

Foreword

From the magnificent expanses of purple heather in late summer and the evocative call of grouse or curlew, to the colourful dale side displays of orchids and cowslips in the spring, wildlife is very much a part of the landscape in the Peak District. It is an integral part of the “Peak District experience” for residents and visitors, young and old, the expert and the curious alike. We are fortunate that on our doorstep we have such a diverse mosaic of landscapes supporting a wealth of plants and animals, some of which can be found in few other places in the world.

...And yet we take this wonderful “living landscape” for granted at our peril. In the 16th century black grouse were considered to be more common than red grouse in the Peak District. It must have been unthinkable that this magnificent bird could ever become extinct in the region, and yet within the last few years the unthinkable has happened. The end of the 20th century has also seen continuing loss of flower-rich hay meadows, with over half of the meadows within the National Park having disappeared over a 10-year period. The loss of habitats and species like these, once such a familiar and characteristic part of the landscape, has deprived the Peak District of some of the features that make it such a special and distinctive place.

This Biodiversity Action Plan has been drawn up by a partnership of conservation organisations, government agencies and landowner/manager representatives, led by the Peak District National Park Authority. Its purpose is to set out an agreed way forward which will ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy as rich and varied wildlife in the Peak District as we can today. Importantly, it also sets out to redress some of the substantial losses in wildlife that the area has suffered over the last 50 years in particular, to help turn the tide of recovery. Wide ownership of the Plan has been encouraged through the establishment of a Peak District Biodiversity Partnership - the first time that such a wide range of interests has been involved together in considering wildlife conservation issues in the area. The aim of the Plan is to bring together as many people as possible - from organisations to individuals - in a common cause.

This Action Plan is put forward as the primary nature conservation document for the Peak District, shared between a wide-ranging partnership of organisations. It aims to set the agenda for wildlife conservation priorities in the area over the next ten years, and to help guide the policies and actions of all those who influence the wildlife of the Peak District.

The targets and actions set out in the Plan are, of necessity, ambitious if we are to conserve and enhance the area's wildlife. We hope that the Plan will provide a milestone in encouraging the necessary shift to more proactive work targeted at conservation priorities. To this end it is very much a working document against which progress towards specific targets and actions will be monitored. It is envisaged that many actions will be carried out using existing resources. In doing so we will need to make more effective use of resources by co-ordinated targeting amongst partners. Other actions will require efforts to secure additional funding, and this Plan is an appeal to all those who care for the Peak District to join us in putting resources into implementation of the Plan. By setting out a programme of shared objectives and targets this Plan provides an important framework for seeking such resources, and if a significant number of the targets are met over the next 5-10 years then wildlife will have a much brighter future in the Peak District.

Although it covers a wider area than the National Park, this plan also forms an integral part of the Peak District National Park Management Plan. It is the first of the detailed Action Plans to be produced following publication of the strategy document in 2000.

For further information on the Peak District Biodiversity Action Plan contact:

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