

# Nature Recovery

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# The Facts

- UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world
- The only major European country (alongside Eire and Iceland) without a breeding wolf population

**13%**

decline in average species' abundance.

Our indicator of average species' abundance of 696 terrestrial and freshwater species has fallen by 13% since 1970; the rate of decline was steeper in the last 10 years, although not statistically significantly so.

**5%**

decline in average species' distribution.

Our indicator of average species' distribution, covering 6,654 terrestrial and freshwater species over a broad range of taxonomic groups, has fallen by 5% since 1970, and is 2% lower than in 2005.

**41%**

have decreased in abundance.

More species have shown strong or moderate decreases in abundance (41%) than increases (26%) since 1970, and likewise more species have decreased in distribution (27%) than increased (21%) since 1970.

**53%**

of species show strong changes.

Our wildlife is undergoing rapid change; the proportion of species defined as showing strong changes in abundance, either increasing or decreasing, rose from 33% over the long term to 53% over the short term.

**15%**


of species are threatened.

Of 8,431 species that have been assessed using regional Red List criteria, 15% have been classified as threatened with extinction from Great Britain, and 2% are already extinct.

By **2020**

most CBD targets won't be met.

An assessment based on the best available data indicates that, although progress has been made, the UK will not meet most of the CBD's 2020 Aichi targets.



