



CORNWALL AND ISLES OF SCILLY NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

March 2025





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- Local experts from our Local Nature Partnership and its steering group, as well as the Isles of Scilly National Landscape which acted as the local steering group. In addition, our other partnerships, including: Cornwall National Landscape Partnership, Tamar Valley National Landscape Partnership, the Nature Recovery Land Group, Cornwall Catchment Partnership, Tamar Catchment Partnership, Marine and Coastal Partnership, Farmer Engagement Working Group, the Forest for Cornwall Partnership, the Cornwall Council Nature Recovery Working Group and the Isles of Scilly Farmers and Growers Initiative.
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- Staff and Members from the Council of the Isles of Scilly, the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and the National Landscape Partnership who acted as the local Steering Group
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Photo credits: to follow





FOREWORD

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are celebrated for their wildlife. Visitors come to enjoy our natural environment and landscapes from all over the world and UK.

Whether its our miles of varied coastline, distinctive towns and villages, wild moorlands, quiet lanes and fields bordered by Cornish hedges or the beautiful islands soaring with seabirds, we know that nature is not just a nice to have. Nature delivers a healthy economy, shapes our heritage and culture and ensures the health and wellbeing of our communities. Nature provides us with clean air, water, and food, while nature-based solutions can help us mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, helping wildlife and communities to thrive. The more we do for nature, the more it can do for us.

However, like the rest of the UK we know that nature in Cornwall and Scilly is in decline. We were among the first areas to declare both biodiversity and climate emergencies.

Our core message is this: **that protecting nature is not enough. We must expand and enhance our natural spaces and the myriad species they support.**

We need a well-grounded strategy, that is deliverable and understandable, that provides a locally shaped framework to achieve our local and national ambition for 30% of land, rivers and seas to be well managed for nature by 2030. In short, we need a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Councillor Martyn Alvey
Cabinet Member for
Environment and Climate
Change, Cornwall Council

Councillor Harry Legg
Lead Member for Environment,
Environmental Services and Climate
Change, Council of the Isles of Scilly

Lord Robin Teverson
Chair of the Cornwall and
Isles of Scilly Local Nature
Partnership

Matt Walpole
Vice-Chair of the Cornwall
and Isles of Scilly Local Nature
Partnership

The '30 by 30' target is a big ask that requires everyone to do their bit. Organisations large and small can play a part, along with local communities and businesses. In a rural area like ours, farmers and growers are central to that mission: this strategy can help guide a transition to farming at the sweet spot. This means ensuring the industry continues to grow food for the nation, supporting businesses to stay viable whilst delivering for nature at the same time. It is a real challenge, but one that's achievable as well as vital.

This strategy is an essential tool in shaping local action for nature. Its creation has seeded the partnerships needed for delivery to ensure we have more nature and that it is bigger, better and joined up. Through its many consultations and conversations, it is grounded in our communities. But it makes clear, beyond any doubt, that we all need to start taking action now before it is too late.

We all want to know that we are leaving this world in a better place than we found it, safe in the knowledge that future generations can enjoy the amazing wonders of wildlife in their everyday lives.




RAGLAVAR

Gerys-da yw Kernow ha Syllan rag aga godhvevnans. Godrigoryon a dheu dyworth oll a-dro dhe'n bys ha'n RU rag enjoya agan kerghynnedh ha tirwelyow naturel.

Mars yw po agan mildiryow a arvor divers; trevow ha treveglosyow diblans; gonyow gwyls; bownderyow ha gwelyow kosel, keow kernewek aga emlow; po an enesow teg may neyj morydhyn yn ughel, ni a wor nag yw natur saw neppyth yw da hy havos. Natur a dhelirv erbysiedh yaghus, a furv agan ertach ha gonisogeth hag a surha yeghes ha sewena agan kemenethow. Natur a brov dhyn ayr, dowr ha boos glan, ha digolmow selys war natur a yll agan gweres ow sewajya hag aswiwa dhe hin eus ow chanjya hag a weres godhvevnans ha kemenethow ow seweni. An moy a wren a-barth natur, an moy a yll hi gul ragon.

Byttegyns, kepar ha remenant an RU, ni a wor bos natur yn Kernow ha Syllan ow tifygya. Yth esen yn-mysk an kynsa ranndiryow dhe dheklarya goredhommow ha bewdhiversest ha hin.

Agan messach kresel yw hemma: **gwitha natur nyns yw lowr. Res yw dhyn efani ha gwellhe agan spassow naturel ha'n eghennow dres nivera a skoodhons.**

Yma edhom dhyn a strateji ha dhodho sel dha hag yw delivradow ha konvedhadow, hag a brov framweyth furvys yn leel rag hedhes agan ughelhwans leel ha kenedhlek may fydh 30% a dir, avonyow ha moryow dyghtys yn ta erbynn 2030. Yn kott, yma edhom dhyn a Strateji Dasvevnans Natur Leel.

Konseler Martyn Alvey
Esel Kabinet rag Kerghynnedh
ha Chanj an Hin, Konsel
Kernow

Konseler Harry Legg
Chif-Esel rag Kerghynnedh,
Gonisyow Kerghynnedhel ha Chanj
an Hin, Konsel Syllan

Arlohdh Robin Teverson
Kaderyer Keskowethyans
Natur Leel Kernow ha
Syllan

Matt Walpole
Is-Kaderyer
Keskowethyans Natur
Leel Kernow ha Syllan

An amkan '30 erbynn 30' yw gorholeth bras a rekwir peub dhe wul aga rann. Kowethyansow bras ha byghan a yll gwari rann, keffrys ha kemenethow ha negysyow leel. Yn ranndir powek kepar ha'n huni dhyn, tiogow ha tevioryon yw kresel dhe'n medras na: an strateji ma a yll gweres ow gidya tremenyans dhe ammeth orth an le effeythus. Hemma a styr surhe y pes an diwysyans tevi boos rag an genedhel, ow skoodhya negysyow dhe wortos hewul yn-dann dhelivra rag natur yn kettermyn. Chalenj gwir yw, mes onan yw hedhadow keffrys hag essensek.

An strateji ma yw toul essensek rag furvya gwriansow leel rag natur. Y wrians re hasas an keskowethyansow yw res rag delivrans dhe surhe bos moy natur dhyn hag y vos brassa, gwell ha kesjunys. Der y lies keskussulyans ha keskowsow, selys yw y'gan kemenethow. Mes ev a glerha, dres pub dout, bos edhom dhyn ni oll a dhalleth gul neppyth lemmyn kyns hy bos re dhiwedhes.

Oll ahanan a vynn godhvos y hesyn an bys ma yn le gwell ages an le ma'n kevsyn, ow kodhvos yn sur y hallo henedhow dedvedhek enjoya an anethow marthys a wodhvevnans y'ga bewnans puptydhyek.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is in the midst of a climate and ecological emergency. Nature plays a vital role in responding to each of these challenges and we need to take urgent action to help nature recover.

The Nature Recovery Strategy is a statutory document as set out in the Environment Act 2021, which requires 48 areas of England to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Cornwall Council was identified by Defra as the Responsible Authority for developing the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Cornwall Council chose to create the strategy in partnership with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership, along with the Isles of Scilly National Landscape Partnership.

The Nature Recovery Strategy has been locally led and is informed by thousands of local views from environment professionals, farmers and growers, foresters, biological recorders, local businesses, Town and Parish Councils and others through a series of workshops, surveys, events and consultation.

The maps have been co-produced with the University of Exeter, working with the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) and the Cornish Biodiversity Network and our biological recording community.

[Appendix D](#) outlines the full engagement and mapping methodology used in the production of this strategy and the accompanying Nature Recovery Network maps.

WHAT WILL IT DO?

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy is a vital next step, that:

- **Outlines opportunities and priorities** for what, where and how we can enhance and grow nature;
- **Maps a series of specific actions** that can guide delivery now to have the most impact for nature; and
- **Sets out the journey** for realising the long-term recovery and growth of nature across the region.

This strategy and maps provide a framework for how we can reach our collective target that: At least 30% of land, rivers and seas will be well managed for nature by 2030 across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

THE STRATEGY COMPRISES A WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF OUR AREA, LOCAL PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS. THE DOCUMENT SHOULD BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MAPS, AS WELL AS INTERACTIVE NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MAPS.



ONE AND ALL CAN TAKE ACTION FOR NATURE IN CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY

The pressures faced by nature are complex and multifaceted. No single organisation can respond to this challenge by itself: landowners, farmers, foresters, businesses, environmental organisations, Town and Parish Councils, community groups and individuals are all needed to restore and grow nature.

WE CAN ALL TAKE ACTION FOR NATURE



1 NATURE RECOVERY IS FOUNDATIONAL TO OUR HEALTH AND PROSPERITY



2 WE NEED MORE NATURE AND FOR IT TO BE BIGGER, BETTER AND JOINED UP



3 PROTECTION IS NOT ENOUGH. WE NEED TO RECOVER AND GROW NATURE



4 WE NEED TO BEND THE CURVE ON NATURE'S DECLINE



5 WHEN WE DO MORE FOR NATURE, NATURE DOES MORE FOR US

Positive action for nature needs to be:

- Ambitious and transformative
- Delivered with the sense of urgency needed
- Deliverable over perfect
- Adaptive to a changing climate
- Supporting resilient communities
- Guided by the strategy, whilst encouraging opportunities everywhere
- Inclusive and collaborative
- Developed with communities at their heart





OUR ROADMAP TO DELIVER NATURE RECOVERY

We are all part of nature.

When nature flourishes it helps clean our air and water, absorbs and stores carbon, provides us with food, protects us from hazards such as flooding, and makes us all more resilient to a changing climate. It gives people opportunities for play and connects us with one another; inspiring art, music and stories. It makes us healthier and happier and is foundational to our local economy, directly and indirectly supporting jobs and skills.

Anyone and everyone can help recover nature. This plan can help inform your activity whether you are a strategic body, charity, a land-owning business, a farmer or grower, or a community group.

If we are to meet this ambition, we must collectively work across our region towards:

- **A thriving Nature Recovery Network** of protected, enhanced, created and restored habitats, bursting with wildlife
- **Species brought back from the brink**, increasing in diversity, ranges and numbers to support a thriving ecosystem
- **Nature-based solutions that bring us closer to nature** and supports resilient communities and businesses in responding to a changing climate.

This will be achieved through our united efforts across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

In Cornwall we also need:

- **A Forest for Cornwall** of new and existing well managed trees and woodlands
- **To love our scrub**, recognising the vital role it plays across our landscape
- **An extensive network of internationally important heathland**, moors and mires stretching out from the spine of Cornwall to the coast dotted with archaeology and nature-rich historic mining and quarry sites
- **Ponds for Cornwall** in farms, villages and schools
- **Clean estuaries and seas** full of fish, birds and mammals thriving above a diverse, healthy seabed as set out in the voluntary Marine Nature Recovery Framework, with beaches and shores given space to thrive and adapt. Coastal species left in peace to live their lives and enrich ours
- **Clean rivers and streams** full of life; meandering through restored wetlands, reconnected to their floodplains and priority rivers re-naturalised
- **Widespread adoption of nature-friendly farming practices** and creation of fields, hedges and edges, healthy soils, orchards and pasture rich in wildlife alongside quality food production
- **Nature-rich grasslands** across farms, towns and villages alive with flowers and birds, creating homes for pollinators
- **Making space for nature** within towns and villages, reconnecting people to make communities happier and healthier
- **A near continuous Coastal Wildbelt** of nature-rich habitat and regenerative farming, wide enough to cope with a changing climate

On the Isles of Scilly we also need:

- **Woody habitats** rich with native species and remnants of temperate rainforest being restored
- **Waved heath** restored and enhanced to create a mosaic of coastal grassland and heathland where wildflowers and insects thrive
- **Internationally important seabirds given space** to breed and thrive, free from predators and disturbance.



NATURE IN CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY

Around 14,000 years ago the Isles of Scilly were connected to Cornwall by land. Natural sea-level rise means that these two locations are now separated by the sea. Both locations are loved for their wildlife, heritage and culture.

THE STRATEGY SETS OUT:

- What makes Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly special;
- How wildlife and habitats have changed over time;
- The challenges our natural environment faces and the opportunities we have to enhance it and watch it grow.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

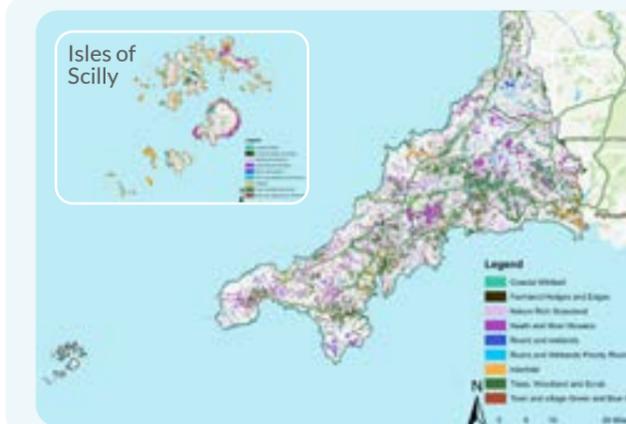
- **Nature is in trouble** and wildlife declines are consistent with national trends;
- **We have a lot of important and unique wildlife** that needs more places to live, and habitats which are bigger, better and joined up;
- **Our communities and visitors care strongly about nature** and recognise that they are part of nature.

TAKE ACTION FOR NATURE

- **Our collective target is to work together so at least 30% of land, rivers and seas in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are being well managed for nature by 2030.**
- **Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice provided act as a checklist** for how all actions should be designed and delivered.
- **The relationship between [Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain in the planning system is explained](#)**, along with a useful [Jargon Buster](#).
- **23 locally agreed priorities and 75 actions sit at the heart of this strategy.** These actions link to the Nature Recovery Network Mapping which shows Existing and Opportunity areas organised into zones.
- **These maps can be used to provide suggestions for what and where action can happen** to make more areas for nature and provide habitats which are bigger, better and joined up. The maps are a guide not a prescription.

ZONE 1 - EXISTING NATURE NETWORK: PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE BEST

Zone 1: The Existing Nature Network, shows our most important areas for habitats and species and includes sites which are already considered in the Planning system through existing legislation and policies. It covers approximately 15% of Cornwall's land area and 33% of the Isles of Scilly.



ZONE 2 - NATURE RECOVERY OPPORTUNITY AREAS: CREATE AND RESTORE THE REST

Zone 2: Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas are suggestions for where habitat and species restoration and/or creation could take place. Zone 2 covers approximately 56% of the land area of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to help provide choices of where to deliver nature recovery to achieve our 30 by 30 target.

OUR LOCAL PRIORITIES

The strategy describes the character of our local priority and focus habitats, the pressures they face, 23 locally agreed priorities and 75 actions needed to help them recover and the focus species and nature-based solutions which will benefit.

We set out examples of inspiring case studies, both large and small from across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, along with links to further reading to support delivery.

The priorities and actions are linked to information in the Nature Recovery Network maps.

-  **Trees, woodland and scrub**
-  **Farmland, hedges and edges**
-  **Rivers and wetlands**
-  **Heathland, moors and mires**
-  **Nature-rich grasslands**
-  **Coastal Wildbelt**
-  **Intertidal**
-  **Town and village green and blue space**
-  **Historic Mines, Buildings and Quarries**

TOGETHER WE CAN

Everyone can support nature's recovery. You can find detailed advice and further resources on our [Nature Recovery Hub](#)

APPENDICES

The strategy is accompanied by a series of appendices which set out:

- Alignment with National Objectives (Appendix A) <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/40237/widgets/119034/documents/80928>
- Focus habitats associated with each Priority (Appendix B) - <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/40237/widgets/119034/documents/80929>
- Focus Species Recovery Toolkit (Appendix C) - <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/focus-species-recovery-toolkit>
- Methodology - How we created the strategy (Appendix D) <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/40237/widgets/119034/documents/80932>
- Consultation report (Appendix E) BANANA





INTRODUCTION

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly recognise that we are in the midst of a climate and ecological emergency and are seeing first-hand the need to adapt to the already changing climate. Nature plays a vital role in responding to each of these challenges and we need to take urgent action to help nature recover.

The Environment Act 2021 requires 48 areas of England to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Cornwall Council was identified by Defra as the Responsible Authority for developing the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

This strategy provides a framework for how we can reach our collective target that:

At least 30% of land, rivers and seas will be well managed for nature by 2030 across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

In this section you will learn more about the strategy, its strategic context and why it is so important to take action for nature.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Nature Recovery Strategy is a statutory document as set out in the Environment Act 2021.
- This strategy outlines opportunities and priorities for what, where and how we can recover nature across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- The strategy comprises a written description of our area, local priorities, actions and interactive Nature Recovery Network maps.
- Anyone and everyone can help recover nature. This plan can help inform your activity whether you are a strategic body, charity, a land-owning business, a farmer or grower, or a community group.





WE ARE ALL PART OF NATURE. IT NEEDS OUR HELP

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are well known for their wildlife. From the mainland with its wild craggy tors and moors, cliffs blooming with heather, farmland bordered by Cornish hedges carpeted in primroses and foxgloves and rivers lined by moss covered woodland filled with bird song. To the archipelago of the Isles of Scilly with its rocky outcrops, maritime heathland and grassland buzzing with pollinators and where seabirds soar. Our wildlife is an integral part of our landscape, communities and economy. It has served as inspiration for generations and makes this a fantastic place to live, work and visit.

WE ARE ALL PART OF NATURE:



WHEN NATURE FLOURISHES IT HELPS CLEAN OUR AIR AND WATER, ABSORBS AND STORES CARBON, PROVIDES US WITH FOOD, PROTECTS US FROM HAZARDS SUCH AS FLOODING, AND MAKES US ALL MORE RESILIENT TO A CHANGING CLIMATE.



IT GIVES PEOPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY AND CONNECTS US WITH ONE ANOTHER; INSPIRING ART, MUSIC AND STORIES



IT MAKES US HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER AND IS FOUNDATIONAL TO OUR LOCAL ECONOMY, DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY SUPPORTING JOBS AND SKILLS.

But we are in an ecological emergency:

a major global decline in wildlife and we need to take urgent action to remedy this. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world and our region is not immune to the trends seen worldwide.

The ground-breaking Cornwall State of Nature¹ report shows that dozens of species have already become extinct locally. Many more are in decline. The Isles of Scilly has also seen declines including the extinction of the iconic Scilly Bee, and serious declines in breeding seabird numbers. Now more than ever we need solutions to halt the decline of nature.

Our [2020-2065 Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Environmental Growth Strategy](#)² set a long-term framework for realising this. It puts Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly at the leading edge of the green agenda, but more needs to be done.

Cornwall Council and the Council of the Isles of Scilly both declared a climate emergency in 2019. In 2021 Cornwall Council also declared an ecological emergency to recognise these twin threats. Action for nature is one strand of our joined-up approach to both mitigating and adapting to the changing climate to ensure that our environment, economy and communities can thrive and be resilient.

This strategy provides a framework for how we can reach our collective target that:

AT LEAST 30% OF LAND, RIVERS AND SEAS WILL BE WELL MANAGED FOR NATURE BY 2030 ACROSS CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY



The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy is a vital next step, that will:

- **Outline opportunities and priorities** for what, where and how we can protect and grow nature;
- **Map a series of specific actions** that can guide delivery now to have the most impact for nature across the region; and
- **Lay out the journey** for realising the long-term recovery and growth of nature across the region.



WE NEED TO RECOVER AND GROW NATURE AND PROVIDE MORE SPACE FOR WILDLIFE TO THRIVE

WHAT DOES NATURE DO FOR US?

We are all a part of nature.

Without nature, life as we know it wouldn't exist.

There is no 'us' without nature.

Nature is foundational to our local communities and economy, keeps us healthy and fulfilled and is essential for our day to day lives.

NATURAL CAPITAL

Natural capital describes those elements of the natural environment which provide goods and services to people. Nature can be considered priceless, but that is not the same as not having a value.

The natural world, directly or indirectly, supports thousands of jobs. From attracting tourists, building health in our soil for food production, to giving us clean water and air. Healthy nature can support us and other animals in living healthier and better lives.

THIS ALSO MEANS THAT WHEN THE ENVIRONMENT IS HARMED, IT HARMS US. WE LIVE IN A WORLD OF LIMITED RESOURCES, AND WE PAY WHEN WE MISUSE THEM.

Nature-based solutions are delivered when habitats are protected, managed and restored in a way which address societal challenges alongside benefiting wildlife. For example, through increasing resilience to climate change and improving human health and wellbeing. Similar terms include ecosystem services and wider environmental benefits.



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Involve working with nature to address societal challenges. When we restore and enhance nature, we grow our natural capital.





£378,000 was donated to Climate and Nature Projects through crowdfunding in 2 years from 2022

59,387 people worked in green jobs, that's 26% of our workforce (2022)³

In 2021, visitors to Cornwall spent **£2 billion**
In 2018, visitors spent £666 million specifically in coastal areas^{4,5}



95% of Cornwall Wildlife Trust members agreed that nature had been important for relieving stress, as well as for their mental and physical wellbeing during the covid lockdown⁶



In 2021, the total asset value of nature-based solutions in the UK⁷ was just over **£1.5 trillion**

2,773 miles (4,462 km) of footpath and bridleways in Cornwall

NATURE IS THE FOUNDATION OF A HEALTHY ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES

6.8% of greenhouse gases are reabsorbed by the landscape in Cornwall in 2021⁸

Biodiversity in the Tamar Valley National Landscape is worth **£2 billion**⁹



24% of visitors to Cornwall take part in paid-for nature-based activities¹¹

In Cornwall, nature helps protect **39,996** properties that are at risk of flooding¹²

Total Income from farming for the southwest in 2023¹³ was **£631 million**

People spending more time in nature in the UK could save the NHS **£635million** in treatment costs¹⁰



In 2013, it was estimated that UK surfers spent over **£1billion** per year spread between the regions and countries of the UK¹⁵

In 2023 there were: **7** Community Supported Agriculture sites, **22** community orchards, **7** school gardens and farms and **33** community and/or social gardens, farms, fields, hubs across Cornwall¹⁴



1,335,686 tonnes of air pollution were removed by nature in the UK in 2021, with an annual value of around £2.5 billion⁷



WHAT ARE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES?

In 2021 the UK Government introduced the **Environment Act** which set targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment. This included a national 25 Year Environment Plan which aims to halt and reverse species decline in England.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a key output from the Environment Act. They are a new set of statutory strategies that are being rolled out across 48 areas in England. Our strategy covers Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and provides a framework for how we can reach our collective target that:

At least 30% of land, rivers and seas will be well managed for nature by 2030 across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly



WHAT DO THEY DO?

This strategy is intended to guide one and all to help nature recover. It is a locally led plan for habitats and species which will help drive investment and action for nature across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. It does this using:

Locally agreed priorities for nature's recovery



Maps of existing areas where nature needs continued protection and enhancement

Maps showing opportunities for creating and restoring habitats for wildlife



IT WILL HELP:

Guide funding: e.g., Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes, Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and private investment;



Target action for nature by highlighting the best places where biodiversity can thrive;

Improve support given by informing farmers and land managers, strategic organisations, ecological consultants and farm advisors;



Promote healthier soils, cleaner air and water by informing farmers and land managers, strategic organisations, ecological consultants and farm advisors



Prioritise and improve nature-based solutions such as flood prevention, water retention and carbon sequestration



Inform the planning process by acting as a material planning consideration helping to shape Local Plans and related policy such as the Cornwall Climate Change Development Planning Document, and influencing deployment of Biodiversity Net Gain;



Guide public bodies in delivering their new enhanced biodiversity duties;

Help Town and Parish councils when developing and updating Neighbourhood Development Plans



Help landowners identify neighbours and partners with similar environmental opportunities to support landscape-scale initiatives; and

Help guide communities, businesses and investors to take action for nature.



THE AIM OF THE STRATEGY IS NOT TO:

Remove productive land. It is about finding where food production and nature can thrive together

Limit land managers choice in decision making. The strategy is not a replacement for local knowledge, and will not dictate to farmers and landowners what to do with their land. **It is a guide, not a prescription**

Replace site surveys and project planning – it is a strategic tool



WHAT IS THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY?

The LNRS is a statutory document which means Cornwall Council, as the Responsible Authority, are required under law to create it.

The LNRS also has legal implications within the planning system. The Environment Act establishes two mechanisms to support the delivery of local nature recovery strategies:

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)¹⁶ for developments:

Cornwall was an early adopter of BNG, applying a voluntary 10% requirement for major developments from 2020. Since April 2024, all new developments have to show a 10% uplift in nature as calculated by the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric.

A Strengthened Biodiversity Duty on Public Authorities:

This requires Local Authorities, including Town and Parish Councils, Government departments and agencies and organisations managing public infrastructure such as roads and water, to not just protect, but also to enhance nature. Moreover, Planning Authorities are required to have regard to LNRSs when making decisions.

Biodiversity Net Gain schemes in Zone 2 of our Nature Recovery Network, are subject to the strategic location multiplier in the BNG metric.

In Cornwall this is further reinforced by Policy G4 within the [Climate Emergency Development Planning Document](#)¹⁷ which states that “where development is sited within or adjacent to an adopted Local Nature Recovery Network it should demonstrate how the proposal will maintain and enhance the integrity and connectivity of the network and support the principles of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy”.

Both [Cornwall Council](#) and the [Council of Isles of Scilly](#) have supplementary guidance for biodiversity and geological diversity providing more specific support for developers. These will be updated based on new legislation or statutory considerations, such as the LNRS.

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES ARE REQUIRED TO NOT JUST PROTECT, BUT ALSO TO ENHANCE NATURE





THIS STRATEGY HAS BEEN LOCALLY LED AND IS INFORMED BY THOUSANDS OF LOCAL INTERESTED PARTIES

HOW HAS IT BEEN CREATED?

In 2023 Defra appointed 48 Responsible Authorities across England, to lead on the production of these ground-breaking new local frameworks for nature. Cornwall Council was asked by the Minister to act as Responsible Authority for creating the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy. This means that the development of the strategy has been led by Cornwall Council following Statutory Regulations¹⁸ and Guidance¹⁹ set out by Government to ensure consistency across England.

We have two Supporting Authorities as prescribed by Defra: The Council of the Isles of Scilly and Natural England. Supporting Authorities have worked closely with Cornwall Council to provide steer and local data to inform the strategy and approved the strategy before publishing to ensure it meets statutory requirements.

Cornwall Council chose to create the strategy in partnership with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership, who have acted as overall Steering Group along with the Isles of Scilly



National Landscape (formerly AONB) Partnership, who are the local Steering Group for the Isles of Scilly.

The LNRS has been locally led and is informed by thousands of local interested parties, including environment professionals, farmers and growers, foresters, wildlife experts, local businesses and others through a series of workshops, surveys and events. The maps have been co-produced with the University of Exeter, working with the [Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly \(ERCCIS\)](#), the [Cornish Biodiversity Network](#) and our biological recording community. Please refer to the online [mapping methods webinar](#) and [Appendix D](#) which explain the full engagement and mapping methodology used in the production of this strategy and the accompanying Nature Recovery Network maps.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

This strategy covers Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and extends to mean low water (the average water level at low tide), as set out in the legislation, following the administrative boundaries of the two Local Planning Authorities.

WORKING WITH DEVON

Whilst the statutory scope of the strategy ends at Cornwall's border with Devon, we know that nature doesn't. Some of our most important sites for nature straddle this boundary including the Tamar Valley National Landscape, and important remnants of culm grasslands to the north. We have worked closely with colleagues in Devon to ensure the two strategies work together and that our mapping and priorities are aligned where appropriate, with University of Exeter supporting both areas with their Nature Recovery Opportunity mapping.

WHAT ABOUT MARINE?

Our seas are renowned for the richness of their wildlife and maritime industries and coastal living has shaped our culture and heritage in both Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. However, marine falls outside of the legal scope for the strategy.

Whilst this strategy will not extend into the marine space, it will continue to:

Reflect the maritime nature of our region.

Include coastal and intertidal priorities and opportunities down to mean low water;

Propose actions for land, freshwater and intertidal environments that will also benefit the marine environment.

Separately, Cornwall Council are leading the creation of a locally led, evidence-based, voluntary Marine Nature Recovery Framework (MNRF) with support from the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Marine and Coastal Partnership (CIOS MCP). This framework will complement the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy. It will highlight the actions that can be taken to help keep our seas healthy and abundant for future generations. This can be accessed on [Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Marine Nature Recovery Framework | Let's Talk Cornwall](#)



WHEN WILL THE STRATEGY BE REVIEWED?

The Government have stated that LNRS will be reviewed in 3-10 years, at a time that will be determined by the Secretary of State.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE PROGRESS?

The strategy is intended to enable and inspire action, and progress will be monitored against national and local targets.

Doing so will inform the next version of the strategy.

National

The Environment Act and associated Environment Improvement Plan act as a national 'monitoring and reporting framework' to help demonstrate progress against specific priorities, including tree planting, Biodiversity Net Gain, the condition status of some of our best protected sites for nature and the health of our rivers.

The Protected Landscape Target and Outcome Framework aligns with the above to set specific targets for our National Landscapes.

Local

Locally, Cornwall Council, with support from the Local Nature Partnership, University of Exeter and the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, hosted by Cornwall Wildlife Trust, created a suite of local environmental growth Key Performance Indicators² (KPIs). These will be reviewed and updated to reflect LNRS priorities, resources and data availability and we will continue to collectively compile and report on these KPIs.

Our three National Landscapes (Isles of Scilly, Cornwall and Tamar Valley) will have specific targets from the Protected Landscape Target and Outcome Framework. This monitoring will support the measuring of progress for the LNRS.

It is also hoped that the statistics compiled for the 2020 Cornwall State of Nature report can be reviewed in the future (if funding allows), and a similar report created for the Isles of Scilly. To achieve this, it is vital that we increase structured monitoring, and all ensure we have the necessary biological records to identify changes and trends across species, habitats and land cover.





ONE AND ALL CAN TAKE ACTION FOR NATURE IN CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY

The pressures faced by nature are complex and multifaceted. No single organisation can respond to this challenge by itself: landowners, farmers, foresters, businesses, environmental organisations, Town and Parish Councils, community groups and individuals are all needed to restore and grow nature.

We can all take action for nature.



OUR COLLECTIVE AMBITION FOR NATURE



This strategy sets out what, where and how we can take collective action to deliver our shared target of:

AT LEAST 30% OF LAND, RIVERS AND SEAS WILL BE WELL MANAGED FOR NATURE BY 2030 ACROSS CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY

Cornwall Council recognises our role as a local systems leader and, supported by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership, will work to guide and collectively influence partners, stakeholders and government to facilitate, catalyse, coordinate and monitor progress of local delivery with the sense of urgency and ambition required to turn things around for nature.

- WE CAN ALL TAKE ACTION FOR NATURE**
- NATURE RECOVERY IS FOUNDATIONAL TO OUR HEALTH AND PROSPERITY**
- WE NEED MORE NATURE AND FOR IT TO BE BIGGER, BETTER AND JOINED UP**
- PROTECTION IS NOT ENOUGH. WE NEED TO RECOVER AND GROW NATURE**
- WE NEED TO BEND THE CURVE ON NATURE'S DECLINE**
- WHEN WE DO MORE FOR NATURE, NATURE DOES MORE FOR US**

- Positive action for nature needs to be:**
- Ambitious and transformative
 - Delivered with the sense of urgency needed
 - Deliverable over perfect
 - Adaptive to a changing climate
 - Supporting resilient communities
 - Guided by the strategy, whilst encouraging opportunities everywhere
 - Inclusive and collaborative
 - Developed with communities at their heart

WE KNOW WHAT WE NEED TO DO, WE UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES, AND WE HAVE A STRATEGY TO OVERCOME THEM. NOW WE NEED TO MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN.



BRANCHES NEEDED FOR SUCCESS

The pressures faced by nature are complex and multifaceted. No single organisation or individual is tasked with delivering it alone. To deliver this action on a broad scale, we all need to ensure that the branches for success are in place:





MANY ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS CAN AND WILL PLAY A ROLE IN HELPING TO DELIVER THIS STRATEGY

Cornwall Council and the Council of the Isles of Scilly

As local planning authorities, through local planning policy and practice within the National Planning and Policy Framework and in ensuring effective delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. As public bodies, they are also required to consider how they can protect and recover biodiversity in the discharge of all their other diverse functions (Environment Act 2021). Additionally, their respective environment services work in partnership with other organisations to ensure strategic alignment and delivery

of environmental projects. As landowners and managers, the opportunity area maps can support them to better manage their assets for nature. Cornwall Council is committed to a Delivery Plan to set out how it intends to act for nature through its functions and asset management.

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership (LNP)

Will provide leadership and champion nature recovery, coordinating efforts with all of the incredible strategic partnerships across the region, including the Catchment Partnerships, Forest

for Cornwall Partnership Forum, National Landscapes, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Marine and Coastal Partnership, and Nature Recovery Land Group. The LNP will encourage regulators to deliver effective compliance and enforcement of all environmental regulations. The LNP will also continue to monitor and report on progress via the Environmental Growth Key Performance Indicators, aligning monitoring with their monitoring of National Landscapes Target and Outcome Framework.

Landowners, farmers and growers, foresters and advisors

Are the stewards for over 75% of our land area and will be vital to help achieve ambitions for more nature and for areas to be bigger, better and joined up. Many land managers are already taking positive action for nature alongside food production. This strategy provides direction and information to help inform farm plans and ELMS applications, woodland establishment and management, and highlight opportunities for neighbouring landowners to collaborate and help everyone integrate delivery for nature with production.

Developers

Developers can use this strategy to inform their Biodiversity Net Gain delivery, so that it will help recover nature. Policy G4 of the Climate Emergency Development Plan document states that developers must support the principles of the Nature Recovery Strategy where appropriate.

Planners and Development Managers

Can use the strategy as a material planning consideration, ensure adherence with Policy G4 of the Climate Change Development Planning Document, to inform planning policy and practice, such as decisions about strategic allocations as part of the Local Plan Review.

Strategic organisations, public bodies and charities

Can use this strategy to prioritise and coordinate their collective action for nature, support public and private funding applications and investment decisions, inform their project planning and development and to embed nature in their strategic priorities.

Town and Parish Councils

Can use this strategy to shape the positive management of their local green spaces for nature and people, along with helping to inform environmental and land use policies and Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Business and industry

Can use the strategy to inform opportunities for local action and private investment alongside LINC: Cornwall's natural capital exchange.

