

Nature in the Dales:

2020 vision

The second Biodiversity Action Plan for the
Yorkshire Dales National Park

Lowland Calcareous Grassland Habitat Action Plan

Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum, 2011

LOWLAND CALCAREOUS GRASSLAND HABITAT ACTION PLAN

DEFINITIONS

Lowland calcareous grasslands develop on shallow lime-rich soils generally overlying limestone rocks including chalk. These grasslands are now largely found on distinct topographic features such as escarpments or dry valley slopes and sometimes on ancient earthworks in landscapes strongly influenced by the underlying limestone geology. More rarely, remnant examples occur on flatter topography such as in Breckland and on Salisbury Plain. They are typically managed as components of pastoral or mixed farming systems, supporting sheep, cattle or sometimes horses. A few examples are cut for hay. The definition of calcareous grasslands covers a range of plant communities in which lime-loving plants are characteristic. Lowland calcareous grassland sites occur in both enclosed and unenclosed situations but typically below the upper level of agricultural enclosure in any particular district. Occurrences of this habitat on roadside verges are also covered by the definition. In the context of this Action Plan, lowland types are defined as the first nine calcareous grassland National Vegetation Classification communities, CG1 to CG9 with the following exceptions:

- CG9 *Sesleria albicans* - *Galium sternerii* grassland, is classed as an upland community in the Yorkshire Dales and is covered by the Upland Calcareous Grassland Habitat Action Plan.
- CG10 *Festuca ovina* - *Agrostis capillaris* - *Thymus praecox* grassland is included where it clearly occurs below the upper limits of agricultural enclosure.
- CG1 *Festuca ovina* - *Carlina vulgaris* grassland and CG2 *Festuca ovina* - *Avenula pratensis* grasslands are included where these clearly occur above the upper limits of enclosure.

STATUS IN YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

	SSSI		Non-SSSI		GRAND TOTAL AREA (ha)
	Area ha (*)	Condition % (*)	Area ha (*)	Condition % (*)	
Favourable	73 (96)	71.3			
Unfavourable-recovering	20 (27)	19.8			
Unfavourable-no change	9 (12)	9			
Unfavourable-declining	0	0			
Partially destroyed	0	0			
Unknown condition	33	-			
A			13 (45)	45	
B			12 (41)	41	
C			4 (14)	14	
Unknown condition			53	-	
TOTAL AREA (ha)	135		82		
AREA IN MOSAIC (ha)	-		17		17
GRAND TOTAL (ha)	135		99		234

*An estimate of likely condition of areas for which no condition survey data was available was estimated by applying the proportions in each condition category from those areas that were condition assessed. The areas in brackets include these estimates and are used subsequently in setting targets.

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

SSSI (Favourable, Unfavourable-recovering condition):	93% (123ha)
Non-SSSI (Condition A):	45% (45ha)
Total (SSSI Favourable, Unfavourable-recovering, Non-SSSI A):	72% (168ha)

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Region	Area (ha)	Proportion contributed by YDNP (%)
Yorkshire Dales National Park	234	-
England	38687	0.6
UK	40594	0.6
Europe (EU25) (combined with upland calcareous grassland)	916400	<0.1

UK & REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

UK BAP Targets	Priority Actions for YDNP LBAP
Maintain at least the current condition of Lowland Calcareous Grassland.	Yes
Achieve favourable or recovering condition for 30,421ha of Lowland Calcareous Grassland by 2010.	Yes
Restore 399ha of Lowland Calcareous Grassland from semi-improved or neglected grassland, which no longer meets the priority habitat definition by 2010.	No
Re-establish 8,424ha of grassland of wildlife value from arable or improved grassland by 2010.	No

REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY TARGETS	Priority Actions for YDNP LBAP
Restore 50 ha (Target Exceeded).	No
Expand habitat by 450ha.	No

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

Objective

LC1: To have 95% (223ha) of Lowland Calcareous Grassland in “Good Condition” (Favourable, Unfavourable-recovering in SSSI, A outside SSSI) by 2020.

LC2: To move 25% (5ha) of SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland in Unfavourable-Recovering Condition to Favourable Condition by 2020.

Actions & Targets

Actions	Target (% of total target)	Main Delivery Mechanism	Lead Organisation	Indicator
LC1.1: Maintain existing area of SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland in “Good Condition”.	123ha (55%)	Agri-environment schemes	Natural England	Area of habitat in “Good Condition”
LC1.2: Maintain existing area of non-SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland in “Good Condition”.	45ha (20%)			
LC1.3: To enhance degraded SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland to “Good Condition”.	22ha (10%)			
LC1.4: To enhance degraded non-SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland to “Good Condition”.	33ha (15%)			
LC2.1: To move 25% of SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland in Unfavourable-Recovering Condition to Favourable Condition by 2020.	5ha			

Milestones

Actions	Target	When?
LC1.1: Maintain existing area of SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland in “Good Condition”.	123ha	Ongoing
LC1.2: Maintain existing area of non-SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland in “Good Condition”.	45ha	Ongoing
LC1.3: To enhance degraded SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland to “Good Condition”.	14ha	2016
	22ha	2019
LC1.4: To enhance degraded non-SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland to “Good Condition”.	22ha	2016
	33ha	2019
LC2.1: To move 50% of SSSI Lowland Calcareous Grassland in Unfavourable-Recovering Condition to Favourable Condition by 2020.	2.5ha	2016
	5ha	2019

Nature in the Dales: 2020 Vision was written and co-ordinated by Tim Thom, Ian Court & Frances Graham 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.

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