

4. Making it Happen

4.1 Partnerships

Biodiversity planning is about prioritising and co-ordinating the work of all those who can have a direct influence on wildlife. The process of drawing up this Action Plan for Dartmoor has created a genuine partnership, not just of the organisations represented on the Steering Group but also of other organisations and individuals who are committed to working together towards biodiversity goals which have been jointly defined. It is essential that this partnership continues and inspires others to work alongside, pooling resources and sharing workloads. It is equally important to promote understanding and support for biodiversity and its conservation amongst Dartmoor inhabitants and visitors. All of us have a part to play in 'making it happen'.

4.1.1 Land owners including farmers and foresters

Most land on Dartmoor is privately owned and managed for reasons other than biodiversity, even in SSSIs; and agricultural and forestry objectives are obviously the prime focus of farm and forestry businesses. However, unless land owners and managers voluntarily support management for wildlife on their land, the targets set out here will not be met. A productive partnership between farmers, foresters and others who own and manage the land on a daily basis and the agencies who can supply funding, and sometimes materials and labour for practical work, is absolutely essential. This requires commitment to clearly defined common goals and an ability to listen to each others' needs. This Action Plan has outlined clear goals for Dartmoor and its preparation has stimulated pragmatic dialogue, which will hopefully continue.

There are actions within the individual action plans to promote sharing of practical information and experience on habitat management so that we continue to learn from each other (see also section 3.5 page 35). Riparian owners (who are not necessarily the landowners) should also be included in any relevant partnerships.

Many Dartmoor farms and estates support more than one key habitat or species and the most practical approach is to integrate actions over the whole farm, woodland or estate. This often also makes sense from a business planning point of view.

Fortunately, farmers and foresters are often very keen to incorporate management for wildlife on their land and grants are available through ESA or other schemes, but it is sometimes difficult to carry it out. It may be that the work coincides with a busy time in the farm year, machinery or contractors may not be easily available or the process of consulting various statutory bodies is too time-consuming. Practical assistance in these circumstances can make all the difference.

| Action | Lead | Complete by |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Individual biodiversity action plans will be drawn up for landowners or managers on request. | DNPA, DBP | Ongoing |
| Practical assistance will be offered to landowners and managers to implement actions wherever possible. | DNPA, DBP | Ongoing |

4.1.2 Agencies and organisations

The Dartmoor Biodiversity Steering Group (mostly made up of representatives of organisations and agencies) has successfully completed the task of steering the production of this Dartmoor Biodiversity Action Plan. The focus of the Group will now shift to active implementation. This could be greatly assisted by a more open exchange of ideas and information. A more flexible Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership could provide links and encourage the exchange of information between sub-groups such as the Dartmoor Biodiversity Research Group or specific interest groups e.g. local recorders of birds or lichens. It could also promote specific partnership projects with new or different combinations of partners e.g. green tourism, community projects or conservation grazing schemes.

Existing Steering Group members will form the core of the new group, but other partners such as people in business, individual landowners, universities, schools or community groups will be encouraged to drop into particular meetings or events, all of which should have a practical focus based on the targets in this Action Plan. All those involved in the action plan workshops will be invited to join the Partnership, if they are not already on the Steering Group, including farmers, foresters and fishermen. In this way, a network of experience, knowledge and practical common sense will be created which will be invaluable in implementing many actions in the plan.

| Action | Lead | Complete by |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Reform Dartmoor Biodiversity Steering Group as Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership with wider membership and remit | DNPA | 2001 |
| Implement practical action by maintaining and extending existing partnerships established through the preparation of this Action Plan | Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership | Ongoing |
| Produce a functional plan of actions in this BAP for each lead and partner body, which they have agreed to deliver | DNPA | 2001 |
| Explore scope for partnership projects based on particular themes and/or geographical areas | Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership | Ongoing |

4.1.3 Businesses

The Dartmoor landscape has been used by people for thousands of years as an economic resource to support themselves and their families. The prime motivation has been human survival and the wildlife we see today has managed to survive alongside Dartmoor people. However, methods of deriving a living from Dartmoor are now so advanced that we have the power to eliminate wildlife completely. We also have the knowledge and skill to incorporate spaces for wildlife in all spheres of economic activity. Dartmoor's biodiversity will not flourish unless we deliberately take steps to integrate wildlife into our day-to-day economic activities, be they farming, forestry, mineral extraction, water abstraction, fisheries management or tourism. By considering opportunities at the earliest planning stages of projects, not as an afterthought, we can make space for wildlife by design rather than accident.