Volunteers and communities

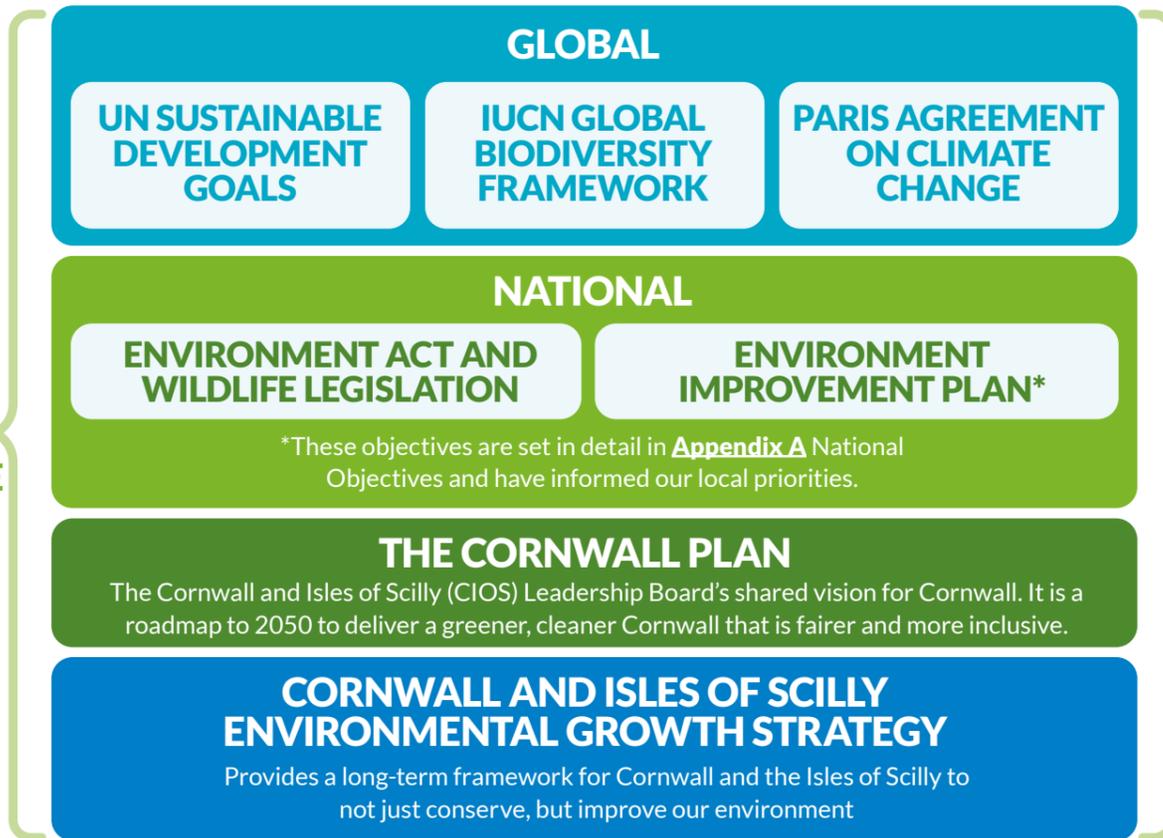
Can use this as a source of inspiration, to help apply for funding and to inform project plans or management of green spaces.



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy cannot work in isolation. It exists within a framework of global, national and local strategies, plans and regulations. This strategy helps supports delivery and ensures joined up thinking, working and acting across sectors.

30%
OF LAND,
RIVERS AND
SEAS WILL
BE WELL
MANAGED
FOR NATURE
BY 2030



OUR STRATEGY EXISTS WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF GLOBAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIES, PLANS AND REGULATIONS





NATURE IN CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY

Around 14,000 years ago the Isles of Scilly were connected to Cornwall by land. Natural sea-level rise means that these two locations are now separated by the sea. Both locations are loved for their wildlife, heritage and culture.

IN THIS SECTION WE'LL EXPLORE:

- What makes Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly special;
- How wildlife and habitats have changed over time;
- The challenges our natural environment faces and the opportunities we have to enhance it and watch it grow.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Nature is in trouble and wildlife declines are consistent with national trends;
- We have a lot of important and unique wildlife that needs more places to live, and habitats which are bigger, better and joined up;
- Our communities and visitors care strongly about nature and recognise that they are part of nature.



PEOPLE'S CONCERNS ABOUT NATURE

In 2023 we launched a survey to get your views on nature. **Over 1,000 of you took part.** We heard from businesses, farmers and growers, environmental professionals, volunteers and communities.

This survey told us...

95% of you are concerned about the current state of nature

97% of you are concerned about the future state of nature

Taking actions for nature

- **Over 14,000 people attended** events with Cornwall Wildlife Trust through 2022-23
- **233 “pledges for nature”** made with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership covering over 14,500 hectares of land
- **Around 100 Volunteers** work with the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust each year
- **218 volunteers working with Forest for Cornwall** to plant and maintain trees in Cornwall
- **Over 20 community projects** on the Isles of Scilly helping to restore nature

We asked why nature was important to you and you told us...

1. ... it has its own intrinsic value
2. ... it is important for tackling climate change
3. ...I am a part of nature
4. ...it is important for our mental health and wellbeing
5. ... it protects us from natural hazards like flooding and pollution
6. ... it provides us with goods and services (e.g., food and raw materials)
7. ... it is important for our physical health and keeping active
8. ... it is beautiful
9. ... it is important for our heritage and sense of identity
10. ... it matters to me spiritually



We asked you what you'd like nature to look like in 5 years' time...



CORNWALL

I would like to see large numbers of insects, bees, butterflies and birds like I used to when I was growing up.

Recovering, flourishing, appreciated and protected.

I would like nature to be valued and present in all areas of Cornwall. I love the addition of wildflower/ green areas to concrete on areas like bus shelters. I think there should be more of this.

ISLES OF SCILLY

For the island's communities and visitors to value nature and work together towards its future protection.

For the islands to have more breeding seabirds, seals and wildlife generally.

Greater biodiversity on the islands, with the decline in species numbers reversed.



NATURE IN CORNWALL

Cornwall is almost an island. Covered on three sides by the English Channel and the Celtic Sea and stretching into the Atlantic. The River Tamar connects us with Devon.



There are around
350,000
hectares of land in
Cornwall depending
on the tide

Cornwall is a cultural living landscape shaped by the symbiosis of human activity and the natural environment – its geology, topography, maritime climate and ecology. All places within Cornwall, while different and distinct from each other, and whether ancient or modern, reflect the remarkable distinctive diversity of Cornish society, culture and economy.

From towans to tors, marshland to moorland, and our rivers flowing out to sea. Our culture, economy and wildlife are intrinsically bound to the sea. Nowhere in Cornwall is further than 24 km from the coast. A maritime climate brings cool summers. The Gulf Stream provides mild winters. Strong salty winds batter our shores and alter the shape of our trees.

Cornwall has some of the richest and most varied geology found anywhere in Britain. Granite outcrops punctuate moorland and the Lizard boasts green tinged serpentine. From the rich geology comes diverse soils, creating a wide variety of habitats for our much-loved wildlife. The rocks and minerals beneath our feet led to a rich mining heritage, dating back to the Bronze Age. An industry which altered vast swathes of our land, rivers and estuaries and continues to influence our environment today.

THE FARMED LANDSCAPE

Farming is a key part of Cornwall's heritage, communities and economy making up over three quarters of our land. As well as producing food, farmland also includes a range of semi-natural habitats and supports wildlife such as cirl bunting and small-flowered catchfly. From woodland and heathland to human-introduced features like orchards and ponds. In Cornwall, field sizes are much smaller than other parts of the country and as such have more edges which provide vital homes for wildlife. Over two thirds of our farmland is Anciently Enclosed Land, land patterns established since the medieval period. In West Penwith we get a glimpse into prehistoric and medieval field patterns.

CORNWALL HAS
SOME OF THE
RICHEST AND
MOST VARIED
GEOLOGY FOUND
ANYWHERE IN
BRITAIN

Cornish hedges are a special and ancient feature of Cornwall's farmed landscape. They can be hundreds of years old, and their stonework reflects the local style. Together with field margins, ditches and hedgerows they create rich and colourful wildlife corridors across the landscape.

RIVERS AND WETLANDS

Cornwall's landscape is connected by a network of rivers, wetlands and estuaries that link our activities on land to the sea. The shape of the land creates "bowls" which catch rainfall and directs it to the nearest watercourse. These are called catchments, and we have 14 main ones across Cornwall. Our varied watercourses range from the Penberth River in the far west to the River Strat in the northeast.

Often arising high on the moorland as fast streams, they shape our landscape on their short journey to the sea, carving deep valleys filled with ancient woodland including our temperate rainforest.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Our towns, villages, parks and gardens bring nature and people closer together. Cornwall's towns and villages each have their own character shaped by their history, whether mining, fishing or market towns. Backyards, green lanes, gardens and window boxes also help shape the nature of our towns and villages. Many are bordered by farmland or the coast, giving a rural feel even where access is not always possible.

Our urban areas include formal town parks, such as Princess Pavilion in Falmouth and Morrab Gardens in Penzance. Wildlife such as pollinators, garden birds and hedgehogs rely on being able to move between these range of habitats. Cornwall is also renowned for its historical gardens such as Caerhays, Mount Edgumbe and Trelissick. Cornwall's colonial past has shaped these places, with many plants in our historic parkland and ornamental gardens gathered from around the world, including rhododendrons and camelias, which originate from Asia.

OUR COAST

Our coastal Wildbelt is a narrow beautiful mix of beach, dune, clifftop, estuarine, and rocky shore habitats. Its cliffs are topped by grassland, heath, and swathes of high nature value farmland. Gulls, fulmar, kittiwake, choughs and peregrine can be seen soaring around these cliffs. It is also

punctuated by wooded valleys, saltmarshes and mudflats that flourish between the tides.

As well as our land and rivers, our seas are teeming with wildlife and underwater habitats. Healthy seas support our fishing communities, an iconic part of Cornwall's culture and economy. Seagrass beds store carbon and create nursery grounds for fish. Seals get vital rest in secluded coves. Spider crabs and lobsters hide amongst anemones in our rocky reefs. Dolphins can be seen regularly along from the coast. And in recent years, minke and humpback whales are becoming more frequent. Our ancient maerl beds are the Cornish equivalent to a coral reef. Our seas are also our link to the Isles of Scilly.

BACKYARDS, GREEN LANES, GARDENS AND WINDOW BOXES ALSO HELP SHAPE THE NATURE OF OUR TOWNS AND VILLAGES.



SPOTLIGHTS: CORNWALL



North Cornwall is not only famed for its surfing. Its open farmed landscape has created a rugged wind-swept terrain. High exposed cliffs are home to nesting seabirds. Sparse tree cover gives way to important coastal grasslands at Cubert Common, and near Widemouth Bay, important homes for ground-nesting birds such as Skylark and diverse flowers supporting pollinators such as the Large Scabious Mining Bee. Towans (sand dunes) fringe many beaches, supporting a range of wildlife, including the vulnerable Silver-Studded Blue butterfly and Adder. Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh can also be found along the Bude Canal, where Water Voles also live. Nearby, rare culm grassland is dotted across the landscape into Devon. This rare habitat has seen severe declines.



SPOTLIGHT ON THE RIVER CAMEL

This tidal river and its surrounding landscape bring together a beautiful mosaic of estuarine mud and sand flats, salt marsh, old oak woodlands, and shallow lagoons.

Species: Bullhead fish, Otter, Atlantic Salmon

About the River Camel:

- 69 km including the estuary and its tributaries
- Special Area of Conservation
- At risk from phosphate issues
- 7 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Includes Sections 2, 3 and 4 of Cornwall National Landscape



The **south of Cornwall** is more sheltered. With rolling scenery and gentler cliffs. Deep estuaries intersect the landscape. Stretching from the Helford River in the west to the Fowey River to the east, wood-lined banks overhanging rich intertidal mudflats and saltmarshes rich feeding grounds for curlew and dunlin. At Loe Bar we find the only example of coastal vegetated shingle in Cornwall backed by the saline lagoon of Loe Pool. This is the only known home of the rarest moth in Britain, the Sandhill Rustic moth. The Roseland Peninsula is home to Cirl Buntings in areas of nature friendly arable and grazed farming. The south of Cornwall's milder climate has made it ideal for large, lush gardens, with many frost-intolerant plants growing in its sheltered inlets.



SPOTLIGHT ON THE LIZARD PENINSULA

Remote, wild, and exposed. The Lizard peninsula juts into the channel and is England's most southerly point. The varied terrain of heathland, ancient woodland valleys, and farmland make it a haven for wildlife.

Species: Chamomile, Grayling butterfly, Western Ground Spider, Adder

About the Lizard Peninsula:

- Special Area of Conservation covering 3,257 Hectares
- National Nature Reserve covers nearly 2,000 hectares of wild peninsula
- 8 SSSIs covering heathland, wet woodland and coastal fringe
- Section 8 of the Cornwall National Landscape Network



SPOTLIGHT ON THE FAL AND HELFORD

The Fal and Helford estuaries are rias (drowned river valleys) bordered by ancient woodlands. Mudflats and saltmarshes host important groups of species such as amphipods, worms, sea cucumbers and molluscs and are renowned for its seabird and wader populations.

Species: Shore Dock, Intertidal Seagrass, Maerl, Sessile Oak, Native Oyster

About the Fal and Helford:

- Special Area of Conservation covers 6,363 hectares of river, estuaries, seagrass and maerl beds, mudflats and saltmarsh from Truro and Tresillian to the sea
- Numerous SSSIs including the upper Fal estuary and woods, and the Malpas estuary Section 8 and 9 of Cornwall National Landscape
- Helford Estuary is a Marine Conservation Zone for the 'ecosystem engineers' native oyster.



The **west of Cornwall** is steeped in rich cultural heritage, shaped by mining, fishing and farming. From rocky outcrops, tin mines and an intimate field network, this landscape is largely unchanged since the medieval period. Historic fishing villages line its southern coast. Iconic St Michael's Mount is backed by Marazion Marshes, with Kingfisher and Heron, Harvest Mice nesting in the reedbeds in summer and starlings gathering in murmuration's in the winter. Along the River Hayle we find one of Cornwall's only saline lagoons, attracting wintering waders such as Redshank, Dunlin and Lapwing.



SPOTLIGHT ON WEST PENWITH

The oldest continuously farmed landscape, with its current field patterns laid out in prehistory 4000 years ago. Coastal Wildbelt meets a mosaic of grassy marsh, rough pasture, gorse scrub and exposed heaths. Interspersed with lichen-covered granite field boundaries and copses.

Species: Basking Shark, Dartford Warbler, Chough, Perkins Mining Bee, Tormentil Mining Bee

About West Penwith:

- 3,044 hectares designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest including 1,202 hectares of Lowland Heath
- 600+ types of invertebrates recorded
- Cornwall National Landscape (AONB) Section 7
- World Heritage status
- Dark Sky Status



The **spine of Cornwall** runs down the line of the main trunk road through the Duchy has a varied mosaic of habitats, shaped by the people who have lived and worked the land. It is home to much of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, dotted with the granite outcrops of Carn Brea, Helman Tor and the Carnmenellis, surrounded by pockets of heath, scrub and extensive farmland.

The Cornish Alps of the China clay area, still framed by some old, small fields. Goss Moor stretching off the A30 with a mix of heath, fens, bogs and willow carr. Rough Tor rising from Bodmin Moor with its fens, swamps, rush pasture and blanket bog and farms.



SPOTLIGHT ON BODMIN MOOR

A rugged, granite-strewn moorland in the centre of Cornwall. With a colourful mosaic of heathland, grassland, purple moor grass and rush pasture. Its shallow valleys are dominated by bogs and mires. A largely treeless landscape fringed by damp wooded valleys. It forms a vital habitat for breeding waders and the Marsh Fritillary.

Species: Starlings, Marsh Fritillary butterfly, Tree Pipit, Lapwing, Curlew

About Bodmin Moor:

- One of the few remaining breeding sites in the southwest for Lapwing and Curlew
- Section 12 of Cornwall National Landscape
- 3 Special Areas of Conservation
- Dark Sky status
- Prehistoric monuments connecting natural tors and outcrops
- 5,400 ha of Sites of Special Scientific Interest



SPOTLIGHT ON THE CORNWALL AND WEST DEVON MINING LANDSCAPE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Our World Heritage Site mining areas stretch from St Just in Penwith in the west to Tavistock in the east. These internationally important areas are also rich with wildlife and hotspots for evolution as lower plants adapt to the high metal content of the ground, creating patches of specialist calaminarian grasslands. Historic tin streaming works are slowly restoring to wet heath and willow carr in areas such as Breney Common. Bare ground created by former mines is now used by nesting solitary bees. Plants have adapted to thrive in the metal-rich soils. Including many distinctive lower plant species, such as liverworts, hornworts and mosses.

Species: Cornish Path-moss, Wild Asparagus, Yellow Centaury

About our heritage mining sites:

- Designated by UNESCO in 2006
- Made up of 10 areas covering 19,710 ha
- Includes 21 Sites of Scientific Interest
- Includes 4 Special Areas of Conservation



SPOTLIGHT ON THE RIVER TAMAR

The River Tamar travels from its source on Woolley Moor in Morwenstow to the estuary flowing out into the Plymouth Sound. Ancient woodland, grazing marshes and reedbeds line its banks. Here coastal saltmarsh and mudflats can be found along the Lynher River, which support the rare allis shad.

Species: Allis Shad, Greater Horseshoe Bat, Triangular Club-rush

About the River Tamar:

- 61 miles long, designated as a Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest
- World Heritage status
- Tamar Valley National Landscape sits in southeast of Cornwall and covers 190 km²
- 17 'Special Species' supported by the Tamar Valley Nature Recovery Plan
- Tamara Coast to Coast Way runs the length of the river

The **east of Cornwall** is the widest part of the region and includes the Tamar River, which separates Cornwall from Devon and the rest of England. The area includes majestic parkland and estates such as Cotehele, Antony and Mount Edgumbe; surrounded by traditional orchards, woodlands and family-run farms. At the coast, the historic towns of Looe and Polperro draw tourists to their rocky shores and neighbouring beaches. Rame Head is one of many headlands in the area supporting coastal grasslands towering over the wide sandy expanse of Whitsand Bay.



THE STATE OF NATURE: CORNWALL



- 74.4% agricultural
- 9.9% woodland and scrub
- 5.7% heath and moor mosaics
- 5.5% towns and villages
- 2.4% transport
- 1.8% waterways and wetlands
- 0.3% others



168 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) covering **23,317 ha** which contains **2** Special Protected Areas (SPAs) and **15** Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)



Only 46% of our Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in favourable condition

3,292 ha of nature reserves including **3** National Nature Reserves and **13** Local Nature Reserves



2 national landscape designations including Cornwall and the Tamar Valley, covering **132,967 ha**

2 international Dark Sky Parks

498 County Wildlife Sites covering almost **33,000 ha**



5 Marine conservation zones, covering

35% of our inshore waters



Heritage features

- **19,710 ha** UNESCO World Heritage Site across 10 Areas
- **1,347** Scheduled Monuments
- **113** County Geology Sites
- **3** Registered battlefields
- **34** Registered Parks and Gardens
- **8** Protected wreck sites

ENVIRONMENTAL GROWTH KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Environmental Growth strategy² set out a monitoring framework against key performance indicators that paint a picture of the state of our local environment on land, our rivers and in our inshore waters.

How we are managing our natural assets



7.9% of our inshore seabed was evidenced as well-managed for nature in 2021.



15.8% of our land was evidenced as well managed for nature in 2023.



22.37% of our freshwater bodies had a good or higher ecological rating in 2019.



1 in 8 of our estuaries had a good or higher ecological rating in 2019.



4% of global biodiversity targets are likely to be fulfilled locally by 2022.

How we are tackling pressures on nature



5.68% of our carbon emissions were reabsorbed by our land given our land use in 2019.



4.57T of carbon dioxide were emitted per person in 2019.



35.63% of our inshore marine area was in a designated conservation zone in 2021.



36.61% of our kerbside and other household waste was recycled or composted in 2021.

How we are enjoying nature



98.8% of our designated bathing waters were rated good or excellent in 2019.



2,226.3m was the average distance to the nearest park or public garden in 2020.



40.8% of residents lived within 4 km of a large (20ha+) accessible wood in 2016.

THE STATE OF NATURE REPORT

In 2020, Cornwall's first State of Nature report¹ was compiled by Cornwall Council and Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

The report shows changes over time for how many of each species and habitat there are and for how many places they were found each year. It also highlights the key pressures wildlife is facing.

One of the risks we face in nature's recovery is shifting baselines; each generation believing that the abundance of nature they experience is the norm, evidence tells us this is not the case.

WHAT ABOUT OUR SPECIES?

Whilst a few species have prospered, we now face an ecological emergency. The ambition of the Nature Recovery Strategy is to support the recovery of species by creating more habitats and enhancing areas to be bigger, better and joined up.

The 2020 State of Nature Report found that

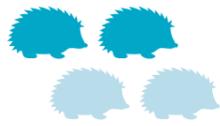
 **12% of Species of Principal Importance were threatened with local extinction or complete loss from Cornwall.**

Species of 'Principal Importance' are those listed in Section 41 of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act.

The report also found that almost a quarter of all terrestrial mammals and butterfly species were threatened with local extinction.

HEADLINES

Cornwall's wildlife trends broadly mirror national trends, with habitat fragmentation and loss affecting species abundance (number of species) and distribution (where they are found).



Nearly half of **terrestrial mammals** are found in fewer places



Three fifths of **butterflies** are found in fewer places



Nearly half of **breeding birds** have declined



In 2021, the biological record database held at [ERCCIS](#) demonstrated that 15,800 different species have been recorded in the last 30 years. Some groups are more well-recorded than others and so were the focus of the State of Nature report: these were birds, flowering plants, butterflies and, to a lesser degree, mammals. **Key findings from the report for these groups are presented below.**

In order to look at how more of our species are doing, we need better structured monitoring across Cornwall. ERCCIS are exploring this, working with colleagues from the University of Exeter.

Birds



Some species have stopped breeding in Cornwall within living memory:

- Ring ouzel
- Wood warbler
- Pied flycatcher

Some breeding birds are on the brink of disappearing:

- Kittiwake
- Willow tits
- Corn bunting



The 2020 State of Nature report found buzzards and yellowhammers are declining, whereas blackcaps and goldfinch were experiencing increases.

Butterflies



Many of our butterflies are struggling due to loss of habitat or poor management. The 2020 State of Nature report showed pearl-bordered fritillary and grayling were being found in fewer places per year.

Mammals



The 2020 State of Nature report found that hedgehogs and pipistrelle bats were being found in more places each year, whereas otters and rabbits were found in fewer places.

Flowering plants



Some plants are endemic and only found in Cornwall and a few other locations in the UK, such as:

- Cornish heath
- Cornish eyebright

WHILST A FEW SPECIES HAVE PROSPERED, WE NOW FACE AN ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY



NATURE IN THE ISLES OF SCILLY

Found 28 miles off the southwest tip of Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly is made up of five inhabited islands and roughly 195 uninhabited rocky islets covering 1,637 ha. The variety of habitats and species found here are disproportionate to the islands small scale and it is very distinct in a UK context.

Because of its exposed nature, Scilly is at the forefront of experiencing climate change. From extreme storm events, increased fogginess, changing wind directions, tidal surges and rising sea levels and temperatures²⁰. It also faces serious threats from invasive non-native species, including plants, pathogens, and predators such as rats which are having catastrophic impacts on breeding seabirds.

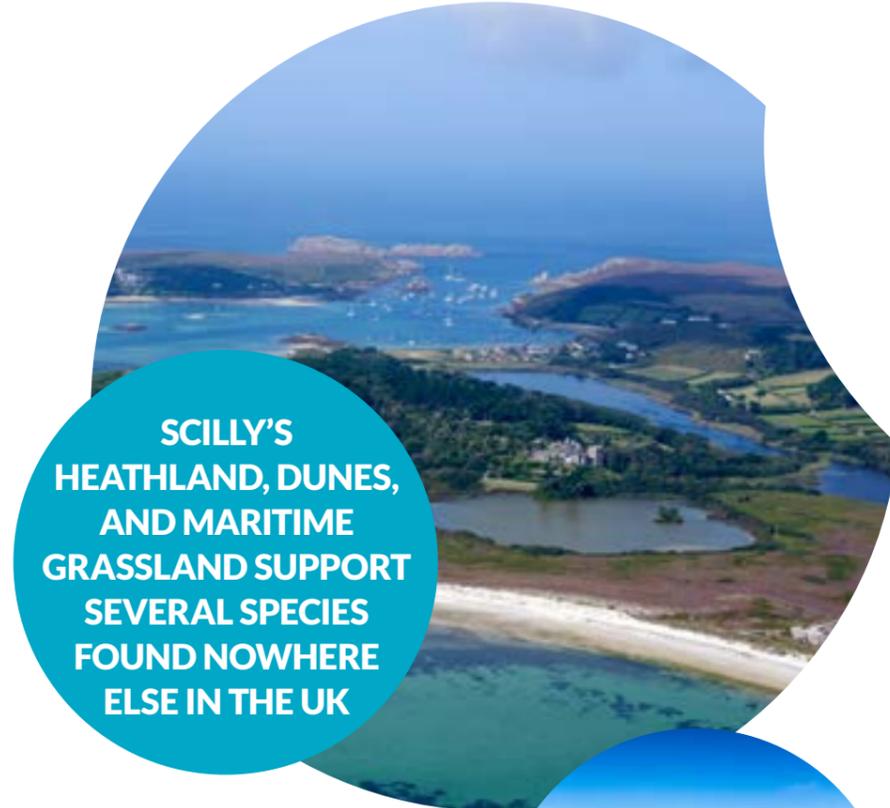
Since 1975 every square metre has been recognised as a **National Landscape (AONB)**, the smallest National Landscape in the UK (16 km² in extent).

It is also the country's only National Landscape designation which covers the entirety of a local authority area.

Scilly's heathland, dunes, and maritime grassland support several species found nowhere else in the UK, such as the dwarf pansy, small adder's-tongue fern, and the gilt-edged lichen. It is also the only place in the country that has avoided Dutch elm disease so far.

Farming has shaped the Isles of Scilly since the early Bronze Age. Archaeology abounds, with Scilly boasting the UK's greatest density of Scheduled Monuments. This history of use is reflected by the enclosed pastures, hedged bulb-

SCILLY'S HEATHLAND, DUNES, AND MARITIME GRASSLAND SUPPORT SEVERAL SPECIES FOUND NOWHERE ELSE IN THE UK



strips, scattered rural settlements and quays. Field margins contain rare arable wildflowers, such as western rampion fumitory. Many Scillonian families can trace their history back centuries. Flower farming and inshore fishing are still present, but tourism has overtaken them as the mainstay of the local economy.

Scilly's breeding seabird colonies are of international importance, with Manx shearwaters, storm petrels, puffins, shags and lesser black-backed gulls being amongst the species that thrive here. This importance led to its designation as a Special Protected Area (SPA) for seabirds.

Isles of Scilly national landscapes

SPOTLIGHTS: ISLES OF SCILLY



SPOTLIGHT ON ST AGNES AND GUGH

Gugh is joined to St Agnes by a sand bank which is covered at high tide. Their position on the Atlantic edge gives them a wild atmosphere and sense of untamed beauty. The non-native rat population was removed following a community-involved eradication in 2015, and breeding seabirds have benefited hugely as a result.

Species: Lesser Black-backed Gull, Kittiwake, Manx Shearwater, Storm Petrel, Least Adders-tongue Fern, Shore Wainscot Moth

Key facts:

- 3 SSSIs plus another on nearby Annet
- Gugh is a Ramsar Site and Special Protected Area





SPOTLIGHT ON BRYHER

An island of two halves. The eroded heathland of Shipman Head Down is an example of “waved heath”, an important home for rare lichens. One of Scilly’s important seabird colonies is found here. The southern and eastern edges have sheltered beaches, farmland and maritime grassland. The Pool of Bryher is found on this side of the island, the only natural brackish lagoon on Scilly.

Species: Orange Bird’s-foot, Shag, Dwarf Pansy

Key facts:

- At only 134 ha, Bryher is the smallest inhabited island
- 3 SSSIs
- Part of the Ramsar site



SPOTLIGHT ON TRESKO

The island of Tresco is leased in its entirety and managed by Tresco Estate. With bare, open waved heath in the north and sandy beaches in the south. Woody habitats surround the Abbey Gardens. Pentle Bay off the east side of Tresco forms part of a larger SSSI complex encompassing several surrounding uninhabited islands.

Species: Manx Shearwater, Storm Petrel, Pochard, Orange Bird’s-foot

Key facts:

- 3 SSSIs
- Tresco’s offshore islands are particularly important for colonies of breeding seabirds such as storm petrel
- Part of the Ramsar site



SPOTLIGHT ON ST MARTIN’S

St Martin’s white sandy beaches and crystal-clear waters are home to a variety of shoreline plants. These are important foraging sites for Sanderling and Plover, which feed on the invertebrates. Sections of waved heath lead into rocky outcrops and patches of gorse provide shelter.

Species: Gilt-edged Lichen, Red-barbed Ant, Ringed Plover

Key facts:

- The red barbed ant is known locally as the St Martin’s ant and is the rarest ant in Britain.
- 4 SSSIs, plus 3 more on nearby uninhabited islands
- Part of the Ramsar site



SPOTLIGHT ON ST MARY’S

The largest island in the archipelago, it balances space for people with space for nature. It is dominated by a striking rocky coastline bordered with maritime heath and grassland. Bulb fields contain rare arable plants. The largest wetlands on St Mary’s are Higher Moors and Lower Moors, both boasting SSSI status.

Species: Spring Squill, Ciliate Strap-lichen, Small-flowered Catchfly

Key facts:

- 4 SSSIs
- Two of the three orchid species on Scilly are found on St Mary’s (Southern Marsh Orchid and Autumn Lady’s Tresses)



THE STATE OF NATURE: ISLES OF SCILLY

The importance of Scilly for biodiversity is reflected through its high density of nature conservation designations:



26 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), including 5 for geology, covering **35% of the islands**

402 ha of Ramsar Site and extensive **Special Protected Area** including inshore waters



13,333 ha of surrounding waters designated as a **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

1 Marine Conservation Zone with 11 Sites covering 5,800 ha



Over 50 miles of paths kept open by the Wildlife Trust



239 scheduled monuments



Almost 50% of the islands are managed by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust



Heritage features

- 131 listed buildings
- 239 scheduled monuments
- Some 900 identified historic assets in total
- Designated as a heritage coast
- Grade 1 registered park/garden
- 5 protected Wreck sites



CONTEXT

A State of Nature report has not been created for Scilly. In 2022 the “Natural evidence report for the Isles of Scilly”²¹ was produced by ERCCIS and funded by Natural England with support from the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, Council of the Isles of Scilly and Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

Despite Scilly being loved for its wildlife, the report notes that very little systematic species monitoring takes place. Therefore, it focuses only on birds and plants as these groups have the most records.

The long-term goal is to increase the sharing of records with record centres and national recording groups and to improve and increase structured monitoring. This will enable a State of Nature report to be created which would enrich future iterations of the strategy.

Plants

- The Isles of Scilly is distinct from the UK in terms of species.
- Several plant species are at their northernmost range limit in Scilly.
- It also contains 25% of all UK and Ireland species of Lichen (550 species). This was key to the island’s recognition as an Important Plant Area by Plantlife.

One of the key threats to wildlife on the Isles of Scilly comes from the prevalence of invasive species. Many of these are plants, including:

- Sour fig
- Pittosporum
- Dew plant family
- Lesser New Zealand flax
- Tree bedstraw
- Chilean guava
- Toothed fireweed
- Chasmanthe
- Oxalis spp

Overview²²

The only location in Britain for:

- Critically Endangered Gilt-edged lichen;
- Dwarf pansy;
- Least adder’s-tongue fern ;
- Unique sub-species of Meadow brown and Speckled wood butterfly
- Lesser white-toothed shrew (Scilly shrew)



239 priority species with some identified as critically endangered or appearing in schedule 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

One of a handful of locations remaining in the UK for Elm where they are not yet impacted by Dutch elm disease



Internationally important for breeding seabirds in the UK – 13 species that include Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Common Tern and 3 species of Auk

Rare arable plants including Western Ramping-fumitory, Corn Marigold and Small-flowered Catchfly



Insects

- The Scilly bee, a sub-species of the Moss Carder Bee is feared to be extinct, with most recent sightings in 2012. Buglife and the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust have plans to undertake a feasibility study to see whether the Moss Carder Bee can be introduced to the islands
- One of only 2 locations in the UK for Red-barbed ant;



Mammals

- The Lesser White-toothed Shrew, fondly known as the 'Scilly shrew' has likely been resident here since the Bronze Age. In the UK it is only found in the Channel Islands, being at the westernmost point in its range here.
- Introduced mammals such as Brown Rat and Hedgehogs, pose a threat to native island wildlife. Particularly to breeding seabirds.
- Grey Seals rest and pup on islands around the archipelago, and are important features of the Special Area of Conservation and 2 SSSI designations.



Shorebirds

- Scilly is an important breeding ground for Oystercatcher and Ringed Plover.
- Ringed Plover is a UK Red List species once widespread in England as a breeding bird on sandy and shingle beaches. It has not bred in Cornwall since 1970s, with the nearest breeding birds in Dorset. Disturbance is a key factor in their decline.



Species spotlight: Seabirds

The Isles of Scilly are particularly important for its seabird populations:

- Internationally important for Lesser Black-backed Gull and Storm Petrel;
- Nationally important for Great Black-backed Gull, Manx Shearwater and Shag (possibly now largest colony in the UK);
- Regionally important for Puffins, Razorbill, Common Tern and Fulmar; and
- One of only two sites in England where Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel breed (the other being Lundy).

Whilst this highlights the importance of Scilly as a stronghold for seabirds, the overall picture shows that seabirds here are in trouble.

Monitoring of Scilly found an 18% decrease in breeding seabirds in the last 8 years²³, with the Common Tern now lost as a regular breeder alongside the Sandwich and Roseate Terns. 2021 was also the first year in living memory where Kittiwakes failed to breed.

THERE HAS BEEN AN 18% DECREASE IN BREEDING SEABIRDS IN THE LAST 8 YEARS IN THE ISLES OF SCILLY



Five of the 12 main breeding seabirds have shown increases in the last 9 years:

- ▲ **Manx Shearwater** pairs have doubled from 523 in 2013 to 1061 in 2023
- ▲ **All three Auk species** are showing increased numbers, particularly guillemots
- ▲ **Storm Petrels** have increased by 20% to 1,603 pairs

In the last 9 years, five species of seabirds have declined more than 20%:

- ▼ **Common Tern** (-85%) and have only bred in one of the last five years
- ▼ **Kittiwake** (-85%) with 2021 being the first year in living memory with no kittiwake nesting attempts
- ▼ **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (-26%);
- ▼ **Herring Gull** (-22%); and
- ▼ **Shag** (-21%).

Hope for the future

Conservation efforts led by the RSPB with support from the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and local communities meant that St Agnes and Gugh joined Annet (an uninhabited island on Scilly), Lundy and Welsh islands in 2017 as rat-free havens for breeding seabirds.

Since eradication **200 breeding pairs of Manx Shearwater** recorded in 2023, up from 22 pairs and no fledged chicks in 2013.

Efforts are ongoing to develop a feasibility study to further eradicate rat populations from all of Scilly's islands except St Mary's, to benefit burrow-nesting seabirds on other islands.

Causes of decline

Many of these breeding seabirds feed offshore and are migratory. They are therefore impacted by international policies and activities:

- Reduced food availability**
- Land use changes**
- Disturbance from humans**
- Predation of eggs and chicks during breeding by invasive species such as brown rats, hedgehogs, cats and house mice**
- Climate change including sea temperature rise**





TAKE ACTION FOR NATURE

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Our collective target is to work together so at least 30% of land, rivers and seas in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are being well managed for nature by 2030
- How, what and where we need to act is set out in this chapter, organised into broad habitats accompanied by the Interactive Mapping Platform
- All nature recovery projects should work towards a set of principles to ensure best practice
- The relationship between Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain in the planning system is explained, along with a useful Jargon Buster.
- This chapter lists the 23 local priorities and 77 actions which sit at the heart of this strategy
- These actions link to the Nature Recovery Mapping which shows Existing and Opportunity areas and can be accessed online [here](#)
- The maps are a guide not a prescription



WE CAN ALL TAKE ACTION FOR NATURE

Our collective target is to work together so at least 30% of land, rivers and seas in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are being well managed for nature by 2030.

