

Corporate Objectives:

1. Produce Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP 2011-20) (Priority level 2)
2. Achieve the priority species and habitat targets in the Biodiversity Action Plan on our own land and by influencing land owners and managers in the wider National Park (Priority level 1)

Focusing on priorities in the Biodiversity Action Plan, almost all (99.3%) of Authority owned Site of Special Scientific Interest land is now in favourable or recovering condition, exceeding the government's Public Service Agreement target of 95%. In the National Park overall 94.6% of Site of Special Scientific Interest land is now in recovering or favourable condition, a major achievement considering that six years ago these figures were only 54.3% and 28.0% respectively, and that they are predominantly in upland areas (requiring more remedial work than in lowland areas).

During the year work has been focused on moorland restoration; habitat management to sustain populations of lapwing and twite; 'ark' sites for crayfish to help restore native populations; and habitat management for woodland birds. The Peak Birds Project funded the creation of two new wader scrapes (small pools for wading birds) in the Dark Peak and the re-creation of another, particularly to provide suitable breeding ground for lapwing. Alongside this work, land management practices are being highlighted through the Upland Entry Level Stewardship and the Higher Level Stewardship. A twite feeding programme continued through the year and the re-instatement of traditional haymeadows for foods is being encouraged through the Stewardship schemes.

Remedial work on our own estates included ongoing improvements through habitat and land management. For example, fencing of a major moor on the Warslow estate and the introduction of Highland Cattle was completed to graze purple moor grass. 4 pairs of Lapwing again nested on the North Lees Estate following the introduction of Highland Cattle and digging of scrapes.

In line with our Asset Management Plan, we successfully delivered the Eastern Moors into a partnership of the National Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds during the year to ensure its continued protection and enhancement.

Looking ahead to 2010/11

We will have been successful if we meet our targets for priority species and habitats such as lapwing, crayfish, grasslands and moorlands.

Key actions for 2010/11 include:

- Addressing species and habitat targets for lapwings, crayfish, grasslands and moorlands
- Further work with the aggregates industry to progress opportunities for developing crayfish 'ark' sites
- Source additional funds for survey work with partners to locate and evaluate the status of any remaining native crayfish populations
- Moorland restoration work, specifically on blanket bog, through the Moors for the Future partnership under the MoorLIFE project
- Continued targeting of Higher Level Schemes and development of Wildlife Sites system to address grassland targets
- Reviewing the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2001 – 2010) performance

- Agreeing achievable targets with key partners for the revised Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2011 – 20) and ensuring targets take into account climate change models where appropriate
- Establishing a more effective monitoring process

Crayfish 'Arks' for the Peak District and Derbyshire

The UK's only native crayfish (the white-clawed crayfish) has been virtually wiped out in the Peak District Dove and Manifold rivers by crayfish plague carried by the non-native signal crayfish - a larger, more aggressive species. In response, the Authority is leading a partnership project in the Peak District and Derbyshire, seeking to establish new populations in safe isolated sites, known as 'arks'. The first of these is in two large well-established pools in old limestone quarries at Ticknall, south Derbyshire, a protected site owned by the National Trust.

The creation of this 'ark' was supported by volunteers from the Peak District and Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan groups, and the National Trust, who moved 16 tons of limestone rocks into the pools to construct "reefs" to provide extra refuges for the crayfish.

The team then caught 101 white-clawed crayfish using small hand nets on the National Trust's nearby Calke Park Estate and transferred them to the pools using special tanks.

The £35,600 project, which runs until March 2011, was made possible due to a grant from Natural England through Defra's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund and in-kind contributions from partners in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

The first 'ark' site will be regularly monitored to track the progress of the population, and further work is ongoing to identify additional sites within the Peak District which have the right conditions for crayfish to thrive.