Dartmoor's wildlife is increasingly recognised as an economic resource in itself. It is already used to promote tourism. Literature advertising accommodation on farms and in hotels often emphasises attractive local wildlife; international wildlife holiday companies have recently started 'Dartmoor weekends'. There are opportunities for developing this concept much further - for instance wildlife 'experiences' can be enhanced by linking different habitats on Dartmoor and in Devon; biodiversity can be linked with local produce, organic farming etc. as a symbol of environmental quality.

Whilst it is obviously essential that any such venture does not jeopardise wildlife values, 'green tourism' projects can provide an economic return for rural communities, an enjoyable experience for visitors and a strong incentive for habitat management and enhancement.

The Dartmoor Partnership is a working group of local tourism-related businesses (including local chambers of commerce), local authorities, statutory agencies and major landowners who are seeking to develop sustainable approaches to tourism on Dartmoor. Biodiversity is recognised as having a significant role to play in this, both as a resource in itself and as an indicator of sustainability. A local version of the European Charter on Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is currently being drawn up by the Dartmoor Partnership, providing an opportunity to incorporate biodiversity issues in the future development of tourism on Dartmoor.

Partnerships focussed very directly on the sustainable economic use of Dartmoor's biodiversity can be particularly productive. Consultation on this plan has led to some very positive responses and good ideas. For example, there is a significant angling industry based on the biodiversity of Dartmoor rivers,

with consequent economic benefits extending well beyond the National Park boundaries. Local angling groups have been involved in voluntary rehabilitation work for some years and are keen to extend this work through a partnership approach.

There may be scope for developing an environmental management systems (EMS) approach to help Dartmoor businesses reduce risk and maximise opportunity for biodiversity. Joint funding of particular projects through industrial sponsorship may also give rewards to company staff and improve relationships with customers. The establishment of common goals and a willingness to engage in dialogue are essential.

| Action | Lead | Complete by |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|
| Seek ways of including local businesses in implementing biodiversity actions | Businesses DNPA, CA | Ongoing |
| Produce fact sheets aimed at particular economic activities, detailing potential opportunities for biodiversity on Dartmoor, starting with mineral extraction and tourism | DNPA, CA, DP, SWT | 2002 |
| Include provision for biodiversity (particularly for key species) in economic activity on Dartmoor wherever possible | Businesses | Ongoing |
| Seek opportunities for green tourism initiatives, which explore but do not exploit Dartmoor's wildlife | DNPA, CA, DP, SWT | 2002 |
| Include biodiversity issues in the drawing up and implementation of a Dartmoor version of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas | DP, DNPA, CA, SWT | 2001 |



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Ancient oak woodland near Holne

4.1.4 Community action

There must be opportunities for people to enjoy and appreciate both the common and the special wildlife features of their immediate environment, and to become involved in looking after them. The Devon BAP has a target for each parish in the county to have at least one publicly accessible 'wildlife site' by 2010. Many Dartmoor parishes already have accessible moorland and woodland on their doorsteps but all parishes should be consulted to see whether they would like help to develop and achieve this target. Practical help could take the form of small grants, labour and materials.

Conservation anywhere in the world ultimately depends on **local** appreciation and value. People living in Dartmoor communities are usually aware of what they value about their local wildlife. However, the regional, national or international biodiversity significance is sometimes not so well known – much information remains in the hands of 'experts'. The conservation agencies, conversely, are not always aware of local sites for priority species or indeed how they can help a local community to look after their much loved wildlife and wild places. A two-way flow of information should be encouraged between agencies and local people,

focussed on raising awareness of the wildlife value of each parish and the ways in which this can be protected and enhanced. In this way, communities can take pride and 'ownership' of their immediate natural environment. Effective ways of achieving this should be explored with local groups and parishes. A start could be made by building on existing links between local communities (schools, groups and individuals such as Tree Wardens) and DNPA staff (rangers and others) and by linking with existing successful Local Agenda 21 initiatives (such as the West Devon Environmental Network). New initiatives such as the Wildlife Warden schemes proposed elsewhere in Devon may also provide opportunities. Trial practical workshops or seminars could be held for a group of interested parishes.