Nature recovery is foundational to our health and prosperity

We need more spaces for nature and for habitats to be bigger, better and joined up

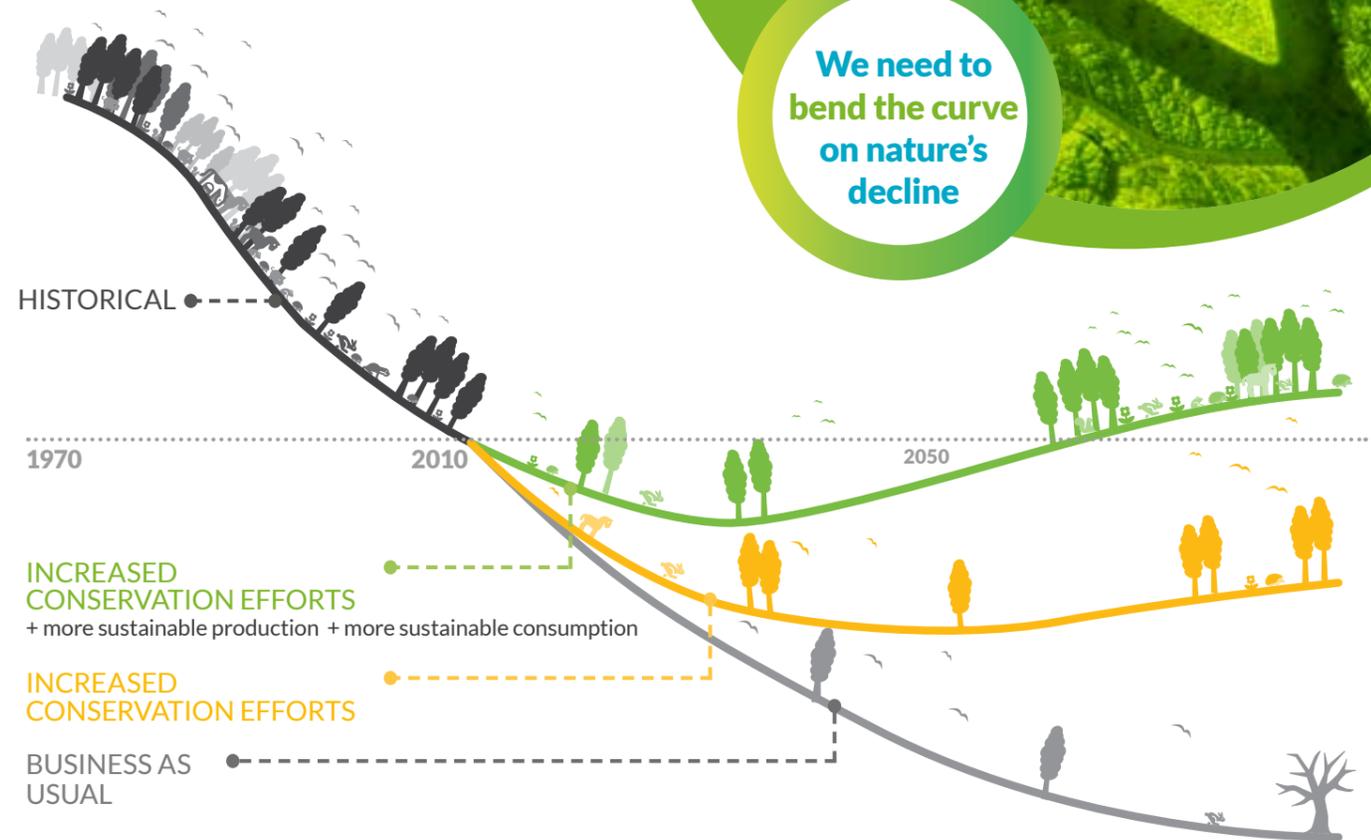
Protection is not enough. We need to recover and grow nature

We need to bend the curve on nature's decline

Targeting action to recover nature can half costs and treble the gains made for nature

When we do more for nature, nature does more for us

Bend the curve





OUR ROADMAP TO DELIVER NATURE RECOVERY

We are all part of nature.

When nature flourishes it helps clean our air and water, absorbs and stores carbon, provides us with food, protects us from hazards such as flooding, and makes us all more resilient to a changing climate. It gives people opportunities for play and connects us with one another; inspiring art, music and stories. It makes us healthier and happier and is foundational to our local economy, directly and indirectly supporting jobs and skills.

Anyone and everyone can help recover nature. This plan can help inform your activity whether you are a strategic body, charity, a land-owning business, a farmer or grower, or a community group.

If we are to meet this ambition, we must collectively work across our region towards:

- **A thriving Nature Recovery Network** of protected, enhanced, created and restored habitats, bursting with wildlife
- **Species brought back from the brink**, increasing in diversity, ranges and numbers to support a thriving ecosystem
- **Nature-based solutions that bring us closer to nature** and supports resilient communities and businesses in responding to a changing climate.

This will be achieved through our united efforts across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

In Cornwall we also need:

- **A Forest for Cornwall** of new and existing well managed trees and woodlands
- **To love our scrub**, recognising the vital role it plays across our landscape
- **An extensive network of internationally important heathland**, moors and mires stretching out from the spine of Cornwall to the coast dotted with archaeology and nature-rich historic mining and quarry sites
- **Ponds for Cornwall** in farms, villages and schools
- **Clean estuaries and seas** full of fish, birds and mammals thriving above a diverse, healthy seabed as set out in the voluntary Marine Nature Recovery Framework, with beaches and shores given space to thrive and adapt. Coastal species left in peace to live their lives and enrich ours
- **Clean rivers and streams** full of life; meandering through restored wetlands, reconnected to their floodplains and priority rivers re-naturalised
- **Widespread adoption of nature-friendly farming practices** and creation of fields, hedges and edges, healthy soils, orchards and pasture rich in wildlife alongside quality food production
- **Nature-rich grasslands** across farms, towns and villages alive with flowers and birds, creating homes for pollinators
- **Making space for nature** within towns and villages, reconnecting people to make communities happier and healthier
- **A near continuous Coastal Wildbelt** of nature-rich habitat and regenerative farming, wide enough to cope with a changing climate

On the Isles of Scilly we also need:

- **Woody habitats** rich with native species and remnants of temperate rainforest being restored
- **Waved heath** restored and enhanced to create a mosaic of coastal grassland and heathland where wildflowers and insects thrive
- **Internationally important seabirds given space** to breed and thrive, free from predators and disturbance.





NATURE RECOVERY PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICE

These nature recovery principles and best practice are a checklist for how all actions should be designed and delivered.

1 PROJECT SCOPING

2 DETAILED PROJECT DESIGN

3 PROJECT DELIVERY

4 MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

1 PROJECT SCOPING

✓ WE ARE NATURE

Remember that humans are a part of nature. Our health, happiness and livelihoods are interconnected with the wildlife and wild areas around us. When nature thrives, so do we. Nature deserves our respect, so give breeding and sensitive wildlife space.

✓ LOOK BACK BEFORE GOING FORWARDS

Historic records and past uses of any area, can often provide clues about lost habitats, species and land management practices that can help inform future ambitions and avoid impacts on heritage features. Use past maps such as the 1880 map, expert advice, and Historic Environment Records to design your plans.

✓ UNDERSTAND YOUR SITE

Capture local knowledge, Zone 2 Opportunity Area maps, species records from the Environmental Records Centre, and undertake baseline surveys to ensure that the right actions are taken in the right place, taking into account current uses, including services on the site.

✓ RIGHT HABITAT IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Soils, the shape of the land, surrounding habitats and wildlife all need to be considered when creating a new habitat. The Zone 2 Opportunity Area maps can help to inform plans, before ground-truthing and refining through on-site surveys.

✓ CO-LOCATION

Many land uses can be co-located alongside positive action for nature in suitable locations. Consider if there are opportunities for co-location of your nature recovery scheme alongside activities such as food production, development, renewables.

✓ ENGAGE, ENGAGE, ENGAGE

Embed engagement throughout the project, from writing the proposal to monitoring the outcomes. Effective early consultation with other interested parties, such as landowners, user groups, heritage, access, landscape, community groups, town and parish councils and neighbours are essential for positive delivery and usually results in better outcomes. Think about which of these groups require engagement and how to access them.

✓ MEANINGFUL CO-CREATION

Communities, landowners, land managers and neighbours know the land better than anyone. Avoid working in siloes, develop partnerships with land managers, strategic bodies, environmental professionals, charities, biological recorders, universities, and citizen science networks.

✓ SEEK ADVICE

Look at the help and guidance available online, through charities, regulators, farm advisors and other relevant experts depending on the nature of your land and project. Seek expert advice early.

✓ FARMER, LANDOWNER AND FORESTER CHOICE

Support farmers, landowners, and foresters to make informed choices based on their environmental circumstances, business model and site-specific assessments.

✓ CAREFUL PROJECT PLANNING

Develop a clear vision, predicted outputs and objectives. Create a plan which integrates your specific local circumstances. Consider appropriate governance and long-term management planning to sustain your outcomes for nature.

✓ COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Get to know environmental and wildlife laws and embed the regulations into every stage of your project to ensure there are no surprises, delays, or adverse impacts. Report infringements to protect wildlife.

✓ FUNDING OPTIONS

A variety of public and private funding sources exist for projects of different scales. Choose those which are best suited to your project, organisation, or circumstances. Collaboration may unlock additional funding but avoid chasing funding and losing sight of your original goals.

✓ RISK REGISTER

Create and maintain a risk register and review it regularly at each key stage of your project.

A VARIETY OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES EXIST FOR PROJECTS OF DIFFERENT SCALES

EFFECTIVE EARLY CONSULTATION WITH OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES IS ESSENTIAL FOR POSITIVE DELIVERY



2 DETAILED PROJECT DESIGN

✓ MAKE SPACE FOR NATURE

Design in the space nature needs to function dynamically and as naturally as possible. Allow rivers to meander, sand dunes to shift and coasts to evolve and give species space to thrive at all stages of their lives. Understand and work with natural processes and seasonal cycles.

✓ THINK AT SCALE

Be open to exploring opportunities at the landscape-scale working with neighbours in the area. Consider talking to other projects you could join forces with through wider, strategic opportunities at the town or catchment scale.

✓ BUILD WITH NATURE IN MIND

Integrate nature into the built environment thinking of both night and day, through the sensitive design of structures, paths, lighting, green infrastructure, sustainable drainage, and integration of wildlife-friendly features.

✓ BRING SPECIES BACK FROM THE BRINK

Research historic species and place names and identify wildlife records through Heritage advice and Local Environmental Record Centre Create. Manage habitats to benefit those species, with a focus on our threatened wildlife. In the right places, consider the reintroduction of lost species. Focus on species that will drive habitat creation and enhancement that benefits lots of other wildlife as well as communities and businesses.

✓ BIGGER, BETTER, CONNECTED

Your actions are part of a bigger picture for nature. Consider how your actions add to what's already there and seek opportunities to engage and collaborate with neighbours or other partners. Embed the Lawton Principles of nature being bigger, better, more and joined up into your plans. Retain, enhance, and grow nature-rich areas to act as stepping stones for wildlife. Protect our most valuable places and buffer them from adjacent land-uses.

✓ MULTIPLE BENEFITS

When nature flourishes it improves our health, protects our communities and businesses, and regulates the climate through nature-based solutions. Maximise the multiple benefits from your project by supporting landscapes to draw down carbon, improve water and soil quality, reduce flooding and pollution risks, and deliver health and wellbeing outcomes.

✓ EMBRACE MESSINESS

Nature thrives on variety. Create structural diversity by retaining and managing different vegetation heights. Create a dynamic patchwork mosaic of habitats, at both a local and landscape scale. Patches of scrub are important and can eventually mature into woodland. Embrace no mow May and leave "messy edges" to allow habitats to blend.

✓ ACCESS IN THE RIGHT PLACES

Bringing nature closer to people allows them to connect with wildlife and feel happier. Inappropriate access can harm wildlife through disturbance and erosion. Consider the right approach on a site-by-site basis, including fencing, seasonal closures, and signage.

✓ BUILD IN GREEN SOLUTIONS

Make our towns and villages happier, healthier, and more resilient to a changing climate by retaining and integrating nature into the built environment. Include green infrastructure and sustainable drainage. Create green corridors to connect our towns and villages to the wider countryside.

WHEN NATURE FLOURISHES IT IMPROVES OUR HEALTH, PROTECTS OUR COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES, AND REGULATES THE CLIMATE THROUGH NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

3 PROJECT DELIVERY

✓ FOLLOW DUE PROCESS

Ensure you have sought advice and followed all the guidance and regulations your project requires. Such as baseline surveys, Environmental Impact Assessments, permissions, licence applications, consultation, seasonal constraints to works etc.

✓ DELIVERABLE OVER PERFECT

Get the balance right between careful project planning and knowing when you have got to take the first steps towards cracking on with your scheme. Consider phasing delivery to reduce uncertainties, especially if you are taking an innovative approach.

✓ ADAPTABILITY

Take an agile approach throughout the lifecycle of the project. Review and revise the project based on early consultation, baseline monitoring, site surveys, engagement and progress and be prepared to adapt if new information or opportunities arise.

✓ COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Tell people what your plans are, engage key stakeholders to help shape decisions using a range of methods, keep people informed of progress, communicate throughout to avoid confusion. Celebrate completion and thank your supporters. Consider opportunities to share information about your site, either through on-site events or virtual methods.

✓ KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Design your project monitoring plan early based on your original predicted outputs and any funding requirements. Collect data and evidence from start to finish, to help measure the impact of your scheme. Use data to help tell the story of what you have achieved for nature and for people.

✓ LONG-TERM THINKING

Nature takes time to mature and establish. Nature can be complex and needs to be dynamic, especially as our climate is changing. Plan for long-term stewardship and deliver with a changing climate in mind. Build in resilience and adaptation. Future-proof actions to ensure they don't prevent adaptation, especially at the coast.

4 MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

✓ LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT

Lack of management is a common reason for poor-quality habitats and declining wildlife. Seek advice and understand the habitats and species present, as this can influence management decisions. Consider a mix of approaches spanning from sustained active management including conservation grazing, to purposeful natural regeneration of wilder sites. Record your management plans on a map for reference and to help communicate future operations.

✓ LONG-TERM MONITORING

Projects should carry out baseline surveys and consider how long-term systematic monitoring can take place (including through citizen scientists) to understand the impact of actions taken, feed into national and local targets, and help plug evidence gaps. Get advice to shape your monitoring plans.

✓ PEOPLE POWER

Long-term management and use of sites large and small, can provide fantastic opportunities for bringing people together for events, work, and volunteering, allowing people from a range of backgrounds to connect with nature, be part of a community and to develop new skills. Consider opportunities for engagement of people at all stages of delivery of a scheme.

✓ LESSONS LEARNT

Document and share your experiences both good and bad and consider if you can become a case study to provide inspiration and encourage others to take action for nature.



THE NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK

The Nature Recovery Network is made up of the areas which are currently being protected for nature, and those areas which could be doing more for nature. It is a key part of the adopted strategy and can help to guide action for nature and should be used in conjunction with this document.

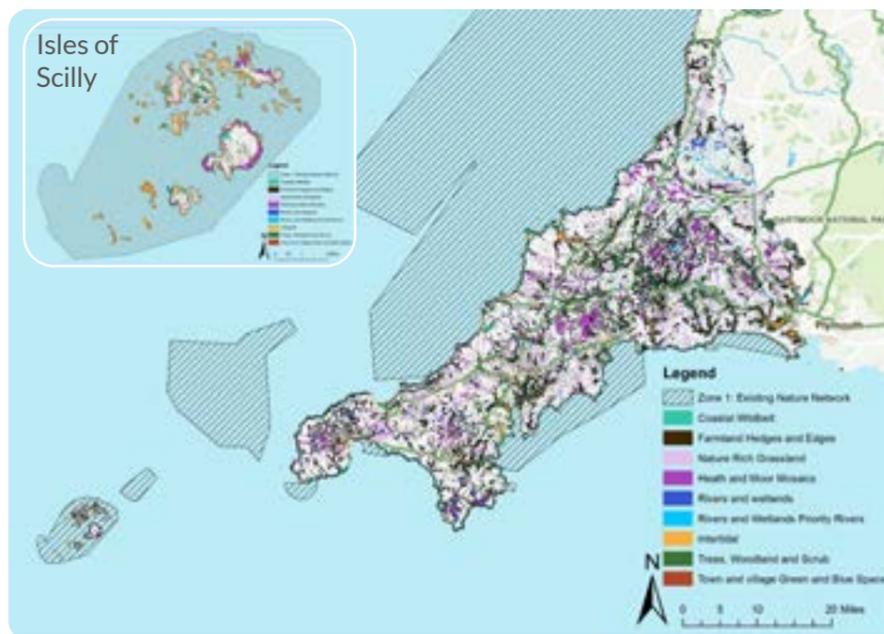


WHERE TO FIND THE MAPS AND HOW TO USE THEM

An interactive version of the Nature Recovery Network maps can be accessed on [Cornwall Council's interactive mapping tool](#) and via the [Council of the Isles of Scilly website](#). These maps can be downloaded, printed and shared, and layers can be turned on and off to help enable effective project planning. See [Appendix D](#) for more information on how the maps were created.

The Nature Recovery Network is shaped by the priorities and actions set out in this chapter of the strategy and can be used to guide delivery towards the best places to focus efforts.

The maps show the areas that make up the Nature Recovery Network. These maps can be used to provide suggestions for what and where action can happen to make more areas for nature and provide habitats which are bigger, better and joined up.



They are a guide not a prescription, and are not intended to replace landowner choice, good site surveys, local knowledge and project planning.

NOT ALL ACTIONS CAN BE MAPPED SPATIALLY, SO IT IS IMPORTANT TO ALSO REFER TO THE PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS IN THIS DOCUMENT FOR FURTHER INSPIRATION.

Further guidance will be produced to set out how this policy will be implemented in the planning system to ensure adherence to local planning policy as set out in the Climate Change Development Planning Document and Local Plans. Actions adjacent to the Nature Recovery Network can also have positive or negative consequences for nature and should be considered as part of any scheme.

ZONE 1 - EXISTING NATURE NETWORK: PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE BEST

Zone 1-the Existing Nature Network, shows our most important areas for habitats and species. These areas are referred to as 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' in the LNRS Regulations. Zone 1 includes sites which are already considered in the planning system through existing legislation and policies.

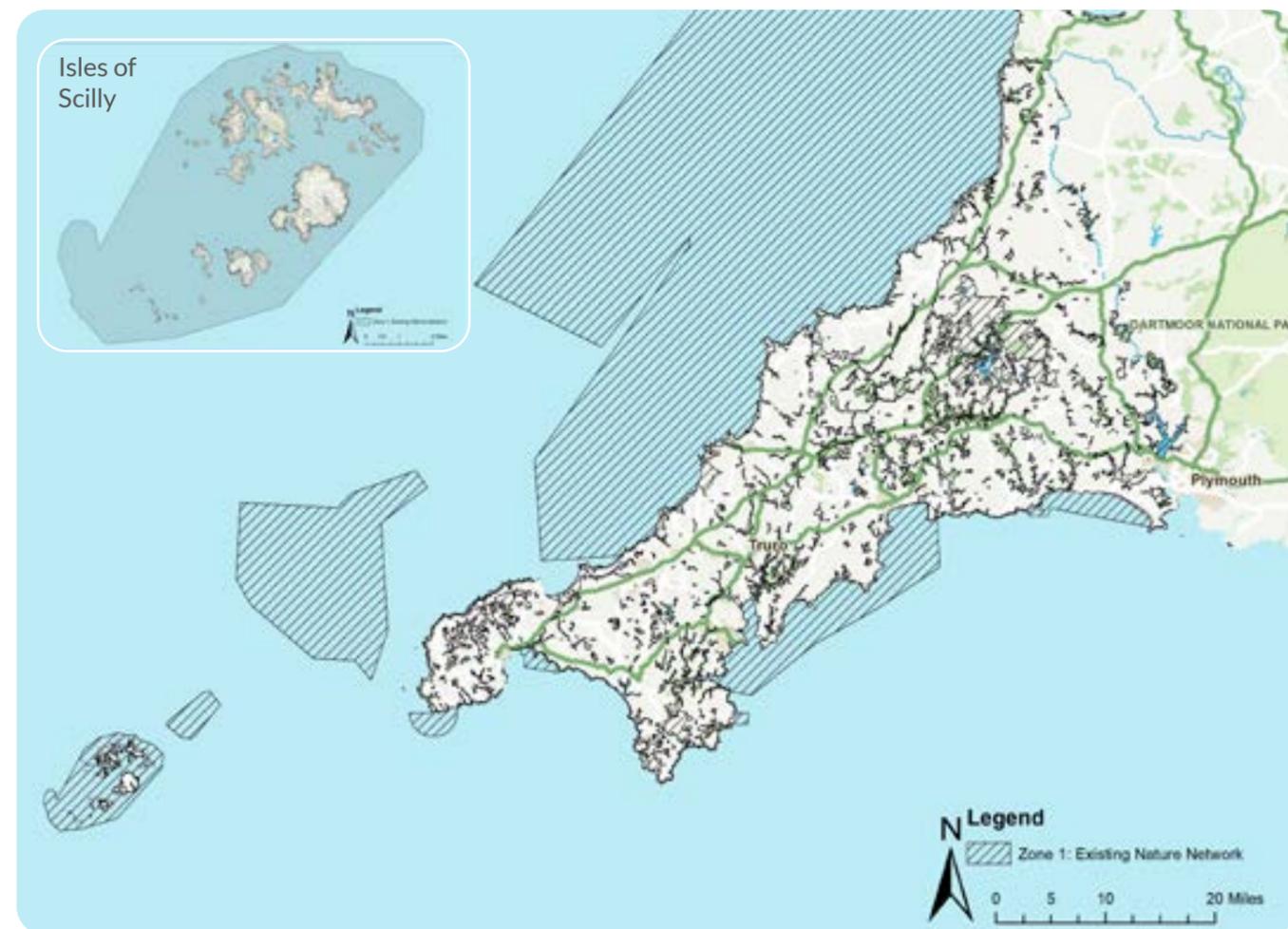
It covers approximately 15% of Cornwall's land area and 33% of the Isles of Scilly.

Zone 1 includes areas currently benefiting from existing environmental protection: Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, National Nature Reserves, and Marine Conservation Zones. It

also includes our Local Nature Reserves, County Wildlife Sites, and irreplaceable habitat that have a different level of protections, but collectively make up the best existing known areas for nature.

THE EXISTING NATURE NETWORK NEEDS ACTIVE PROTECTION, ENHANCEMENT AND IN SOME CASES CONCERTED RESTORATION TO REACH A MORE FAVOURABLE CONDITION.

The Existing Nature Network and environmental designations featured within it, are all subject to existing national and local policies and legislation, which must be adhered to when considering any activity within Zone 1.



ZONE 2 - NATURE RECOVERY OPPORTUNITY AREAS: CREATE AND RESTORE THE REST

Zone 2 Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas are suggestions for where habitat restoration and/or creation could take place to benefit species.

Zone 2 includes areas referred to as 'Areas that could become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' in the LNRS Regulations.

Delivering the actions suggested within the zone 2 network can help Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly recover nature and build towards our 30x30 target.

The interactive map shows where action can have the most impact. Each Opportunity on the map is accompanied by suggestions of the actions which could be considered

in the approximate location.

Zone 2 acts as the strategic significance multiplier for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain delivery.

The Opportunity Areas are intended to act as a guide, not a prescription and do not replace good site surveys, landowner and farmer input and project planning.

Opportunities can cover a range of habitats. For example, wetland opportunities may include wet woodland, ponds and reedbeds. Each opportunity that has been mapped has been displayed with the corresponding priority and action group from the following chapter, as well as information about how to manage conditions

to promote certain species which occur locally. An interactive version of this map can be accessed [here](#).

Zone 2 is made up of:

- non-statutory designations and irreplaceable habitats within the Existing Nature Network
- priority habitats which are not currently designated and should be retained and restored as part of any project or development
- areas of existing habitat which can be restored and enhance to provide greater benefits to wildlife
- areas which could be suitable for new habitat creation.

RECOVERY BEYOND THE NETWORK

Recovery Beyond the Network

The Existing Nature Network (Zone 1) and Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas (Zone 2) work together to guide action in the places where evidence tells us will have the biggest impacts for nature over the next 3-10 years.

Recovery beyond the network is also vital if we are to reverse the ecological emergency. **Cornish hedges, hedgerows and green corridors are important networks which connect the landscape**, and need to be retained and enhanced.

There are many actions you can take beyond the network. From creating or enhancing habitats such as ponds and wetlands, planting trees and wildflowers, letting hedgerows grow thicker and bushier, managing a nature friendly garden or joining a local beach clean, we can all help nature recover no matter where we are.

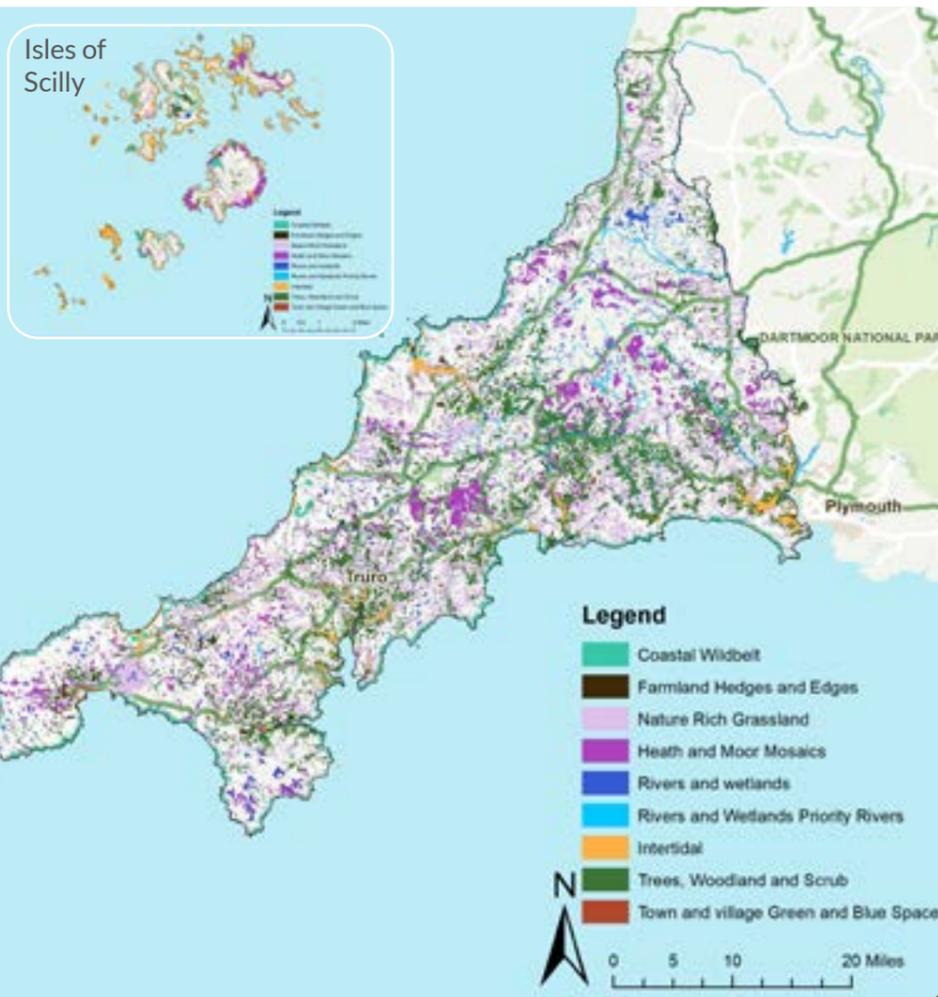
Using the priorities and actions

The priorities and actions listed in the next chapter have been written to support and inspire everyone who would like to help nature, and can be delivered in any suitable location.

Make sure to read the [best practice help and advice](#) and if you are planning a project of your own, don't forget to let us know by making a [pledge for nature!](#)

Mapped and unmapped actions - It is important to note that not every action listed against priorities will appear on the map. Whilst many actions have been targeted to specific locations, there are many that could benefit nature anywhere and should be considered everywhere. Mapped and unmapped actions are depicted by symbols in the action heading.

- 📍 Mapped actions
- 🌱 Unmapped actions



JARGON BUSTER

Key phrases used in the strategy and what they mean.

FOCUS SPECIES

Are made up of iconic, rare and threatened, those being supported by projects and have support from communities. They are a shortlist taken from a larger list of species being supported through the maps.

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK

Made up of the areas which are currently being protected for nature (Zone 1), and those areas which could be doing more for nature (Zone 2). The network is presented on our Interactive Mapping Tool.

ZONE 1 EXISTING NATURE NETWORK

Shows our most important areas for habitats and species.

ZONE 2 NATURE RECOVERY OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Are suggestions for where habitats restoration and creation could take place to benefit species.

PRIORITIES

Are the end results the Nature Recovery Strategy is seeking to achieve. They refer to either habitat creation, management or restoration and will support species recovery.

ACTIONS

Are the practical steps needed to achieve the priorities.

UNMAPPED ACTIONS

Those which can be delivered or integrated in lots of locations. They are no less important. They are shown by the symbol opposite.



MAPPED ACTIONS

Can be found on the Interactive Mapping Tool. In the written document they are identified with the symbol opposite.



Not all mapped actions are mapped as preferred actions, many can occur in lots of locations and so are mapped as additional actions.

PREFERRED ACTION GROUP

Are those mapped actions which evidence suggests would be most beneficial to enhance or create in that location to support species recovery. Preferred actions can be found on the pop-up revealed by clicking on a Zone 2 area on the maps.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Are other practical steps that would lead to benefits if delivered alongside or instead of the preferred actions, allowing for greater landowner choice. Additional actions can be found on the pop up revealed by clicking on a Zone 2 area on the maps.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN USERS

- Delivering the preferred action within Zone 2 would qualify a scheme for the **strategic significance multiplier** through the Defra biodiversity metric calculator.
- Delivering an additional action would not qualify a scheme for the BNG Strategic Significance financial uplift.



DEFRA GUIDANCE

Key phrases used in Defra guidance and what they are called in our strategy:

Defra Guidance	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy
Local Habitat Map	Nature Recovery Network
Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity	Zone 1: Existing Nature Network
Zone 2: Opportunity Area Note: To see ALL areas mapped within Zone 2 we also have a "Strategic Significance layer"	Area where a potential measure has been proposed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity • Map of measures • Biodiversity Net Gain Strategic Significance Multiplier • Area where a potential measure has been proposed 	Zone 2: Opportunity Areas. For Biodiversity Net Gain users Zone 2 includes a Biodiversity Net Gain Strategic Significance layer which shows the whole of Zone 2 for ease of use.
Measures	Actions
Wider Environmental Benefits	Nature-Based Solutions
Potential measure for that location; this is the action that must be delivered to achieve the BNG Strategic Significance uplift	Preferred Action Group (proposed within the Zone 2: Opportunity Area)



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN AND LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES EXPLAINED

The Nature Recovery Strategy plays an important role in the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), a new legal duty for developers set out in the Environment Act (2021) for which Government has designed rules and guidance.

BNG IS COMPLEX AND REQUIRES SPECIALIST EXPERTISE TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE RULES.

THIS SIMPLE EXPLAINER PROVIDES A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BNG AND LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES.

FURTHER READING IS NEEDED BEFORE EMBARKING ON ANY PROPOSED SCHEME.

READ LOCAL AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE AND SEEK ADVICE BEFORE CONSIDERING BNG.

WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)?

BNG means that developers are required to not just mitigate the environmental impact of their development but show a measurable positive impact ('net gain') for nature, compared to what was there before development.

MITIGATION HIERARCHY

All developments must follow a mitigation hierarchy showing how they have avoided or minimised environmental impact. They must then deliver at least 10% measurable uplift for biodiversity. This can be delivered in three ways:

- 1 Maintain or create biodiversity on-site** (within the red line boundary of a development site).
- 2 Deliver units off-site**, where developers cannot achieve all of their BNG on-site. Developers can either deliver off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site, or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
- 3 Buying statutory biodiversity credits from the government**, where developers cannot achieve on-site or off-site BNG. This should be a last resort.

Developers can combine all 3 options but must follow the steps in order. This order of steps is called the [Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy](#).

HOW DOES BNG INTERACT WITH THE STRATEGY?

Our Zone 2 Opportunity Areas in the Nature Recovery Network Maps, can help to incentivise the creation or restoration of the right habitat in the right place by rewarding delivery of actions proposed by the Nature Recovery Strategy, with a 15% uplift as part of any BNG scheme, benefitting the landowner.

HOW WE MEASURE BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The Defra Biodiversity Metric is used to measure and score the abundance and quality of habitats before and after development. The tool provides the number of "units" present before development and is then used after delivery to ensure a 10% uplift in biodiversity has been achieved. This uplift must then be maintained for at least 30 years.

Requirements for BNG will vary depending on the size of development, the location uplift is delivered, and the quality and type of habitat which is being replaced. For example, certain habitats are deemed as "irreplaceable" and these are mapped within the Nature Recovery Strategies Zone 1: Existing Nature Network. These are protected from removal through development.

BNG JARGON BUSTER

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy	Defra BNG Guidance
Zone 2: Opportunity Area	Strategic Significance Multiplier in the Defra Biodiversity Metric
Nature Recovery Network	Local Habitat Map
Zone 2: Opportunity Area Note: To see ALL areas mapped within Zone 2 we also have a "Strategic Significance layer"	Area where a potential measure has been proposed
Preferred Action Group proposed within the Zone 2: Opportunity Area must be delivered to achieve the BNG Strategic Significance uplift	Potential measure for that location

Biodiversity Net Gain and the Strategic Significance Multiplier

As per Defra guidance, all baseline habitats should be scored with a low strategic significance multiplier in the BNG metric

Only interventions that deliver the preferred action in Zone 2 will be eligible for the Strategic Significance Multiplier in the BNG metric

The financial benefit of the 15% uplift from the multiplier lies with the landowner that is delivering the preferred action in Zone 2 as part of a BNG plan.

The developer only benefits if they are delivering the BNG on their own land or if the BNG provider passes on cost efficiencies

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

[Biodiversity Net Gain \(BNG\) - Cornwall Council](#)

[Biodiversity Net Gain - Council of the Isles of Scilly](#)

[Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK](#)

[LINC | Cornwall's Natural Capital Exchange](#)

HOW TO SECURE THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE UPLIFT

- 1 FIND THE LAND ON THE INTERACTIVE MAP.** Where there are Zone 2: Opportunity Areas mapped, the land will qualify for the uplift providing the Preferred Action is delivered for that location. This applies for both on and off-site BNG delivery.
- 2 IDENTIFY THE PREFERRED ACTION FOR THE LAND PARCEL USING THE POP UP ATTRIBUTES TABLE.** The Nature Recovery Network mapping identifies Preferred Actions and Additional Actions. Only delivery of the Preferred Action will qualify for the uplift.
- 3 COMPLETE THE STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC TOOL** to calculate how many units can be delivered on the site.
- 4 DELIVER THE PREFERRED ACTION.** Search the written document for the Preferred Action code to discover the different sub actions which can be taken. Seek advice from a qualified ecologist or consultant shape the BNG plan.
- 5 MANAGE AND MONITOR** the BNG for 30 years

WHAT WILL NOT QUALIFY FOR THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE MULTIPLIER?

Additional actions shown on the maps, are other actions which would lead to greater benefits if delivered alongside or instead of the preferred actions, allowing for greater landowner choice. Delivering an additional action would not qualify a scheme for the BNG Strategic Significance Multiplier financial uplift through the DEFRA biodiversity metric calculator. Additional actions can be found on the pop up revealed by clicking on any location in Zone 2.

BNG can still be delivered outside of Zone 2, or it can be inside Zone 2, but not deliver the preferred action. In those instances, there will still be benefits for nature but landowners will not benefit from the financial uplift for any BNG units. This rule is set by Government.



OUR LOCAL PRIORITIES

-  **Trees, woodland and scrub** 78
-  **Farmland, hedges and edges** 94
-  **Rivers and wetlands** 112
-  **Heath and moor mosaics** 124
-  **Nature-rich grasslands** 136
-  **Coastal wildbelt** 146
-  **Intertidal** 158
-  **Town and village green and blue space** 166
-  **Historic mines, buildings and quarries** 176

IN THIS SECTION YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- Key habitats
- Pressures they face
- Inspiring case studies
- Priorities and actions to recover nature





TAKING ACTION FOR SPECIES

Species recovery is embedded throughout the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy. The 2020 state of nature report¹ showed us that our wildlife is in trouble, and we need to take urgent action if we are to see species recovery.

