

Wye Valley National Landscape

Nature Recovery Plan 2026 – 2031



Dyffryn Gwy
Tirwedd Cenedlaethol

Wye Valley
National Landscape

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Introduction

The Wye Valley National Landscape, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is one of the country's finest lowland landscapes. The only cross border protected landscape, straddling the English Welsh border, the primary purpose of the AONB designation is 'to conserve and enhance natural beauty'.

Biodiversity is in decline. To reverse the declines in biodiversity and realise nature's recovery, we need to work together and on a landscape scale to enact the Lawton principles of Bigger, Better, More and Joined Up. This means conserving and enhancing our existing natural habitats, but also making them bigger, creating new areas of species-rich habitat and, critically, ensuring they join up to create functional and resilient ecological networks that enable nature and people to thrive. Landowners, be they gardeners, smallholders or owners of large tracts of land, are central to Nature Recovery, creating space for abundant wildlife, enhancing natural beauty and delivering benefits for people, including healthy food, flood alleviation, well-being and recreational opportunities and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Biodiversity loss goes far beyond the habitats and species themselves. The ground breaking Dasgupta Review¹, into the economics of global biodiversity, explains that broad-based sustainable growth, now and into the future, depends on urgent action across all levels of society to protect and restore nature. The Covid pandemic has put a spotlight on what we value, further highlighting the climate and environmental emergency and our dependency on the robustness of nature. More recently in 2026 the National security assessment on global ecosystems² concludes that "Global ecosystem degradation and collapse threatens UK national security and prosperity". The report goes on to state that "Biodiversity loss, alongside climate change, is amongst the biggest medium to long term threat to domestic food production - through depleted soils, loss of pollinators, drought and flood conditions. Ecosystem collapse would place the UK's agriculture system under great stress, leaving it struggling to pivot to the new approaches and technologies that would be required to maintain food supply."

It is well documented that the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. Whilst the Wye Valley National Landscape is rightly regarded, and protected, as one of the finest lowland landscapes in the country, nature here is also suffering many of the same problems as elsewhere. The Wye Valley National Landscape, and National Landscapes throughout the country are though, well placed to be at the forefront of nature recovery. This plan sets out how we propose using the special habitats found in the Wye Valley to aid recovery of those species who depend upon them.

Our approach to nature recovery

Wildlife and the habitats that sustain them represent our biodiversity. We have purposely not approached nature recovery with a single species approach. The Way Valley National Landscape is a landscape designation, designated in part due to the important habitats found within it. These habitats, some of the most special found in the UK, are home to a range of plants and animals. By conserving and enhancing these habitats, we create space for some of our most threatened species. We want to see nature rich habitats across the landscape, between which species can move easily.

We must also remember that the National Landscape is an evolving landscape, where people live, work, spend leisure time and one which provides a range of goods and services to society. Nature recovery sits alongside other important priorities such as historic sites and archaeology, leisure activities, health and wellbeing, farming and food production. We believe nature can thrive in a

¹ [Final Report - The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review - GOV.UK](#)

² [National security assessment - global biodiversity loss ecosystem collapse and national security](#)

landscape which provides all these and more; it is not a case of any of priorities being incompatible with each other, but they can and must work together for the benefit of all.

As with and set out in the statutory Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan (2021-26)³, conservation and enhancement of the character and quality of the National Landscape lies at the heart of this Plan. There are four landscape management strategies:

- **Conserve** – for landscapes in good condition with stronger character where the emphasis is on protecting the key characteristics of the area.
- **Enhance** – for landscapes where some features have fallen into decline. Management should aim to reintroduce features, improve their management and remove features that detract from the overall character.
- **Restore** – for landscapes where features have been lost or are in a severe state of decline. Management should aim to repair and re-establish characteristic features.
- **Create** – for landscapes where condition is poor and character weak beyond repair. Management should consider creation of a new landscape.

In taking forward these approaches, management tends to focus on large or landscape scale initiatives. However they are equally applicable to small sites. Sometimes working at suitable scale means reaching beyond the boundary of the National Landscape into surrounding catchments or nearby habitats, and this is encouraged where resources allow.

This plan does not advocate ‘re-wilding’ the National Landscape or wholesale change to the existing landscape. Many of the special places that exist here such as traditional orchards, species-rich grasslands, rivers and streams, semi-natural and ancient woodlands, are rich in culture as well as wildlife. They are an integral part of what makes this landscape so special. There are many issues in play including communities, culture, heritage, scenic landscape value and wildlife and biodiversity. This landscape is special because of the interaction and relationship between them and each have value in the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. It is though accepted that in order to reverse the decline of biodiversity, some landscape change is inevitable and this should not be shielded away from or discounted. There is great opportunity for the Wye Valley National Landscape to play an important role in nature recovery through the expansion, enhancement and creation of habitats important to the National Landscape and its character.



Orchid in New Grove Meadow (©Wye Valley National Landscape)

³ [Wye Valley](#)

The Colchester Declaration

The Wye Valley AONB Partnership, along with all AONBs (now National Landscapes), signed up to the collective 'Declaration on Nature in AONBs', following the adoption of the Declaration at the national Landscapes for Life Conference in Colchester in July 2019.

Set against the backdrop of unprecedented concern for the future of the natural world, and intergovernmental reports that the current global response to the effects of human impact on nature is insufficient, the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) identified a need to increase the pace of nature conservation activity in AONBs. Using our unique network and partnership model, we are making a collective Declaration on Nature in AONBs, setting out our strategy for change.

Many AONB host authorities had at the time taken the step of declaring a Climate Emergency. The Colchester Declaration demonstrated AONBs readiness to act to redress declines in species and habitat within the context of a wider response to climate change.

The Colchester Declaration:

We believe

- 1. Natural Beauty has intrinsic value and means so much to people***
- 2. AONBs should be places of rich, diverse and abundant wildlife***
- 3. Nature recovery is central to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty***
- 4. Climate change is the biggest threat to humanity and one of the greatest threats to biodiversity. Designated landscapes offer some of the most powerful solutions to the challenges of climate change***
- 5. The network of AONBs and National Parks, their teams, partnerships, authorities and stakeholders offer a unique solution to tackling environmental challenges***

We pledge

By July 2020

- 1. To enable an approach that creates opportunities within AONBs for people to make an emotional connection with nature.***
- 2. To work towards the creation of Nature Recovery Plans for each AONB***

By 2024

- 1. To embed an ecosystems services approach into all AONB Management Plans***
- 2. To ensure all AONB management plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero***

By 2030

- 1. That at least 200,000 ha of SSSIs in AONBs will be in favourable condition***
- 2. That at least 100,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created/ restored in AONBs to further support the natural movement of plants and animals***
- 3. That at least 36,000 ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principle of the right tree in the right place***
- 4. That, by each AONB immediately adopting a species on the threatened list and by preparing and delivering a Species Action Plan, at least thirty species relevant to AONBs will be taken off the list by 2030***

We call on Westminster and Welsh Governments to provide the power and resources to make these targets achievable



The River Wye from Wintour's Leap

The Nature Recovery Plan

What area does this plan cover?

This plan covers the Wye Valley National Landscape, the area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (map 1). The National Landscape covers an area of 32,735 hectares (126 square miles), being 36% in Wales and 64% in England.

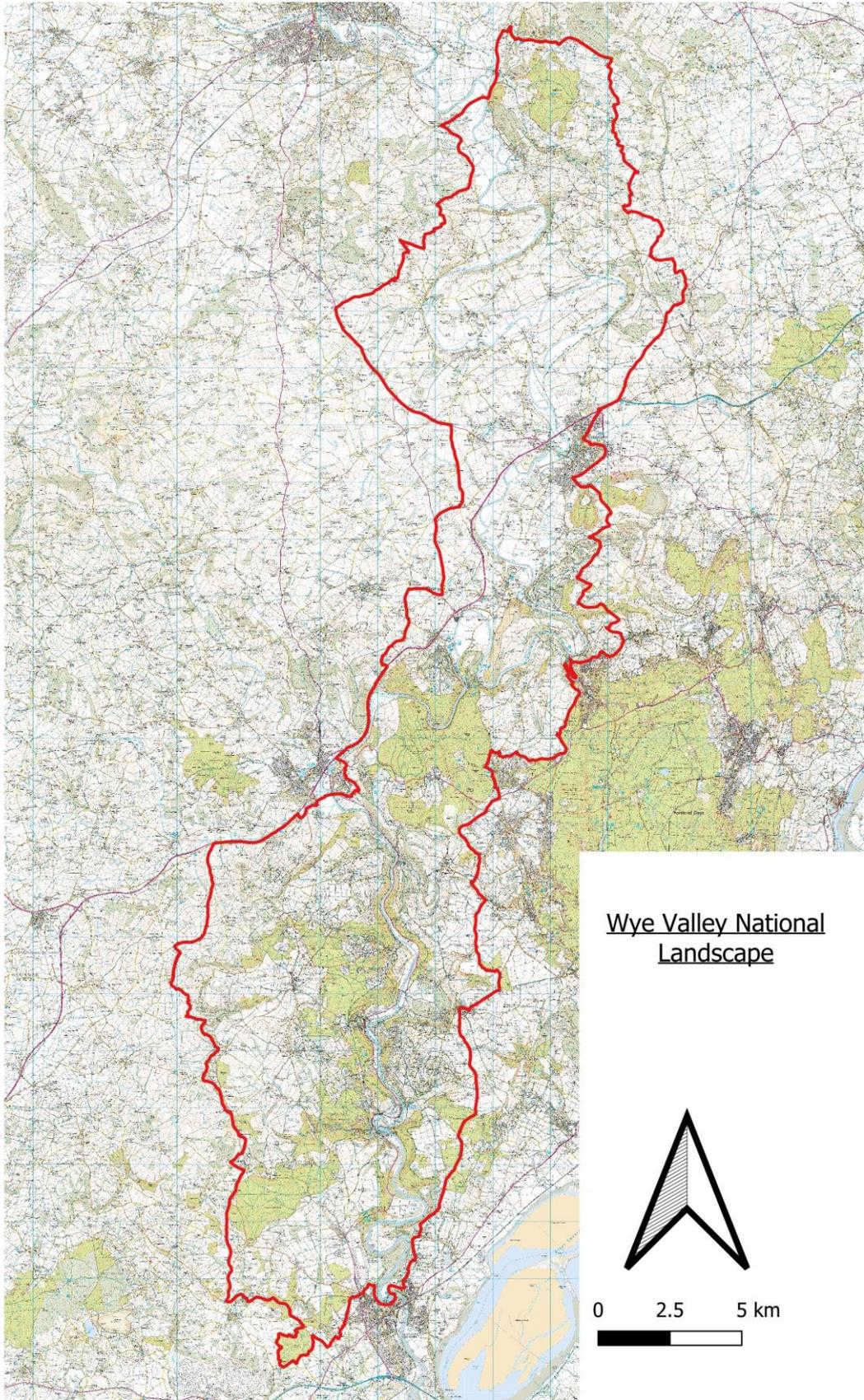
Other plans and documents

This plan builds on a number of existing documents including the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (2021-26) and is also closely linked with Wye Valley National Landscape Species Action Plans⁴ for five adopted species or assemblages. This Plan has also been produced in alignment with the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) for Herefordshire and Gloucestershire and the Monmouthshire Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP). The development of the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELM) in England and Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) in Wales, and the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) provision as part of new development, are also likely to significantly influence this Nature Recovery Plan. As these schemes and strategies develop, there will be a need to review and revise the Nature Recovery Plan as necessary, as well as any reconfiguration with the next Wye Valley National Landscape Management Plan.