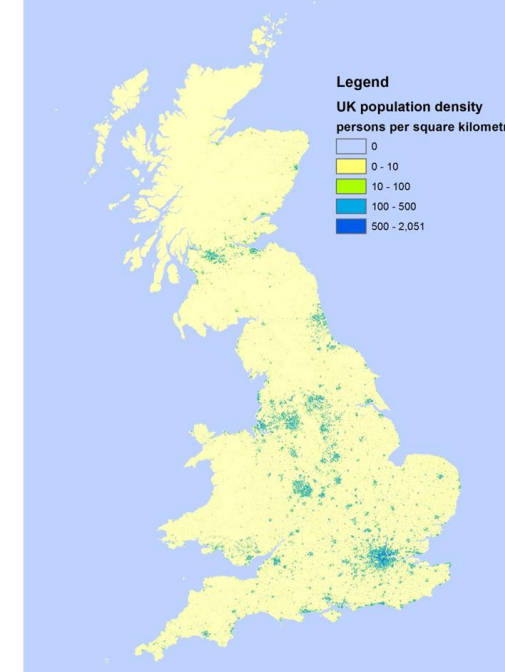
**STATE  
OF  
NATURE**

2019

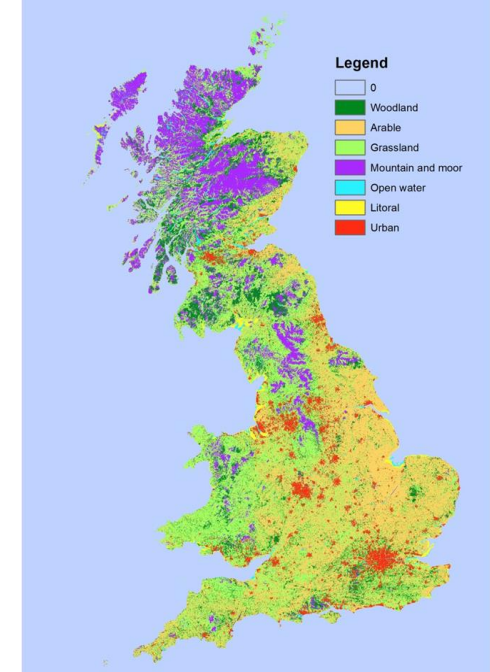
state of  
nature  
PARTNERSHIP

# Some non-facts

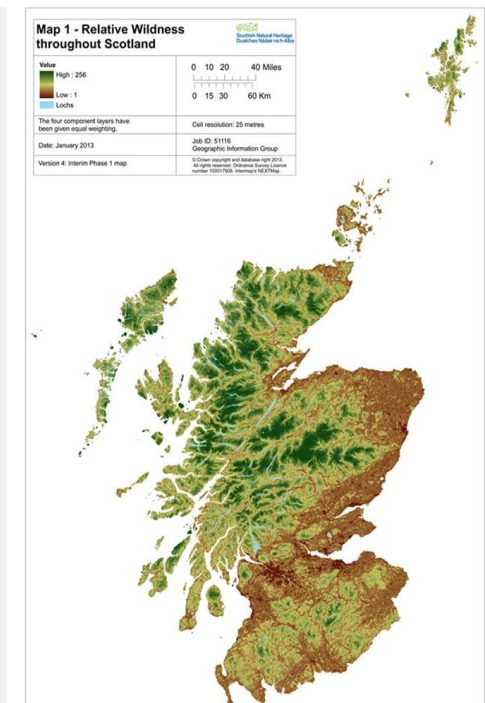
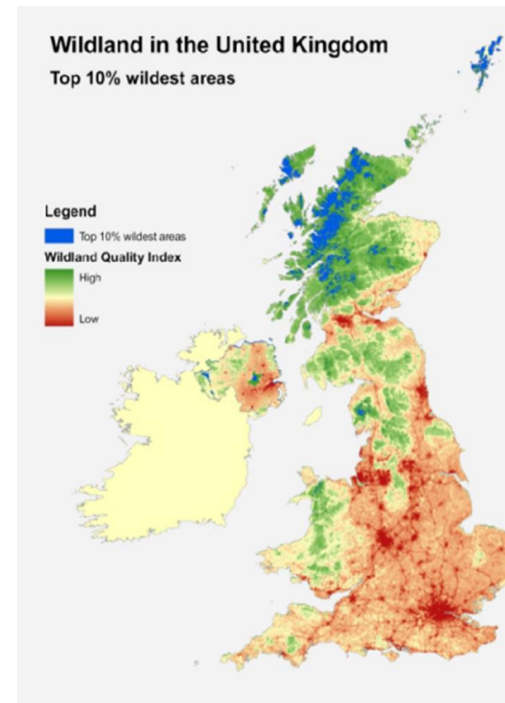
- Small and crowded island
- 75% of the world's heather moorland is in the UK (and that's rarer than rainforest)<sup>1</sup>
- There is no wild(er)ness left in the UK
- Nature cannot survive without our help
- Rewilding will mean the loss of biodiversity and valued habitats



~97% < 1 person per km<sup>2</sup> and >81% urban



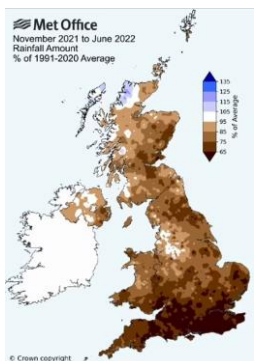
~6% urban and ~16% mountain and moor



<sup>1</sup><https://www.moorlandassociation.org/> but see <https://landethicsblog.wordpress.com/2019/09/17/no-moor-myths/>

# Problems and drivers

- Climate change and biodiversity loss
- Growth (economic and population)
- Disparities (money and education)
- Agricultural intensification
- Falling (failing) environmental standards
- Lack of vision and joined-up thinking
- Politics!



## MONTHLY FOCUS

### Climate change and biodiversity loss should be tackled together

More than 200 world leaders are gathering in Glasgow, Scotland for the United Nation's climate summit to discuss climate change.

Described as the world's best last chance for action, the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) formally opens on 31 October after a one-year delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The two-week negotiations, which begin on 1 November, are the most important since the landmark Paris Agreement was signed in 2015, when countries agreed to limit global warming to 1.5 ° C.

COP26 is a crucial summit for global climate action. Delegates will discuss progress on delivering the goals set out in Paris, but world governments are also expected to raise their climate ambitions and discuss how to increase the capacity to adapt to climate change.

