



4. The Future - Action for Wildlife

4.1 Identifying the Current Wildlife Resource

A list of Peak District habitats was drawn up at an early stage in the preparation of the plan. These habitats will form the basis for monitoring and, where appropriate, reporting back at regional and national level. The relationship between the national Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and the local ones selected here is shown in Appendix 8.5. In some instances the local habitats do not correspond entirely to the national ones for one of three reasons:

- The Peak District classification identifies ALL habitats at detailed level, whereas the national classification identifies detailed habitats only where they are a priority within the broad habitat types
- Some national priority habitats have been further split in the Peak District. This has been done where the national definition includes a range of distinctive habitats in the Peak District, each with its own particular interest and conservation issues. For example 'Lowland Meadows' has been divided into Hay Meadows, Neutral Pasture and Tall Dales Grassland
- Conversely some national priority habitats have been combined where they occur in close association with each other, are hard to distinguish in the Peak District and for which separate data are not easily available. An example is Upland and Lowland Calcareous Grassland, which appear as two separate national types but have been combined as a single type - Calcareous Grassland - in the Peak District

A provisional list was drawn up of habitats and species for which the preparation of first tranche action plans should be considered. In practice this covered virtually all habitats and some 60 species. (see Appendix 8.6). *It must be emphasised that this list identifies possible priorities which could particularly benefit from targeted conservation action. It should NOT be seen as a list of all habitats and species of importance in the Peak District.* From this list the final selection of habitats and species for action plan production was made. Full audits have been prepared for these, setting out what is known about the current extent, importance, trends and problems in the Peak. These audits form the second

part of this plan. The principles guiding the selection of habitats and species for the provisional list and subsequent priorities for action plans are set out in the next section.

4.2 Selection of Habitats and Species

The production of Habitat and Species Action Plans will be a continuing process, with new plans produced as they are required and as resources become available for implementation of new initiatives. The initial focus, however, has been very much on habitats rather than species, on the basis that much species conservation can be addressed by conserving the habitat. In all, 15 Habitat Action Plans have been prepared as part of this first main round including most semi-natural habitats and nearly all Peak District habitats for which there is a national Action Plan. It is intended that all habitats present in the area will be covered by an Action Plan by 2005.

7 Species Action Plans have been prepared to date. These cover species for which the Peak District supports a substantial proportion of the global population or species whose populations have declined very heavily in the Peak District over the last 20 years. There is a need for further assessment of status and population trends for many other species to identify those which warrant the production of Action Plans in the future. The possibility of reintroducing species which have become extinct in the Peak District will also be considered if feasibility studies suggest this is appropriate.

Selection of habitats and species for the provisional list, and the final selection for Action Plan production, has been based on consideration of the following factors:

- *Whether the habitat/species has a national action plan or is on the UK BAP list of species of conservation concern.* Some habitats and species with national action plans have been omitted at this stage, however, for one or more of the reasons below
- *The contribution that the Peak District makes to the national resource.* Habitats and species of

international importance, such as those listed in the European Habitats Directive, have been given particular attention (though recent changes to the internationally designated sites in the Peak District will mean some additional habitats and species are likely to be a priority in the next round of Action Plans). Conversely some species with national action plans have been omitted because conservation action in the Peak District is likely to make a very limited contribution to the national population. An example is bullfinch, a bird more characteristic of lowland Britain and for which the Peak District is probably of well below average importance. Its national decline is largely associated with the decline of orchards in southern England and its population is probably relatively stable in the Peak District

- *The conservation importance of that habitat/species in a Peak District context.* Limestone heaths, for example, are a habitat of particular historical importance in the Peak District

- *The degree of vulnerability or extent of known declines in the Peak District.* This factor has been one of the most important in deciding priorities. Thus hay meadows and lapwings for example, both of which have suffered serious declines in the Peak District over the last decade, have been given a particular priority

- *The degree to which species conservation can be addressed through habitat conservation.* The conservation of important species such as golden plover, for example, can probably be largely addressed through the Blanket Bog and Heather Moorland Habitat Action Plans, and the population appears relatively stable. Conversely a Species Action Plan has been produced for twite as they depend on more than one habitat (moorland for nesting but hay meadows for feeding) and their population has been declining to the extent that specific targeted action is required

National Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species Relevant to the Peak District

(E) = extinct (U) = unconfirmed (I) = Introduced

Species in red are of Global Conservation Concern (globally threatened)

Mammals

Brown Hare
Dormouse (E)
Lesser Horseshoe Bat (E)
Otter
Pipistrelle
Red Squirrel (E?)
Water Vole

Birds

Black Grouse (E)
Bullfinch
Corn Bunting (E)
Corncrake (E?)
Grey Partridge
Linnet
Nightjar
Reed Bunting
Skylark
Song Thrush
Spotted Flycatcher
Tree Sparrow
Turtle Dove (E?)