How this plan can be used

This is primarily a plan for the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership and team, to give strategic direction to nature recovery work. It can however be used by a broader audience in decision making around land management opportunities, including but not limited to landowners and managers, communities and other interest groups. The plan will also influence and help implement many of the new policies and national initiatives on both sides of the national boundary.

⁴ [Priority Species Project - Wye Valley AONB](#)



Map 1 – The Wye Valley National Landscape

Nature of the Wye Valley National Landscape

The AONB Management Plan identifies 27 Special Qualities of the landscape. These include Biodiversity, Geological, Visual and sensory, Historic Environment, Language, Access and Recreation features. The biodiversity features have been identified as they are the most locally distinctive and important habitats in the Wye Valley National Landscape, and consequently are those habitats which hold the most value for nature. The conservation and enhancement of these habitats therefore has the greatest potential for the recovery of nature in the National Landscape. The Nature Recovery Plan explores the extent, condition and issues relating to each habitat and identifies opportunities for nature recovery.

The Wye Valley National Landscape team has, in consultation with partner organisations and expert individuals, identified and ‘adopted’ a distinctive and threatened species associated with each biodiversity Special Quality. The aim of this work was to identify locally distinctive threatened species to champion and work towards their recovery.

The approach taken in establishing this list was to consider each of the habitats identified as a Special Quality and identify a species or assemblage of species associated with each of these habitats. This approach would ensure that good habitat management and therefore landscape enhancement, was at the core of work to recover species.

Basic principles

- To choose species which are representative of Special Qualities, and benefit from positive landscape scale management.
- To choose species which are already found in the National Landscape and are in need of conservation work.
- To choose species with which the general public can engage, as much as possible, and ideally contribute towards conservation work.

Using these basic principles, a list of 5 species or assemblage of species was established around which conservation effort can be focused over the coming years. As a result of this work, ‘adopted’ species for the Wye Valley AONB are:

- SQ 2 Woodlands – Woodland Butterfly assemblage (with a focus on Wood White & Pearl Bordered Fritillary)
- SQ 3 The River & Tributaries – Water Crowfoot
- SQ 4 Species rich grassland, including small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland - Bumblebee assemblage (with a focus on Shrill Carder Bee, Brown Banded Carder Bee & Redshank Carder Bee)
- SQ 5 Boundary habitat diversity & connectivity – Hedgehog. Also a species associated with urban areas in the landscape.
- SQ 27 Orchards – Noble Chafer beetle

Species Action Plans for each of these adopted species accompany this Nature Recovery Plan.

The State of Nature in the Wye Valley National Landscape

The State of the AONB Report (2021)⁵ analyses available statistics for habitats as well as other Special Qualities. It is difficult to paint a cohesive picture across the whole National Landscape, as the data available differs between England and Wales. However, it is identified that of the English Priority Habitats, the Wye Valley National Landscape has significant extents of Deciduous Woodland, Good quality semi-improved grassland, Lowland Meadow and Traditional Orchards.

⁵ [State-of-the-AONB-Report-2021-final.pdf](#)

Baseline data, where available, for habitats was used in the State of the AONB Report, trends will be mapped where possible when this is reviewed as part of the Management Plan review in 2026.

Condition

Other than Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) where condition monitoring has taken place, it is difficult to ascertain the condition of habitats across the National Landscape. 26 SSSIs on the English side of the National Landscape covering 1,674 ha, and on the Welsh side of the National Landscape 22 SSSIs covering 655.12 ha. Condition monitoring differs slightly on each side of the border, condition data for SSSI notifiable species is available in Wales, but not currently in England. Data for SSSIs habitat condition (2024) across the Wye Valley National Landscape is presented here:

Condition statistics for SSSIs in Wye Valley National Landscape

England

Favourable	Unfavourable - Recovering	Unfavourable - Declining	Unfavourable – No Change	Unknown	Total Area
808.4 ha	240.3 ha	575.4 ha	50.3 ha	0 ha	1674 ha
48.3%	14.4%	34.4%	3%	0%	
63%		37%			

Source - <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::sites-of-special-scientific-interest-england/about>

Wales

Favourable	Unfavourable	Unknown	Total Area
11 ha	516.9 ha	127.2 ha	655.1 ha
1.7%	78.9%	19.4%	

Source - <https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/protected-sites-baseline-assessment-2020/?lang=en>

Nature Recovery Themes & Special Qualities

Woodlands [SQ2]

Current extent

The National Landscape is well known for its woodland cover, being just under 28% woodland⁶. 14% of the English National Landscape is Deciduous Woodland. Whilst there is space for more tree planting in the Wye Valley National Landscape and it should be encouraged, the right tree, in the right place, for the right reason principle should be followed. Woodland creation should be targeted to locations where it has greatest landscape benefit through habitat connectivity or expansion of existing sites. Ill thought out woodland planting has the potential to have a significant detrimental impact on the landscape character of the Wye Valley and could impact on other Special Qualities. The value of the good management of existing woodlands in the recovery of nature is great and should be encouraged.

Woodlands are a dominant feature of the Wye Valley AONB, with significant connectivity across the landscape. Much of the woodland is ancient woodland of high nature conservation value, but there are also sizable conifer plantations. Over 900ha of woodland is within the Wye Valley Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Wye Valley woodlands are not only notable as important wildlife habitats, but are also of economic value for their timber production, and provide significant recreation and health and wellbeing benefits.

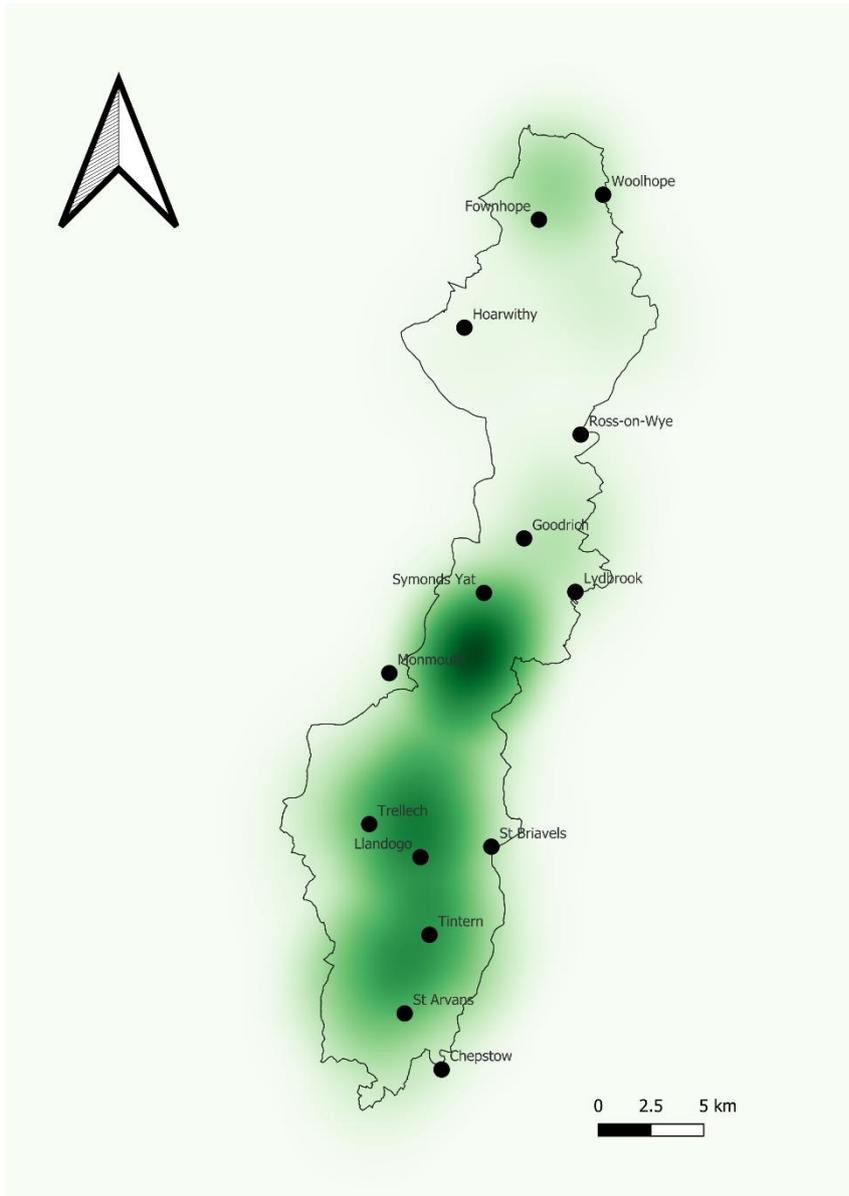
Condition

Pests and diseases affecting trees and woodlands are increasing at an unprecedented rate. These include Ash Dieback which is in evidence throughout the AONB and Phytophthora effecting predominantly alder along river banks. The impact of these can be seen on a landscape scale. Deer and grey squirrel populations, both found in large numbers in the Wye Valley, can have a serious detrimental impact on the conservation value of our woodlands, as can Wild boar particularly in the Forest of Dean, but also as the population ranges further into Wales and Herefordshire.

Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) such as cherry laurel and Himalayan Balsam are also seen to be having a detrimental impact, especially in the Wye Gorge.

Woodland habitat condition varies greatly. The condition of woodland SSSIs is recorded and ranges from favourable to unfavourable depending on the level of management present and the effect of pests, disease and INNS on the habitat.

⁶ extrapolated from [National Forest Inventory GB 2024](#)



Map 2- Wye Valley National Landscape Woodland Heatmap (Source – Woodland Inventory 2022)

Key Flora and Fauna

Woodland of the Wye Valley are a special habitat and home to a broad range of species. In identifying a species to represent woodland habitats and encourage their positive management, a range of mammals, plants, trees, insects, birds and reptiles were identified by local experts as important and/or distinctive to this area, and often in need of conservation work.

Dormouse are present in woodlands throughout the Wye Valley, requiring good woodland management, age structure and varied ground flora.