The situation is critical as more and more countries in Europe and around the world are already feeling the impacts of climate change – from longer periods of drought to more and fiercer storms, heat waves and wildfires. These threats are directly linked to a second challenge: biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

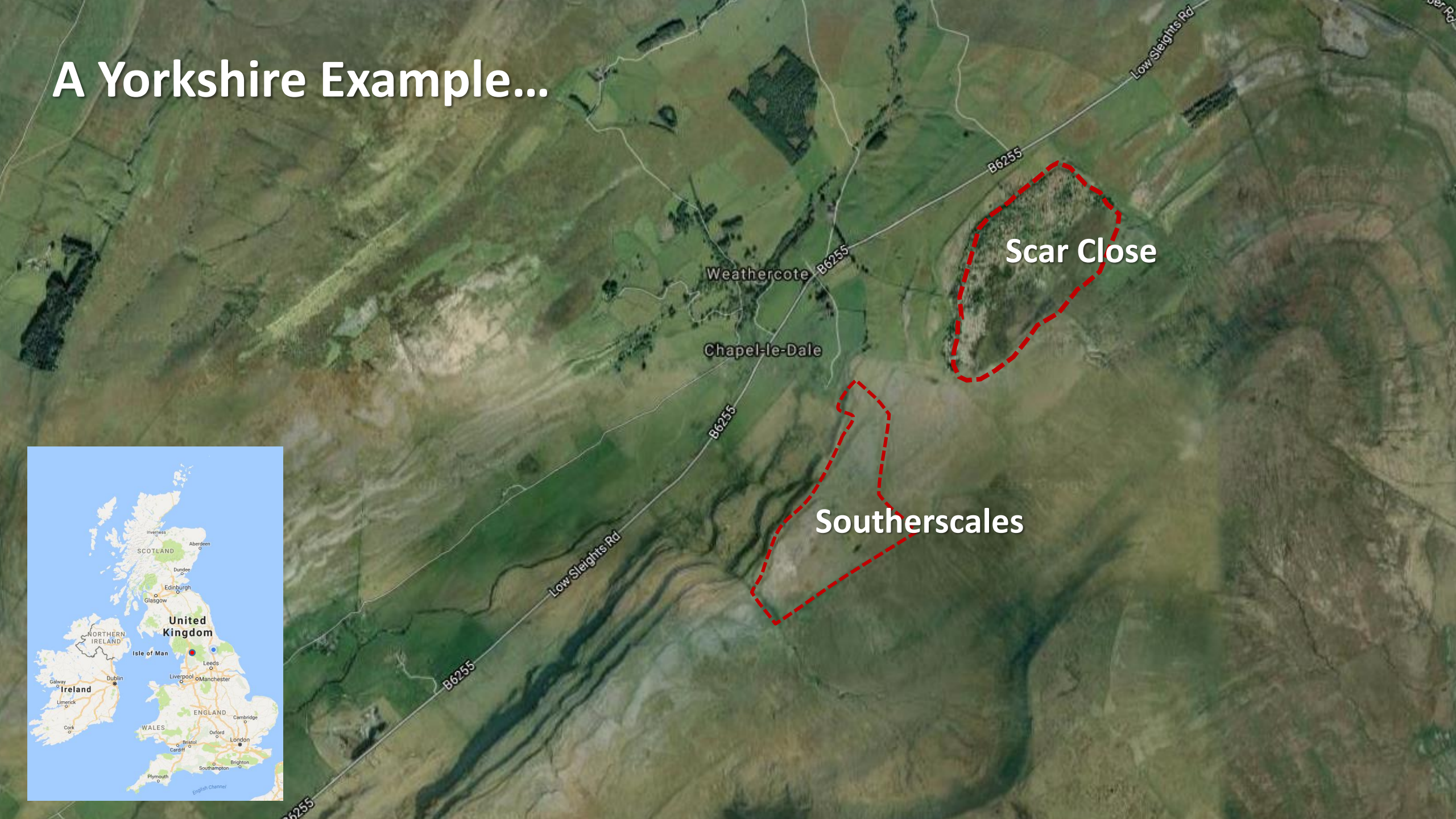
Tackling these twin crises will require coordinated, global efforts and local actions addressing both issues. This will be discussed at the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which is being held in Kunming, China in two phases – in October 2021 and in April 2022. It should decide on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and was also postponed due to the pandemic.

