

# PARKLAND and WOOD PASTURE

## DEFINITION

Wood-pastures are areas that have been managed by a long-established tradition of grazing allowing, where the site is in good condition, the survival of multiple generations of trees. The tree and shrub component may have been exploited in the past and can occur as scattered individuals, small groups, or as more or less complete canopy cover.

Parkland is a term used to describe areas of open grassland with widely spaced trees within an historic designed landscape. Parkland was grazed by deer kept initially to be hunted and then as a landscape accoutrement. It was always managed for its aesthetics as much as for its economics. In the post-Victorian period wood pasture and parkland have converged.

Parklands and wood pastures are historic places, some dating back for many hundreds of years. They are often associated with country houses and estates and form a distinctive element of both the natural and historic heritage of North Devon's Biosphere Reserve.

## DISTRIBUTION

There are many fine examples of parkland and wood pasture in the Biosphere Reserve. These range from major sites such as Arlington Court, which is owned by the National Trust, to smaller private sites such as Hallsannery near Bideford. There are no reliable statistics on the extent of the overall resource in England, but it is thought that there are 10-20,000 ha currently in a working condition given in the habitat statement of the UK Biodiversity Steering Group report is the current best estimate. Within the Biosphere Reserve there are 47 parklands totalling 954 Ha.

## LOCATIONS

Main Locations:     Arlington Court near Barnstaple  
                          Castle Hill Estate at Filleigh  
                          Tapeley Park at Instow  
                          Tawstock Park near Barnstaple  
                          Heanton Satchville near Merton  
                          Clovelly Court  
                          Hartland Abbey  
                          Okehampton

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Yeo Vale near Littleham  
Hallsannery near Bideford  
Dunsland

Other locations: Youlston Manor at Shirwell  
Hall near Bishops Tawton  
King's Nympton Park  
Upcott House Pilton  
The Hobby near Clovelly  
Peppercombe & Portledge  
Trentishoe Common  
Brownsham Moors  
Great Torrington Common

## CHARACTERISTIC WILDLIFE

The main components of parkland and wood pasture are the trees, which are often several centuries old, comprising of mainly oak, ash, beech and other long lived species. It is thought that oak supports more species of organism than any other tree in Britain and this is especially true of specimens in parkland. Frequently mature specimens in parkland support rich communities of insects, mosses and fungi, and parkland/wood pasture habitats are especially noted for the presence of lichens which grow on the bark of the trees. Parkland and wood pasture is characterised by an abundance of saproxylic species (i.e. ones living on dead and decaying wood) such as the beetles *Bitoma crenata* and *Pediacus dermastoides*.

Plants: sessile oak, ash, beech  
Mammals: greater and lesser horseshoe bats  
Insects: high brown fritillary, pearl bordered fritillary, lesser stag beetle  
Birds: spotted flycatcher; green woodpecker; barn owl  
Lichens: *Usnea articulata* (string-of-sausages lichen)



## THREATS

There are many threats to this existing habitat. The wood pasture concept of raising a timber crop on land retained in livestock production is no longer popular and many previously managed sites are threatened by neglect. Changes in agricultural practices have led to a cessation of traditional grazing practices and intensification of management, including high fertiliser use, ploughing and reseeded and in some cases a conversion to arable land.

A lack of management, especially in the replanting and replacement of old and fallen trees together with inappropriate planting of tree species within areas of parkland also affect this habitat.

## SITE STATUS

Site of Special Scientific Interest: Arlington court 51.5 Ha  
Okehampton Park Flush 6.5 Ha  
Dunslund Park 12.3 Ha  
Marsland to Clovelly Coast 26.5 Ha  
West Exmoor coastland and woods  
Watersmeet  
North Dartmoor

County Wildlife Sites: Tawstock court  
Huntacott Bridge  
Okehampton Golf Club

## CURRENT ACTION

Many of the historic parklands are under active management for the benefit of landscape, biodiversity and the visiting public. Countryside Stewardship Agreements have been established at Arlington Court , Castle Hill near Filleigh, Clovelly court, Hallsannery near Bideford, Heanton Satchville and King's Nympton Park. Dunslund is under the Higher Level Scheme. In addition, the Forestry Commission provides forestry practice advice to owners of woodlands and wood pastures.

Devon Wildlife Trust, through the survey of County Wildlife Sites, has identified important sites. In 2007, Devon County Council put together an Inventory of Parks and Wood Pastures.

## LINKS TO OTHER BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS

	UK BAP	SW BAP	Devon BAP	Exmoor BAP
Habitat Action Plans	Wood - pasture & Parkland	Wood Pasture & Parkland	Parkland & Wood Pasture Oak woodland Flower rich meadows	Parkland, Wood Pastures & Veteran Trees
Species Action Plans	Greater horseshoe bat Stag beetle High brown fritillary Pearl bordered fritillary		Greater horseshoe bat Pearl bordered fritillary Barn owl	Lungwort Lichens

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Maintain the current extent, distribution and quality of parkland and wood pasture in Biosphere Reserve.
- 2 Extend and improve knowledge of the resources of parkland and wood pasture in Biosphere Reserve, its constituent communities and species, and management options for conservation and enhancement.
- 3 Ensure that the management of surviving sites includes the biological value of parkland and wood pasture as well as historical, cultural and agricultural aspects.
- 4 Restore, where appropriate, the quality of parkland and wood pasture by ensuring long term recruitment and by linking of existing areas of quality habitat to restored areas within a particular site, to allow for re-colonisation of species.
- 5 Foster improved public understanding and awareness of the value of dead wood as a wildlife habitat and the conservation importance of parklands wood pastures in general.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TARGET</b>	<b>LEAD DELIVERER</b>	<b>PARTNERS</b>	<b>Obj. No.</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Policy and Legislation</b>				
1	Ensure due consideration is given to parkland and wood pasture in all relevant planning policies	Ongoing	NDC TDC	DCC	1
<b>B</b>	<b>Site Safeguard and Management</b>				
1	Ensure that Local Planning Authorities make due consideration to PPS9 in their planning role, particularly in relation to parklands and wood pasture.	Ongoing	NDC TDC		1
2	Promote the restoration of degraded parkland and wood pasture through entry into Environmental Stewardship.	5 successful Entry Level and 5 Higher Level Scheme applications by 2015.	Site owners	FWAG, NDABS, DWT, ENPA	3, 4
<b>C</b>	<b>Advisory</b>				
1	Provide advice to landowners on the management of parkland and wood pasture for wildlife conservation and enhancement.	Management advice offered to all main parklands by 2015	FWAG, NE	NDC, ENPA, NDABS, BLS, IGER, Tilhill and Sylvanus Trust	3,5
<b>D</b>	<b>Research and Monitoring</b>				

ACTION		TARGET	LEAD DELIVERER	PARTNERS	Obj. No.
1	Identify priority sites for management and restoration from the inventory of sites.	Parkland inventory to be completed by 2011	NE, DBRC, NDABS	NT, NE, NDC, ENPA, British Lichen Society, DBG, Devon Invertebrate Group.	2,3
<b>E Communication and Publicity</b>					
1	Communicate biodiversity objectives and initiatives to landowners/farmers through newsletters.	One newsletter article published about the value of parkland for wildlife by 2012	NFU, CLA, FWAG	ATF	3,5
2	Arrange a "Parkland Event" to promote best practice	Parkland event held by 2011	ATF	NE, NT, FWAG, British Lichen Society, DBG, Devon Invertebrate Group, NDABS	3,5



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