The Wye Valley is a key site for a number of bat species, particularly in the Lower Wye Valley. A number of bat sites in the National Landscape are designated SSSI and the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Bat sites Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is one of only 3 SACs extending into the National Landscape,

26% of which is broad-leaved deciduous woodland. Species that are a primary reason for designation are Lesser horseshoe bat and Greater horseshoe bat⁷.

Wye Valley Woodlands are home to Roe, Fallow, Red and Muntjac deer. Although much loved and a thrill to see, high numbers and the associated browsing is having a large detrimental impact of woodland habitat condition. Control is required throughout the National Landscape. Similarly, Wild Boar are to be found in woodlands, primarily from Ross southwards, and can have a significant detrimental impact on woodland condition, especially impacting on woodland understory, ground vegetation and regeneration.



Bluebells in a Wye Valley woodland (© Wye Valley National Landscape)

Recently reintroduced in the Forest of Dean, Pine Marten have spread into and beyond the Wye Valley National Landscape.

Plant and tree species of particular interest include Small and Large leaved lime trees. Sorbus species unique to this area including *Sorbus saxicola* (commonly known as Symonds Yat Whitebeam) and *Sorbus eminentiformis* (Doward whitebeam). The Lower Wye Valley being the second most diverse site for sorbus in the British Isles with 19 taxa⁸. Distinctive woodland plants include Spreading Bell

⁷ <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0014794>

⁸ <https://naturalresources.wales/media/688205/cym-report-332-sorbus-diversity-in-wye-valley-woodlands-sac-wales.pdf>

Flower, Narrow Lipped Helleborine, White Helleborine, Tintern Spurge, Herb Paris, Wood Barely and Ghost Orchid.

Although Turtle dove used to be present, they are no longer found despite the good habitat available. As with other mobile species, the condition of habitat elsewhere is as important as that here. Pied Flycatcher are a lover of wood pasture and Nightjar are to be found in the area, benefiting from the open spaces created by woodland management and felling. Wood Lark and Tree Pipit are also to be found in Wye Valley Woodlands. Peregrin Falcons are spectacular feature at Symonds Yat Rock, where they can be viewed from the viewpoint which is the picture postcard image of the dramatic Lower Wye Valley.



Symonds Yat Viewpoint (© Wye Valley National Landscape)

Adders are found on heathlands across the National Landscape, but also use woodlands, grasslands and other open spaces. Woodland management which creates good habitat for Nightjar, can also be good reptile habitat.

Favouring old coppice management and associated with decaying timber and deadwood, Cosnards Netwing Beetle are present in a small number of sites. Populations of Oil beetles and also to be found locally. Surveying and study at Piercefield woods have identified it as a hugely important site for invertebrate populations.

An assemblage of woodland butterflies have been adopted as one of the National Landscapes key species, with a particular interest in Wood White and Pearl Bordered Fritillary (See associated Species Action Plan), to represent woodland habitats. The Forestry Commission and partners have carried out extensive work in Haugh Wood, including ride management and a programme of reintroduction, which has made the site a hot spot for Wood White and other woodland butterfly species. Ride and

glade management can also benefit Glow Worms. These can be found where woodland management is taking place for butterfly and adder populations.



Wood White butterfly on orchid (© Wye Valley National Landscape)

Aims and Objectives for Nature Recovery

Woodland Nature Recovery Aim:

To ensure woodlands are well managed, better connected and opportunities for woodland creation are considered (following the principle of the right tree, in the right place, for the right reason). The woodlands of the Wye Valley should continue to be renowned as some of the most diverse, special and wildlife rich the country has to offer, and are understood and enjoyed by a diverse range of visitors.

OBJECTIVE	HOW WILL WE ACHEIVE
For all Woodland SSSIs and LWSs to be in good or recovering condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the monitoring of woodland SSSIs to establish current condition, and the continuation of monitoring to monitor change. • Encourage the surveying of Woodland Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) to establish current condition. • Support the positive management of Woodland SSSIs and LWSs to improve condition and maintain good condition. • Where available and when it is the most appropriate source of funding to use, provide funding support to carry out management work, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate.
Support the creation of new woodland where it is suitable and has no detrimental impact on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where available and when it is the most appropriate source of funding to use, provide funding support to carry out woodland creation work, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners.

<p>other Special Qualities of the Wye Valley National Landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. • Encourage the use of available opportunity mapping tools such as the Gloucestershire Nature Map⁹ as an indication of habitat suitability • Establish National Landscape guidance to aid the decision making process for new woodland planting schemes. • Continue to provide considered advice on the suitability of planting schemes through consultations. • Encourage consultation with the National Landscape team when considering woodland planting schemes.
<p>Support the positive management of existing woodland, including but not limited to PAWS restoration, coppicing, ride and glade management, INNS control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance on suitable management, or signpost woodland owners to recognised organisations and experts for management advice. • Where available and when it is the most appropriate source of funding to use, provide funding support to carry out management work, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. • Promote woodland management techniques through promotional material, talks and events. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. • Encourage the upskilling and training of arboriculture contractors, to ensure management is suitable and well considered, and there is a deep enough pool of local skilled contractors.
<p>Support the monitoring and promotion of woodland habitats to enable deeper understanding and influence management beneficial to wildlife.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect people with woodlands through volunteering opportunities, walks, talks, events and social media promotion. • Encourage the upskilling of volunteers to enable surveying and monitoring of woodland habitats and associated species.

Woodland Nature Recovery Targets

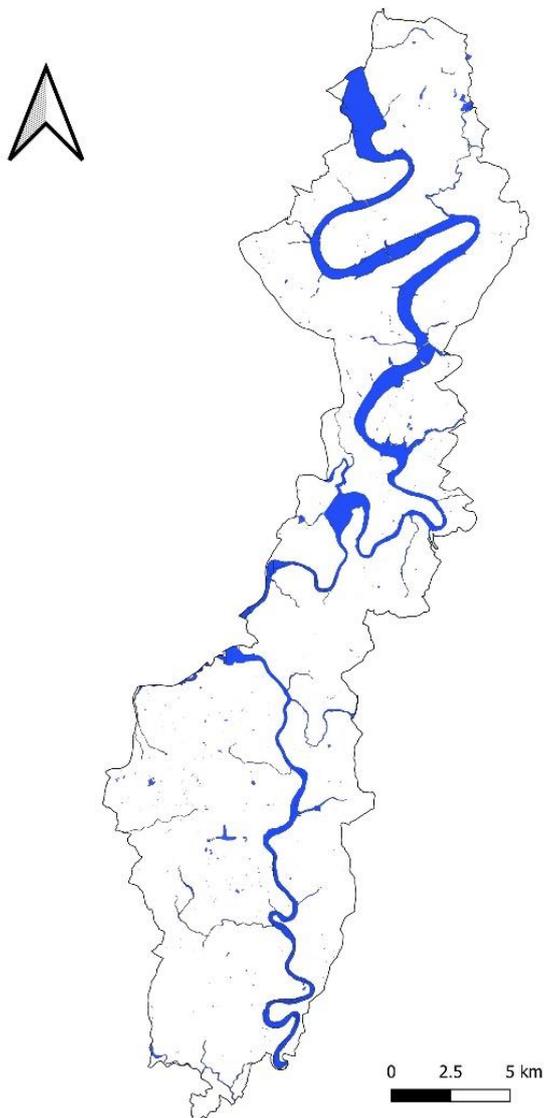
- To bring all woodland SSSI sites into good or recovering condition by 2031
- Contribute towards achieve Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework Objective Target 8: Increased tree canopy and woodland cover. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from a 2022 baseline). In the Wye Valley 3% = 982ha created by 2050
- Extend Woodland Habitat in the Wye Valley by 500ha by 2031, 100ha per annum, and to greater than 29% woodland cover.

⁹ www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/nature-map

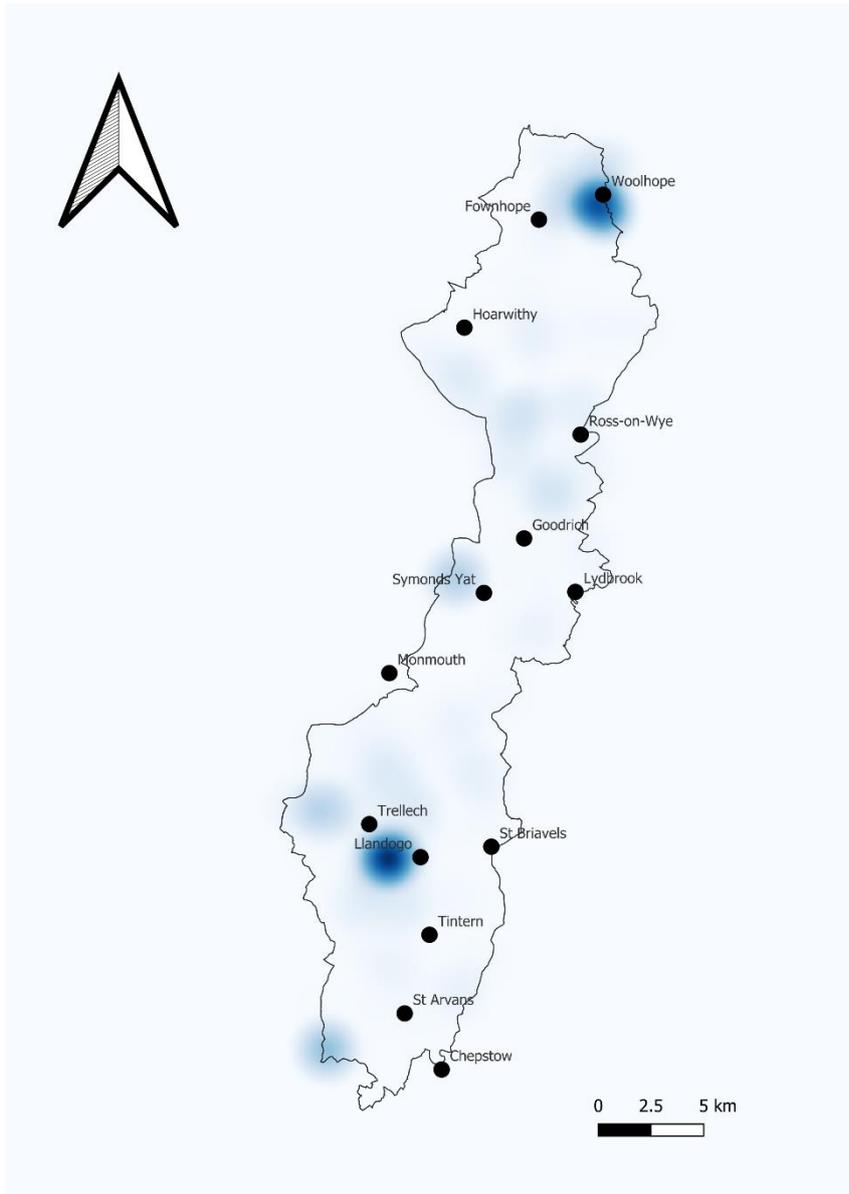
River & Tributaries [SQ3]

Current extent

At the heart of the National Landscape is the River Wye, which flows through the Wye Valley National Landscape for 58 miles (92km) from Mordiford to Chepstow, being tidal south of Bigsweir bridge. Streams and tributaries cover a similar length. Flood Zone 2 (medium risk, with a 1% chance from rivers) covers approximately 3,121 ha of floodplain throughout the National Landscape. Other wetland habitats are to be found throughout the National Landscape. Phase 1 habitat surveys have identified ponds, wet grasslands, mire and other similar wetland habitats covering just over 122ha. Flood zone 2 and other wetland habitats are presented on map 3 below, with a heatmap showing the primary location of wetland habitats in map 4.