Practical biodiversity work can be carried out by almost anyone, be they young or old, fit or unfit. Many groups on Dartmoor already do this, particularly through the DNPA's Ranger and Education Services, both of which work with a wide range of groups and individuals. A pool of conservation volunteers is currently being developed by the DNPA Ranger Service. The Dart Biodiversity Project has effectively focussed volunteer activity on biodiversity targets within the Dart catchment. Wherever possible, opportunities should be taken to co-ordinate existing volunteer effort with biodiversity targets and expand it to involve more people in the practical side of biodiversity action - 'thinking globally, acting locally'.

In addition, there are 'communities of interest' where a group of people share a common interest in a particular subject. Where these interests include biodiversity issues e.g. amenity groups, efforts will be made to work in partnership with these groups, guided by biodiversity targets.

| Action | Lead | Complete by |
|---|--|--------------|
| Assess the need for parish 'wildlife sites' and help establish where necessary | DNPA, WDEN Parish Councils, DWT | 2001 onwards |
| Explore ways of helping local communities to appreciate and protect key species and habitats, including a free flow of information | DNPA, WDEN, Parish Councils, DWT, DBRC | 2001 onwards |
| Explore ways of identifying and protecting other wildlife valued by local communities | DNPA, WDEN Parish Councils, DWT | Ongoing |
| Use existing volunteer groups to deliver biodiversity targets for key species and habitats and seek new opportunities for working with volunteers | DNPA, DBP, WDEN, DWT, NT | Ongoing |
| Identify biodiversity indicators linked to key species and habitats, which can be easily monitored by local communities | DNPA, DWT, WDEN | 2002 |
| Work with 'communities of interest' to achieve biodiversity targets | DNPA, DWT, Amenity Societies | Ongoing |

4.1.5 Recreational users

It is essential that visitors and local people alike have opportunities to enjoy, appreciate, understand and care for Dartmoor's wildlife. Recreational activities on the moor are a significant way in which many people can interact with wildlife in its natural environment. Open public access to wild areas is thus welcome in many ways; it brings people closer to wildlife and stimulates interest in and support for biodiversity measures.

However, not all habitats and species are equally robust. For instance, human disturbance can result in trampling of fragile vegetation and disruption to breeding birds or animals. These problems can almost always be avoided with knowledge and forethought - for example attractive routes can be provided around wildlife refuges rather than through them; access can be to one riverbank rather than both.

A number of recent initiatives have addressed these issues. The DNPA has recently drawn up an Access Strategy, which promotes responsible access; the highly successful Moor Care campaign has encouraged people to consider the impact of their own behaviour on the Dartmoor environment including wildlife; and after much discussion with the main organisations representing recreational users, the DNPA has produced Codes of Guidance for a wide range of activities (walking, letterboxing, camping and backpacking, cycling, canoeing, horse riding, climbing, etc).

Almost all of these initiatives outline ways in which recreational activities can be managed to avoid conflict with Dartmoor's wildlife and allow people to continue to enjoy it. To ensure that this approach is successful, there is an ongoing need to provide consistent and up-to-date advice and information, particularly

regarding the nesting season and vulnerable sites. The recognised sensitive time for nesting birds has recently been extended to cover 1 March to 15 July and exclusion zones for organised recreational activities are now agreed on an annual basis for particularly vulnerable species and sites. Organisers of recreational events are trying hard to adapt their activities.

Issues relating to particular habitats or species and recreational use are covered in this plan in the relevant individual habitat and species action plans. Here, targets and actions are included with named 'deliverers'. This will hopefully allow any potential conflict to be identified and resolved. Examples are the action to 'ensure that canoe access does not adversely affect salmonid populations or other key species' (Freshwater Action Plan) and the action to 'annually meet recreational groups to clarify exclusion zones during the breeding season' (Action Plan for Ring Ouzel).

If these initiatives are pursued, the implications of the *Countryside and Rights of Way Bill* for Dartmoor's wildlife are likely to be minimal. Little new disturbance will be caused as there is already widespread open access across most of Dartmoor's moorland. However, if unrestricted public access results in new significant disturbance to quiet riverbank and valley areas, then it is likely that wildlife will suffer. Again, management by consensus is the most effective way to prevent this happening.