THE 2020 STATE OF NATURE REPORT SHOWED US THAT OUR WILDLIFE IS IN TROUBLE, AND WE NEED TO TAKE URGENT ACTION IF WE ARE TO SEE SPECIES RECOVER.

OUR APPROACH TO PRIORITISING SPECIES

Finding our locally important species

Whilst many species in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are under threat, it was important to create a list of focus species that this strategy could support. The first step was to create a longlist of species which are important locally.

We used a range of information sources:

- General nature recovery survey
- Strategic organisation survey
- Existing evidence
- Local knowledge and expertise
- Species records

Putting species on the map

Species are at the heart of the Opportunity Area maps. So when you deliver the priorities and actions within the map you will be creating vital habitats for 100s of species.

To find out how species were used to create the maps, see the Methodology in [Appendix D](#).



Focus species

100 focus species have been selected from the longlist. These are species which have public and strategic support for recovery.

They are a mixture of charismatic, locally distinctive and rare species which all need our help to recover.

Cornwall has 71 focus species and the Isles of Scilly has 35, with some species appearing for both locations.

These are made up of:



33 Birds
(21 for Cornwall and 15 for the Isles of Scilly)



18 Flowering plants
(11 for Cornwall and 7 for the Isles of Scilly)



12 Mammals
(10 for Cornwall and 3 for Isles of Scilly)



19 Terrestrial invertebrates
(14 for Cornwall and 6 for the Isles of Scilly)



7 Lichens and bryophytes
(4 for Cornwall and 3 for the Isles of Scilly)



6 Migratory fish
(6 for Cornwall and 1 for the Isles of Scilly)



2 Reptiles and amphibians
for Cornwall



2 Freshwater invertebrates
for Cornwall



1 Fungi
for Cornwall

Take action for species

At the end of each Priority, you will see a "Focus Species" box. This lets you know which species you will be helping recover if you deliver the suggested actions.

To discover more specific actions you can take for each focus species, check out the [Focus Species Recovery Toolkit \(Appendix C\)](#).

You will see these focus species highlighted throughout the priorities and actions sections below.

Top tip

To find out what species are in your area, request data from your [Local Environmental Record Centre](#). If you have rare and specialist species, seek ecological expert advice.



Manx Shearwater





TREES, WOODLAND AND SCRUB



Moss filled, lichen-dripping ancient woodland valleys and woodlands shaped by the winds such as the mysterious dwarf coastal woodlands of Dizzard. Tangled undergrowth alive with birdsong. Blossom dressed orchards that swell with fruit in autumn. Majestic avenues of street trees greening our towns and villages. Stunted hawthorn shaped by the wind. Our trees, woodland and scrub are special.

THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT AND EXPAND OUR TREE COVER AND WOODY HABITATS, WHILST ENHANCING THE CONDITION OF THOSE THAT ALREADY EXIST.

Trees feature in almost every habitat. They help improve our wellbeing, heal our past disturbance in the landscape and are celebrated across our culture. But perhaps their biggest contribution is to nature. They provide food, shelter and home for hundreds of our most important species including birds, bats, mammals, beetles, fungi, mosses and lichens.

Trees play a role in making our towns and villages happier and healthier places to live. They provide us with food and timber, spaces for recreation, clean our water and air, store carbon to help tackle climate change, slow the



flow of water to help protect us from extreme weather, contribute to our economy and even increase house prices.

Cornwall has less canopy cover than the rest of the country and the UK has three times less trees compared to other European countries. Historically, trees have been felled for ship building, settlements and farming activity. More recently, Dutch Elm Disease and Ash Dieback are decimating our tree populations. In the last century national policy, competing land use and incentives have meant that these woodlands have been slow to recover. We now have a sparsely wooded landscape, dotted with smaller copses, linked by trees in hedges and valley bottoms of Willow and Alder carr. Many of our notable woodlands have streams running through them, creating a perfect habitat for charismatic Dippers, Otters and Kingfisher. One of the most famous copses are the 'nearly home trees' on the Cornwall/ Devon border which signify to many that they are returning home.

Ancient trees are living witnesses of our history. The Darley Oak is Cornwall's oldest tree, thought to be around 1,000 years old, and stands proud on the southern edge of Bodmin moor. Myth and folklore have been hung on the tree, with local folklore believing it to have healing properties and that any wish made to the tree would come true. Cornwall is home to over 2,000 ancient and veteran trees and has remnants of temperate rainforest, a rare and charismatic woodland.

Broadleaved, mixed and conifer plantations populate many Cornish estates, and the valleys of central, south and east Cornwall. These

plantations provide income for their owners, deliver sustainable UK grown timber and provide semi natural habitats and connectivity. These plantations have the potential to be 'nature rich' and to contribute to nature's recovery.

There is an opportunity to connect and expand our tree cover and woody habitats, whilst enhancing the condition of those that already exist. Cardinham Woods and Luxulyan Valley are examples of these. In the early 1900's pine plantations were established and are a key feature of Bodmin moor. Many of these are now being re-naturalised and sit on ancient woodland sites making them ideal candidates for recovery.

THE DARLEY OAK IS CORNWALL'S OLDEST TREE, THOUGHT TO BE AROUND 1,000 YEARS OLD

Woodlands are less prevalent in the Isles of Scilly. However, there are small pockets of woodland on inhabited islands, in particular Tresco and St Mary's. In the current absence of Dutch elm disease, Scilly is an important site for the preservation of a range of western Elm species. Hints at a past where temperate rainforest was once more prevalent can also be found in remnants of woodland flora on the islands.

FACTS AND FIGURES FOR CORNWALL

Priority woodland habitats

2,981 ha of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)

306 ha Traditional orchard

3,055 ha of Ancient semi-natural woodland

22,169 ha Deciduous woodland

2,227 Ancient and veteran trees

1 million trees planted by Forest for Cornwall between 2019-2024

Broadleaved woodland²⁴

- Broadleaved 23,843 ha (71.10%)
- Mixed mainly broadleaved 482 ha (1.40%)
- Low density 153 ha (0.50%)
- Shrub 443 ha (1.30%)
- Assumed woodland 688 ha (2.10%)
- Young trees 1,535 ha (4.60%)
- Failed 67 ha (0.20%)
- Coppice 1 ha (0.00%)

Mixed and conifer woodland²⁴

- Conifer 4,458 ha (13.30%)
- Mixed mainly conifer 472 ha (1.40%)
- Felled 1,218 ha (3.60%)
- Ground prep 151 ha (0.50%)
- Windblow 16 ha (0.00%)

ISLES OF SCILLY

- <5% woodland cover
- 25 ha woodland on Tresco (the most wooded island)



OUR FOCUS TREE AND WOODLAND HABITATS

SEE ALSO...

Farmland, hedges and edges
Rivers and wetlands
Heath and moor mosaics
Town and village green and blue space

Broadleaf Woodland

These woodlands are made up of leafy trees and make up most of our woods and trees. They include plantations on estates such as at Penrose, Lanhydrock and Trelissick and are made up of many species of native tree including the iconic sessile oak.



Temperate Rainforest

Twisting limbs laden with ferns, mosses, lichens, insects and bird life. Temperate rainforest is an incredibly rare and sensitive habitat and one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the country. Found lining the estuaries of the Fal and Helford and valleys to the west and south of Bodmin Moor.



Wood Pasture and Parkland

This habitat is often more biodiverse than woodland, owing to its mosaic of diverse habitats – grassland (often low input), scrub, and mature (often veteran) trees. Commonly managed with larger livestock (cattle or deer), this open mosaic mimics a period when large herbivores roamed wild across our landscape.

Wet Woodland

These are sometimes called carr and are wild and rare places and are some of our most natural woodlands. They occur on soils which are regularly or seasonally wet, ranging from along streams and rivers, around lakes, in peatland and at the margins of fens, bogs and mires. They are often successional and a component of riparian habitat mosaics. Water-loving tree species such as birch, willow and alder thrive, forming homes for amphibians, bats, mammals and rare birds such as the willow tit.



Ancient and Veteran Trees

There are over 2,000 ancient and veteran trees across Cornwall. Veteran trees are the younger of the two, containing features which are similar to those of ancient trees. The exact age a tree must reach to be classed as ancient depends on the species. Ranging from 150 years for birch, to over 800 years for yew trees. They have immense ecological, historical and cultural importance. They contain a diverse array of micro-habitats such as holes and dead wood in the canopy which supports a vast array of wildlife. Examples of such special trees can be found throughout the Fowey valley and Boconnoc Estate, Lanhydrock and around the Helford River.

Elm Trees (Isles of Scilly)

Isles of Scilly is home to pockets of mature elm trees. These are of particular national significance in that they remain currently unaffected by Dutch elm disease – which has killed millions of trees across the UK.



Ancient Woodland

Beautiful and complex areas of woodland that have been in existence since at least the 1600s. Due to their age and complexity, they are considered ecologically irreplaceable and often hold strong cultural significance. Ancient woodland makes up around 2% of Cornwall's land cover. From the twisted magical Dizzard Woods on the north coast to the Fowey Valley.



Scrub

An open woody habitat made up of a broad mixture of plants, including Bracken, Gorse and shrubs. It is a successional habitat, meaning that it eventually matures into woodland. Scrub is an extremely valuable habitat for wildlife as part of wider dynamic mosaics. Management of scrub is important in open habitats, such as heathland and grassland, to maintain it as part of the habitat.

PRESSURES ON OUR TREES, WOODLAND AND SCRUB



Fragmentation and poor condition of our ancient woodlands

Cornwall is peppered with small remnants of ancient woodland, often disconnected from woody habitats and with poor structural, age and species diversity. Their isolated nature, size and condition means that they are less resilient and adaptive to change. Historic plantations and forestry operations upon ancient woodland sites have removed native flora and fauna, damaged soils and continue to threaten remnant natural features.



Lack of management

In line with much of England, only around 36% of woodlands in Cornwall are actively managed. Many woodland plants and animals benefit from the microhabitats and open habitats provided through active management. Management can also increase resilience of woodlands to weather events such as high winds and drought. Coppicing, selective tree removal, coup clearance and ride management mimic the actions of large herbivores. Within small woodlands, where the reintroduction of natural processes and large herbivores is not sustainable, active management is critical to maintaining good ecological condition.



Climate change

As the climate changes we can expect to see hotter summers, wetter winters and more powerful storms across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Droughts make it harder for new trees to establish. Seasonal mismatches are also occurring, with trees flowering and fruiting earlier than usual having knock on impacts to other wildlife. A changing climate also affects which tree species can best thrive and may thus change the composition of our woodlands, removing niche habitats for specialist species. It can also mean pests and diseases increase.



Timber processing capacity

A particular challenge for bringing woodlands into management is the lack of forestry processing infrastructure. Despite market demand for locally produced timber, there are very few processing facilities in Cornwall and only one on the Isles of Scilly, which means there is little commercial incentive to manage existing woodlands and even plant new ones.



Invasive non-native species (INNS)

Plants such as rhododendron, cherry laurel, bamboo, gunnera and Himalayan balsam readily infiltrate our woodlands, shade out and out-compete native plants. Where established these plants can harbour diseases, diminish the biodiversity within and the ecological condition of our woodlands.



Pests and diseases

Ash Dieback and Dutch elm disease can cause significant damage and tree death. There are increasing numbers of tree diseases within the UK, affecting many tree species. International plant trade increases the risks of disease and can push trees into decline, impacting the wildlife which rely upon them. Biosecurity is particularly important for the Isles of Scilly which has currently avoided Dutch elm disease and where the introduction of pests and diseases would spread rapidly across the relatively small archipelago.



Animal damage

Populations of deer and grey squirrel are expanding to unsustainable levels. Unfortunately, these mammals can cause damage to and even kill susceptible species (e.g. beech). This prevents the successful establishment of new trees, promotes un-diverse woodlands and leads to a decline in wildlife²⁵. Grey squirrels eat native song-bird chicks and eggs which nest in woodlands, but are generally unaffected by predation themselves, leading to imbalanced ecosystems.



Lack of skills and resources

Planting, management and cultivation of woodlands require specialist skills and resources that are in short supply across the UK. In particular, a lack of funding and skills for management of existing woodlands is one of the biggest challenges facing the sector.



Land use change

Development, agriculture and other land use changes can result in the destruction or felling of trees, woodland and scrub. This is particularly true of "fallow" sites where new forests, establishing through natural regeneration, can be destroyed due to a perception that this land is unproductive.



INSPIRATION



FOREST FOR CORNWALL



Responding to the Climate Action Plan target to plant 8,000 ha of woodland by 2030 and working with land managers and communities, F4C has now recorded over 1million trees planted since 2019 across more than 1,000 ha.

Find out more

www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/countryside/forest-for-cornwall-programme



FRIENDS OF THE FAL



Friends of the Fal are a community woodland and river conservation project based in Gramound. They help restore native woodland for nature and help connect the community to their local environment.

Find out more

www.friendsofthefal.org



CARDINHAM WOODS



The 265ha woodland includes accessibility infrastructure including a car park and over 34km of forest roads, rides and trails. Management is for timber production, increasing the cover of native broadleaves for greater age and tree species diversity. 90% of the area is Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) targeting natural regeneration, and the remaining area is managed for rotational timber production. Existing open spaces are managed to provide linkages for wildlife, including Pearl bordered fritillary.

Find out more

[Cardinham Forest Plan 2014-24.pdf](#)



TAKING ACTION FOR TREES, WOODLAND AND SCRUB



Nature-rich landscapes are usually mosaics of a mixture of habitats.

REFER TO

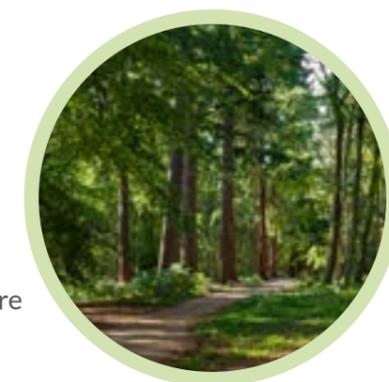


- Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice
- The Nature Recovery Network maps
- Focus Species Recovery Toolkit (Appendix C)
- All habitat Priorities and Actions
- Focus species, Habitats and Nature-based Solutions boxes
- Priorities and Habitats Matrix (Appendix B)

PRIORITY 1

Management and enhancement of existing woodland and scrub mosaics

Biodiversity in our existing trees, woodland and scrub, including temperate rainforests and ancient woodlands, has been improved through targeted management. Woodlands support larger populations of native species and are better able to provide nature-based solutions. Trees, woodland and scrub are more resilient to hazards such as storm events, flooding, drought and disease.



Location: Cornwall **Code:** P1

A1 Improve structure and diversity of existing woodlands

- A1.1** **Manage woodlands to ensure a diverse age and canopy structure**, to increase and vary light levels within the woodland in support of fungi and lichen. Ensure variety of species within the canopy, understory and ground layers. Planting and replacement of felled trees should aim to improve diversity of tree species and ages within existing woodlands.
- A1.2** **Create a good proportion of open space and open habitats**, including glades, rides, water courses and ponds to support a range of woodland species. Coppicing and thinning can be used to support this.
- A1.3** **Increase deadwood**, both fallen and standing, and manage as per guidance in Forestry Enterprise "life in the deadwood" guidance (2022) to provide habitat for deadwood assemblages.
- A1.4** **Preferentially employ low impact silvicultural systems** and regenerative forestry practices, such as continuous cover and coppice where these meet landowner objectives.
- A1.5** **When managing woodland, obtain Forestry Commission approval** (e.g., tree felling licenses) where required and consider securing UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) accreditation to show best practice.
- A1.6** **For unmanaged woodland, create and implement a UKFS compliant management plan** to improve ecological condition.



A2 Enhance conifer and mixed woodlands

- A2.1 Adapt existing plans or create new management plans** to identify and maximise opportunities for biodiversity, delivery of nature-based solutions and income generation.
- A2.2 Integrate sustainable and regenerative forestry practices** within productive and mixed woodlands. Utilise low impact systems such as continuous cover forestry and coppice where these support landowner objectives
- A2.3 Undertake informed, gradual and targeted restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)** using site assessments to inform restoration and management practices which increase naturalness. Restore native tree, shrub and herb species, retain and enhance existing historic natural features such as hedge banks, mature native trees and ancient and veteran trees.

A3 Manage existing open woody habitat and scrub mosaics

- A3.1 Use grazing, pig rootling and/or cyclic management** to maintain a mosaic of scrub, scattered trees and grassland/bracken, encompassing a diversity of vegetation structures and successional stages.
- A3.2 Manage bracken** to benefit Fritillary butterflies, creating mosaics of bracken interspersed with grassy patches and canopy gaps, with an abundance of Violets.
- A3.3 Conserve and ensure continuity of ancient and veteran trees** within wood pastures ([see actions A9 & A10](#)).

ACTIONS



A4 Control invasive species and protect from disease and pests

- A4.1 Targeted and sustained removal of nonnative plants** such as Bamboo, Rhododendron, Himalayan Balsam and Cherry Laurel to enable natural regeneration and establishment of native understorey. Target activities across key woodlands, working collaboratively across landownership boundaries and at a catchment scale.
- A4.2 Where tree pest or disease impacts are high, adapt management plans and practices to respond.** Where restocking is planned or required to replace lost diseased trees, use species that are resistant and that replace any lost ecological function and niches.
- A4.3 Ash trees should be monitored** for signs of Ash dieback. Where Ash dieback is suspected, a tree management plan should be put in place. If the tree is removed, replacements should be chosen in alignment with principles set out in guidance from the Forestry Commission.

ACTIONS



A5 Control grey squirrel and manage deer populations

- A5.1 Develop management plans to secure coordinated and sustained landscape scale control of grey squirrel** to improve ecological condition within existing woodlands and enable the establishment of new woodlands. This can support work towards longer term reintroduction of red squirrel populations.
- A5.2 Consider reintroduction of pine marten where it is appropriate to do so,** and in consultation with landowners. Pine marten naturally prey upon grey squirrel and can be effective at helping to control populations.
- A5.3 Undertake landscape scale management of sustainable deer populations** to improve ecological condition and natural regeneration. Develop and implement deer management plans, working collaboratively across woodland complexes and the farmed environment.



Mapped Action



FURTHER READING



- [A provisional definition of Temperate Rainforest in Britain and Ireland](#) - Ben Averis
- [Climate Change Adaptation Manual: Woodland](#) - Natural England
- [Controlling grey squirrels in forests and woodlands in the UK](#) - Forest Research
- [Creating a woodland management plan](#) - Forestry Commission
- [Deadwood management for invertebrates](#) - Buglife
- [Managing ash dieback in England](#) - Forestry Commission
- [Developing a Woodland Water Code](#) - Forest Research
- [How to identify suitable bracken habitats for fritillaries](#) - Butterfly Conservation
- [Life in the deadwood](#) - Forest Enterprise
- [Managing spring and seepages in woodlands](#) - Buglife
- [Species Reintroduction Feasibility Study | Let's Talk](#) - Cornwall Council
- [The Mosaic Approach: Managing Habitats for Species, Trees and woodland](#) - Natural England
- [The UK Forestry Standard](#) - Forest Research
- [UK Woodland Assurance Standard](#)
- [Veteran Trees: A guide to good management](#) - Natural England
- [Wood pasture mosaic habitat management](#) - Buglife

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Adder
- Badger
- Bastard Balm
- Beaver
- Black Oil Beetle
- Blue Ground Beetle
- Bullfinch
- Common Toad
- Cornish Moneywort
- Cuckoo
- Dipper
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Hazel Dormouse
- Heath Fritillary
- Hedgehog
- Mistle Thrush
- Nightjar
- Osprey
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Perkins Mining Bee
- Pine Marten
- Starling
- Tawny Owl
- Willow Tit
- Yellowhammer



FOCUS HABITATS

- Ancient Woodland
- Ancient and Veteran Trees
- Broadleaf Woodland
- Estuaries
- Mixed and conifer woodland
- Ponds and Pools
- Riparian Woodland
- Scrub
- Springs and Seepages
- Streams and Rivers
- Temperate Rainforest
- Trees Outside Woodlands
- Wet Woodland
- Wildlife-rich Grassland
- Wood Pasture and Parkland



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Jobs and Investment

PRIORITY 2

Creation of new woodland and scrub mosaics

The total area of woodland, wood pasture, mosaics and woody scrub, and trees outside of woodlands has increased to create connected, ecologically rich and resilient landscapes which better allow the movement of wildlife. Trees are being established where they can support nature-based solutions such as carbon drawdown and flood and drought resilience.

Location: Cornwall **Code:** P2



A6 Establish new woodland, scrub and woody mosaics

- A6.1 Establish new woodland, woody scrub and mosaics.** Establishment should buffer, expand and link existing woodlands within the upper catchments and riparian corridors of rivers. This should particularly target long established and ancient woodlands including temperate rainforest.
- A6.2 Where suitable native seed sources are present, prioritise natural colonisation** as a method of native woodland establishment.
- A6.3 When not using natural colonisation, establish a diverse and resilient mix of tree species,** preferentially utilising native trees and shrubs from high quality, bio-secure, locally grown planting stock, from seed sourced locally and/or from more southerly provenances, subject to landowner objectives.
- A6.4 Promote successful establishment** by managing grazing pressure, regular watering, mulching and tree tube removal when appropriate. Address deer browsing pressure through sustained, landscape scale deer management practices and/or protection (e.g., tubes or fencing).
- A6.5 Within new woodlands create a good proportion of open space and open habitats,** including glades, rides, water courses and ponds to support a range of woodland wildlife. Coppicing and thinning can be used to support this.
- A6.6 Open woody habitats such as scrub and woodland mosaics** should be established in place of closed canopy woodland where appropriate. Use grazing and/or cyclic management to maintain areas of scrub and scattered trees as features within mosaics and at the edges of other habitats.
- A6.7 New tree establishment areas should take careful consideration** of the importance of the sites for other wildlife and habitats that are being replaced, and for landscape and heritage/archaeological features present
- A6.8 Design and establish woodland** in accordance with the current version of the UK Forest Standard and applying the principle of 'right tree, right place'. Information of lost woodlands and orchards can be found using the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record.

A7 Establish open woody habitat and scrub mosaics

- A7.1 Establish open woody habitat and scrub mosaics** in place of closed canopy woodland within open habitats such as heath and moors, wetlands, nature-rich grasslands and bracken. Encourage scrub and scattered trees to establish as part of a mosaic through natural colonisation.
- A7.2 Reduce grazing pressure** initially to allow scrub to establish. Once established, manage using grazing and/or cyclic management to maintain areas of scrub and scattered trees as features within mosaics and at the edges of other habitats.

A8 Establish trees outside of woodlands

- A8.1 Establish and maintain a resilient network of 'Trees outside Woodlands',** connected to and linking our woodlands
- A8.2 Restore and establish new areas of wood pasture, parkland and orchards** where increased diversity and structure will benefit wildlife such as greater horseshoe bats and hazel dormice and create corridors for species to move between adjacent woodlands.
- A8.3 Establish and maintain trees in our towns and villages,** our parks, streets and Public Rights of Way to improve connectivity and provide nature-based solutions.
- A8.4 Promote the next generation of standard trees** through recruitment of existing saplings within hedgerows or establishment of new trees. Maintain until maturity as open grown trees to improve the structural diversity of hedgerows.
- A8.5 Establish and maintain 'in field' trees,** as a part of farming with tree practices such as silva-pasture and silva-arable.

FURTHER READING



- [Creating New Woodland](#) – Historic England
- [Planting woodland](#) – Forest Research
- [How to identify suitable bracken habitats for fritillaries](#) – Butterfly Conservation
- [Tree planting and woodland creation: Overview](#) – Gov.uk
- [Woodland creation guide](#) – Woodland Trust

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Adder
- Bastard Balm
- Beaver
- Bullfinch
- Cornish Moneywort
- Common Toad
- Heath Fritillary butterfly Hedgehog
- Mistle Thrush
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Perkins Mining Bee
- Starling
- Yellowhammer



FOCUS HABITATS

- Broadleaf Woodland
- Cornish Hedges
- Hedgerows
- Orchards
- Riparian Woodland
- Scrub
- Town and Village Green and Blue Spaces
- Trees Outside Woodlands
- Wet Woodland
- Wood Pasture and Parkland



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable
- Tourism
- Jobs and Investment
- Food Supply

PRIORITY 3

Retain and manage ancient and veteran trees

The resilience of our wood pasture, parkland, ancient and veteran trees (AVT's) has been improved. The continuity of these irreplaceable habitats has been secured for all its associated species including bats, moths and hazel dormice.

Location: Cornwall **Code:** P3



A9 Manage Ancient and Veteran Trees (AVTs)

A9.1 Protect and preserve AVTs their unique habitats and their surrounding complimentary landscape. Use guidance to inform management, including avoiding overshadowing and compaction. Retain deadwood and provide opportunities for succession of new generations of AVTs and associated habitats.

A9.2 Ensure continuity of AVTs and associated habitats through identifying notable mature trees within the landscape, developing individual management plans and undertaking 'veteranisation' to create micro habitats. Establish new trees (future generations of AVTs) within 250m of existing. Activity should be prioritised in "Hot spots" of ancient and veteran trees, to ensure connectivity within the landscape.

A9.3 Creation and delivery of management plans for wood pasture and parkland to maintain niches and micro habitats (e.g., rot pockets, cavities, bark dysfunction, deadwood), maintain mosaic landscapes, through cyclic management and/or informed grazing (appropriate species and density of herbivores). And where appropriate restoring historic coppice or pollard practices within wood pasture and parkland.

A9.4 Buffer the canopies and roots of AVTs, ensuring appropriate light levels for tree growth and associated species (e.g., lichens) and protecting roots from compaction to improve root and soil health.

ACTIONS



A10 Identify Ancient and Veteran Trees (AVTs)

A10.1 Undertake targeted surveys to identify unknown Ancient & Veteran Trees in proximity to known populations, wood pasture and parkland. Record upon the Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) for verification. Prioritise activity in proximity to "Hot spots" (i.e., significant collections of ancient and veteran trees) and within key landscapes to ensure the resilience and connectivity of this resource.



FURTHER READING



- [Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management](#) - Ancient Tree Forum
- [Ancient Woodland Inventory mapping](#) - Defra Magic Maps under Habitats > Woodland > Ancient Woodland
- [Climate Change Adaptation Manual: Wood pasture and parkland](#) - Natural England
- [Deadwood management for invertebrates](#) - Buglife
- [Life in the deadwood](#) - Forest Enterprise
- [Managing veteran trees and dead wood for species](#) - Buglife
- [Wood pasture mosaic habitat management](#) - Buglife
- [Veteran Trees: A guide to good management](#) - Natural England

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Blue Ground Beetle
- Bullfinch
- Dipper
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Mistle Thrush
- Nightjar
- Tawny Owl
- Willow Tit



FOCUS HABITATS

- Ancient and Veteran Trees
- Ancient Woodland
- Broadleaf Woodland
- Scrub
- Trees Outside Woodlands
- Wet Woodland
- Wildlife-rich Grassland
- Wood Pasture and Parkland



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Jobs and Investment



PRIORITY 4

Creation and management of woodland for Scilly

Woody habitats on the Isles of Scilly have been expanded, improved and better connected, including Atlantic rainforest, scrub, shelterbelts, woodland and orchards. Woodland is free from pests and diseases.

Location: Isles of Scilly

Code: P4



A11 Enhance existing woody habitats

A11.1 Existing woody habitats are enhanced using relevant actions set out in other priorities.

A11.2 Orchards are managed for a variety of wildlife and individual trees are planted within hedges where they don't already exist.

A11.3 Establish native trees and shrubs within existing conifer shelter belts through replacing felled and fallen trees

A12 Establish new woody habitats where appropriate

A12.1 Expand the existing network of woody habitats, and establish new areas taking careful consideration of the importance of the sites for other wildlife and habitats that are being replaced, and for landscape and heritage/archaeological features present.

A12.2 Expand woody habitats through natural colonisation and/or tree establishment, with a particular focus on shelter belts and orchards within farmland.

A12.3 Prioritise tree and shrub establishment to connect and expand existing woody habitats.

A12.4 Restore and establish woody habitats, including orchards, integrating with complimentary open habitats to create mosaics, support connectivity and provide ecological niches.

A12.5 Utilise a broad, resilient mixed palette of tree and shrub species, favouring native species, but using non-native trees where ecologically appropriate and in response to the maritime environment.

ACTIONS A13 Revive Atlantic rainforest

A13.1 Establish trees, woodland and scrub to realise the long-term revival of Atlantic rainforest (where opportunities are identified through the Small is Beautiful Landscape Recovery Project).

ACTIONS A14 Ensure biosecurity

A14.1 Source all planting stock from bio secure nurseries within the UK, such as those certified under the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme.

FURTHER READING

- [Guides and advice](#) – The Orchard Project
- See Further Reading for [Priority 1](#) and [2](#)

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...

FOCUS SPECIES

- Cuckoo
- Western Elm
- Scilly Speckled Wood
- Brown Long-eared Bat

FOCUS HABITATS

- Atlantic Rainforest
- Broadleaf Woodland
- Orchards
- Ponds and Pools
- Scrub
- Springs and Seepages
- Trees Outside Woodlands

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Storage
- Food Supply
- Jobs and investment
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism

RECOVER NATURE USING THE STRATEGY



1

Read the Strategy for inspiration



2

Explore the Nature Recovery Network maps

3

Discover the Priorities and Actions for your area

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MAPS + STRATEGY DOCUMENT

5

Tell us about your successes to inspire others
Visit our [Let's Talk Nature Recovery Hub](#)



Interested in Biodiversity Net Gain?

The Zone 2 maps act as the Strategic Significance Multiplier

FARMLAND, HEDGES AND EDGES

Making up 75% of our landscape, farmland is a key part of what makes Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly distinctive. From coastal rough ground and inland moors used for summer grazing and harvesting furze to the dense network of fields and green lanes used to produce and transport crops and livestock. Many field patterns have been in place since the medieval period. Fields here are small, often irregularly shaped and bordered by hedgerows, dry stone walls and ancient Cornish hedges.

THE 2023 UK STATE OF NATURE REPORT²⁶ SHOWS A 60% DECLINE IN FARMLAND WILDLIFE



Hedges and edges within farmland and the wider landscape create wildlife corridors, retain water and are natural barriers against soil erosion. Field margins can support rare arable wildflowers and offer undisturbed breeding sites for invertebrates and ground-nesting farmland birds.

Within this landscape the footprint of former land cover can often be seen, through seed banks on Cornish hedges and remnants of



Ancient Woodland on steep sided coastal creeks. The continuation of traditional farming methods helps sustain this ancient landscape character and its precious habitats and species. These semi-natural habitats and features are a key part of farmland mosaics and include grassland, ponds, orchards, trees and woodland, wetlands and heathland.

Food production and nature can go hand in hand. However, agricultural policy since WW2 and economic pressures have driven intensification of food production and land management. The consequences of these policies have damaged the very soil needed for food production, leading to further challenges through over reliance on chemicals which can

then run-off into and pollute waterways.

Natures decline, and climate instability, is intensifying the challenges facing our farming sector. In recent years policies are changing to support farmers and growers to go back to farming more in harmony with nature, including regenerating the soil which is the foundation of life on the farm.

In Cornwall, farmland changes across the county. From the more open landscape of sheep and arable farmland around Padstow, to the moorland grazing on Bodmin, Goss Moor and West Penwith. Pastural grassland and smaller crop fields of brassicas are found around the Fal and Helford down to the Lizard. On nature-rich farms throughout Cornwall, skylarks can be heard singing high overhead in fields dotted with wildflowers. Dung beetles scurry through the undergrowth and worms burrow through the soil. Primroses and

foxgloves carpet historic hedges in spring and turn red and black with berries in autumn, feeding farmland birds.

On the Isles of Scilly, fields contain rare arable plants and escapees from the flower farming industry can be seen across the islands.

Wildflower rich heathland and grasslands are managed by livestock to control bracken and scrub. Here, the hedges are mostly non-native Pittosporum and conifers which create shelter belts to protect crops and livestock from the strong Atlantic winds.

FOOD PRODUCTION AND NATURE CAN GO HAND IN HAND.

Creating and enhancing nature-rich mosaics in farmland alongside food production can:

- Support better outputs
- Improve soil quality and health
- Improve water management and protect against droughts
- Promote natural predators of crop pests
- Help pollinators to thrive



NATURE'S DECLINE AND CLIMATE INSTABILITY IS INTENSIFYING THE CHALLENGES FACING OUR FARMING SECTOR

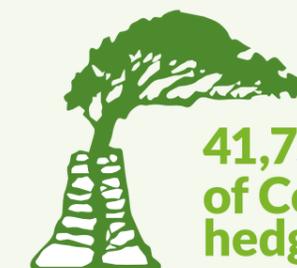
FACTS AND FIGURES FOR CORNWALL

We have **1,980 farms**  consisting of **4,400 holdings²⁷**.



In 2021 **60% of farms in Cornwall had livestock²³** with **302,563 cattle, 467,010 sheep, 50,836 pigs and 1.05 million poultry.** 

Average farm size in the South West (Cornwall, Bath/Bristol, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and the Isles of Scilly) **is 69 hectares** which is smaller than the English average of **88 hectares²⁷**.



41,753.8 km of Cornish hedges





OUR FOCUS FARMLAND, HEDGES AND EDGES HABITATS

Farming with trees (Agroforestry)

The practice of integrating trees and shrubs into productive agricultural systems. This can enhance productivity whilst also offering benefits to biodiversity and soil health. Agroforestry offers a way to protect livestock and crops from the sun and wind while also supporting native species and enhancing landscape resilience.



Field margins

Buffering the edges of fields, often in the shelter of a hedge. They can contain remnants of wildflower communities from within their seed bank or can be newly created through agri-schemes. They offer a relatively undisturbed microclimate that supports wildlife. They also buffer against soil erosion and reduce water run-off.

Orchards

Cherished features of the rural landscape, reflecting a rich history of fruit cultivation. Traditional orchards are often small-scale, with a variety of nuts, apple, pear, and plum trees. These orchards play a vital role in sustaining local ecosystems, providing habitats for pollinators and other wildlife. Many of our orchards have been lost, but their locations are still known. The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record has historic maps of orchards to support their re-planting.



Pasture, grassland and meadow

A significant proportion of farmed land in Cornwall is grassland or grazed pasture. As well as grassland, pasture can include rush pasture in our moorlands, our heathlands and wood pasture in our historic estates. Livestock are an important management tool for preventing scrub encroachment. Managed well, pastoral grassland can be flower-rich and support a range of invertebrates including pollinators. On the Isles of Scilly, pasture makes up a much smaller part of farmland and is often adapted to the challenging coastal environment.

Arable and horticulture

These land uses can be vital for wildlife if managed in a way that allows space for wilder edges and mosaics of seminatural habitats. Many farmland birds such as cirl bunting and yellowhammer need undisturbed areas in arable and horticultural fields for nesting and in winter stubble provides important foraging areas. Rare and sensitive arable wildflowers are often found in the edges of fields.



Soils

In Cornwall, the soils are influenced by the underlying granite and slate geology, varying from fertile loams in the valleys to more acidic, shallow soils on the uplands. These soils support a range of invertebrates, mammals and fungi vital to healthy functioning of overlying habitats and crops which are integral to the region's agricultural productivity. On the Isles of Scilly, the soils are often sandy and well-drained, shaped by the islands' granite base and coastal environment. These soils support a unique blend of horticulture and grazing.

