek SSSI notification of one valley system by 2011 and three by 2016	5B	NE	DNPA			●	●			
Seek NE/DNPA management agreements to reach the target of 990 ha	1C	NE/ DNPA				●				
Habitat Management										
Make condition assessment on all A and B graded sites	1G	NE/ DNPA				●	●			
Draw up and implement further management plans to cover 80% of NE/DNPA agreement areas	1D	NE/ DNPA				●				
Co-ordinate management within each valley system to maintain its important conservation features	1B	NE/ DNPA								●

(cont.)

Actions for Rhôs Pasture 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 marsh fritillary & narrow-bordered bee hawkmoth, keeled skimmer & southern damselfly, and bog hoverfly see separate Species Action Plans)									
Advisory									
Use demonstration sites to share good practice	1A	NE/ DNPA						●	
Produce a management information sheet via the Two Moors Fritillary Project	1A	BC	DNPA/ NE	●					
Research and Monitoring									
Undertake visits to all management agreement sites at least every three years	1A	NE/ DNPA	BC					●	
Monitor integrity of all sites and share results	1A	NE/ DNPA	BC			●			
Encourage research into management and restoration of Rhôs pasture	1A, 1E	DNPA/ NE/BC	DWT/ Research Institutes					●	
Communication and Publicity									
Produce <i>Dartmoor Biodiversity Newsletter</i> with Rhôs pasture articles	1A	DNPA	NE/BC					●	
Provide annual farm walks for members of the public and/or interest groups	1F	DNPA						●	
Maintain access and interpretation on at least one site	1F	DNPA	NE					●	

(cont.)

Actions for Rhôs Pasture on Dartmoor (cont.)

Abbreviations used in this table:

DNPA – Dartmoor National Park Authority, DWT – Devon Wildlife Trust, EA – Environment Agency, NE - Natural England, FC – Forestry Commission, DBRC – Devon Biodiversity Records Centre, BC – Butterfly Conservation