The Ten Tors Expedition is a well-established and much appreciated event, which brings great benefits to the thousands of young people who take part. Nevertheless, from a biodiversity perspective, it contravenes the *Code of Guidance for Organised Events*. With up to 2,400 entrants, a training period covering much of the nesting season and around 4,500 people involved on the day itself, the potential impact

is considerable. Unfortunately, it is particularly difficult to move the date away from late spring/early summer, mainly due to the timing of the school year and the long training period required. The organisers have taken steps to minimise the impact of the event on wildlife, promoting exclusion zones for vulnerable nesting birds for both training and the event itself, and training must take place in small groups. This is very welcome. However, it would be preferable if the Ten Tors Expedition and associated training could avoid this sensitive time and discussions will continue. Changes to the school year may provide opportunities.

| Action | Lead | Complete by |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Improve understanding and minimise conflict by continuing dialogue with recreational users | DNPA | Ongoing |
| Include advice on minimising ecological impact in all recreational Codes of Guidance and through the Moor Care campaign; update details on nesting season and vulnerable sites | DNPA | 2001 |
| Implement practical measures to prevent disturbance to key sites and species, where necessary | DNPA, MoD | Ongoing |
| Continue to provide ecological information and encourage wildlife appreciation amongst recreational users | DNPA, EN | Ongoing |
| Continue and extend efforts to minimise the impact of Ten Tors on wildlife and seek acceptable alternative dates | DNPA, MoD | Ongoing |
| Seek opportunities for encouraging public enjoyment of wildlife (see section 3.7.1) | | |

4.1.6 Other environmental interests

Dartmoor’s prime wildlife and geological sites often have other conservation interests. There are strong links between archaeological, wildlife, geological and landscape values. Virtually all Dartmoor’s heather moorland is underlain by internationally important archaeological features; ancient woodland contains evidence of centuries of use for charcoal production; and both these habitats are much loved landscapes. Historic buildings, which may be of local, regional or even national importance for their vernacular architecture, can provide habitats for rare bats and barn owls. Geological exposures often occur in sites of importance for industrial archaeology e.g. quarries and mine workings, which can also be key wildlife sites.

Management for wildlife or geological conservation should not compromise these other conservation interests and opportunities should be taken to protect and enhance landscape and archaeological values wherever possible. Examples might include phasing habitat restoration to minimise landscape impact, re-thatching a roof outside of the bat breeding season, or managing vegetation so that it doesn’t undermine an archaeological site. Occasional conflicts of interest may arise, and these are best dealt with on an individual site basis – it is normally clear which interest should take precedence, using national and international criteria and a pragmatic approach.

Equally, opportunities to enhance biodiversity should be sought when land is managed for its archaeological and/or landscape interest.

| Action | Lead | Complete by |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|
| Ensure that wildlife conservation measures take account of archaeological, historical and landscape values | DNPA, EN, DWT, NT, MAFF | Ongoing |
| Include biodiversity measures in archaeological and landscape conservation work wherever possible | DNPA, EH | Ongoing |



Weathering of granite at Watern Tor

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4.2 Funding

One of the great benefits of agreeing priorities between a number of key partners is that it allows existing funds to be co-ordinated and directed towards biodiversity targets. Many of the actions outlined here require a continuation of existing funding e.g. agri-environment schemes and woodland grant schemes. During the process of drawing up this action plan, a number of organisations have developed their work programmes to include actions from the plan. For example, the Environment Agency has completed LEAPs for most Dartmoor catchments which incorporate costed priority actions identified here; MAFF has recently reviewed the Dartmoor ESA and included grants and supplementary payments for management of farmland specifically aimed at Dartmoor biodiversity targets; English Nature's Species Recovery Programme is already funding research and survey actions on Dartmoor which have been identified in the Species Action Plans for Dartmoor. These examples all illustrate the benefits of a co-operative approach.

However, there will be a need for extra funding for some actions. This could come from a variety of sources. External funding opportunities should be sought wherever possible - European structural funds have been used successfully in the Dart Biodiversity Project, and Heritage Lottery Fund money is supporting a major habitat restoration project of moorland and woodland at Hawns and Dendles. In both examples, biodiversity targets were the main justification for funding and a strategic approach has allowed maximum cost-benefit for funding organisations and wildlife. Partnership funds can be used to great effect either as pump-priming for obtaining matching external funds or simply as a way of achieving a more secure funding base.

| Action | Lead | Complete by |
|---|--|-------------|
| Direct existing resources as appropriate towards biodiversity targets | MAFF FC, DNPA, EN, EA (All) | Ongoing |
| Explore opportunities for external funding and sponsorship for actions for key species and habitats | DNPA (All) | Ongoing |



Greater butterfly orchid

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4.3 The Project Approach

Many of the actions outlined in the Action Plan will be carried out by agencies or individuals as part of their daily work programmes. However, few of these agencies have biodiversity as their main business and, even with co-ordinated and focussed targets, it will be impossible to achieve all of the actions through their energies alone. There are also a number of actions which require a catalyst or short injection of energy, enthusiasm and resources to get up and running. Examples are some of the partnership actions for communities and businesses and helping individual landowners to carry out their own biodiversity action plans.