Map 3 - Wye Valley National Landscape Flood Zone 2 and wetland habitats



Map 4 - Wye Valley National Landscape wetlands heatmap

Condition

The River Wye is designated as both a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) containing a rich variety of plants and animal life. Recent condition monitoring of designated features downgraded the River Wye SSSI from unfavourable – recovering, to unfavourable – declining; unfavourable in Wales.

The plight of the Wye has become national news, with the river suffering from high levels of pollution, particularly excessive phosphate and nitrate levels, and algal blooms, all of which are associated with the loss of wildlife and habitat quality. It has been identified that agriculture is the source for much of the excess nutrients (72-74%), but sewage and household waste also contribute¹⁰.

¹⁰ [River Wye Action Plan - GOV.UK](#)

Much work is being done to both better understand and reverse the worrying state of the river, but it must be recognised that there is no quick fix and despite best efforts it is likely to take a number of years of concerted effort to return the river to its former state.

Invasive Non-Native Species are a significant threat to the river and its tributaries, particularly Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and American Skunk Cabbage (on tributaries). Although there are no known Giant Hogweed stands in the National Landscape, it is known to be present in small quantities on tributaries higher up the catchment.

Climate change is having a significant impact on the river and its tributaries. Warmer and wetter winters are leading to more frequent flood events, with hotter dryer summers leading to low flows and high water temperatures. Both drought and flood conditions are having a detrimental impact on the wildlife that depends on the river. Water quality and quantity is also having a negative impact on river users and the associated health and wellbeing, and local economy benefits.

Key Flora and Fauna

The SSSI¹¹ and SAC¹² citations identify a number of species which make the river so important. Discussions around the most appropriate species to adopt for recovery across the National Landscape identified a range of mammals, plants, insects, fish and birds found locally and which rely upon the river habitat.

Water Crowfoot (*Ranunculus*) was chosen as the adopted species for the river and its tributaries, being a distinctive feature of the Wye and a key indicator species within the SAC citation. It is under threat from the issues which are affecting water quality and quantity (see associated Species Action Plan). Algal blooms, high water events and poor water quality are all considered factors in the decline in water crowfoot, the extent of which has reduced dramatically in recent years.

Clubtail dragonfly and White tail damselfly are both indicators of water quality and specialities on the Wye. Crayfish, Eels/Elvers, Pea Muscle and Lamprey were all identified as species of local interest. Atlantic Salmon are also a distinctive feature of the Wye, but as with others, numbers have been on the decline. Dippers are a feature of tributaries, and kingfisher can be seen on the river throughout the Protected Landscape. Tufa is also an interesting feature on the Slade Brook SSSI in the Gloucestershire part of the National Landscape.



Water Crowfoot in the River Wye (© Ellie Baggett / Wye Valley National Landscape)

¹¹ [CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU](#)

¹² [European Site Conservation Objectives for River Wye SAC - UK0012642](#)

Aims and Objectives for Nature Recovery

The River and Tributaries Nature Recovery Aim:

To work with statutory agencies and partners to reverse the declining habitat of the River Wye and its tributaries, encouraging positive action. To see the return of species and habitats in decline as a result of water quality and quantity issues.

To increase the extent of wetland features to create permanent and seasonal habitat, and slow the flow of water across land and in tributaries, including but not limited to ponds, scrapes and leaky dams.

OBJECTIVE	HOW WILL WE ACHEIVE
For the River Wye SSSI to be in Good or recovering condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working through partnership including the Wye Catchment Partnership and Farm Herefordshire, encourage positive upstream activity which improves water quality and reduces the impact on the Wye Valley National Landscape. • Within the Wye Valley National Landscape, and where possible upstream, continue to develop projects and prioritise funding for projects which work towards improvements in water quality. • Support the monitoring of water quality by both the public and voluntary sectors and promote opportunities to get involved. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding for beneficial projects, and support applications where appropriate. • Support riparian owners to manage land and features for the benefit of the habitat and species. • Promote the adoption of land management activity which promote good soil management, reduction in surface water run off and storage of water on land. • Where available, provide funding support to carry out work, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. • Encourage and support the surveying of indicator species in the river, to better understand their condition and influence practice to restore habitats. • Continue to explore opportunities for coordinated river management and initiatives that could benefit the habitat, species and public enjoyment. • Celebrate and promote good practice to highlight and encourage sharing and learning.
Support land management activity which slows down, soaks up and stores water in our soils, vegetation and small watercourses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote Natural Flood Management opportunities • Support riparian owners to manage land and features for the benefit of the habitat and species. • Encourage the upskilling and training of contractors, to ensure management is suitable and well considered, and there is a deep enough pool of local skilled contractors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote NFM techniques through promotional material, talks and events. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. • Where available provide funding support to carry out work, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners.
To reduce the negative impact of Invasive Non Native Species on our river and tributaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance on suitable management. • Encourage volunteer and community activity in the monitoring and management of INNS. • Where available provide funding support to carry out work, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. • Continue to monitor the extent of INNS in the National Landscape to establish success rates of removal and any potential spread and/or new species.
To use the National Landscapes platform to promote and encourage positive action, enlist support and celebrate achievements.	<p>Continue to work with partner organisations and groups to highlight the plight of the river, coordinate beneficial project work and promote good land management practice. Celebrate and promote good practice to highlight and encourage sharing and learning. Promote opportunities for monitoring, surveying and engagement with river enhancement activities through talks, walks, events and social media.</p>

The River and Tributaries Nature Recovery Targets

- To bring all riparian and wetland SSSI sites into good or recovering condition by 2031
- Increase the extent of wetland features, both permanent and seasonal, by 50% by 2031. 12.5ha per annum created.
- Install 100 new Natural Flood Management (NFM) Features per annum. 500 by 2031
- Create 50,000m³ of new water storage in the landscape per annum. 250,000m³ by 2031
- By 2031 3 tributaries of the River Wye clear of Invasive Non Native Species.

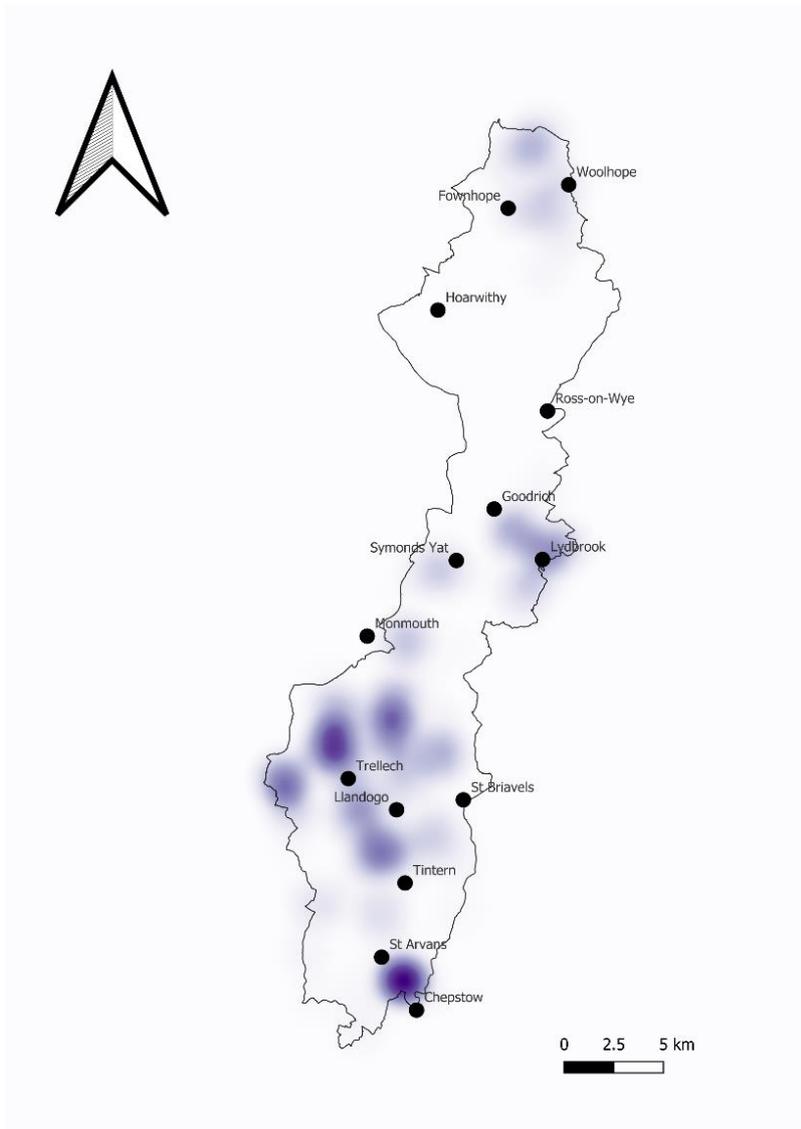
Species-rich grassland, including small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland [SQ4]

Current extent

Phase 1 habitat data identifies 10,148ha of grassland across the National Landscape, 31% of land. Of this the majority is improved grassland (5,240 ha / 16%). Land recorded as semi-improved species rich or unimproved grassland totals 480ha, just 1.47% of land across the National Landscape. From a different source, Priority Habitat data for England has recorded 174.5ha of Good quality semi-improved grassland, 122.5ha of Lowland Meadows and small areas (less than 5ha) of Lowland Calcareous and Lowland Dry Acid Grassland combined. Although species-rich grassland and un/semi-improved grassland covers a comparatively small part of the National Landscape, it is a significant resource in the national context, is a Special Quality of landscape and provides a valuable habitat for wildlife. Key locations are to be found in the Woolhope Dome, Hewelsfield & Brockweir, Doward and Monmouthshire parts of the National Landscape.



New Grove Meadow (©Wye Valley National Landscape)



Map 5 - Wye Valley National Landscape un and semi-improved grassland sites heatmap

Condition

Very few grassland sites are designated as SSSI, however many more are recorded as Local Wildlife Sites. The condition is therefore unknown.

