



Mineral Products Association

Building on our legacy ...realising our potential

The MPA Biodiversity Strategy



Minerals and mineral products are essential to our economy and quality of life.

Mineral extraction is a temporary land use which can affect biodiversity negatively through habitat loss and disruption, but also positively through creation and management of habitats which can be better than before development – so resulting in a net positive impact and a net gain in biodiversity.

Biodiversity loss is one of the biggest threats facing humanity in the next decade¹. The mineral products industry has a proven legacy of high quality restoration and has further significant potential to protect and enhance biodiversity, including common as well as rare and threatened species and habitats. Continuing good site management, restoration and after-use of minerals sites will contribute significantly to the achievement of nature recovery in the UK, particularly for more, bigger, better and joined-up habitats.

MPA members have a unique role to play. They have been working with and enhancing the environment, building a substantial legacy for 50 years. The industry was the first in the UK to have a biodiversity strategy which it launched in 2009. The Natural Environment is one of MPA's 7 Strategic Priorities set out in its Charter which producer members are committed to as part of their membership, including clear objectives and targets relating to Biodiversity and Land Restoration.

¹ As highlighted in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 *Bringing nature back into our lives* (2020)



Strategy

MPA members will continue to take a positive approach to nature conservation and recovery, leaving behind more and better quality habitats than before mineral extraction (net gain) through sensitive site selection, management, restoration and aftercare.

MPA and its members will:

- ✓ **Protect and enhance biodiversity** through land and site management and restoration, including wherever possible, delivering a net gain in biodiversity.
- ✓ **Extend our knowledge** of the wildlife interest and potential on and adjacent to active sites, and how best to maximise benefits through management, restoration and after-use, through monitoring and sharing of experience.
- ✓ **Share best practice** between our members and partners through regular events, briefings, and through our Biodiversity & Nature Conservation working group.
- ✓ **Develop our partnerships** with conservation organisations, decision makers and individuals to ensure that opportunities to improve biodiversity associated with minerals operations are understood and realised.
- ✓ **Celebrate our successes** through our Quarries and Nature Awards, collating and publicising achievements.
- ✓ **Understand our contribution** to delivery of local, national and international biodiversity priorities, through measuring and reporting the gains that we are achieving and planning to deliver.
- ✓ **Increase our influence** through engagement with policy makers at all levels, including with global initiatives and in association with European Trade bodies.
- ✓ **Promote awareness and participation** using industry assets such as restored sites and education centres to encourage visitors and out-of-classroom learning, to encourage first-hand experiences of the natural environment and our role in its conservation.



Context

Mineral products are essential to our construction and manufacturing industries, to our economy and to our everyday lives. The 390 million tonnes of minerals and mineral products produced in the UK each year comprise the biggest material flow in the economy.

The UK's diverse geology provides us with high-quality materials and supports a wide range of habitats and species. Maintaining a secure and adequate supply of materials, while reducing environmental impact and maximising environmental benefits is central to delivering sustainable development.

Importance of Biodiversity

'Biological diversity' - or biodiversity - describes the variety of life on Earth - the wide variety of ecosystems and living organisms: animals, plants, their habitats and their genes². Biodiversity is important in its own right, in providing natural capital from which ecosystem services (eg nutrient recycling, carbon sequestration and flood defence) are derived, adding to our enjoyment and quality of life.

The government's priorities for biodiversity and ecosystem services in England are set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan³, particularly development of a Nature Recovery Network providing 500,000 hectares of additional wildlife habitat. Recovering wildlife will require more habitat; in better condition; in bigger patches that are more closely connected⁴.

Nature Strategies for the England and devolved administrations are being prepared which will provide more detail. The management and restoration of minerals sites presents a major opportunity to contribute to all of these.

Impact and potential of extraction

The extraction of minerals, particularly by surface methods, inevitably results in changes to the characteristics of the land where it takes place. These changes are often temporary, and careful site management, restoration and after-use has already created a legacy of rich biodiversity, and further potential remains.

Management and restoration of minerals sites make a substantial contribution to establishment and expansion of most UK priority habitats⁵, which in turn deliver multiple natural capital and ecosystem service benefits⁶.

² IUCN

³ A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)

⁴ The 'Lawton principles' as set out in 'Making Space for Nature' – A review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network (September 2010) and reiterated in the 25 Year Plan for the Environment

