

## Morecambe Bay Limestones Target Area



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Total Area: 22,300ha

### Why is the Morecambe Bay Limestones Area a priority for Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) management?

The **Morecambe Bay Limestones Target Area** is important for its significant contribution to the following Higher Level Stewardship objectives: **Biodiversity**, **Landscape** and **Historic Environment**.

This area includes parts of the **Lake District National Park** and all of the **Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**. This area is of particularly high biodiversity value including a mosaic of habitats ranging from **coastal saltmarshes** to exposed **limestone pavement** scars. Within this

target area nationally important areas of **lowland raised bogs, lowland calcareous grassland, upland calcareous grassland, limestone pavement, floodplain grazing marsh, and coastal saltmarsh** occur. Important areas of **lowland fens, reedbeds, purple moor grass and rush pasture** are also present supporting internationally important populations of **bittern and breeding and wintering waders and wildfowl**. Other important species include a group of butterflies associated with **coppiced woodland** including **Duke of Burgundy, pearl-bordered and high brown fritillaries**. **Limestone walls** and industrial remains such as **lime kilns** are key historic features of the area. The landscape of this area is characterised by its **designed landscape** including deer parks and parkland areas. **Damson orchards** are an important feature of the Lyth Valley.

## What do I need to do to get an agreement?

Applications must perform **ONE\*** or more of the following land management activities:

- Maintain/Restore/Create important areas of the following habitats<sup>1</sup>:

**limestone grasslands** (lowland calcareous grassland and upland calcareous grassland), **limestone pavement, coppiced woodlands and juniper scrub**. These habitats support a significant range of rare plants and animals, including **dormouse** and are particularly important for butterflies including **Duke of Burgundy, and pearl-bordered and high brown fritillaries**. *HLS woodland and grassland management to benefit these features may include establishing small scale coppicing, appropriate grazing regimes and tailored scrub and bracken management*

AND/OR

**lowland raised bogs, fens, purple moor grass and rush pasture, lowland meadows, saltmarshes and reedbeds**. The local reedbeds support important populations of **bittern**. *HLS management of these lowland wetland habitats may include water level management*

- Provide habitat for the following range restricted farmland birds:

**Wet Grassland Birds:** Provision of nesting habitats and summer food where three or more the following wet grassland species breed – **lapwing, snipe, curlew and redshank, yellow wagtail** or (with strong supporting evidence) the holding is known to support an important regional breeding population for any of these species<sup>2</sup>

- Positive management of visible and **below ground archaeological and historic** features that are assessed as a priority in the region<sup>3</sup>
- Protect, maintain and restore **historic landscapes and their features**, such as parkland where they are assessed as a priority in the region<sup>4</sup>
- Maintain or restore **historic buildings** that are assessed as a priority in the region<sup>5</sup>
- Maintain or restore **characteristic field boundary patterns** including features such as **hedgerows, hedgerow trees, limestone walls and parkland walls**
- Protect, restore and enhance **orchards** in their traditional settings, including **damson orchards** in the Lyth Valley
- Create new **permissive access** where there is identified demand or need in order to link people with places, enhance existing networks and/or provide opportunity to improve people's understanding of the farmed environment through **educational access**

- Protect and restore **lowland raised bog** and other habitats on deep peat soils to reduce losses of carbon from nationally important carbon stores

If you think that you can help Natural England achieve any of the above objectives please contact your local office using the number below. Natural England currently hold additional information about environment features on your holding which will be used to identify priority holdings, as a result of this, please note that you may be contacted directly by us.

**Please note:** \* applications seeking to maintain or restore field boundaries MUST be accompanied by another land management activity from the list provided.

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>creation of the habitats listed above will be considered where there are significant opportunities to extend, link or buffer important areas of existing habitat to reduce the impacts of fragmentation.

<sup>2</sup> Provision of nesting habitats and summer food (for wet grassland birds) will typically require specific management/restoration of existing wet grassland and management of water levels which would provide the right sward height and conditions for this assemblage of species. Maps showing the location of key areas believed to support the species listed above are available at <http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk>.

<sup>3</sup>This statement refers to both designated (Scheduled Monuments) and undesignated historic environment features that have been prioritised in accordance with advice from Natural England, English Heritage and local authority archaeologists. It aims to ensure positive management of visible features such as earthworks, standing stones and structures, and action for the most vulnerable archaeological sites that are currently in cultivation, for example by reducing the depth of damaging cultivations through minimum tillage or direct drilling where this offers a suitable level of protection. It also includes the maintenance of below-ground archaeology under permanent uncultivated vegetation and maintaining sufficient waterlogged conditions to preserve organic archaeological material in wetlands.

<sup>4</sup>This statement refers to both designated (Registered Parks and Gardens, World Heritage Sites and Registered Battlefields) and undesignated historic environment features that have been prioritised in accordance with advice from Natural England, English Heritage and local authority archaeologists. It aims to significantly address the condition of historic landscapes through the proactive maintenance or restoration of structures or features that make a major contribution to the design intentions, character or feel of the area, as well as providing for their biodiversity and amenity value.

<sup>5</sup>Natural England has a method of prioritising historic buildings by assessing them for their significance, vulnerability and value for money. To check the eligibility of your building, and to find out if your building is a priority for action, please contact Natural England.

For more information on Higher Level Stewardship please see our website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

**Before applying for HLS you are required to discuss your proposals with a Natural England adviser.**

**To contact an adviser please telephone 0300 060 1113**