Cornish hedges

Iconic features of the Cornish landscape, consisting of earth banks faced with stones. They may or may not be topped with vegetation including mature trees. Their cultural distinctiveness is shown by the differing styles of stone which are unique to different areas. These ancient structures, some dating back thousands of years, serve multiple purposes including marking field boundaries, providing shelter from wind and supporting a diverse range wildlife. Their unique structure means they support a wide range of plants and animals. Cornish Hedges are now covered by the Management of Hedgerow Regulations 2024.



Hedges (Scilly)

In Scilly, the most biodiverse hedges are earth banks faced with stones. They have similar features to the Cornish hedge. Other hedges in Scilly include non-native conifer and Pittosporum shelter belts, introduced to protect crops from the strong salty winds.



Hedgerow

A continuous boundary line of trees or shrubs which are more than 20 m long and less than 5 m wide. Banks, walls, ditches or trees within 2 m of the centre of the hedgerow are considered part of the habitat. They may be relics of ancient woodland, a product of post medieval miner's smallholdings and even more recent agri-environment schemes. A good quality, well-established hedgerow will include some native trees, a diverse range of shrubs and plants and a rough grass margin, all of which combine to provide habitat and forage for a wide range of wildlife, including birds, insects, and small mammals.



SEE ALSO...

- Trees, woodland and scrub
- Rivers and wetlands
- Heath and moor mosaics
- Nature-rich grasslands
- Coastal wildbelt

PRESSURES ON OUR FARMLAND, HEDGES AND EDGES



Economic challenges

In recent years the cost-of-living crisis and socio-political instability around the world has massively increased the costs of agricultural inputs. In addition, retailers are also trying to limit costs to the consumer which means farmers are getting paid less to produce our food. This impacts farmers income and health and wellbeing, meaning that farmers can be less able to implement changes which would support farmland wildlife.



Agrochemicals

Reduced soil health, as well as increases in pests and diseases caused by climate change, can lead to increased reliance upon artificial inputs including fertilisers, medicines, pesticides and supplements to grow crops and rear livestock. These are harmful to wildlife including pollinators, invertebrates and the wildlife which feed on them as well as freshwater wildlife as the chemicals run-off into our waterways.



Climate change

A changing climate will mean more storms, heavier rainfall and increased droughts. It will also lead to more crop pests and diseases. Currently our farmlands, like many of our habitats, are less resilient to these changes due to loss of habitats and wildlife within the landscape.



Loss of semi-natural habitats

The loss of habitats within farmland, such as drainage of wetlands and infilling of ponds and the removal of trees and scrub has reduced the areas available for wildlife within farmland.



Declining soil health

Compaction and exposure from mechanisation, cropping practices and high livestock densities can reduce soil health. This threatens future productivity and affects invertebrates which live in the soil. In addition, leaving soils exposed over winter can cause erosion and muddy run-off into freshwater habitats. This can harm wildlife and lead to algal blooms.



Inappropriate hedge management

Cutting all hedges at once and cutting them before they have been allowed to fruit reduces the food and shelter available for wildlife. Equally, not managing hedges so that they become gappy or "leggy" reduces their quality as a corridor for wildlife.



Changing management practices

Changing of seed sowing from autumn to spring can reduce the food available for wildlife over winter. The switch from hay making to silage production has drastically reduced food available for specialist pollinators and invertebrates. This has knock on effects for wildlife which feed on them such as birds, bats and mammals.



Changing agricultural policies and funding

Farmers have had to keep adapting to changing agricultural policies and funding over the decades. Until recently, rural policies and farm payments encouraged intensification which has had an impact on nature and on farming. Now, more policies and funds are encouraging a more balanced approach to land management with payments for funding linked to actions that benefit nature and wider society. However, this changing policy landscape has unsettled some farming businesses, alongside other pressures and uncertainties facing the industry.



Support

Limitations of access to time, skills, funding and knowledge to support transition towards more sustainable practices for things like private and public agri-environment funding, to practical information about agroforestry, the laying and restoration of Cornish hedges, the management of orchards and healthy soil practices.



Removal of boundaries

To improve efficiency and maximise production, there has been a trend towards larger machinery, edge-to-edge cropping and increasing field sizes since World War 2 have combined to reduce the extent and quality of field margins. This removes habitat for wildlife but also the buffers that slow and filter run-off to remove contaminants before they enter our wetlands and rivers.



INSPIRATION



ROSUICK FARM



Rosuick Farm is an organic mixed arable, cattle and sheep farm on the Lizard peninsula. The project includes 25 hectares of agroforestry planting including fruit and nut crops, trees for shelter, hedgerows and parkland trees for timber.

Find out more

<https://rosuick.co.uk>



FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES



Farming in Protected Landscapes is a national funding programme delivered by National Landscape Partnerships. This includes our Partnerships in Cornwall, Tamar Valley and the Isles of Scilly. These programmes work with farmers to improve nature, mitigate climate change and improve the lives of people.

Find out more

<https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/tag/farming-in-protected-landscapes/>



HIGHER KEIGWIN FARM



Landholders across the region are rethinking the way they steward the land. For example, Higher Keigwin Farm in Pendeen has completed a range of projects focussed on nature recovery and boosting biodiversity through the Cliff to Carn project. The aim is to explore how a wilder approach can benefit farming, wildlife and the local community.

Find out more

<https://higherkeigwin.com>



HILLSIDE FARM, BRYHER, ISLES SCILLY



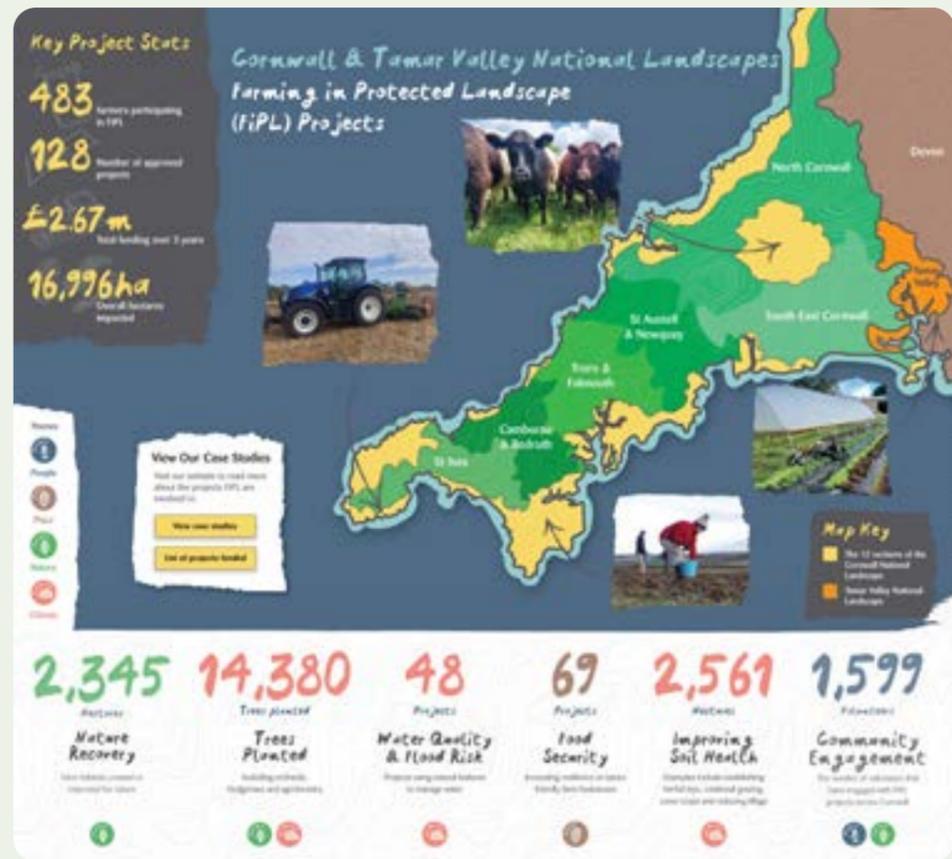
Hillside Farm on Bryher are a small-scale farm with large-scale impact. They produce a range of vegetables and meat whilst also creating space for nature and recover soil using regenerative, low impact methods such as no-dig and conservation grazing to managing the land.

Find out more

<https://www.hillsidefarmbryher.co.uk/about-4>



- In Cornwall, **around 2,250 Hectares of land have been recovered for nature** and over 128,00 trees have been planted.
- On the Isles of Scilly, **17 projects were supported** covering around 184 hectares of land between 2021-2023
- In the Tamar Valley **34 projects have been supported**
- Combined, **over 477 farmers have taken part in FiPL** as of 2024 (406 Cornwall, 13 Ios, 48 Tamar)



ST MARTIN'S VINEYARD



St Martin's Vineyard produce wine on the Isles of Scilly. They take a regenerative approach and prioritise biodiversity and sustainability. Alongside the cultivated vines on the site are wilder areas where nature can flourish undisturbed including an elm copse studded with bluebells and campions, as well as areas of fragrant honeysuckle and gorse. They are carbon negative and fossil fuel free.

Find out more

stmartinsvineyard.co.uk



TAKING ACTION FOR FARMLAND, HEDGES AND EDGES



Nature-rich landscapes are usually mosaics of a mixture of habitats.

REFER TO



- Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice
- The Nature Recovery Network Maps
- Focus Species Recovery Toolkit (Appendix C)
- All habitat Priorities and Actions
- Focus species, Habitats and Nature-based Solutions boxes
- Priorities and Habitats Matrix (Appendix B)

PRIORITY 5

Improve soils and farmland wildlife using regenerative practices

There is increased adoption of nature friendly arable, horticulture and livestock farming practices. This boosts biodiversity, improves the quality of food produced, improves soil structure and reduces reliance on pesticides and artificial fertilisers, mitigates flooding and muddy run-off and increases carbon sequestration.

Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly **Code:** P5



ACTIONS



A15 Undertake regenerative livestock, arable and horticultural practices

- A15.1 Manage livestock through regenerative grazing and husbandry practices** such as maintaining permanent pasture, herbal leys, riverside buffer strips, tree establishment and mob grazing where appropriate.
- A15.2 Manage stock that have high worm egg counts through rotation and monitoring** of worm status to reduce the need for routine worming. This encourages greater diversity of dung flora and fauna.
- A15.3 Reduce use of chemical treatments, pesticides and artificial fertiliser** to reduce potential transfer to watercourses.
- A15.4 Adopt arable land management practices** such as cover crops aiming for 60-100% soil cover, and rotations and integrating livestock for diversity. This can improve soil health and improve soil biodiversity for species such as earthworms. Management practices should be dependent on local conditions and species. No till or low till can help improve soil health and structure.

A16 Introduce trees within productive farmland

A16.1 Introduce trees within productive arable and pastoral farmland to provide food, shade and shelter for livestock and diversify income sources. Agroforestry practices could include features such as hedgerows, hedges, Cornish hedges, copses and in-field trees (low- and high-density planting). Utilise a mixed, resilient palette of tree and shrub species, suited to objectives. This can improve biodiversity on the farm particularly for birds, bats and insects.

A16.2 Use short-rotation coppicing of high-yielding willow and poplar species in strips/rows/compartments to produce wood chippings for mulching to promote biodiversity and soil health.

A17 Support arable flowers and farmland birds through management practices

A17.1 Support rare arable flowers which require soil disturbance to complete their flowering cycle. This can be encouraged through considered ploughing and exclusion of herbicides. See [“Conserving Important Arable Plants: The Challenge and Opportunity for Arable Farmers”](#) for more details.

A17.2 Support overwintering birds through the establishment of winter bird mixes, and retention of wild flower seedheads and stubble on arable and horticultural land to maintain winter food for a range of farmland birds, such as finches, buntings, and sparrows. Create nesting plots for ground nesting birds such as Skylark.

ACTIONS



A18 Monitor soil health to inform practice

A18.1 Review soil health regularly, looking for good soil structure and organic matter levels. Visual inspections can often be enough, however sampling can show a complex picture of soil micro-organisms and bacteria to help guide farming practices.

FURTHER READING



- [Advice about low-input farming practices](#) – Soil Association
- [Cirl Bunting conservation: Advice for farmers](#) – RSPB
- [Climate change adaptation manual: Arable field margins](#) – Natural England
- [Conserving Important Arable Plants: The Challenge and Opportunity for Arable Farmers](#) – Plantlife
- [Farming Hub](#) – Buglife
- [How arable farms can support farmland birds](#) – Farmers Weekly
- [Improving soil health: 8 things you can do on your farm](#) – NFU
- [The Mosaic Approach: Managing Habitats for Species: Arable farmland](#) – Natural England
- [Yellowhammer conservation: Advice for farmers](#) – RSPB



Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...

FOCUS SPECIES

- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Chough
- Cirl Bunting
- Common Toad
- Corn Bunting
- Curlew
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Hedgehog
- Kestrel
- Lapwing
- Mistle Thrush
- Moss Carder Bee
- Oystercatcher
- Mud Pond Snail
- Scilly Speckled Wood
- Skylark
- Small-flowered Catchfly
- Starling
- Swift
- Tawny Owl
- Tormentil Mining Bee
- Tormentil Nomad Bee
- Yellowhammer

FOCUS HABITATS

- Arable Fields
- Cornish Hedges
- Farmland
- Flower Farms
- Field Margins
- Grassland
- Hedgerows
- Market Gardens
- Permanent Pasture
- Riparian Woodland
- Wildlife-rich Grassland
- Stone Walls
- Streams and Rivers
- Trees Outside Woodlands

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Pollination
- Good Soil and Sediment Status
- Food Supply
- Heritage and Culture
- Jobs and Investment

PRIORITY 6

Restore and manage existing nature-rich farmland mosaics

Farmland is nature-rich and incorporates resilient wildlife connections across our landscapes. Traditional and diverse farm habitats, such as hedgerows, ponds, orchards, arable field margins, wood pasture and scrub, have been created, extended and restored.

Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly **Code:** P6



A19 Establish, recover and enhance traditional farmland habitat mosaics

A19.1 Create a mosaic of habitats by buffering and allowing existing habitats to extend. Focus on areas adjoining existing habitats and on unproductive areas of land e.g., steep slopes for natural regeneration or tree planting, wet areas for wetland and pond creation and floodplains for riparian buffers and wetlands. In Scilly, flower field margins should be managed for rare arable plant assemblages.

A19.2 Manage identified existing areas of high quality semi natural habitat within farmland such as Cornish hedges (P8), purple moor-grass and rush pasture (P16), ponds (P9) and ancient and veteran trees (P3). Ensure they are managed in alignment with the relevant actions. See [Appendix B](#) for a summary of priorities and how they can be integrated into the farmed environment.

A19.3 In particular for the Isles of Scilly, take an integrated approach where conservation grazing benefits regenerative farming, maintenance of permanent pasture, restoration and maintenance of heathland, dune, and maritime grassland. Support the Small is Beautiful project's aim to install an abattoir on the island to enable grazing to manage key habitats.

ACTIONS A20 Encourage market gardens and smaller growing spaces (Cornwall)

A20.1 Encourage and support market gardens and community growing schemes that align with sustainable practices as per the recommendations laid out in the Community Growing in Cornwall report

FURTHER READING

- [Climate change adaptation manual: Arable field margins | Traditional orchards](#) - Natural England
- [Farming Hub](#) - Buglife
- [Community growing in Cornwall](#) - Sustainable Food Cornwall, Cornwall Council, University of Exeter
- [Managing farmlands habitats for invertebrates: Grassland](#) - Buglife
- [Managing farmland habitats for invertebrates: Hedgerows & Cereal field margins](#) - Buglife
- [Managing farmland habitats for invertebrates: Ponds & Ditches](#) - Buglife
- [Pond Creation Toolkit](#) - Freshwater Habitats Trust
- [The Mosaic Approach: Managing Habitats for Species](#) - Natural England
- [Wood pasture mosaic habitat management](#) - Buglife
- See Further Reading for relevant Priorities

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...

FOCUS SPECIES

- Adder
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Buffish Mining Bee
- Chough
- Cirl Bunting
- Corn Bunting
- Common Toad
- Curlew
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Hedgehog
- Kestrel
- Lapwing
- Mistle Thrush
- Moss Carder Bee
- Oystercatcher
- Plymouth Pear
- Mud Pond Snail
- Scilly Speckled Wood
- Skylark
- Small-flowered Catchfly
- Starling
- Swift
- Tawny Owl
- Tormentil Mining Bee
- Tormentil Nomad Bee
- Yellowhammer

FOCUS HABITATS

- Ancient and Veteran Trees
- Broadleaf Woodland
- Coastal Grassland
- Cornish Hedges
- Farmland
- Field Margins
- Flower Farms
- Grassland
- Hedgerows
- Heathland
- Orchards
- Permanent Pasture
- Ponds and Pools
- Riparian Woodland
- Scrub
- Springs and Seepages
- Stone Walls
- Streams and Rivers
- Trees Outside Woodlands
- Wetlands
- Wood Pasture and Parkland

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Pollination
- Good Soil and Sediment Status
- Food Supply
- Heritage and Culture
- Jobs and Investment

PRIORITY 7

Establish buffer zones around hedges and edges

Nature-rich buffer zones have been created and expanded around hedgerows, hedges and Cornish hedges. These enhance and extend pollinator-friendly habitat and act as wildlife corridors. Buffers include field margins, ditches and roadside verges.

Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly **Code:** P7



A21 Allow buffers of habitat around hedges, Cornish hedges and hedgerows

A21.1 Hedgerows, hedges and closed canopy Cornish hedges are free from grazing and cultivation. They are managed for nature and have a buffer that is wide enough to protect them from chemicals and damage. Areas of bare earth and stone are retained or created, especially on south facing sites for the benefit of reptiles and ground-nesting bees.

A21.2 Dead plant stems are retained as important habitats for overwintering invertebrates including predators of crop pests and solitary bees. Where possible cutting occurs on rotation to ensure at least part of the hedge is able to flower and set fruit each year.

ACTIONS



A22 Maintain ditches in a wildlife friendly way

A22.1 Where ditches are needed, they should be created and managed in a nature friendly way and connected to the wider water network. They should be managed to provide habitats for aquatic wildlife (see [P9](#)) such as toads and newts, avoiding steep sides and including gradual slopes to allow for varying water levels. Ditch bottoms should remain moist and overhanging vegetation is cut back to reduce shading.

A22.2 Create vegetation buffers around ditches and avoid ploughing near to the ditch edge to reduce soil erosion. Implement actions to avoid pollution entering the ditches, as outlined in [A35: Manage farmland near water courses sensitively](#).

A22.3 Aim for a patchwork of ditches at different siltation and vegetation successional stages across the site. This is best achieved by adopting a five-year rotational ditch clearing management cycle, where only short sections or only one side of any ditch are cleared in one year and not all adjacent ditches are cleared in the same year.

A23 Establish and maintain field margins

A23.1 Field margins are created and managed for wildlife. This aims to leave areas of longer tussocky grass and wildflowers, managed on rotation, to benefit small mammals and pollinators.

A23.2 Implement actions to avoid chemicals drifting onto field margins, as outlined in [P5](#).

A24 Manage field margins and shelter belts to promote native species (Isles of Scilly)

A24.1 Margins around flower fields are managed for rare arable plant assemblages. See “Conserving Important Arable Plants: The Challenge and Opportunity for Arable Farmers” for more details.

A24.2 Conifer shelter-belts and Pittosporum hedges are interspersed with native species of broadleaf trees and shrubs. They are cut back where they have become overgrown.

FURTHER READING



- [Climate change adaptation manual: Arable field margins](#) – Natural England
- [Climate change adaptation manual: Hedgerows](#) – Natural England
- [Conserving Important Arable Plants: The Challenge and Opportunity for Arable Farmers](#) – Plantlife
- [Cornwall Regional Education and Skills Trust \(CREST\)](#)

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Adder
- Badger
- Bastard Balm
- Common Toad
- Coral-Necklace
- Cornish Moneywort
- Cirl Bunting
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Hazel Dormouse
- Harvest Mouse
- Hedgehog
- Kestrel
- Perkins Mining Bee
- Pennyroyal
- Plymouth Pear
- Scilly Speckled Wood
- Small-flowered Catchfly
- Small Red Damselfly
- Yellowhammer



FOCUS HABITATS

- Cornish Hedges
- Farmland
- Field Margins
- Flower Farms
- Grassland
- Hedgerows
- Road Verges
- Scrub
- Stone Walls
- Trees Outside Woodlands
- Town and Village Green and Blue Spaces



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Pollination
- Good Soil and Sediment Status
- Food Supply
- Heritage and Culture
- Jobs and investment



PRIORITY 8

Restore and manage Cornish hedges, hedgerows and hedges

Hedgerows, hedges and the Cornish Hedge network are wider, less “gappy” and better managed for wildlife such as hazel dormice and bats. They are better connected to one another and to other habitats. More historic field boundaries (“ghost hedges”) have been planted with hedgerows and Cornish hedges to increase connectivity within the landscape.

Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly **Code:** P8



ACTIONS



A25 Manage hedgerows, hedges and Cornish hedges for a range of wildlife

A25.1 Maintain hedgerows that are tall, thick and bushy, with continuous cover for shelter and retain mature hedge trees to support bats.

A25.2 Trim hedges on 2-3 year cycle or longer, ensuring that at least half of hedges remain unmanaged in any given year. By doing this, some of the wildlife is able to survive on the untrimmed side on each occasion of trimming.

A25.3 Hedgerows should be managed to encourage an annual cycle of fruiting and flowering. Vary cycles of trimming (alternating hedge sides/faces annually) and locations and cycles of coppice to deliver diverse age and canopy structure. Manage hedgerows to create varied scalloped edges rather than straight lines to encourage microclimates that benefit invertebrates and hazel dormice.

A25.4 Hedgerow trimming and cutting regimes must be planned in accordance with UK Government Hedgerow Management Rules and should aim to reach definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Hedgerows

A25.5 Manage hedgerows with laying techniques that benefit both wildlife and hedge growth. Retain deadwood in the process. Aim to lay no more than 10% of hedgerow each year. If coppicing, coppice no more than 5% of the hedgerow each year.

A25.6 Retain existing standard trees and recruit new trees, utilising existing native saplings to secure continuation of open canopy and mature trees. Retain deadwood in situ.

A25.7 Where bat foraging and migration routes are known retain and/or develop tall, thick and bushy hedges with continuous cover.

A25.8 In the Isles of Scilly, Shelter belts and wind-break hedges are managed for nature using actions from [Priority 7](#). Where possible, include native species within them and allow mature trees to establish. Where hedges have become excessively wide, trim sensitively using actions above to encourage denser structure.

A26 Establish new hedgerows and Cornish hedges

A26.1 Re-establish “ghost hedges” and establish new hedges and hedgerows where they will connect existing woodlands and habitats. Use the local traditional Cornish hedge style as appropriate.

A26.2 Establish hedgerows to include at least five different species and include a mixture of trees, shrubs, creepers and ramblers that provide flowers from early spring to late autumn to support pollinators and hazel dormice. Create and leave buffers.

ACTIONS



A27 Retain characteristics of hedgerows and Cornish hedges

A27.1 Cornish hedges vary between localities, where creating new Cornish hedges the local style should be used. Management should aim to meet the needs of local conditions and follow guidance set out in Further Reading. For detailed guidance seek advice from your farm advisor.

A27.2 On the Isles of Scilly, manage hedges and stone walls by removing bracken, bramble, common gorse, and non-native invasive species. Retain and create open areas on stone-faced hedges through grazing, cutting back or lack of planting to encourage acid grassland for important for rare shade intolerant species.

FURTHER READING



- [Climate change adaptation manual: Hedgerows](#) - Natural England
- [Cornish hedges](#) - Cornwall Council
- [Lost hedges mapping layer](#) - Cornwall Council interactive map > Historic Environment
- [Definition of favourable conservation status for hedgerows](#) - Natural England
- [Hedgerow Management Rules: cutting and trimming](#) - Gov.uk

- [How to look after a Cornish hedge](#) - Cornish Hedges Library
- [Managing farmland habitats for invertebrates: Hedgerows & Cereal field margins](#) - Buglife
- [The complete hedge management guide for farmland birds](#) - Hedgelink
- [The natural flood management manual](#) - CIRIA

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Adder
- Badger
- Bastard Balm
- Common Toad
- Cirl Bunting
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Harvest Mouse
- Hazel Dormouse
- Hedgehog
- Long-horned Bee
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Perkins Mining Bee
- Plymouth Pear
- Western Elm
- Yellowhammer



FOCUS HABITATS

- Cornish Hedges
- Farmland
- Hedgerows
- Road Verges
- Stone Walls
- Trees Outside Woodlands
- Town and Village Green and Blue Spaces



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Pollination
- Good Soil and Sediment Status
- Food Supply
- Heritage and Culture
- Jobs and Investment



RECOVER NATURE USING THE STRATEGY



1 Read the Strategy for inspiration



2 Explore the Nature Recovery Network maps

3 Discover the Priorities and Actions for your area

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MAPS

+

STRATEGY DOCUMENT

5 Tell us about your successes to inspire others

Visit our [Let's Talk Nature Recovery Hub](#)

i Interested in Biodiversity Net Gain?

The Zone 2 maps act as the Strategic Significance Multiplier



The main mapped Farmland, Hedges and Edges Opportunities are to support arable wildflowers and farmland birds.

For most farmland, a mixture of specific habitat Opportunities are mapped which in most cases can be implemented alongside food production.

Your land being mapped does not mean the Opportunities will happen. This is down to landowners to deliver at their discretion.



RIVERS AND WETLANDS

THERE ARE NO RIVERS ON THE ISLES OF SCILLY

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly jut into the Atlantic with little protection from the elements. Where the land meets the sea, rain brings life to our wetlands. This is one of the United Kingdom's wettest regions.

MANY OF OUR CORNISH RIVERS HAVE BEEN PHYSICALLY ALTERED TO SUPPORT NAVIGATION FOR EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

This rain-soaked environment creates the perfect conditions for waterlogged habitat. Rivers and streams meander their way towards the sea alongside lakes, ponds, pools and ditches, which seep through the landscape. Together they form a web that connects green to blue and makes for some of our most diverse and distinctive habitats.

These blue spaces are vital for nature. Aquatic and terrestrial species alike rely on them for refuge, breeding and forage. Migratory fish, eels, river flies and birds all depend upon our wetlands. Waders such as curlew, which has seen significant declines over the past 20 years, are a common winter sight in our estuaries. Despite historical challenges, the otter has continued to thrive in the River Camel.

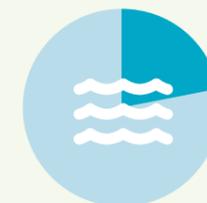
However, high levels of rainfall can also lead to pressures in our wetland and river habitats through agricultural run-off and sewage overflows being discharged. This pollution is harmful to our freshwater wildlife and in turn threatens our marine species and habitats, as well as the quality of our bathing waters.



Moreover, many of our Cornish rivers have been physically altered to support navigation for extractive industries such as clay, granite, slate and sand or through historic tin mining. These activities have resulted in the straightening and dredging of rivers, leaving them disconnected from their floodplain. Barriers to fish migration such as weirs limit access to breeding grounds. Wetland species also face pressure from disturbance, particularly around our estuaries where recreation is high.

On Scilly, wetlands support a rich bounty of wildlife including rare plants. They also provide the majority of St Mary's drinking water. Higher Moors and Lower moors, both of which are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), are some of the archipelagos biggest wetlands and are found on St Mary's. Pools are found across St Agnes, Bryher and Tresco. On St Martins, semi-aquatic Marsh Pennywort can be found in the wetlands near Coldwind Pit. Interestingly, there are no rivers on the Isles of Scilly.

FACTS AND FIGURES FOR CORNWALL



Only 22% of our freshwater bodies had a good or high ecological rating in 2019

50% of UK ponds were lost in the 20th century*



80% of remaining UK ponds in a poor state*



* <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/habitats/ponds/>



OUR FOCUS RIVERS AND WETLAND HABITATS

Rivers and Streams

From the Gannel in the north, the Tamar in the southeast, the Fal, the Helford and many others. Cornwall is threaded with rivers and streams, many of which arise on our moorland spine, connecting our upland moors to the oceans that surround us.

Riparian

Where green meets blue, you find our riparian zones; vegetated buffers that link water to the land around it. Riparian habitats stabilise riverbanks, holding soil in place and preventing erosion, they slow the flow which reduces flood risks downstream and create space for rivers to function naturally. They can also absorb and strip nutrients and chemicals from run-off, playing an essential role in maintaining and improving water quality.

Lakes, Pools and Ponds

These can be found across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. They play a vital part in connecting river systems and providing space for invertebrates, amphibians and birds to thrive. Historically, many lakes and ponds have been lost from the countryside through drainage or neglect; filling with silt and vegetation or stagnated under fallen leaves.

Wetlands

Some of the most threatened habitats in the world, yet also the most vital for wildlife and people. Wetlands are not a single habitat but a range of them. Different types of wetland habitat work together as part of an intricate ecosystem, home to a huge diversity of wildlife.



SEE ALSO...

Trees, woodland and scrub
Farmland, hedges and edges

Nature-rich grasslands
Town and village green and blue space

PRESSURES ON OUR RIVERS AND WETLANDS



Disconnection from floodplains

Engineering activities such as flood alleviation schemes, straightening of watercourses, dredging, and water storage have modified flows in some rivers and streams, lowered water tables and removed available habitat. This can also include the loss of areas of exposed riverine sediments that support specialist rare invertebrates.



Pollution and Run-off

Pollution from farms, sewers, private septic tanks, mine waste, built areas and roads all affects the water quality in our rivers. Only 22.37% of our freshwater bodies in Cornwall had a good or higher ecological rating in 2019.



Climate Change

A changing climate can destabilise our wetlands and rivers. Droughts can shrink wetlands, lead to low river flows and warmer waters or dry them up altogether whilst high rainfall can lead to extreme flows, erosion and flooding.



Encroachment

Rivers and wetlands need functioning floodplains to remain healthy. Encroachment by livestock and agriculture, development or even "tidiness" can reduce the extent and function of these important riparian buffers, which then reduces water quality. It can also increase water temperatures which affect cold-loving species.



Invasive Species

These disrupt the natural functioning of river systems by outcompeting native species for space, light or for food. Examples include Least Duckweed and New Zealand pigmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*) which can take over ponds, lakes and pools, and slow flowing watercourses, covering the surface and displacing native species. American mink have reduced our water vole populations, and make reintroductions harder. Whilst signal crayfish outcompete with our native white-clawed crayfish.



Weirs and Blockages

Weirs and other physical barriers within river systems can block access for migratory fish to important breeding and feeding habitat. Structures can fragment and degrade river habitats, isolating fish and invertebrate populations and increasing the impact of pollution. A fully connected river is more resilient as it allows natural recovery of river systems.



Complex Land Ownership

Rivers and streams pass through many land holdings as they make their way towards the sea. Good practice in one area can be easily undermined up or down stream unless well-coordinated actions are taken by a community of landowners, land users and key partners.



Abstraction and water demand

Abstraction (harvesting of freshwater from natural sources) provides essential water for public water supply, agriculture and industry. However, unsustainable levels of abstraction impact the ecology and resilience of our rivers, wetlands and aquifers. Unsustainable abstraction still diminishes some of the most iconic catchments and important habitats.

INSPIRATION



UPSTREAM THINKING



The Upstream Thinking project, funded by South West Water in collaboration with conservation charities, is one of the UK's most innovative conservation projects. It focusses on catchment scale delivery of nature-based solutions and positive land management to improve water quality, reduce pollution, recover habitats, improve soil quality and reduce flood risks.

Find out more

www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/upstreamthinkingproject



LOWER MOOR WETLAND NATURE RESERVE



Lower Moors is a beautiful wetland in the heart of St Mary's. The Isles of Scilly wildlife trust manage the site to recreate a healthy wetland ecosystem. They are removing invasive species and reintroducing grazing to the wet grassland.

Find out more

ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk



CORNWALL BEAVER PROJECT



After being hunted to extinction in the UK 400 years ago, a new project brought beavers back to Cornwall in 2017, demonstrating the possibilities of species reintroduction. Beavers are now free to roam across a 5-acre fenced enclosure of plantation woodland. Following reintroduction of two adults, two beaver kits were born in 2018 highlighting the schemes success.

Find out more

<https://woodlandvalley.co.uk/beavers>



THE WHITE RIVER PROJECT



Aims to restore and enhance the St Austell River catchment through environmental, heritage, wildlife, and community-focused initiatives. Through a highly collaborative approach, the aim is to transform the White River catchment into a thriving, resilient, natural and cultural landscape, restoring the ecological integrity of the river, celebrating its rich heritage, and creating accessible, inclusive spaces that promote wildlife habitats while fostering community well-being and engagement.

Find out more

<https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/white-river>



TAKING ACTION FOR RIVERS AND WETLANDS



Nature-rich landscapes are usually mosaics of a mixture of habitats.

REFER TO



- Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice
- The Nature Recovery Network Maps
- Focus Species Recovery Toolkit (Appendix C)
- ➔ All habitat Priorities and Actions
- ➔ Focus species, Habitats and Nature-based Solutions boxes
- Priorities and Habitats Matrix (Appendix B)

PRIORITY 9

Wetland management and connection

A diverse network of wetland sites and small waterbodies have been created and restored. Transitional and connecting habitats, such as wet woodlands, have been created to support diverse wildlife and provide natural flood management.

Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Code P9



A28 Create and re-establish ponds

A28.1 Re-establish and create new areas of ponds and open water for the benefit of wildlife. Avoid connection to inflows, which will generally cause the pond to infill faster, or pollute the pond. Invasive species should be removed.

A28.2 Profile new lakes and ponds, detention basins and swales to make them accessible and safe for wildlife. Create a variety of shallow and deep areas, as well as sunlit and shady spots to provide niches for different species.

A28.3 Design permanent lakes and ponds to have additional capacity to hold extra water during storm events, and with sediment management in mind to minimise the need for desilting.

A28.4 Seasonal ponds, scrapes, swales and silt traps should be created on farms to help capture nutrients before they enter wider wetland systems.

A28.5 SuDS ponds should be created near developments and transport infrastructure to slow surface water run-off and mitigate storm surges (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems – aka SuDS).

A28.6 It should be noted that ponds created for nature-based solutions are unlikely to be as beneficial for wildlife, as ponds created for the purpose of creating wildlife habitat. Pond creation should consider objectives and plan accordingly.

A29 Manage ponds and ditches for wildlife

- A29.1 Manage ponds, swales and ditches for wildlife** by providing a range of conditions for different species. Management to be conducted at specific times of year which avoid disturbance of breeding and overwintering wildlife, and through including rotational and incremental management. Invasive species should be removed.
- A29.2 Manage ditches for wildlife** using actions in [Priority 7](#): Establish buffer zones around hedges and edges

A30 Create, restore and manage wetlands as integrated systems and habitat mosaics

- A30.1 Enhance wetlands for a range of wildlife** including plant diversity, breeding waders and invertebrates. This can be achieved by maintaining water levels, creating mosaics of wet and dry areas as well as additional beneficial habitats such as reedbeds, ponds, scrub, wet grasslands, wet woodland and woodland edges. Create and deliver management plans that align with local conditions and wildlife needs. Low intensity grazing can be used where appropriate. Invasive species should be removed.
- A30.2 Restore water levels where they have been altered.** This can be done through a range of methods including disabling drain tiles using ditch plugs, filling ditches and blocking in-field drains to increase residence time of water in disturbed wetlands. Use appropriate restoration techniques for the site, choosing from options that range from process-based (using natural processes) to form-based (hardened infrastructure) options, to reconnect floodplains adjacent to incised river channels.
- A30.3 Reintroduce licenced beavers** to help manage wetland mosaics. Beavers are effective at creating and enhancing varied and dynamic habitats for a wide range of wildlife, increasing water storage and drought resilience, slowing flows and helping flood prevention.
- A30.4 Where it is not practical to introduce beaver, undertaking of “beaver-like” activity**, such as the creation of leaky dams, bunds and retention of deadwood, can help deliver some similar outcomes for wildlife.
- A30.5 Surrounding land managed in a way which reduces nutrient inputs** into wetlands as per actions listed under [Priority 5](#) and [11](#).
- A30.6 Reintroduce water voles** where landowner consent is given and it appropriate to do so. See [Focus Species Recovery Toolkit \(Appendix C\)](#) for details of species requirements. Reintroduction must be done alongside targeted control of American Mink, an invasive introduced species.
- A30.7 Restore wet areas** by blocking land drains and drainage ditches, and removing barriers and bunds to restore natural water levels.
- A30.8 Create scrapes** to provide nesting areas for breeding birds.