Within each of the 3 Counties a group with a ‘meadow’ grassland focus has been established; The Parish Grasslands Project focusses on sites and landowners in and around Hewelsfield and Brockweir, Monmouthshire Meadows has a county wide focus, and Herefordshire Meadows again with a county wide but more of an agricultural focus. Roadside verge nature reserves in Herefordshire are also covered by the Verging on Wild group. Whilst their extent and condition are recorded as having declined since the mid 20th century, the current picture is brighter with a renewed interest in managing, restoring and safeguarding this precious habitat.



Six spot burnet moth (© Wye Valley National Landscape)

Key Flora and Fauna

A key habitat for many pollinators, meadow grasslands are important to a range of species. As well as bumblebee species, butterflies and moths thrive here, including spotted burnet moths and marbled white butterflies. An assemblage of bumblebees has been adopted by the Wye Valley National Landscape to represent Species-rich and good quality semi-improved grassland sites (See associated Species Action Plan).

The flowers upon which the pollinator species thrive include a range of orchid species including green-winged, lesser and greater butterfly orchid. Wild daffodil are also found, particularly in the northern part of the National Landscape. Into the autumn, on many of these sites fungi flourish, including the less common waxcap.



Shrill Carder Bee (©Nature Picture Library)



Waxcap at New Grove Meadow (© Wye Valley National Landscape)

Aims and Objectives for Nature Recovery

Species Rich Grassland including small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland Nature

Recovery Aim

To ensure species-rich and good quality semi improved grasslands are recorded, well managed, better connected and opportunities for restoration are promoted and taken. The extent of meadow grasslands is increased.

OBJECTIVE	HOW WILL WE ACHEIVE
<p>To see the creation of new species rich and good quality semi-improved grassland sites throughout the National Landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support landowners to manage, restore and create meadow grassland habitats. • Continue to explore opportunities for coordinated meadow grassland creation and management initiatives that could benefit the habitat, species and public enjoyment. • Where available provide funding support to carry out work, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. • Work with partner organisations and meadow groups to promote meadow creation opportunities.
<p>To see all grassland SSSIs and LWSs in good or recovering condition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the monitoring of grassland SSSIs to establish current condition, and the continuation of monitoring to monitor change. • Encourage the surveying of grassland LWSs to establish current condition. • Support the surveying of potential grassland LWSs and/or Priority Habitat sites, for inclusion on registers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the positive management of grassland SSSIs and LWSs to improve condition and maintain good condition. • Where available provide funding support to carry out work, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate.
Support the positive management of existing good quality grassland sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance on suitable management, or signpost landowners to recognised organisations and experts for management advice. • Promote best practice management techniques through promotional material, talks and events. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. • Encourage the upskilling and training of contractors, to ensure management is suitable and well considered, and there is a deep enough pool of local skilled contractors. • Invest in upskilling and equipment to enable broader seed harvesting operations
Support the monitoring and promotion of good quality grassland habitats to enable deeper understanding and influence management beneficial to wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect people with species-rich and good quality semi improved grasslands through volunteering opportunities, walks, talks, events and social media promotion. • Encourage the upskilling of volunteers to enable surveying and monitoring of grassland habitats and associated species. • Continue to support and champion meadow restoration groups who work to promote the habitat and support landowners, throughout the National Landscape.

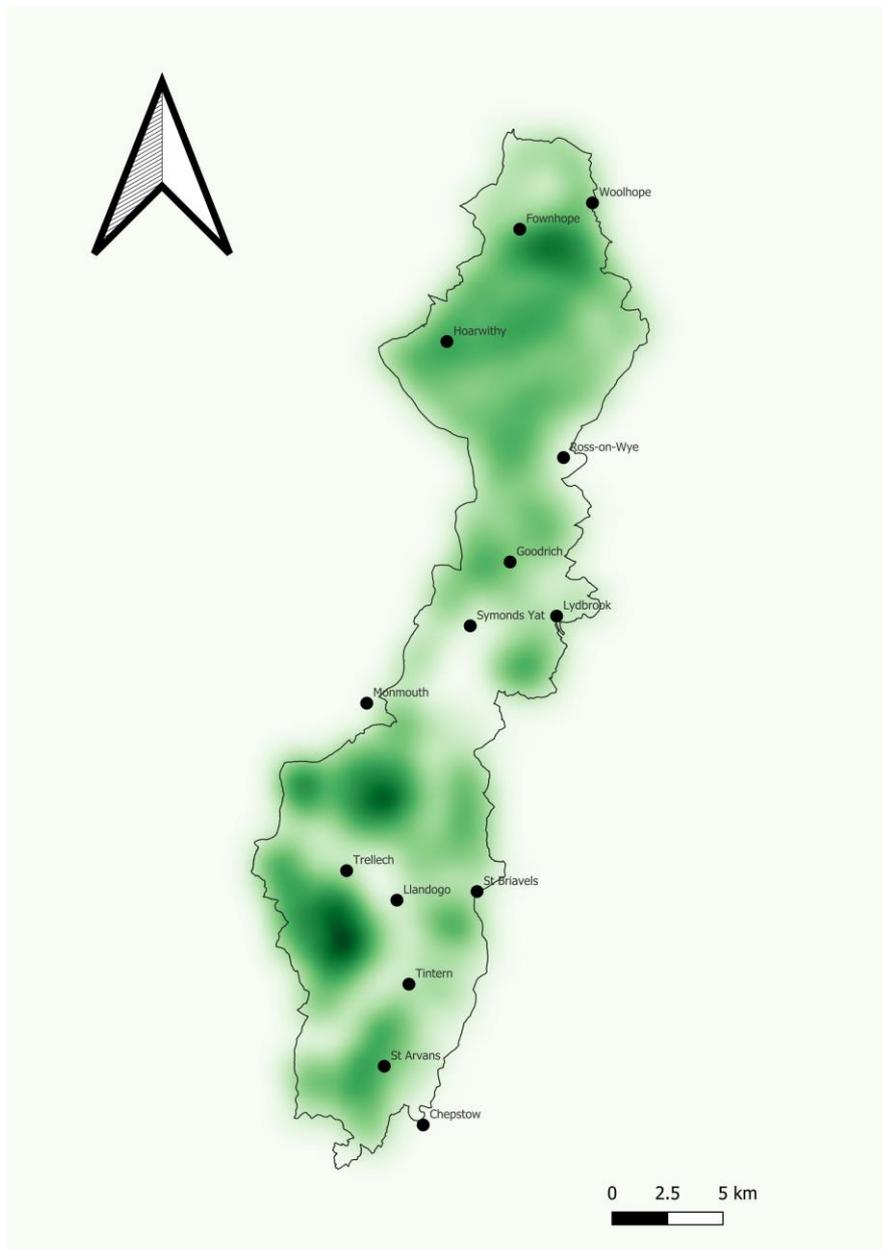
Species rich grassland including small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland Nature Recovery Targets

- To bring all grassland SSSI sites into good or recovering condition by 2031
- To create 250ha of new meadow grasslands across the National Landscape by 2031. 50ha per year created.

Boundary habitat diversity & connectivity [SQ5]

Current extent

Throughout the AONB. Dry stone walls are a feature of the Lower Wye Valley and small field patterns south of Ross-on-Wye. Hedgerows are found throughout the National Landscape, being more widespread in the more agricultural land of Herefordshire, but also bounding grassland and arable fields and providing habitat connectivity in the more densely wooded lower Wye Valley. UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) data for England, combined with Wye Valley National Landscape Phase 1 data for Wales has mapped 1,083km of hedgerows across the National Landscape. The data shows that hedgerows are more evenly spread throughout the Herefordshire part of the National Landscape where the fields are generally larger, with density varying slightly. Land to the south of Fownhope being a hotspot. More density of hedgerows are to be found bounding the fields between woodlands in the lower Wye Valley.



Map 6 – Wye Valley National Landscape hedgerow heatmap

Condition

Hedgerows play an important connectivity role across the National Landscape, especially between woodland and species-rich grassland sites. Their condition varies greatly not only between different parts of the National Landscape, but often from field to field. Ash dieback has the potential to have a significant impact on the condition and functionality of our hedgerows as connectivity features.

Dry stone walls are more of a feature in the Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire parts of the National Landscape, but are generally considered to be in poor condition. They often no longer function as a livestock barrier.

Hedgerows can play an important role in natural flood management, especially when they are found cross slope, slowing down the flow of surface water, catching sediment and soaking up water.



Wye Valley National Landscape hedgelaying (© Wye Valley National Landscape)

Key Flora and Fauna

Hedgehogs, one of the Wye Valley National Landscapes adopted species, are associated with hedges (See associated Species Action Plan). They form highways along which the animals can safely shelter and navigate by.

One of the three SACs in the National Landscape is the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat sites. Hedgerows are an important feature for bat species for navigation and orientation, as well as a source of food through the abundance of invertebrates.

A range of bird, insect and mammals will make use of hedgerows throughout the National Landscape for navigation, food, shelter, home and to connect between other nature rich habitats.



Wye Valley dry stone wall (© Wye Valley National Landscape)

Aims and Objectives for Nature Recovery

Boundary Habitat diversity & connectivity Nature Recovery Aim

Promote the cultural and ecological importance of hedgerows and dry stone walls, and their importance as features for habitat and connectivity. Encourage their reinstatement and maintenance for the benefit of species which use them. Support the creation of new hedgerows and dry-stone walls, increasing their extent.

OBJECTIVE	HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE
<p>To see the extent of hedgerows and drystone walls increase throughout the Wye Valley National Landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support landowners to plan and deliver hedge planting schemes, prioritising those which provide good habitat connectivity. ● Continue to explore opportunities for hedgerow and drystone wall creation and management initiatives that could benefit the habitat, species and public enjoyment. ● Provide funding support to carry out work where available, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. ● Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. ● Promote the use of cross-contour hedgerows as a Nature Based solution to mitigate the impact of climate change and slow down the flow of surface water.

<p>To see the condition of existing boundary features enhanced through good hedgerow management and drystone wall restoration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote good management techniques such as hedgelaying and coppicing, to improve condition and longevity. • Raise awareness of the impact of pest and disease on hedgerows and encourage the replacement of lost specimens with suitable replacements. • Provide funding support to carry out work where available, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate.
<p>Support the monitoring and promotion of boundary habitats to enable deeper understanding and influence management beneficial to wildlife.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support monitoring activity to better understand and map existing resource. • Celebrate the importance of hedgerows through promotional activity, using the hedgehog and other key species as engagement opportunities. • Develop a programme of monitoring and surveying of dry stone walls, following circa 2005 AONB survey, to establish changes in condition and extent. • Connect people with hedgerows and dry stone walls through volunteering opportunities, walks, talks, events and social media promotion. • Encourage the upskilling and training of contractors, to ensure management is suitable and well considered, and there is a deep enough pool of local skilled contractors.

