



Wansbeck Riverside Country Park © NBP Photographer John Williamson

Working with Wildlife

Transport Corridors Habitat Action Plan

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| Plan Lead | Local Authorities |
| Latest version | January 2008 |

Description

Transport Corridors are linear strips of land adjacent to roads, railway lines, cycle ways and bridleways. Most transport corridors are areas of rough grassland or embankment, sometimes shrub and tree lined. These transport corridors provide valuable habitat for a variety of small mammals, birds, invertebrates and wild flowers, facilitating the dispersal of plants and animals throughout the county.

Conservation Status

Specific legislation for transport corridors relates to the species that utilise them as wildlife corridors

Current Extent in Northumberland

Transport Corridors form a large and extensive network, although rail transport corridors are less extensive than the road network.

Major highways with mature semi-natural habitats include the:

- A1(T), A697 (the main north to south route)
- A696(T), A68 (cross border routes)
- A69(T) (the main east to west route)

Approximate distance of 'A' roads is 376 km
 Approximate distance of 'B' roads is 340 km
 Approximate distance of 'C' roads is 1,522 km

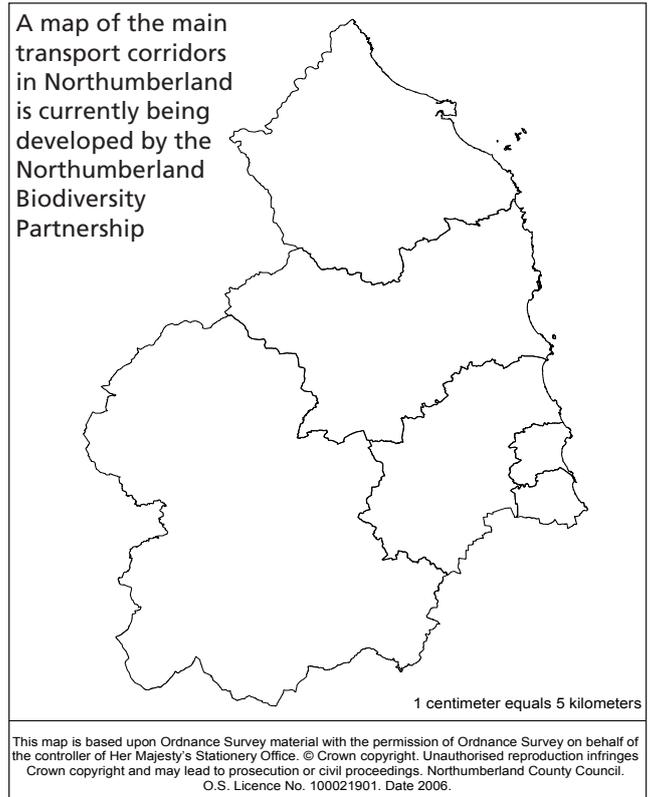
Approximate distance of 'unclassified' roads is 2,395 km

The main East Coast railway runs through the area with smaller branch lines (mineral use) in the southeast area. A rail link also runs east to west along the River Tyne valley corridor. The approximate distance of railway corridor in Northumberland is 208 km.

The main cycle ways are:

- The Coast and Castles cycle route' (part of National route 1) which starts at Tynemouth and ends up at Berwick-on-Tweed (approx. 160 km on road with approximately 48 km on traffic free routes)
- The Pennine Cycleway (National route 68) from Cumbria to Berwick-on-Tweed via Haltwhistle, Bellingham and Wooler (approximately 160 km on road with 13 km on traffic free tracks/bridleways)

There are many other cycleways around the southeast Northumberland area that link into the National routes network. These links use old waggonways, bridleways and other link paths.



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Current Factors Causing Loss or Decline

- Many linear features are subject to insensitive management – weed killing, intensity and timing of mowing or lack of knowledge of the composition, extent and status of roadside habitats
- Species subject to disruption by road improvement schemes as well as statutory services (underground pipelines, cables, etc.)
- Reseeding of sites using imported seed
- Biodiversity unfriendly landscaping and development for example tree planting in grassland of nature conservation value
- Inappropriate siting and management of street trees
- Scrub encroachment and spread of invasive species on grassland of conservation value
- Vulnerability to vandalism, accumulation of litter and fly tipping
- Pollution of waterways and wetland habitats adjacent to roads and railways from inappropriate storage and use of road salts and petrochemical runoff
- A number of priority species killed on roads and railways
- Lack of knowledge about the habitat(s)

Associated Action Plans

Bats

Otters

Red Squirrel

Water Vole

Farmland Birds

Barn Owl

Great Crested Newt

Recreational & Amenity Space

Hedgehogs

Trees & Hedgerows

Garden Birds

Further Information

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment website <http://www.cabe.org.uk>

Targets

Maintain the current extent of transport corridors of nature conservation value in Northumberland by 2010.

Restore 10 transport corridors to valuable nature conservation sites in Northumberland by 2012.

Create 10 new transport corridors of nature conservation value in Northumberland by 2015.

| Code | Priority Actions | Date |
|--------|---|---------|
| TC A01 | Survey known roadside and rail side verges for nature conservation value & identify other valuable verges and species-rich roadside hedges | 2009 |
| TC A02 | Produce conservation management plans for all linear features of known wildlife importance | 2010 |
| TC A03 | Make Local Authorities and Highways Authorities aware of valuable roadside verges | 2010 |
| TC A04 | Develop sympathetic roadside verge management practices where practical and ensure that these are implemented | 2010 |
| TC A05 | Monitor the success of management plans through repeat surveying of identified sites | 2015 |
| TC A06 | Ensure that relevant habitat policy is included in local planning documents, to protect, enhance or create new landscape features of wildlife importance along transport corridors and to ensure that ecological surveys are undertaken prior to the determination of new transport schemes | ongoing |
| TC A07 | Install wildlife warning signs and wildlife underpasses and bridges along appropriate roads | ongoing |
| TC A08 | Produce best practice guidelines for rail side land management and statutory services to minimise disturbance to wildlife | 2009 |
| TC A09 | Encourage people to follow guidelines for hedgerow & tree management to ensure that work which might disturb nesting birds avoids the breeding season (March-August) | ongoing |
| TC A10 | Include oil/silt traps in the design of new road & rail schemes adjacent to sensitive wetland sites & watercourses | ongoing |
| TC A11 | Promote the use of SUDS on any new road schemes | ongoing |
| TC A12 | Encourage reporting of road/rail-kills (badgers, red squirrel, barn owls etc.) to relevant recording bodies | ongoing |
| TC A13 | Raise awareness of the importance of linear transport corridors for biodiversity to the wider community and those responsible for their upkeep and maintenance | ongoing |