A31 Manage wetlands on the Isles of Scilly to prevent encroachment and support key species

- A31.1 Restore, enhance and maintain existing wetlands**, focusing on maintaining high water levels.
- A31.2 Manage wetland margins** to create a mosaic of wet woodland/willow carr, reed and rush beds. Regularly cut and remove arisings to prevent succession. Create open areas and maintain muddy margins for wading birds.
- A31.3 Remove and monitor invasive non-native species** around brackish and saline lagoons on St. Agnes and Bryher
- A31.4 Manage wet meadow sites** adjacent to and extending from the wetland sites on St. Mary’s by cutting and grazing (particularly by cattle) to support tubular water dropwort.
- A31.5 Manage the Great Pool on Tresco and the Lower and higher moors area of St Mary’s** to encourage European Eels.

FURTHER READING



- [Beaver Management](#)
- [Climate change adaptation manual: Reedbeds | Standing open water](#) – Natural England
- [General guidance to managing springs and seepages for wildlife](#) – Buglife
- [Grazing marsh ditches: An important habitat for invertebrates](#) – Buglife
- [Grazing marsh ditches: Creation and restoration for invertebrates](#) – Buglife
- [Grazing marsh ditches: Management for invertebrates](#) – Buglife
- [Management of wetlands for wildlife](#) – SAC
- [Managing farmland habitats for invertebrates: Ponds & Ditches](#) – Buglife
- [Pond Creation Toolkit](#) – Freshwater Habitats Trust
- [Springs and seepages](#) – an important habitat for wildlife – Buglife
- [Sustainable Drainage Systems \(SuDS\)](#) – Cornwall Council
- [The natural flood management manual - Chapter 7: Run-off storage | Chapter 11: Offline storage](#) – CIRIA
- [Wetlands](#) – WWT

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Beaver
- Common Tern
- Common Toad
- Coral-necklace
- European Eel
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Harvest Mouse
- Lapwing
- Mud Pond Snail
- Otter
- Oystercatcher
- Pennyroyal
- Ringed Plover
- Small Red Damselfly
- Swift
- Water Vole



FOCUS HABITATS

- Bogs
- Ditches and Leats
- Estuaries
- Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Lowland Fen
- Marshes
- Ponds and Pools
- Reedbeds
- Springs and Seepages
- Streams & Rivers
- Wet Grassland
- Wet Woodland
- Wetlands



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism



PRIORITY 10

Restore healthy rivers

Rivers, streams and estuaries are restored and functioning more naturally with minimal modifications allowing them to meander and reconnect with their flood plain enabling natural flow, nutrient and sediment regimes.

Seven priority rivers and their catchments (including estuaries) have been prioritised where evidence suggests there exists the best opportunities for recovery: Camel, Inny, Fowey, Lynher, Ottery, East Looe and West Looe.

Location: Cornwall

Code P10



A32 Connect rivers and streams to floodplains

A32.1 Re-connect rivers to their floodplains. This can be done through a range of techniques such as trapping sediment to raise the riverbed, re-bending canalised channels, lowering or reprofiling riverbanks, removing or setting back embankments, creating in-channel features like leaky dams, boulders and reed pools, excavating scrapes, and restoring wet woodland where appropriate.

A32.2 Reintroduce licenced beavers to help manage wetland mosaics. Beavers are effective at creating and enhancing varied and dynamic habitats for a wide range of wildlife, increasing water storage and drought resilience, slowing flows and helping flood prevention.

A32.3 Avoid putting watercourses underground. Restore existing culverted watercourses to the surface to maximise wildlife benefits and make access for management easier.

A32.4 Invasive non-native species including American Mink, should be controlled within rivers, riverbanks, ponds and within wetlands.

A32.5 Development of management plans should take a catchment-scale approach and include input from landowners, consenting bodies and managers.

A32.6 Woodland establishment and management should follow principles laid out in the UK Forestry Standard for creating and managing riparian woodland.

A33 Remove barriers for migratory fish

A33.1 Improve access for migratory fish such as European eel and Atlantic salmon to spawning grounds through weir removal or the installation of technical fish passes where it is safe and appropriate to do so. Generally, removal is preferential as this is more deliverable than modifications.

FURTHER READING



- [Beaver Management](#)
- [Climate change adaptation manual: Rivers and streams](#) - Natural England
- [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Shoreline Management Plan](#)
- [Cornwall Flood Risk Strategy](#) - Cornwall Council
- [Flood risk activities: Environmental permits](#) - Gov.uk
- [Isles of Scilly Flood Risk Management Strategy](#) - Cornwall Council
- [Land Drainage Consent](#) - Cornwall Council
- [The natural flood management manual](#) - Chapter 12 | Chapter 13 - CIRIA

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Allis Shad
- Atlantic Salmon
- Beaver
- Brown/Sea Trout
- Coral-necklace
- Dipper
- European Eel
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Osprey
- Ringed Plover
- Otter
- Sea Lamprey
- Smelt
- Triangular Club-rush
- Water Vole



FOCUS HABITATS

- Ditches and Leats
- Estuaries
- Riparian Grassland
- Ponds and Pools
- Riparian woodland
- Streams and Rivers
- Wet Woodland
- Wetlands



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism

PRIORITY 11

Establish and manage riparian habitats

Riparian buffers around waterways have been widened and allowed to recover as part of naturally functioning floodplains. Wildlife is thriving, habitats are improving water quality and reducing flood risk, filtering run-off, slowing surface water and holding storm water.

Location: Cornwall

Code P11



A34 Establish Riparian buffers

A34.1 Establish riparian buffers across floodplains around rivers and waterways, through natural colonisation and succession, tree planting and management of open habitats.

A34.2 Riparian buffers should take a mosaic approach to create a mix of shady habitats for river cooling and as shady hunting habitats for birds and mammals, dark hunting habitats for otters and bats, and open habitats to provide warm riffles for fish spawning. These could include wildlife-rich grassland, reedbeds and woodlands.

A34.3 Any woodland establishment and management should follow principles laid out in the [UK Forestry Standard](#) for creating and managing riparian woodland.



ACTIONS  **A35 Manage farmland near water courses sensitively**

A35.1 Livestock access to waterways should be limited to prevent issues such as riverbank erosion or eutrophication (excessive amounts of plant and algae in waterways which reduces light and can harm other wildlife). However, limited flash grazing (short periods of intense grazing by livestock) can be used to help manage the mosaic of open habitats in riparian zones as well as to manage invasive species.

A35.2 Crop management should limit run-off into waterways in compliance with the Farming Rules for Water. Practices could include reducing inputs to minimise eutrophication of waterways, horizontal cropping to reduce run-off and maintaining and managing buffers to store water.

A35.3 Use nature-based solutions like farming with trees for example through short-rotation coppicing of high-yielding willow and poplar species, cross-slope hedges, in-field trees and tree belt planting to intercept and slow surface water run-off and reduce pollution entering water courses where possible.

ACTIONS  **A36 Ensure biosecurity protocols near waterways**

A36.1 Educate river and waterbody users about biosecurity through signage. Install biosecurity facilities (boat wash downs, angling die tanks etc.,) at key leisure destinations e.g., lakes, rivers.

A36.2 Add signage to accessible waterways around the harmful impacts of flea and tick treatments for freshwater species.

FURTHER READING 

- [Creating and managing riparian woodland](#) – Forest Research
- [Creating riparian shade for climate change adaptation](#) – Keeping Rivers Cool



Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...

 **FOCUS SPECIES**

- Allis Shad
- Atlantic Salmon
- Beaver
- Blue Ground Beetle
- Brown/Sea Trout
- Coral-necklace
- Dipper
- European Eel
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Mud Pond Snail
- Otter
- Perkins Mining Bee
- Pennyroyal
- Ringed Plover
- Sea Lamprey
- Small Red Damselfly
- Smelt
- Swift
- Triangular Club-rush
- Water Vole

 **FOCUS HABITATS**

- Estuaries
- Lowland Fen
- Permanent Pasture
- Ponds and Pools
- Reedbeds
- Riparian Woodland
- Scrub
- Springs and Seepages
- Streams and Rivers
- Temperate Rainforest
- Wetlands
- Wet Woodland
- Wildlife-rich Grassland

 **NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS**

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture
- Jobs and Investment

RECOVER NATURE USING THE STRATEGY



1 Read the Strategy for inspiration



2 Explore the Nature Recovery Network maps

3 Discover the Priorities and Actions for your area

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MAPS

+

STRATEGY DOCUMENT

5 Tell us about your successes to inspire others

Visit our [Let's Talk Nature Recovery Hub](#)



 **Interested in Biodiversity Net Gain?**

The Zone 2 maps act as the Strategic Significance Multiplier





HEATH AND MOOR MOSAICS

Rolling hills that bloom purple and gold with heather and gorse. Moorland rich in bog moss, cotton-grass and shrubs and areas of open water dotted with pond skaters. Skylark nest in the grass on the open moor and lizards warm themselves on bare earth in the morning sun. From our coastal headlands of Penwith, the peaty, wet heaths of Goss Moor to the windy summit of Rough Tor on Bodmin Moor; heathland, moors, and mires traverse swathes of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

HEALTHY PEATLAND STORES MORE CARBON THAN ALL OTHER VEGETATION TYPES IN THE WORLD COMBINED

Heath and moor mosaics are home to many specialist insects, several species of reptile and ground-nesting birds. It is not uncommon to see kestrels hovering in the hunt and buzzards circling high above. Look closer to the ground and you may be lucky enough to see reptiles such as common lizard, adder and slow worm.

Heath and moor mosaics also soak up rainwater and help filter and slow the flow of water – this helps clean our water and helps to protect communities from flooding. They also help store carbon. Healthy peatland stores more carbon than all other vegetation types in the world combined.

These open landscapes contain a mosaic of semi natural habitats, which are the product of human activity and need active management to maintain. Our heath and moor mosaics have been fragmented due to conversion to other land uses or natural encroachment by scrub, bracken and woodland and can be impacted by pollution, such as soil enrichment caused by atmospheric nitrogen. Poor management can lead to heathland shrubs being replaced by grass. Many heathland species, especially breeding birds, are vulnerable to disturbance.



On the Isles of Scilly, Coastal Heathland is arguably one of the most important and valued habitats. It hosts national rarities, including some not found on mainland Britain. However, this vital habitat is under threat and has shown the highest levels of decline of any habitat in recent years.

OPEN LANDSCAPES CONTAIN A MOSAIC OF SEMI NATURAL HABITATS, WHICH ARE THE PRODUCT OF HUMAN ACTIVITY AND NEED ACTIVE MANAGEMENT TO MAINTAIN

FACTS AND FIGURES FOR CORNWALL



In Cornwall we have...
31,667 hectares of grass moorland



OUR FOCUS HEATH AND MOOR MOSAICS HABITATS



Heathland

The rocks and minerals (geology) beneath the surface give way to acidic soils which supports our heathland. A mixture of dry, humid and wet heath can be found depending on the shape of the land. These variations of heathland type each support a range of different species. In late summer purple blooms can be seen from West Penwith to Bude. Without management, heathland naturally turns into scrub and then woodland. The Lizard is the only location in Britain where the species Cornish heath can be found making it nationally significant.



Moorland and mires

Found across the uplands of Bodmin Moor and West Penwith, moorland occurs on higher, more exposed, shallow peat soils (from 300 m to 1,000 m). It is largely dominated by heather and rough grass but often with wetter areas of mire and bog (see peatlands below) in depressions and valleys. Large areas of open moorland have been utilised for centuries by man for grazing livestock and are still used today.



Peatland

Amazingly wild places, home to rare and unusual plants, birds and insects. The particular water-logged conditions slow plant decomposition to such an extent that dead plants accumulate to form peat – storing carbon in deep layers.



Waved Heath (Scilly)

Low lying heathland habitat that is particularly important for the Isles of Scilly. It is characterised by low growing specimens of heather and bell heather. In Scilly it is important for breeding birds such as stonechats, meadow pipits and linnets.

SEE ALSO...

Trees, woodland and scrub
Farmland, hedges and edges

Rivers and wetlands
Nature-rich grasslands
Coastal wildbelt

PRESSURES ON OUR HEATH AND MOOR MOSAICS



Encroachment and invasive species

Without management, heathland and moorlands can disappear. Succession into bracken, gorse and woodland can reduce and fragment these important habitats and limit space for the species that rely on it. Invasive species can also unbalance heathland habitats.



Grazing, drainage and land use

Heathland and moorland are sensitive habitats. Both over- and under- grazing can cause declines in different types of heathland, moor and mire. Historical drainage of land to create farmland or the emergence of conifer plantations has further fragmented these habitats and changed the underlying hydrology. Poor management or implementation of the same management approach too widely can lead to uniform heathland, moors and mire habitats that lack structural and age variation, reducing their value for invertebrates.



Climate

Being a product of climatic conditions, heath and moorland (including peatland) is sensitive to the effects of climate change. Where peatlands dry out, the rate of decomposition increases dramatically releasing carbon that was formerly stored in layers of peat. Warmer and drier summers increase the likelihood of wildfires, which can be especially damaging to wildlife and even threaten people.



Pollution and excess nutrients

Heathland soils are typically low in pH and fertility. Nitrogen pollution from surrounding landscapes and poor air quality can lead to enrichment of heathland soils and transition to grassland.



Disturbance

The open wilderness feel of our Moors and Heathlands is attractive for people. Whilst access can have many benefits, it can also lead to issues of erosion and wildlife disturbance, especially in the case of ground nesting birds such as skylark and waders such as snipe and curlew.



INSPIRATION



SOUTH WEST PEATLAND PARTNERSHIP



The Southwest Peatland Partnership is a project working to restore peatland across the Southwest. Their vision is to restore peatlands across Cornwall, Dartmoor and Exmoor that support wildlife, store carbon, manage flooding, improve water security, enhance the historic environment, and champion livelihoods.



Find out more

<https://southwestpeatlandpartnership.co.uk/>



ALL THE MOOR BUTTERFLIES



The All the Moor Butterflies project improved habitat conditions and raised awareness of six of our most threatened butterfly and moth species. Cornwall Butterfly Conservation worked with 146 landowners across the region on 201 sites to deliver gains for these special species.



Find out more

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work/conservation-projects/england/all-the-moor-butterflies>



TOR TO SHORE



Tor to Shore is an ambitious new project from Cornwall Wildlife Trust. It will create a network of habitat spanning across land and sea – one of the first of its kind in the UK - bringing together rewilding principles, sustainable farming practices, and marine conservation activities, all underpinned by communities.

Find out more

<https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/tor-to-shore>



TAKING ACTION FOR HEATH AND MOOR MOSAICS



Nature-rich landscapes are usually mosaics of a mixture of habitats.

REFER TO



- Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice
- The Nature Recovery Network Maps
- Focus Species Recovery Toolkit (Appendix C)
- All habitat Priorities and Actions
- Focus species, Habitats and Nature-based Solutions boxes
- Priorities and Habitats Matrix (Appendix B)

PRIORITY 12

Create and enhance heath and moor mosaics

Heath and moors are expanded and better connected as functioning habitats supporting a range of wildlife including Adders, Marsh Fritillary and ground-nesting birds like Skylarks. They store carbon, support livelihoods and help protect communities from flooding.

Location: Cornwall **Code:** P12



A37 Create new heath and moor mosaics

A37.1 Create acidic soil conditions through the addition of sulphur which also reduces soil nutrients. Reduce the impacts of weed seed banks and reduce nutrients by stripping the top layer of soil.

A37.2 Add locally sourced flowering heather into new heath and moor mosaics preferentially using locally sourced seed stock or cut brush. If soil acidification was undertaken, a period of 18-24 months may be needed before introducing flowering heathers.

A37.3 Protect young plants from browsing pressures until plants have established.

A37.4 Manage through grazing (or rotational mowing where grazing is not possible) to create a mosaic of bare ground, heather, grassland and scrub in accordance with **A38**.

A38 Restore, connect and manage existing heath and moor mosaics

A38.1 Manage heath and moors as mosaics of flowering heathers; bare ground, sandpits and cuttings; scrub, trees and dead wood; acid grassland; bracken; mire, wet heath, pools and ditches.

A38.2 Manage through appropriate grazing regimes and periodic disturbance such as controlled burns (where appropriate), scraping or mowing (carried out in a rotational and piecemeal manner in response to site monitoring). Control excessive spread of bracken, gorse and scattered tree components where it is becoming dominant (using controlled burning or cutting if grazing is not available). Grazing should be cyclic and managed to meet local wildlife objectives.

A38.3 Integrate firebreaks and ponds to improve climate resilience and mitigate pressures from wildfire.

A38.4 Target removal of non-native plants like Rhododendron, Buddleia, Cotoneaster and Japanese Rose.

A38.5 Roll out low-input farming systems in mire catchments to reduce eutrophication (excessive amounts of plant and algae in waterways which reduces light and can harm other wildlife) of freshwater habitats.

A38.6 Provide bare ground and early successional vegetation, which provide basking, nesting and hunting opportunities for ground-active invertebrate species and reptiles, as well as opportunities for key early successional flowering species. If grazing is not available, this can be achieved via rotational cutting and scraping of the soil surface to create exposures.

A38.7 Restore and buffer heathland remnants, integrating and creating heathland mosaics within woodlands utilising woodland margins, corridors and open space.

ACTIONS



A39 Reduce pollution from wormers

A39.1 Manage stock that have high worm egg counts through rotation and monitoring of worm status to reduce the need for routine worming. This encourages greater diversity of dung flora and fauna.

ACTIONS



A40 Increase awareness of pressures at key public access sites

A40.1 Increase education and information provision at sites where heathland, moors and mires are accessible to the public to help reduce disturbance from humans and pets on wildlife such as ground nesting birds.

FURTHER READING



- [A practical guide to the restoration and management of lowland heathlands](#) – RSPB
- [Climate change adaptation manual: Heathland](#) – Natural England
- [Heathland mosaic habitat management](#) – Buglife
- [Managing spring and seepages in grassland, heathland and open habitats](#) – Buglife
- [The Mosaic Approach: Managing Habitats for Species. Heathland](#) – Natural England

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Adder
- Coral-necklace
- Cornish Eyebright
- Cuckoo
- Dartford Warbler
- Grayling
- Kestrel
- Lapwing
- Marsh Clubmoss
- Marsh Fritillary
- Mistle Thrush
- Moss Carder Bee
- Nightjar
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Perkins Mining Bee
- Silver-studded Blue
- Small Red Damselfly
- Tormentil Mining Bee
- Tormentil Nomad Bee
- Yellow Centaury



FOCUS HABITATS

- Acid Grassland
- Bogs
- Heathland
- Heritage Mining Sites
- Mires
- Moorland
- Peatland
- Ponds and Pools
- Scrub
- Springs and Seepages
- Trees Outside Woodland
- Wetlands



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture



PRIORITY 13

Restore heathland on the Isles of Scilly

Heathland, and maritime grassland on the Isles of Scilly are functioning mosaic habitats which support a range of wildlife.

Location: Isles of Scilly

Code: P13



A41 Restore heathland, maritime grassland 'downs' and the coastal strip

A41.1 Restore heathland and maritime grassland 'downs' and coastal strips to their former extent on 'unenclosed land' on inhabited islands where practical. Manage by cutting, burning and conservation grazing.

A42 Manage waved heath against encroachment

A42.1 Maintain an open mosaic of heath and bare ground, and prevent encroachment of bracken, bramble, and gorse by cutting and removal of arisings, or grazing where possible.

A42.3 Where possible, open up areas adjacent to the heath which are currently dominated by bracken, gorse, bramble and scrub.

A42.2 Remove and prevent re-emergence of invasive plant species, particularly rhododendron (Tresco), carpobrutus (St. Helen's), pittosporum and coprosma (particularly around granite outcropping, where soil may accumulate).

FURTHER READING



• See Further Reading for [Priority 12](#)

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Buffish Mining Bee
- Chamomile
- Cuckoo
- Least Adder's-tongue Fern
- Moss Carder Bee
- Orange Bird's-foot
- Red Barbed-ant
- Swiss Sac-spider



FOCUS HABITATS

- Bogs
- Heathland
- Mires
- Ponds and Pools
- Scrub
- Springs and Seepages
- Trees Outside Woodland
- Waved Heath



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture

PRIORITY 14

Restore peatland

Existing peatlands are being restored. Their associated habitats support wildlife, store carbon, support rural livelihoods and improve water storage.

Location: Cornwall

Code: P14



A43 Restore peatlands through re-wetting and low input farming

A43.1 "Re-wet" existing peatland deposits by raising water levels (plugging ditches) and allow for the recolonisation of plants such as Sphagnum mosses. Use key species and habitats (such as sphagnum mosses and wet woodland) to slow and retain water on mires and bogs during dry spells, sustain waterlogged acidic soils and slow decomposition, promoting active peat accumulation.

A43.4 Utilise grazing and/or cyclic management to manage peatland habitat mosaics. Where grazing is proposed, install and maintain bridges for livestock.

A43.2 Roll out low-input farming systems in mire catchments to reduce eutrophication (excessive amounts of plant and algae in waterways which reduces light and can harm other wildlife) of freshwater habitats.

A43.5 Ensure 're-wetting' and the alteration of both water levels and flows is carried out with regard to the surrounding land uses and ensure no negative impacts on neighbouring land.

A43.3 Block up areas of fast flowing water with untreated timber, wooden planks, heather bales or stone, and cover in peat and vegetation to blend into the landscape.

A43.6 Target restoration work around or near to existing high quality peatland sites, to improve connectivity and to provide opportunities for invertebrates and other wildlife to develop resilient populations.



ACTIONS  **A44 Return Forest Plantation to Bog**

A44.1 Undertake targeted and informed removal of woodland to restore peat and priority open habitats (e.g., blanket bog). Actions may include tree harvesting, tree mulching, furrow blocking and ground smoothing.

A44.2 Ensure activities accord with government policy and relevant joint Forestry Commission and Natural England decision making framework and operational guidance. Awareness should be given to historical features within the landscape.

FURTHER READING 

- [Climate change adaptation manual: Blanket bog | Upland flushes, fens and swamp](#) - Natural England
- [Decision support framework for peatland protection, the establishment of new woodland and re-establishment of existing woodland on peatland in England](#) - Forestry Commission, Forest Research and Natural England
- [Factsheet: Peatlands, forestry and climate change](#) - Forest Research
- [Peatland Code](#) - IUCN
- [UK Peatlands](#) - IUCN
- [When to convert woods and forests to open habitat](#) - Gov.uk

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...

 **FOCUS SPECIES**

- Common Toad
- Coral-necklace
- Cornish Moneywort
- Marsh Clubmoss
- Marsh Fritillary
- Small Red Damselfly
- Yellow Centaury

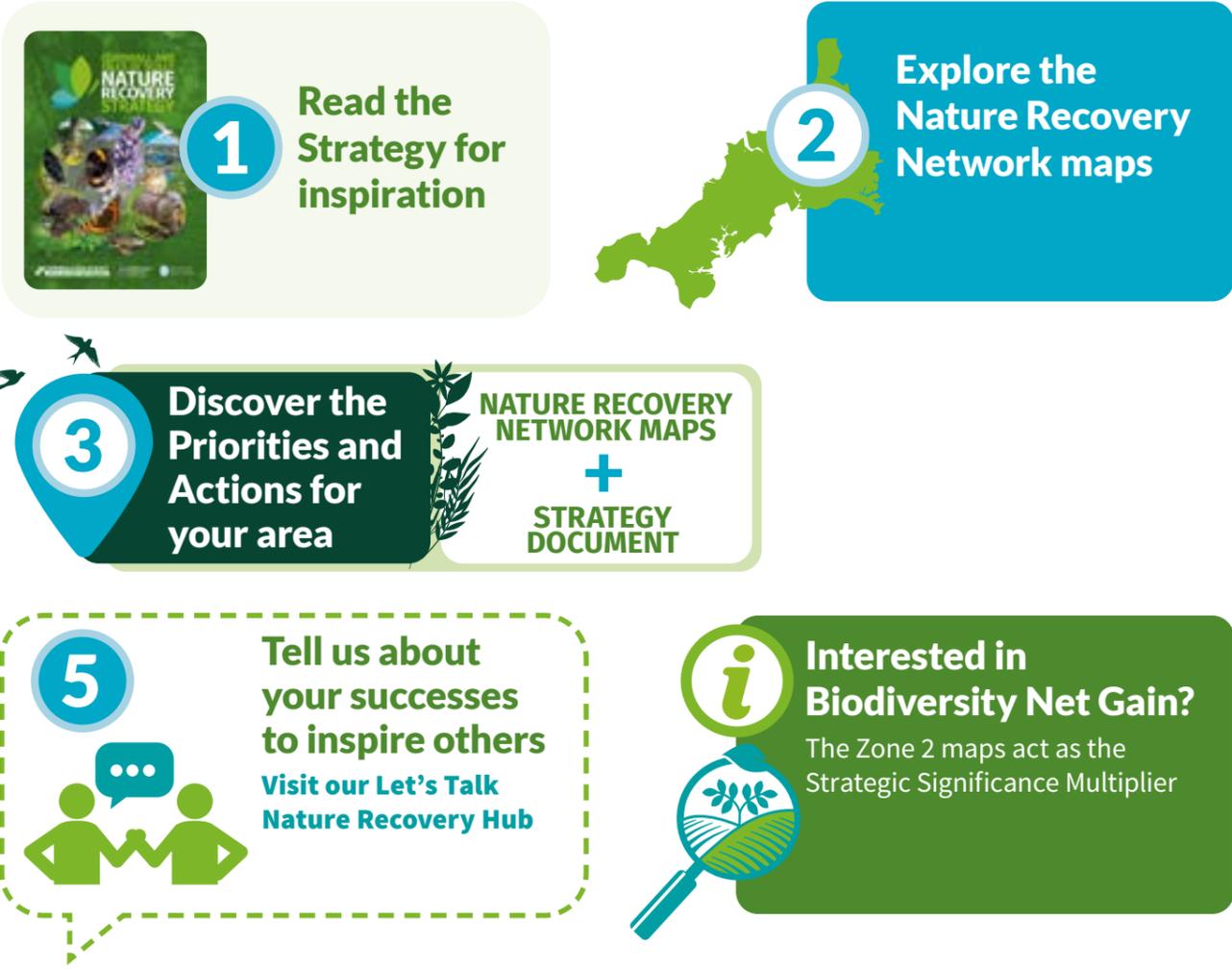
 **FOCUS HABITATS**

- Blanket Bog
- Heathland
- Lowland fen
- Mires
- Peatland
- Ponds and Pools
- Purple Moor-grass and Rush Pasture
- Raised Bog
- Springs and Seepages
- Wet Grassland
- Wetlands

 **NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS**

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture

RECOVER NATURE USING THE STRATEGY



1 Read the Strategy for inspiration

2 Explore the Nature Recovery Network maps

3 Discover the Priorities and Actions for your area

5 Tell us about your successes to inspire others

Interested in Biodiversity Net Gain?





NATURE-RICH GRASSLANDS

Understated and often underappreciated, nature-rich grassland covers a spectrum of biodiverse and flower-rich habitats.

SINCE WORLD WAR 2 ENGLAND HAS LOST AROUND 97% OF UNIMPROVED LOWLAND GRASSLAND. LOCALLY THE PICTURE IS MUCH THE SAME.

Much of the farmed grassland in and around our towns has been improved (through fertilisers, pesticides, intensive management and reseeded) and does not support diverse wildlife. However, across the region, you can find grasslands which are nature-rich and home to a huge variety of species.

Nature-rich grasslands include traditionally managed pasture and hay meadows in the farmed landscapes. Nature-rich grasslands occur in habitat mosaics in floodplains, alongside heathland and along our coastal fringe. Our temperate climate means an extended grass growing season here compared to other parts of the UK.

Due to our geology, most semi-natural grassland in Cornwall is acidic with a few sandy shell grasslands at the coast. Towards the northeast of Cornwall, Culm grassland – a distinctive form of rush pasture – plays a role in connecting Bodmin Moor through to Dartmoor. This creates a vital connection for many species including Marsh Fritillary.

Nature-rich grasslands provide habitat for rare plants, fungi and pollinators while also providing cover for ground-nesting birds such as skylark, meadow pipit and some waders. They also support small mammals like bank vole and a diverse array of insects. Unimproved hay meadows support an especially diverse flora including many rare wildflowers.



ISLES OF SCILLY

In Scilly, maritime grassland in particular is a vital habitat. It grows as a distinctive short sward that forms a band around the perimeter of the islands and is home to rare species such as the unassuming Least Adder's tongue fern.

Nature friendly management can have a positive impact on grassland species. Dwarf Pansy was re-found on Teän in 2021, after sustained management by Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust to provide the right conditions for this species. It had not been seen there since the site was covered by deep sand after storms in early 2014.



FACTS AND FIGURES



Since the 1930s,

over 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost



Cornwall has **over 1,000 ha of good quality semi improved grassland**

Lowland meadows can have up to 35 species of plant per square metre

Reference: <https://meadows.plantlife.org.uk/>



IN SCILLY, MARITIME GRASSLAND IN PARTICULAR IS A VITAL HABITAT AND HOME TO RARE SPECIES SUCH AS THE UNASSUMING LEAST ADDER'S TONGUE FERN



OUR FOCUS NATURE-RICH GRASSLAND HABITATS



Rush Pasture (Wet Grassland)

Also known as purple moor grass or Culm, is a damp/marshy grassland that is of immense value for wildlife with up to 50 different plant species in a 2 x 2 metre square. They are also home to a variety of animals including Curlew and Marsh Fritillary.



Hay Meadows

Are the product of particular (traditional) land management practices and can be particularly rich in wildflowers. The meadows are left to grow untouched through the spring and summer and cut for hay from mid-June to August depending on the weather. The aftermath is traditionally grazed with livestock through the autumn.



Rough Pasture

Low yield grassland, found on poor soils that may have been improved. It is typically found in our uplands and the exposed coastal zone. It is mainly used for extensive grazing of livestock in rotation with more productive land (i.e., hay meadows). Although not floristically-rich compared to a hay meadow, rough pasture supports a range of wildlife including ground-nesting birds and particular wildflowers and invertebrates.



Maritime Grassland

A special habitat that is a product of its exposure to wind and salt spray. It occurs in both Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and is generally short, kept this way by grazing (livestock and/or rabbits) as well as exposure. Maritime Grassland can be particularly important for rare plants such as Wild Asparagus.



SEE ALSO...
 Trees, woodland and scrub
 Farmland, hedges and edges
 Heath and moor mosaics
 Coastal wildbelt
 Town and village green and blue space

PRESSURES ON OUR NATURE-RICH GRASSLANDS



Fragmentation

Land use changes have resulted in existing nature-rich grassland becoming fragmented and disconnected. Because of this wildlife is unable to travel between sites and recolonise new areas. This is particularly the case for pollinators and other invertebrates due to their inability to travel far from nesting sites.



Land development

Increased infrastructure and demand for housing has led to the conversion of more grasslands into residential and commercial areas, leading to a permanent loss of these grasslands and reducing the availability of natural spaces for habitats to grow.



Grazing regimes

Inappropriate grazing by livestock can damage grasslands, reduce plant diversity and encourage fewer desirable species such as ragwort and thistle; over-stocking can destroy the plant layer, compact and erode the soil. This impedes drainage, leading to waterlogging and muddy run-off, which reduces water quality. Under grazing can also lead to problems. Without sufficient grazing, grasslands will naturally transform into scrubs of bracken and gorse and eventually into woodland through a process called succession.



Climate Change

Rising temperatures alter rainfall patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events can impact grassland ecosystems. Changing climatic conditions may lead to shifts in species composition and changes in habitat as nature responds and adapts.



Pollution

Runoff from intensively managed agricultural fields, urban areas and roads can carry chemicals and silt, which can contaminate grasslands, harming plant and animal species and disrupting the natural nutrient cycles within these ecosystems.



Disturbance

Increased foot traffic, trampling, and infrastructure development for tourism, particularly in sensitive areas like the Isles of Scilly, can damage grasslands, leading to compaction, erosion and wildlife disturbance. Grasslands on thin soils, such as coastal and upland grasslands, are particularly vulnerable to damage from excessive foot traffic.



Frequency of cutting

The frequency and timing of cutting can have a big impact on the health of grasslands and the species that live within it. Cutting when plants are in summer, or during important times of the year for species, for example when birds are nesting, can cause significant damage to ecosystems.



INSPIRATION



GREEN RIBS



Highways England and Shared Prosperity Funding is being used to deliver activities through National Highway's Green Ribs project. Led by Highways England, with support from Cornwall Wildlife Trust and designed to support local businesses, the project hopes to tackle decreasing biodiversity by creating and enhancing habitat areas for wildlife, improving the quality, condition and connectivity of landscape features, and mitigating the impacts of the A30 by creating stronger habitat connections and channelling wildlife from the road.

Find out more

www.gov.uk/government/news/national-highways-funding-gives-the-green-light-to-cornwall-eco-improvements



NORTH CORNWALL B-LINES



The North Cornwall B-Lines project is working with local landowners and communities to help threatened bee species by creating or enhancing 20 hectares of flower-rich habitat along the North Cornwall coast. Led by bug life, the project aims to create and restore areas of flower-rich habitat, which will form stepping-stones for wildlife, enabling pollinating insects to colonise new areas

Find out more

North Cornwall B-Lines - Buglife projects



CORNISH COASTAL MEADOWS PROJECT



A three year project to create 250ha of new wildflower meadows around the coast of Cornwall on National Trust land. The project runs from 2023 to 2025 and uses seed harvested from existing Cornish meadows to enhance species-poor grasslands. The aims are to 1) enhance connectivity for coastal habitat by creating new habitats inland, 2) create a resource of new wildflower donor sites for future habitat creation projects.

Find out more

Cornish Coastal Meadows Project | National Trust



LETHYTEP



Once a working farm, this is now a secluded haven for wildlife transformed into 52 acres of species-rich meadows along with lakes and ancient woodland managed. The owner has developed wildflower meadows, wetlands, lakes and woodland as managed wildlife habitats.

Find out more

www. lethy tep.co.uk/about.php



TAKING ACTION FOR NATURE-RICH GRASSLANDS



Nature-rich landscapes are usually mosaics of a mixture of habitats.

REFER TO



- Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice
- The Nature Recovery Network Maps
- Focus Species Recovery Toolkit (Appendix C)
- ➔ All habitat Priorities and Actions
- ➔ Focus species, Habitats and Nature-based Solutions boxes
- Priorities and Habitats Matrix (Appendix B)

PRIORITY 15

Connect and grow wildlife rich grassland

There are more biodiverse and wildflower-rich grasslands, which are bigger, better managed and better connected. They form part of a mosaic with other semi-natural habitats like scrub, heath and wetland, allowing diverse wildlife to thrive and move – especially pollinators.



Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Code: P15

A45 Enhance species poor grasslands to improve diversity for wildlife

A45.1 Harvest seed stock from existing species-rich grassland for seeding new grassland sites to help increase area of habitat and ensure local ecological integrity across sites. Locally collected seed or green hay can be sown directly, or propagated as plugs to restore floral diversity of grassland.

A45.2 Integrate Cornish hedges, hedgerows, trees and other landscape features (where appropriate) where they can add ecological diversity and enhance connection within land uses.

