

Biggest ever nationwide initiative to restore nature in England set for launch

In the first of its kind, an England-wide initiative was launched today (5 November) and will recover nature across the length and breadth of the country, and help everybody access and enjoy it.

The Nature Recovery Network (NRN) Delivery Partnership, led by Natural England, brings together representatives from over 600 organisations to drive forward the restoration of protected sites and landscapes and help provide at least 500,000 hectares of new wildlife-rich habitat across England from doorstep to landscape, as set out in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The Network will link together our very best nature rich places, restore landscapes in towns and the countryside and create new habitats for everybody to enjoy. It is the biggest initiative to restore nature ever to be launched in England.

The partners, including the Council for Sustainable Business, Wildlife and Countryside Link, National Parks England, RSPB and the Country Land and Business Association, alongside Defra, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission, will be providing a wide range of support including funding and land to be restored. Today Natural England is calling for even more organisations to be part of the initiative, organisations already giving their support include Coca-Cola, Network Rail and Severn Trent Water.

As well as making sure our existing protected sites are in the best possible condition, the Nature Recovery Network programme will recover threatened animal and plant species and create and connect new green and blue spaces such as wetlands, ponds, meadows, woodlands, and peatlands. It will engage conservation rangers and environmentally focused community-based projects and put lost features like hedgerows and trees back into our landscapes. These restored habitats will help address climate change through capturing carbon, while improving the quality of our air, water, and soil, and provide natural flood protection. They will also provide us all with places to enjoy and connect with nature and helping to improve our health and wellbeing.

The Nature Recovery Network will:

- Restore 75% of protected sites to favourable condition so nature can thrive.
- Create or restore at least 500,000 additional hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites.
- Recover our threatened and iconic animal and plant species by providing more habitat and wildlife corridors to help species move in response to climate change.
- Support the planting of 180,000 ha of woodland.
- Deliver a range of wider benefits, including carbon capture, flood

management, clean water, pollination and recreation.

- Bring nature much closer to people, where they live, work, and play, boosting health and wellbeing.

As part of the Nature Recovery Network, the government is exploring the creation of large scale nature recovery areas to significantly expand wildlife habitat and deliver wide ranging benefits. This visionary approach to restoring nature was recently demonstrated by Natural England with seven leading partners designating the first ever 'super' National Nature Reserve (NNR) at [Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve in Dorset](#). The super NNR – which is the size of Blackpool – knits together 11 types of priority habitat across the landscape, giving rare and varied wildlife, including the sand lizard, the Dartford warbler, and the silver studded blue butterfly, a better chance of adapting and thriving in light of the current climate crisis. It also provides enhanced experience for 2.5m people who visit Purbeck every year.

The ambitious plans were launched in a virtual conference, where Chair Tony Juniper and CEO Marian Spain called for even more organisations, businesses, and charities to pledge to take action to help deliver the Nature Recovery Network.

Launching the Nature Recovery Network initiative, Natural England chair Tony Juniper said:

We are firing the starting gun on England's Nature Recovery Network, backed by the biggest ever collaboration between government, business and charities to drive forward the biggest programme for nature recovery in England's history. The natural world upon which we all depend has for far too long been in decline, and now is the moment when we must change our approach, to move beyond preserving what little remains and to embark on restoration at scale.

Achieving nature recovery is a complex task that can only be realised through partnerships. These are needed to bring together the people who manage land and sea, the different sources of investment and knowledge that we need to make progress, the variety of official policies we have, and to make the most of the passion of the many leaders who are ready to step up to deliver action on the ground. Our vision is for that network of organisations and people to create a network of places that will bring huge benefits for wildlife, landscapes and people. It is an ambitious idea, but the fact is that in different parts of the country it's already happening, and we should take great encouragement from that.

International Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith, also speaking at the event, said:

Our country's rich biodiversity and ecosystems are under threat, and that is true all around the world. Last month at the UN, seventy five leaders registered their support for our ambitious Leader's Pledge for Nature to put nature and biodiversity on the road to recovery by 2030. Our duty now is to turn those words into meaningful action.

I am thrilled that we are launching a partnership to help deliver the biggest nature recovery project in England's history, which will restore our depleted ecosystems and habitats as we continue to build back greener.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow, speaking about the launch of the partnership, said:

Delivering a Nature Recovery Network is fundamental for achieving our goals for nature – enhancing the quality of our existing areas for nature, restoring and creating new habitats, and linking all of these together. It is only with bigger, better, well-connected habitats that we can recover our beloved species and address the greatest challenges we face – from climate change to declines in mental health.

We cannot deliver the Nature Recovery Network alone. We are providing new legislation, tools and funding, but it is together that we will deliver the network of wildlife-rich places that allow nature and people to flourish

Mark Bridgeman, President of the Country Land and Business Association, speaking about the launch of the partnership, said:

As a partner of the Nature Recovery Network Partnership we recognise there is no time to lose. The public can see the impact of biodiversity loss and climate change with their own eyes, and quite rightly they expect us to act.

As stewards of the countryside, landowners are uniquely placed to deliver meaningful programmes that will drive environmental recovery, and we are determined to play our part in meeting the challenges ahead.

Liz Lowe, Head of Sustainability at Coca-Cola Great Britain, speaking about the launch of the partnership, said:

We welcome the launch of the Nature Recovery Network, especially as this exciting new partnership will help encourage more businesses to understand and play their part in the active restoration of nature and to invest in it for the long-term: without thriving natural ecosystems, we can't have thriving businesses and communities.

Emma Marsh, Director, RSPB England, speaking about the launch of the partnership, said:

This is a once in a generation opportunity to make a step-change in how we protect nature in England. The public wants this. The experience, skills, and ambition are there. We all stand ready to play our part to level up and deliver a wildlife-rich country for the benefit of all. Together, we can leave the natural world in a better condition than we inherited.

The Nature Recovery Network is a major commitment in the government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#). It is underpinned by '[Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#)' (LNRS), established through our landmark [Environment Bill](#), which will provide the spatial mapping and planning tools to inform nature recovery. Additional funding of over £650m, including the government's [Green Recovery Challenge Fund](#) and Nature for Climate Fund will help drive the Nature Recovery Network forward.

Earlier this year Natural England and Defra announced that five local authorities will receive a share of a £1 million fund to pilot how LNRS can drive the recovery of England's landscapes and wildlife locally.

The Nature Recovery Network will also be key to England's recovery from coronavirus. The [Natural England people survey](#) revealed that the nation's gardens, parks, woodlands and rivers have played a huge part in helping maintain their mental health during the coronavirus pandemic, with almost nine in ten adults in England reporting that access to nature boosts their mood.

Further information

- To express an interest in becoming a Nature Recovery Network Delivery Partner, contact Natural England's Nature Recovery Network partnership team: NDPNaturerecovery@naturalengland.org.uk. We will then organise a meeting to discuss your contribution to the Nature Recovery Network.
- Further quotes from partners, additional case studies and social media videos are available on the Nature Recovery Network via [this Dropbox link](#). Our 6 minute case study video will be made available on request after 14:00 on Thursday 5th November.