

Nature in the Dales:

2020 vision

The second Biodiversity Action Plan for the
Yorkshire Dales National Park

Lowland Meadows Habitat Action Plan

Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum, 2011
Amended Feb 2015

LOWLAND MEADOWS HABITAT ACTION PLAN

DEFINITIONS

A wide-ranging approach is adopted in this plan to lowland grasslands treated as lowland meadows. They are taken to include most forms of unimproved neutral grassland across the enclosed lowland landscapes of the UK. In terms of National Vegetation Classification plant communities, they primarily embrace each type of *Cynosurus cristatus* - *Centaurea nigra* grassland, *Alopecurus pratensis* - *Sanguisorba officinalis* floodplain meadow and *Cynosurus cristatus* - *Caltha palustris* flood-pasture. The plan is not restricted to grasslands cut for hay, but also takes into account unimproved neutral pastures where livestock grazing is the main land use. On many farms in different parts of the UK, use of particular fields for grazing pasture and hay cropping changes over time, but the characteristic plant community may persist with subtle changes in floristic composition.

In non-agricultural settings, such grasslands are less frequent but additional examples may be found in recreational sites, church-yards, roadside verges and a variety of other localities. Excluded from this plan are *Anthoxanthum odoratum* - *Geranium sylvaticum* grasslands (which are dealt with in a companion action plan for upland hay meadows) and *Molinia* - *Juncus* pastures.

STATUS IN YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK 2011

ESTIMATED AREA IN THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK IN "GOOD CONDITION"

SSSI (Favourable, Unfavourable-recovering):	17%
Non-SSSI (Condition A):	43%

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE 2011

Region	Proportion contributed by YDNP (%)
Yorkshire Dales National Park	-
England	33
UK	23
Europe	0.2

UK & REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY TARGETS 2011

UK BAP Targets	Priority Actions for YDNP LBAP
Maintain the current extent of Lowland Meadows in the UK. (Target represents no loss of BAP habitat).	Yes
Maintain at least the current condition of Lowland Meadows.	Yes
Achieve favourable or recovering condition for 7,088ha of Lowland Meadow by 2010.	Yes
Restore 1,736ha of Lowland Meadow from semi-improved or neglected grassland, which	Yes

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no longer meets the priority habitat definition by 2010.	
Re-establish 345ha of grassland of wildlife value from arable or improved grassland, by 2010.	No
260ha (75%) of re-established area to be adjacent to existing Lowland Meadows or other semi-natural habitat by 2010.	No
170 ha (50%) of re-established area to contribute to resultant habitat patches of 2ha or more of Lowland Meadow by 2010.	No

Regional Biodiversity Targets	Priority Actions for YDNP LBAP
Restore 40ha (target exceeded).	Yes
Extend by 35ha (target exceeded).	No

NATURE IN THE DALES: 2020 VISION OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS, TARGETS & MILESTONES

Objective

- LH1.1:** To have 95% of Lowland Meadows in “Good Condition” (Favourable, Unfavourable-recovering in SSSI, A outside SSSI) by 2020.
- LH1.2:** To move 25% of SSSI Lowland Meadows in Unfavourable-Recovering Condition to Favourable Condition by 2020.

Actions & Targets

Actions	Target (% of total target)	Main Delivery Mechanism	Lead Organisation	Indicator
LH1.1: Maintain existing area of SSSI Lowland Meadows in “Good Condition”.	17%	Agri-environment schemes	Natural England	Area of habitat in “Good Condition”
LH1.2: Maintain existing area of non-SSSI Lowland Meadows in “Good Condition”.	43%			
LH1.3: To enhance degraded non-SSSI Lowland Meadows to “Good Condition”.	40%	Haytime Project	Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust	
LH2.1: To move 25% of SSSI Lowland Meadows in Unfavourable-Recovering Condition to Favourable Condition by 2020.	25%	Agri-environment schemes	Natural England	

Milestones

Actions	Target	When?
LH1.1: Maintain existing area of SSSI Lowland Meadows in “Good Condition”.	17%	Ongoing
LH1.2: Maintain existing area of non-SSSI Lowland Meadows in “Good Condition”.	43%	Ongoing
LH1.3: To enhance degraded non-SSSI Lowland Meadows to “Good Condition”.	40%	2020

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LH2.1: To move 25% of SSSI Lowland Meadows in Unfavourable-Recovering Condition to Favourable Condition by 2020.	25%	2020
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Nature in the Dales: 2020 Vision was written and co-ordinated by Tim Thom, Ian Court, Frances Graham & Hannah Fawcett of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in 2011, following consultation. The production of the plan was steered, advised and supported by the Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum who will be responsible for ensuring that the actions and targets in *Nature in the Dales: 2020 Vision* are achieved. Minor revisions made Feb 2015.

The Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum wishes to acknowledge the financial support from the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in the production of *Nature in the Dales: 2020 Vision*.

For citation purposes please use the following format:
Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum, 2011. *Nature in the Dales: 2020 Vision*, Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

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