

Corporate Outcome E: Increasing the quality, distinctiveness and resilience of the biodiversity of priority habitats and species consistent with climate change by...

- 1. Influencing partners and land managers to achieve favourable (or at least recovering) Site of Special Scientific Interest condition of land in the Peak District (Priority level 1)*
- 2. Achieving favourable (or at least recovering) Site of Special Scientific Interest condition of all National Park Authority owned land (Priority level 3)*
- 3. Ensuring the achievement of all Biodiversity Action Plan targets (Priority level 1)*

Key achievements have been the increase to 97.6% of Authority owned Site of Special Scientific Interest land in favourable or recovering condition and the increase to 89.3% of Site of Special Scientific Interest land not owned by the Authority, exceeding our targets and exceeding the government's Public Service Agreement target for our own land.

Significant partnerships of Moors for the Future and the Peak District Land Management Advisory Group (with Natural England) have contributed to this success. Moors for the Future has also developed a business plan to secure its longer term future in this key area. Remedial work on our own estates included 1,300 person days spent on habitat and land management such as fencing of moor on the Warslow estate and the introduction of Highland cattle to graze purple moor grass.

Highlights during 2008/09 included returning peregrines at the Roaches successfully raising chicks, pond restoration and creation providing new habitats for great crested newts, Stoke Brook restoration following a major pollution incident and 700 hectares of moorland restoration by United Utilities and Yorkshire Water.

We have made progress and are addressing our data issues but we have been unable to monitor land under conservation agreement for each Biodiversity Action Plan habitat, curtailing our ability to monitor our progress. Reaching agreement with Natural England and other partners on monitoring arrangements are a high priority for the year ahead.

Looking ahead to 2009/10

We aim to achieve more moorland restoration, habitat management to sustain populations of lapwing and twite, ark sites for crayfish to help restore native populations, habitat management for woodland birds, in 2009/10.

Key actions for 2009/10 include:

- Co-ordinate continuing improvements to Site of Special Scientific Interest condition of land in the Park (L1)*
- Focus on priority habitats and species within the biodiversity action plan such as grassland management and addressing the decline in lapwings and twite (L1)*
- Prepare for the review of the local Biodiversity Action Plan in 2010 and plan for implementation beyond 2010 (L2)*
- Monitoring arrangements in place to determine achievement (L2) PIP 1.1a5*
- Development of a Wildlife Sites System for the White Peak (L2)*
- Establish new management structure for the Eastern Moors Estate (L2) PIP4.6b2*
- Review the management of the Roaches Estate (L2) PIP4.6b2*
- Seek partners to develop the Monsal Trail (L2) PIP4.6b2 (move to section D)*

Bogs, Birch and Biodiversity

During 2008/09, in partnership with Natural England and our tenants, we made significant progress on improving the Authority's landholdings for wildlife. 97.6% of our nationally important wildlife sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) are now in favourable or recovering condition, exceeding the Government's 95% target more than a year ahead of schedule. Moorland Management Plans were completed for the Roaches and the Warslow Moors estates, and changes in grazing patterns have been agreed with tenant farmers to allow moorland plants like heather to thrive. Highland cattle were introduced on part of the Warslow Moors and have been very successful in reducing vigorous grasses, which has benefited moorland birds such as snipe. Moorland ditches have been blocked using a variety of techniques on The Roaches, Warslow and North Lees, encouraging the spread of the bog mosses which are so vital to the health of the moors, providing feeding areas for moorland birds and habitat for the threatened water vole. The creation of shallow pools or scrapes on the moorland at Warslow has also attracted feeding birds. Monitoring on the Eastern Moors shows that experimental techniques to restore grass moor to heather carried out over a large area in 2004/05 appear to be very successful, opening the way to similar techniques being used elsewhere in the future.

During 2009/10 we plan to extend the use of traditional cattle breeds on the Warslow Moors, carry out further moorland ditch blocking work on a number of sites to re-wet the moors and establish approximately 10 hectares of new native woodland on The Roaches by encouraging natural regeneration of rowan trees, linking existing wooded areas. We will be continuing the collection of wildflower seed from hay meadows at North Lees to spread on fields of less interest and this will hopefully result in a glorious display of colour in our meadows. We will continue the programmes of heather management on all our estates, birch management at The Roaches, Eastern Moors and Warslow Moors and rush cutting on Warslow Estate farmland, to continue enhancing our landholdings for wildlife and visitors.