Reptiles, Amphibia & Fish

Great Crested Newt

Butterflies

High Brown Fritillary (E)
Marsh Fritillary (E)
Northern Brown Argus
Pearl-bordered Fritillary (E?)

Moths

Agent & Sable
Barred Toothed Stripe
Chalk Carpet
Common Fan-foot
Square-spotted Clay
Sword-grass (E?)
Waved Carpet (E?)
White-spotted Pinion

Flies

Hornet Robberfly (U)
Lipsothrix errans (a crane fly)

Bees

Brown-banded Carder Bee (E?)
Great Yellow Bumblebee (U)
Large Garden Bumblebee (E?)
Short Haired Bumblebee (E?)

Ants

Northern Wood Ant
Shining Guest Ant

Other Invertebrates

White-clawed Crayfish

Higher Plants

Broad-fruited Cornsalad (E)
Corn Cleavers (E)
Cornflower (I,E?)
Floating Water Plantain (E?)
Grass-wrack Pondweed (E)
Juniper
Killarney Fern
Lady's Slipper Orchid (E)
Marsh Clubmoss (E)
Red Hemp-nettle
Shepherd's Needle (E)
Small-flowered Catchfly (E)
Tower Mustard (E?)

Mosses

Appleyard's Feather-moss
Derbyshire Feather-moss
Orthodontium gracile (E?)
Slender Green Feather-moss (E?)
Spruce's Feather-moss

Lichens

Bacidia incompta
Orange-fruited Elm Lichen

Fungi

Hygrocybe calyptriformis
Microglossum olivaceum (E?)



In drawing up Habitat Action Plans a “landscape ecology” approach has been taken for some groups of habitats, particularly where they form inter-dependent mosaics and frequently occur as part of the same management unit. This approach has been taken for limestone dales (covering all open dales habitats), river corridor habitats and heather moorland, where a range of associated Peak District habitats are covered by each Action Plan. In such situations the ecological interest of each habitat is often heavily interdependent so that the interest of the whole mosaic is greater than the sum of the individual habitats (e.g. species such as globeflower and dark green fritillary typically occur in a mosaic of limestone grassland and scrub); the mosaic of habitats and the dynamics between them is in itself of considerable ecological interest (e.g. the zonation of river corridor habitats in a flood plain); and the different habitats often fall within one management regime (such as areas of heather moor, bracken and flushes which may all fall within one moorland grazing block). Thus actions for one habitat will almost invariably have a significant

effect on the other habitats present as well. The coverage of habitat types by relevant Habitat Action Plans in the Peak District is shown in Appendix 8.7.

4.3 Conservation, Restoration and (Re-)creation

The objectives and targets for each habitat essentially divide into three categories - conservation, restoration and (re-)creation. The definitions of these terms, as used in this Plan, are shown below.

The first objective(s) in each Action Plan relate to conservation - the safeguarding and enhancing of existing sites. This has been taken as the starting point for all of the habitats and species and is generally the first priority (see overleaf). However, the scale of historic and continuing losses for many habitats and species means that there is a real need to try and redress these losses as well if we are to hand on to future generations a landscape as rich in wildlife as the one which we inherited. Fragments of clough woodland,

The Definitions of Conservation, Restoration and (Re-)creation used in this Plan

- Conservation** - The maintenance and enhancement in quality of existing sites where the habitat is present. Examples include using grazing and scrub clearance to sustain and enhance flower-rich daleside grassland, or clearing rhododendron from an upland oakwood where it is common and shading out much of the associated flora
- Restoration** - The restoration of a habitat on sites where it has been heavily degraded by management but is still present in degraded form. Examples include encouraging the development of species-rich hay meadows on semi-improved grassland and encouraging regeneration of native woodland in moorland cloughs where a limited cover of trees or shrubs remain
- (Re-)creation** - The re-creation of a habitat on sites where it has been lost by conversion and has to be created again, or the creation of entirely new habitat. Examples of re-creation might include the sowing of heather seed into species-poor grassland where heathland has been lost, whilst examples of creation might include the construction of a new pond or the creation of appropriate habitats through the restoration of disused quarries

