

B. The Habitats

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B. 1. Habitat Selection

To determine priorities for biodiversity conservation in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, a number of Habitat Working Groups were established by the Biodiversity Forum. Each group consisted of individuals from a range of organisations that have an interest in particular habitats or land-use types. The membership of each Habitat Working Group is given in Appendix 2.

A total of 39 habitats were identified and are listed in Table B.1. An evaluation scoring system (Table B.2) was devised which took account of the objectives of local biodiversity action plans as set out in section A. The evaluation scoring system is designed to take account of both the UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and those habitats considered of local importance for biodiversity. It also takes account of the importance of some habitats to the conservation of species of national and local biodiversity value. The use of such a scoring system is not an exact science and some of the criteria chosen are subjective. However, by carrying out a broad consultation and taking on the views of a wide range of interests the habitat evaluation has received general acceptance by those involved.

The initial scorings for each habitat were discussed and refined at further Habitat Working Group meetings and at the Biodiversity Forum. This was followed by consultation with a large number of organisations and individuals and with the general public through the use of a questionnaire. As a result of this widespread consultation the priority list in Table B.1 was drawn up (full evaluation scorings for each habitat are given in Appendix 3).

Table B.1 divides habitats into Very High, High, Medium and Low importance for biodiversity conservation in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Those habitats of Very High and High importance have had detailed and costed Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) drawn up by the Habitat Working Groups. Those habitats of Medium and Low importance have had Habitat Statements drawn up. The status of Medium importance habitats will be reviewed in three years and Habitat Action Plans drawn up as necessary.

Many of the habitats are more common in some parts of the National Park than others and occur together where conditions suit them. For example, calcareous grassland, limestone pavement and upland mixed ashwoods are typical of areas where Carboniferous limestone occurs and are concentrated in the Craven District of the Park. Table B.3 shows how many of the habitats listed can be grouped into broad land classes within the National Park. *Nature in the Dales* uses these land classes to develop the action plans and statements in this section.

Table B.1 Yorkshire Dales National Park habitats identified by Habitat Working Groups and ranked into Very High, High, Medium and Low importance for biodiversity using the evaluation scoring system outlined in Table B.2 and the following cut-off scores:

VERY HIGH	greater than 9
HIGH	greater than 6 less than or equal to 9
MEDIUM	greater than 3 less than or equal to 6
LOW	less than or equal to 3

SCORE	PRIORITY	HABITAT OR LAND-USE TYPE
12	VERY HIGH	Small Base-Rich Wetlands
11		Calcareous Grassland
11		Limestone Pavement
11		Upland Hay Meadows
10		Small Upland Wetlands
10		Lime-Rich Natural Lakes
9	HIGH	Lowland Hay Meadows & Pastures
9		Small Dales Wetlands
9		Species Rich Road & Rail Verges
9		Limestone Rock Outcrops, Scars and Scree
9		Upland Heath
9		Upland Mixed Ashwoods
9		Wet Woods
8		Upland Oak Woods
8		Scrub
8		Hedgerows
8		Blanket & Raised Bogs
8		Caves
8		Rivers & Streams
7		Dales Lakes & Ponds
7		Other Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland
7		Purple Moor Grass & Rush Pasture.
7		Wet Acidic Grassland
6	MEDIUM	Wood Pasture & Parkland
6		Acidic Tarns
6		Mine Spoil
6		Drystone Walls
5		Non-Native Broad-Leaved & Mixed Plantations
5		Mines
4		Limestone Quarries
4		Conifer Plantations
4		Upland Reservoirs
4		Acidic Rock Outcrops, Scars and Scree
3	LOW	Arable Land
2		Dry Acidic Grassland
2		Buildings
2		Gritstone & Shale Quarries
1		Bracken
0		Improved Grassland

Table B.2 Criteria used in the evaluation of the biodiversity value of Yorkshire Dales habitats.

1. National & International Importance	
UK BAP Habitat Action Plan	1
No UK BAP Habitat Action Plan	0

2 Local Distinctiveness	
Locally Distinct	1
Not Locally Distinct	0

3 Species Importance	
Important for UK BAP species	2
Important for Dales BAP species	1
Not Important for UK or Dales BAP species	0

4 Local status of habitat	
Declining	2
Stable	1
Increasing	0

5 Proportion of UK habitat in local area	
Highly significant	2
Significant	1
Not significant	0

6 Local threat to habitat	
High	2
Medium	1
Low	0

7 Local rarity of habitat	
Rare	2
Scarce	1
Common	0

Table B.3 Grouping of Yorkshire Dales National Park habitats identified by Habitat Working Groups into broad land classes:

Broad Land Class	Habitat
Limestone Country	Small Base-Rich Wetlands
	Limestone Pavement
	Calcareous Grassland
	Natural Lime-Rich Lakes
	Limestone Woodland & Scrub
	Limestone Rock Outcrops, Cliffs & Scree
	Caves
	Purple Moor-Grass & Rush Pasture
	Limestone Quarries
	Moorland & Moorland Fringe
Upland Heath	
Blanket & Raised Bogs	
Wet Acidic Grassland	
Dry Acidic Grassland	
Moorland & Moorland Fringe Woodland & Scrub	
Conifer Plantations	
Acidic Tarns	
Acidic Rock Outcrops, Cliffs & Scree	
Mines	
Mine Spoil	
Upland Reservoirs	
Gritstone & Shale Quarries	
Bracken	
Dales	
	Lowland Hay Meadows & Pastures
	Small Lowland Wetlands
	Lowland Woodland & Scrub
	Hedgerows
	Natural Lakes & Ponds
	Arable Land
	Improved Grassland
Woodlands & Scrub	Upland Mixed Ashwoods
	Wet Woods
	Upland Oakwoods
	Scrub
	Other Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland
	Pasture & Parkland
	Non-Native Broad-Leaved & Mixed Plantations
	Coniferous Plantations
Rivers & Streams	Rivers & Streams
Built Environment	Road & Rail Verges
	Drystone Walls
	Buildings