



# **NATURE RECOVERY PLAN**

## Executive Summary



North York Moors  
National Park

Large-scale pond creation and more at Peat Rigg Outdoor Centre

© Charlie Fox



Oak sapling planted in the North York Moors National Park

© Charlie Fox

## The North York Moors National Park Nature Recovery Plan outlines the actions required to restore and enhance nature across this iconic landscape.

Aligned with the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (published by government on 31 January 2024), this plan will support the achievement of key targets for nature recovery over the coming years.

Structured around eight themes, the plan addresses vital habitats and ecosystems, with each theme including a vision for the future, clear priorities, and a series of actionable steps.

The plan draws on insights from a wide range of stakeholders, including nature conservation groups, landowners and government bodies, ensuring both ambition and practicality in its goals. It will be regularly reviewed (between every 3-10 years) to coincide with updates to the two Local Nature Recovery Strategies within the National Park – the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Tees Valley Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and when the National Park Management Plan is reviewed.

River buffer, William Beck Farm, Chop Gate

© Charlie Fox



## THEMES & PRIORITIES



## Landscape scale

Landscape-scale thinking means considering how nature-rich sites connect with each other and how surrounding farmland, gardens and urban spaces can be enhanced to support habitats and species movement. If all land within a defined area can be improved to support a little more biodiversity, we create thriving ecosystems that are bigger, better, and more joined up.

### Priorities

- ✓ Improve soil health
- ✓ More wet habitats
- ✓ Soft edges, scrub, natural recolonisation and habitat in transition
- ✓ Dark skies friendly lighting
- ✓ More designated local wildlife sites
- ✓ Sustainable practices (reducing single use plastics and removing tree guards)

Wildflower meadow seeds  
© Holly Ramsden

## Farming

Agriculture has shaped the North York Moors, and the National Park Management Plan emphasises the need to support a thriving farming community that benefits climate, nature, and people. Existing farming groups promote collaboration and share best practices, but larger-scale support is needed to encourage broader adoption of new environmental schemes. The success of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme shows strong local interest in targeted conservation efforts when guided by trusted advisors.

### Priorities

- ✓ Better, more accessible and streamlined local advice
- ✓ Hedgerow management and enhancement
- ✓ Reduce air pollution
- ✓ More nature friendly farming outside the National Park

The Grassland Sustainability Project, supported by a grant from the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme  
© Charlie Fox





# Moorland

Most of the moorland habitat within the National Park is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These important designations reflect the ecological value of the area, and achieving a favourable condition for the habitats and species within these sites is clearly a key part of delivering nature recovery within the National Park.

## Priorities

- ✓ Increase species and structural diversity of moorland habitats
- ✓ All deep peat habitat in active restoration by 2032
- ✓ Increase understanding of shallow peat (<40cm) within the National Park



Dipwell monitoring examines water table depth in the North York Moors National Park  
© Holly Ramsden

# Grassland

In the North York Moors, there are pockets of species-rich grasslands, teeming with diverse plants and insects that are precious remnants of previous habitats lost to time. Road verges, coastal slopes, and woodland glades can also serve as biodiversity hotspots when managed properly, helping to link and protect historic meadows. Grasslands often overlap with habitats like farmland or moorland, so it's crucial to focus on their preservation and expansion to support nature recovery in the National Park.

## Priorities

- ✓ Identify all existing areas of species rich grassland to ensure its active management
- ✓ Support grassland habitat where it exists within other habitat mosaics
- ✓ Use roadside verges to increase connectivity between species rich grasslands
- ✓ Raise the profile of species rich grassland

Wildflower meadow in the North York Moors National Park  
© Holly Ramsden





## Trees and Woodland

Trees and woodland form an important part of a resilient landscape and help address climate change and nature recovery.

### Priorities

- ✓ Reverse the decline of trees in the landscape and the loss of veteran trees/future veterans
- ✓ Create, restore, and enhance different woodland habitat
- ✓ Increase the amount of standing and lying deadwood
- ✓ Work to control the impact of invasive species and disease
- ✓ Managed shoots comply with best practice advice and support local biodiversity

Woodland creation at Woodhead Farm

© Charlie Fox



Wetland creation at Peat Rigg Outdoor Centre

© Charlie Fox

## Rivers, water and wetlands

Our rivers face a multitude of pressures, including impacts from intensive land-use, invasive non-native species (INNS), water pollution, and climate change. Rivers need to be considered as whole catchment systems, and so efforts to preserve the National Park's rivers focus on landscape-scale habitat restoration and creation.

### Priorities

- ✓ Eliminate water pollution and lower nutrient levels and sedimentation rates
- ✓ Remove in-channel obstacles to fish movement and natural river processes
- ✓ More space for rivers (to meander and connect to floodplain)
- ✓ Control invasive non-native species and embed biosecurity protocols



## Marine and coastal

Yorkshire's coastal and marine environment is a vibrant ecosystem linking inland and offshore areas through estuaries and tidal currents. Key habitats include coastal streams like Staithes Beck – vital for fish migration – along with intertidal rocky shores and underwater kelp forests.

### Priorities

- ✓ Raise the profile of rocky shores
- ✓ Improve connectivity of coastal streams and estuaries
- ✓ Enhance the great Yorkshire kelp forest
- ✓ Enhance soft coastal cliffs and sediments

Cultivated native kelp produced by SeaGrown, the UK's first offshore seaweed farm  
© Ceri Oakes

## Species

Alongside habitat restoration, targeted species recovery is essential to ensure the survival of species like the Large Heath Butterfly, Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Water Vole. Reintroducing species can enhance biodiversity and help ecosystems adapt to climate change.

### Priorities

- ✓ Make progress towards beaver reintroduction
- ✓ Support larger and more connected populations of Large Heath Butterfly
- ✓ Support a recruiting population of Freshwater Pearl Mussel
- ✓ Trial methods to expand populations of Water Vole
- ✓ Support greater diversity of raptors
- ✓ Monitor bird species and abundance in different habitats and look to increase their numbers



Beaver in the water  
© NYMNP

[northyorkmoors.org.uk](http://northyorkmoors.org.uk)

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Duke of Burgundy butterfly  
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