Biodiversity, the unique variety of life on our planet, underpins our cultural, economic and social well-being. However, human-induced changes to ecosystems and the extinction of species have been more rapid in the past 50 years than at any time in human history.

Human impacts on the evolution of life are responsible for the sixth mass extinction according to many scientists. Today, around one million species of an estimated 8 million animal and plant species are already threatened with extinction.

Furthermore, the global rate of species extinction is already at least tens to hundreds of times higher than the average rate over the past 10 million years and is accelerating. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) population

# A Yorkshire Example...



Scar Close

Southerscales

Weathercote

Chapel-le-Dale

Low Sleights Rd

B6255

B6255

Low Sleights Rd

B6255

B6255

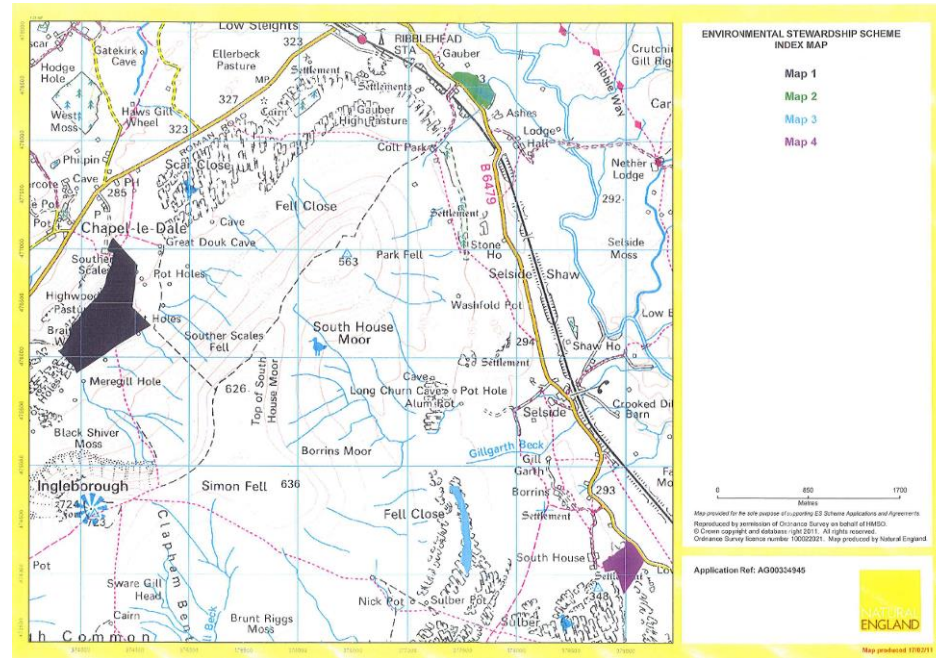


# Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

**Higher Level Stewardship:  
agri-environment subsidy payment over  
10 years of the agreement**



**Southerscales Nature Reserve**



### PART 3

#### HLS - Management of environmental features

##### General conditions on all HLS agreement land

On your HLS agreement land you must follow the general management conditions set out below, unless specifically stated otherwise in a subsequent section of this agreement. HLS agreement land is all land on which Higher Level Stewardship management prescriptions apply, including items within a Capital Works Plan