The Importance of Conserving and Expanding on Existing Sites

- Conserving existing sites will generally be more cost-effective than restoring or re-creating habitats, which is generally very resource-intensive
- Existing sites have often evolved over a long period of time (in some cases perhaps several thousand years) through complex ecological processes, resulting in a degree of diversity and complexity which cannot easily be re-created over a short period of time
- Many species are very slow to colonise new sites and/or require particular conditions that have evolved over a long period, and can therefore only be conserved through the safeguard and management of existing sites. This is particularly true of those species that are of greatest conservation importance due to their rarity or degree of specialisation. “Ancient woodland indicators” such as lily-of-the-valley are a good example of such species
- Semi-natural habitats are an important historical component of the landscape, reflecting the interaction of physical conditions and past and present management by people. As such they are of cultural significance as part of the historic landscape, as well as of importance for their wildlife interest *per se*. The limestone heaths, which once dominated the White Peak plateau and are now reduced to about 100 hectares on a few sites, are a good example of a habitat of significant historical, cultural and landscape importance
- The most effective source of colonisation for any new site is likely to be from existing habitat in the area. Without the existing habitat to provide colonists, new sites will be slow to develop interest
- The complexity and diversity of sites of conservation importance means that only a small fraction of the biodiversity of any one site is generally known, even on the most studied sites. It may therefore be possible to create something similar elsewhere, but there will generally be significant differences
- Habitat restoration and creation is a relatively new science. Whilst new techniques are being developed all of the time there is often limited information on the success or otherwise of such techniques

For all of the above reasons existing habitats of high conservation value are therefore effectively irreplaceable. Whilst new habitats can generally be created at any time in the future given sufficient knowledge, will and resources, existing habitats may be gone forever if they are lost.

for example, remain isolated with little opportunity for ancient woodland species such as bluebell to recolonise, whilst the handful of remaining native crayfish populations are extremely vulnerable to disease and pollution incidents. Further objectives and targets therefore go on to address expansion of the existing wildlife resource through restoration of degraded sites, habitat (re-)creation and targeted action for priority species. A particularly high priority has been given to restoration and (re-)creation where there are significant existing opportunities (e.g. the Forestry Commission's Woodland Challenge Fund for new native woodland in National Parks or restoration schemes following mineral extraction); where the extent of the existing resource is very limited (e.g. limestone heaths); or where a high proportion of the habitat is in poor condition (e.g. dried-out dewponds).

The creation of priority habitats at the expense of habitats of lower conservation concern (e.g. dense bracken beds, improved or species-poor grassland, recent mineral workings, plantation woodlands) will often be justified on biodiversity grounds. However it is essential that the merits of any proposed habitat expansion be carefully considered on an individual site-by-site basis. Furthermore there may be conflicts with other conservation issues, such as archaeological

interest, or with economic interests, which need to be resolved.

Similarly for species the objectives principally divide into three categories- maintaining existing populations; expanding the existing population; and re-introducing populations. Again the priority is generally to safeguard and expand existing populations since these will tend to reflect the best remaining habitat and will be the best source of any future expansion. Re-introduction has only been considered where a species has become locally extinct, the likelihood of natural recolonisation is very remote, the factors that caused extinction are known and no longer apply, and reintroduction will make a very significant contribution to conservation of the species in the Peak District.

4.4 The Approach to Setting Objectives and Targets

In identifying objectives and targets several principles have been borne in mind:

- As far as possible we have tried to make targets clearly **measurable** and with a target date for achieving them. By that date it should therefore be possible to identify whether the target has been met

in full or, failing that, what proportion of the target has been met

- We have tried to make targets **ambitious but realistic**. This generally means that targets will not be achieved simply by maintaining the current level and pattern of conservation activities, but will require additional resources (in some cases quite considerable). Nevertheless in each case the Habitat Biodiversity Groups and the Wildlife Executive Group felt that such additional resources could realistically be available (although not currently guaranteed) through a combination of refocusing/targeting existing conservation work; delivering more cost-effective results through working in partnership; and seeking new resources such as Heritage Lottery or European LIFE funding. The extent to which targets are met will therefore depend heavily on the success in securing such additional resources
- Where habitats relate to national Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, the **national targets** have been taken as a starting point for identifying local targets on a *pro rata* basis according to the proportion of the national resource which occurs in the Peak District. Local experience within the Habitat Biodiversity Groups has then been used to assess whether these *pro rata* targets are appropriate. For example the White Peak supports a significant proportion of the UK's upland ashwoods, yet there are limited opportunities for expansion due to conflict with other habitats of outstanding wildlife importance in the dales so the creation target is far lower than the national target would suggest is appropriate. Conversely, the Peak District has relatively little upland oakwood and the opportunities for re-creation of new native woodlands in Dark Peak valleys and cloughs suggests that we could deliver more than our "fair share" of the national target for this habitat
- The starting point has been to try and **safeguard existing sites** or species populations and enhance their quality. Further objectives and targets then go on to try and **redress past losses** through restoration of degraded sites, habitat (re-)creation and targeted action for priority species
- In measuring achievement of the targets the starting point of April 1st 2001, or the nearest preceding date for which information is available, will be taken as the **baseline for monitoring**
- With one or two exceptions objectives and targets have generally been set over a **10-year period**, from 2001 to 2010. This ties in with most national targets where 2010 is the end date

4.5 Implementation and Resources

The Actions essentially fall into three types - those that can be pursued as part of the core work of individual organisations through prioritisation and targeting of existing resources (e.g. consideration of biodiversity issues by Planning Authorities); those which can be achieved by consensus within the Biodiversity Groups or Wildlife Executive Group (e.g. agreeing definitions of favourable condition); and those which require a project-based approach which in some cases may require significant new resources, such as the appointment of dedicated people on a contract or consultancy basis (e.g. the proposed bird conservation project). Many of these latter actions in particular will be dependent on the level of resources available, and some may depend entirely on successfully securing major new funding (e.g. from the Heritage Lottery Fund, European LIFE Fund, Rural Development Schemes, Landfill Tax or sponsorship).

Every action in this plan has a **lead organisation and partner organisations** and target date identified against it. The implementation of many actions will be resource-dependent and cannot therefore be guaranteed, but there is a commitment from the named organisations, and in particular the lead agency, to try and take these actions forward by the target date as far as possible.

Guidance on the Plan will be provided by the **Peak District Biodiversity Partnership**, whose role will more specifically be:

- commenting on and endorsing the Plan
- establishing wide awareness and ownership of the Plan
- receiving an annual progress report on implementation of the Plan
- advising the Wildlife Executive Group on update and review of the Plan, including development of further Habitat and Species Action Plans
- seeking consensus on key issues
- helping secure resources to deliver the Plan
- providing a shared identity and voice for the Plan

Overall implementation of the Plan will be overseen by the **Wildlife Executive Group**, which will have the following roles:

- providing co-ordination between the Habitat and Species Groups and ensuring there is an integrated approach towards actions where appropriate (e.g. for encouraging review of agri-environment schemes, or where a joint approach to projects would be beneficial)
- identifying overall priorities and helping resolve any potential conflicts between the Habitat and Species Groups objectives
- co-ordinating resource bids between Groups where necessary

- taking forward the 25 Key Actions on page 31
- providing the driving force for overall implementation of the full Action Plan
- preparing an annual progress report on implementation of the Plan for the Partnership

The role of the **Habitat and Species Biodiversity Groups** is central to the Action Plan process. They will oversee the implementation of the relevant Habitat and Species Action Plans, and more specifically will:

- provide the driving force for implementation
- support individual organisations in carrying out actions
- co-ordinate actions between organisations
- establish consensus on key issues
- establish appropriate projects for taking forward actions, where necessary
- seek resources for delivery of the Action Plans

Implementation will also involve liaison and co-ordination with the East Midlands Regional Biodiversity Forum, and with other Biodiversity Action Plan partnerships in the area.

The Action Plans have not been costed at this stage because of the considerable complexities of doing so, the limited value of using a broad figure when resource implications will be different for different organisations and the inevitable changes in funding requirements over the lifetime of the Plan. Nevertheless it was felt important to indicate which of the main actions in this Plan can probably be delivered with existing resources (assuming they continue at current levels) and which are likely to require additional resources in some form. To this end each Habitat and Species Action Plan has a concluding section on resources which flags up the main sources of existing resources, actions which are likely to

require significant additional funding and steps currently being taken to try and secure such additional funding. The “25 Key Actions” are also followed by a brief section identifying those which are likely to require additional resources.

As they implement the Action Plans each of the Habitat and Species Biodiversity Groups will assess the amount of funding needed and possible sources in more detail. Depending on circumstances such resources might take the form of additional core funding by partner organisations or bids for discretionary grants from external organisations, for example. In some cases it may be appropriate to bid for resources at regional level or in partnership with other Local Biodiversity Action Plans. The Wildlife Executive Group, with guidance from the Peak District Biodiversity Partnership, will assess priorities between Groups to ensure potential conflicts between resource bids are avoided.

4.6 Monitoring and Review

This Action Plan is seen as an organic evolving document. Monitoring and review of progress towards targets will be overseen by the Wildlife Executive Group. Information on progress with the individual Habitat and Species Action Plans will be collated on a regular basis by the Habitat and Species Biodiversity Groups and the individual organisations on those groups as they implement the plans. This will be fed back to the Wildlife Executive Group and the results will be reported annually to the Peak District Biodiversity Partnership for comment and guidance. A loose-leaf format has been adopted so that the Plan can be updated and amended as necessary. Other Habitat and Species Action Plans will be developed as the need arises and resources allow, balancing this carefully against implementation of existing plans. The aim is to produce Action Plans for all remaining habitats by 2005 and there will be a full review of the plan in 2010.