Boundary habitat diversity & connectivity Nature Recovery Targets

- To restore 100m of dry stone wall per annum.
- All hedgerows to be in good management by 2031
- To create 25km of new hedgerows across the National Landscape by 2031. 5km per annum.
- To restore, through coppicing, hedge laying, gapping up &/or protection from livestock, 37.5km of existing hedgerows across the National Landscape by 2031. 7.5km per annum.
- To plant 500 standard hedgerow trees by 2031. 100 per annum

Ancient and veteran trees [SQ18]

Current extent

Found throughout the AONB in field boundaries, woodlands and open settings. Key locations include The Doward and Lower Wye Valley.



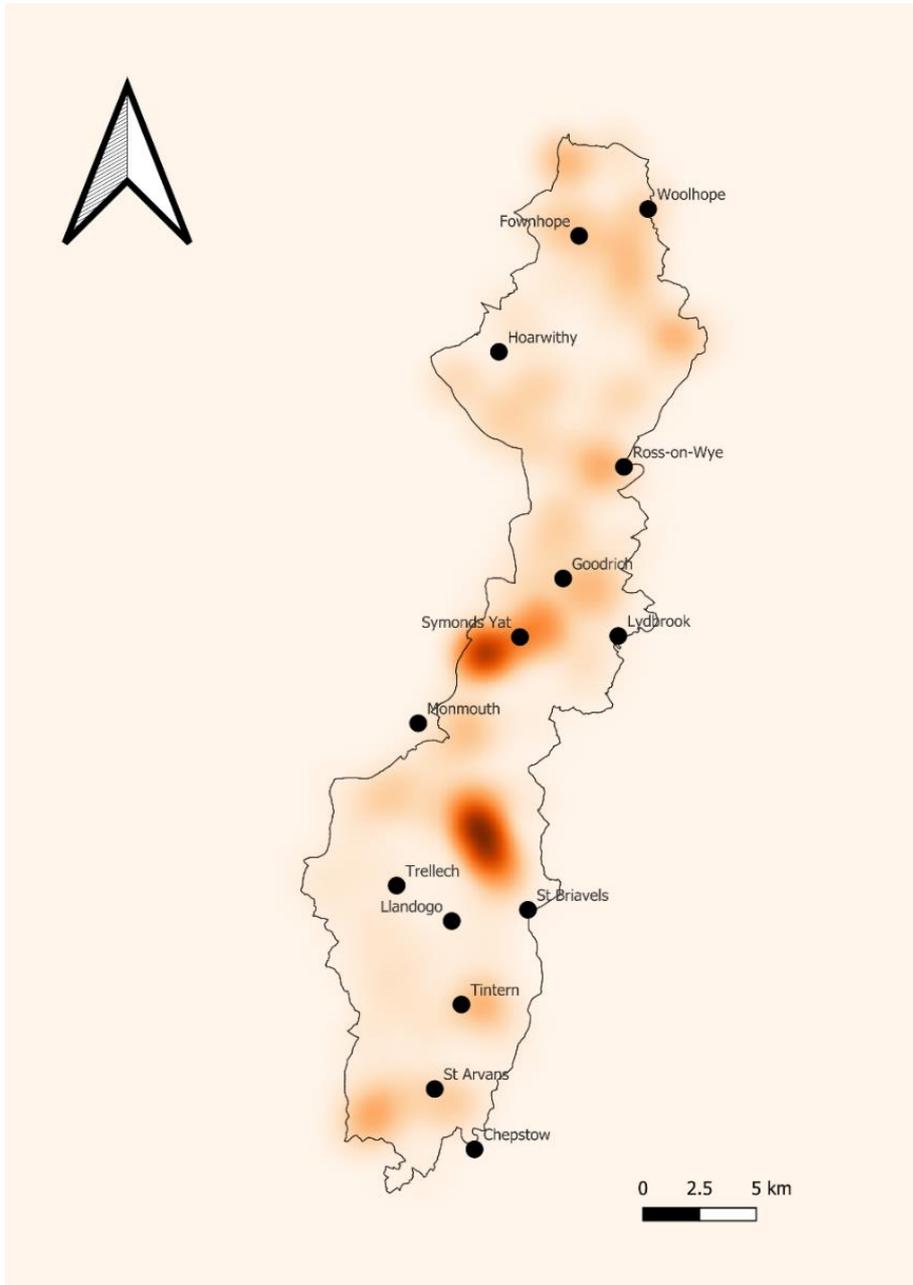
Veteran sweet chestnut tree (© Wye Valley National Landscape)

Condition

Mostly unknown, but considered to be poor in the majority of cases. A survey carried out by Wye Valley AONB Volunteers in the mid 2000s recorded the features and conditions of many. A number of the trees recorded have known to have been since lost.

Key Flora and Fauna

One of the key attributes of ancient and veteran trees are the species that are dependent on deadwood habitats, saproxylic species. Rot holes in branches and hollow trunks can be used as nest sites for many species of bird and bat. A huge diversity of invertebrates are also supported by veteran trees, which can also act as food for nesting animals. Fungi, lichens, mosses and liverworts also thrive in the environment created by ancient and veteran trees. In orchard settings, the decaying wood of veteran fruit trees is a key habitat for Nobel chafer beetle (see traditional orchards theme).



Map 7 - Wye Valley National Landscape Veteran Trees heatmap

Aims and Objectives for Nature Recovery

Veteran Trees Nature Recovery Aim:

Promote the importance of ancient and veteran trees both culturally and ecologically. Encourage their monitoring and good management to secure longevity, and encourage and support the management of potential veterans and planting of future veterans.

OBJECTIVE	HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE
To see no not loss of ancient and veteran trees across the Wye Valley National Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support landowners to plan and deliver life prolonging management of ancient and veteran trees.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding support to carry out work where available, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. • Work with partner organisations to promote opportunities. • Revisit early 2000s veteran tree survey, using it as an established baseline, to establish habitat expansion or retraction.
To see an increase in the management of candidate veteran trees, and the planting of standard trees as veterans of the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote good management techniques to improve condition and longevity. • Raise awareness of the impact of pest and disease on trees and encourage the replacement of lost specimens with suitable replacements. • Provide funding support to carry out work where available, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. • Promote standard tree planting following the principle of the right tree in the right place. • Encourage the planting and/or management of standard trees in new and existing hedgerows.
Support the monitoring and surveying of ancient and veteran trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage landowners and volunteers to survey and record veteran trees. • Revisit early 2000s veteran tree survey, using it as an established baseline, to establish habitat expansion or retraction. • Encourage the upskilling and training of contractors, to ensure management is suitable and well considered, and there is a deep enough pool of local skilled contractors.
Celebrate the cultural and ecological importance of ancient and veteran trees, and promotion the importance of veteran trees to enable deeper understanding and influence management beneficial to wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect people with ancient and veteran trees through walks, talks, events and social media promotion. • Encourage the upskilling of volunteers to enable surveying and monitoring of woodland habitats and associated species.

Veteran Trees Nature Recovery Targets

- To plant 1,000 in field standard trees, as future veterans, by 2031. 200 per year.
- No net loss of existing veteran trees.
- Carry out life prolonging management of 25 veteran trees by 2031, 5 trees per annum

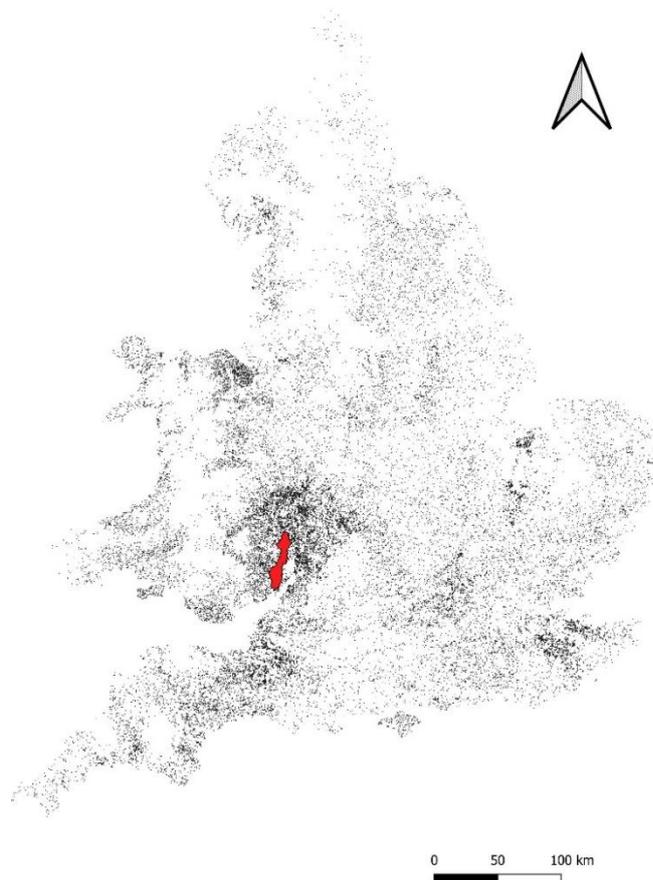
Traditional Orchards [SQ27]

