

Introducing Community Scale Rewilding



What is Community Scale Rewilding?

Rewilding at the local level, aimed at:

- Restoring natural ecosystems
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Reconnecting people to nature

Core Principles of Community Rewilding

- **Passive management** of the habitat – minimising the human control over ecological processes
- **Species reintroduction** – whether that be plants and/or animals, it is about the return of local wildlife
- **Landscape connectivity** – using the local landscape and history to maximise success

In the UK, since 1970,
the abundance of
species has
decreased by

19%↓

Benefits and Challenges

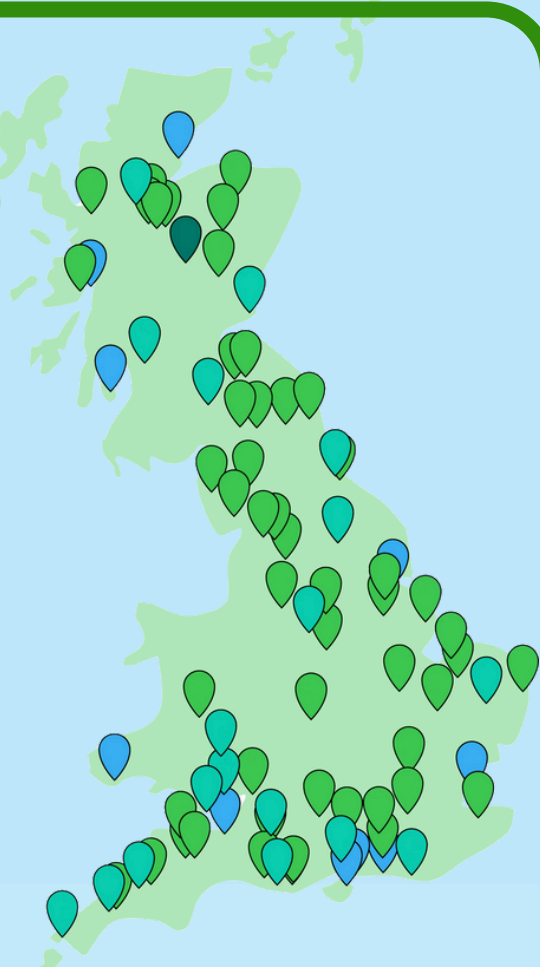
For the community

- ✓ Improved mental and physical health through access to greener spaces
- ✓ Potential economic benefits from nature based enterprises and eco-tourism
- ✓ Strengthening of local culture and heritage
- ? Balancing the agricultural and social use with the overall goal of biodiversity enhancement
- ? Access to funding and initial investment to kick-start rewilding
- ? Conflicts over species reintroduction
- ? Land ownership and accessibility

UK Rewilding Case Studies

- **Knepp Estate** – Breeding White Storks have returned here, the first time in the UK in over 600 years!
- **Carrifran Woodland** – Community led project converting a barren valley into a woodland

Overall, there are hundreds of rewilding projects across the UK, on different scales, in different habitats and aimed at different species



Why Rewild at the Community Scale?

Enhances Local Biodiversity

Promotes habitat recovery and species reintroduction, from wildflowers, vital to key pollinators, to small mammals like hedgehogs or rare bird species like curlews

Empowers Local Communities

Involves local people in decision making, fostering stewardship and connection

Social and Environmental Benefits

Builds community engagement with nature and an adaptive understanding of larger climate change issues, whilst also benefiting people's wellbeing and reducing stress levels

Recommendations to Future Community Rewilding Projects

Prioritise community engagement and education

Advertising to local community groups can build support and create a long-term connection to the area

Start with simple, low-cost techniques

Like introducing vegetation or including small-scale water restoration can have huge impacts

Explore diverse funding models and be adaptive

Whether it is public grants or private finance, investment can enable long-term success. Rewilding is not a fixed process, so flexibility is key

Plan for accessibility and inclusivity

Ensure that parts of the area are open to all, enabling it to act as a social space. However, balance this with the fundamental aims of rewilding