A45.3 Incorporate species rich grassland into other land uses where appropriate e.g., market gardens, farmland developments, woodlands (margins, corridors and open space) and roadside verges, especially for areas within the **B-Lines network**.

A45.4 Create more hay meadows by converting silage production fields where feasible, to encourage flowers to complete their annual cycle for the benefit of small mammals and pollinators. Leave an uncut margin during cutting, to provide shelter and food sources for wildlife.

A46 Maintain existing wildlife rich grasslands for nature

- A46.1 Eliminate invasive non-native species.**
Manage excessive scrub and bracken and remove cuttings to reduce nutrient inputs.
- A46.2 Connect to other habitats through wildlife-friendly corridors** including field margins, hedgerows, hedges and Cornish hedges.
- A46.3 Stagger cutting times of meadows** to ensure there are always some plants in flower and some long grass present to create a varied structural diversity across each site.
- A46.4 Integrate some bare ground into grassland** areas to act as essential nesting sites for solitary bees.
- A46.5 Manage pastures through low intensity grazing** to limit browsing pressures and compaction on grasslands to ensure that flowering plants are able to carry out their seasonal reseeding cycles.

A47 Restore permanent grassland (Isles of Scilly)

A47.1 Restore permanent grassland enclosed by granite stone walls by grazing in short rotation with long recovery (mob grazing), topped if required and possibly cut for hay.

FURTHER READING

- [B-Lines project for pollinators](#) – Buglife
- [Climate change adaptation manual: Grasslands](#) – Natural England
- [Create and restore species-rich grassland](#) – Farming | Gov.uk
- [Grassland restoration and management](#) – Blakesley and Buckley
- [Managing farmlands habitats for invertebrates: Grassland](#) – Buglife
- [Managing Grassland & Green Space](#) – Plantlife
- [Managing Meadows](#) – Plantlife
- [Managing spring and seepages in grassland, heathland and open habitats](#) – Buglife
- [Species-rich grassland: Species identification and habitat classification](#) – Back from the Brink
- [The Mosaic Approach: Managing Habitats for Species. Lowland grassland](#) – Natural England

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Adder
- Badger
- Black Oil Beetle
- Buffish Mining Bee
- Chamomile
- Chough
- Curlew
- Cirl Bunting
- Date Waxcap
- Dwarf Pansy
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Harvest Mouse
- Hedgehog
- Kestrel
- Long-horned Bee
- Marsh Fritillary
- Moss Carder Bee
- Nightjar
- Oystercatcher
- Plymouth Pear
- Silver-studded Blue
- Skylark
- Starling
- Swift



FOCUS HABITATS

- Acid Grassland
- Calaminarian Grassland
- Coastal Grassland
- Field Margins
- Permanent Pasture
- Purple Moor-grass and Rush Pasture
- Ponds and Pools
- Road Verges
- Rough Pasture
- Scrub
- Springs and Seepages
- Town and Village Green and Blue Spaces
- Wet Grassland
- Wildlife-rich Grassland



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Pollination
- Good Soil and Sediment Status
- Food Supply
- Jobs and Investment

PRIORITY 16

Expand and connect areas of wet grassland

Wet grassland including culm grassland, rush pasture and coastal & floodplain grazing marsh is better managed, covers a greater area and is connected with compatible habitats to provide space for species, store water, slow flows and help communities adapt to a changing climate.

Location: Cornwall

Code: P16



A48 Create new wet grassland habitat

- A48.1 Plug drainage gullies and ditches** to rewet grasslands, ensuring that this is carried out with due regard to the surrounding land to ensure no negative impacts on neighbouring land.
- A48.2 Ensure a range of sward heights** using cattle to create areas of bare ground for invertebrates. Maintain high water levels through spring and summer for foraging birds. Create scraps and water features such as seasonal pools.

A49 Manage existing wet grassland habitat for nature

- A49.1 Use low intensity grazing**, such as extensive grazing or mob grazing with long rest periods, to limit browsing pressures and compaction on grasslands to ensure that flowering plants are able to complete seasonal cycles. Invasive species should be removed.
- A49.2 Where retained, drainage ditches should be managed on rotation.** Management should be conducted at specific times of year which avoid disturbance of breeding and overwintering wildlife, and through including rotational and incremental management.

FURTHER READING

- [Climate Change Adaptation Manual: Purple moor grass and rush pasture](#) – Natural England
- [Grazing marsh ditches: An important habitat for invertebrates](#) – Buglife
- [Grazing marsh ditches: Creation and restoration for invertebrates](#) – Buglife
- [Grazing marsh ditches: Management for invertebrates](#) – Buglife
- [Managing culm grassland](#) – Devon Culm
- [Managing spring and seepages in grassland, heathland and open habitats](#) – Buglife
- [Wet grassland and grazing marsh](#) – Farm Wildlife

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Common Toad
- Coral-necklace
- Cornish Moneywort
- Marsh Clubmoss
- Mud Pond Snail
- Oystercatcher
- Pennyroyal
- Small Red Damselfly
- Swift
- Yellow Centaury



FOCUS HABITATS

- Floodplain and Grazing Marsh
- Marshes
- Ponds and Pools
- Purple Moor-grass and Rush Pasture
- Springs and Seepages
- Temporary Ponds
- Wet Grassland



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Pollination
- Good Soil and Sediment Status
- Food Supply
- Jobs and Investment

PRIORITY 17

Flower rich habitats on the Isles of Scilly

There are more biodiverse and wildflower-rich grasslands, which are better managed and connected. They form part of a mosaic with other semi-natural habitats like scrub, heath, and wetland, allowing diverse wildlife to thrive and move – especially pollinators.

Location: Isles of Scilly

Code: P17



A50 Create new flower rich habitat

A50.1 Create floristically diverse hay meadows and pastures, with careful attention to biosecurity issues and potential introduction of invasive species.

A50.2 Locally collected seed or green hay is used in direct sowing, or propagated as plugs to restore floral diversity.

A51 Manage existing flower rich habitat

A51.1 Remove excessive scrub and bracken to allow the establishment of wildflower-rich coastal grasslands and heathland. Cuttings should be removed to prevent nutrient build up.

A51.3 Manage flower rich grasslands, including lowland and hay meadows, through an appropriate cutting or grazing regime. Wait for flowers to complete their annual cycle for the benefit of small mammals and pollinators. Leave an uncut margin during cutting, to provide shelter and food sources for wildlife.

A51.2 Establish new hedgerows, hedges and create Cornish hedges to connect habitats.

A52 Buffer protected sites with new high quality habitat

A52.1 Existing habitats are enhanced and expanded around protected sites to increase their resilience, whilst reducing the pressures from outside. Particular focus on elimination of invasive non-native plant species, extending Atlantic rainforests and buffers to control run-off into wetlands.

A52.2 Regenerative farming practices are implemented around protected sites using actions from [P5](#).

A53 Remove non-native invasive plants

A53.1 Focus on the removal of non-native invasive plants from existing habitats. Including through trials for eradication methods and development of fundable management plans.



Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...

FOCUS SPECIES

- Black Oil Beetle
- Chamomile
- Dwarf Pansy
- Moss Carder Bee

FOCUS HABITATS

- Atlantic Rainforest
- Coastal Grassland
- Heathland
- Hedgerows
- Ponds and Pools
- Road Verges
- Springs and Seepages
- Town and Village Green and Blue Spaces
- Wetlands
- Wildlife-rich Grassland

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Pollination
- Good Soil and Sediment Status

FURTHER READING



• See Further Reading for [Priority 15](#) and [16](#)

RECOVER NATURE USING THE STRATEGY

1 Read the Strategy for inspiration

2 Explore the Nature Recovery Network maps

3 Discover the Priorities and Actions for your area

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MAPS + STRATEGY DOCUMENT

5 Tell us about your successes to inspire others

Visit our [Let's Talk Nature Recovery Hub](#)

i Interested in Biodiversity Net Gain?

The Zone 2 maps act as the Strategic Significance Multiplier



COASTAL WILDBELT

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are surrounded by hundreds of miles of dramatic coastline. In years gone by, huers (people employed by fishers to spot fish) would have stood on the clifftops to watch for pilchard shoals, shouting “hevva!” when they spotted the once enormous shoals.

OUR COASTAL HERITAGE IS INGRAINED INTO OUR SPIRIT, OUR RECREATIONAL PURSUITS, OUR CULTURE AND OUR ECONOMY.

The Coastal Wildbelt is a landscape-scale zone around the entire coast, reaching above high water and extending inland to where salty winds blow in from the sea. It consists of a mosaic of cliffs, nature-rich maritime grasslands, heathlands, sand dunes, and farmland interspersed with coastal towns and villages.

Seabirds such as fulmar, kittiwake and herring gulls nest on cliffs and rocky outcrops alongside the occasional raven and peregrine falcon. Shorebirds such as redshank, godwit and ringed plover forage and even nest along our



shores. In Scilly, Manx shearwater and storm petrels breed in colonies on islands cleared of rats and other invasive predators.

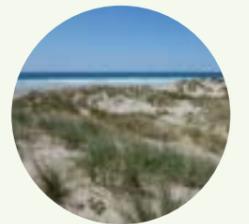
Gorse and shrubs cling to the cliff faces in areas, leading to swathes of coastal heathland and maritime grassland. In summer our coastal grasslands and heathlands are bursting with pinks, purples and yellows. These areas were traditionally grazed, and the reintroduction of grazing has been vital to recover key species including the Cornish chough. Buff-tailed bumblebees buzz between the flowers, and furry oak eggar moth caterpillars wriggle across the spiky gorse. In spring, fat and shiny oil beetles scurry across the coast path. In Cornwall, adders and common lizards can also be seen basking in the sunny exposed areas.



These areas are at risk from increased erosion as climate change makes storms more powerful and more frequent. The Towans (sand dunes) backing many beaches, are important natural coastal defences from storms and rising seas, helping our communities to be resilient in the face of climate change. Many are being squeezed into smaller areas as sea level rises. Development and intensive agriculture can further increase this coastal squeeze. Their proximity to residential areas and holiday hotspots gives rise to high footfall and disturbance, which they are unable to withstand, leading to damage and erosion, which could ultimately lead to the loss of a vital protective barrier for our coastal settlements.

FACTS AND FIGURES FOR CORNWALL

Sand dunes cover approximately 2% of the area of Cornwall



The Cornish section of the South West Coast Path covers over 300 miles of trails

Cornwall has 4,034 ha maritime cliff and slope



48 historic ports and harbours

13 Protected wreck sites

OUR FOCUS COASTAL WILDBELT HABITATS

The Coastal Wildbelt is a landscape-scale zone around the entire coast, reaching above high water and extending inland to where salty winds blow in from the sea. It consists of a mosaic of habitats.

Maritime grassland

A special habitat that is a product of its exposure to wind and salt spray. It occurs in both Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and is generally short, kept this way by grazing (livestock and/or rabbits) as well as exposure. Maritime Grassland can be particularly important for rare plants such as Wild Asparagus.

Coastal heathland

Coastal heathlands tend to occur in a mosaic of semi-natural habitat which includes scrub and bracken. It is important for plants, insects and songbirds such as stonechat and wheatear which feed on the abundance of insects. Exposure to gale-force winds and salt spray, steep slopes with thin soils, frequent erosion and landslides - all contribute to forming unique and characteristic wildlife assemblages.

Towans (sand dunes)

These support both wildlife and are rich in plant diversity. Rare species are often found within them. They also play an important role in protecting our communities against sea level rise and coastal flooding.

Cliffs

Critical nesting sites for seabirds, they act as refuges for wildlife, they also host unique plant communities which include rare cliff-dwelling species.

Coastal woodland

Woodland is particularly important to Cornwall's south coast where a labyrinth of creeks and sheltered valleys offer trees protection from strong winds. These woodlands are important carbon sinks as well as vital habitat for a range of species. In particular where these woodlands meet the intertidal zone, this can create a mangrove like habitat for aquatic species.

SEE ALSO...

Trees, woodland and scrub
Farmland, hedges and edges
Rivers and wetlands
Heath and moor mosaics
Nature-rich grasslands



PRESSURES ON OUR COASTAL WILDBELT



Climate change

Shifts in temperature, changing weather patterns and increasingly frequent extreme weather events all impact and alter our coastal environment. Climate change raises sea levels and can accelerate coastal erosion, increasing the loss of habitats like salt marshes and threatening species that have evolved to depend on specific ecological conditions.



Pollution

Marine debris, plastic waste, oil spills, agricultural runoff and sewage overflows all pollute our coastal waters, harming marine habitats and coastal life. These pollutants degrade water quality and the ecological value of our coastal wildbelt.



Tourism and recreation

High visitor numbers, particularly in popular coastal areas, leads to trampling of vegetation, soil compaction, and disturbance of wildlife. Removal of driftwood and other strandline debris can have a negative impact on those creatures that need this habitat for shelter and breeding. Coastal grasslands and sand dunes are increasingly experiencing damage through excessive footfall. Both local and visiting boats anchor in sensitive areas, damaging key marine habitats.



Coastal development

Development near to our coasts can often lead to habitat destruction and the disruption of natural coastal processes, these infrastructures have lasting impacts on nature.



Invasive species

Invasive species within our waters such as pacific oysters outcompete natives and disturb the ecological balance of our coastlines. Encroachment by spreading species such as sour fig on cliffs outcompete other wildflowers and lichens.



Scrub encroachment

When left unmanaged, scrub encroachment from bracken and gorse can engulf these habitats, which can change the microclimate that are important for many plants, invertebrates and reptiles. The location of coastal habitats makes access with machinery and thus management challenging.



INSPIRATION



RETURN OF THE CHOUGH



Once a common sight in areas of the UK including Cornwall, the red-legged chough fell into drastic decline. The National Trust and other local charities have been working hard to turn this around, bringing back traditional grazing to help recreate habitats where these colourful and historically important birds can thrive.



MAKING SPACE FOR SAND



Making space for sand aims to help build community resilience through nature-based solutions approach to beach and dune management. With community and landowners support the project helps facilitate the development of adaptation and resilience plans, and in some instances deliver interventions.

Find out more

<https://www.makingspaceforsand.co.uk>



ISLES OF SCILLY SEABIRD RECOVERY PROJECT



The Isles of Scilly are a nationally and internationally important location for seabirds. Invasive brown rats have predated on nesting seabirds and decimated numbers across the islands. The Seabird Recovery Project aims to work with communities to clear the islands of rats, restoring nesting sites to allow for seabird recovery. This project works with communities to help set traps and monitor impact using trail cameras. This is still the largest community-based successful island restoration project in the world.

Find out more

<https://www.ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk/our-projects/isles-scilly-seabird-recovery-project>



THE LIZARD RARITIES PROJECT



The Lizard is renowned for its exceptional assemblages of plants, bryophytes and lichens, many of which are largely or wholly confined to the Lizard, known as 'Lizard Specialities'. The Lizard Rarities Project will deliver targeted action to create and enhance habitats for 15 of these species across 18 National Trust sites. Habitat management for this suite of species also benefits many other species of animal and plant, many of which are nationally rare and reliant on these habitats.

Find out more

Species Recovery Programme
Lizard NT | National Trust



TAKING ACTION FOR THE COASTAL WILDBELT



Nature-rich landscapes are usually mosaics of a mixture of habitats.

REFER TO



- Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice
- The Nature Recovery Network Maps
- Focus Species Recovery Toolkit (Appendix C)
- ➔ All habitat Priorities and Actions
- ➔ Focus species, Habitats and Nature-based Solutions boxes
- Priorities and Habitats Matrix (Appendix B)

PRIORITY 18

Connect the coastal wildbelt

A diverse landscape-scale mosaic of coastal habitats has been established and enhanced for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The coastal zone is subject to reduced pressure from land-based activity and is delivering nature-based solutions. In Cornwall, more space has been allowed for nature, to adapt to a changing climate and limit coastal squeeze.



Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

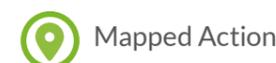
Code: P18

A54 Expand and connect the coastal habitat network

A54.1 In Cornwall, aim to create a coastal wildbelt that extends inland at least up to 250m, where feasible. This should create and connect a mosaic of habitats including our grassland and heathland, farmed and woodland landscapes that typify the Cornish coast. This gives space for rollback of habitats at risk of being lost through coastal erosion and provides habitat for many of the vulnerable wildlife which our coast supports.

A54.3 Create wildflower-rich habitats along the coast for our rare and threatened pollinators such as the long-horned bee and silver-studded blue. Use locally sourced seed mixes and/or natural regeneration from historic seedbanks and focus on areas within the **B-lines network**.

A54.2 Habitat creation should have regard to and enable the implementation of shoreline management plans to adapt communities to a sustainable location and support the development of coastal change management areas.



A55 Manage existing habitat to promote coastal species

A55.1 Manage the coastal Wildbelt to create habitats and feeding areas for a wide range of species including Chough and Gull Bunting, and invertebrates like the Long-horned Bee, incorporating grazing practices where appropriate.

A55.2 Habitats within the coastal zone to be managed according to the relevant priorities within this strategy.

A55.3 Cordon off ground nesting bird areas and use signage to remind dog owners to walk their dogs on leads during ground nesting bird season and where livestock is present, in accordance with national legislation. All walkers to stick to defined paths where they exist, which is particularly important for ground nesting birds.

A55.4 Encourage dark skies by reducing unnecessary light pollution.

A55.5 Ensure coastal wildbelt management is informed by and aligns with the recommendations in the latest version of the Shoreline Management Plan.

A55.6 Reduce the usage of wormers on grazing animals to reduce impacts on coastal invertebrates and stimulate dung flora and fauna. Work with farm advisors to assess suitable alternative management techniques which can enable this.

A56 Restore and maintain existing coastal wildbelt (Isles of Scilly)

A56.1 Restore and maintain existing coastal wildbelt by managing bracken and gorse. A variety of approaches are needed to account for accessibility. Regularly remove at least 2-3 metres of vegetation adjacent to permissive footpaths to create sheltered wildlife corridors between more open areas of heathland and maritime grassland. Manage open areas using livestock grazing, where access allows.

A56.2 Clear space near granite outcropping (locally known as carns) to retain this important habitat for lichen communities which are threatened by engulfment by coprosma and pittosporum, and carpobrotus.

A56.3 Remove invasive plant species from granite 'plinths', flush with surrounding ground in the coastal belt, that are important habitats for golden hair lichen, ciliate strap lichen and least adder's tongue fern and liverwort species. Maintain these free of encroaching vegetation and use conservation grazing to prevent red fescue becoming a dominating monoculture.

FURTHER READING



- [B-Lines project for pollinators](#) - Buglife
- [Coastal grazing marsh mosaic habitat management](#) - Buglife
- [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Shoreline Management Plan](#)
- [Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code](#)
- [Light Pollution](#) - Buglife
- [Managing coastal soft cliffs for invertebrates Summary Report](#) - Buglife
- [Managing spring and seepages in grassland, heathland and open habitats](#) - Buglife
- [Managing springs and seepages on coastal cliffs](#) - Buglife
- [Marine and coastal wildlife code](#) - GOV.UK
- [Coast Protection Authority](#) - Cornwall Council
- See Further Reading for relevant Priorities



Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- A lichen *Parmotrema robustum*
- Bastard Balm
- Black Oil Beetle
- Buffish Mining Bee
- Chamomile
- Chough
- Ciliate Strap-lichen
- Cornish Eyebright
- Curlew
- Dwarf Pansy
- Dwarf Rush
- Gilt-edged Lichen
- Grayling
- Golden Hair-lichen
- Heath Pouchwort
- Kestrel
- Lapwing
- Least Adder's-tongue Fern
- Long-horned Bee
- Moss Carder Bee
- Orange Bird's-foot
- Oystercatcher
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Red Barbed-ant
- Scilly Shrew
- Shore Dock
- Silver-studded Blue
- Skylark
- Swift
- Swiss Sac-spider
- Western Ground-spider
- Wild Asparagus



FOCUS HABITATS

- Arable Fields
- Bulb Fields
- Coastal Heathland
- Coastal Grassland
- Estuaries
- Intertidal Mudflats
- Intertidal Seagrass
- Pasture
- Ponds and Pools
- Reedbeds
- Saltmarsh
- Sand Dunes
- Springs and Seepages
- Streams and Rivers
- Vegetated Shingle
- Wildlife-rich Grassland
- Woodland



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Erosion Control
- Food Supply
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture



PRIORITY 19

Enhance sand dunes

Beach and dune systems have been expanded and restored, with invasive non-native species removed. They are being managed to control encroachment, to be dynamic and self-regulating. Dunes have been given space to naturally adapt, evolve and migrate. They are playing an important role in protecting communities from the impacts of climate change and environmental hazards.

Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Code: P19



A57 Create and roll back sand dunes

A57.1 Create and expand on dune habitats by making space for sand.

Roll-back of dunes is supported through buffer zones and re-locating infrastructure where possible and working with surrounding landowners and communities as recommended by the Shoreline Management Plan and local adaptive strategies. This supports long-term benefits through flood protection, climate adaptation and reduced risks from erosion.

A58 Manage and enhance sand dunes

A58.1 Management aims to encourage natural dune dynamics

which include a balance between newer areas, successional habitats and older habitats. Management takes into account the whole dune system and connecting systems to develop a site-specific approach which benefits a range of wildlife. Invasive species such as sea buckthorn and Japanese rose are removed using techniques such as hand pulling.

A58.2 Implementation of and alignment with the Cornwall Beach Dune Management Plans.

A58.3 Access points are carefully managed to prevent unwanted erosion.

A58.4 Periodically fence off vulnerable areas, such as young sparsely vegetated foredunes and ground nesting bird sites, to prevent damage by excessive disturbance or overuse.

A58.5 Retain and encourage small and controlled areas of native scrub and tree species

which provide shelter, nectar sources, and overwintering sites for many dune invertebrates and other wildlife.

A58.6 Maintain the water table in dune slacks by

avoiding any water abstraction, drainage, or creation of scrapes and pools on nearby land. Additionally, avoid deepening dune slacks to make them permanent – seasonal dune slacks that flood in winter but dry to mossy pools in the summer are especially important for scarce invertebrates.

A58.7 Conservation grazing with appropriate livestock should be used to manage areas of scrub within dune systems.

FURTHER READING



- [Beach Dune Management Plans](#) – Cornwall Council

- [Climate change adaptation manual: Sand dunes](#) – Natural England

- [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Shoreline Management Plan](#)

- [Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code](#)

- [Sand dune managers handbook](#) – Dynamic Dunescape

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Adder
- Chamomile
- Dwarf Pansy
- Large Scabious Mining Bee
- Orange Bird's-foot
- Ringed Plover
- Silver-studded Blue
- Shore Dock



FOCUS HABITATS

- Beaches
- Boulder beach
- Dune Slacks
- Coastal Grassland
- Coastal Heathland
- Ponds and Pools
- Saltmarsh
- Sand Dunes
- Scrub
- Springs and Seepages



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Erosion Control
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture

PRIORITY 20

Grow Scilly's seabird populations

Seabird populations are increasing following removal of non-native brown rat and invasive plant species. Current "rat free" islands remain 'rat-free'. People living on the islands and visitors are engaged with seabird recovery, and biosecurity is embedded within the culture of local communities and businesses.

Location: Isles of Scilly

Code: P20



ACTIONS



A59 Restore habitats on uninhabited islands

A59.1 Restore habitats on permanently vegetated uninhabited islands by cutting, burning and mechanical management and maintain by active management, and by conservation grazing, for the benefit of wildlife including breeding seabirds.

A59.2 Eliminate pittosporum, coprosma, capobrotus, and other invasive species and prevent re-establishment.

A60 Reduce wildlife disturbance

A60.1 Limit dog and human disturbance of shorebirds, seals and wader nesting areas using zoning, seasonal restrictions, education and signage especially during breeding seasons.

A60.2 Develop plans for managing buffer zones around sensitive wildlife sites in partnership with landowners, NGOs and communities, to support rare species of plants, waders, nesting seabirds and seals.

A60.3 Encourage understanding and compliance with Coastal Wildlife Codes such as the Seashore Code for rockpooling, dogs on leads and managed footpaths to help walkers to stick to defined paths, and exclusion zones to protect birds and seals from disturbance.

ACTIONS  **A61 Continue biosecurity measures**

A61.1 Expand rat eradication and control of feral cats prioritising St Helen’s, Bryher, Tresco and St Martin’s working with local communities to install and maintain traps.

A61.2 Continue biosecurity measures to ensure St Agnes and Annet maintain their rat free status.

A61.3 Work with communities to control feral cats and predation across all islands

FURTHER READING 

• [How to spot seabirds on Scilly](#) – Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

• [Isles of Scilly 2023 Special Protected Area Survey](#) – Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

• [Isles of Scilly seabird strategy](#) – Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, Isles of Scilly National Landscape, NCEA, RSPB and Natural England

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...

FOCUS SPECIES 

- Common Tern
- Fulmar
- Great Black-backed Gull
- Guillemot
- Herring Gull
- Kittiwake
- Lesser Black-backed Gull
- Manx Shearwater
- Puffin
- Razorbill
- Shag
- Storm Petrel

FOCUS HABITATS 

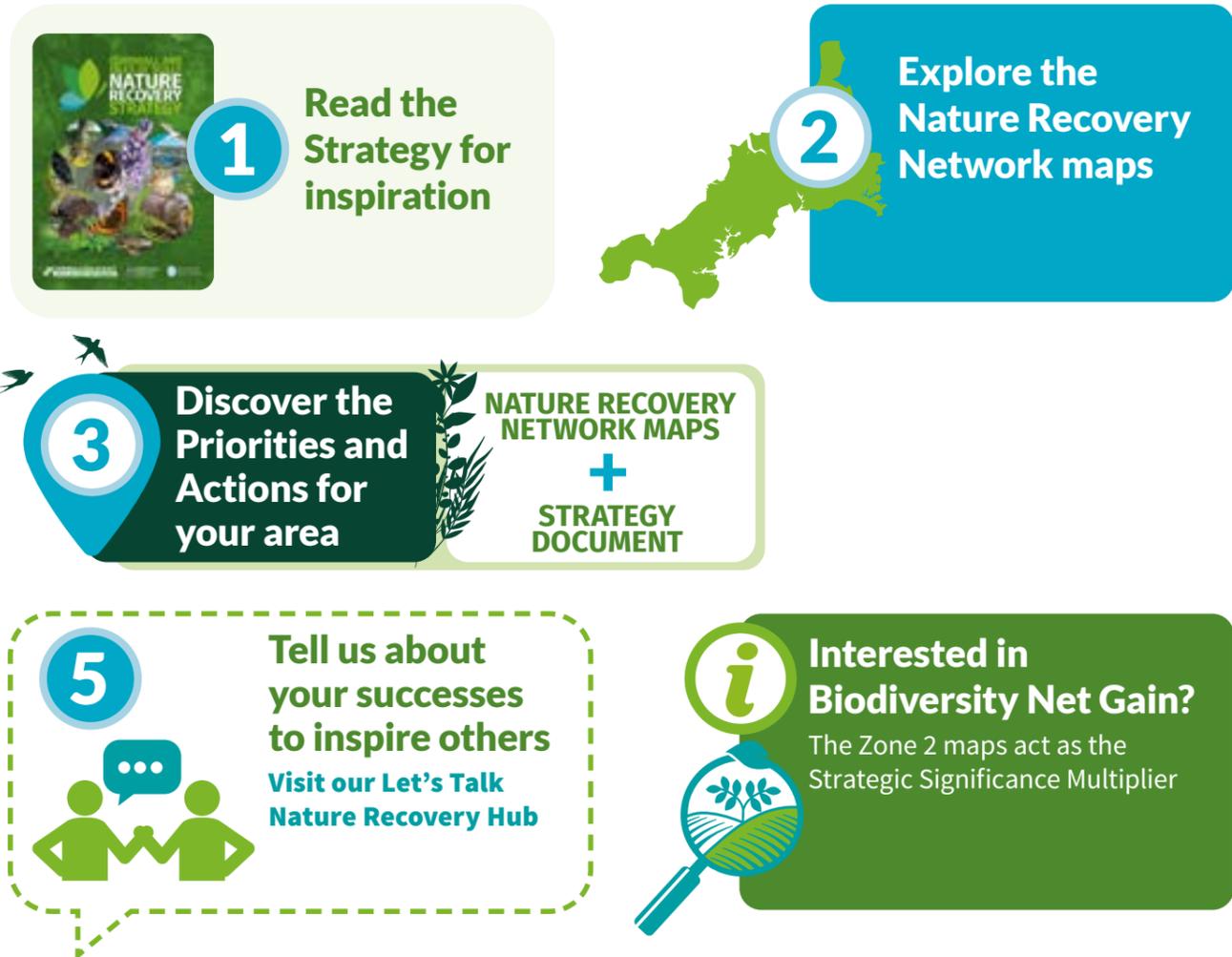
- Boulder Beaches
- Coastal Grassland
- Coastal Heathland
- Exposed Rock Faces
- Intertidal Seagrass
- Rocky Outcrops
- Rocky Shore
- Sand Dunes
- Sandy Beaches

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS 

- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture



RECOVER NATURE USING THE STRATEGY



 **Mapped Coastal Wildbelt Opportunities** are a mixture of **specific habitat Opportunities** (where evidence suggests they will deliver the biggest benefits for species).
In other areas a mosaic of Coastal Wildbelt actions are presented to reflect the suite of habitat creation and enhancement options in these areas.

INTERTIDAL

Our intertidal habitats are the interface between land, rivers and sea. Our estuaries, rocky shores, sandy and boulder beaches are home to an abundance of resilient wildlife living in some of the most extreme of conditions.

THE REGIONS OPEN COAST IS INTERSPERSED WITH DYNAMIC SANDY AND BOULDER BEACHES TOPPED BY STRANGLINES.



The sight and sound of Oystercatcher and Sanderling flitting along the beach, feeding on the strandlines and dodging the rising tide captures our senses. Varied geology helps shape our rocky shores, often covered in kelps and seaweeds. From Mussels clinging to Atlantic wave-battered rocks to more sheltered shores and beaches. Here crabs, anemones and fish hide within rockpools, with sponges and bryozoans clinging to the underside of rocks. Secluded, inaccessible coves, uninhabited islands and caves offer sanctuary for seals to haul out, digest and give birth.

In the Isles of Scilly, shingle beaches offer important breeding grounds for Ringed Plover. These Red Listed breeding birds have been lost from most of the southwest.

In Cornwall, our estuaries link shoreline habitats to our freshwater rivers, where migratory fish, like salmon and trout come to spawn. Here the intertidal seagrass beds provide nurseries for many of our commercial fish species, whilst also storing carbon.

As the tide goes out, saltmarsh and mudflats are exposed. Wading birds like curlew, redshank, dunlin and godwit come to feed on the invertebrates that live in the mud. Where our estuaries are given space, mudflats make way into lush green saltmarshes filled with plants like samphire and sea lavender. These can store carbon and protect our farmland and communities from coastal erosion by acting as a buffer between us and stormy seas. Combined, these habitats are particularly important for our breeding and overwintering birds.



INTERTIDAL HABITATS AND SPECIES AT RISK

However, these intertidal habitats are at risk from rising sea-levels squeezing them against hard infrastructure and coastal defences. Pollution also threatens them through increased nutrients from sewage and agricultural run-off. Pollution is also leading to the build-up of anti-microbial resistant genes, which is an emerging threat to humans and wildlife.

Disturbance is also a threat to breeding and foraging intertidal wildlife. Tourism is an important part of the economy for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Visitors love the beaches, and the wonderful wildlife they can watch there.

However, this puts humans and wildlife into the same spaces, and if not observed from a distance, can prevent wildlife from foraging and breeding.



OUR FOCUS INTERTIDAL HABITATS

SEE ALSO...

Trees, woodland and scrub
Farmland, hedges and edges
Rivers and Wetlands
Coastal wildbelt

Rocky shores

These serve as both key feeding grounds for seabirds and marine invertebrates, they support a diverse range of specially adapted marine life including barnacles, limpets and algae, and are important haul-out sites for seals.



Mudflats

Crucial feeding areas for wading and migratory bird species, they are rich in nutrients and support a wide variety of invertebrates like worms.



Estuaries

Many of our focus intertidal habitats are found in our estuaries as habitat mosaics closely linked to the surrounding river catchment. On the south coast these are mainly rias, or drowned-river valleys, with dynamic sandy estuaries dominating the north coast.



Sandy beaches

These play an important role in key coastal processes like acting as buffers against storm surges and erosion. They also support species such as sand dune plants and nesting birds.

Saltmarsh and reedbeds

These act as natural flood defences and carbon sinks, they also provide important habitats for salt-tolerant birds, plants and invertebrates.



Intertidal seagrass

Vital habitats for juvenile fish and marine species. They provide biodiversity and help to reduce coastal erosion through stabilising sediment.



Boulder beaches

They work to absorb wave energy which offers protection to coastal ecosystems. These beaches also provide diverse microhabitats.



Saline lagoons

Both natural and man-made areas of open salty water are dotted in a few locations along the banks of our estuaries and open coast, supporting bird life and unusual species specially adapted to these habitats.



PRESSURES ON OUR INTERTIDAL HABITATS



Climate Change

As our climate changes, we will experience rising sea levels, more frequent and stronger storms and heavier rainfall. Storms can damage the delicate intertidal habitats, whilst rising sea levels could mean we lose some habitats altogether. Heavier rainfall impacts intertidal habitats in two ways. One is through overloading our drainage systems, leading to more frequent storm overflows and the potential for more sewage entering these areas. This leads to excessive amounts of plant and algae (eutrophication) in waterways which reduces light and can harm other wildlife, it can also reduce photosynthesis of seagrass and contaminates our mudflats and saltmarshes. Secondly, it leads to increased run-off from the land which can lead to pollutants from roads and developments entering the water. In addition, it leads to increased agricultural run-off bringing excessive nutrients and soil into the water.



Pollution

Intertidal areas are under pressure from plastic pollution, chemicals including pesticides and vessel anti-fouling, sewage, noise and light pollution. These upset the delicate balance of these ecosystems and has impacts across the whole food chain. For example, chemical and sewage pollution is particularly damaging to filter feeding bivalves such as mussels which are then an important food source for waders and shorebirds. Toxins from micro-plastics, sewage and chemicals builds up in filter feeders and is then ingested in the animals that eat them.



Recreational disturbance

Many of us love to spend time in the sea and in our Cornish estuaries. Unfortunately, if not done responsibly this can negatively impact wildlife. Examples of disturbance include: dogs off leads scaring sea birds, anchoring on sensitive seabed habitats which damages seagrass beds, kayaking too close to feeding birds and not following best-practice or speed limits when using water crafts including boats and jet skis. Another aspect of recreational disturbance is through bait digging and foraging activities, this takes valuable wild resources out of the ecosystem and damages habitats when people walk over them. Because it is unregulated there is no limit to how much resource people take.



Coastal squeeze

Development and hard infrastructure to protect communities from flooding and sea level rise means that these habitats are squeezed into smaller and smaller areas and have nowhere to expand into.



Invasive non-native species (INNS)

Species introduced by humans outside of their natural range that have the ability to spread and which cause harm to the environment, economy, human health or the way we live. One of the most common INNS in Cornwall are pacific oysters, which outcompete native oysters.



INSPIRATION



CALSTOCK FLOOD DEFENCE SCHEME



The Tamar Valley is a Special Area of Conservation but the tidal wetlands here are under threat from coastal squeeze as existing coastal defences prevent intertidal habitats from expanding inland. The Environment Agency gained funding to realign the flood defences to protect properties while creating new intertidal habitats.

Find out more

<https://www.tamarvalley-nl.org.uk/our-work/projects/calstock-wetlands>



LIVING SEAWALLS



A Falmouth harbour wall that was sparse of wildlife is being upgraded to become a bristling habitat of marine flora and fauna due to the installation of 'habitiles' designed to increase biodiversity. These living seawalls are designed to create habitat and encourage nature to thrive.