Agreement Reference	Customer Name	Town	Scheme	Total Cost of Agreement (£)	Amount Paid to Date (£)	Total Area Under Agreement (ha)	Does Agreement Provide Access?	Detail
AG00334945	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	York	Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship	131736.8	12514.60	61.61	No	<a href="#">More...</a>

**Southerscales Nature Reserve**

Join us  
 Protect local wildlife

**HK16 - Restoration of grassland for target features**

**Land parcels and associated features managed under this option:**

RLR Field Number: SD74762836, SD74772901 & SD77745340

Features: G08 Upland calcareous grassland - BAP habitat, L01 Limestone pavement  
 - BAP habitat, M06 Blanket bog - BAP habitat, M08 Upland flushes, fens and swamps - BAP habitat

**Parcels – SD74762836 & SD74772901 (Southerscales)**

January	February	March	April
Maintain an average sward height 2-15cm, without overgrazing or poaching. Max – 40 sheep	Maintain an average sward height 2-15cm, without overgrazing or poaching. Max – 40 sheep	0-40 sheep	0-40 sheep
May	June	July	August
20 sheep	10 cattle only	10 cattle only	10 cattle only
September	October	November	December
10 cattle & 50 sheep or 100 sheep	10 cattle & 50 sheep or 100 sheep	Maintain an average sward height 2-15cm, without overgrazing or poaching. Max – 40 sheep	Maintain an average sward height 2-15cm, without overgrazing or poaching. Max – 40 sheep

Max livestock Units per hectare per year = 0.172



**SSSI Unit 66**

*“The Trust made Southerscales stock-proof and in 1987 was able to re-introduce the traditional grazing regime” ....why?*

## Limestone walk

Ingleborough National Nature Reserve

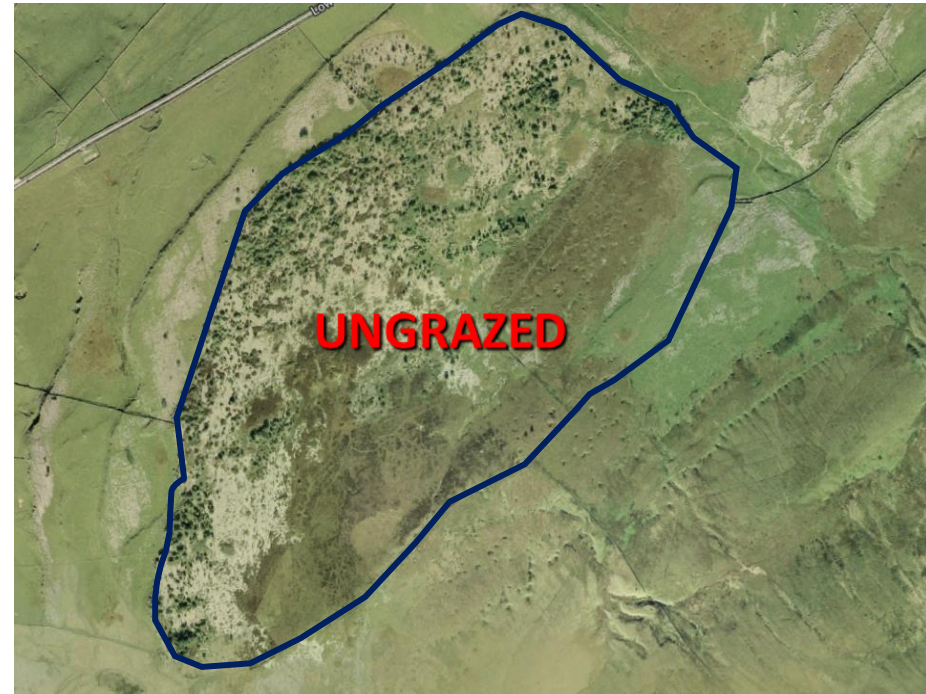
### Ungrazed since 1974

#### Scar Close

Glance to your right to see wooded Scar Close. Grazing livestock have been excluded for many years allowing ash trees and hazel bushes to escape from the confines of the grikes.