During the preparation of this plan, the Dart Biodiversity Project has successfully taken the project approach forward on a pilot basis within the Dart catchment. Focussing on the key species and habitats outlined in the Nature of Dartmoor and pulling together actions from existing BAPs, the Dart LEAP and local management plans, this three-year project has employed a Project

Officer with partnership funding from the DNPA, EN, EA, and the Duchy of Cornwall.

It has attracted matching funding from the EU through the South Devon and Dartmoor Leader 2 Programme and is widely considered to be successfully linking biodiversity planning with practical action for wildlife on the ground. It is intended to extend this approach to the whole of Dartmoor using this Plan to direct work and including additional partners.

| Action | Lead | Complete by |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Pursue external funding to extend and develop the Dart Biodiversity Project to cover the whole of Dartmoor | DNPA, EA, EN, Duchy of Cornwall | 2001 |
| Implement relevant actions in this plan through a Dartmoor-wide Biodiversity Project | Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership | 2005 |



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Dart Biodiversity Project Officer putting up a dormouse box built by local schoolchildren

4.4 Monitoring and Review

This Action Plan is intended to be a dynamic document covering the next ten years, and it is certain that priorities for action will change over the life of the plan. Some targets will be achieved while others may become more difficult to reach. New information will become available and it may be necessary to add or delete key species and action plans for them. Species and habitats are themselves dynamic and continually changing. Indeed this change is necessary and healthy to allow them to adapt to changing environmental circumstances.

This will create new opportunities and constraints. For instance, there will be winners and losers due to the direct and indirect effects of climate change. In addition, economic and political circumstances will inevitably change (looking back ten years who would have predicted a Dartmoor ESA?). For all these reasons this plan must be regularly monitored and reviewed.

Individual organisations have accepted the task of monitoring individual plans and are listed in these plans. They will report annually to the Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership which will have responsibility for monitoring the overall plan. The results will be made widely available on the Internet and through the *Dartmoor Biodiversity Newsletter*. It is also intended to carry out a major review of the Plan at five-year intervals and re-publish, if necessary.

This should ideally coincide with the review of the *Dartmoor National Park Management Plan* and the Dartmoor ESA Review so that revised targets and actions can be co-ordinated and reinforced in all these documents. It may be necessary to re-publish before this date, depending on the scale and rate of change and achievement.

It is essential to integrate biodiversity achievements (and failures!) on Dartmoor with the national and regional picture. *The Dartmoor Biodiversity Action Plan* includes targets for species which only occur on Dartmoor, or where the majority of the national or regional population is on Dartmoor. It is therefore the main mechanism for practical delivery of national and regional targets. So far, the framework for reporting back is not well defined but it is essential that it happens, the results are shared and all targets then amended accordingly, particularly for key national and regional species.

Some of the challenges and opportunities facing biodiversity on Dartmoor are shared with other National Parks in Britain, Europe and world-wide. Lessons can be learned by sharing results with other National Parks. There are opportunities for doing this through the Association of National Park Authorities, National Parks Ecologist's Workshops, Europarc, and with Dartmoor's present or future partner parks such as Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal.



Fly agaric

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| Action | Lead | Complete by |
|--|---|-------------|
| Report progress on individual plans annually to the Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership | DNPA, EN, EA, FC, etc | Annually |
| Monitor overall plan annually | Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership | Annually |
| Carry out major review of Dartmoor BAP every five years, republishing if necessary | DNPA, Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership | 2005, 2010 |
| Feed annual results of monitoring into regional and national fora (including national species workshops and local records centre) at every opportunity | DNPA, Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership | Annually |
| Share results of monitoring with other National Parks | DNPA | Annually |
| Disseminate results of monitoring and reviews locally through the Dartmoor Biodiversity Newsletter and other media | DNPA, Dartmoor Biodiversity Partnership | Annually |