



Former Bates Colliery © Elaine Jaggs

Working with Wildlife

## Brownfield Land Habitat Action Plan

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Plan Lead	Local Authorities
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Local communities often use the sites for casual recreation.

### Conservation Status

Presently brownfield land as a habitat has no legal protection but individual species associated with sites may be protected

### Description

The term 'brownfield' is applied to unused or vacant land which was previously occupied by human use, primarily by industry. Examples of industrial uses include:

- disused colliery sites
- spoil tips
- abandoned factories
- redundant dockland
- disused quarries
- industrial lagoons
- contaminated land
- former refuse tips
- restored open cast sites
- demolition sites

Disused railways, often associated as brownfield sites, are covered within the Transport Corridors Action Plan.

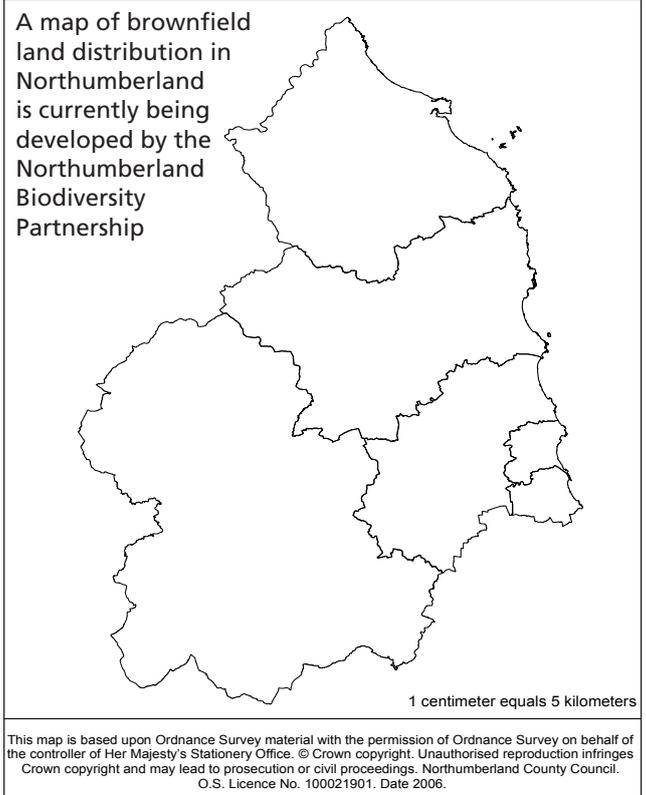
Brownfield sites are host to natural colonisers of the plant and animal communities and are characterised by a semi-natural, unmanaged nature. Soil quality and quantity is often poor, but a wide range of plants can grow in soils containing heavy metals.

Many brownfield sites are of a temporary nature as they await redevelopment. If a brownfield site is left undisturbed for a long period of time pioneer communities will develop through succession into habitats such as grassland, wetlands, scrub and woodland.

The biodiversity value of brownfield land is often underestimated. They are often described as being 'unsightly' and their ecological value misunderstood. Open ground is an important habitat for lichens, butterflies, moths, beetles and bees, and can act as an alternative for species that have declined due to the loss of native habitats in the wider countryside.

### Current Extent in Northumberland

The extent of Brownfield land in Northumberland is currently unknown but the majority occurs in the South East of the county in the Blyth and Wansbeck local authority areas.



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### Current Factors Causing Loss or Decline

- Pressure for previously developed land to be used for development for commercial or residential purposes resulting in consequent loss of habitat
- Loss of distinctive communities and uncommon species associated with waste and spoil tips
- Habitat fragmentation and isolation
- Small total area of brownfield sites
- Lack of management and spread of invasive species
- Excessive disturbance from recreational pressure
- Negative public perception due to site association with fly tipping, bonfires, motorbike scrambling, vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- Lack of public awareness of biodiversity values of a site
- Inappropriate management to create 'tidy' landscapes
- Lack of up to date information on the wildlife resource in brownfield sites

### Associated Action Plans

Dingy Skipper

### Further Information

ODPM, Nov 2006, Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) – Housing

English Partnership, Nov 2003, Towards a National Brownfield Strategy

### Targets

**Maintain the current extent of brownfield land of wildlife value in Northumberland by 2010 (no net loss)**

Code	Priority Actions	Date
BL A01	Identify all areas of brownfield land with significant wildlife value and confirm their conservation status	2008
BL A02	Monitor the conservation status of the brownfield resource	ongoing
BL A03	Use survey results to quantify the target to maintain the current extent and create targets for achieving condition on existing sites	2008
BL A04	Publish an information leaflet about the biodiversity value of derelict sites for planners and developers	2009
BL A05	Publish a promotional leaflet on Northumberland's key accessible brownfield sites to raise public awareness	2010
BL A06	Produce best practice management guidelines for brownfield land	2009
BL A07	Create management plans for all identified brownfield sites of conservation value	2010
BL A08	Carry out brownfield site focused events and activities across Northumberland	2011
BL A09	Promote the potential for the introduction/recovery programmes for flagship species which utilise brownfield sites, that are now rare or extinct	2009
BL A10	Identify potential areas for brownfield wildlife sites	2009
BL A11	Promote the retention of habitat interest features in the development of brownfield land in accordance with PPS9, paragraph 13	ongoing
BL A12	Promote the inclusion of habitat with 'brownfield' characteristics in mitigation schemes	ongoing
BL A13	Implement at least 3 brownfield site wildlife creation projects	2015