This area now looks more like the landscape which existed prior to man's clearance of the upland woodlands that once covered the Yorkshire Dales. English Nature and other wildlife organisations are encouraging more land to move to a semi-wooded state, richer in plant, bird and insect life.

**True ecological restoration!**





# Ecological restoration - not “rewilding” with herbivores (=farming)



Limestone pavements of the Yorkshire Dales



Southercales - **grazed**



Scar Close - **not grazed**

I have a functional view of ecological restoration. It gives credit to the capacity of natural systems for self-organization and for creating their own complexity by doing so. Putting aside all the caveats that instantly spring to mind, the best driver for ecological restoration is to remove the constraints—something that Morrison, to his credit, also recognizes. I visited a rare example recently in the semi-upland limestone landscape of the Yorkshire Dales. The simple expediency of excluding sheep grazing 35 years ago had set that area on a trajectory of restoration that was aided only by the distribution systems of wild nature, the reclaiming of species mediated through the natural force of wind, the assistance of birds and mammals, and the seeds in their droppings. That this was a developing, functioning ecosystem was readily apparent through the contrast with the depauperate state of the grazed lands surrounding it and the obvious difference in vitality. The regenerating woodland of ash, hazel, and rowan is just past the scrub stage and into low canopy. These trees may never grow fully due to the thinness of the returning soil and exposure to the wind of the upland climate, but the shadier areas beneath their canopies have a lushness of ground layer vegetation and one can only speculate on what invertebrate life exists in the accumulating decomposition. Butterflies revel in this reforming woodland and there is the sound of birds, missing from the grazed areas.

## Species of Scar Close and Souther scales

*“a trajectory of restoration that was aided only by the distribution systems of wild nature, the reclaiming of species mediated through the natural force of wind, the assistance of birds and mammals, and the seeds in their droppings”*

Angelica	Elder	Primrose
Ash	Field scabious	Raspberry
Baneberry	Figwort	Red currant
Bilberry	Globe flower	Rigid buckler fern
Birch	Greater burnet	Rock rose
Bird cherry	Green spleenwort	Rowan
Birds eye primrose	Guelder rose	Solomon's seal
Birds foot trefoil	Hard head	St John's wort
Blackthorn	Hawthorn	Stone bramble
Bloody cranesbill	Hazel	Strawberry
Bluebell	Heart's tongue fern	Sycamore
Bracken	Heather	Valerian
Brittle bladder fern	Honeysuckle	Violet
Bugle	Ivy	Water avens
Butterwort	Juniper	Welsh poppy
Cinquefoil	Lesser meadow rue	Willows x 3
Cowberry	Lily of the valley	Wood anemone
Climbing corydalis	Limestone oak fern	Wood cranesbill
Daffodil	Meadow sweet	Wood sage
Devil's bit scabious	Melancholy thistle	Wood sorrel
Dog rose	Milkwort	Yarrow
Dog's mercury	Orpine	Yew
Early purple orchid		

### Scar Close

Ash
Baneberry
Blackthorn
Dog's mercury
Figwort
Fragrant orchid
Gooseberry
Hawthorn
Hazel
Heart's tongue fern
Ivy
Lesser meadow rue
Limestone oak fern
Raspberry
Rigid buckler fern
Rowan
Sycamore
Violet
Welsh poppy
Wood anemone
Wood sage
Wood sorrel