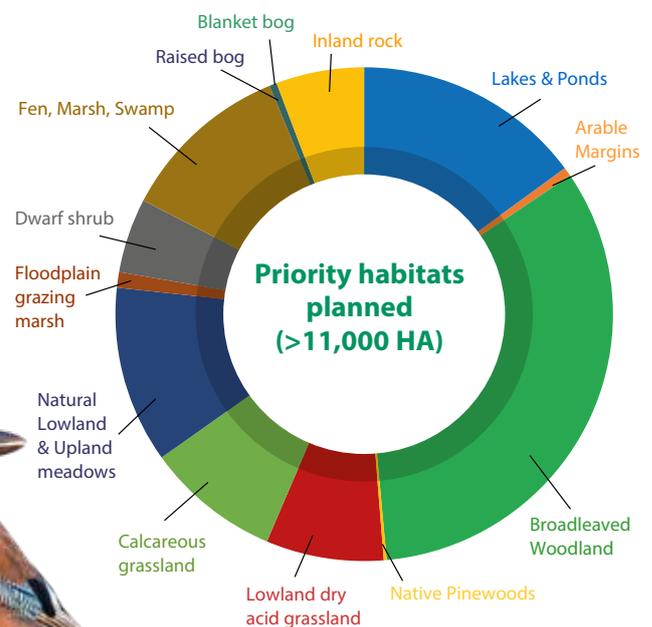
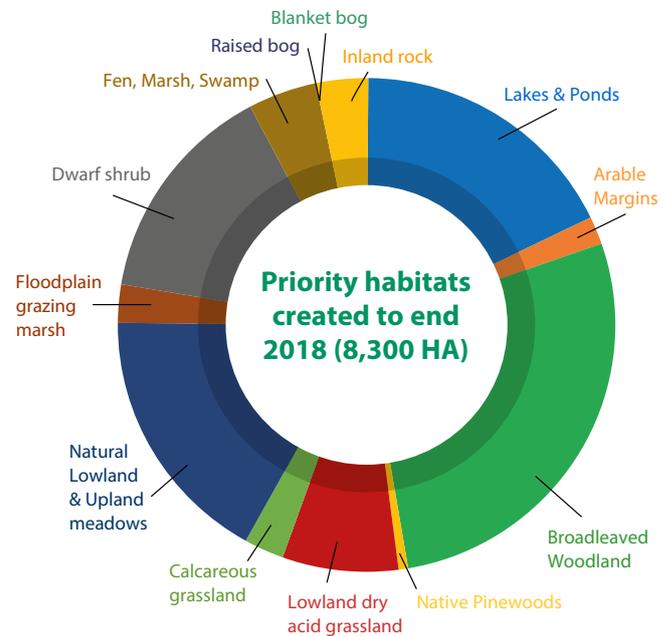
⁵ Joint Nature Conservation Committee <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-habitats/#list-of-uk-bap-priority-habitats>

⁶ For example, as set out in Defra's emerging 'Eco-metric' <https://ecosystemsknowledge.net/ecometric>

Delivery

Improvement of wildlife habitats has long been a priority for the industry through land management and quarry restoration. The MPA and its members work closely with communities, regulators and wildlife charities to ensure we are well informed, including on site management and wider measures, in judging our biennial awards, and through developing Memorandums of Understanding and specific projects with a number of ngos.

Our monitoring indicates that to date that at least 8,000 hectares of UK priority habitat has been created on members' sites, with at least a further 11,000 hectares committed to in approved restoration plans.





MPA's National Nature Park



In most cases, our restoration of sites results in more and better habitats than before development – a ‘net gain’ in biodiversity – although in the past this hasn’t been systematically measured. As set out in the MPA Charter⁷, the industry will continue to deliver net gain in biodiversity, principally through management and restoration of extraction sites, guided by Biodiversity Management Plans for all sites.

Landscape-scale approaches go beyond site-based measures, and can deliver more extensive and diverse ecological networks which are more resilient, particularly where these connect to the dynamics of surrounding landscapes and features – an ‘up-wilding’ approach.

Keeping track of performance and the contribution mineral products industries are making to biodiversity is crucial. We will measure the industry’s contribution to biodiversity, especially the amount of net gain and nature recovery delivered and planned.

National and local policy makers need to continue to recognise the key role that the industry can contribute to biodiversity and nature recovery, including through positive and flexible use of the planning system and by supporting positive initiatives such as Nature after Minerals.

Nature conservation and the development of public spaces are high on the industry’s agenda. MPA has devised an interactive map which highlights MPA’s National Nature Park - former quarries and other former industrial locations returned to nature and with public access, which are now considered of special interest to nature conservationists and members of the public.

⁷ Mineral Products Association (2020) Charter and Members’ Handbook 2020





Cover: Peregrine falcon, Undisclosed Northern Quarry by Michael Cardus

Page 2: Barn owl, (RSPB) Langford Lowfields, Newark, Nottinghamshire, by Stuart Carlton

Hare on haul road, King's Lynn Quarry, Norfolk by Alan Bland

Oystercatcher stretching, Swinden Quarry, Skipton, North Yorkshire by Jeremy West

Small blue butterflies mating, (Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust) College Lake Nature Reserve, Tring, Buckinghamshire by Roy McDonald

Sand martins on dredger winch wire, Nosterfield Quarry, North Yorkshire by Chris Pennock

Female pantaloon bee, (Suffolk Wildlife Trust) Lackford Lakes, Suffolk by Hawk Honey

Page 3: Barn swallow, Almington Quarry, Staffordshire by Dave Barnes

Scarce chaser dragonfly, Paxton Pits Nature Reserve, St Neots, Cambridgeshire by Peter Hagger

Wagtail, (Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust) College Lake Nature Reserve, Tring, Buckinghamshire by Roy McDonald

Brown long-eared bat, (Devon Wildlife Trust) Sourton Quarry Nature Reserve, nr Okehampton, Devon by John J Kaczanow

Stoat, Almington Quarry, Staffordshire by Dave Barnes

Corner pond, Blackhill Quarry, Exeter, Devon by Malcolm Jarvis

Page 4 (Bottom): Jay collecting acorns, Almington Quarry, Staffordshire by Dave Barnes

Page 5: Short-eared owl, Totterhoe Knolls Nature Reserve, Totterhoe, Bedfordshire by Roy McDonald

Bee orchid, Bowers Quarry, Isle of Portland, Dorset by Mark Godden

Back cover (Top Left): Two brown hares sitting amongst wild flower meadow, (RSPB) Langford Lowfields Nature Reserve, Nottinghamshire by Roger Bennett

Back cover (Bottom Left): Whiskered bat, (Devon Wildlife Trust) Sourton Quarry Nature Reserve, nr Okehampton, Devon by John J Kaczanow

Back cover (Right): Kingfisher bringing food to its young, Barham Quarry, Barham, Ipswich by Ian Rumbellow



The Mineral Products Association is the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, dimension stone, lime, mortar and silica sand industries.

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