

Dorset County Council

Natural Environment Team Advice Note



habitat restoration sites

Contents

1. What is a Dorset habitat restoration site?	3
2. Why are they important?	3
3. What types of sites are included?	4
4. When are sites not included?	4
5. What should I do if a development or plan is likely to have an impact on a Habitat Restoration Site?	5

What is a Dorset habitat restoration site?

Dorset Habitat Restoration sites have been mapped from data on habitat restoration, habitat re-creation and wetland creation gathered from organisations in Dorset including Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset County Council, Natural England and Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group south west (FWAG SW).

Why are they important?

There has been a massive loss of unimproved and semi-improved habitat in Dorset especially heathland, chalk grassland sites and hay meadows. The best remaining areas are recorded as Priority Habitat and are often within Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and are given a measure of protection in the planning process.

Priority Habitat is easily destroyed by poor management, over- or under-grazing, non-treatment of invasive species or addition of fertilizer. Priority Habitats cannot be re-created quickly, it may take many decades.

Conservation practices such as the removal of invasive species, ploughing botanically poor grassland sites and re-seeding or covering with green hay or heather brashing can give sites a good start towards providing better habitat for our native species. Many of the sites included in the habitat restoration layer are part of long-term projects, e.g. the restoration of an area after landfill or mineral workings; and land-owners may have received funding to help with the restoration, e.g. through projects such as Pastures New or Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage.

Although these sites may not yet be of SSSI or SNCI standard there may have been much time and effort invested in them and they need to be recognised for their current and future value for wildlife.

What types of sites are included?

- Arable conversion to permanent grassland, heathland, wetland or broad-leaved woodland;
- Intensive grassland to permanent hay meadows e.g. green hay sites;
- Plantation on Ancient Woodland sites restored to mixed woodland;
- Post-1945 mineral site restoration;
- Green infrastructure provided by development;
- Removal of alien species that have replaced natural vegetation, e.g. Rhododendron on heathland;
- Removal of plantation pine forest or dense stands of self-sown pine over heathland;
- Orchard planting, including community orchards;
- Wetland creation including ponds, reedbeds and field scrapes;
- River restoration including realignment of the channel.

When are sites not included?

- Removal of native scrub e.g. dense gorse;
- Ongoing site management.

Basic information about sites will be provided including the original land use, target habitat and an approximate date of restoration.

What should I do if a development or plan is likely to have an impact on a Habitat Restoration Site?

It may be useful to contact one of the key organisations to find out more about the site and long-term plans for its restoration.

Organisation	Contact	
Dorset County Council	Natural Environment Team	Email: net@dorsetcc.gov.uk T: 01305 224290/224931
Dorset Wildlife Trust	Rob Brunt / Debbie Watkins	T. 01305 264620
Natural England	John Stobart	john.stobart@naturalengland.org.uk

Data on Habitat Restoration Sites is collated and maintained by Dorset Environmental Records Centre

- www.derc.org.uk
- Email: derc@dorsetcc.gov.uk