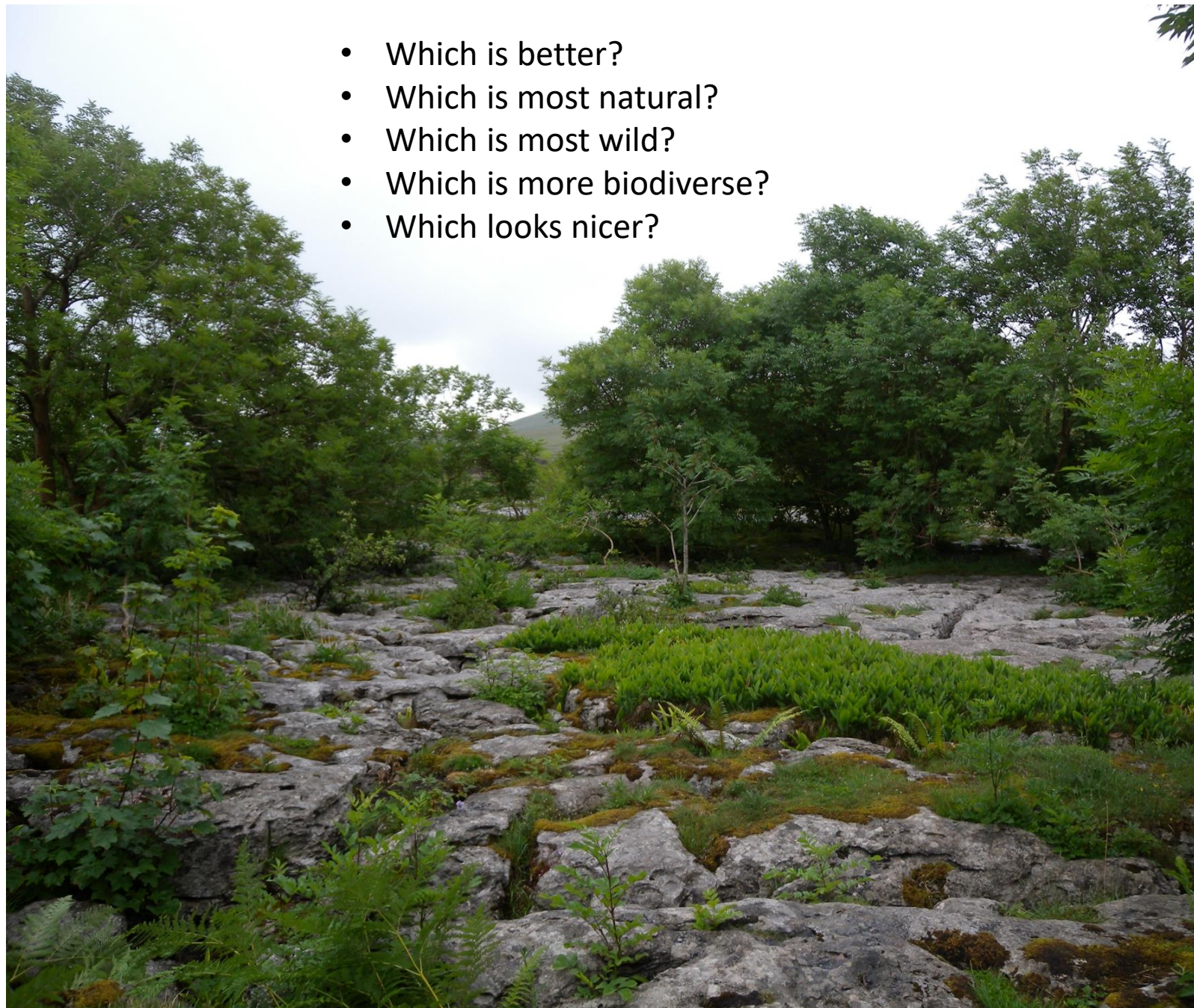
### Souther scales

## Ecological restoration

**- reclaiming soil, humus, wildlife, natural processes**



Figure 3b. Southerscales



- Which is better?
- Which is most natural?
- Which is most wild?
- Which is more biodiverse?
- Which looks nicer?

# Vision and commitment fit for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Britain

- Overhaul of agri-environmental policy post-Brexit?
- Re-invigorated conservation sector?
- Commitment to wild nature and natural processes?
- Land reform?

