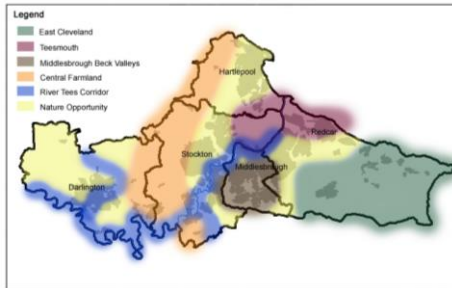


Biodiversity Opportunity Area: Central Farmland – Amerston CF BOA II

1. Background



The Tees Valley can be divided into five broad areas of landscape type. The BOA's comprise the key areas for potential biodiversity enhancement within these larger areas where targeted maintenance, restoration, creation, mitigation and offsetting measures should be adopted to enhance biodiversity and in turn help to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. Collectively the BOA's form a strategic network, representing a significant environmental asset for the Tees Valley.

TVNP Priority 1: Protect and enhance the geodiversity and biodiversity of the Tees Valley ensuring the conservation, restoration and creation of key landscapes and habitats, including mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

TVNP Priority 2: Work at a landscape scale to restore and deliver robust ecological networks that demonstrate a wide range of environmental, social and economic outcomes.

NPPF: para. 109: The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...; recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, ...establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

NPPF: para. 117: plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries; identify and map components of the local ecological networks (including) areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation; preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations.

2. Overview:

The BOA falls within the [NCA Profile: 23 Tees Lowlands \(NE439\)](#)

Characteristics of Central Farmland area: Patchwork agricultural landscape including areas of increasingly scarce unimproved neutral grassland, ponds, hedgerows, small wetlands, a broken corridor of woodland from Crimdon Dene to Wynyard to community forests and the river Tees. A large percentage of many breeding populations of bird species of key importance in the Tees Valley are present within this Landscape Area.

Characteristics of BOA: A scattered mixture of semi natural habitats within a mixed agricultural landscape. Opportunity to join fragments and link to adjacent Close Wood.

Local authorities affected: Hartlepool Borough Council

Landscape Character Assessment areas: [Hartlepool Landscape Character Assessment 2000](#)

3. Profile:

3.1 Geology and Soils: Roxby Formation overlain with Devensian-Diamicton Till and scattered alluvium deposits. Soil slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils

3.2 Biodiversity:

3.2.1 Statutory-designated sites: [Central Farmland area designations](#)

None present

3.2.2: Non-statutory sites,

LWS: HP7 Pawton Hill Grassland, HP10 Crookfoot Reservoir, HP11 Amerston Gill Woodland, HP6 Black Wood Marsh, HP37 High Stotfold Meadow, HP20 Gunnersvale Marsh,

LGS: None present

3.2.3: Priority habitats and priority species NERC Act S.41

[Central Farmland area priority habitat & species](#); [Priority habitats and species in the Tees Valley](#)

Priority habitats: Good quality semi improved grassland, no main habitat but additional habitats present, deciduous woodland, (taken from Priority Habitat Inventory for England)

Tees Valley BAP Priority species: Great crested newt, Harvest Mouse, Brown Hare, Barn Owl, Corn Bunting, Grey Partridge, Tree Sparrow.

S41 bird species: Bullfinch, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Lapwing, Linnet, Marsh Tit, Reed Bunting, Skylark, Starling, Willow Tit, Yellowhammer.

3.2.4: Further important habitats. Parkland at High Stotfold Gill, new woodland plantation at Amerston adjacent to low intensity grazing areas. Unimproved neutral grassland.

3.2.5: Further important species. Creeping willow, Spring sedge, Separate-headed sedge, Heath grass, Purple moor-grass, Lady's-mantles, Burnet-saxifrage, Pepper-saxifrage, Common butterwort (HP7); Purple loosestrife, Tufted sedge (HP6); Shoreweed (HP10); Blunt-flowered rush (HP20).

3.2.6: Ancient woodland presence: Nearest is at the Howls (east of the A19) and Close Wood Complex to the south (the Wynyard woodlands) – all LWSs

3.2.7: Landscape-scale conservation activity: Not known

3.3 Archaeology: Scheduled monuments: None present

3.4 Access:

3.4.1. Country Parks: None

3.4.2 Cycleways: None

3.4.3 PRow: A public footpath (but no bridleways) traverse the area.

3.5 Key Ecosystem Services: agricultural production, energy generation (wind turbines), pollination services; flooding regulation recreational (walking, nature observation)

3.6 Socio-Economic:

3.6.1 Employment: agriculture

3.6.2 Housing/employment land allocations: None

3.6.3 Community involvement: Hartlepool Countryside Volunteers are active throughout the borough (managed by Hartlepool BC).

3.6.4 Agri-environment schemes: North East Region Theme Area HLS: x 2 entry level plus higher level environmental stewardship agreements;

4. Objectives & proposals:

Objective 1: Positive management of existing sites derived from [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#) outcomes, SSSI to achieve 'favourable condition' by 2020. LWS in the BOA are in positive management by 2020.

Objective 2: Habitat restoration & creation.

- Provide management through agri-environment scheme and LWS system for LWSs: especially two grassland/verge sites and two fen/ marsh sites.
- Grassland sites are HP7 Pawton Hill Grassland & HP37 High Stotfold Meadow
- Fen sites are HP6 Black Wood Marsh & HP20 Gunnersvale Marsh
- Expand HP20 Gunnersvale Marsh area (the natural spring would enable this) and address any agricultural run-off that may be adversely affecting the site.
- Raise water level of HP6 Black Wood Marsh.

Objective 3: Socio economic including; access, public involvement.

- Promote and support farmers to create feeding and breeding habitat for scarce farmland birds, perhaps by not harvesting all cereals/ leaving stubble over-winter.

5. Nomenclature

BOA – Biodiversity Opportunity Area

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest

LNR – Local Nature Reserve

LWS – Local Wildlife Site

LGS – Local Geological Site

PAWS – Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site

PRoW – Public Rights of Way

NERC Act s.41 – Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Section 41: Species of Principal Importance in England

BOA Objectives & Targets for the whole of the Tees Valley will be compiled in a summary table.