Current extent

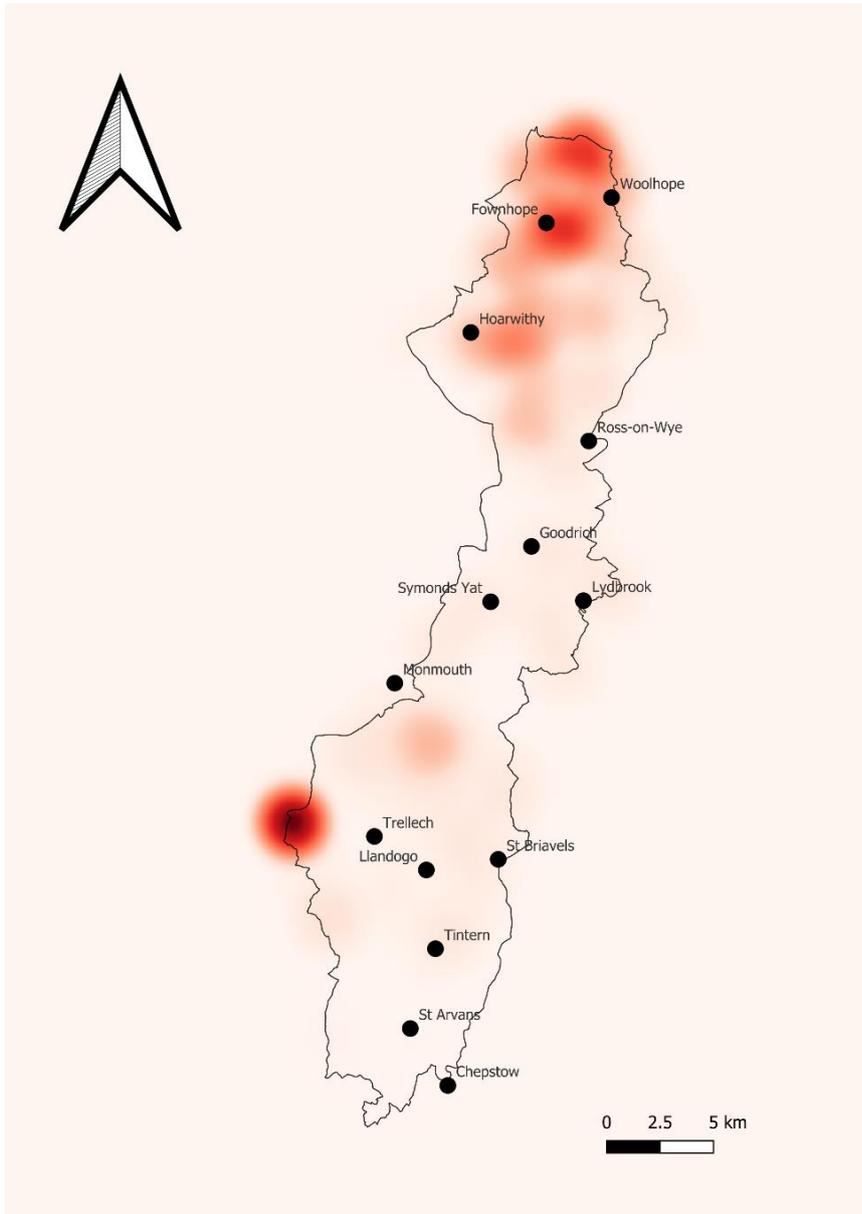
Herefordshire and Gloucestershire are both recognised historically as counties rich in traditional orchards. From 1891 to 1988, in the parishes between Holme Lacy and Bridstow the extent of traditional orchards fell from 460ha to 65ha (Hurley, Landscape Origins of the Wye Valley, 2008). Despite this decline, the National Landscape still retains just under 223ha of traditional orchard, 0.7% of the land area. This is a significant resource, being approximately 1% of all traditional orchards in England and over 6% of those found across Wales, predominantly is a number of large orchards near Cwmcarvan. Orchards are found throughout the National Landscape, but very few are to be found south of Llandogo.

National Context

Traditional Orchards are an England Priority Habitat of which the Wye Valley National Landscape has 1% of the National resource. Since the 1950's, 90% of traditional orchards in England and Wales have been lost (PTES, 2022). The overall area of orchards in England has declined by 63%, and of the remainder, only a third are traditional. This means that only 13.5% of the former English habitat range exists (Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, 2015). In Wales, the agricultural census estimates that there was a 94% reduction in area of orchards between 1958 and 1992 (Oram, Alexander & Sadler, 2013).



Map 8 - England and Wales Traditional Orchard density (source DataMapWales / Natural England Open Data Geoportal)



Map 9 - Wye Valley National Landscape Traditional Orchards heatmap

Condition

Mainly unknown but many traditional orchards considered to be in poor condition due to lack of management and neglect. Only 0.1ha sit within a SSSI, with 0.09ha in unfavourable recovering and 0.01ha in Favourable condition. The remaining orchards have no protected status and are vulnerable to removal. (Wye Valley AONB State of the AONB Report, 2021)

Key Flora and Fauna

The noble chafer beetle is one of the National Landscapes adopted species (see associated Species Action Plan). Associated with deadwood in old fruit trees, the main national distribution today is in the old orchard country of the 'Three Counties' (Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire). Recent project work in the National Landscape has establish two small populations in the far north of the National Landscape, with an aim of expanding the available habitat and range of the species. Pheromone trap survey work established a small but significant number of beetles, increasing the know records from 2 individuals to 5. Surveying has been carried out twice in recent years in

Monmouthshire, with no beetles found in either survey. There are a number of records just outside the National Landscape boundary in both Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

Other species of note to be found in Wye Valley Traditional Orchards include bird species mistle thrush and lesser spotted woodpecker. Mistletoe is also synonymous with the habitat as are species associate with mistletoe, the mistletoe moth and gall weevil.



Orchard restoration at Brampton Abbots (© Emma Drabble)

Aims and Objectives for Nature Recovery

Traditional Orchards Nature Recovery Aim:

To encourage the management of traditional orchards to bring existing habitat into good condition. To encourage and support the planting new orchards to expand the habitat and provide stepping stones between existing sites.

OBJECTIVE	HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE
For all Traditional Orchards to be in good condition and under appropriate management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the monitoring and surveying of traditional orchards to establish current condition and appropriate management opportunities, and the continuation of monitoring to monitor change. • Support the positive management of traditional orchards to improve condition and maintain good condition. • Provide funding support to carry out work where available, through the development of projects and in conjunction with partners.

<p>Support the creation of new orchards and expansion of existing orchards, particularly where they provide connectivity or stepping stones between existing sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance on the location of new orchards and the most suitable species to include in planting schemes. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate.
<p>Support the positive management of existing traditional orchards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance on suitable management, or signpost woodland owners to recognised organisations and experts for management advice. • Promote orchard management techniques through promotional material, talks and events. • Provide advice and guidance on suitable sources of external funding, and support applications where appropriate. • Encourage the upskilling and training of contractors, to ensure management is suitable and well considered, and there is a deep enough pool of local skilled contractors.
<p>Support the monitoring and promotion of traditional orchard habitats to enable deeper understanding and influence management beneficial to wildlife.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect people with orchards through volunteering opportunities, walks, talks, events and social media promotion. • Encourage the upskilling of volunteers to enable surveying and monitoring of orchard habitats and associated species. • Promote good management practices and signpost orchard owners towards available funding opportunities • Celebrate the cultural and ecological importance of traditional orchards through promotional activity.

Traditional Orchards Nature Recovery Targets

- To create 10ha of new traditional orchards throughout the National Landscape by 2031. 2ha per annum
- To plant 200 fruit trees as standard trees, or restocking existing traditional orchards by 2031, 40 trees per annum.



Noble chafer beetle (© Ellie Baggett / Wye Valley National Landscape)



Orchids at Joans Hill Farm (© Wye Valley National Landscape)

30 by 30

In 2022, at the UN Biodiversity Conference, the UK made a formal commitment to protect and conserve a minimum of 30% of land and sea for biodiversity by 2030, known as 30x30. Whilst establishing what land is eligible towards 30x30, it is recognised that work to recover nature must be taking place now. Protected Landscapes can play a key role in the delivery of 30x30 and we believe should be aiming higher than this target. In our aim to achieve greater than 30x30 in the Wye Valley National Landscape, we are in this Nature Recovery Plan setting targets in relation to the designated land and Special Quality habitats, which will also achieve significant landscape value enhancements.

What land contributes to 30x30 targets is currently in consultation, so it is difficult to set a figure for our aspirations for the Wye Valley National Landscape. However, the aspirations and targets identified below will contribute towards greater than 30% across the protected landscape.

By 2030, in partnership with landowners and other organisations, within the Wye Valley National Landscape we aspire to see:

- All SSSIs to be in favourable or recovering condition (2,295.68ha / 7%)
- All Local Nature Reserves to be in positive management and good condition (125.2ha / 0.004%)
- All National Nature Reserves to be in good condition (121.74ha / 0.4%)
- All Local Wildlife Sites mapped, recorded and in positive management (3,642.13ha / 11.1%)
- All Priority and Sensitive habitats in good condition and the mapped extent increased (3,988.23ha / 12.18%)

NB – it is noted that there is cross over in the figures above and some land will be recorded under more than one aspiration.

We have set the following aspirations for the increase in extent of Special Quality features throughout the Wye Valley National Landscape by 2031.

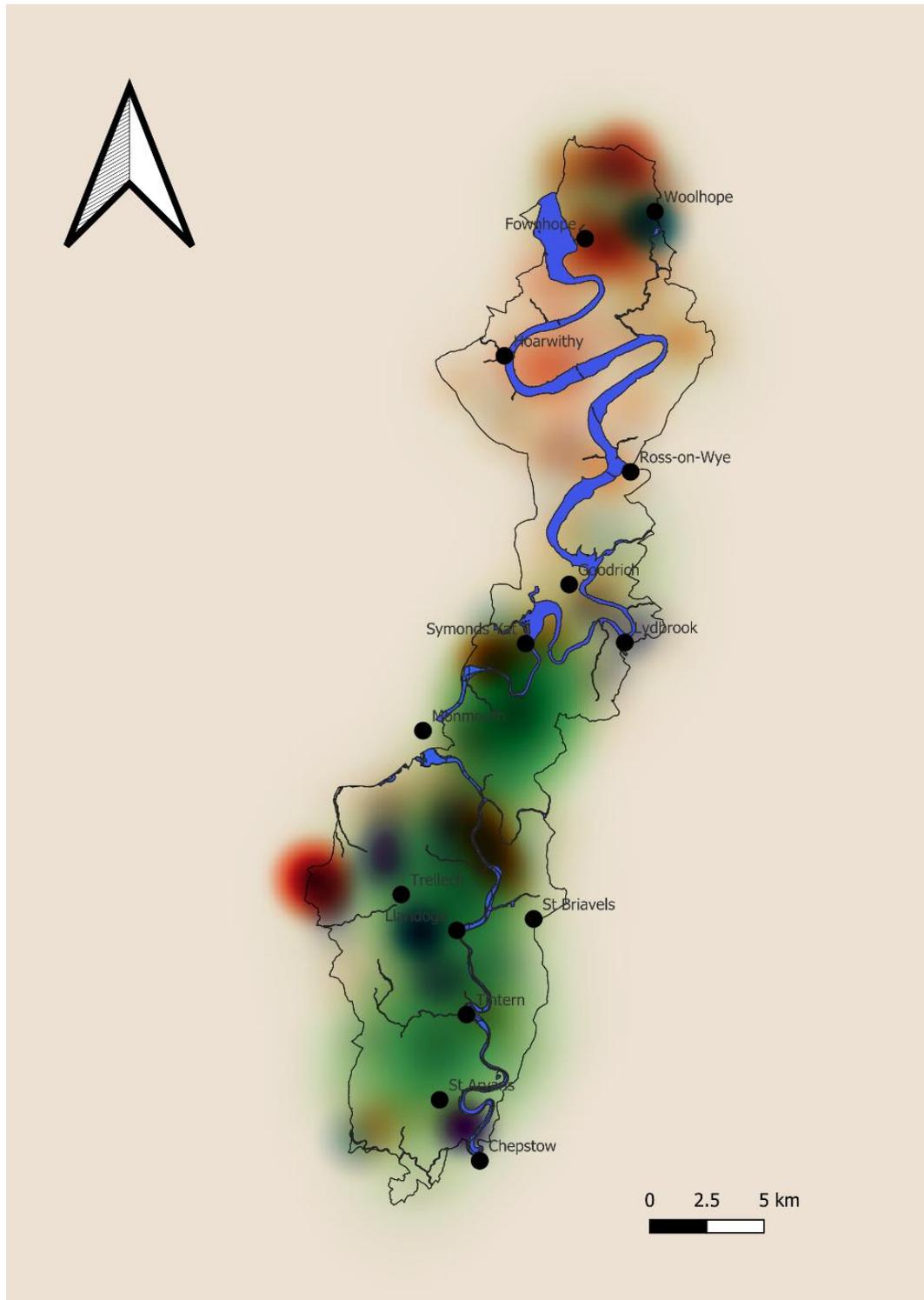
Habitat	Current Extent 2024	Target Extent 2031	New habitat target
Woodland	9,033.1ha / 27.6%	9,533ha / 29.1%	500ha
Species-rich/good quality semi-improved grasslands	479.97ha / 1.47%	730ha / 2.2%	250ha
Traditional Orchards	222.6ha / 0.68%	242.6ha / 0.74%	10ha
Wetland features	122.2ha / 0.37%	184.7ha / 0.56%	62.5ha
Veteran Trees	2,350	No net loss	1000 new standards as future veterans
Hedgerows	1,083 km	1,108 km	25 km

On the English side of the National Landscape, these targets will also work towards achieving the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework Targets 1 and 8.