Find out more

<https://www.falmouthharbour.co.uk/general-news/seawall-tiles/>



ADVANCED MOORING SYSTEMS (AMS)



New nature friendly mooring systems are being tested across Cornwall to help protect our ocean floor. Traditional mooring systems can damage important habitat such as Seagrass and Mearl beds through the dragging of chains or rope on the ocean floor as the tide moves. AMS use a system of floats to mitigate this, suspending the rope in the water and reducing this drag.

Find out more

<https://www.falmouthharbour.co.uk/environment/advanced-mooring-systems-ams/>



YOUR SHORE NETWORK



The Your Shore Network consists of a collection of community-led marine conservation groups across Cornwall, facilitated by Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Through public engagement, citizen science, and local campaigns, the groups work both independently and collaboratively to raise awareness of our coast and seas and to present a united voice advocating for better protection for our coast.

Find out more

Your Shore Network | Cornwall Wildlife Trust

TAKING ACTION FOR INTERTIDAL HABITATS



Nature-rich landscapes are usually mosaics of a mixture of habitats.

REFER TO



- Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice
- The Nature Recovery Network Maps
- Focus Species Recovery Toolkit (Appendix C)
- All habitat Priorities and Actions
- Focus species, Habitats and Nature-based Solutions boxes
- Priorities and Habitats Matrix (Appendix B)

PRIORITY 21

Create and better manage intertidal habitats

Intertidal and estuarine habitats are given appropriate space to migrate inland where sea level rise, increased storminess and coastal squeeze is happening due to climate change. Habitats are enhanced and restored to support wildlife and provide nature-based solutions.

Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Code: P21



A62 Create intertidal habitat

A62.1 Create new intertidal habitats through intertidal flooding, using case studies of the flood defence improvement scheme at Calstock, Cotehele and South Hoo. This benefits fish, river birds and wading birds. Implement managed realignment approaches in estuarine habitats in accordance with the Shoreline Management Plan recommendations.

A62.2 Develop plans for migrating intertidal habitats inland in areas where potential loss of these habitats may occur due to sea level rise or saltwater inundation. Work with landowners and local communities to ensure that they are consulted in this process.





A63 Restore intertidal habitats

A63.1 Restore rocky shores, mudflats, saltmarshes and intertidal seagrass by enabling natural sediment movement and removing redundant structures such as old boat hulks, debris and litter alongside active intervention such as planting, and a reduction in pressures.

A63.2 Restore saline lagoons by re-establishing natural processes, maintaining historic structures and re-connecting land and sea.

A63.3 Reduce erosion of intertidal habitats such as mudflats and saltmarsh, through effective management of access and boating activities e.g., speed limits to reduce wash from boats.

A63.4 Identify, monitor and control invasive species, for example the Pacific oyster. Control can be achieved through prevention measures, such as capturing boat biological debris and ensuring disposal away from water, to physical removal via controlled and approved culling events.

A63.5 Manage saltmarshes to retain a full transition of vegetational stages, from open saline pools and salt pans, brackish dune slacks, to vegetated terrestrial fringes in upper saltmarsh areas. This will support species of varying salinity tolerance, create a diversity of microhabitats, and provide winter hibernation sites.

ACTIONS A64 Manage habitats and activities to reduce pollution, including from run-off

A64.1 Clean beach litter by hand to avoid disturbance to strandline habitats. Limit any removal of natural debris from the strandline.

A64.2 Reduce pollution into estuarine and intertidal habitats through positive land management in the catchment, neighbouring fields and creation of wide nature-rich buffers between them and other land uses, along with upgrades and maintenance of water and waste infrastructure, including septic tanks.

A64.3 Reduce storm overflow discharges through effective natural flood management e.g., creation of riparian buffers, ponds, wetland mosaics and sustainable soil management.

A64.4 Limit coastal light pollution from new and existing coastal infrastructure.

A64.5 Reduce sources of noise pollution near sensitive sites.

A64.6 Enable water pollution prevention from recreational boating through widening engagement and compliance with best practise guidance provided by the [RYA's Green Blue](#) to reduce leakage from engines, to using environmentally friendly antifouling paints and using land-based facilities for disposal of your boats blackwater.

A65 Reduce wildlife disturbance

A65.1 Limit dog and human disturbance of shorebirds, seals and wader nesting areas using zoning, seasonal restrictions, education and signage especially during breeding seasons.

A65.2 Develop plans for managing buffer zones around sensitive wildlife sites in partnership with landowners, NGOs and communities, to support rare species of plants, waders, nesting seabirds and seals.

A65.3 Encourage understanding and compliance with Coastal Wildlife Codes such as the Seashore Code for rockpooling, dogs on leads and managed footpaths to help walkers to stick to defined paths, and exclusion zones to protect birds and seals from disturbance.

A66 Increase education resources in publicly accessible intertidal spaces

A66.1 Increase the number of educational resources for coastal users at popular sites for a range of water users including swimmers, snorkelers, anglers, boat users, kayak and SUP users and swimmers. Materials may include information boards, leaflets and stickers.

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...

FOCUS SPECIES

- A lichen *Parmotrema robustum*
- Atlantic Salmon
- Brown/Sea Trout
- Common Tern
- Curlew
- Dwarf Rush
- European Eel
- Fulmar
- Gilt-edged Lichen
- Great Black-backed Gull
- Grey Seal
- Guillemot
- Herring Gull
- Kittiwake
- Lesser Black-backed Gull
- Manx Shearwater
- Osprey
- Oystercatcher
- Puffin
- Razorbill
- Ringed Plover
- Sandhill Rustic
- Scilly Shrew
- Sea Lamprey
- Shag
- Smelt
- Storm Petrel
- Triangular Club-rush

FOCUS HABITATS

- Boulder Beaches
- Estuaries
- Intertidal Mudflats
- Intertidal Seagrass
- Reedbeds
- Riparian Woodland
- Rocky Shore
- Saline Lagoons
- Saltmarsh
- Sandy Beaches
- Streams and Rivers
- Wetlands

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Erosion Control
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture

- [Climate change adaptation manual: Coastal saltmarsh | Coastal vegetated shingle](#) - Natural England
- [Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code](#)
- [The Mosaic Approach: Managing habitats for species. Coastal saltmarsh](#) - Natural England
- [Making your marine & coastal encounter great for wildlife](#) - Wildlife First
- [Planning applications on the coast](#) - Cornwall Council
- [Water Pollution Prevention](#) - The Green Blue

FURTHER READING

RECOVER NATURE USING THE STRATEGY

1 Read the Strategy for inspiration

2 Explore the Nature Recovery Network maps

3 Discover the Priorities and Actions for your area

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MAPS + STRATEGY DOCUMENT

5 Tell us about your successes to inspire others

Visit our [Let's Talk Nature Recovery Hub](#)

Interested in Biodiversity Net Gain?

The Zone 2 maps act as the Strategic Significance Multiplier

TOWN AND VILLAGE GREEN AND BLUE SPACE

From the trees that line our streets to the grass in our parks and verges to the hedges and shrubby gardens which mimic woodland edges, our towns and villages can help nature’s recovery. Not only can nature thrive in our gardens, but many built-up areas also incorporate green spaces such as woodlands, hedges, streams, grasslands and ponds, which are of importance culturally, economically and especially for nature.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR POLLINATORS AND SONGBIRDS



Encouraging nature in our urban spaces can help bring people closer to nature. Green spaces help clean air and water and offer places for reset, relaxation and exercise which can improve our health and well-being. They also provide vital wildlife corridors and links from the urban to the wider landscape that help create a more resilient network for nature and improve ecological connectivity.



Towns and villages are particularly important for pollinators and songbirds where relatively small areas of sympathetically managed habitat including gardens and green roofs can be highly important. It is crucial that we protect and enhance these green spaces, so they can help mitigate the impacts of climate change by improving air quality, supporting pollinators and managing water run-off.



FACTS AND FIGURES



5.5% of Cornwall's land is taken up by towns and villages

2.4% of Cornwall's land is devoted to transport networks



OUR FOCUS TOWN AND VILLAGE GREEN AND BLUE SPACE HABITATS

SEE ALSO...

Trees, woodland and scrub
Farmland, hedges and edges
Rivers and Wetlands
Nature-rich grasslands

Hedges and road verges

These provide vital green corridors for wildlife in and through our towns and villages. If managed appropriately, these often-overlooked strips can support a diverse range of plant and animal species. Connecting fragmented habitats, road verges help sustain biodiversity, allowing species to move through the landscape. Changes to mowing regimes can significantly enhance their ecological value, turning them into essential refuges for wildlife.



Orchards

Not only can orchards offer a bountiful harvest, but these special local green spaces can also serve as a focal point which bring people together. Once much more numerous and widespread, many orchards have been lost from the landscape either through removal (grubbing up) for alternative use or development or through simple neglect. Where communities come together, orchards can be restored and replanted to provide a community resource for everyone.



Private gardens

These can offer safe havens for wildlife and nature within towns and villages. When managed for nature, these gardens can form a significant network that enhances ecological connectivity.



Public green and blue spaces

Essential spaces for our health and well-being. Blue spaces are those which contain water such as fountains, ponds and rivers. If managed for nature they can contain diverse habitats, increase wildlife in our towns and villages and deliver nature-based solutions such as flood alleviation. They connect people to nature, and wildlife to the rural landscape.



PRESSURES ON OUR TOWN AND VILLAGE GREEN AND BLUE SPACE



Community disconnection

As communities become less and less connected with nature, nature itself suffers through unintended consequences of ill-informed action. As people become less connected with nature, we lose the knowledge, skills and expertise required to manage urban green spaces for nature. Well intentioned action like tidying up a scrubby corner and keeping the grass cut neat and tidy, removes the very habitat that nature needs to thrive.



Development

The continued need for more housing drives the development of sites on the edges of our towns and villages that have traditionally supported nature. Sites on the edges of towns and villages that farmers have long abandoned for productive use, gradually become more diverse in wildlife only to be lost to development. Brownfield sites can often be rich in wildlife because of their varied habitats. These can often be lost to development despite their natural value.



Home improvements

With busy lives comes the desire to reduce the burden of maintaining land and property, which can lead to natural areas being replaced with artificial or hard landscaping, both of which are hostile environments for nature. Additional pressures come from pet predation, artificial grass and removal of ponds.



Surface run-off

Hard surfacing in our towns and villages only serves to exacerbate problems when it rains, even turning our streets into short-lived streams! Most of this urban run-off water is collected by our drainage systems but, when volumes exceed drain capacity, it runs directly into our watercourses and causes pollution which impacts wildlife in our rivers and seas.



Verge management/frequent cutting

The management of verges found within our towns and villages is commonly contracted out to companies who are expected to manage them in accordance with a standard 'nice and tidy' specification. This one-size-fits-all approach compromises the availability of space for nature.



Light pollution

Most of the earth is affected by light pollution. 80% of the world's population live under skyglow and almost everyone in the UK cannot experience a natural night sky from where they live. The evidence of the impacts of light pollution on species and ecosystems has grown and strengthened. Increased Artificial Light at Night, known as ALAN, is directly linked to measurable negative impacts on energy consumption, human health, and wildlife such as bats, birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and plants. Unnecessary artificial light increases financial costs and contributes to greenhouse emissions.

INSPIRATION



LANGARTH VILLAGE



Langarth Garden Village is an ambitious new, sustainable community that is being developed in Cornwall. It will provide an attractive and healthy environment for people to live in, grow, and develop, surrounded by nature. It will feature green infrastructure at its heart, delivering a wide range of homes to suit everyone and jobs for all age groups and accommodating between 8-10,000 people.

- The village will have over **5 hectares** (12 acres) of new woodland as part of the Forest for Cornwall
- Langarth will provide around **117 hectares of green space**, with green corridors and tree lined streets, woodlands and hillside areas, parks, allotments, community orchards and gardens and play areas.
- At least **48% of the site will be made up of these green spaces**
- The development is aiming for a **20% biodiversity net gain** across the site, balancing the needs of both people and wildlife

Find out more
www.langarth.co.uk



WADEBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL



Wadebridge Town Council became free from spraying in March 2016. The policy aims to promote the importance and value of a quality environment and its contribution to the quality of life for the community of Wadebridge. Instead, they use a self-drive powered brush weeder, gas flame, trimmer and hand weeding. This helps promote wildflowers and pollinators, and created a more attractive nature rich town for communities.

Find out more
<https://www.wadebridge-tc.gov.uk/services/parks/pesticide-free>



MAKING SPACE FOR NATURE

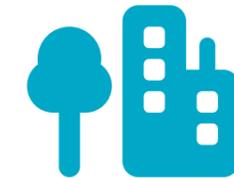


24 spaces across Cornwall's towns and villages have been improved for wildlife and people. The project has improved a selection of recreation grounds, parks, woodlands, verges and closed churchyards to create havens for bees, butterflies, birds and hedgehogs.

Find out more
www.cornwall.gov.uk/parks-leisure-and-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/making-space-for-nature/



TAKING ACTION FOR OUR TOWNS AND VILLAGES



Nature-rich landscapes are usually mosaics of a mixture of habitats.

REFER TO



- Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice
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PRIORITY 22

Bring nature into towns and villages

Towns and villages incorporate space for nature, with connected green and blue infrastructure in which wildlife can thrive and move. Urban habitats, such as trees and freshwater systems, are linked to the wider ecological network, benefiting biodiversity, increasing resilience, and are delivering nature-based solutions. Communities are actively involved in recovering nature.



Location: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Code: P22

ACTIONS



A67 Integrate nature recovery and green and blue infrastructure within developments

- A67.1 Delivery of BNG** on and offsite should respond to the priorities and habitat opportunities set out in this strategy and maps.
- A67.2 Green infrastructure creation and management** follows best practice principles set out in the [Further Reading](#).
- A67.3 Provision for wildlife should be included within development plans** in accordance with the [Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity Guidance](#). Green roofing, bat boxes and swift boxes and bee bricks should be integrated into developments and infrastructure.
- A67.4 Establish woodland strip "screening"** adjacent to roads, infrastructure and new developments to reduce impacts of light and noise pollution.
- A67.5 Identify and protect** wildlife-rich brownfield sites when reviewing Local Development Plans.
- A67.6 Avoid development, reclamation or remediation proposals** that threaten brownfield habitats and their associated invertebrate fauna.



A68 Establish new trees within towns and villages

A68.1 Establish new trees within streets, parks and shared green spaces and river corridors preferentially targeting areas of deprivation, and/or with low levels of canopy cover and poor provision of green infrastructure.

A68.2 Utilise a broad, mixed palette of tree and shrub species suited to urban conditions, preferentially using native species where appropriate. Select species which are more resilient to changing climatic conditions with prolonged periods of drought and persistent and heavier rainfall, earlier and stronger storms and less groundwater penetration.

A68.3 Maintain and where appropriate establish new fruit trees and orchards within public and shared green spaces.

A68.4 Establish new and manage existing woodland to improve their ecological condition and resilience. See relevant actions within strategy including under [P1](#), [P2](#), [P3](#) and [P4](#).

A69 Establish nature friendly mixed wildflowers and shrubs

A69.1 Incorporate pollinator-friendly wildflowers and shrubs in green spaces such as parks and along streets to ensure habitat provision.

A69.2 Prioritise native pollinator friendly wildflowers in planted areas and adhere to biosecurity principles to avoid spreading non-native invasive species and diseases. Where horticultural species are chosen, avoid planting highly spreading species which are likely to become invasive in the wider environment such as montbretia and buddleia. This is especially vital where developments occur near to existing habitats.

A70 Manage freshwater habitats for nature and other environmental benefits

A70.1 Create and deliver management plans for River Basins, Drainage and Wastewater, and Surface Water that incorporate nature-based solutions within towns and villages.

A70.2 Create new Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) that comply with technical standards and that are designed and implemented to provide habitat for wildlife. Focus activity within 10 m from the top of the bank of the waterbody.

A70.3 Create and enhance buffers around freshwater habitats, including rivers, streams, ponds and lakes, to enhance biodiversity and support protection of homes and businesses from flooding, and prioritise activity within 10 meters of de-culverted watercourses and retrofit SuDS where feasible.

A71 Manage gardens, growing spaces and other greenspaces for nature

A71.1 Integrate small ponds, shrubs, trees and wildflowers alongside amenity grasslands into gardens, parks, playing fields, allotments and growing spaces to create more space for nature and allow for improved connectivity.

A71.2 Create biodiverse green spaces which promote health and wellbeing, these can range from small break spaces to community gardens that form part of the health “estate” to green spaces within schools and other estates.

ACTIONS



A72 Wildlife friendly practices should be adhered to

A72.1 Limit the use of chemicals which are harmful to wildlife and can enter our waterways, avoid the use of artificial lawns, concreting and large areas of paving which can lead to flooding and water pollution.

A72.2 Create dark spaces for nature by reducing light pollution especially around greenspaces and gardens. This will support nocturnal wildlife such as bats, moths and hedgehogs.

A72.3 Educate about responsible pet ownership, particularly if living close to existing habitats, this extends to adding bells to cats' collars and keeping them in overnight where appropriate and speaking to vets about appropriate methods of flea and tick control.

A73 Manage verges, path and trail edges for nature

A73.1 Verges, paths and trails are managed to produce a diversity of vegetation structure and nectar sources through mowing regimes that are staggered both spatially and temporally. Where possible cuttings are removed, and cuts timed to reduce negative impacts on foraging and overwintering invertebrates.

A73.2 Avoid mowing, except for where safety regulations apply, between May-August to allow wildflowers and invertebrates to complete their lifecycles.

FURTHER READING



- [BlueHealth Toolbox for urban planners, designers and decision makers](#) – Blue Health Project
- [Climate Emergency DPD Guidance \(Policy G3 and G4\)](#) – Cornwall Council
- [Cornwall planning for Biodiversity Guide](#) – Cornwall Council
- [Creating a Green Roof for Invertebrates: A best practice guide](#) – Buglife
- [Green Infrastructure: Building for nature](#) – RSPB
- [Green Infrastructure Principles](#) – Natural England
- [Light Pollution](#) – Buglife
- [Managing Grassland & Green Space](#) – Plantlife
- [Managing road verges and green spaces](#) – RSPB
- [Managing road verges for pollinators](#) – Buglife
- [Nature on prescription handbook](#) – European Centre for Environment and Human Health
- [Planning for Brownfield Biodiversity](#) – A Best Practice Guide – Buglife
- [Sustainable Drainage Systems \(SuDS\)](#) – Cornwall Council
- [Sustainable drainage systems: non-statutory technical standards](#) – Defra
- [The SuDS manual](#) – CIRIA
- [Trees in development](#) – Cornwall Council
- [What you can do for wildlife](#) – RSPB

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...

FOCUS SPECIES

- Badger
- Buffish Mining Bee
- Bullfinch
- Chamomile
- Common Toad
- Hedgehog
- Kestrel
- Mistle Thrush
- Plymouth Pear
- Scilly Speckled Wood
- Starling
- Swift
- Tawny Owl
- Western Elm

FOCUS HABITATS

- Cornish Hedges
- Gardens
- Hedgerows
- Orchards
- Ponds and Pools
- Road Verges
- Scrub
- Streams and Rivers
- Street Trees
- Town and Village Green and Blue Spaces
- Trees Outside Woodlands
- Wildlife-rich Grassland
- Woodland

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought resilience
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture
- Jobs and Investment

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3 Discover the Priorities and Actions for your area

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MAPS + STRATEGY DOCUMENT



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i Interested in Biodiversity Net Gain?

The Zone 2 maps act as the Strategic Significance Multiplier






HISTORIC MINES, BUILDINGS AND QUARRIES

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have an extraordinary post-industrial landscape which includes a wealth of heritage assets, both built and environmental, as well as more recently industrialised land such as the China Clay region. These sites present a unique opportunity for nature.

THE BARE SOIL FOUND ON FORMER MINING SITES OFFERS PERFECT SITES FOR GROUND-NESTING SOLITARY BEES, WHILST BATS COMMONLY USE DISUSED BUILDINGS AND SHAFTS TO ROOST.

Encompassing an area of 20,000 hectares the [Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site \(WHS\)](#) is the largest industrial WHS in the UK. The WHS assemblage of heritage assets have Outstanding Universal Value of global significance. In Cornwall, the remnants of an industrial past can be seen across the landscape. From mine engine houses sitting atop Cornish cliffs, to abandoned water wheels and the China clay pits of St Austell, which can be seen from space. Not only do these remind us of the industrious Cornish spirit, but many of them have also been reclaimed by nature and are now important wildlife sites.

Our mining activities have generated spoil rich in metals and low in nutrients. Specialist communities of plants (heathers, lichens, bryophytes and liverworts), that can grow on low nutrient substrates have colonised these metalliferous environments.



The bare soil found on former mining sites offers perfect sites for ground-nesting solitary bees, whilst bats commonly use disused buildings and shafts to roost.

Dis-used quarries have become filled with water, providing homes for freshwater species as well as a variety of bird life. More than this, some of them are now used as reservoirs that provide us drinking water and they are generally an important water storage feature.

However, these activities have not been without consequence and the spoil left from quarrying can contain toxic chemicals which can seep into groundwater and contaminate watercourses.

In Cornwall, tin mining led to the straightening, canalisation and over-deepening of our rivers and streams with sometimes irreparable consequences. Such modified watercourses are disconnected from their floodplains, increasing the risk of flooding downstream, and are poor quality environments for wildlife. Fortunately, work is being done to restore canalised watercourses to more natural, irregular profiles. For example, in wetter areas such as bogs, modified watercourses are being blocked up to allow areas to re-wet and retain water.



FACTS AND FIGURES

 **20,000**
hectares
across Cornwall
and west Devon.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR DELIVERY

Historic mines, buildings and quarries include and are situated within a range of habitats. Integrating them within nature recovery projects benefits heritage, people and nature. These key steps can help enhance your project:

Integrate the historic environment into your project. Work with the [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record \(HER\)](#) to:

- Understand the heritage features within your site
- Explore historic habitats that once were present which could be restored
- Use historic features to guide the location and design of habitat creation, particularly tree planting
- Enrich your project by telling the story of the site through the historic environment.

Check the legal requirements, policies and guidance:

- Did you know that only around 5% of heritage assets in England are designated? **Check the status of your site**
- **Get expert advice through the HER**
- Check out the Further Reading at the end of this chapter for guidance.



OUR FOCUS HISTORIC MINES, BUILDINGS AND QUARRY HABITATS

Historic mining sites and structures

Mining activity in Cornwall goes back 4,000 years and has generated spoil rich in metals and low in nutrients where specialist communities of plants support re-naturalisation (heathers, lichens, bryophytes and liverworts), slowly colonising these metalliferous environments. The often-polluted bare soil on former mining sites offers a perfect habitat for ground-nesting solitary bees, whilst disused buildings, structures and shafts provide shelter for roosting bats and bird nesting sites.



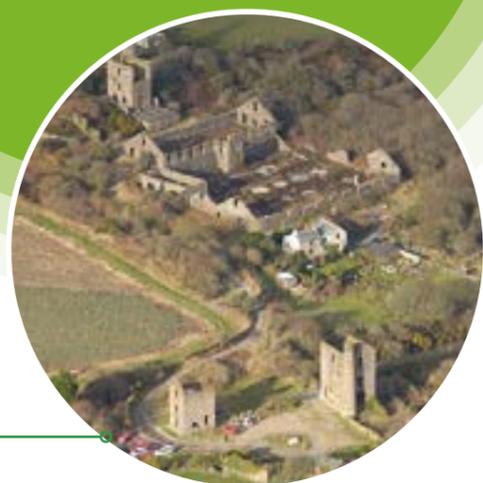
Dis-used quarries

Quarries can offer brilliant opportunities for nature recovery, creating brand new habitats for specialised and endangered species. Many have already been flooded to provide important freshwater ponds and wetlands for wildlife such as dragonflies, newts, amphibians and diving beetles.



Open Brownfield Mosaics

Brownfield sites are spaces which have been altered by human activity (not including farmland or forestry) and are often important sites for nature. They range from derelict urban areas to quarries, old railway lines and disused airfields. They contain a mosaic of habitats on low nutrient soil, offering a mix of open and more scrubby areas. This diversity has made them key sites for rare and scarce invertebrates as well as lichens, plants, birds, reptiles and amphibians.



SEE ALSO...

Trees, woodland and scrub
Heath and moor mosaics
Nature-rich grasslands

PRESSURES ON HISTORIC MINES, BUILDINGS AND QUARRIES



Contaminated land

Residual pollutants from industry, such as heavy metals and acidic drainage, can leach into soil posing long-term risks to nearby ecosystems. Polluted substrates left by metalliferous mining activities can slow down or prevent natural regeneration of vegetation due to poor soil quality. Conversely, this contamination also allows areas to remain open and suitable for rare plants.



Encroachment and loss of specialised habitats

The legacy of human activity in the landscape, including dis-used mines and quarries, can provide unique habitats. For example, structures are used as bat roosts in old engine houses and rare plant and invertebrate communities are associated with post-industrial substrates. A careful balance of management is needed. Clearing and 'tidying up' these sites for public access, such as the removal of substrates, can remove these valuable habitats. Lack of management can lead to overgrowth of vegetation, in particular non-native invasive species which can outcompete native flora and fauna, leading to a decline in biodiversity.



Tree and woodland establishment

In some areas, tree and woodland planting may not be in line with the landscape character or heritage designation. All planting should follow the 'Right Tree in the Right Place' principal to align with and enhance the protected and historic landscape character.



Inappropriate management

The introduction of broad-scale and intensive management can disrupt habitat mosaics, change the character of historic mine and quarries and lead to loss of intangible cultural heritage associated with traditional land management. Conversely, an absence of management can lead to scrub encroachment and the eventual loss of open habitats and heritage assets.



Human disturbance

Disused locations may attract recreational activities such as off-road driving, or illegal waste dumping, which disturbs and degrades these sensitive environments.

INSPIRATION



JEWELS IN THE CORNISH MINING LANDSCAPE



Cornwall's former mining sites have become important refuges for many declining species. Cornwall Butterfly Conservation are working within the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site, creating areas of bare ground, sensitively managing scrub and removing invasive species, such as Buddleia and Cotoneaster, to restore the habitat of these historic sites for threatened butterflies such as the Silver-studded Blue, Grayling and Dingy Skipper.

Find out more

<https://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/index.html>



SOUTH CROFTY TREATING MINE WATER



Cornish Metals is working towards re-opening the historic South Crofty underground tin mine. The mine workings are flooded, and dewatering is required. The Environment Agency granted a permit to treat and discharge of up to 25,000m³/day of mine-water. The Water Treatment Plant was commissioned in October 2023 removing substances such as iron, manganese and arsenic and greatly improving the quality of the water. Treated water is discharged into the Red River via the Dolcoath Deep Adit.

Find out more

South Crofty: BBC News
South Crofty Tin Project | Cornish Metals Inc



WHEAL JANE MINE WATER TREATMENT



The Wheal Jane Scheme treats mine water abstracted from below ground, and uses a high density sludge process to remove metal from the mine water. The resultant sludge is pumped to a dam and the treated water is discharged to a stream. In a typical year approximately 6,000,000 m³ of mine water is treated, with 600 tonnes of metal contaminants (predominately iron and zinc) removed.

Find out more

Wheal Jane - Case study - GOV.UK



RED RIVER LOCAL NATURE RESERVE



The Red River between Camborne and Godrevy earned its name from discolouration caused by the mining waste. After years of decline the tin streaming sites were abandoned in the 1960s and 70s and the settling tanks and leats they left behind became breeding sites for vulnerable dragonflies and damselflies. Great Wheal Seton is one of the few remaining sites. Volunteers from the Red River Rescuers maintain the pools here and aim to create stepping-stone sites where species can re-populate through the valley.

Find out more

<https://redriverrescuers.weebly.com/>

TAKING ACTION FOR HISTORIC MINES, BUILDINGS AND QUARRIES



Nature-rich landscapes are usually mosaics of a mixture of habitats.

REFER TO



- Nature Recovery Principles and Best Practice
- The Nature Recovery Network Maps
- Focus Species Recovery Toolkit (Appendix C)
- All habitat Priorities and Actions
- Focus species, Habitats and Nature-based Solutions boxes
- Priorities and Habitats Matrix (Appendix B)

PRIORITY 23

Enhance historic mine sites, buildings and quarries for nature

The mosaic of habitats associated with historic mining sites, buildings and quarries are appropriately managed, so that their unique assemblages of native plants and animals are thriving. Creation and enhancement of habitats is well balanced alongside protection and enhancement of the heritage assets and attributes.



Location: Cornwall **Code:** P23

A74 Manage habitats in historic mines, buildings and quarry sites for nature

- A74.1 Explore the feasibility of species reintroductions** where compatible with heritage features. The recording of heritage features and understanding impact prior to releases should form part of any consultation and approval process.
- A74.2 Introduce a positive management regime that is rotational** e.g., creating new scrapes or other periodic disturbance, in response to site monitoring, to minimise disturbance and pollution remobilisation.
- A74.3 Non-native invasive species should be removed from all sites** using appropriate management to prevent damage to above and below ground historic features.
- A74.4 Manage public access** to balance the conservation of heritage, habitats and species.



ACTIONS



A75 Restore a mosaic of habitats sensitive to the historic landscape character

- A75.1 Allow the land and water to slowly heal** taking a landscape-led approach to all stages of schemes, sensitive to past uses and designated features.
- A75.2 Understand past land use** and cover, historic landscape character, designations and processes of change to identify habitat restoration opportunities and constraints using the Historic Environment Record. Enhance or restore habitats for priority species appropriate to the historic character and significance of assets and attributes, following best practice.
- A75.3 Allow young damp scrub to develop in post-industrial sites** such as former spoil tips, quarries and gravel pits.
- A75.4 Manage and maintain** historic mines, buildings and quarries for wildlife to prioritise restoration, enhancement and maintenance of a diverse mosaic of distinctive habitats including bare ground, scrub, heathland, open water and nature-rich grassland to support species such as Dartford warbler and certain reptiles. Habitat creation principles should follow actions listed in Trees, Woodland and Scrub (P1, P2, P3 & P4) and Heath and Moor Mosaics (P12, P13 & P14).

- A75.5 Restore wetlands, including ponds, streams, rivers and floodplains** for wildlife and heritage conservation (see P9, P10 & P11), providing a range of conditions for different species and opportunities to reduce downstream pollution and run off.
- A75.6 Ponds and waterways should be re-connected to the wider catchment network** where feasible, however special consideration should be given to the build-up of polluting materials such as heavy metals and arsenic which may be present in historic mining sites.
- A75.7 Identify opportunities to diversify and re-naturalise topographical features** through the creation of scrapes, wetlands (see P9), hollows or depressions where this does not damage at or below surface archaeology. These can create localised warm microclimates where there is bare ground, or form shallow ephemeral pools, inundation grassland or permanently wet areas which can reduce downstream pollution.

FURTHER READING



- [The Mosaic Approach: Managing habitats for species. Brownfield or open mosaics on previously developed land](#) - Natural England
- [Cornish Distinctiveness | Let's Talk](#) - Cornwall Council
- [Cornish Mining World Heritage Site](#) - Management Plan
- [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record](#) - Cornwall Council
- [Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's Historic Environment](#) - Cornwall Council interactive mapping
- [Cornwall Butterfly Conservation](#)
- [Cornwall Heritage Hub | Let's Talk](#) - Cornwall Council's Strategic Historic Environment team
- [Habitat advice Archives](#) - Nature After Minerals



- [Heritage at the Heart of an Evolving Cornwall: A Strategy for Cornwall's Historic Environment \(2022 - 2030\) | Let's Talk](#) - Cornwall Council
- [Landscapes & Areas](#) - Historic England
- [Managing Aggregates Sites for Invertebrates](#) - Buglife
- [Nature Recovery and the Historic Environment](#) - Natural England
- [Protected Rural Landscapes](#) - Historic England

Delivering the actions within this priority will support the following...



FOCUS SPECIES

- Coral-necklace
- Cornish Path Moss
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Kestrel
- Marsh Clubmoss
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Perkins Mining Bee
- Silver-studded Blue
- Small Red Damselfly
- Western Rustwort
- Yellow Centaury



FOCUS HABITATS

- Acid Grassland
- Calaminarian Grassland
- Dis-used Clay Pits and Quarries
- Dis-used Tramways and Railways
- Heathland
- Heritage Buildings
- Heritage Mining Sites
- Heritage Sites
- Ponds and Pools
- Scrub
- Springs and Seepages
- Streams and Rivers
- Trees and Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Wetlands
- Wildlife-rich Grassland
- Woodland



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Carbon Drawdown
- Flood and Drought Resilience
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Food Supply
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Sustainable Tourism
- Heritage and Culture
- Jobs and Investment

RECOVER NATURE USING THE STRATEGY



1

Read the Strategy for inspiration

2

Explore the Nature Recovery Network maps

3

Discover the Priorities and Actions for your area

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MAPS
+
STRATEGY DOCUMENT

5

Tell us about your successes to inspire others
Visit our Let's Talk Nature Recovery Hub



Interested in Biodiversity Net Gain?

The Zone 2 maps act as the Strategic Significance Multiplier





REFERENCES

- 1 State of Nature Cornwall Report** (2020) Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Cornwall Council
- 2 Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Environmental Growth Strategy 2020-2065** (2020) Cornwall Council and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership
- 3 Cornwall's Green Economy and Skills Deep Dive Research** (2022) Kovia Consulting Ltd
- 4 Ten opportunities towards a local industrial strategy** (2022) Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership
- 5 One Coast Evidence Base: An Environmental and Economic Review of the Cornish Coastal Corridor** (2020) University of Exeter
- 6 Wild thriving: how tending to our wild places helps our wellbeing** (2022) Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- 7 UK Natural Capital Accounts** (2023) Office for National Statistics
- 8 Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly** (2021) University of Exeter
- 9 Our Tamar Valley National Landscape in numbers** (2025) Tamar Valley National Landscape
- 10 A Natural Health Service: Improving lives and saving money** (2023) The Wildlife Trusts
- 11 Sustaining the Visitor Economy and Environment in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly** (2021) University of Exeter
- 12 Cornwall Local Flood Risk Management Strategy** (2020) Cornwall Council
- 13 Total Income from Farming in the South West of England** (2023) Defra
- 14 Community growing in Cornwall report** (2023) Sustainable Food Cornwall and the University of Exeter
- 15 The economic impact of domestic surfing on the United Kingdom** (2013) Surfers Against Sewage
- 16 Biodiversity Net Gain** (2025) Cornwall Council
- 17 Cornwall Climate Emergency Development Plan Document** (2023) Cornwall Council
- 18 The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations** (2023) UK Government
- 19 Local nature recovery strategy statutory guidance** (2023) Defra
- 20 Isles of Scilly Climate Change Adaptation Plan** (2022) Council of the Isles of Scilly
- 21 Natural Evidence Report for The Isles of Scilly** (2022) ERCCIS, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, Council of the Isles of Scilly, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Natural England
- 22 Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2021-2025 (2021)** Isles of Scilly National Landscapes
- 23 Isles of Scilly seabird survey** (2023) Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and RSPB
- 24 National Forest Inventory Description of Attributes** (N/A) Forestry Commission
- 25 The cost of grey squirrel damage to woodland in England and Wales** (2021) Royal Forestry Society
- 26 State of Nature 2023 - report on the UKs current biodiversity** (2023) State of Nature Partnership
- 27 Agricultural facts: South West region** (2023) Defra



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

There are four documents which can support your understanding and implementation of this strategy.

These can be found on our Nature Recovery Hub on Let's Talk.

They are:

- **Alignment with National Objectives** (Appendix A)
- **Focus habitats associated with each Priority** (Appendix B)
- **Focus Species Recovery Toolkit** (Appendix C)
- **Methodology - How we created the strategy** (Appendix D)
- **Consultation report** (Appendix E)

If you would like this information in another format or language please contact us:

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