- Target 1: Wildlife-rich habitats. Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).
- Target 8: Increased tree canopy and woodland cover. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from a 2022 baseline).

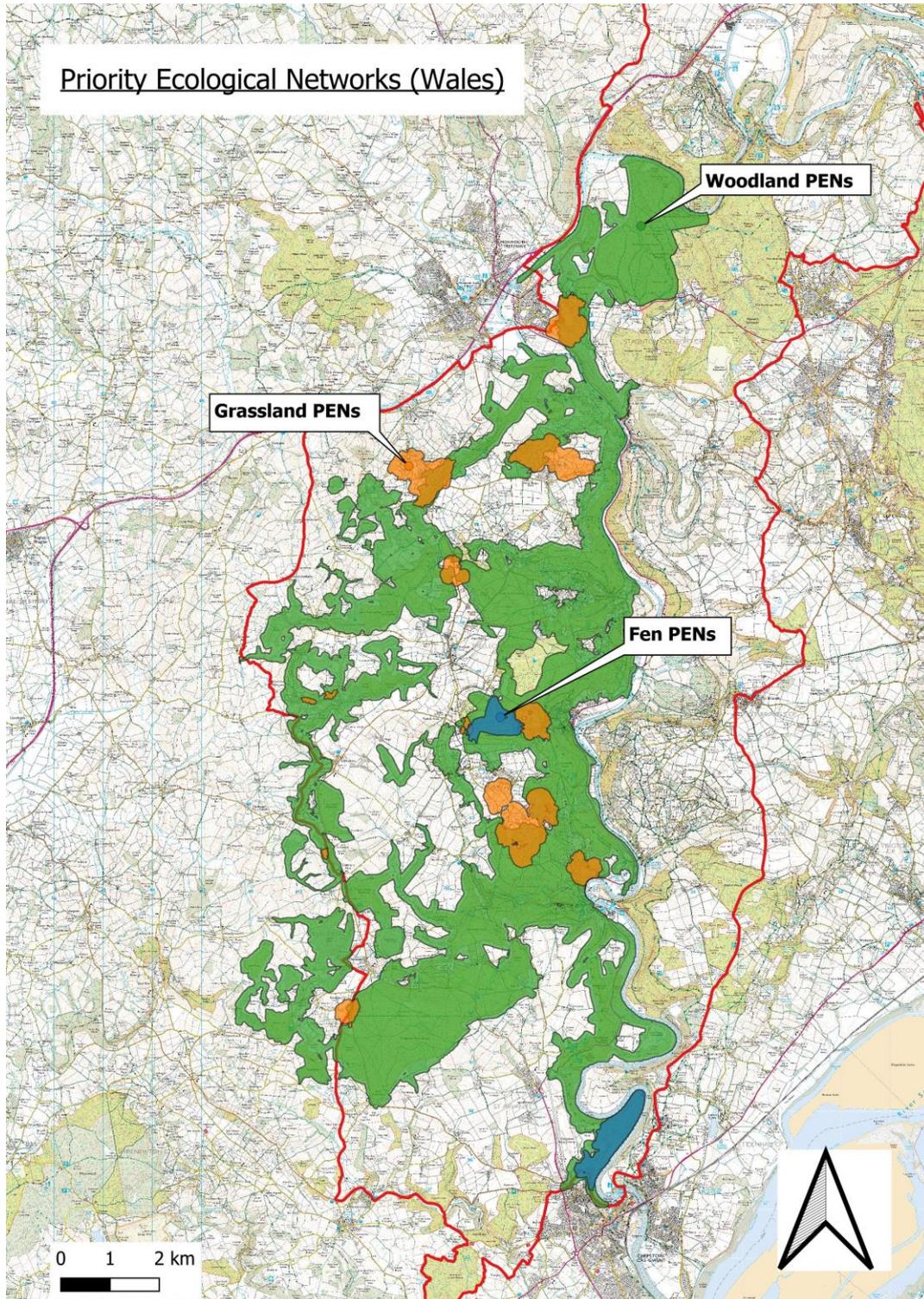
Opportunity mapping and enhancing nature recovery network across the National Landscape

Combining the priority habitats discussed above (minus hedgerows due to their extent throughout the National Landscape) gives us this visual representation of where the most important wildlife habitats are to be found based on the best available data. The darker the area, the greater density of existing habitat.



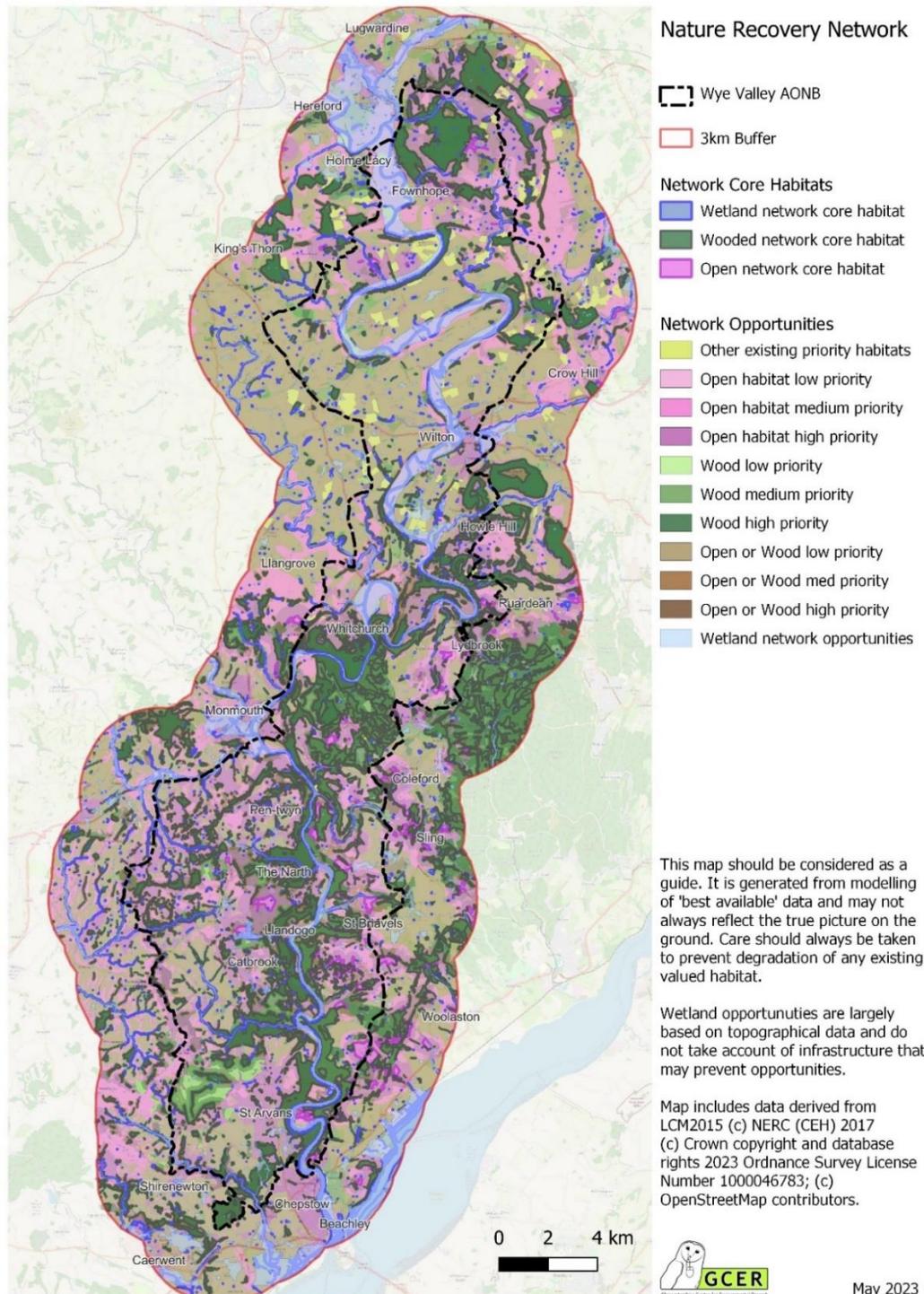
Map 10 - Wye Valley National Landscape Priority Habitats combined

In Wales, Priority Ecological Networks (PENS) show areas of connectivity between Protected Sites, providing a framework to inform the location of action to build functional resilient ecological networks. Native Woodland, Semi-natural grassland and Fen PENS are located within the Wye Valley National Landscape. They are shown on map 11 below, and further information can be found at [https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/new?layer=geonode:nrw_priority_ecological_networks#/.](https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/new?layer=geonode:nrw_priority_ecological_networks#/)



Map 11 – Priority Ecological Networks (PENS) in Wales

Produced by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, the map below goes further and identifies the areas where there is highest opportunity for expanding or creating different habitat types, based on the location of existing habitats and the way key species move between them. The mapping undertaken considers open (grassland), woodland and wetland habitats. It can be clearly seen the greater opportunities presented in the southern half of the National Landscape along with the Woolhope Dome in the north. The map should be used by anyone considering and planning for changes on the ground. The maps can be seen in greater detail at <https://naturalcapital.gcerdata.com/>.



Map 12 – Wye Valley National Landscape Nature Recovery Network (© Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust)