



**North Devon  
Coast  
National  
Landscape**

**State of the  
National  
Landscape Report  
2025**  
Craggatak Consulting



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Craggatak Consulting acknowledges the support given by the National Landscape team; they have supplied materials and given access to research and survey resources. We set out the sources of data with each of our maps and tables.

## Acknowledgements

Photographs owned by the North Devon Coast National Landscape Partnership (Neville Stanikk).

## Location of the North Devon Coast National Landscape



Source: GIS data obtained from OS Open data and [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk) – October 2025.

## Summary

Key to trend symbols:



Informative data



New baseline



Condition improving



Condition stable




















Condition declining












Not clear

Topic	Notes	Baseline	Trend
Climate			
Greenhouse gases overall (PLTOF Target Indicator 6)	There has been a 40.3% reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions between 2005 and 2023.	2005	↑ A general reduction
	Transport is the only producer of greenhouse gases that has increased. It produced 13.5 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2005, 12.9 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2013 (2012 was the lowest point at 12.5 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e) and 18.5 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2023 (+43% since 2013).		↓ Significant rise
	Agriculture is the highest producer of greenhouse gases. It fell from 87.6 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2005 to 87.0 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2013. This then fell to 78.1 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2023 (-10% since 2013).		↑ A modest reduction
	Domestic was the next highest source of greenhouse gas emissions in 2005 at 32.1 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e, this fell to 28.0 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2013 and 14.3 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2023 (-49% since 2013).		↑ Significant reduction
	Commercial was at 16.3 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2005, 13.8 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2013 and 5.7 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e in 2023 (-59% since 2013).		↑ Significant reduction
Individual greenhouse gases (PLTOF Target Indicator 6)	Carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) levels in 2023, agriculture produced 35% of emissions (down from 37% in 2005), transport 31% (up from 13% in 2005) and domestic 23% (down from 31% in 2005).	2005	↓ Significant rise in emissions from transport
	Methane (CH <sub>4</sub> ) levels in 2023, 94.4% of emissions come from agriculture (associated with the livestock) (up from 84% in 2005); waste produced 4% (down from 13% in 2005).		↓ Rising emissions from agriculture offset reductions from waste




	Nitrous oxide (N <sub>2</sub> O) levels in 2023, generally very low, the highest emissions, at 94%, are associated with agricultural soils (fertilisers) (a slight rise from 93% in 2005).			No change
Carbon flux	The organic carbon flux from habitats present within the National Landscape was set at -40,457 t CO <sub>2</sub> e or -2.0 t CO <sub>2</sub> e / ha. 90% of the carbon is stored below ground.	2024		
Soil carbon	Much of the soils in the National Landscape hold the equivalent of 155 tonnes of carbon per hectare but there are areas holding considerably more. The amount of carbon accumulating in the soils and vegetation rose by 2% between 2005 and 2013 but fell by 0.4% between 2013 and 2023.	2023		Data shows a fall, but this may be data errors
Air quality	Particulate matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> ) levels are relatively low in the area but with hotspots around Ilfracombe / Slade and Westward Ho!.	2023		
	Sulphur dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> ) levels are low in the area but there are hotspots at Combe Martin, Clovelly and Hartland.	2023		
	Ammonia (NH <sub>3</sub> ) levels are high in and around the parishes of Berrynarbor, Parkham and Hartland.	2023		
<b>Place</b>				
Number and condition of heritage assets (PLTOF Target Indicator 10)	There are 416 Listed Buildings, 25 Scheduled Monuments, and 1 Registered Park and Garden. Of these, 6 assets are at risk; there were 3 assets at risk in 2020, and 5 assets at risk in 2013.	2013		
Number and condition of conservation areas (PLTOF Target Indicator 10)	There are 11 Conservation Areas wholly within the National Landscape. Historic England states that none of the conservation areas are at risk.	2024		
Land-use	Agriculture is the dominant land use within the National Landscape and there is no recorded change since 2012 except for some coastal transitional woodland-shrub appearing in 2021 between Eldern Point and Beckland Bay; and associated with Reeve Wood near Yapham Farm.	2012		
Agricultural land-use	In 2024, 63% of the National Landscape is under agriculture (10,784 ha) with 38% of the area down to permanent grass (6,485 ha).	2010		
Agricultural tenure	In 2024, 74% of the agricultural tenured land was owner occupied (no significant change since 2010).	2010		
Agricultural holdings	In 2024, there were 176 agricultural holdings; 38% are less than 20 hectares, 44% are between 20-100 hectares, and 18% are over 100 hectares in size. 31% are lowland livestock grazing farms, 21% are less	2010		

	<p>favoured area livestock grazing, 23% are general cropping farms, 7% are dairy farms, and 9% are mixed farms.</p> <p>Allowing for sampling errors, the number of holdings has been stable since 2010. However, there is an increase in the smallest units (less than 5 ha). There is a decline in the 20-50 ha and over 100 ha holdings.</p> <p>Grazing livestock is the predominant holding type though, in the last ten years, there has been a 31% decrease in the number of grazing in less favoured area holdings. There has also been a 29% reduction in dairy holdings. During the same period, there has been a 173% increase in general cropping.</p>			
Livestock numbers	<p>In 2024, poultry was the largest group of livestock (33,972 animals), an 85% increase in numbers since 2010. There are 27,000 sheep, down 33% since 2010 and 2016 (40,550/40,534 respectively). There is a 23% decline in cattle numbers since 2010, now down to 11,840 animals. Pigs have declined by 93%. Since 2010, breeding sheep numbers have fallen by 26%, the dairy herd is down by 21%, the beef is down by 29%, and there are 90% fewer breeding female pigs.</p>	2010		
Agri-environment schemes	<p>In 2024, 5,700 ha was entered into agri-environment schemes (33% of the National Landscape). The total claimed for Countryside Stewardship and SFI schemes was £1,618,000.00.</p> <p>In 2021, the total annual values of agri-environment agreements in the National Landscape was £448,701, down from £470,365 in 2016.</p> <p>The area has decreased from 7,537 ha in 2016 (44% of the National Landscape) to 5,649 ha in 2021 (33% of the National Landscape).</p>			
Development monitoring	<p>2023-24 - responded to 27% of all development applications</p> <p>2014-18 - responded to 12% of all development applications</p>	2024		
Number of development plans with Spatial Strategy and allocations	<p>One joint District plan</p> <p>There are two 'made' Neighbourhood Plans and five 'designated' neighbourhood planning areas.</p>	2024		
Dark night skies	<p>The National Landscape generally has dark night skies; there are only very low levels of light radiated at night. The noticeable light sources within the area are around Combe Martin, Woolacombe, Croyde, Buck's Mills, Clovelly and Hartland. The average radiance for these settlements is 0.67 watts/steradian/cm<sup>2</sup> (energy radiating from the earth's surface).</p>	2019		Radiance has fallen within the NL apart from around Croyde.

	<p>There is also light spillage into the National Landscape from Ilfracombe, Westward Ho!, and Bideford.</p> <p>Woolacombe has seen the greatest reduction since 2019 (-2.46 watts/steradian/cm<sup>2</sup>).</p>			
Noise pollution	<p>The National Landscape is generally quiet (&lt;40 dB).</p> <p>There is low-level traffic noise (40 dB+) spilling from the road network throughout the area.</p> <p>There are higher levels recorded along the A39 between Bideford and Bursdon, and along the A361 into Ilfracombe (70 dB+).</p> <p>Routes to Hartland and Clovelly also have higher noise levels (65 dB+).</p> <p>Combe Martin, Woolacombe and Croyde record traffic noise above 60 dB.</p>	2022	↔	
<b>Nature</b>				
Percentage of SSSIs in a favourable or unfavourable but recovering condition	In 2020, 94% of its SSSIs were in a favourable or unfavourable but recovering condition.	2010	↗	Abandoned metric
Percentage of SSSI features in a favourable condition (PLTOF Target Indicator 2)	In 2024, 26% of the SSSI features were in favourable condition (the average for the National Landscapes is 41.3%, and for all England it is 39.5%)	2024	↔	Below average
Percentage of SSSI features assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition (PLTOF Target Indicator 3)	In 2024, 7% (the average for all the National Landscapes is 15.3%, and for all England it is 14.1%)	2024	↔	Below average
Area of priority habitats	In 2025, there were 3,912 ha of priority habitats covering 23% of the National Landscape.	2018	⚠	Metric changed
Area of woodland	In 2024, there were 1867.7 ha of woodland covering 10.9% of the National Landscape.	2013	i	Stable
Percentage of woodland in active management	In 2024, 31% of woodland is in active management (593 ha) - down from 36% in 2020	2018	↓	Less active management
Area of ancient woodland	In 2024, there were 596.1 ha of ancient woodland covering 3.5% of the National Landscape.	2013	↗	No change since 2013.
Locally protected sites LNRs etc	In 2024, statutory Local Nature Reserves covered 0.1% of the National Landscape. In addition, 54 non-statutory designated sites covered around 5.5% of the area.	2009	i	No change since 2009.

Length of hedgerows and other traditional field boundaries (PLTOF)	In 2024, 2,000 km of hedgerows and/or other traditional field boundaries were recorded + 442 ha of trees out of woodlands (includes 3.9 ha classed as orchard)	2024		No breakdown of type or condition
Ecological status of rivers	In 2024, 54% of rivers and 25% of water catchments had a good ecological status. The transitional/coastal waters and groundwater bodies had a moderate or poor status.	2013		Metric changed
<b>People</b>				
Population	The estimated total population on census day 2021 was 12,300. Population numbers have fallen slightly since 2011, by approximately 2.6%	2021		Defra analysis based on population rounding
Average age	The estimated average age was 48 (41 in England).	2021		
Population profile	There was a population ‘bulge’ of 60–64-year-olds in 2011 (9.3% of the population). In 2021, this cohort (now aged 70–74) and has dropped to 8.7% of the population. A new ‘bulge’ at 55-59 has developed in 2021 that may be the result of early retirees moving into the area. By 2021, those aged 15 and under is down by 1%, the working age population (16-74) is down by 1.1%, and those aged 75 and over is up by 2.1% when compared to 2011.	census		Slowly aging population
Ethnicity of resident population (%)	There has been little change in either ethnicity between 2011 and 2021. In 2021, 98.1% of the resident population classified as ‘white’ (down from 98.6% in 2011).	census		No material difference from 2011
Gender of resident population (%)	There has been little change in either gender between 2011 and 2021. In 2021, 50.7% were female (up from 50.4% in 2011), and 49.3% were male (down from 49.6% in 2011).	census		Male levels declining
General health of the resident population (%)	In 2021, 48% of the resident population enjoyed very good health; only 1% suffered very bad health.	census		No material difference from 2011
Disability status of resident population (%)	In 2021, 18% of the resident population were listed as disabled under the Equality Act.	census		No material difference from 2011

Relative wealth of the resident population	Average earnings per month were £2,000 in 2021. For rural areas in England, it was £2,300. In 2023, full-time employees could expect to spend 10 times their earnings on buying a home in the National Landscape. For rural areas in England, they could expect to spend around 9 times their annual earnings.	2024		
Levels of deprivation (deciles)	Across the area, the average decile of deprivation is 5. A part of Northam Parish is in the 8th least deprived decile. The Parishes of Hartland and Ilfracombe are in the 2nd most deprived decile.	2024		Local variations may be hidden
Registered businesses by size	Most businesses employ less than nine employees. There is a greater proportion of sole traders within the National Landscape than the average for rural areas in England.	2024		
Registered businesses by number and type	There are 840 registered business units, tourism, agriculture and fishing dominate.	2024		
Employment profile by occupation	Between 2011 & 2021, there has been an increase of 3% in professional occupations and a 3.5% decrease in skilled trades and manual labour.	census		6% swing to professional occupations
Employment profile by industry	Between 2011 & 2021, there has been an increase in health and social work (+2.8%), construction (+0.6%), and agriculture & fisheries (+0.5%); and a decrease in accommodation & food services (-2.2%), other (-1%), transport (-0.8%) and manufacturing (-0.5%).	census		
Employment status	53% of the resident population was employed in 2021 (down 10% since 2011) and an 11% increase in those residents not seeking work (73% of those not seeking work were retired in 2021, up from 66% in 2011).	census		An increase in the numbers not seeking work (includes an increase of 10% in retirees since 2011)
Employment in farming	Employment in farming has increased by 5.7% during the last 10 years. In 2024, 391 people were employed in farming (3% of the resident population).	2010		

Means of travel to work	In 2021, 32% of employed residents worked from home, up from 15% in 2011. In 2011, 60% of employed residents drove a car to work; this reduced to 50% in 2021.	census	↑	15% increase in home working
	In 2021, 89% of the resident population had access to at least one car or van, up from 88% in 2011.	census		No material difference from 2011
Tourism trends	In 2023, there were approximately 2 million visitors, down from 3 million in 2016 (-28%). Visitor spend has remained at £247m pa since 2016. Employment supported by the sector in 2023 was 3,193 FTE posts, a fall from 4,256 in 2016 (-25%).	2016	↓	Sector is declining
Rights of Way Paths and trails (PLTOF Target Indicator 9)	There are 206.8 km of RoW recorded. This is made up of 173.6 km of footpaths, 29.8 km of bridleways, 3.1 km of byways and 0.3 km of roads used as public paths. 89.7 km of the South Coast Path and two National Cycle Trails lie within the NL.	2024	↔	
Condition of designated bathing waters	In 2024, 8 were rated 'excellent', Combe Martin was rated 'good', and Ilfracombe Hele was rated 'sufficient', down from 'good' in previous years.	2019	↓	Majority consistently excellent but deterioration close to Ilfracombe
Access to public transport	In 2025, there were 11 public transport routes. No Sunday services in the National Landscape but weekdays generally good; some limited single journeys on market days. In 2018, there were 9 public transport routes. This was a reduction from 13 routes in 2008	2008		
Accessible blue/green infrastructure	'Accessible Green Infrastructure', as defined by Natural England, covers 1,473.4 ha (8.6%) of the National Landscape (up from 7.7% in 2013).	2013		Metrics have changed

# Introduction

## The North Devon Coast National Landscape

A National Landscape is an area that is so precious that it is safeguarded for the nation. It is the everyday name for what is set out in legislation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The National Landscape covers an area of 171 square kilometres ranging from the lowest point on dry land at Northam Burrows, protected from the sea by its Pebble Ridge, to the highest point of 269 metres at Berry Down near Combe Martin, across from the Hangman cliffs of Exmoor. The coastal boundary of the National Landscape varies from low water mark to high water mark at different sites and extends out to the South Tail sandbank in the mouth of the Taw Torridge estuary. The inland designation line is based on the catchments of the coastal streams of Hartland and North Devon, resulting in a long narrow National Landscape area for which the setting, whether ocean or inland downs, is highly influential.

A mainly coastal landscape including special places such as Combe Martin, Lee Bay, Woolacombe, Croyde, Saunton, Northam Burrows Country Park, Westward Ho!'s Pebble Ridge, the Hartland Peninsula and Braunton Burrows, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. The landscape varies from wild coastal cliffs, spectacular waterfalls and rocky coves to sand dunes and beaches, wooded combs and valleys with sheltering villages.

The long social and cultural history of North Devon is reflected in the landscape, shaped by centuries of farming practices as seen in the strip field systems, hedge banks with facings of slate and stone or remnants of orchards and soft fruit production. Human

habitation of the area stretches back to pre-historic times with ancient burial mounds, coastal hillforts, historic farmsteads, remote fishing villages and ancient landscape features. The maritime and agricultural heritage are reflected in local culture and traditions often linked to the seasons or particular historic events. The remoteness of this landscape at the periphery of South West England and its protection through landscape designations, has ensured that many historic features are still visible today whether from the iron age or from the Cold War in the 1950's.

## Purpose of document

This is a timely update of the state of the area and many of its special qualities and will help to inform the statutory review of the current National Landscape Management Plan (2019-24) and support the preparation of a new plan.

This report pulls together the data and information gathered by the National Landscape team, with its partners including Natural England, for the National Landscape; and from other sources as indicated. It presents data collated in the autumn of 2025 alongside comparable data from annual reviews and reports, where such exists, or to alternative baselines against which there are comparisons and trends.

## Data considerations

There have been a series of reports describing the state of the North Devon Coast National Landscape, the last being published in 2018. We have considered the earlier reports and referenced their findings where relevant. Defra and its agencies have always provided some environmental data cut to the National Landscape boundary. This was through the national framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in National Parks and National Landscapes (MEOPL). Natural England led in this work, in close

partnership with Defra, the English National Park Authorities Association, Historic England and the National Landscapes Association.

In 2024, Defra published its new Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF). In May that year, it released its first set of national data, though several data sets were to follow. The framework includes 10 indicators supported by 24 statistic sheets. We set out the new indicators in Appendix 1 and have included the released data in the body of this report. These data sets are similar, but not identical, to MEOPL. Some metrics vary.

As it is difficult to compare PLTOF to MEOPL, the trends set out in this report are based on the MEOPL data. However, this 2025 report also sets up baseline data sets to be consistent with the new targets. The intent is to use these for future trend monitoring.

No new studies were commissioned for this report, and not all data can be disaggregated to the National Landscape boundary. Furthermore, it is recognised that many partners take actions that secure the Management Plan's objectives but do not necessarily report these to the National Landscape.

Census statistics help paint a picture of the nation and how we live. They provide a detailed snapshot of the population and its characteristics. Census data is not cut to the National Landscape boundary. The Office for National Statistics did provide output

area population estimates allocated to the national landscape on a best fit basis. Defra is now releasing additional social data as a part of PLTOF. It has calculated the proportion of actual land area for each Output Area within the National Landscape boundary (this is therefore different from the ONS figure). These are to be the baseline for the National Landscape. However, a comparison with earlier census sets is not possible because the boundary cutting is not retrospective.

To show the changes between the 2011 and 2021 Census, there is a need to identify the best-fitting parish data to give a reasonable estimate for the National Landscape area. We have created our own best fit. We exclude some parishes where only a very minor part of the parish is within and/or much of the population of that parish are outside the National Landscape. This means that our census presentations are estimates of the likely position. The official figures are also estimates because:

- a. there is not a 100% response (Maximising the quality of Census 2021 population estimates - Office for National Statistics ([ons.gov.uk](https://ons.gov.uk)); and
- b. output areas do not correlate exactly with parish boundaries.

For this reason, we do not show the numeric values recorded in the census, rather, we use the percentage scores for each topic.

# Climate

In this section, we report on greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) across the National Landscape; the transfer of carbon to and from a habitat (carbon flux) and the soil organic carbon stock. We also consider air quality (particulate matter, sulphur dioxide, and ammonia) and the progress of renewable electricity installations over 150kW.

The Department for Energy Security & Net Zero publishes a nationally consistent set of greenhouse emissions estimates cut to the National Landscape boundary; and it reports on renewable energy installations through the Renewable Energy Planning Database (REPD).

The National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory receives detailed data on individual point sources regulated by the Environment Agency and Local Authority Pollution Control. This shows the distribution of greenhouse gases and other airborne pollutants

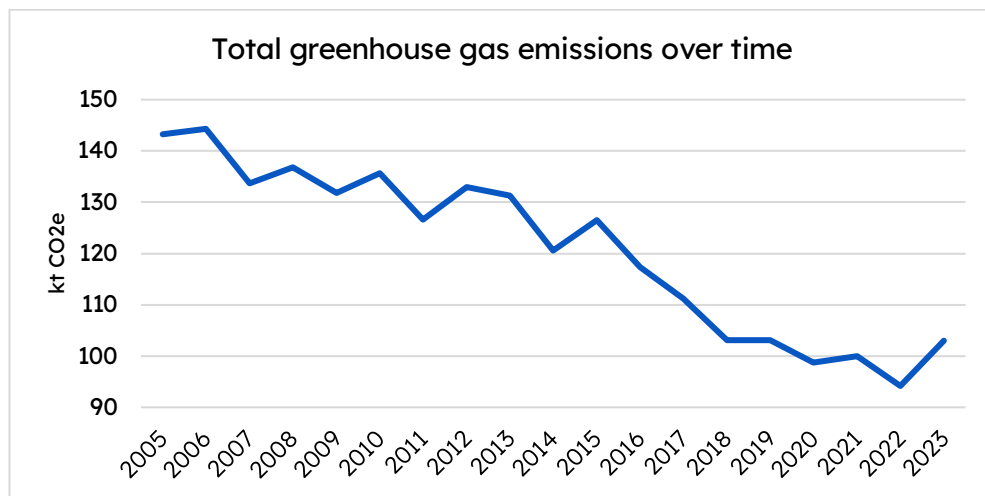
Cranfield University's National Soil Resources Institute (NSRI) keeps key national soil data like the Land Information System (LandIS) and the National Soils Inventory (NSI), providing digital soil maps, profiles, and analysis for environmental research, policy, and industry.



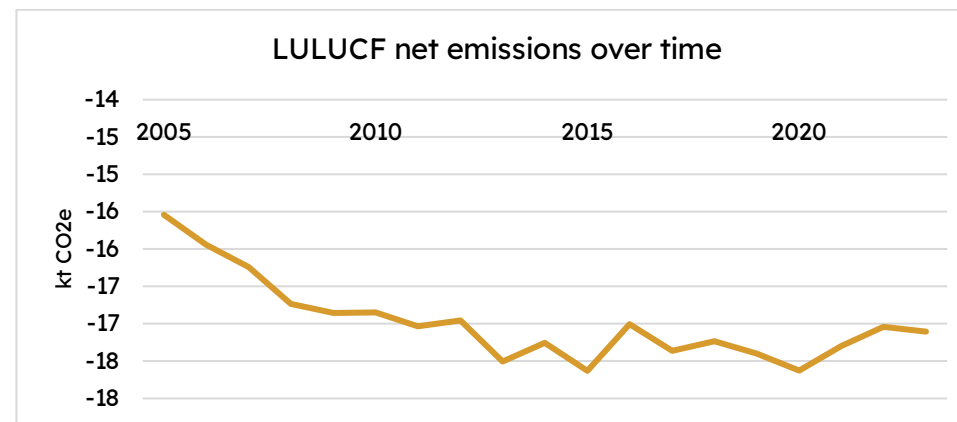
## Greenhouse gases

### Trend data for North Devon Coast National Landscape

A series of charts showing levels of greenhouse gas emissions for the North Devon Coast National Landscape. There has been a 40.3% reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions between 2005 and 2023.



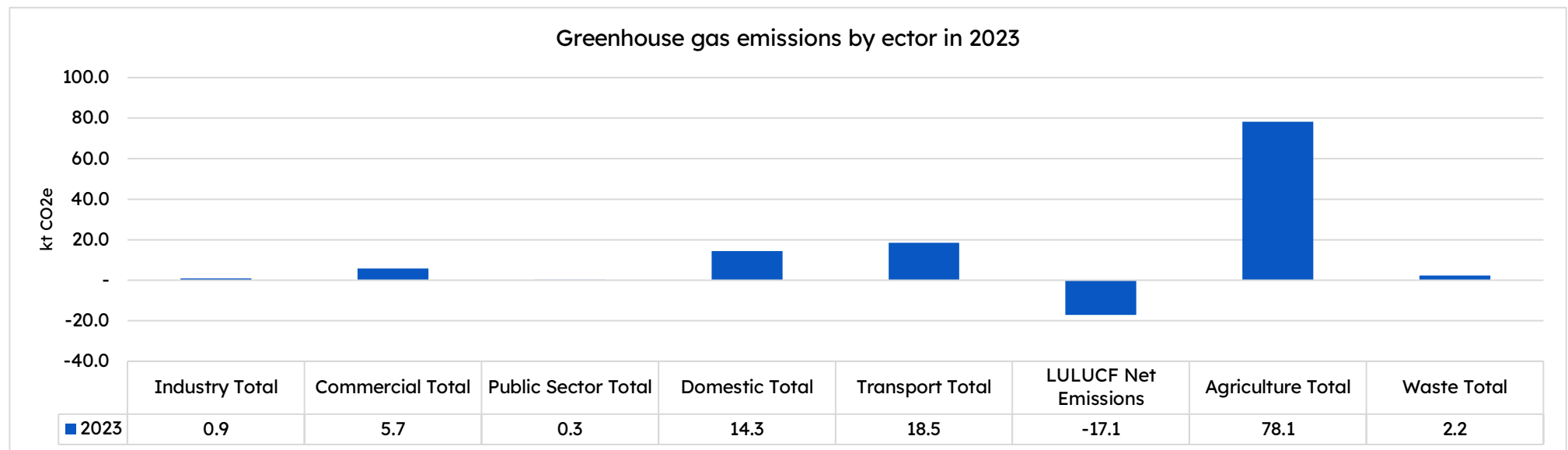
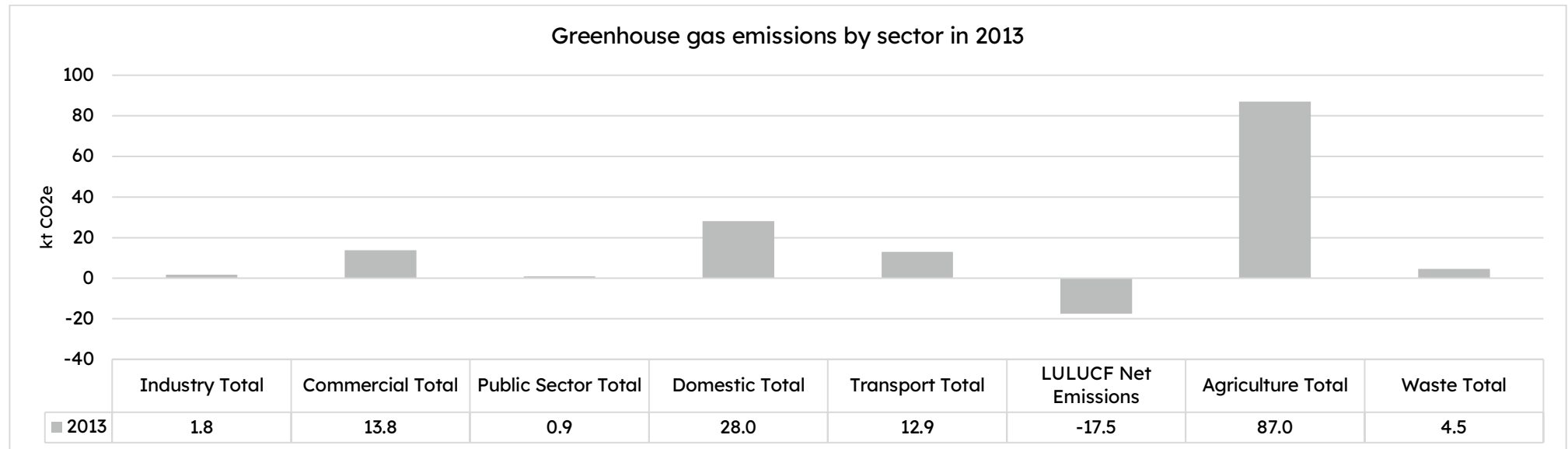
The greenhouse gases covered in this data are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Each of these gases is weighted by its global warming potential (GWP), so that total greenhouse gas emissions can be reported on a consistent basis. The GWP for each gas is defined as its warming influence relative to that of carbon dioxide. Reporting is in kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (kt CO<sub>2</sub>e) unless otherwise stated.



There has been a 1.6% increase in the accumulation of carbon in the National Landscape's vegetation and soils between 2005 and 2023.

\* LULUCF = Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry. The rate of build-up of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere can be reduced by taking advantage of the fact that atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> can accumulate as carbon in vegetation and soils in terrestrial ecosystems. Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change any process, activity or mechanism that removes a greenhouse gas from the atmosphere is referred to as a "sink". Human activities impact terrestrial sinks, through land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF). Consequently, there is an alteration in the exchange of CO<sub>2</sub> between the 'terrestrial biosphere' and the atmosphere.

## Comparison of greenhouse gas emissions by sector in 2013 and 2023



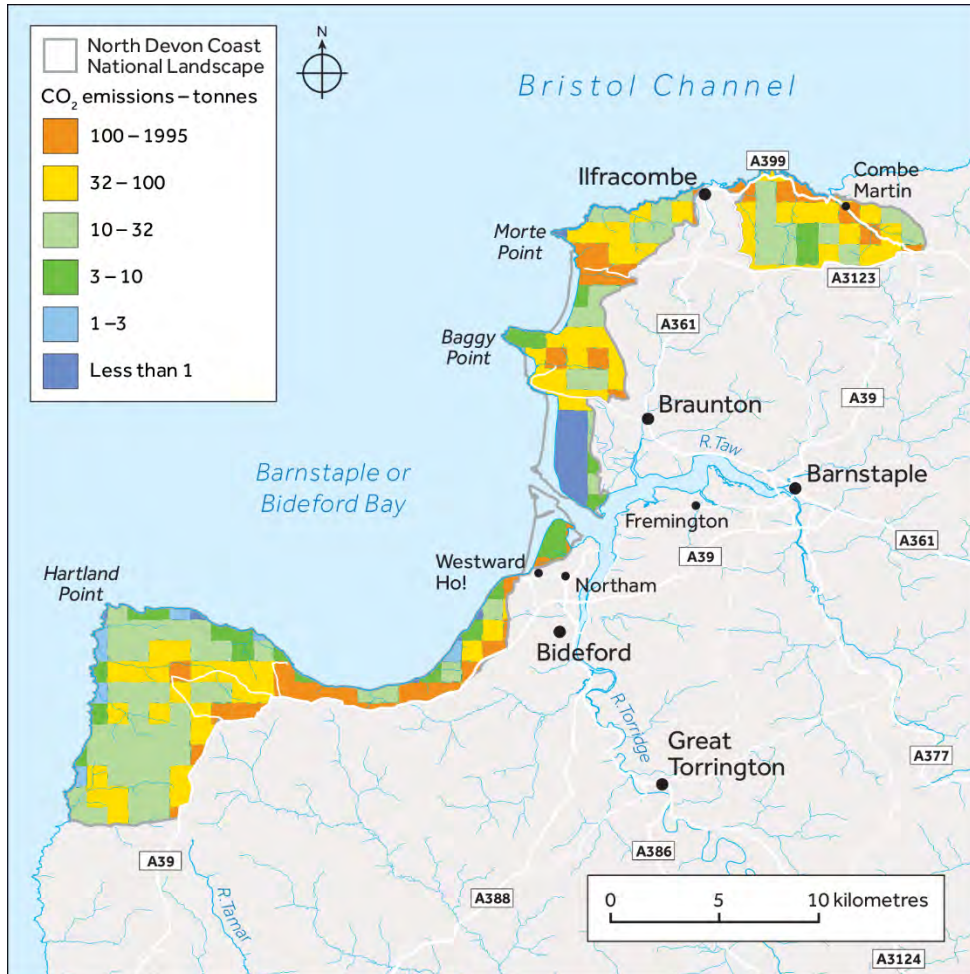
- Transport is the only producer of greenhouse gases that has increased. It produced 13.5 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2005, 12.9 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2013 (2012 was the lowest point at 12.5 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e) and 18.5 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023 (+43% since 2013).
- Agriculture is the highest producer of greenhouse gases. It fell from 87.6 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2005 to 87.0 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2013. This then fell to 78.1 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023 (-10% since 2013).
- Domestic was the next highest source of greenhouse gas emissions in 2005 at 32.1 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e, this fell to 28.0 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2013 and 14.3 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023 (-49% since 2013).
- Commercial was at 16.3 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2005, 13.8 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2013 and 5.7 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023 (-59% since 2013).
- The other sectors record very low emission levels throughout the period. Nonetheless, the sectors do record large decreases; industry (-50% since 2013), public sector (-67% since 2013), waste (-51% since 2013).
- The amount of carbon accumulating in the soils and vegetation fell by 2.3% between 2013 and 2023.

Source: Department for Energy Security & Net Zero; UK Protected Landscapes greenhouse gas emissions statistics: 2005-2023, published 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics-2005-to-2023>

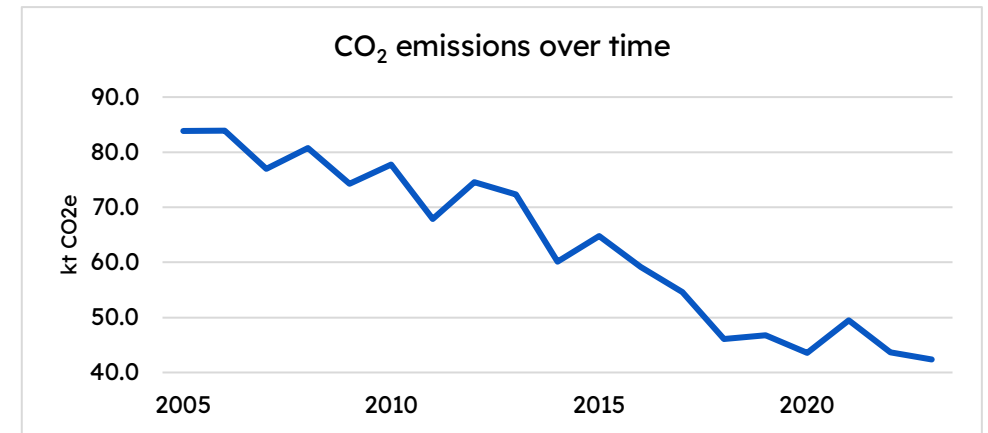
The maps that follow show the presence of emissions within the National Landscape during 2023. Refer to the [Land-use map](#) (click) to match emissions to land-use activity.

## Carbon dioxide in the National Landscape

Map showing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels in 2023. In 2023, agriculture produced 35% of emissions (down from 37% in 2005), transport 31% (up from 13% in 2005) and domestic 23% (down from 31% in 2005). The highest concentration (100-1995 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e) is associated with the A39, A399 and access routes to popular recreational destinations.



Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) enters the atmosphere through burning fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, and oil), solid waste, trees and other biological materials, and also as a result of certain chemical reactions (e.g., cement production). Carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere (or "sequestered") when it is absorbed by plants as part of the biological carbon cycle.

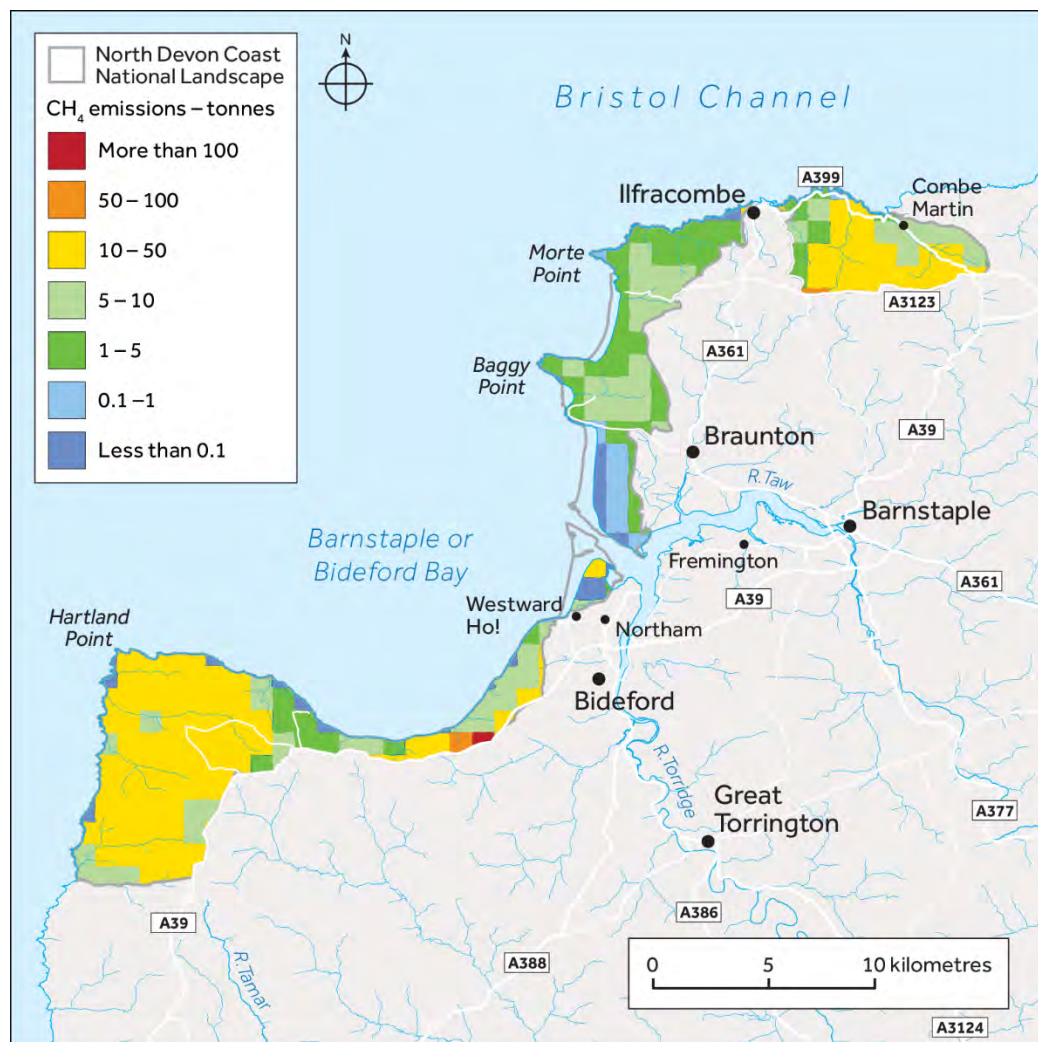


The main human activity that emits CO<sub>2</sub> is the combustion of fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, and oil) for energy and transportation. Certain industrial processes and land-use changes also emit CO<sub>2</sub>.

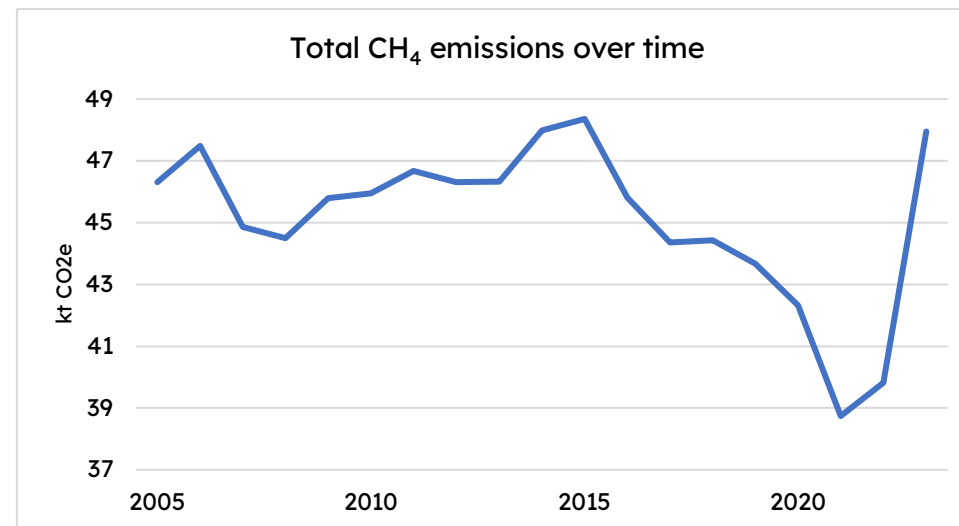
Source: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) 2023 (<https://naei.beis.gov.uk/data/mapping>). The NAEI receives detailed data on individual point sources regulated by the Environment Agency and Local Authority Pollution Control.

## Methane in the National Landscape

Map showing methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) levels in 2023. In 2023, 94.4% of emissions come from agriculture (associated with the livestock) (up from 84% in 2005); waste produced 4% (down from 13% in 2005).



Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) is emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil. Methane emissions also result from livestock and other agricultural practices, land use, and by the decay of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills.

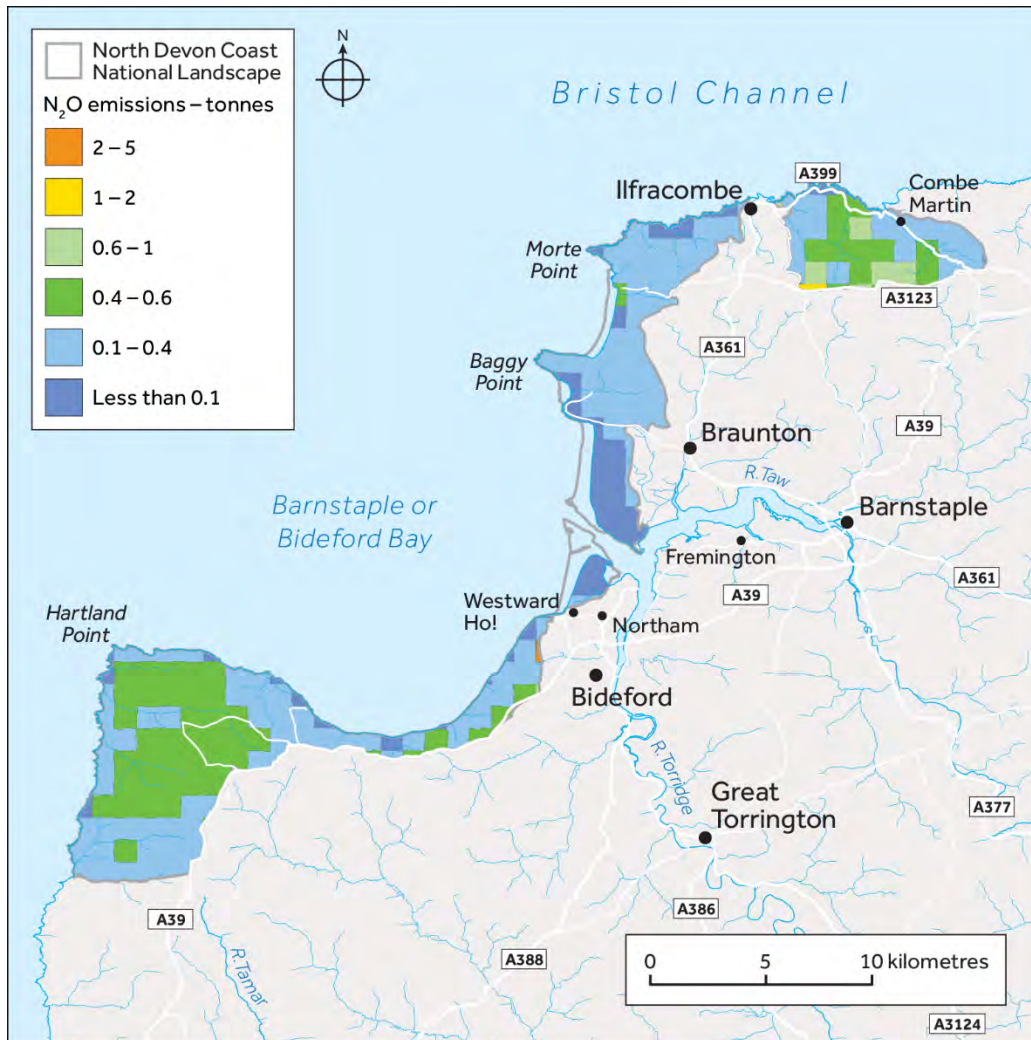


Reference to the [Land-use map](#) (click) shows that the areas showing greater than 10 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e of methane are generally the pasture lands. Land used for arable and woodland generally emit less than 10 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e of methane.

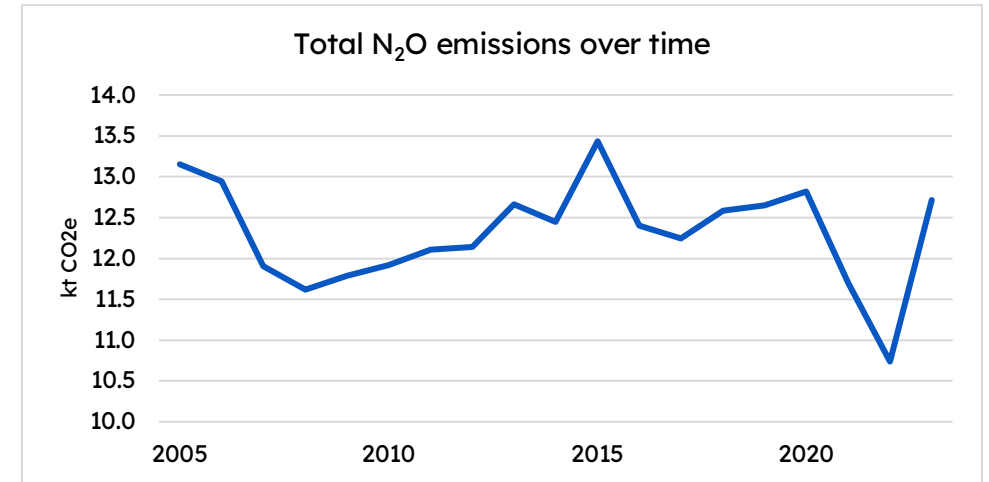
Source: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) 2023 (<https://naei.beis.gov.uk/data/mapping>). The NAEI receives detailed data on individual point sources regulated by the Environment Agency and Local Authority Pollution Control.

## Nitrous oxide in the National Landscape

Map showing nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) levels in 2023, which is generally very low. In 2023, the highest emissions, at 94%, are associated with agricultural soils (fertilisers) (a slight rise from 93% in 2005).



Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) is emitted during agricultural, land use, and industrial activities; combustion of fossil fuels and solid waste; as well as during treatment of wastewater. It is associated with vehicle engines.



The lowest rates are in areas of woodland.

Source: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) 2023 (<https://naei.beis.gov.uk/data/mapping>). The NAEI receives detailed data on individual point sources regulated by the Environment Agency and Local Authority Pollution Control.

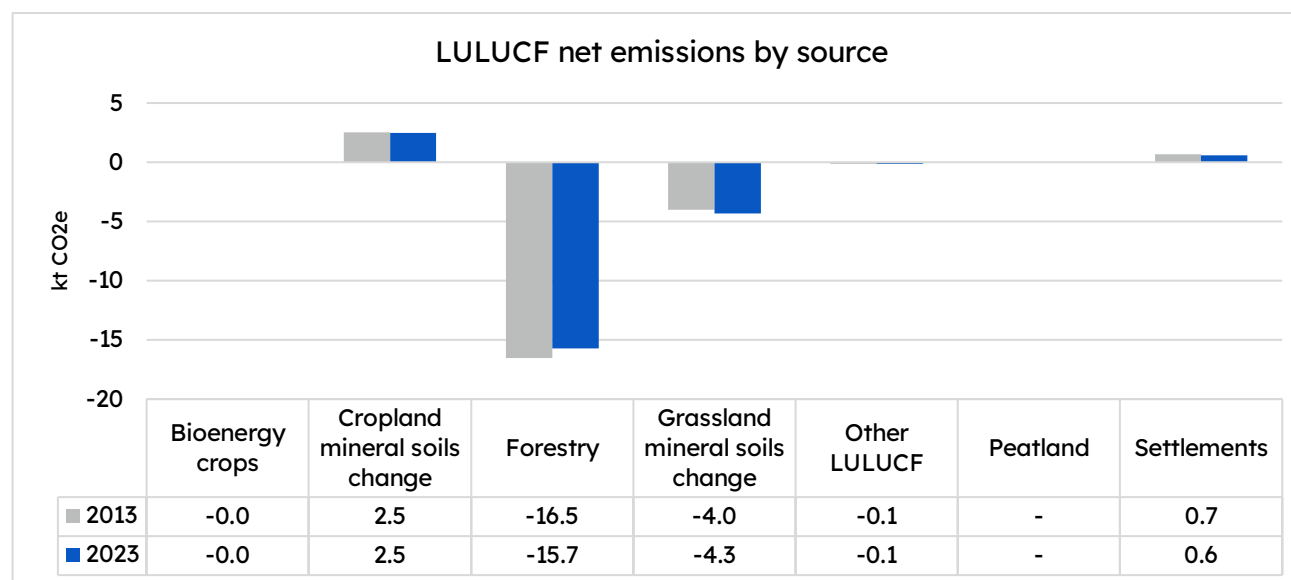
## Carbon flux

In 2024, a baseline assessment of the organic carbon flux from habitats present within the National Landscape was set at -40,457 t CO<sub>2</sub>e or -2.0 t CO<sub>2</sub>e / ha. 90% of the carbon is stored below ground.

Estimate of the amount of carbon stored and sequestered by habitats

Above ground carbon storage, tonnes (t)	Below ground carbon storage, tonnes (t)	Total carbon storage, tonnes (t)	Sequestration (carbon flux), tonnes (t co <sup>2</sup> equivalent Yr-1)	Above ground carbon storage, tonnes per hectare (t/ha)	Below ground carbon, tonnes per hectare (t/ha)	Total carbon, tonnes per hectare (t/ha)	Sequestration, tonnes per hectare (t co <sup>2</sup> equivalent /ha)
451,866	5,602,298	6,054,165	-40,457	23	281	304	-2.0

The greenhouse gas data shows a 2.3% increase in carbon accumulating in the local soils and vegetation between 2013 and 2023. The LULUCF chart identifies forestry and grassland soils as the only carbon stores.

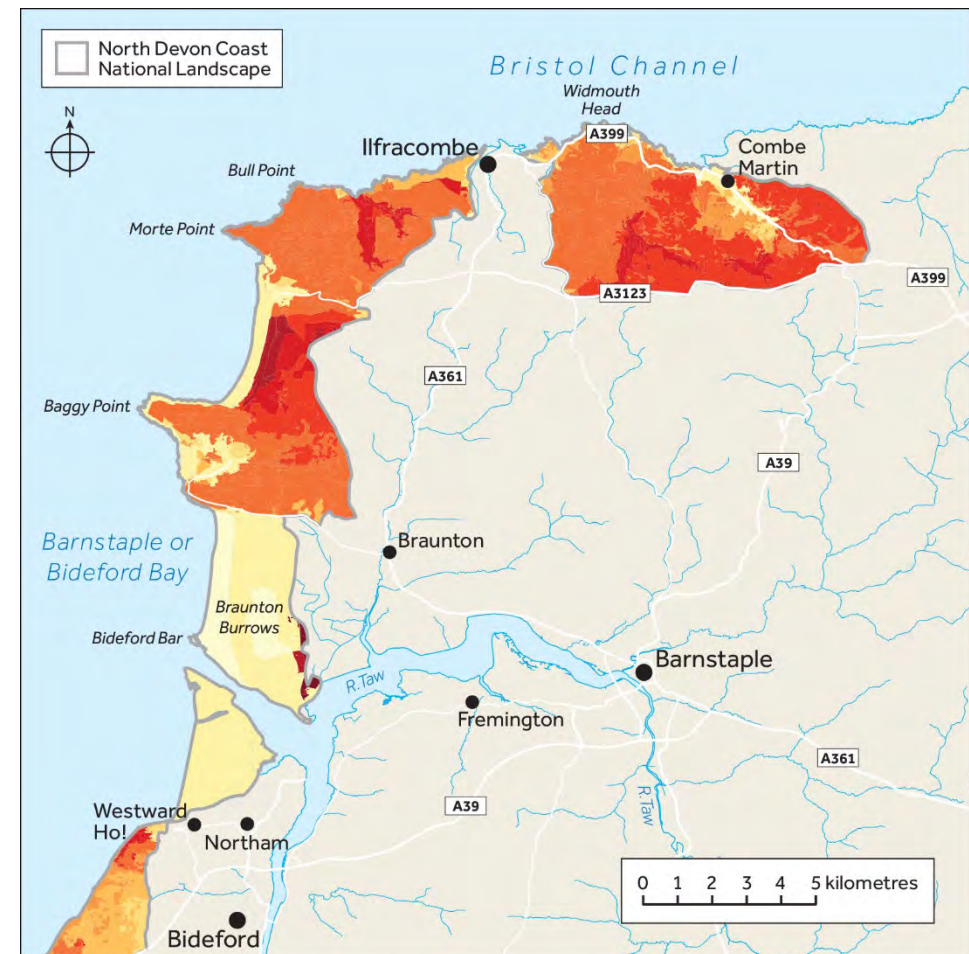
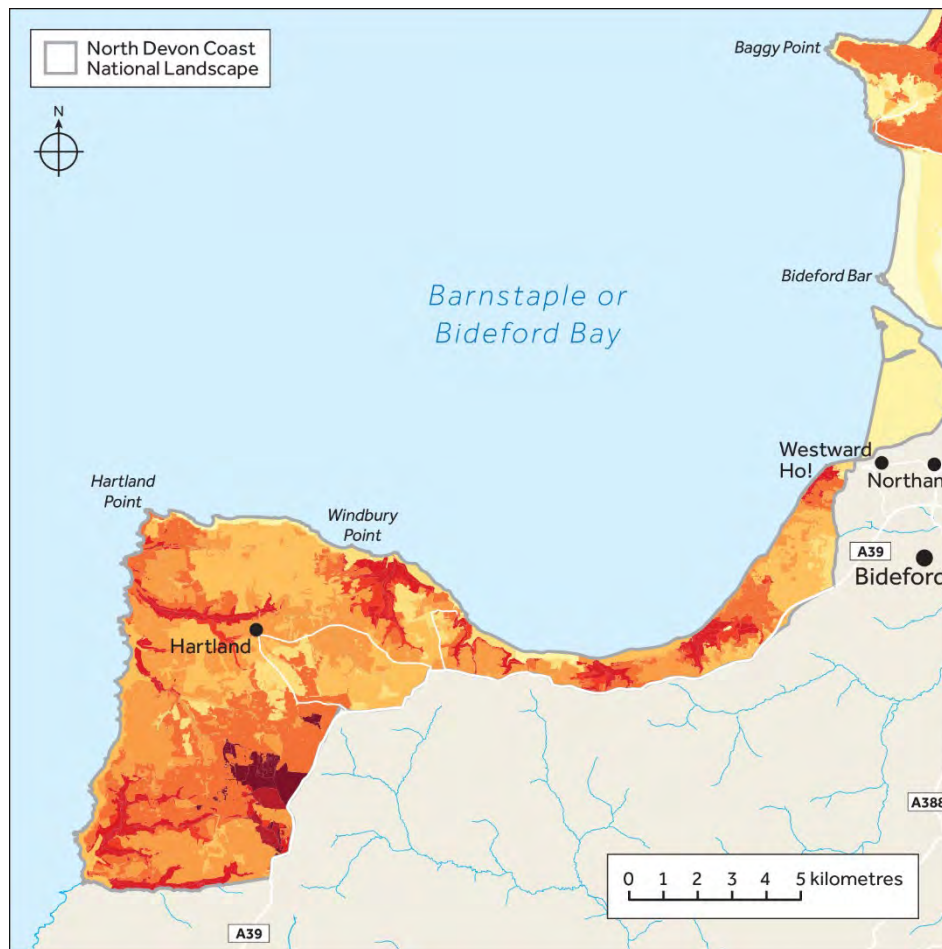


The term carbon flux refers to the transfer of carbon (mass) to and from a habitat expressed as tonnes of carbon equivalent (t CO<sub>2</sub>e)

Source: PLTOF additional statistic 7: Estimate of the amount of carbon stored and sequestered by habitats within Protected Landscapes © Natural England [2024], reproduced with the permission of Natural England, [www.gov.uk/natural-England](http://www.gov.uk/natural-England). © Crown Copyright and database right [2024]. Ordnance Survey licence number AC0000851168.

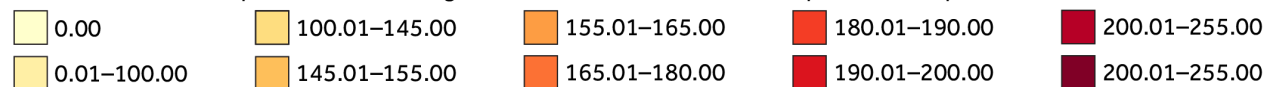
## Soil organic carbon stock

A baseline assessment of organic carbon storage capacity of habitats present within the National Landscape. Much of the soils in the National Landscape hold the equivalent of over 155 tonnes of carbon per hectare but there are areas holding considerably more.



### Legend

Soil C stock – tonnes per hectare. Soil organic carbon stock at 0–150cm depth – tonnes per hectare medium estimate



Derived from the National Landscapes Association's (supported by Natural England) National Landscape Carbon Audit and Metric project delivered by Cranfield University.

The term carbon stock refers to the amount of carbon contained within soils or biomass at a given time described in terms of mass per standardised unit area (tonnes per hectare) and are often referred to as carbon density (see Zawadzka, J.E., et al 2022).

Soil has a critical role to play in climate change mitigation by regulating atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs). Global soils are the dominant natural land-based carbon sink, holding more carbon than all terrestrial habitats combined (soil carbon stock). There are opportunities to increase soil carbon stocks and reduce GHG emissions from many agricultural soils by changing management practices and how land is used.

PLTOF 2024 data:

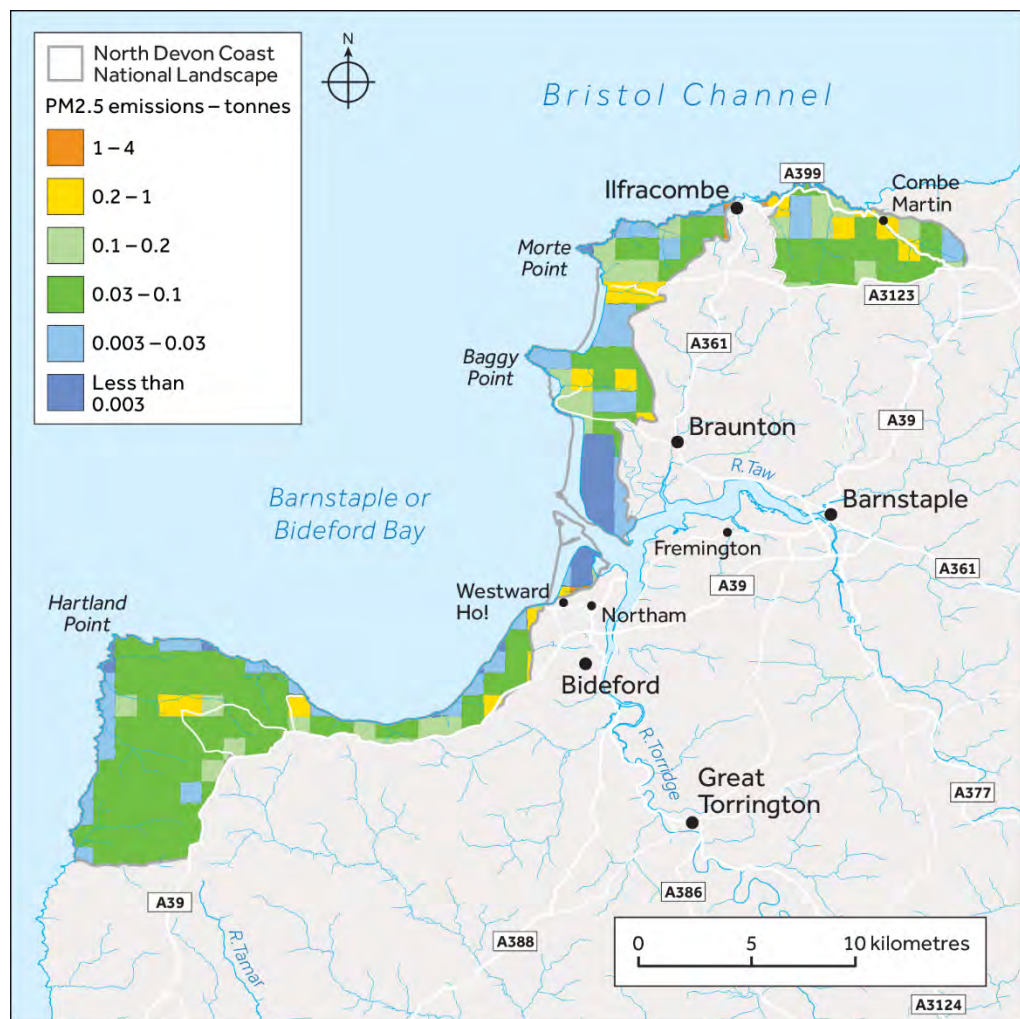
Peat Type	Extent of peat (ha)	% NL covered by peat	Area of peat committed for restoration by March 2025 (ha)
Shallow Peaty Soils	563.13	3.3	0
Soils with Peaty Pockets	268.19	1.6	0

Source: Non-priority habitats: data owned by UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology © Database Right/Copyright UKEH; Priority habitats: Ordnance Survey MasterMaps® (OSMM); Natural England; Soil data: © Cranfield University (NSRI) and for the Controller of HMSO (2022). Backdrop: © Crown copyright and/or database right 2022 OS. PLTOF 2024 additional statistic 6: Area, depth and percentage cover of peatland & target indicator 7: Extent of peat committed for restoration in Protected Landscapes

## Air quality

### Particulate matter in the National Landscape

Showing PM2.5 levels in 2023. Levels are relatively low in the area but with a hotspot around Ilfracombe / Slade and Westward Ho!.



The areas with the higher emissions are generally associated with the road network. There are now increasing levels due to increased use of wood as a fuel for homes. Industrial use of biomass fuels is also increasing and has become a more significant contributor to UK emissions.

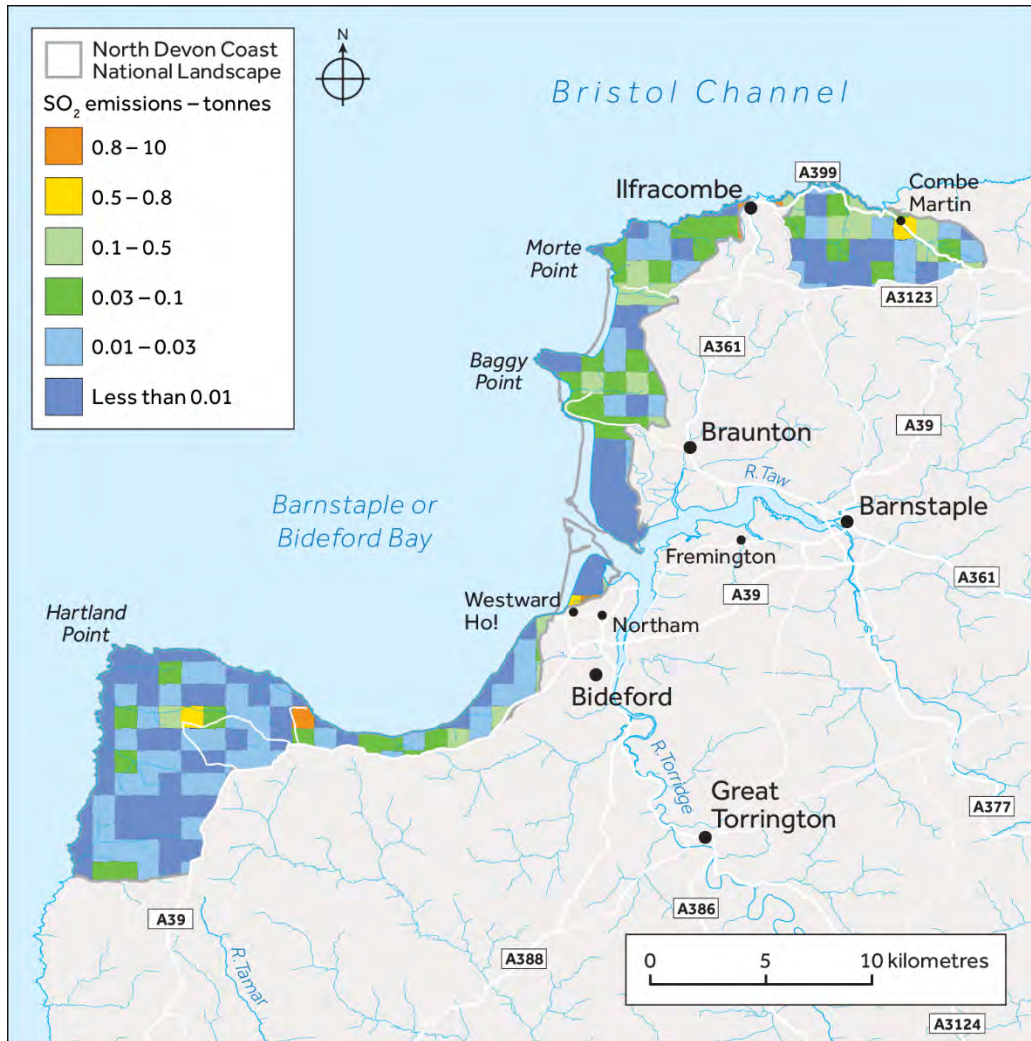
Particulate matter (PM) is everything in the air that is not a gas and consists of a huge variety of chemical compounds and materials, some of which can be toxic. PM2.5 is matter that is less than 2.5 micro gram in diameter. Due to the small size, some of these toxins may enter the bloodstream and be transported around the body, lodging in the heart, brain and other organs.

Note on UK emissions: Because of measures in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, PM2.5 emissions from road transport, aviation and railways in 2020 were 23%, 61% and 28% lower than they had been in 2019 respectively.

Source: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) 2023 (<https://naei.beis.gov.uk/data/mapping>). The NAEI receives detailed data on individual point sources regulated by the Environment Agency and Local Authority Pollution Control. Emissions of PM10 and PM2.5 from agricultural sources are distributed using agricultural census data 2014.

## Sulphur dioxide in the National Landscape

Showing sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in 2023. Levels are low in the area but there are hotspots at Combe Martin, Clovelly and Hartland.

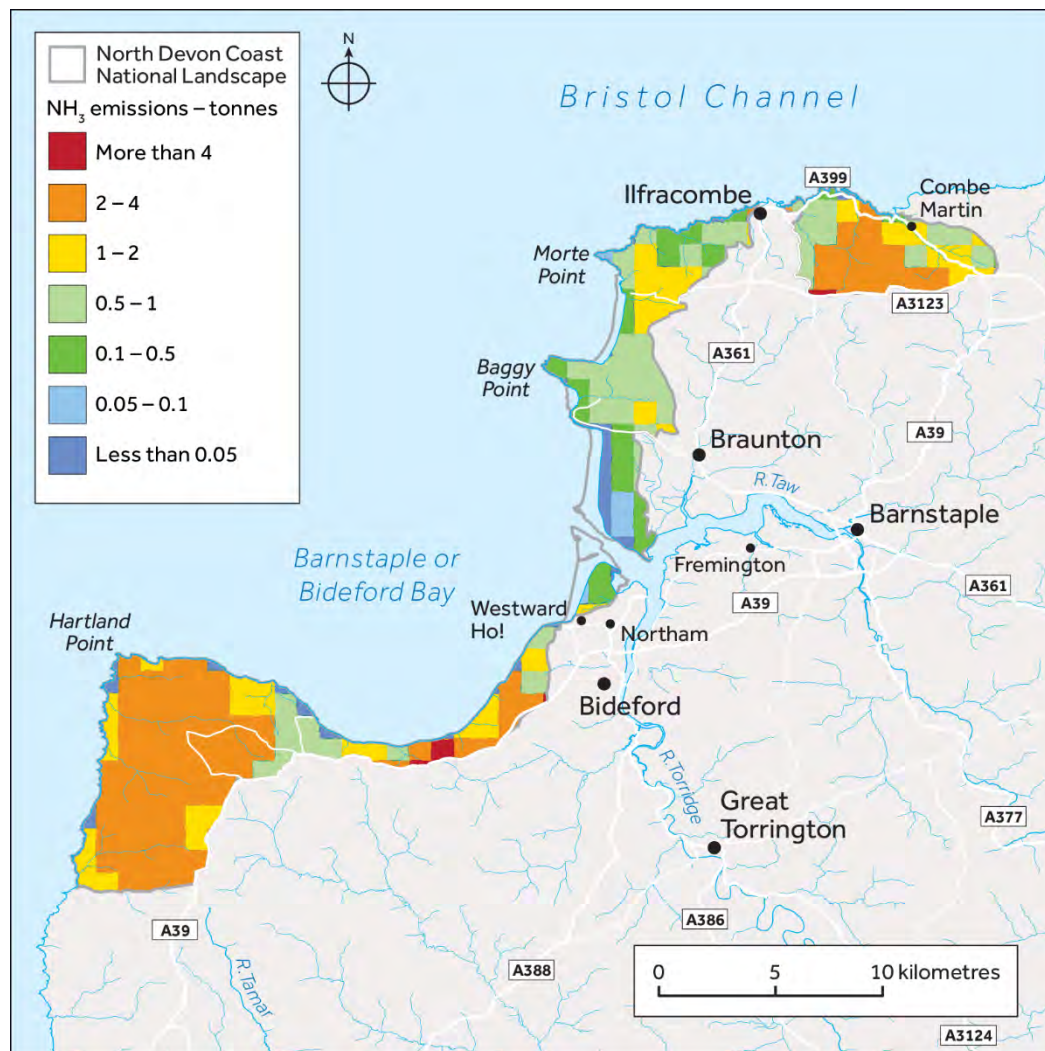


The principal man-made source of sulphur dioxide is the combustion of fossil fuels. Sulphur dioxide contributes to aerosol formation which can either warm (through absorption of solar radiation on dark particles) or cool (from forming cloud droplets and reflecting radiation) the atmosphere.

Source: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) 2023 (<https://naei.beis.gov.uk/data/mapping>). The NAEI receives detailed data on individual point sources regulated by the Environment Agency and Local Authority Pollution Control.

## Ammonia in the National Landscape

Showing ammonia ( $\text{NH}_3$ ) in 2023. There are high levels in and around the parishes of Berrynarbor, Parkham and Hartland. Rural ammonia usually comes from farming activities; the other source can be large bird colonies.



Ammonia ( $\text{NH}_3$ ) is a highly reactive and soluble alkaline gas. The main source is agriculture (manures, slurries and fertiliser application). Other agriculture-related emissions include biomass burning or fertiliser manufacture. Non-agricultural sources, such as catalytic converters in internal combustion engines, landfill sites, sewage works, composting of organic materials, combustion, industry and wild mammals and birds can also emit ammonia. UK-wide emissions of ammonia have decreased by 14 per cent since 1990, to 265 thousand tonnes in 2023.

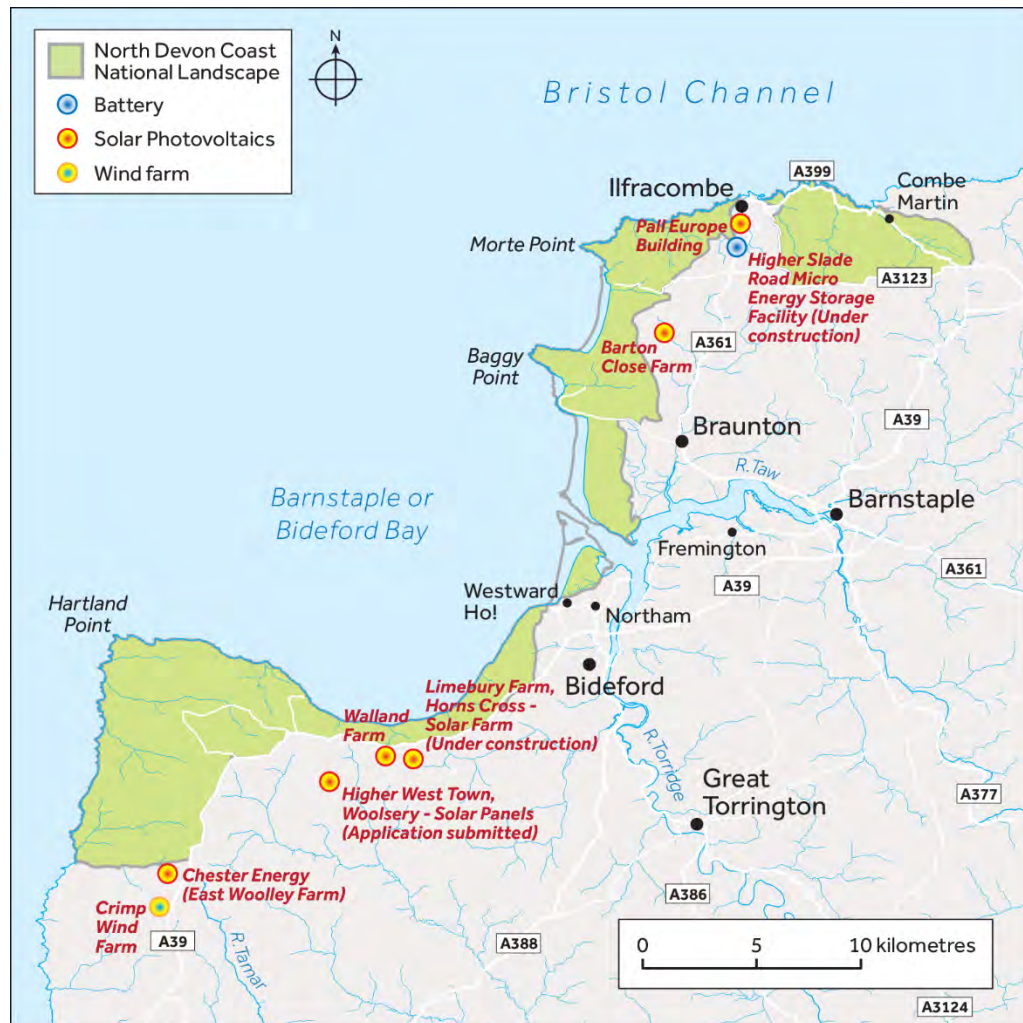
As well as impacting air quality, high ammonia concentrations can disturb the natural balance of ecosystems and endanger native flora, fauna and water sources:

- Eutrophication
- Shift in dominance from mosses, lichens and ericoids towards grasses like *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Molinia caerulea* and ruderal species.
- Increased risk of frost damage in spring
- Increased winter desiccation levels in *Calluna* and summer drought stress
- Increased incidence of pest and pathogen attack, e.g. heather beetle outbreaks.
- Direct damage and death of sensitive species, e.g. lichens and mosses.
- Reduced root growth and mycorrhizal infection
- Increase in soil pH follows acidification

Source: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) 2023 ( <https://naei.beis.gov.uk/data/mapping> ). The NAEI receives detailed data on individual point sources regulated by the Environment Agency and Local Authority Pollution Control.

## Renewable energy

There are no renewable energy generation sites running within the NL; there are four not far from the boundary.



The Renewable Energy Planning Database tracks the progress of renewable electricity over 150kW through the planning system. There are three sites close to the boundary.

Close to boundary

Operational:

1. Barton Close Farm - solar photovoltaics (5MW)
2. Chester Energy (East Woolley Farm) - solar photovoltaics (5.5MW)
3. Pall Europe Building - solar photovoltaics (0.579MW)
4. Walland Farm - solar photovoltaics (5MW)

Awaiting construction:

5. Limebury Farm, Horns Cross - solar photovoltaics (5MW)
6. Higher Slade Road, Lower Slade - Micro Energy Storage Facility - battery (0.2MW)

Source: <https://www.mygridgb.co.uk/map/> See also Department for Energy Security & Net Zero <https://data.barbour-abi.com/smart-map/repd/desz/?type=repd>

## Place

In this section, we report on the number and condition of heritage assets in the National Landscape, which includes listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, and conservation areas. We describe the use of land and present an agricultural profile. We set out the levels of development in the area and consider future development pressure through the development plan process.

Historic England publishes the National Heritage List and the Heritage at Risk Register. The register indicates the causes and levels of risk to assets.

The European Environment Agency (EEA) uses the Copernicus Land Monitoring Service to present land cover changes over time with a Minimum Mapping Unit (MMU) of 25 hectares (ha) for areal phenomena and a minimum width of 100 m for linear phenomena.

Defra conducts an annual Survey of Agriculture every June and publishes its findings. The data is cut to the National landscape boundary.

Natural England monitors and evaluates impacts on nature; it publishes a range of data to support good decision making, much of it cut to the National Landscape boundary.

The local authorities and the National Landscape Team present a range of data, especially linked to development.

### Tranquillity

We report on light and noise pollution. Natural England used to measure tranquillity based on analysis of the 2006 Council for Protection for Rural England Tranquillity Mapping study. That data has not been updated. We replace the 'tranquillity' reporting with data for light and noise pollution.

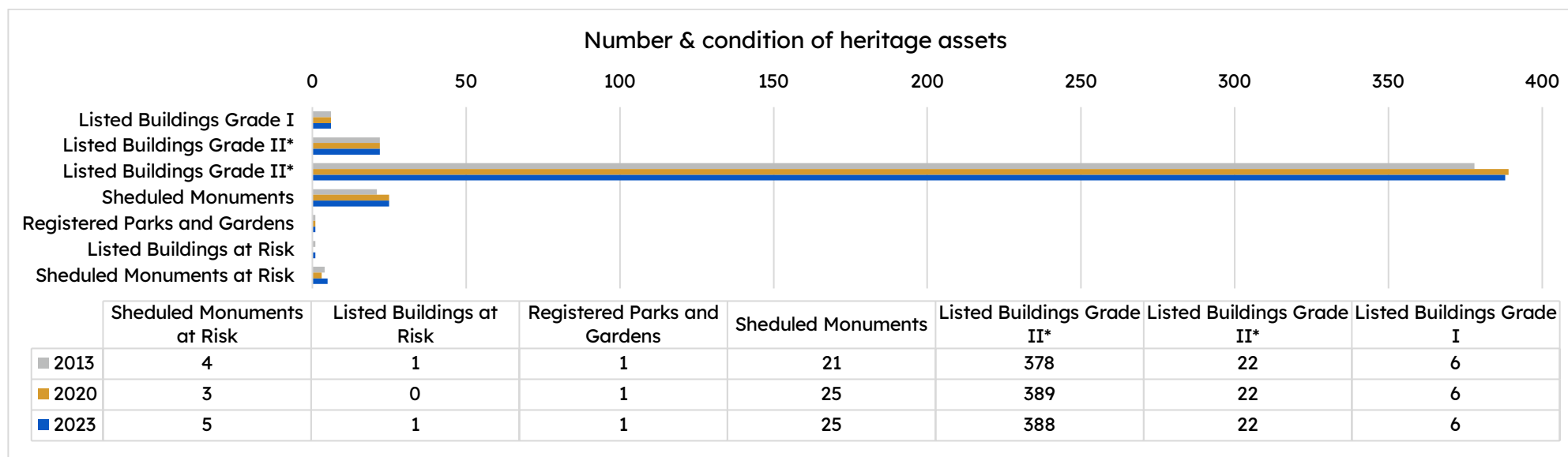
Light pollution - NASA uses Day/Night Band (DNB) detectors as a part of the Suomi-NPP Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS). This satellite product provides a global measurement of nocturnal visible and near-infrared light suitable for Earth science and climate studies. It enables monitoring of both the magnitude and signature of nighttime phenomena and human sources of light emissions.

Noise pollution - Under the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), Defra must adopt noise maps that show people's exposure to environmental noise every 5 years. Environmental noise mainly consists of noise from transport sources such as road, rail and aviation; Lden indicates a 24-hour annual average noise level with separate weightings for the evening and night periods. The first round of maps was completed in 2006



## Number and condition of heritage assets

There are 416 Listed Buildings, 25 Scheduled Monuments, and 1 Registered Park and Garden. Of these, 6 assets are at risk; there were 3 assets at risk in 2020, and 5 assets at risk in 2013.



Source: © Historic England 2022. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2022. The most publicly available up-to-date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from [www.HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk)

English Heritage ‘list’ the most important historic assets in England. ‘Listing’ is the term given to the practice of identifying historic assets of national importance (including buildings, scheduling monuments, registering parks, gardens and battlefields, and marine wreck sites). This allows Historic England to highlight what is significant about a building or site and helps to make sure that any future changes to it do not result in the loss of its significance.

### Percentage of Heritage Assets at risk in the National Landscape

Listed Buildings	Scheduled Monuments	Registered Park and Gardens
0.2%	20%	0%

## The condition and trend of Heritage Assets at risk in the National Landscape

Asset	List n°	Site type	Condition	Vulnerability	Trend	Parish
<b>Listed Building at risk:</b>						
Church of St Nectan,	1333125	Listed Place of Worship grade I - Religious ritual and funerary	Poor - slow decay; no solution agreed	Medium - Water penetration through south aisle walls, affecting fine wall monuments internally, water penetration to tower walls, leaching and mortar wash-out, causing damp and rot to embedded timbers.	Declining	Hartland
<b>Scheduled Monuments at risk:</b>						
Lynchets approximately 34 metres northwest of Saunton Sands Hotel	1424711	Scheduled Monument - agriculture and subsistence	Extensive significant problems	High - scrub/tree growth	Declining	Braunton
Wreck at Westward Ho!	1432418	Scheduled Monument - maritime wreck	Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems	Medium - natural erosion	Declining	Northam
Wreck off Northam Burrows	1432949	Scheduled Monument - maritime wreck	Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems	Medium - unlicensed metal detecting	Declining	Northam
Bowl barrow 520 metres west of Higher Welsford	1017138	Scheduled Monument - Religious ritual and funerary	Unknown	High - arable ploughing	Unknown	Hartland
Ring cairn and bowl barrow 540 metres southwest of Higher Welsford	1017139	Scheduled Monument - Religious ritual and funerary	Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems	High - stock erosion, extensive	Declining	Hartland

Source: MEOPL Historic England (2013 & 2020): Heritage at Risk Register 2023 (South West) <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2023-registers/sw-har-register2023/> & Historic England web search (May 2023) <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/> PLTOF © Historic England (2024). Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right (2024). The Historic England GIS Data on which this material is based was obtained on the dates shown above. The most publicly available up-to-date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from [HistoricEngland.org.uk](https://HistoricEngland.org.uk).

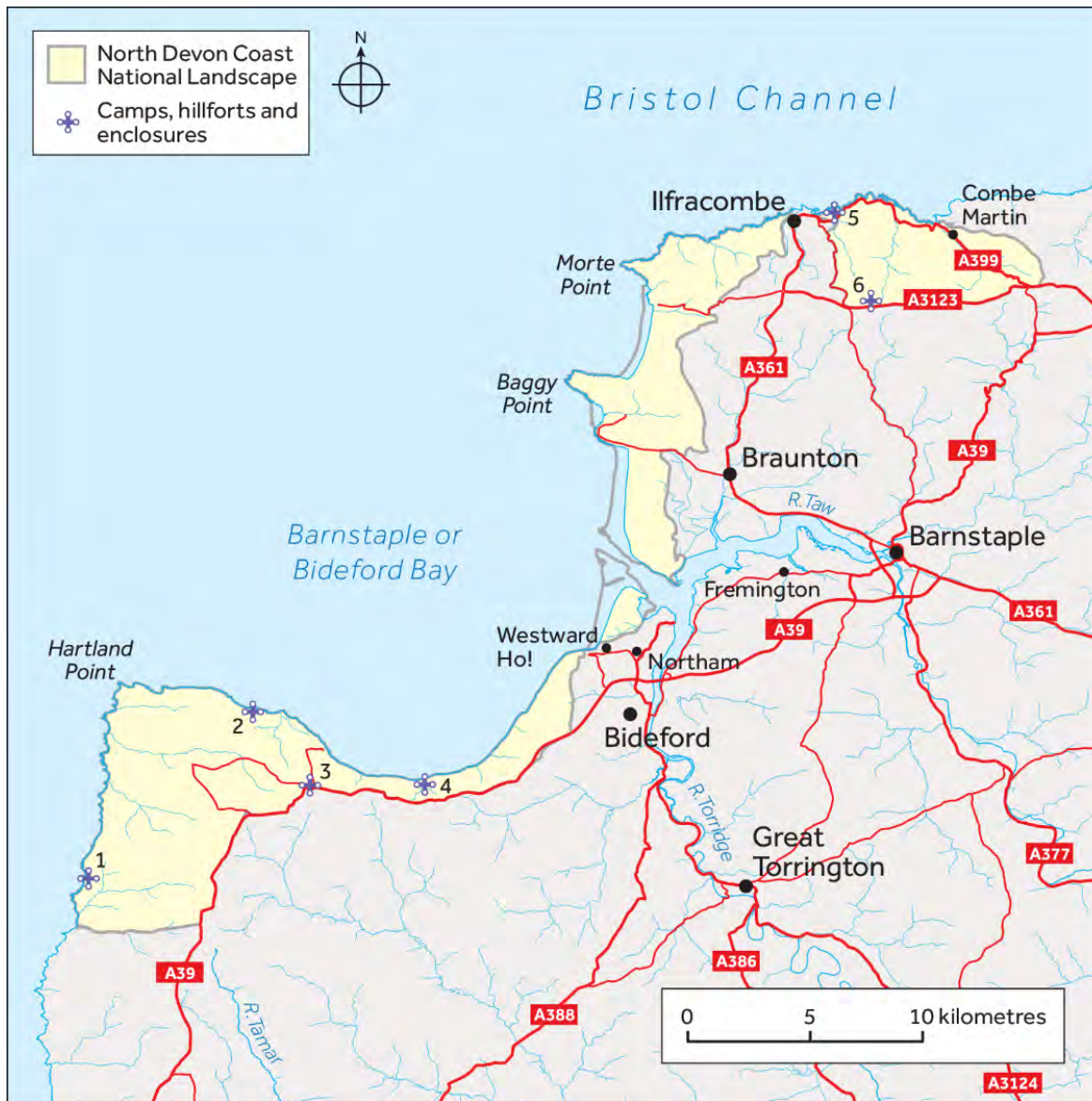
## Location of scheduled monuments

There are 25 scheduled monuments in the National Landscape.



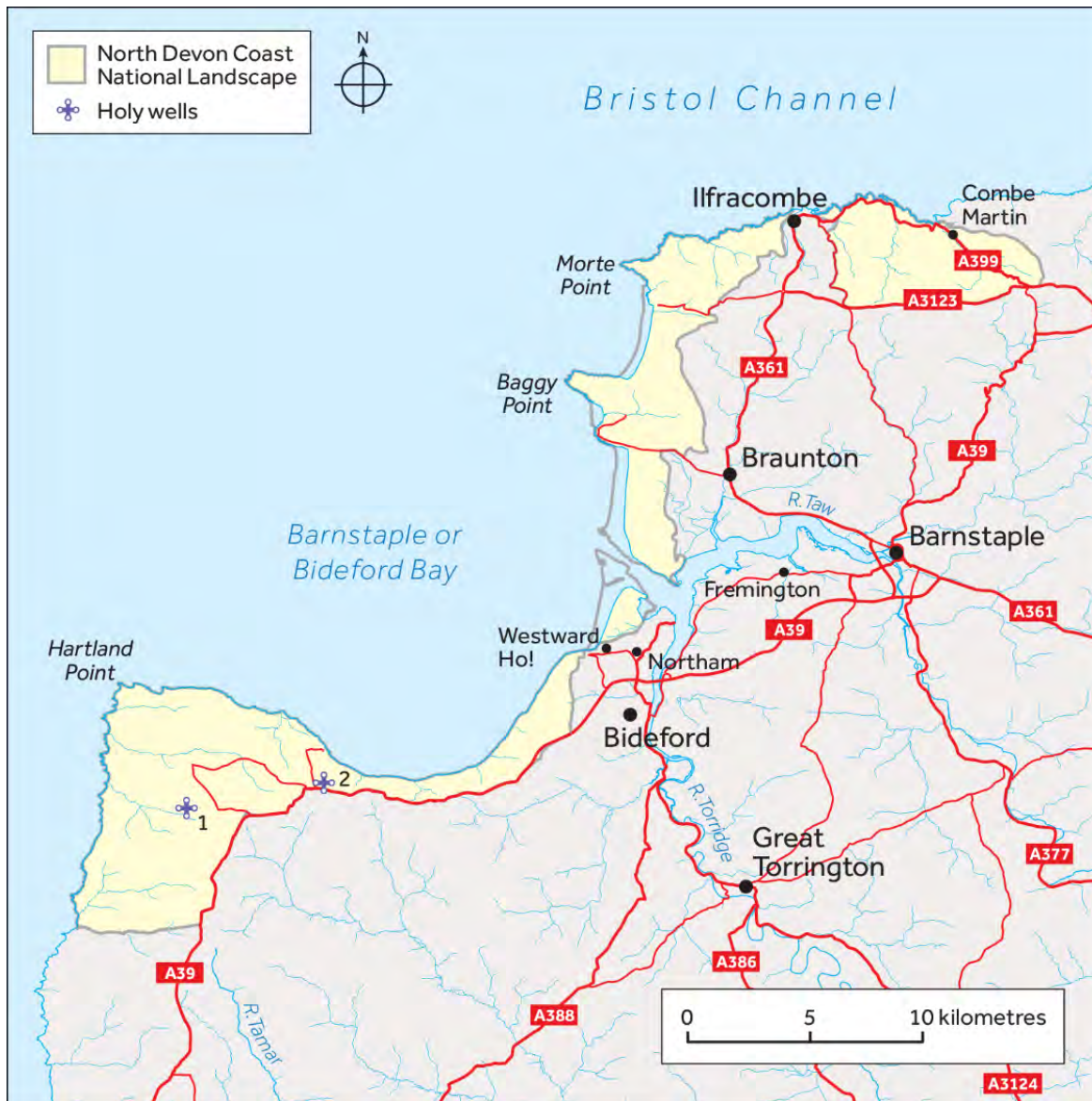
### Legend

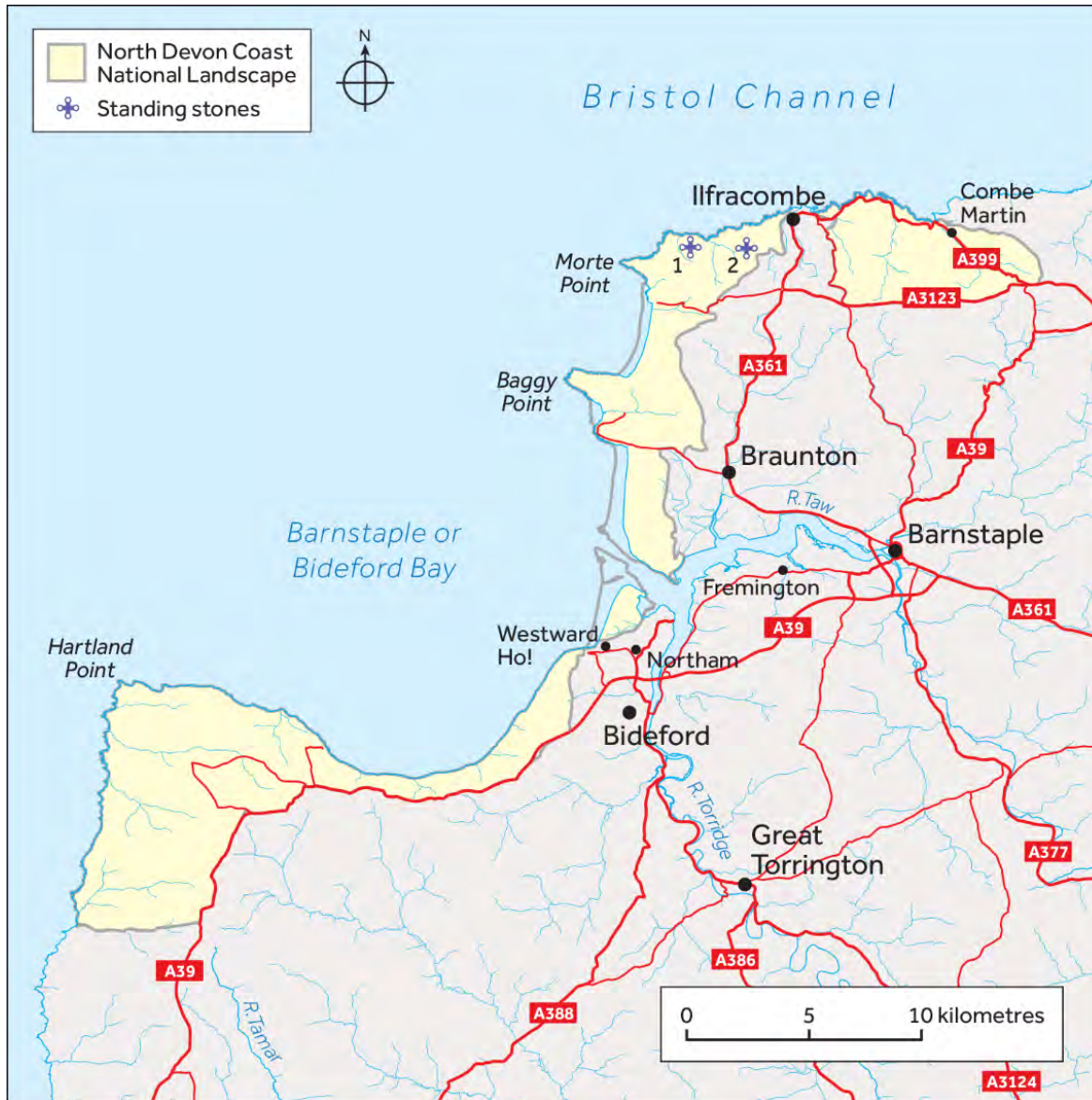
- 1 Three bowl barrows and one bell barrow on Bursdon Moor situated 670m north east of Lutsford Cross
- 2 Four bowl barrows on Bursdon Moor, 270m north west of Summerville Cross
- 3 Round barrow cemetery 920m south west of Higher Welsford
- 4 Ring cairn and bowl barrow 540m south west of Higher Welsford
- 5 Bowl barrow 520m west of Higher Welsford
- 6 Bowl barrow 240m south west of West Dyke
- 7 Bowl barrow at Gallantry Bower
- 8 Bowl barrow 440m north west of Ettiford
- 9 Three bowl barrows 520m and 620m east of Lynton Cross
- 10 Bowl barrow 420m east of Smythen Cross, forming part of a round barrow cemetery on Berry Down
- 11 Bowl barrow 200m south of Leedown Cottage



### Legend

- 1 Embury Beacon camp
- 2 Windbury Head camp
- 3 Clovelly Dykes hillfort
- 4 Earthwork E of Buck's Mills
- 5 Hillsborough Promontory Fort
- 6 Iron Age hilltop enclosure at North Hill Cleave, circa 400m north-east of Outer Narracott Farm





### Legend

- 1 Three standing stones 550m, 700m and 820m north of Damage Barton
- 2 A standing stone 110m south of Whitestone Farm



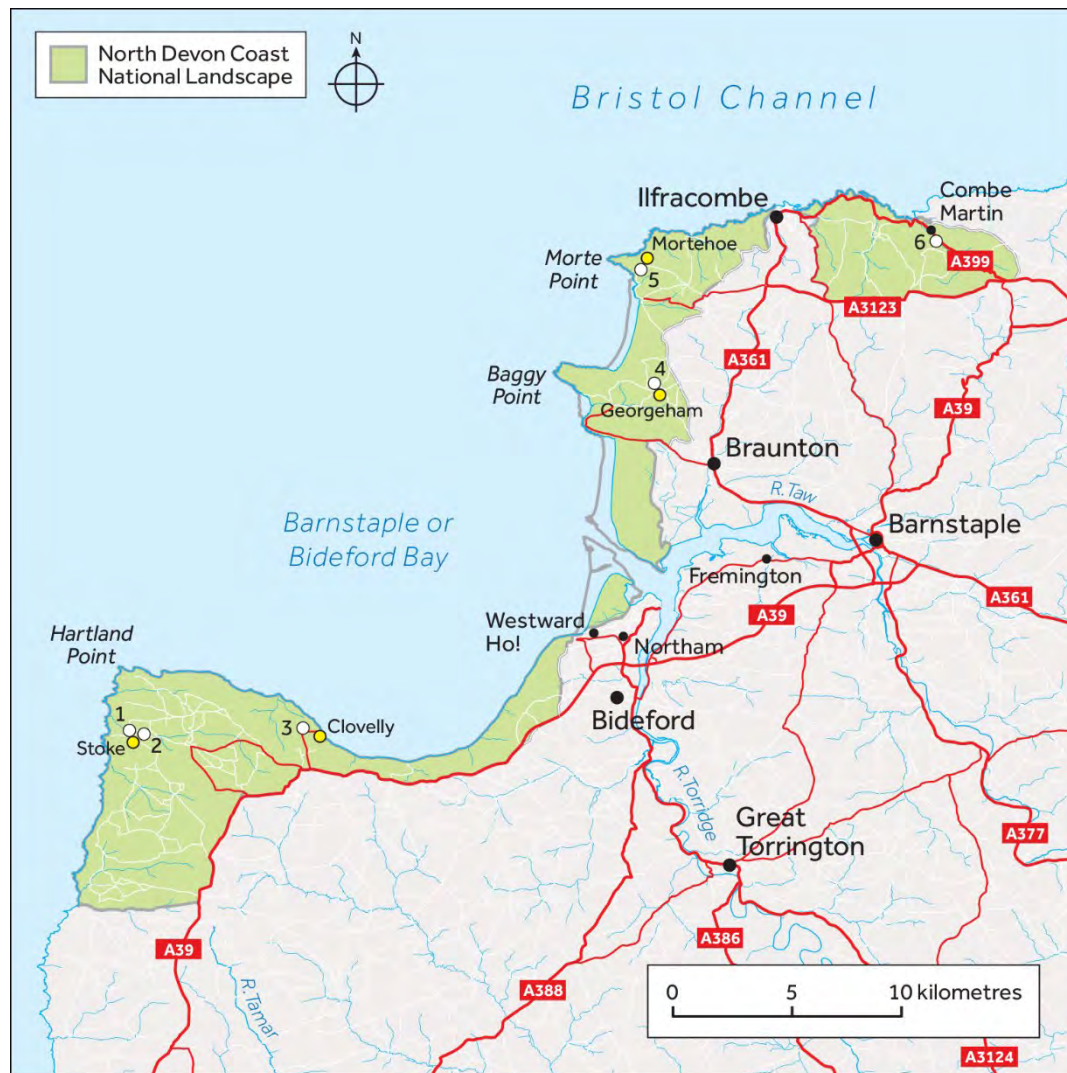
### Legend

- 1 Wrecks at Westward Ho! and Northam Burrows
- 2 Two decoy targets at Northam Radar Station
- 3 Lynchets approximately 34m north-west of Saunton Sands Hotel

Source: MEOPL © Historic England 2022. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2022. The most publicly available up-to-date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from [www.HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk)

## Location of Grade I listed buildings

There are 6 Grade I listed buildings in the National Landscape; all are religious buildings.



### Legend

#### Grade I

- 1 Church of St Nectan
- 2 Hartland Abbey
- 3 Church of All Saints'
- 4 Church of St George
- 5 Church of St Mary Magdalene
- 6 Church of St Peter Ad Vincula

Note: The Church of St. Nectan is at risk.

Source: MEOPPL © Historic England 2022. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2022. The most publicly available up-to-date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from [www.HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk)

## Location of Registered Parks and Gardens

There is one Registered Park and Garden in the National Landscape (Saunton Court); it is not at risk.



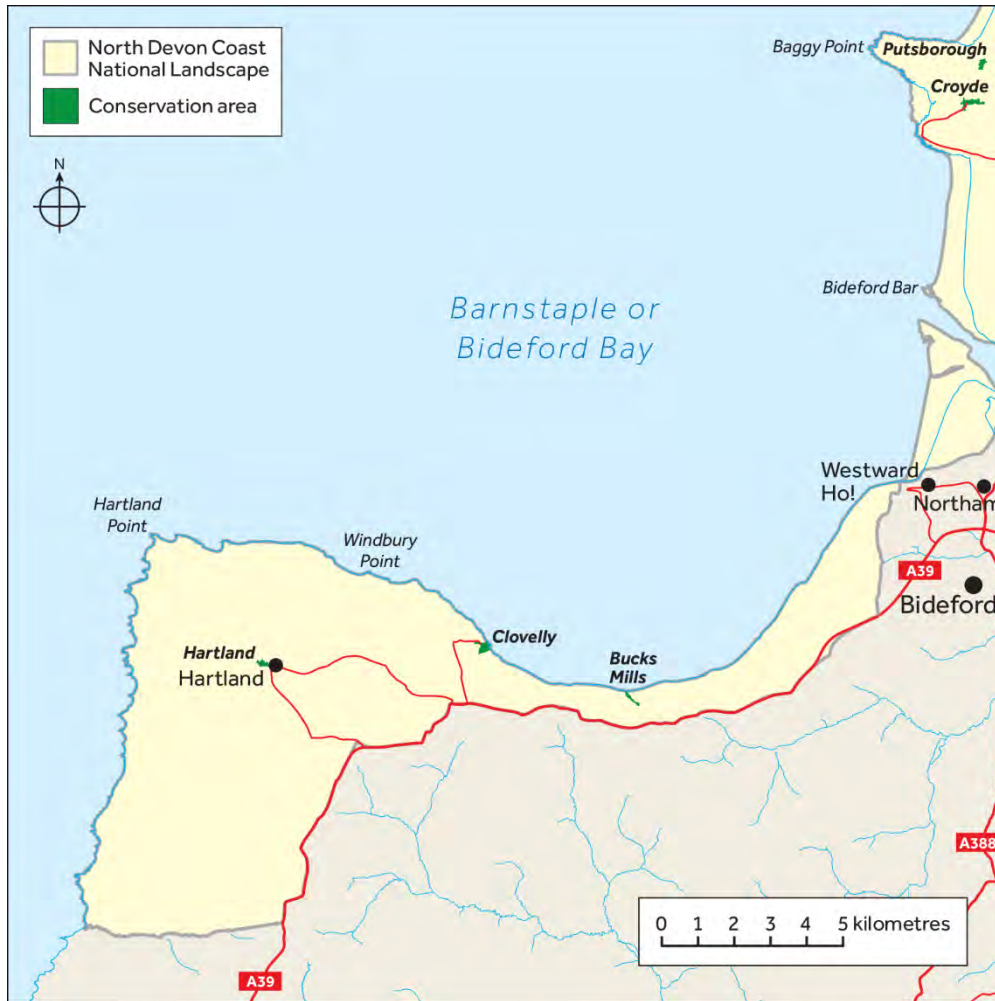
Saunton Court (Grade II) 3 ha - An early C20 formal terraced garden and kitchen garden designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens surrounding a medieval manor house which he remodelled and extended in 1932, together with informal C20 gardens.

Note: The emphasis of this Register is on gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces, such as town squares. They are 'designed' landscapes, rather than of planting or botanical importance.

Source: MEOPL © Historic England 2022. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2022. The most publicly available up-to-date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from [www.HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk)

## Location and condition of conservation areas

There are 11 Conservation Areas wholly within the National Landscape. Historic England states that none of the conservation areas are at risk.



The local planning authorities designate most conservation areas. A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest; preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of these areas is an important part of local planning policy. Change in conservation areas can be negative either through poor quality new development, neglect, or even deliberate damage.

The best way to define the local character is through the production of a conservation area appraisal. This provides an understanding of the history of an area and its special qualities. Only the areas in North Devon have published appraisals.

The designation dates for the following areas in the district of North Devon are:

- Berrynarbor, designated 1983 + appraisal 2010
- Combe Martin (x2), designated 2011 + appraisal
- Croyde, designated 1975 + appraisal 2009
- Georgeham, designated 1975 + appraisal 2009
- Lee, designated 1986 + appraisal 2018
- Mortehoe, designated 1983 + appraisal 2009
- Putsborough, designated 1975 + appraisal 2009
- Woolacombe, designated 1983, extended 2009 + appraisal 2009

The designation dates for the following areas in the district of Torridge are:

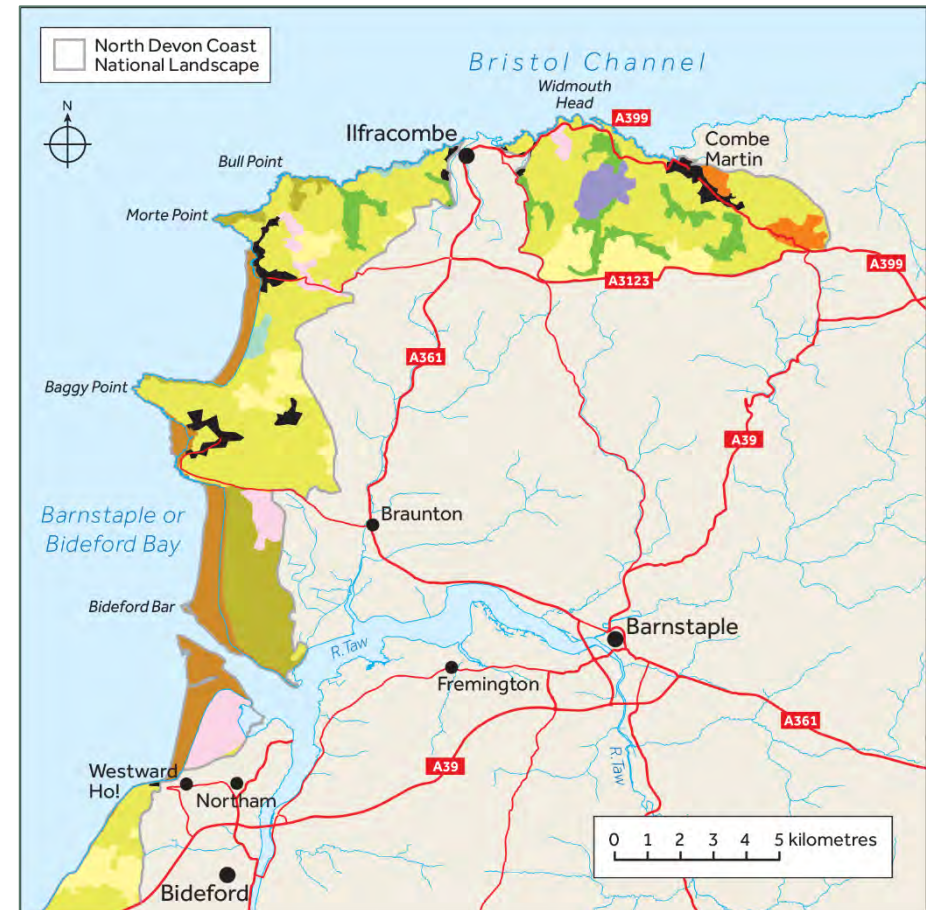
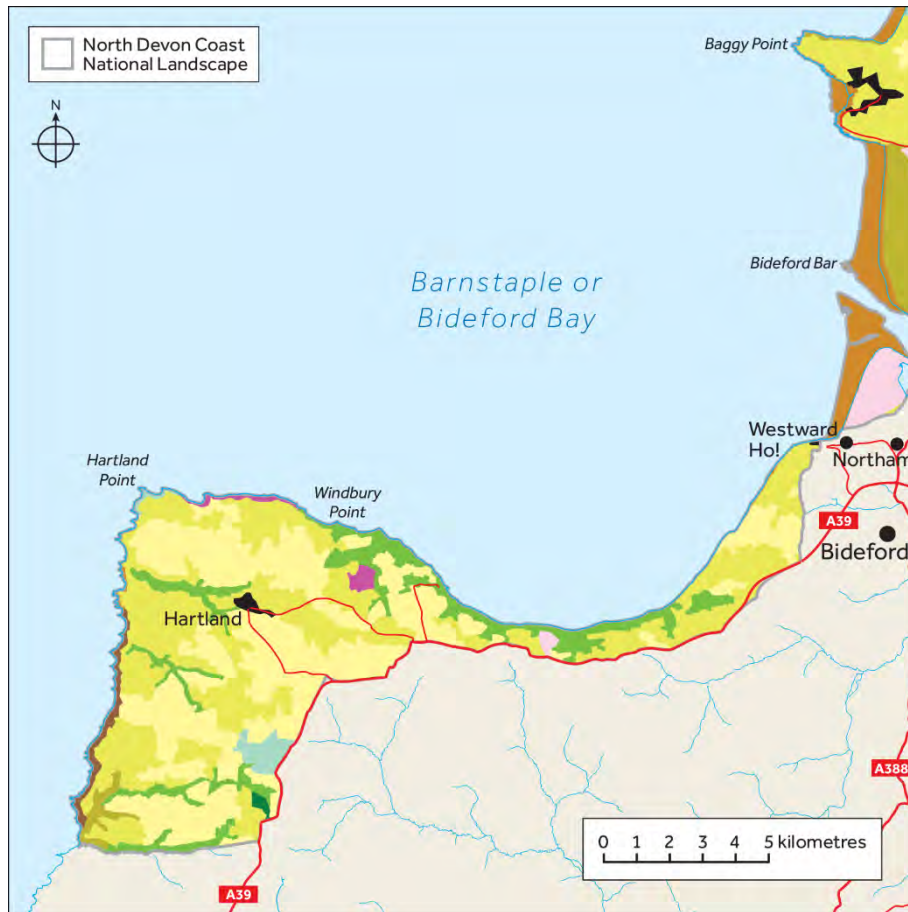
- Hartland, designated 1973, extended 2000
- Clovelly, designated 1973, extended 1997
- Bucks Mills, designated 1971

Note: a very small part of Ilfracombe Conservation Area, above Larkstone beach, is in the National Landscape. Ilfracombe was designated in 1973 with large extension in 1986, with an appraisal in 2008. This area is listed as at risk and is in a poor condition.

Source: © Historic England 2023. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2022. The most publicly available up-to-date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from [www.HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk)

## Land-use map

Agriculture is the dominant land use within the National Landscape and there is no recorded change since 2012 except for some coastal transitional woodland-shrub appearing in 2021 between Eldern Point and Beckland Bay; and associated with Reeve Wood near Yapham Farm.



### Legend

- |                              |                                  |                     |                              |             |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Arable farmland              | Complex cultivation patterns     | Grassland           | Pastures                     | Urban areas |
| Bare rocks                   | Coniferous forest                | Intertidal flats    | Sport and leisure facilities |             |
| Broadleaf and mixed woodland | Farmland with natural vegetation | Moors and heathland | Transitional woodland-shrub  |             |

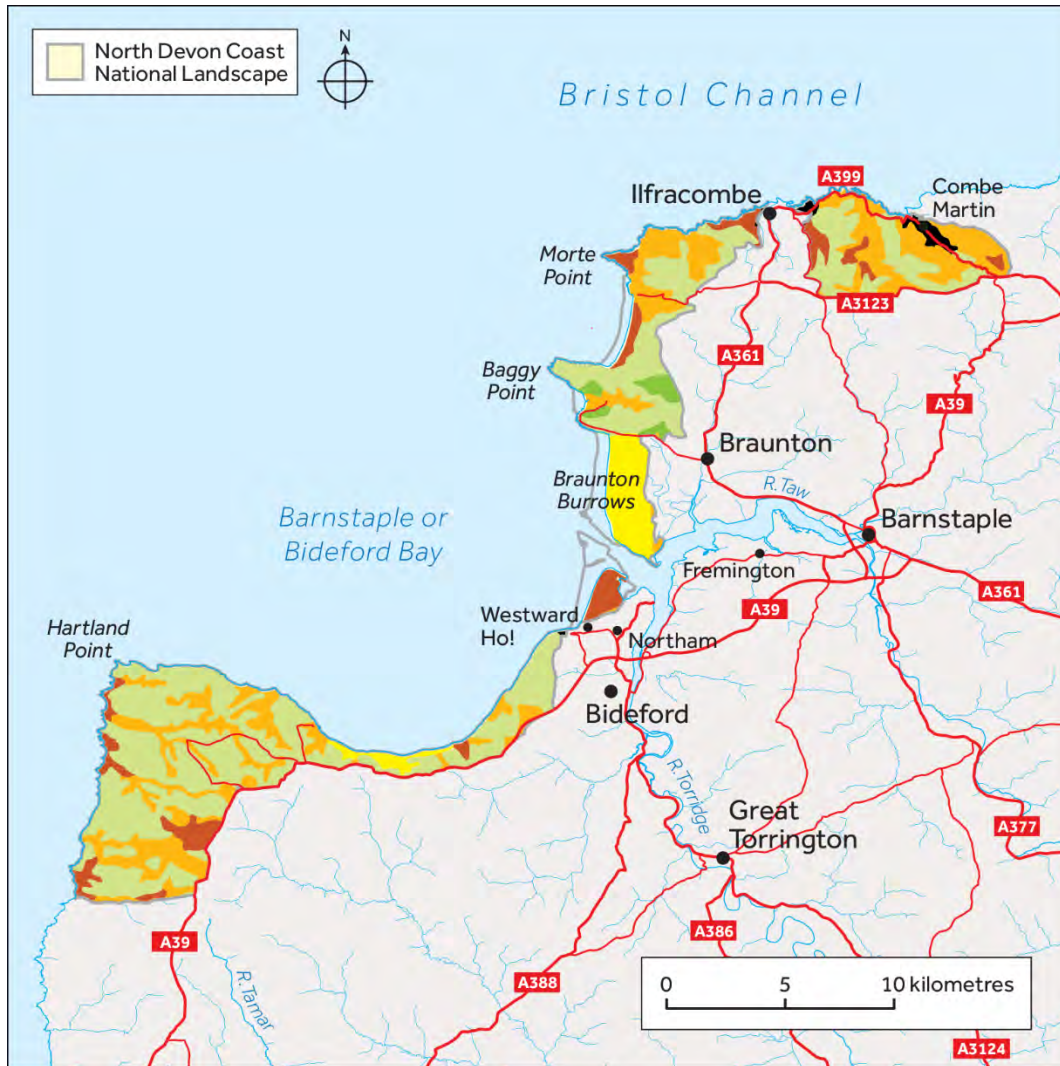
The map shows the 2021 CORINE land cover data from the EU Copernicus Land Monitoring Service. It uses satellite earth observation and in situ (non-space) data to provide geographical information on land cover and its changes, land use, vegetation state, water cycle and earth surface energy variables.

The CORINE Land Cover inventory was initiated in 1985 (reference year 1990) with regular updates since, the latest being 2018. It consists of an inventory of land cover in 44 classes.

(Click [Methane in the National Landscape](#) to see link between land-use and emissions)

Source: © European Union, Copernicus Land Monitoring Service 2021, European Environment Agency (EEA). <https://land.copernicus.eu/pan-european/corine-land-cover> - CORINE Land Cover uses a Minimum Mapping Unit (MMU) of 25 hectares (ha) for areal phenomena and a minimum width of 100 m for linear phenomena.

## Agricultural Land Classification



### Legend

Agricultural Land Classification

- Grade 2 – very good
- Grade 3 – good to moderate
- Grade 4 – poor
- Grade 5 – very poor
- Non-agricultural land
- Urban

Grade 1 (Excellent Quality Agricultural Land): *Not present*

Grade 2 (Very Good Quality Agricultural Land): Slightly more limitations than Grade 1 but still highly productive, capable of sustaining diverse cropping options.

Grade 3 (Good to Moderate Quality Agricultural Land): This category is divided into two subgrades:

Grade 3a: Considered good quality, suitable for growing a variety of crops with some limitations.

Grade 3b: Moderate quality land, more limited in its agricultural use due to factors such as soil depth, drainage, or climate.

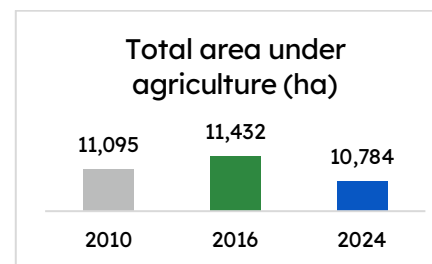
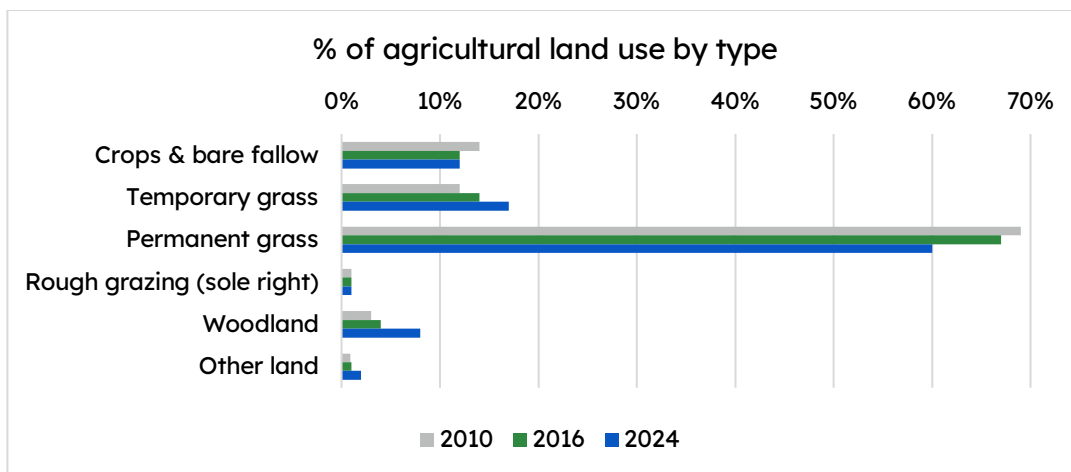
Grade 4 (Poor Quality Agricultural Land): Land with significant limitations, restricting it to lower-yield crops or permanent pasture.

Grade 5 (Very Poor Quality Agricultural Land): Only suitable for rough grazing due to severe limitations such as steep slopes or poor soil quality.

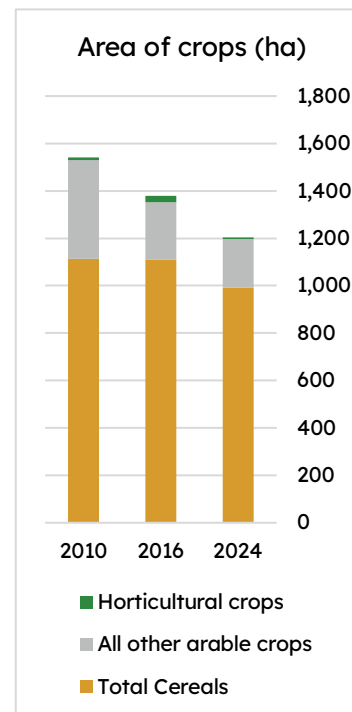
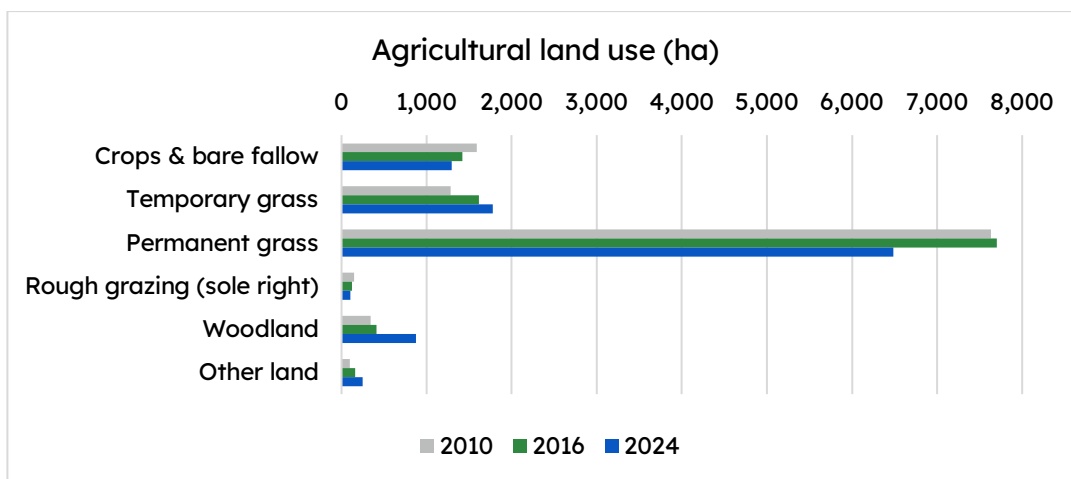
Source: © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2025.

## Agricultural land-use

Currently, 63% of the National Landscape is under agriculture (10,784 ha) with 38% of the area down to permanent grass (6,485 ha).



The data shows a small decrease in the total area of agricultural land during the last ten years. In 2024, there were 10,784 ha of land under agriculture. This is a decrease of 3% from 2010 (11,095 ha) and a decline of 6% since 2016 (11,432 ha).



In 2024, 60% of the agricultural land was down to permanent grass (6,485 ha). This is down from 69% in 2010 and 67% in 2016.

Temporary grassland covered 17% of agricultural land in 2024, up from 12% in 2010 and 14% in 2016. Rough grazing was at 1% in 2024, the same as previous years. Consequently, 78% of the agricultural land was down to grassland in 2024.

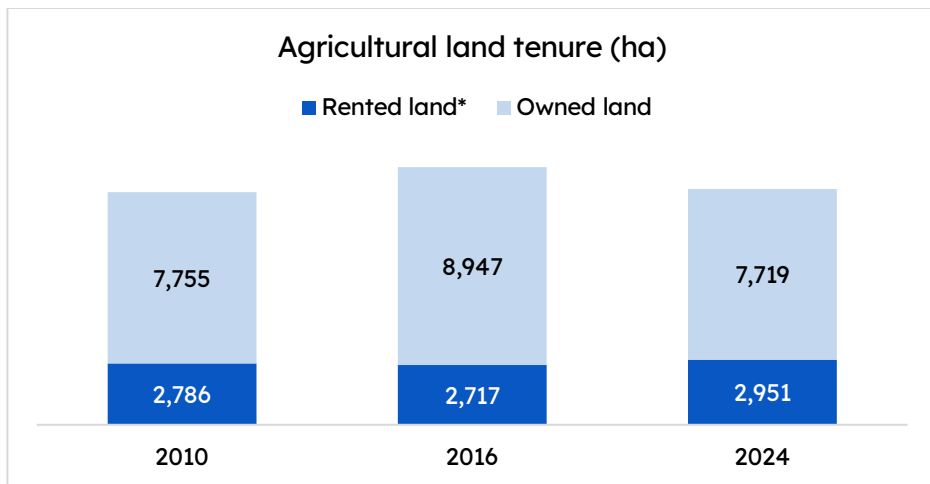
Farm woodlands have increased from 3% of the agricultural land in 2010 to 8% in 2024. Crops and bare fallow have fallen from 14% in 2010 to 12% in 2024.

Note: The Defra June Survey of Agriculture is a large sample survey sent to a representative sample of holdings across England. As the results are based on a sample survey, they are subject to a degree of sampling error and do not consider other sources of survey errors, such as non-response bias or administrative data errors. Comparisons between the years is best done by percentages rather than values.

Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-june>

## Agricultural tenure

In 2024, 72% of the agricultural tenured land was owner occupied.



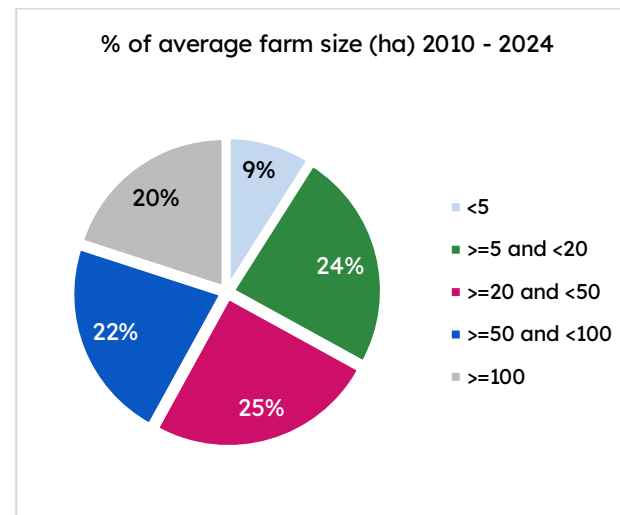
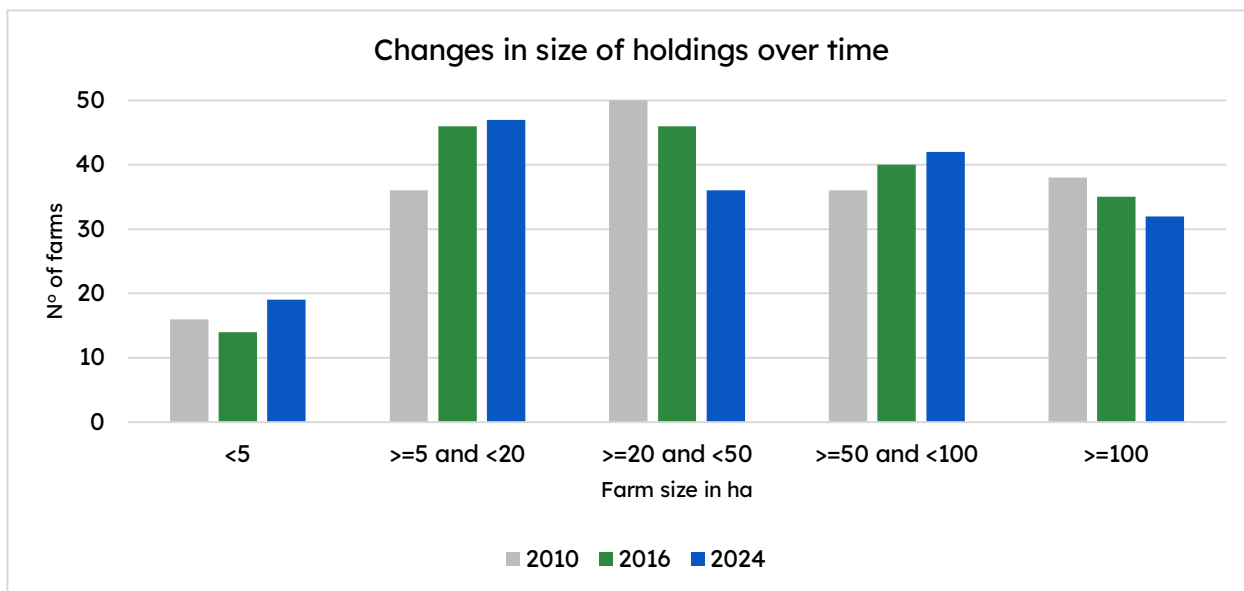
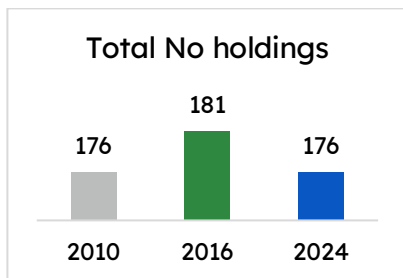
Note that the area of total land use does not equate with the area of total tenure; some land is either not actively managed or is common land.

\* Rented land means land rented for at least 365 days on either a Full Agricultural Tenancy, Farm Business Tenancy, or other long-term agreement.

Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-june>

## Agricultural holdings

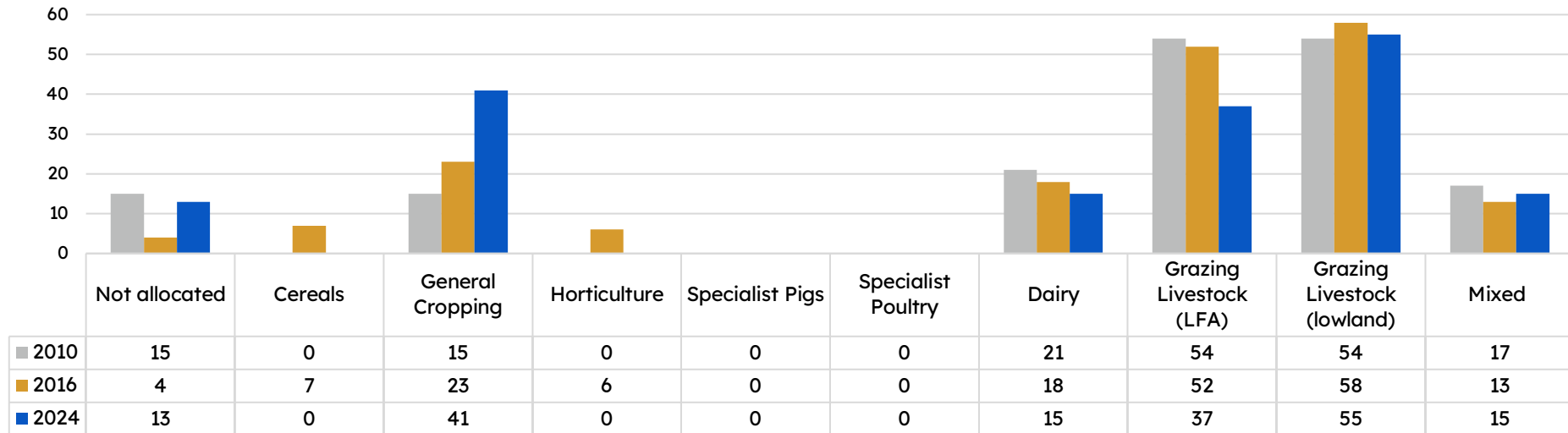
In 2024, there are 176 agricultural holdings; 38% are less than 20 hectares, 44% are between 20-100 hectares, and 18% are over 100 hectares in size. 31% are lowland livestock grazing farms, 21% are less favoured area livestock grazing, 23% are general cropping farms, 7% are dairy farms, and 9% are mixed farms (7% of holdings are not given a farm type as the sample size is too small to protect individuals).



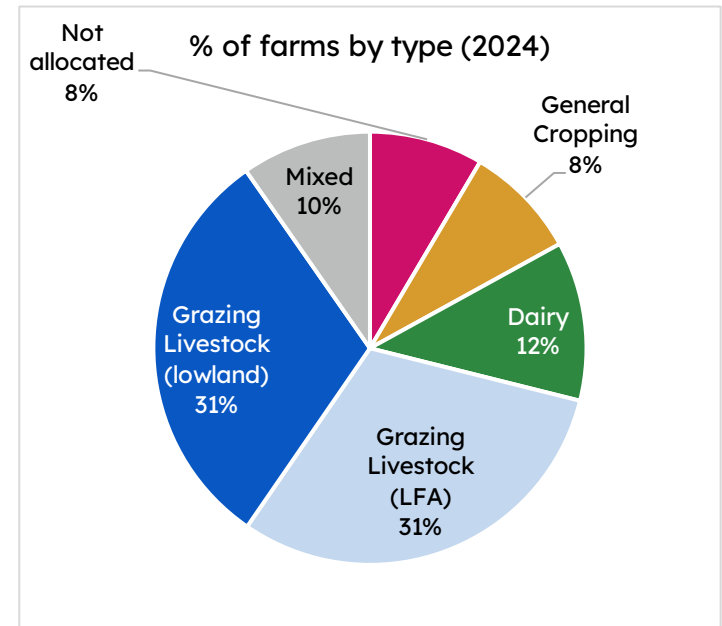
Allowing for sampling errors, the number of holdings has been stable since 2010. However, there is an increase in the smallest units (less than 5 ha). There is a decline in the 20-50 ha and over 100 ha holdings. This suggests that some units have been sub-divided.

Details of the agricultural labour force are set out in the 'People' section - click [Employment in farming](#) to see the table.

### N° of farms by type



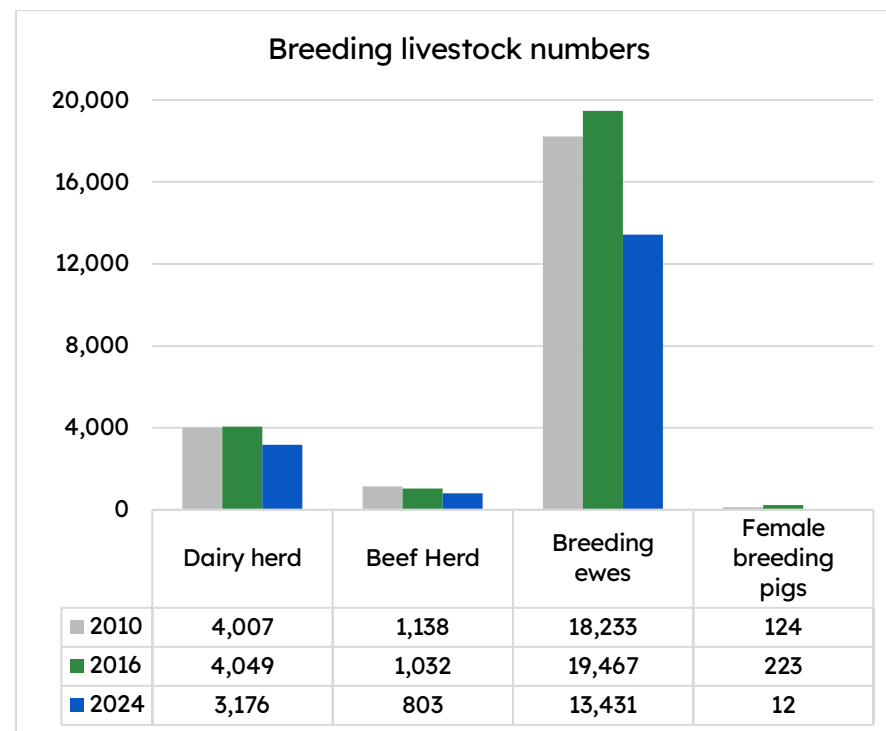
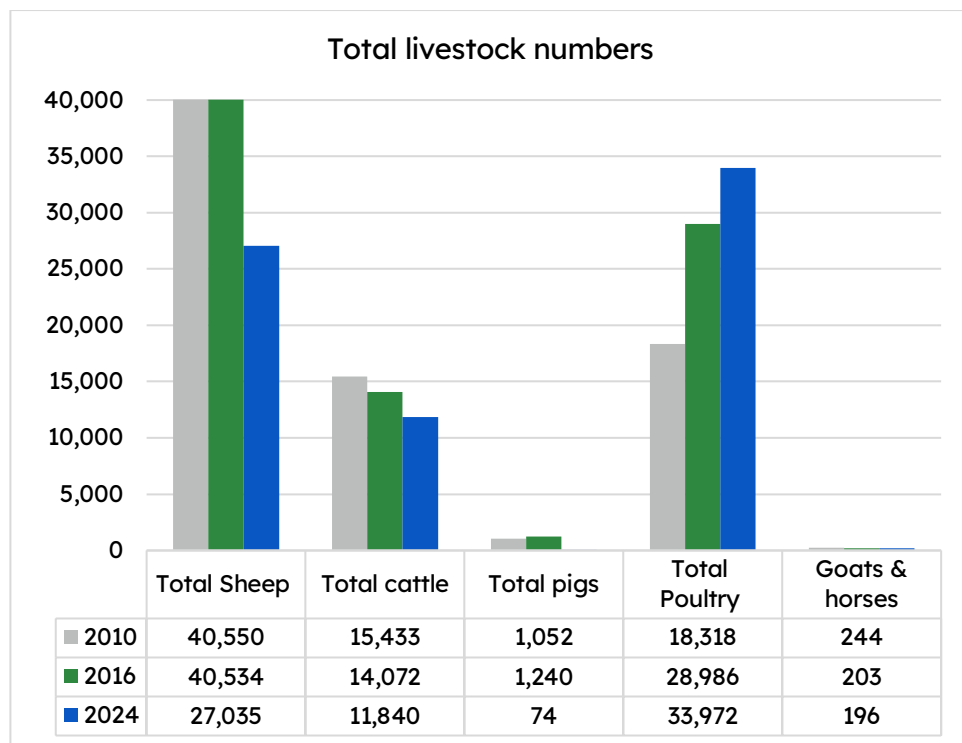
Grazing livestock is, and has constantly been, the predominant holding type though, since 2010, there has been a 31% decrease in the number of grazing in less favoured area holdings. There has also been a 29% reduction in dairy holdings. During the same period, there has been a 173% increase in general cropping.



Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-june>

## Livestock numbers

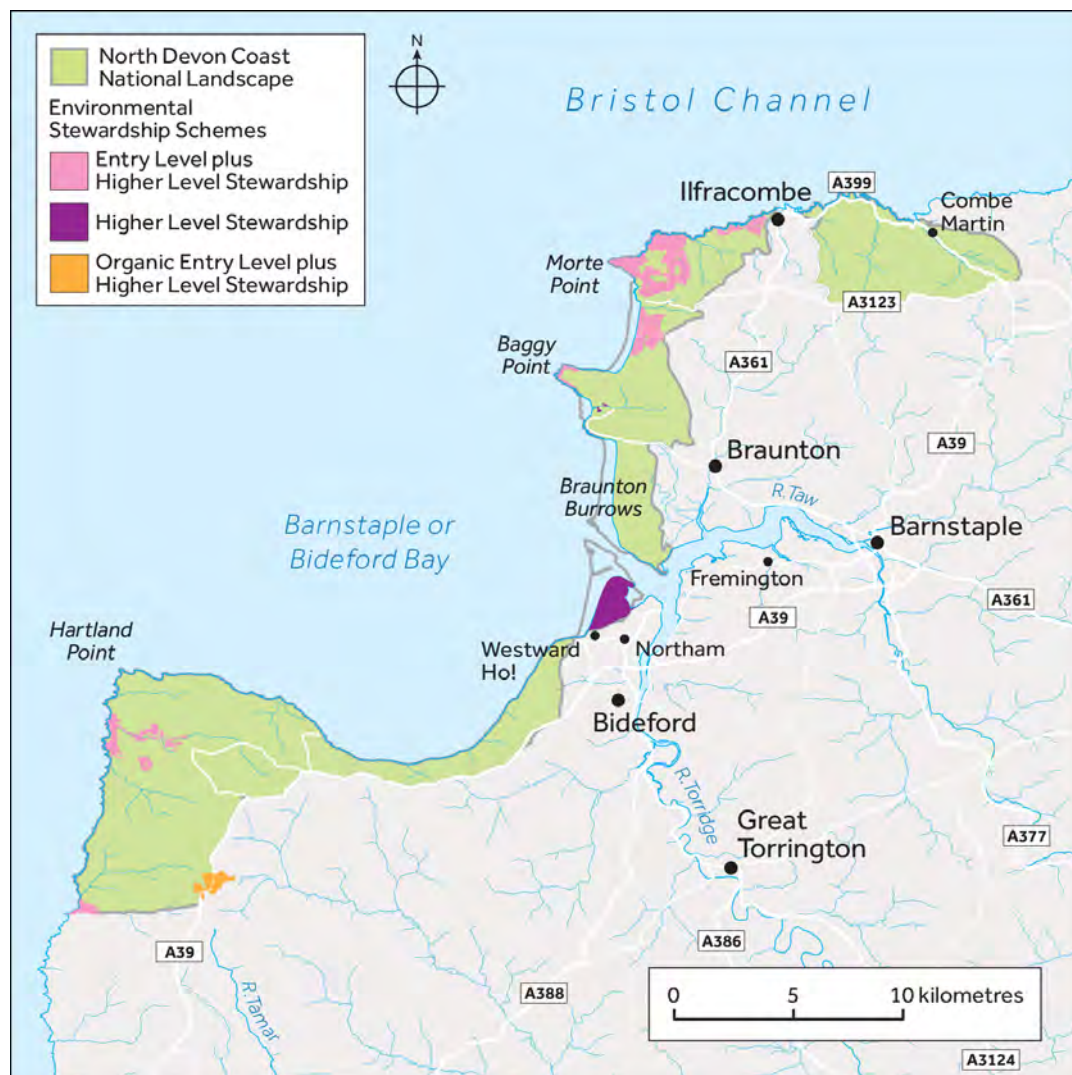
In 2024, poultry was the largest group of livestock (33,972 animals), an 85% increase in numbers since 2010. There are 27,000 sheep, down 33% since 2010 and 2016 (40,550/40,534 respectively). There is a 23% decline in cattle numbers since 2010, now down to 11,840 animals. Pigs have declined by 93%. Since 2010, breeding sheep numbers have fallen by 26%, the dairy herd is down by 21%, the beef is down by 29%, and there are 90% fewer breeding female pigs.



Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-june>

## Land in agri-environment schemes

In 2024, there are 5,700 ha entered into agri-environment schemes, covering 33% of the National Landscape, at a value of £1,618,000.00.



The stewardship scheme, which replaced the older Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Area schemes, has two levels:

- Entry-Level Stewardship; and
- Higher-Level Stewardship.

There is no breakdown of data after 2021. The headline sums for 2024 include Countryside Stewardship and the Sustainable Farming Initiative (SFI) schemes.

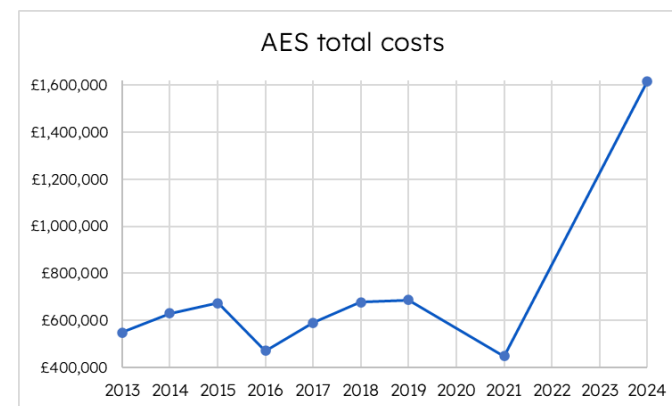
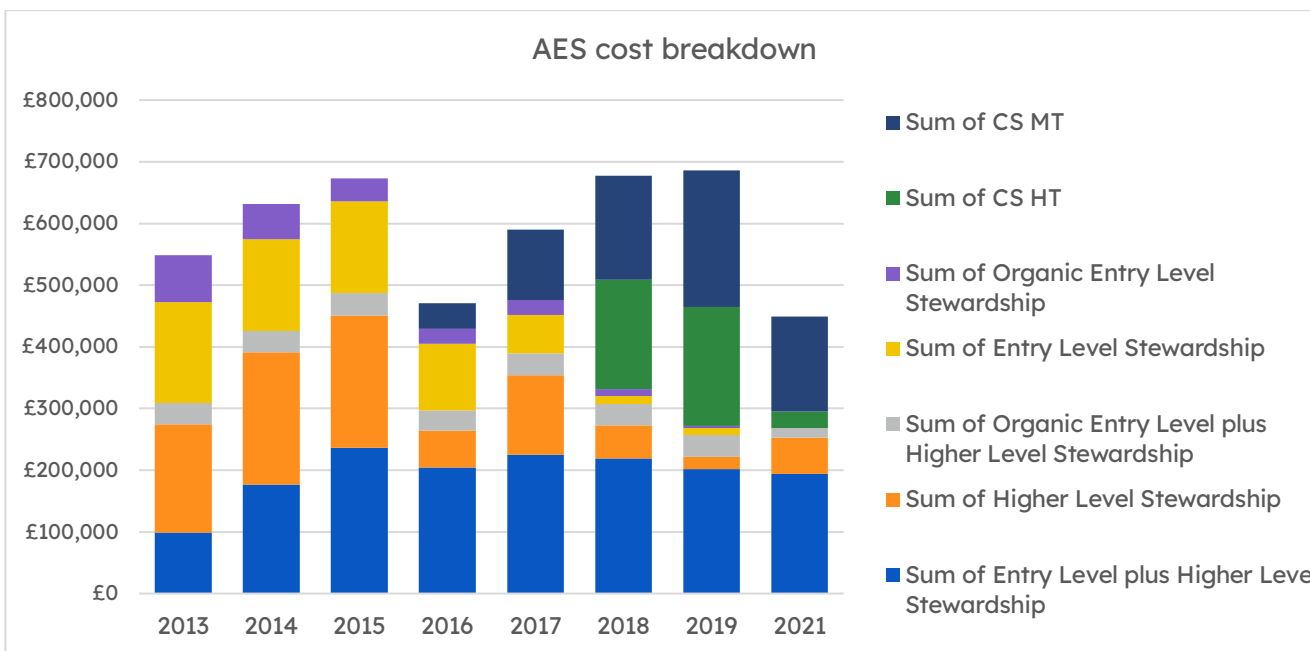
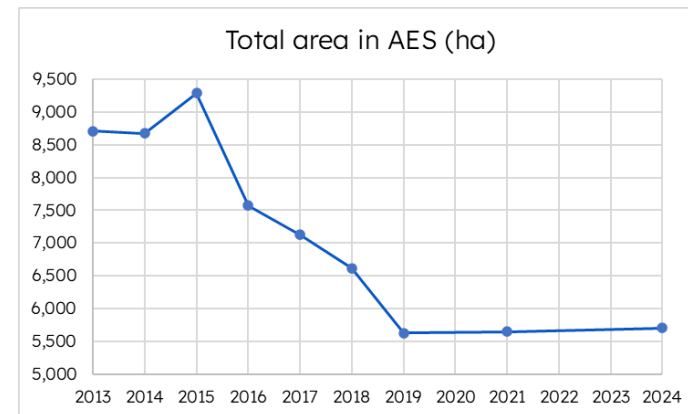
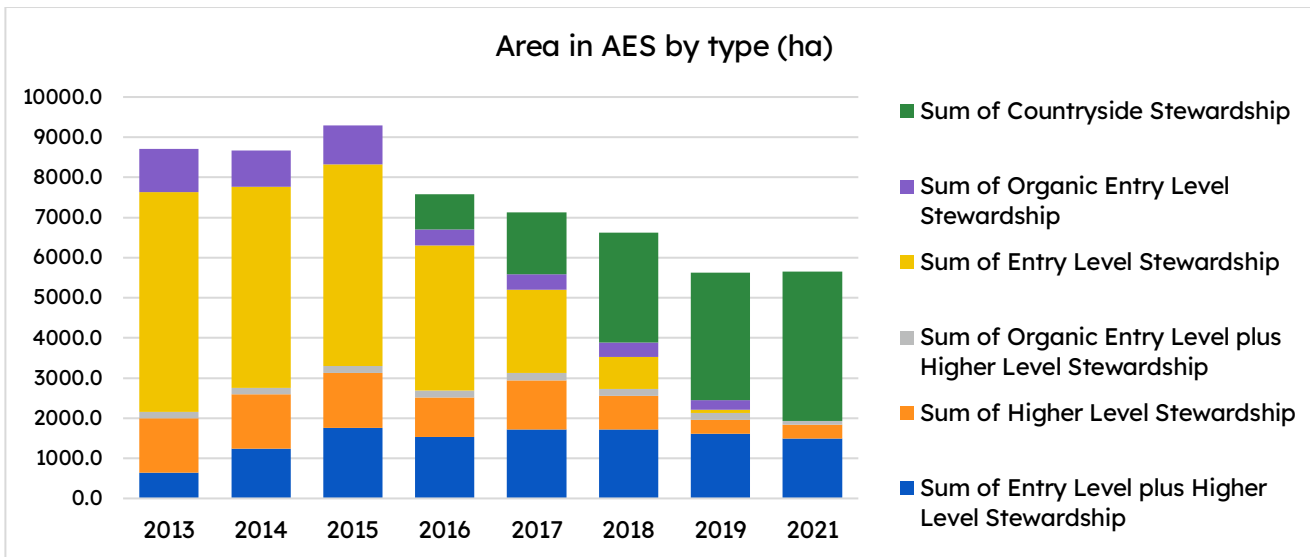
In 2024, 13,700 ha is eligible for agri-environment schemes (AES). 5,700 ha is entered into agri-environment schemes (41.6% of the eligible land area, and 33% of the National Landscape). The total claimed for Countryside Stewardship and SFI schemes was £1,618,000.00.

In 2021, the total annual values of agri-environment agreements in the National Landscape was £448,701, down from £470,365 in 2016 (and down from the high point of £686,205 in 2019). The area has decreased from 7,537 ha in 2016 (44% of the National Landscape) to 5,649 ha in 2021 (33% of the National Landscape).

In 2021, 7% of the National Landscape was in Entry-Level Stewardship, and 2% was in Higher-Level Stewardship.

The cost and area of the various schemes are set out in the charts below.

Source: © Natural England copyright. Environmental Stewardship Scheme holdings agreement polygons (includes farm business and payment info) Attribution Statement: © Rural Payments Agency. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023. <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/df5e865d-51a0-4d24-9dfc-6540b959c26c/environmental-stewardship-scheme-agreements-england/>



Source: MEOPL 2021 © Natural England copyright, Guidance on agri-environment area and costs.

## Development monitoring

Reporting on scrutiny and input into planning applications and policies.

### Development (2023-24)

Planning applications in NL	265	71 responses made due to adverse impact on natural beauty (27% of total)	
Pre - application queries	55	16 responses made due to potential impact on natural beauty	
Major applications in the NL	2	105 units, refused permission	11 units permitted with mitigations
Powerlines undergrounded	7.266 km	5 schemes between 2019 and 2023.	Cost of £1.3m.
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects	Withdrawn July 2025 (new scheme may be submitted)	Xlinks Morocco-UK Power Project - cables landing at Abbotsham Cliffs	

### Development (2014-18)

Planning applications in NL	350 pa (average)	42 responses a year on average (12% of total)	
Pre - application queries	-	21 responses made in 2017, none in previous years	
Powerlines undergrounded	< 5km	2 schemes between 2017 and 2018 - Morteheo and Croyde	

Source: North Devon Coast National Landscape Team 2025; North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: State of the AONB Report 2014-2018

## Future development pressure

Working to ensure that local planning policy fully recognises the National Landscape's purpose and objectives.

### Local Plans

Planning Authority & status of plan	Spatial Strategy and allocations
<p>North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031</p> <p>Adopted October 2018</p>	<p>Policy ST04: Improving the Quality of Development</p> <p>Development will achieve high quality inclusive and sustainable design to support the creation of successful, vibrant places. Design will be based on a clear process that analyses and responds to the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area taking full account of the principles of design found in policy DM04.</p> <p>Policy DM04: Design Principles</p> <p>(1) Good design seeks to guide overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials, access and appearance of new development. It seeks not just to manage land use but support the creation of successful places and respond to the challenges of climate change. Development proposals need to have regard to the following design principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) are appropriate and sympathetic to setting in terms of scale, density, massing, height, layout appearance, fenestration, materials and relationship to buildings and landscape features in the local neighbourhood;</li><li>b) reinforce the key characteristics and special qualities of the area in which the development is proposed;</li><li>c) are accessible to all, flexible to adaptation and innovative;</li><li>d) contribute positively to local distinctiveness, historic environment and sense of place;</li><li>e) create inclusive environments that are legible, connected and facilitate the ease of movement and permeability through the site, allowing everyone to easily understand and find their way around;</li><li>f) retain and integrate existing landscape features and biodiversity to enhance networks and promote diversity and distinctiveness of the surrounding area;</li><li>g) provide public and private spaces that are well designed, safe, attractive and complement the built form, designed to minimise anti-social and criminal behaviour;</li><li>h) provide safe and appropriate highway access and incorporate adequate well-integrated car parking, pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities;</li><li>i) ensure the amenities of existing and future neighbouring occupiers are safeguarded;</li><li>j) incorporate appropriate infrastructure to enable connection to fast ICT networks;</li><li>k) optimise the efficient use of land, and provide well-designed adaptable street patterns and minimise functionless open spaces;</li></ul>

- l) create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses and support local facilities and transport networks;
- m) consider opportunities for public art; and
- n) provide effective water management including Sustainable Drainage Systems, water efficiency measures and the reuse of rainwater.

(2) All major residential proposals will be expected to be supported by a Building for Life 12 (BfL12)(117)(or successor) assessment. High quality design should be demonstrated through the minimisation of "amber" and the avoidance of "red" scores.

#### Policy ST09: Coast and Estuary Strategy

The Coastal and Estuarine Zone is identified on the Policies Map where:

(1) The sustainability of coastal communities will be maintained and enhanced with regard to their distinctive cultural heritage, diverse maritime economy, landscape setting and regeneration opportunities. The separate identity of these settlements will be maintained and enhanced.

(2) Priority will be given to employment uses and waterside infrastructure requiring a coastal location. Such uses will be directed to previously developed sites around the coastline and the Taw-Torridge estuary with existing jetties and wharves. These sites should be safeguarded for employment uses requiring a waterside location. Facilities at Appledore and Yelland Quay will be protected for their value as landing stages for marine aggregates and for other marine employment uses. Loss of traditional boating facilities that are part of the fabric of coastal communities will be discouraged.

(3) Proposals for tourism attractions, leisure developments, new tourist accommodation, associated tourism facilities and services of an appropriate scale will be supported within the Developed Coast where they enhance the quality or diversity of the local tourism offer and will not detract from the character of protected landscapes and other environmental assets.

(4) Settlements and resorts will be defended against marine inundation, coastal erosion and tidal flooding without transferring risks elsewhere. Opportunities to manage coastal realignment and re-establish functional flood plains will be supported in accordance with the Shoreline Management Plan.

(5) The integrity of the coast and estuary as an important wildlife corridor will be protected and enhanced. The importance of the undeveloped coastal, estuarine and marine environments, including the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, will be recognised through supporting designations, plans and policies. The undeveloped character of the Heritage Coasts will be protected.

(6) Water quality will be improved where it has been affected by human activity.

(7) Development within the Undeveloped Coast and estuary will be supported where it does not detract from the unspoilt character, appearance and tranquillity of the area, nor the undeveloped character of the Heritage Coasts, and it is required because it cannot reasonably be located outside the Undeveloped Coast and estuary.

(8) The role and operation of Bideford and Ilfracombe as commercial and leisure ports / harbours will be maintained and enhanced. Proposals to diversify Ilfracombe's role as a ferry port to South Wales and beyond will be supported. The development of port facilities

to maintain and improve the competitiveness of the fishing industry at Bideford, Appledore, Clovelly and Ilfracombe and to enhance leisure opportunities in appropriate coastal locations where required to meet community needs will be supported.

(9) Military training and operational uses around the Taw-Torridge estuary will be supported in locations associated with established military activity.

(10) Delivery of onshore facilities for operational servicing of offshore renewable energy proposals will be facilitated in existing ports and at existing jetties and wharves where they:

- a) do not harm identified environmental and heritage assets; and
- b) do not prejudice the current operational effectiveness of the port.

(11) The continuity of the South West Coast Path and the Tarka Trail will be protected and a network of connecting routes will be improved. Improvements to coastal and estuarine access will be sought where rundown waterfront areas are regenerated. The Tarka Trail link between Ilfracombe and Braunton will be completed.

#### Policy ST14: Enhancing Environmental Assets

The quality of northern Devon's natural environment will be protected and enhanced by ensuring that development contributes to:

- (a) providing a net gain in northern Devon's biodiversity where possible, through positive management of an enhanced and expanded network of designated sites and green infrastructure, including retention and enhancement of critical environmental capital;
- (b) protecting the hierarchy of designated sites in accordance with their status;
- (c) conserving European protected species and the habitats on which they depend;
- (d) conserving northern Devon's geodiversity and its best and most versatile agricultural land;
- (e) conserving the setting and special character and qualities of the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty whilst fostering the social and economic well being of the area;
- (f) ensuring development conserves and enhances northern Devon's local distinctiveness including its tranquillity, and the setting and special qualities of Exmoor National Park including its dark night skies;
- (g) protecting and enhancing local landscape and seascape character, taking into account the key characteristics, the historical dimension of the landscape and their sensitivity to change;
- (h) recognising the importance of the undeveloped coastal, estuarine and marine environments through supporting designations, plans and policies that aim to protect and enhance northern Devon's coastline;
- (i) conserving and enhancing the robustness of northern Devon's ecosystems and the range of ecosystem services they provide;
- (j) increasing opportunities for access, education and appreciation of all aspects of northern Devon's environment, for all sections of the community;
- (k) meeting the Nature Improvement Area's strategic objectives; and

(l) improving failing water bodies and preventing deterioration of water quality.

#### Policy DM08: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

(1) Development should conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests and soils commensurate with their status and giving appropriate weight to their importance. All development must ensure that the importance of habitats and designated sites are taken into account and consider opportunities for the creation of a local and district-wide biodiversity network of wildlife corridors which link County Wildlife Sites and other areas of biodiversity importance.

#### European Sites

(2) The highest level of protection will be given to potential and existing Special Protection Areas, candidate and existing Special Areas of Conservation and listed or proposed Ramsar sites. Proposals having an adverse impact on the integrity of such areas that cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated to remove any adverse effect will not be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances will only apply where there are:

- a) no alternative solutions;
- b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and
- c) necessary compensatory provisions secured to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network of European sites is protected.

(3) Development will only be supported where any necessary mitigation is included such that, in combination with other plans or projects, there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European Nature Conservation Sites.

#### National Sites

(4) Development proposals within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest or Marine Conservation Zone which would be likely to affect the designation adversely, either individually or in combination with other developments, will not be supported unless the benefits of the development at this site clearly outweigh both the adverse impacts on the site and any adverse impacts on the wider network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Marine Conservation Zones.

#### Local Sites

(5) Development likely to affect adversely locally designated sites, their features or their function as part of the ecological network, including County Wildlife Sites, County Geological Sites and sites supporting Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species, will only be permitted where the need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss, and the coherence of the local ecological network is maintained.

#### Protected Species and Habitats

(6) Adverse impacts on European and UK protected species and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species must be avoided wherever possible, subject to:

- i. the legal tests afforded to them where applicable; or otherwise unless

- ii. the need for and benefits clearly outweigh the loss.

Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees

(7) Development must avoid the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and veteran trees, unless the need for, or benefits of development on that site clearly outweigh the loss.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation for Biodiversity and Geodiversity Impacts

(8) Development should avoid adverse impact on existing features as a first principle and enable net gains by designing in biodiversity features and enhancements and opportunities for geological conservation alongside new development. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable they must be adequately and proportionately mitigated, If full mitigation cannot be provided, compensation will be required as a last resort.

## Neighbourhood Plans

A Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document that guides and shapes development in the local area. The local planning authority continues to determine planning applications but, once ‘made’ (adopted by the planning authority), a Neighbourhood Plan forms a part of the development plan for the area. Decisions are then in accordance with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

There are two ‘made’ plans in the national landscape:

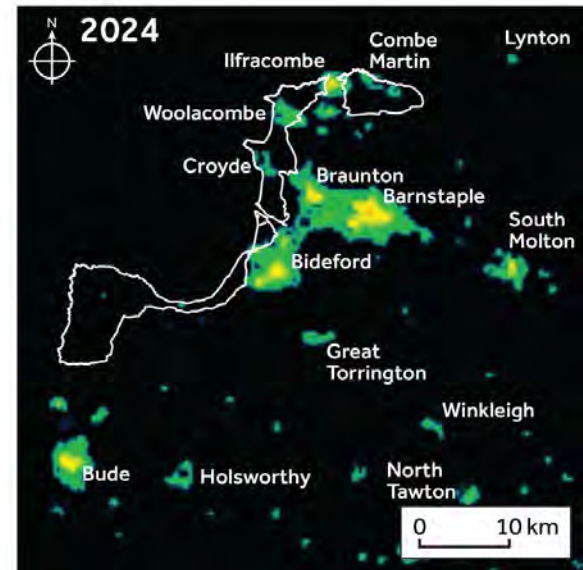
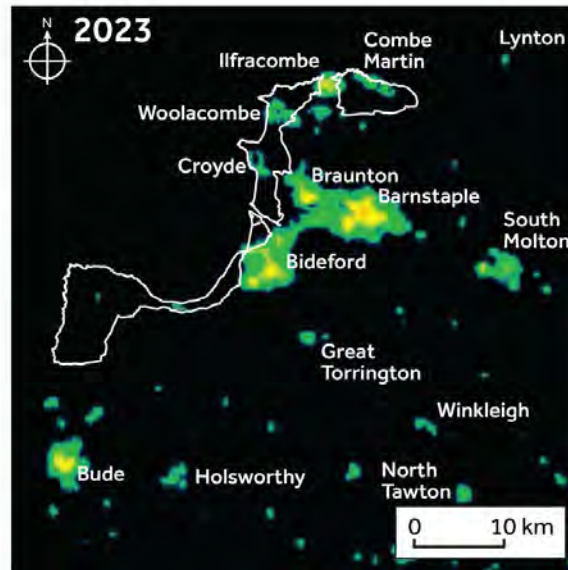
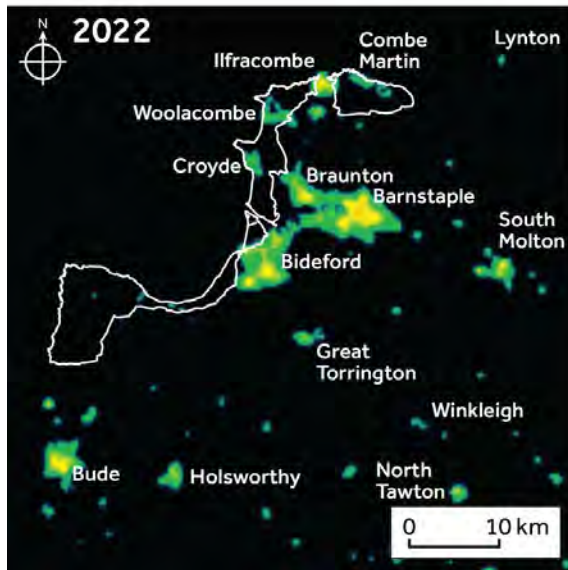
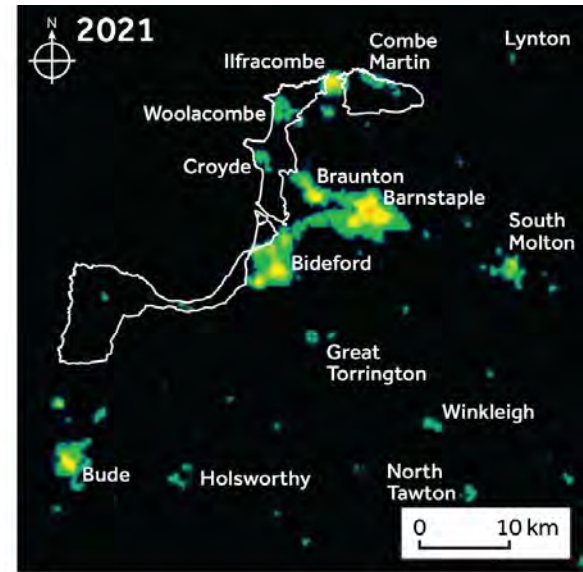
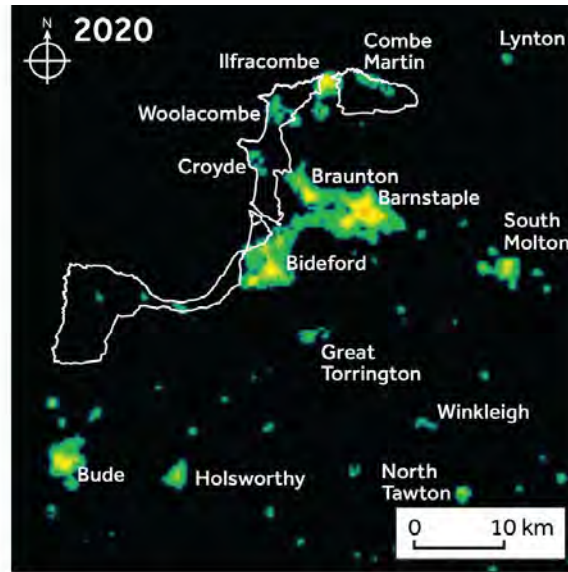
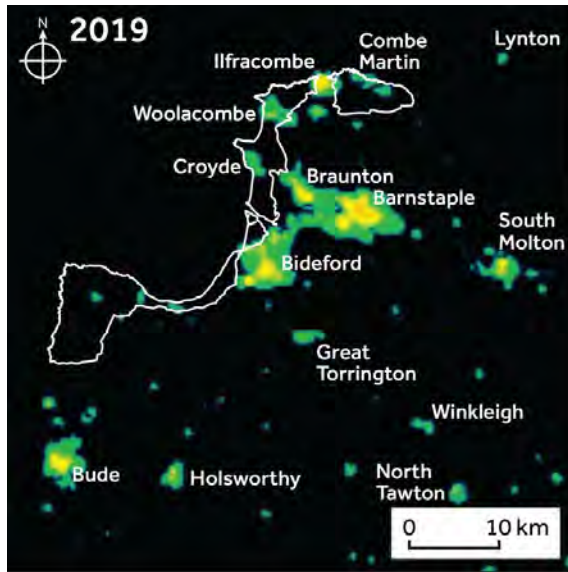
Parish	Date made
Georgeham	12 Jan 2022
Broughton	4 October 2023

And five Neighbourhood Plans in preparation:

North Devon District		Torridge District	
Parish	Status	Parish	Status
Mortehoe	Designated 2018	Northam	Designated 2017
Ilfracombe	Designated 2019	Welcombe	Designated 2017
		Parkham	Designated 2022

## Light pollution

Six satellite images showing light radiance since 2019. There is little change over the years; the area keeps its dark night skies.



Radiance (nWcm <sup>-2</sup> sr <sup>-1</sup> )	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	
Combe Martin	0.75	0.64	0.71	0.67	0.78	0.79	↓
Ilfracombe	6.29	6.97	8.37	8.49	8.63	9.68	↓
Woolacombe	0.60	0.58	0.91	0.80	0.77	3.06	↓
Croyde	0.79	0.76	0.96	0.68	0.56	0.68	↑
Buck's Mills	0.77	0.89	0.71	0.73	0.79	0.83	-
Clovelly	0.53	-	0.59	-	0.51	0.63	↓
Hartland	0.59	0.58	0.51	0.67	0.62	0.81	↓
Westward Ho!	3.63	4.19	4.56	4.91	0.65	5.14	↓
Bideford	10.11	9.59	10.86	10.19	10.56	12.27	↓
Barnstaple	20.50	20.18	23.39	23.72	23.82	25.22	↓
No light	0.00						

Comparing energy radiating from the surface (watts/steradian/cm<sup>2</sup>)

The National Landscape generally has a dark night sky; there are only very low levels of light radiated at night. The noticeable light sources within the area are around Combe Martin, Woolacombe, Croyde, Buck's Mills, Clovelly and Hartland. The average radiance for these settlements is 0.67 nWcm-2sr-1.

There is also light spillage into the National Landscape from Ilfracombe, Westward Ho!, and Bideford. Barnstaple provides the brightest source of light in the local region. Over time, radiance has fallen within the National Landscape apart from around Croyde. Here, the trend is for increasing radiance. The source is not known but there are various holiday developments in the Croyde Bay area; these may have enhanced night lighting for their visitors. Within the National Landscape, Woolacombe has seen the greatest reduction since 2019 (down 2.46 nWcm-2sr-1).

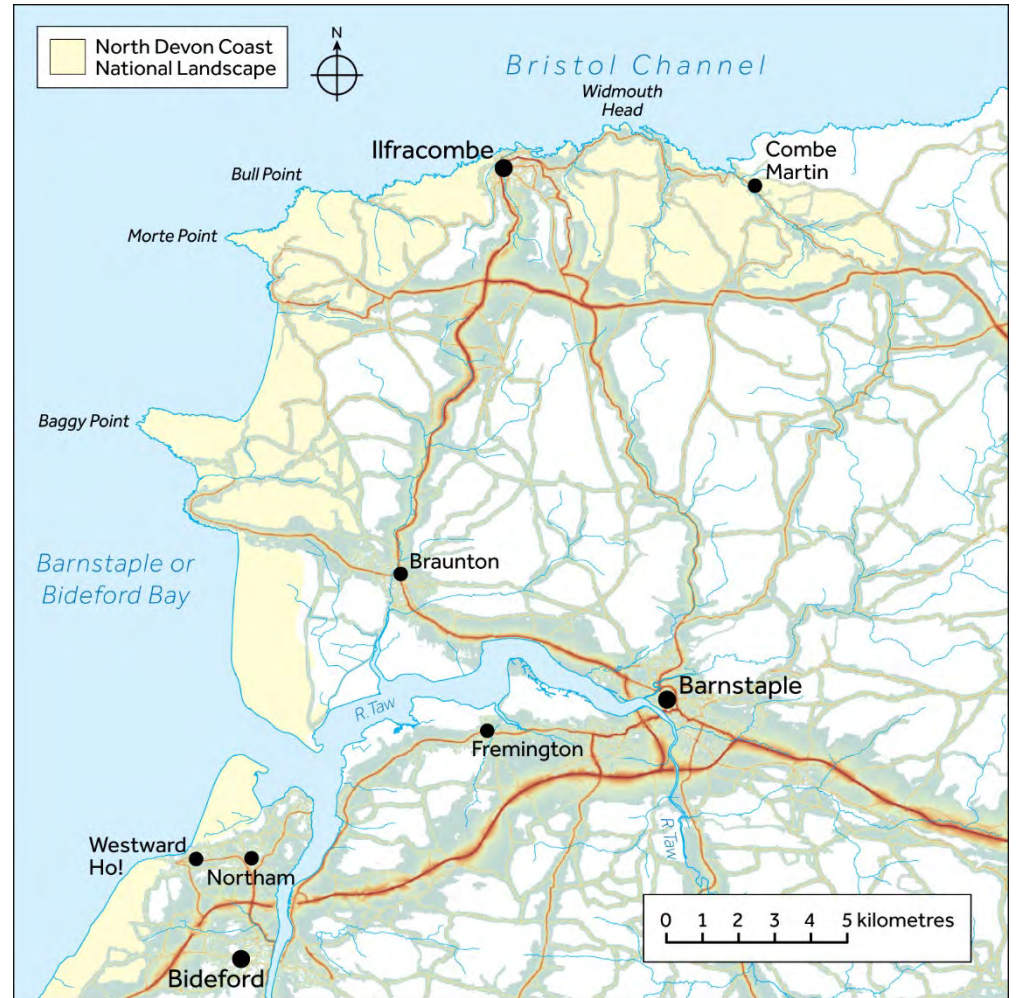
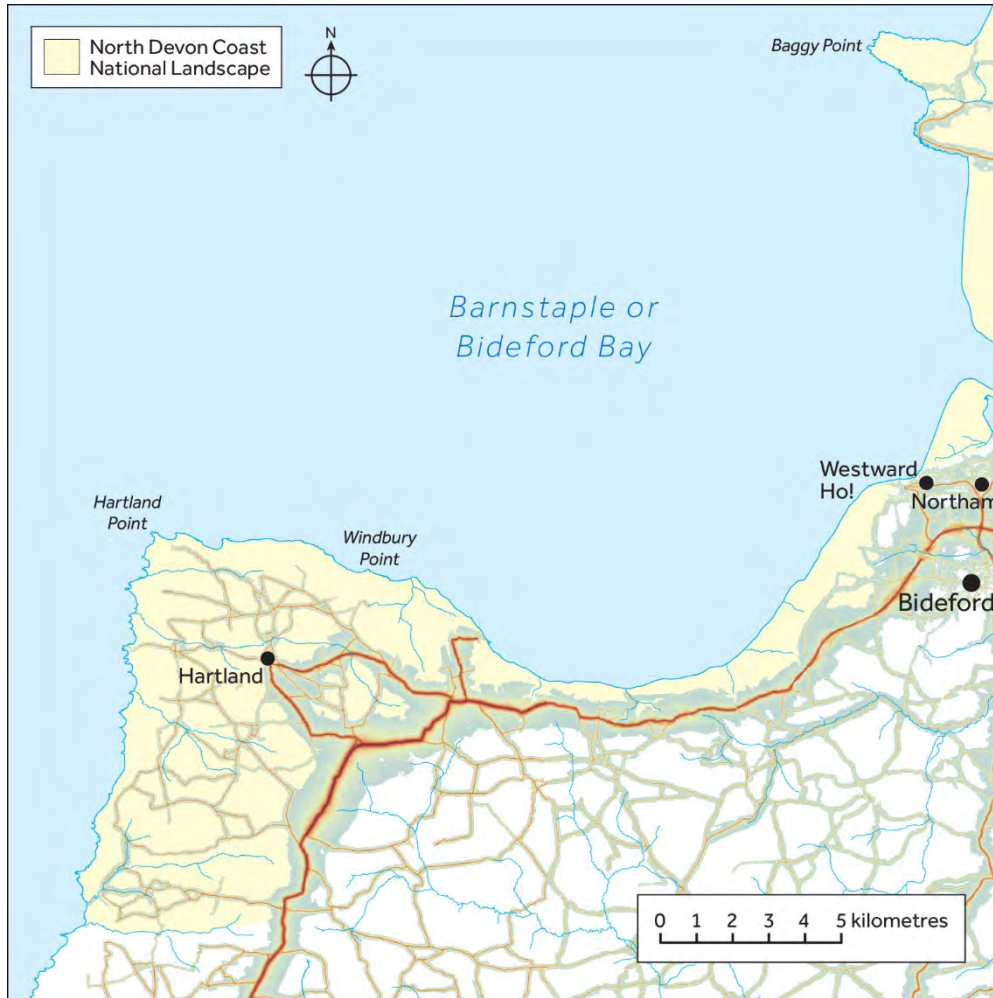
Note: there are gaps in the Clovelly data set.

Source: The maps come from [www.lightpollutionmap.info](http://www.lightpollutionmap.info) and the data is NASA Earth Data shown is VJ146A4 - NASA's VIIRS SNPP/NOAA-20 Lunar BRDF-Adjusted Nighttime Lights Yearly L3 Global 15 arc second Linear Lat Lon Grid - for the years 2019 -2024

Citation - Román, M.O., Wang, Z., Sun, Q., Kalb, V., Miller, S.D., Molthan, A., Schultz, L., Bell, J., Stokes, E.C., Pandey, B. and Seto, K.C., et al. (2018). NASA's Black Marble nighttime lights product suite. Remote Sensing of Environment 210, 113-143. doi:10.1016/j.rse.2018.03.017.

# Noise pollution

Maps showing the 'Round 4' noise data (2022).



## Legend

Road Noise Lden Round 4 (2022)



Lden indicates a 24-hour annual average noise level with separate weightings for the evening and night periods.

The National Landscape is generally quiet (<40 dB). However, there is low-level traffic noise (40 dB+) spilling from the road network throughout the area. The maps show the 'shadow' effects of this traffic noise. There are higher levels recorded along the A39 between Bideford and Bursdon, and along the A361 into Ilfracombe (70 dB+). The routes to Hartland and Clovelly also have higher noise levels (65 dB+). Combe Martin, Woolacombe and Croyde record traffic noise above 60 dB.

Note: It is not possible to compare Round 4 data with earlier data sets because there is a material difference in the metrics. The Round 4 data consider all public roads and railways (including light rail). This means that all the roads in the National Landscape are monitored. In the earlier rounds only major roads, major railways and agglomerations were mapped. Major Roads are defined as regional or national sections of road which have a bi-directional flow of 3 million vehicle passages or more per year. Consequently, only parts of some 'A' roads running along the National Landscape boundary are marked.

Source: © Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs copyright and/or database right 2023. All rights reserved. Defra Noise management  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/noise-management> Round 3 (2019) - <https://environment.data.gov.uk/dataset/fd1c6327-ad77-42ae-a761-7c6a0866523d> Round 4 (2022) - <https://environment.data.gov.uk/dataset/562c9d56-7c2d-4d42-83bb-578d6e97a517>

# Nature

In this section, we report on the number and condition of protected natural sites in the National Landscape (including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation). We describe the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and list the area of priority habitats, National Forest Inventory woodland types and ancient woodlands, and the locally protected sites. There is some limited information on the length of hedgerows and the numbers of trees out of woodlands. The ecological status of rivers is illustrated.

Natural England monitors and evaluates impacts on nature; it publishes a range of data to support good decision making, much of it cut to the National Landscape boundary.

Forestry Commission produces the National Forest Inventory data and its Forest Research branch issues data for trees out of woodland.

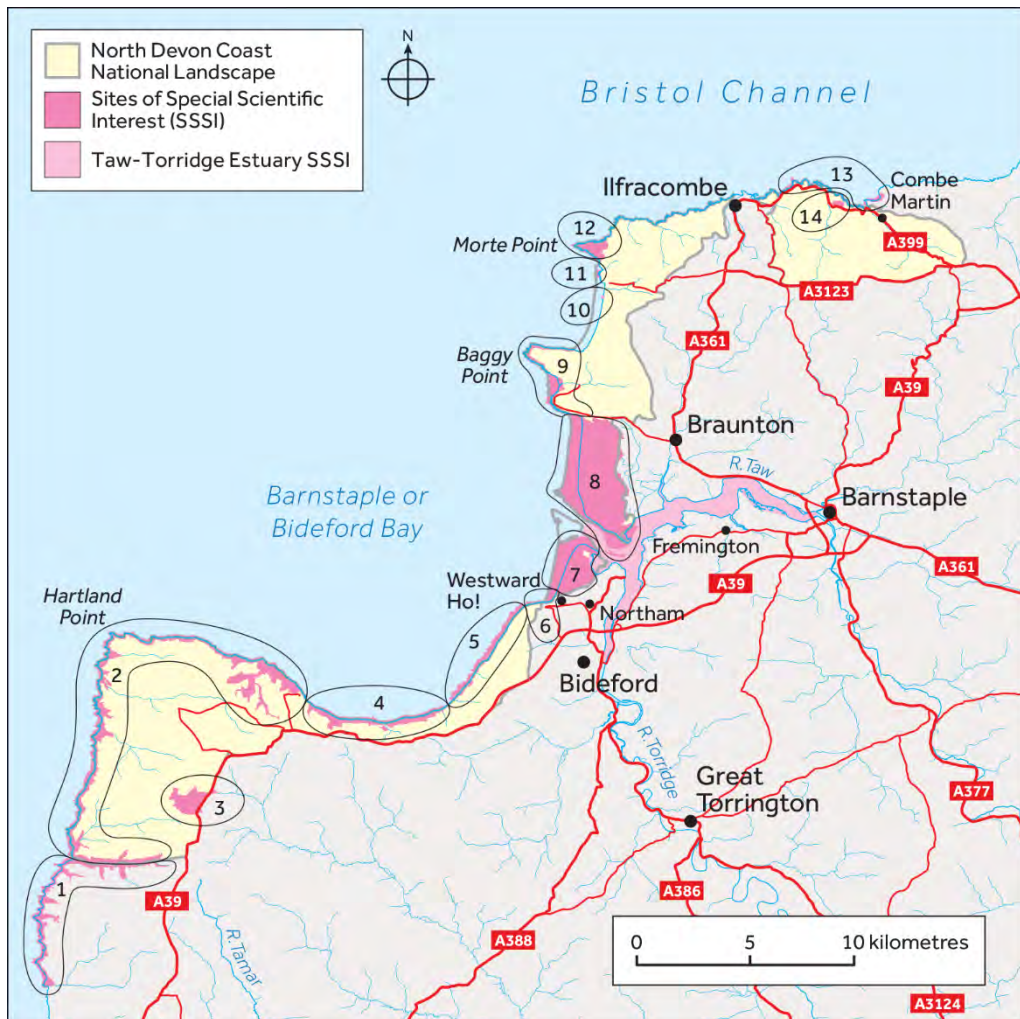
The Environment Agency monitors the condition of water and produced data on the ecological status of rivers.

Local data comes from the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve organisation and the Devon Biodiversity Record Centre.



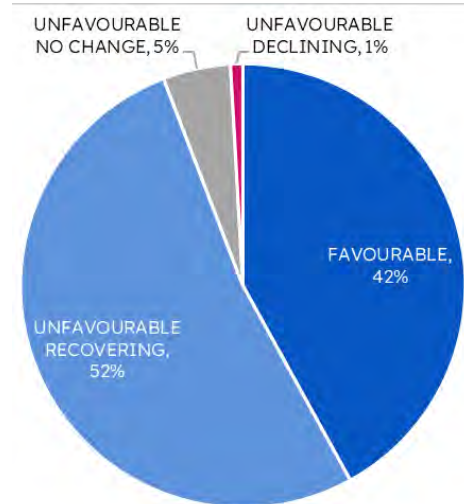
## Location and condition of SSSIs by area

In 2024, there are 15 designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest in or close to the National Landscape, occupying 2,911 ha (16.9%) of its area.

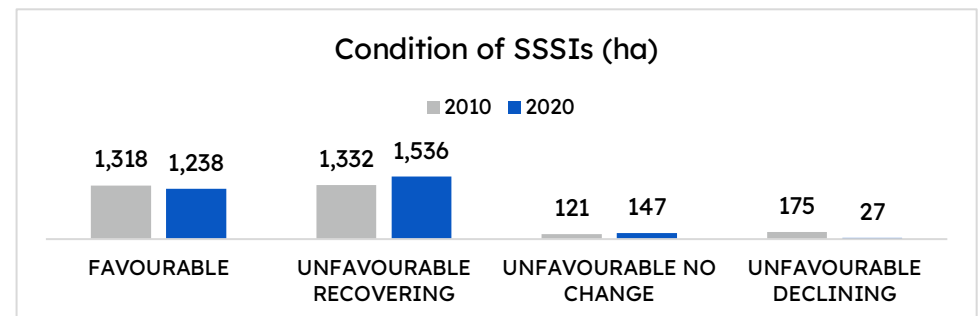


### Legend

- 1 Steeple Point to Marsland Mouth
- 2 Marsland to Clovelly Coast
- 3 Bursdon Moor
- 4 Hobby to Peppercombe
- 5 Mermaid's Pool to Rowden Gut
- 6 Westward Ho! Cliffs
- 7 Northam Burrows
- 8 Braunton Burrows
- 9 Saunton to Baggy Point Coast
- 10 Mill Rock
- 11 Barricane Beach
- 12 Morte Point
- 13 Hele, Samson's and Combe Martin Bays
- 14 Napp's Cave



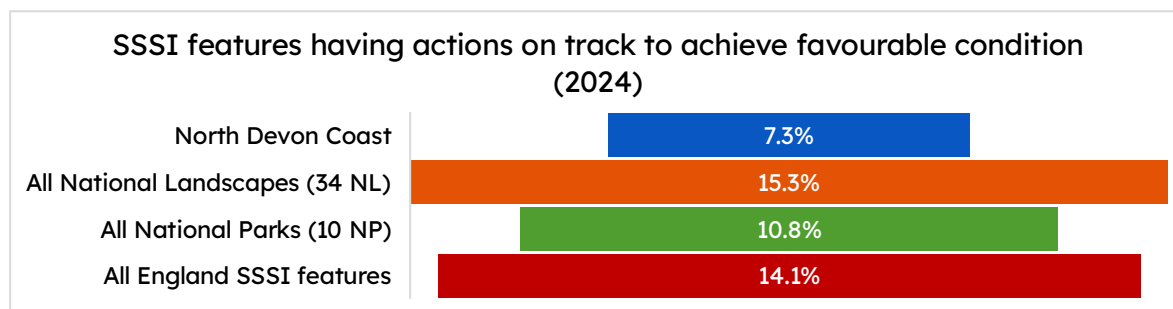
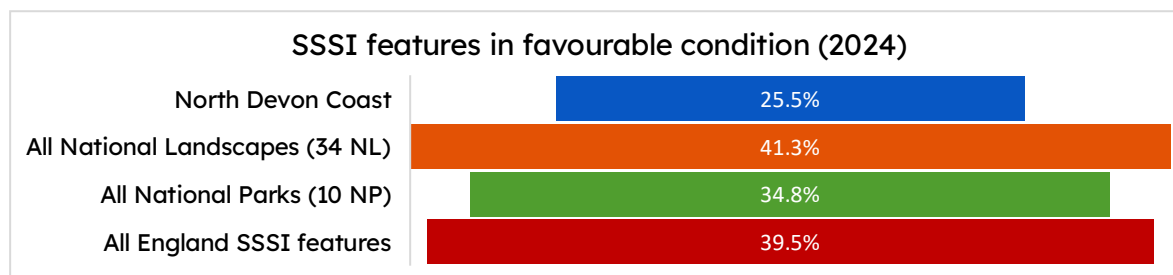
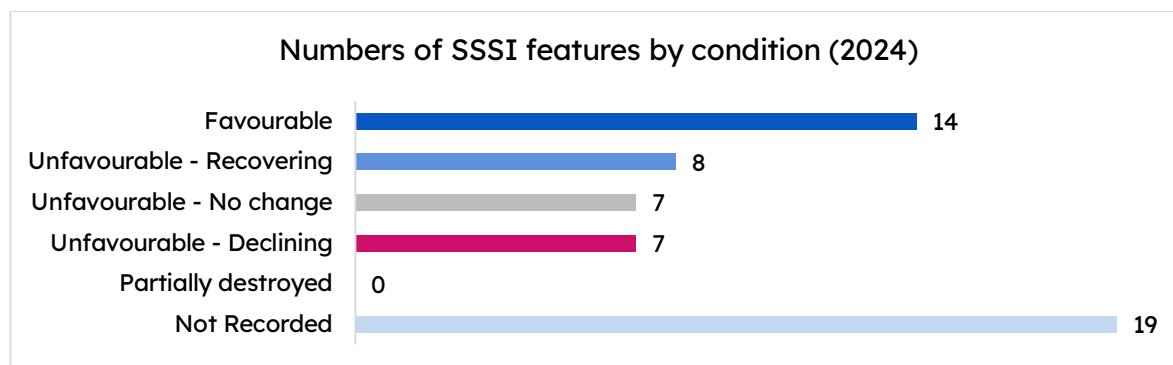
Under Defra's Biodiversity 2020 strategy, there is a national target for 95% of SSSI's (by area) to be in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition. The pie chart shows that the National Landscape nearly meets this target. 94% of its SSSIs are in a favourable or unfavourable but recovering condition. In 2010, there was a greater area in an unfavourable/declining condition.



Source: MEOPL GIS data 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest Condition Units England Natural England' obtained from [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk), 22 March 2022. PLTOF © Natural England copyright 2024. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024.

## Condition of SSSI features

In 2024, 26% of the SSSI features are in favourable condition and only 7% of the remaining features have actions to bring up to favourable status.



PLTOF now sets a target to bring 80% of SSSI features within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042 (Target Indicator 2). The new indicator measures the SSSI features, not the area of SSSI. This means that a comparison between this new data and the MEOPL data is not possible.

The chart shows that the National Landscape has only 25.5% of its SSSI features in a favourable condition. This may rise once the status of the features not recorded is known (35% of the SSSI features have no condition record).

The North Devon Coast is below average when compared with the other National Landscapes (average is 41.3%), and with all England's SSSIs (average is 39.5%).

There are 102 geological SSSI features in the National Landscape, 48% are in a favourable condition. Two features in Napp's Cave and one in Northam Burrows are in an unfavourable recovering condition; and two in Braunton Burrows and one in Northam Burrows are in an unfavourable no change condition.

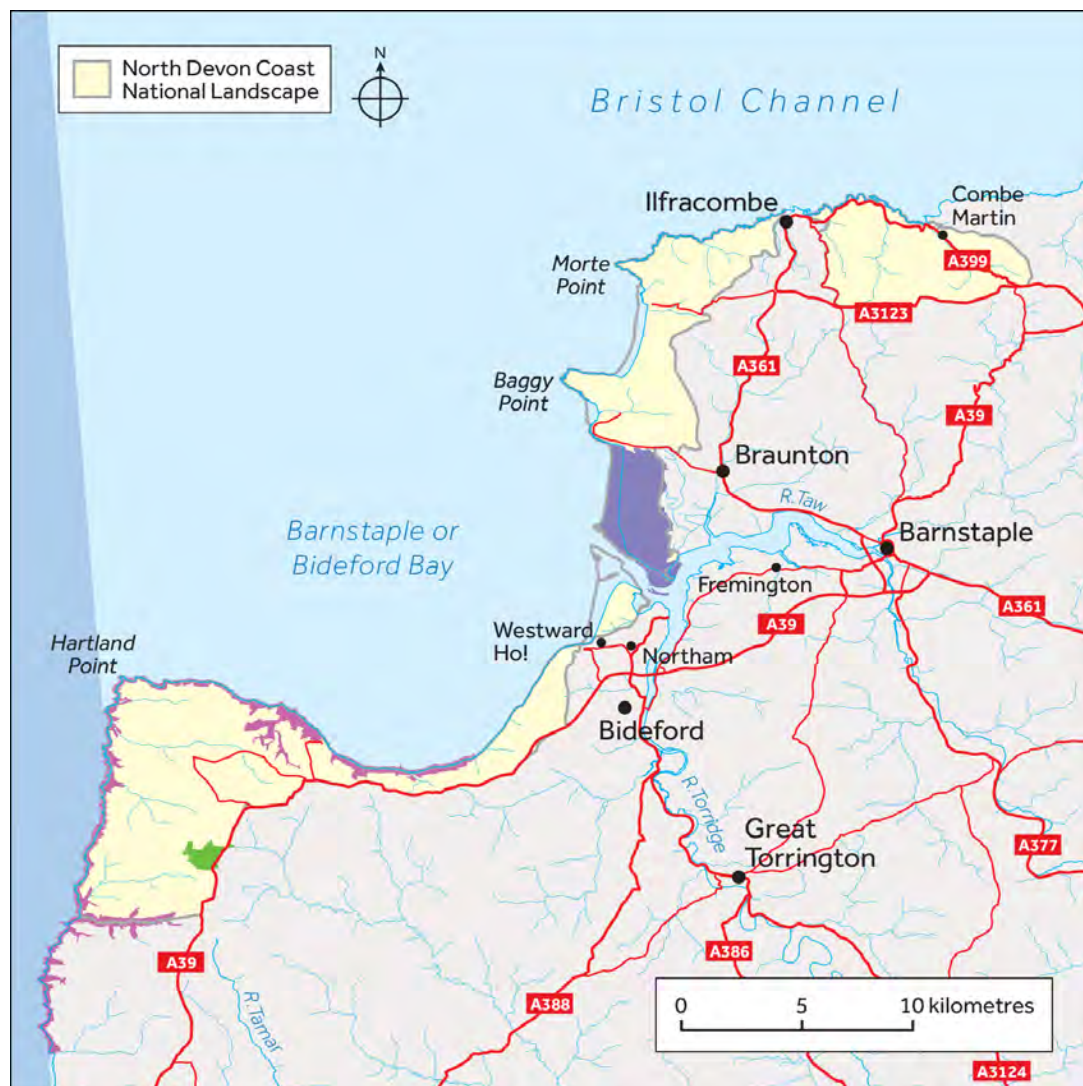
PLTOF Target Indicator 3 is the percentage of SSSI features within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition.

North Devon receives a score of 7% under this indicator. The average for the National Landscapes is 15.3%, and for all England it is 14.1%.

Source: PLTOF © Natural England copyright 2024. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024.

## Location of SAC

In 2024, there are three designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in the National Landscape, occupying 2,173 ha (12.6%) of its area.



### Legend

- Bristol Channel Approaches
- Tintagel-Marsland-Clovelly Coast
- Culm Grasslands
- Braunton Burrows

Bristol Channel Approaches (584,994 ha) is not in the National Landscape but does touch its coast south of Hartland Point.

### Qualifying features within the National Landscape:

#### Tintagel-Marsland-Clovelly Coast (2,380.4 ha)

- Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts
- Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles
- European dry heaths

#### Culm Grasslands (774.2 ha)

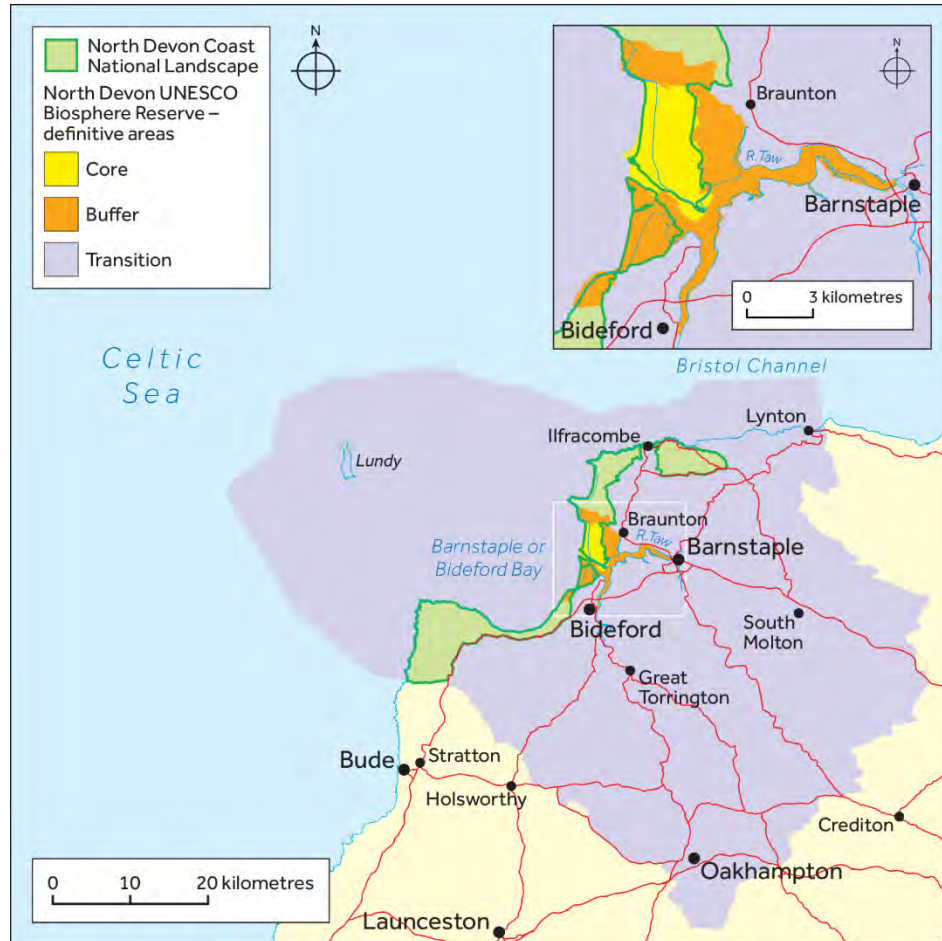
- *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinia caerulea*)
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- Marsh fritillary butterfly *Euphydryas (Eurodryas, Hypodryas) aurinia*

#### Braunton Burrows (1,339.7 ha)

- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes)
- Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) \* Priority feature
- Dunes with *Salix repens ssp. argentea (Salicion arenariae)*
- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- Petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii*

Source: PLTOF © Natural England copyright 2024. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024.

## Location of the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere



UNESCO Biosphere Reserves consist of 3 concentric zones with complementary roles:

- Core Area(s) managed to conserve a habitat/site of international importance
- Buffer Zone(s) surrounding and supporting the Core Area that includes adjoining areas with supporting designations
- Transition Area surrounding the Buffer Zone covering the 'inter-connected' ecosystem area as a whole

North Devon UNESCO Biosphere (5,000 km<sup>2</sup> in total) - designated 2002

**Core Area:** Branton Burrows, the largest sand dune system in England, rich in rare plants and wildlife.

**Buffer Zone:** the National Landscape and Taw Torridge Estuary - an area where land/sea management is sympathetic to the conservation of the objectives of the core area.

**Transition Zone:** the catchment areas of the Taw and Torridge rivers and 12 nautical miles into the enveloping Lundy Island, a hotspot for marine biodiversity and the UK's first Marine Conservation Zone.

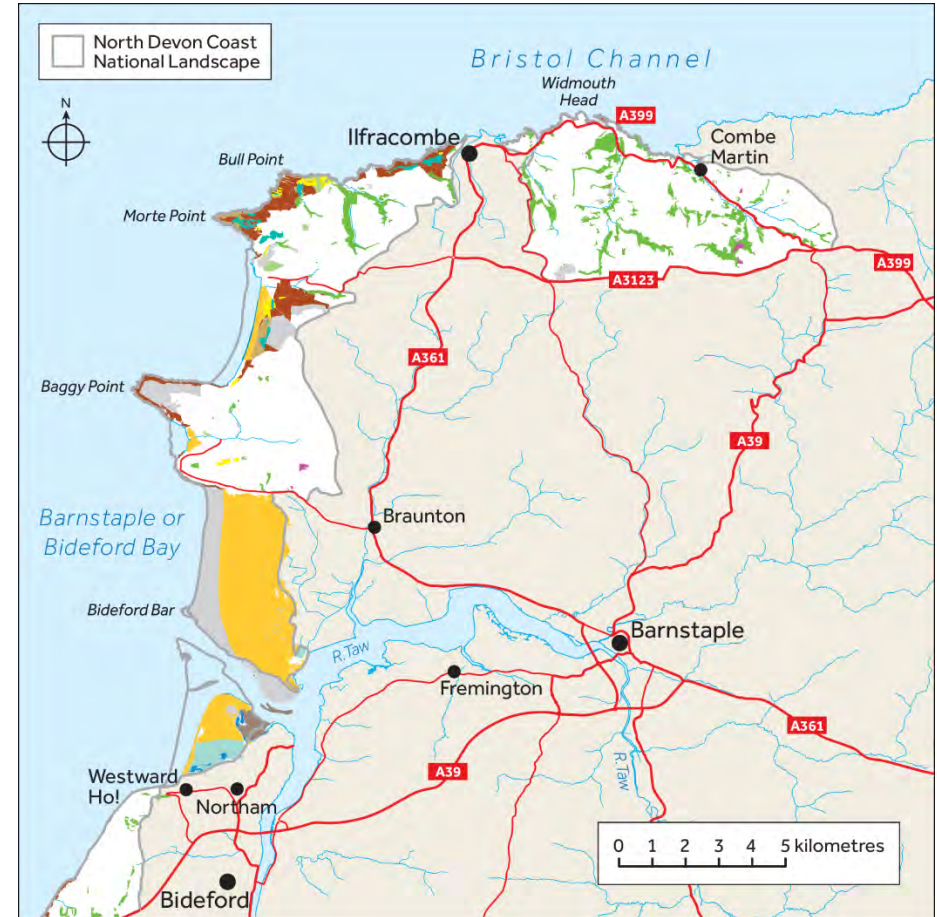
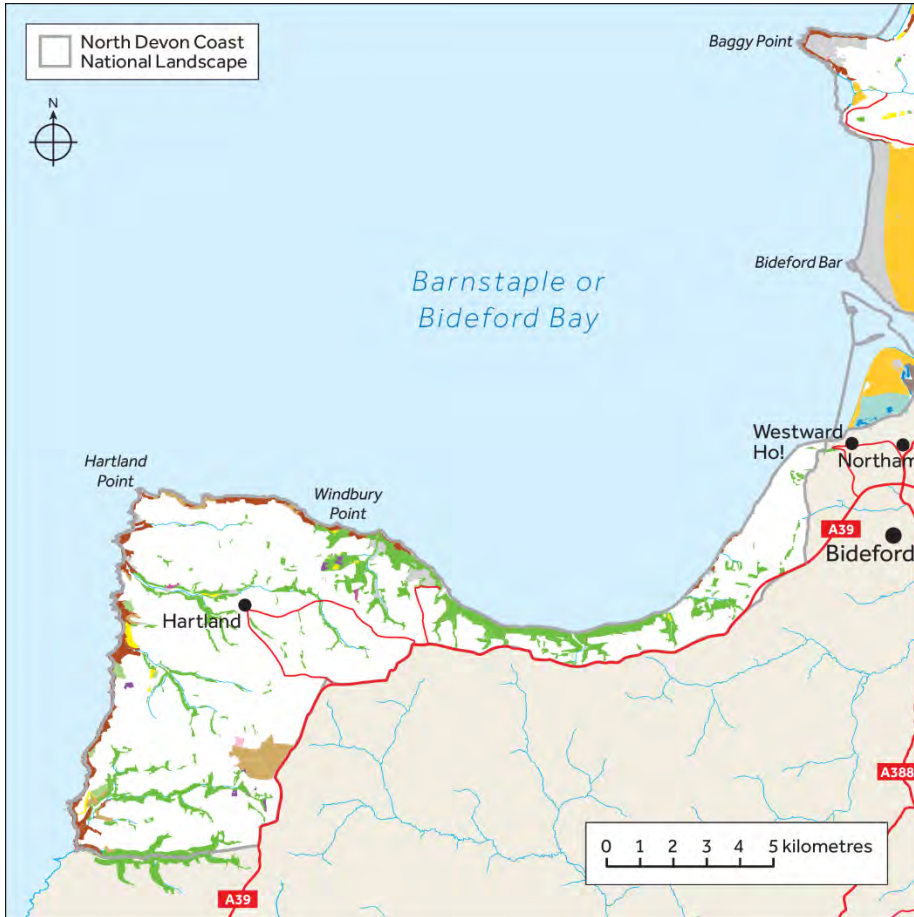
**Definition:**

A biosphere reserve is an area that has been recognised for its unique mix of plants and animals, valued environment and sustainable way of life of the people who live and work within the area. Biosphere reserves are designated under the Man and the Biosphere Programme of UNESCO and rely on local cooperation to ensure the careful management of the resources within biosphere reserves that allow development without harming the area for future generations.

Source: <https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/> and <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/biosphere-reserves-england/explore>

# Area of priority habitats

In 2024, there are 3,976 ha of priority habitats covering 23% of the National Landscape.



### Legend

- |                                      |  |                          |   |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh | Good quality semi-improved grassland               | Lowland heathland        | No main habitat but additional habitats present | Upland flushes, fens and swamps |
| Coastal saltmarsh                    | Low calcareous grassland, maritime cliff and slope | Lowland meadows          | Purple moor grass and rush pastures             |                                 |
| Coastal sand dunes                   | Lowland dry acid grassland                         | Maritime cliff and slope | Reedbeds  |                                 |
| Deciduous woodland                   | Lowland fens, maritime cliff and slope             | Mudflats                 | Traditional orchard                             |                                 |

There are several habitat data sets and they differ. National data sets do not match local Biodiversity Record Centre data sets; and neither are comprehensive. Not all priority habits are listed. In the NL, there are also hedgerows, field margins and ponds.

Data from 2021 and 2024 are similar, less was recorded in 2013. The 2024 data show big changes in deciduous woodland and lowland dry acid grassland.

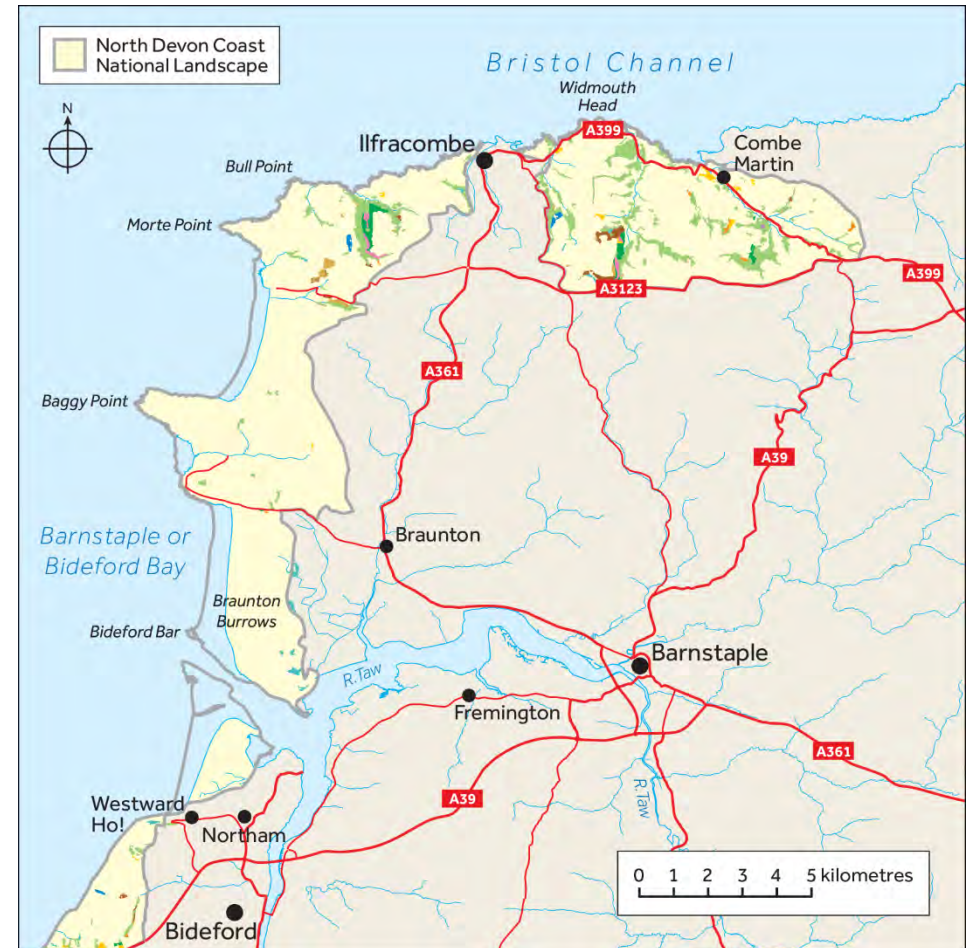
Priority Habitat in ha	MEOPL 2013	MEOPL 2021	PLTOF 2024
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	40	99	99
Coastal saltmarsh		12	19
Coastal sand dunes	1,132	1,090	1,092
Deciduous woodland	1,310	1,257	1,483
Lowland calcareous grassland			1
Lowland dry acid grassland	14	7	53
Lowland fens			1
Lowland heathland	173	249	225
Lowland meadows	3	7	73
Maritime cliff and slope	825	1,010	1,030
Mudflats	36	30	29
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	41	41	18
Reedbeds			0
Traditional orchard	5	28	25
Upland flushes fens and swamps			12
Upland heathland	136		
Other habitats on the Priority Habitat Index:			
Good quality semi-improved grassland	49		64
No main habitat but additional habitats present		560	558
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,764</b>	<b>4,390</b>	<b>4,224*</b>

\* This is PLTOF data by habitat. It is 312 ha more than the PLTOF total from the same data set (at **3,912 ha**). Natural England state that some priority habitats can overlap, so the sum of areas of individual habitats will be greater than the total area covered by priority habitat.

Source Data: MEOPL Priority Habitat Inventory v2.3 2020, SSSI Condition April 2013 & 2021, © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2021. PLTOF © Natural England copyright 2025

## Area of woodland

In 2023, there were 1,928 ha of National Forestry Inventory woodland and 442 ha of trees outside woodlands (14.5% of the National Landscape).



### Legend

- |                      |         |             |                          |                      |             |
|----------------------|---------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Assumed woodland     | Conifer | Grassland   | Low density              | Mixed mainly conifer | Young trees |
| Broadleaved woodland | Felled  | Ground prep | Mixed mainly broadleaved | Shrub                |             |

National Forestry Inventory type	2013	2020	2023
Broadleaved	1,489	1,537	1,537
Conifer	125	136	114
Mixed	51	46	47*
Young trees	56	62	62
Shrub	49	50	50
Felled	22	14	37
Prepared for planting	26	23	23
Other woodland type			
Low density	-	-	7
Assumed woodland	-	-	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,818</b>	<b>1,868</b>	<b>1,928</b>

Source: MEOPL © Forestry Commission copyright (2013 & 2021). Taken from the Natural England Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England) dataset, dated September 2020; and the Forestry Commission National Forest Inventory dated March 2019. © Forestry Commission (2025). Contains data from Forest Research (2024). Contains Ordnance Survey Data, Crown Copyright 2025

In 2024, 31% of woodland is in active management (593 ha) (PLTOF)

In 2020, 36% of woodland was in active management (693 ha) (up from 35% in 2013) (MEOPL).

\* In 2023 'mixed' was made up of 31.8 ha mixed - mainly broadleaved and 15 ha mixed - mainly conifer

#### Trees outside existing woodlands:

In 2022, there were 441.6 ha of trees outside woodlands (includes 3.9 ha classed as orchard). Together, they cover 2.7% of the National Landscape area.

## Area of ancient woodland

In 2024, there are 596.1 ha of ancient woodland covering 3.5% of the National Landscape.



Ancient woodland has two parts, ancient and semi-natural ancient woodland (ASNW), and plantations on ancient woodland Sites (PAWS):

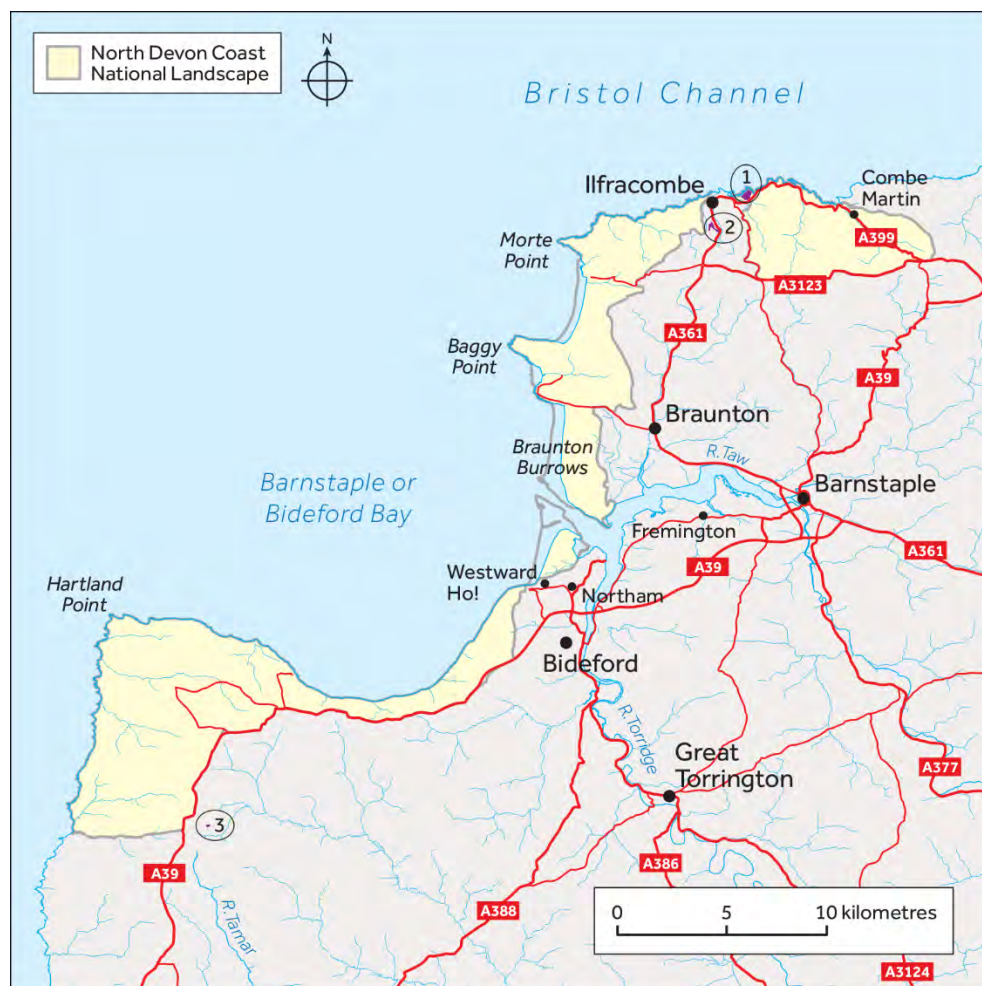
Ancient woodland by theme		Area in Ha
Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	ASNW	476.4
Ancient Replanted Woodland	PAWS	119.7
		596.1 ha

There has been no change since 2013.

Source: MEOPL Natural England-OS Open Government Licence July 2013. M:\Geo-Data\Habitats\_Species\Habitats\Habitat\_Inventories\_Ancient\_Woodland\Ancient\_Woodland\_NE\Ancient\_Woodland.gdb\Ancient\_Woodland (June 2022). PLTOF © Natural England copyright 2024. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024.

## Locally protected sites

Statutory Local Nature Reserves cover 0.1% of the National Landscape. In addition, 55 non-statutory designated sites cover around 5.5% of the area.



### Legend

Locally protected sites within the National Landscape

- 1 Hillsborough

Locally protected sites close to the National Landscape

- 2 Cairn Woodland
- 3 Meddon Green

A Local Nature Reserve is a statutory designated site, featuring locally important wildlife and/or geological interests.

Type	Cover	Area (Ha)
Local Nature Reserves	0.1%	22 ha
County Wildlife Sites	5.5%	889 ha
	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>911</b>

Designation of non-statutory sites is at the local or county level. County Wildlife Sites are designated for their local nature conservation value and important habitats and/or species, based on locally agreed criteria. The frameworks are managed by Devon Biodiversity Record Centre.

The National Landscape contains:

- 55 County Wildlife Sites (up from 53 in 2018 and 2009)

Note: There is incomplete condition data for County Wildlife Sites or priority habitats at the National Landscape or finer scale.

Source: PLTOF © Natural England copyright 2024. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024. CWS data © DBRC.

## Length of hedgerows and other traditional field boundaries

In 2024, 2,000 km of hedgerows and/or other traditional field boundaries are recorded.

Source: PLTOF © Rural Payments Agency. Crown copyright and database rights 2024 OS AC0000849761 and © Natural England 2024. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024 AC0000851168.



## Ecological status of rivers

In 2024, 54% of rivers and 25% of water catchments have a good ecological status. The transitional/coastal waters and groundwater bodies have a moderate or poor status.



Under the UK Water Framework Directive, waterbodies are rated as high, good, moderate, poor or bad status. Only the waterbodies that are described as 'good' or 'high' are in a sustainable and healthy condition; the rest all need a greater level of protection and management if they are to improve to a good level of health.

	Length of rivers (Km)			N° of coastal bodies			N° ground water bodies			N° waterbody catchments		
	2013	2021	2024	2013	2021	2024	2013	2021	2024	2013	2021	2024
High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Good	24	23	23	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	-	6
Moderate	29	17	19	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	-	9
Poor	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	-	2
Bad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
No status	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>% with High or Good status</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>25%</b>

Source: PLTOF © Environment Agency copyright and database rights 2024. All rights reserved. © Crown copyright and database rights 2024, OS AC0000807064. © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2015 & 2016. All rights reserved. WFD Groundwater Bodies Cycle 2, derived in part from 1:50,000 and 1:250,000 scale digital data under permission from British Geological Survey. ©NERC. © Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 100024198. © Natural England copyright 2013.

## People

In this section, we set out the comparative size of settlements in and around the National Landscape and present the characteristics of households and resident population characteristics (population numbers, age profile, ethnicity, gender, health, relative wealth, level of deprivation, employment profiles, and the means of travel). There is a consideration of trends in tourism and the opportunities for access and recreation, including access to public transport.

The Office for National Statistics undertakes a census every 10 years that gives a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. All information is anonymised and the actual census records are secure for 100 years. The last census was in 2021. The Office for National Statistics did provide output area population estimates allocated to the designation areas on a best fit basis. Defra is now releasing additional social data as a part of its Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF). It has calculated the proportion of actual land area for each Output Area within the National Landscape boundary. This is therefore different from the ONS figure. PLTOF data will set a new baseline. But for this report, we compare changes between 2011 and 2021. The nationally adjusted data is only for 2021. We use the best fit output area data to monitor trends since 2011.

Defra and its agencies do provide some data cut to the National Landscape boundary, running from 2013 to 2022. This is through the national framework for monitoring environmental outcomes (MEOPL) in National Parks and National Landscapes. Devon County Council, the District Councils, and the National Landscape Team supply rights of way and other recreational data.



## Administrative boundaries

The National Landscape lies within the areas of Devon County Council and two District Councils (North Devon and Torrridge).

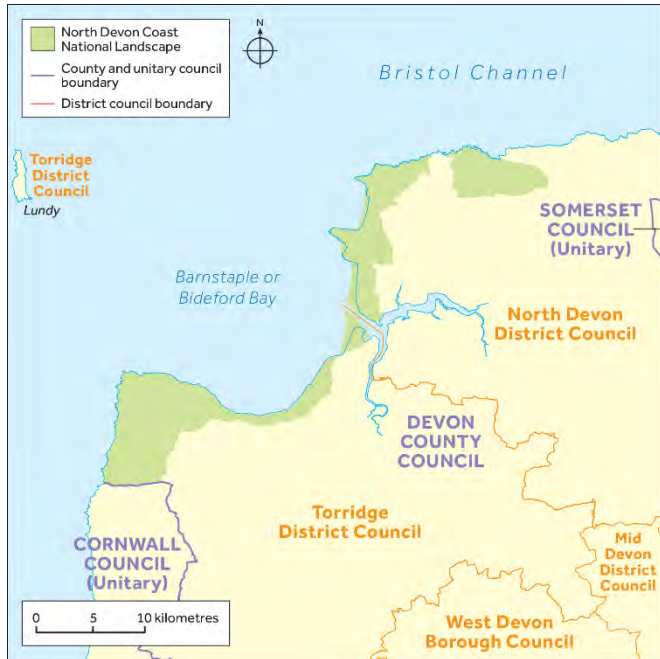
### Census Output Areas for 2011 and 2021

There are 34 output areas



Source: GIS data obtained from [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk) \*Note - The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (Sections 84 & 89) define the relevant local authorities.

There are 15 parish councils.



**Legend – Parish Councils**

- 1 Welcombe
- 2 Hartland
- 3 Clovelly
- 4 Woolfardisworthy
- 5 Parkham
- 6 Alwington
- 7 Abbotsham
- 8 Northam
- 9 Braunton
- 10 Georgeham
- 11 Morteohoe
- 12 Ilfracombe
- 13 Bittadon
- 14 Berrynarbor
- 15 Combe Martin

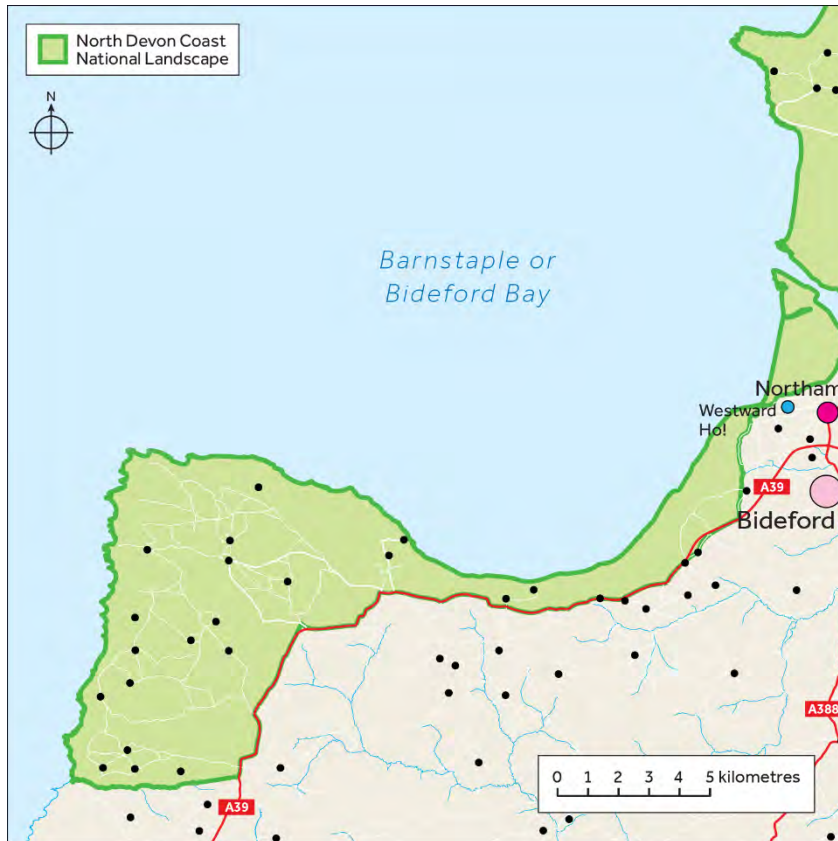
Note: There are no residential properties within the National Landscape part of Bittadon Parish

Source: GIS data obtained from [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk)

# Characteristics of resident population

## Comparative size of settlements

The largest settlement within the National Landscape is Combe Martin with around 2,700 residents, other settlements have less than 1,000 residents.



**Legend**  
 Size of population

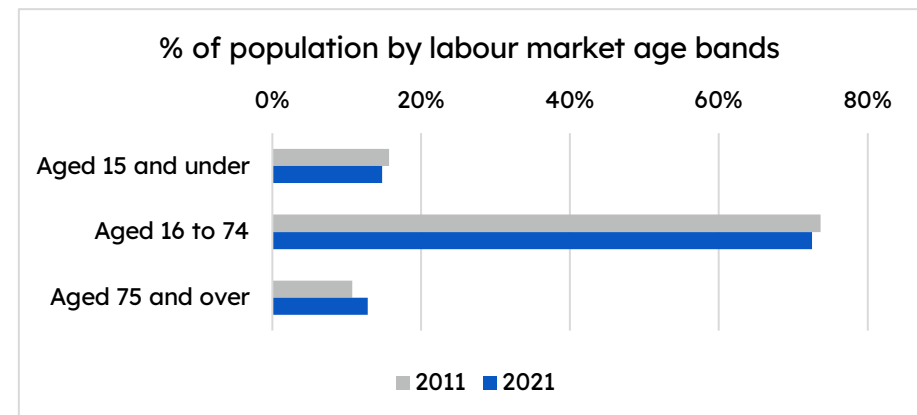
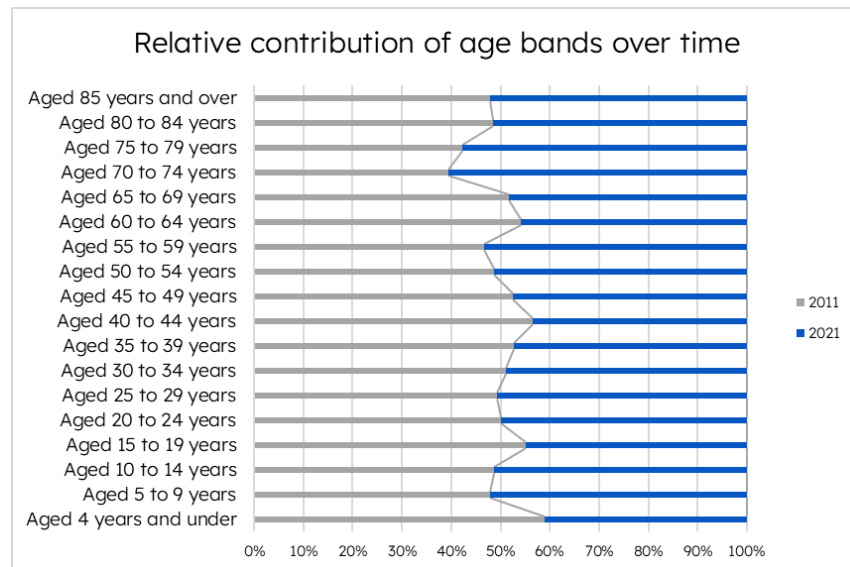
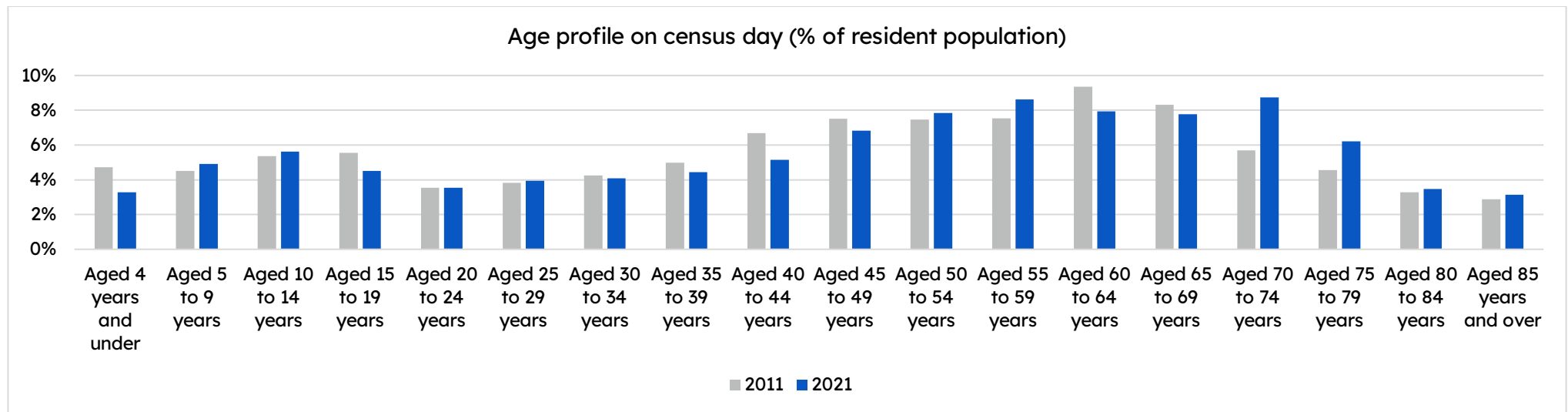
- 10,000–50,000
- 5,000–10,000
- 2,000–5,000
- 1,000–2,000
- Under 1,000

Most settlements within the National Landscape have a population of less than 1,000 people. There is one exception; Combe Martin has around 2,700 residents. There are larger settlements close to the area. Ilfracombe is the largest, with just over 9,200 residents, and Westward Ho! has 3,470. Braunton has around 6,600 residents, and Northam 5,200. Slightly further away, Bideford has approximately 19,480 residents and Barnstaple 31,270.

Source: City populations (<https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/southwestengland/>); OpenStreetMap data is available under the Open Database License

## Population numbers and age profile

From PLTOF data: The estimated total population on census day 2021 for the National Landscape was 12,300 and the average age in the National Landscape was 48 (41 in England).

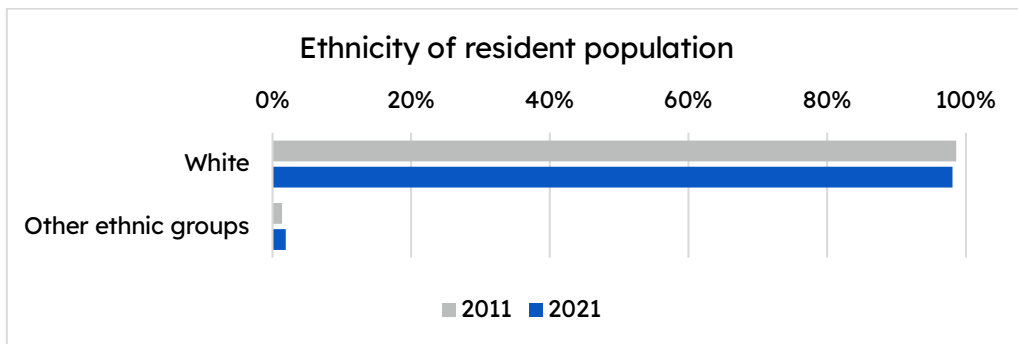


Population numbers have fallen slightly since 2011, by approximately 2.6%. The average age of the population is 48 years of age. There was a population 'bulge' of 60–64-year-olds in 2011 (9.3% of the population). In 2021, this cohort (now aged 70–74) and has dropped to 8.7% of the population. A new 'bulge' at 55–59 has developed in 2021. By 2021, those aged 15 and under is down by 1%, the working age population (16–74) is down by 1.1%, and those aged 75 and over is up by 2.1% when compared to 2011.

Source: Based on allocation of Output Areas, Census 2021. These estimates are based on National Landscape boundaries as of 2022. Output area population estimates have been allocated to National Landscapes on a best fit basis. ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 13 October 2025] 2011: QS103EW; Tables 2021: TS007a and TS007b

## Ethnicity and gender of resident population

There has been little change in either ethnicity or gender between 2011 and 2021. In 2021, 98.1% of the resident population classified as 'white' (down from 98.6% in 2011), 50.7% were female (up from 50.4% in 2011), and 49.3% were male (down from 49.6% in 2011).



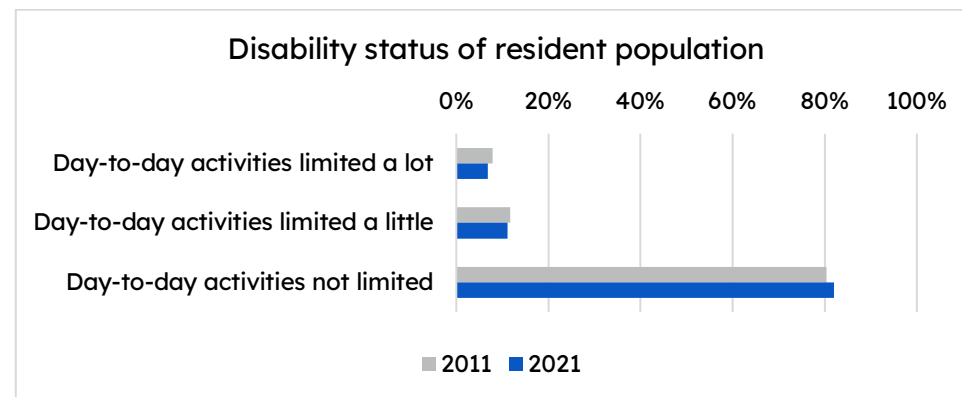
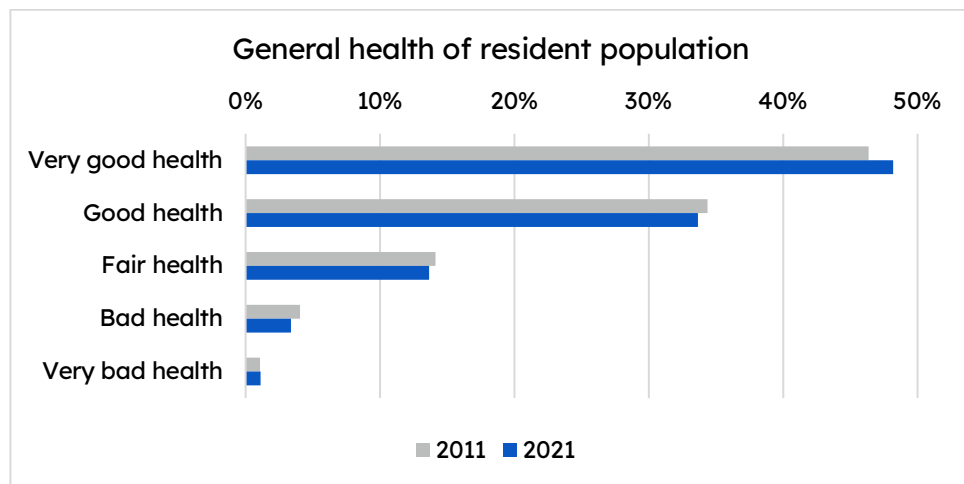
Gender of resident population

	2011	2021
Female	50.4%	50.7%
Male	49.6%	49.3%

Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 13 October 2025] Tables 2011: QS104EW & KS201EW, 2021: TS008 & TS021

## Health of resident population

In 2021, 48% of the resident population enjoyed very good health; only 1% suffered very bad health. There is no material difference with the 2011 data. In 2021, 82% of the resident population suffered no long-term health conditions. The 18% who did have long-term health condition were listed as disabled under the Equality Act.



Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 13 October 2025] Tables 2011: QS302EW & QS303EW, 2021: TS037 & TS038

## Relative wealth of the resident population

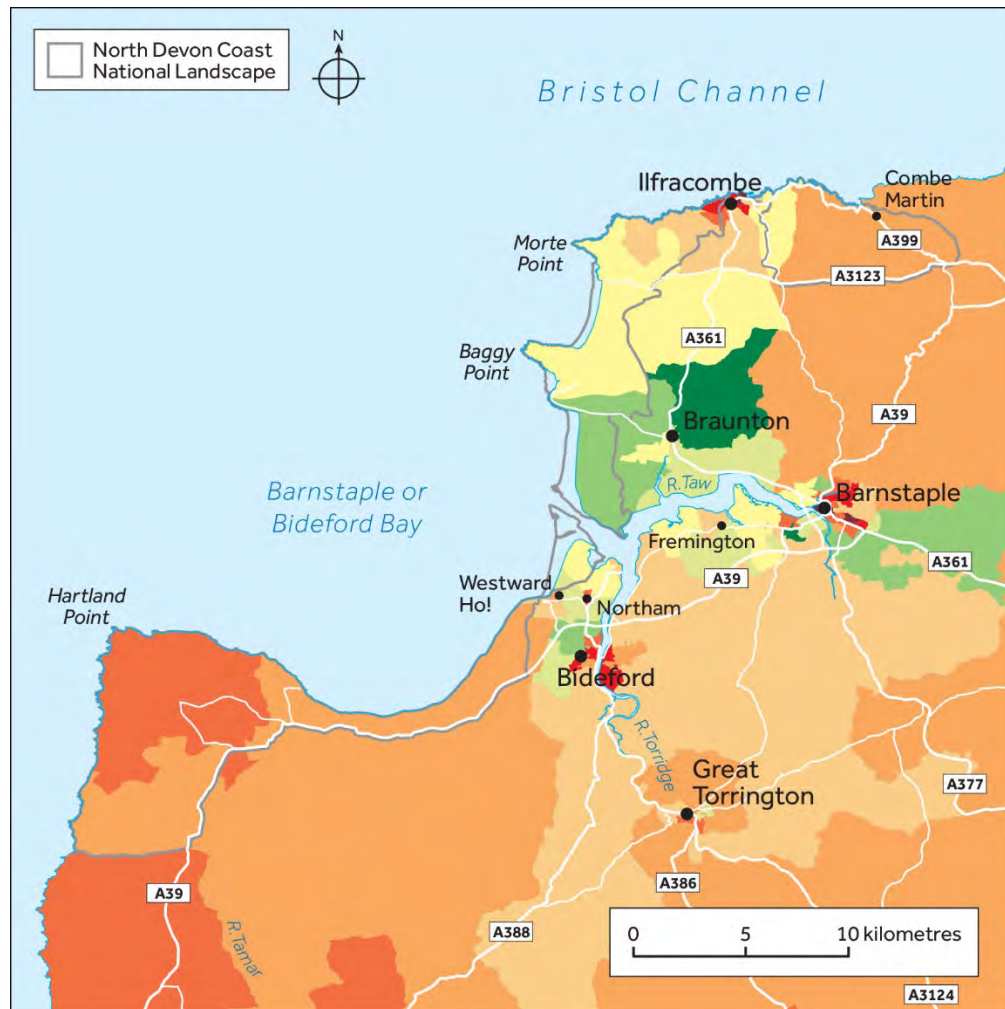
From PLTOF data, the average earnings per month were £2,000 in 2021. For rural areas in England, it was £2,300.

Dividing house prices by annual earnings creates a housing affordability ratio. In 2023, the National Landscape house-price affordability ratio was 10 (the average for all the National Landscapes was 11). This means that full-time employees could expect to spend 10 times their earnings on purchasing a home in the National Landscape. Full-time employees in England could expect to spend around 9 times their annual earnings buying a home.

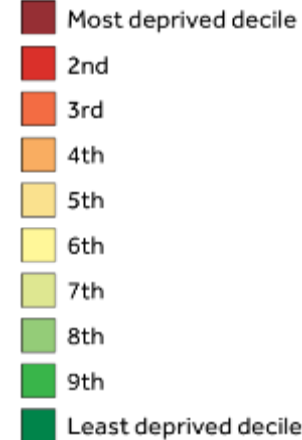
Source: Based on apportioning of Middle-layer Super Output Areas, Census 2021. ONS Crown Copyright Reserved

## Levels of deprivation

Across the area, the average decile of deprivation is 5. A part of Northam Parish is in the 8<sup>th</sup> least deprived decile. In contrast, the Parishes of Hartland and Ilfracombe are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> most deprived decile. The parishes of Combe Martin, Berrynarbor, Abbotsham, Alwington, Parkham, Woolfardisworthy and Clovelly are in the 4<sup>th</sup> most deprived decile.

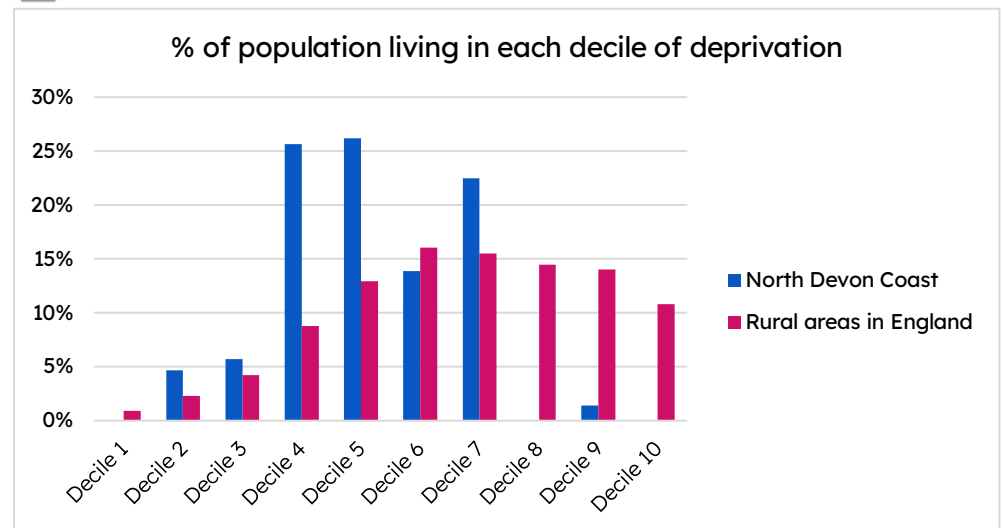


### Legend



The Indices of Deprivation provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) across England, based on seven different fields of deprivation:

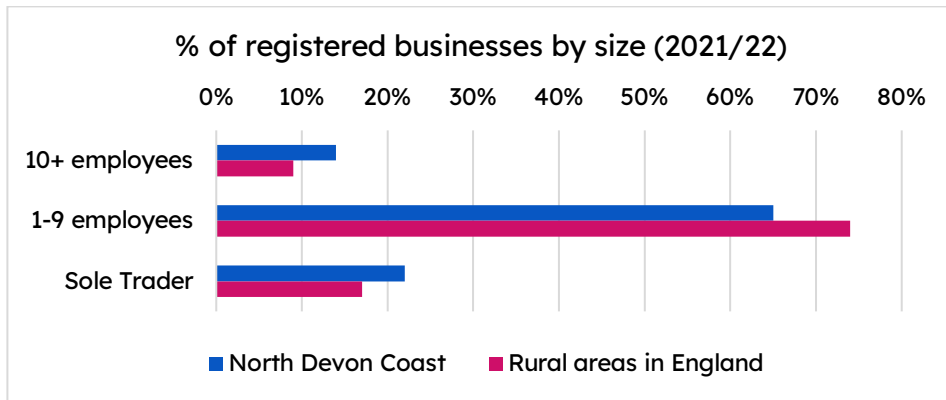
- Income Deprivation;
- Employment Deprivation;
- Education;
- Skills and Training Deprivation;
- Health Deprivation and Disability;
- Crime;
- Barriers to Housing and Services; and
- Living Environment Deprivation.



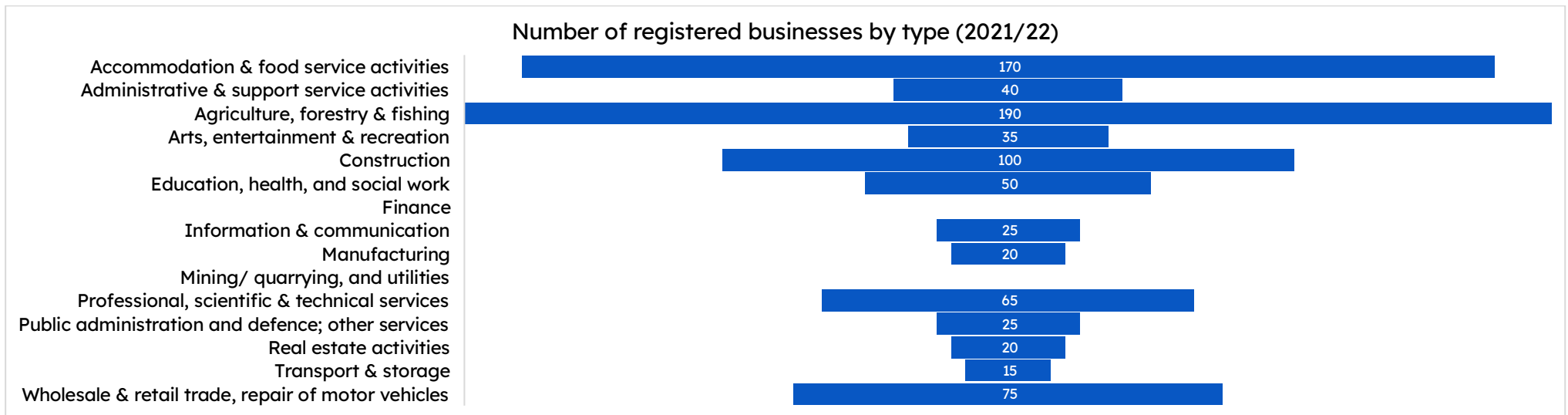
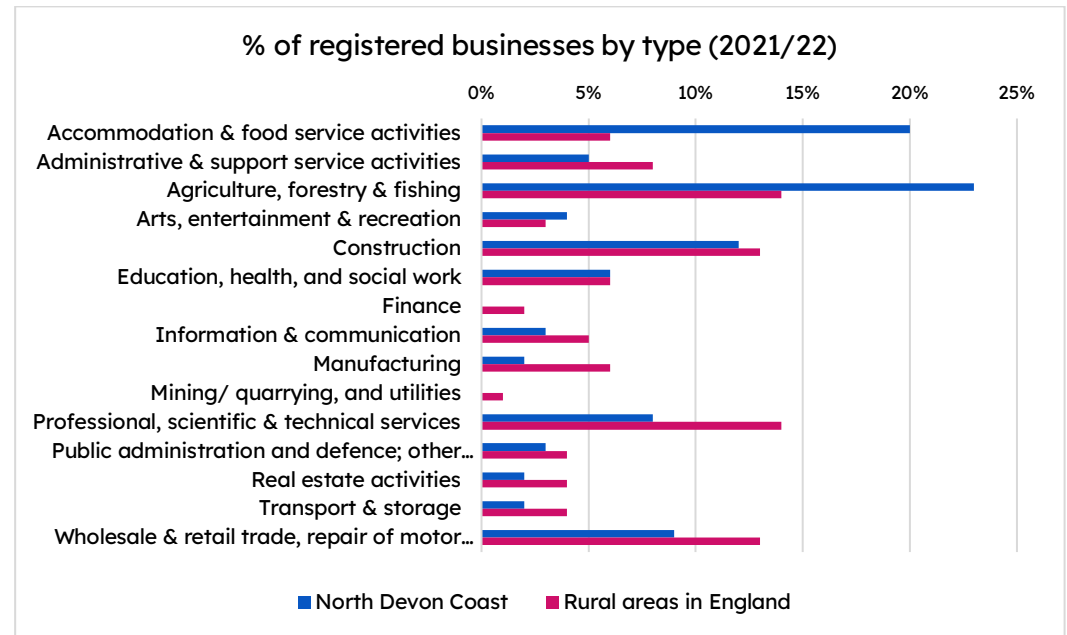
Source: <https://data.cdrc.ac.uk/dataset/index-multiple-deprivation-imd> and PLTOF Based on apportioning of Lower-layer Super Output Areas, Census 2021

## Registered businesses by size and type

From PLTOF data, there are 840 business units registered within the national landscape; tourism, agriculture and fishing dominate.



Most businesses employ less than nine employees. There is a greater proportion of sole traders within the National Landscape than the average for rural areas in England. The dominant business type is agriculture, forestry and fishing.



Within the National Landscape, 'Accommodation & food services' and 'Agriculture, forestry & fishing' represent 43% of business types in Devon, compared to only 20% across rural England. And only 8% of businesses are in professional services, compared to 14% across rural areas in England.

Source: PLTOF Based on allocation of Output Areas

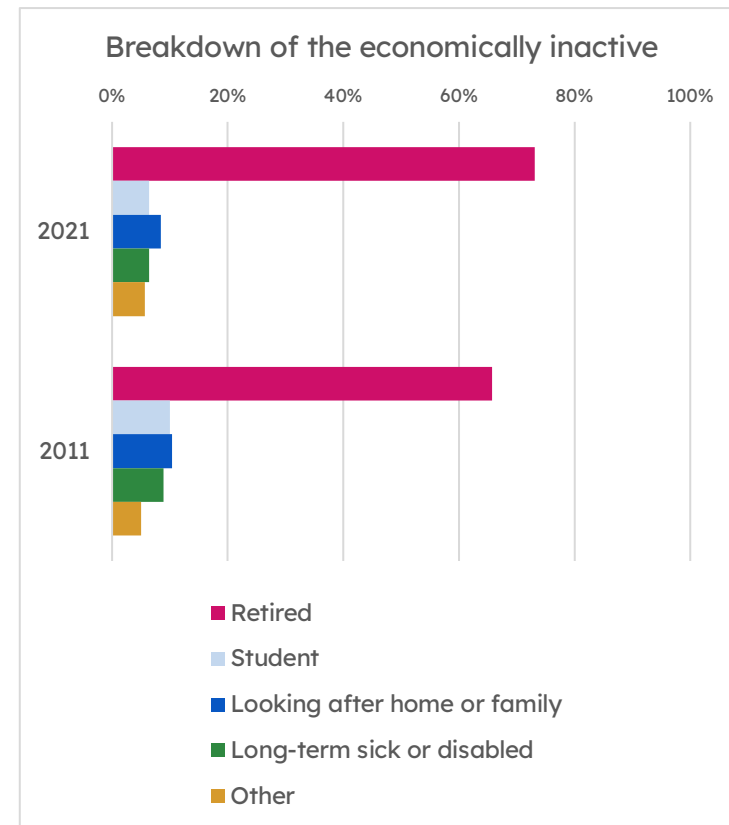
## Employment profiles of resident population

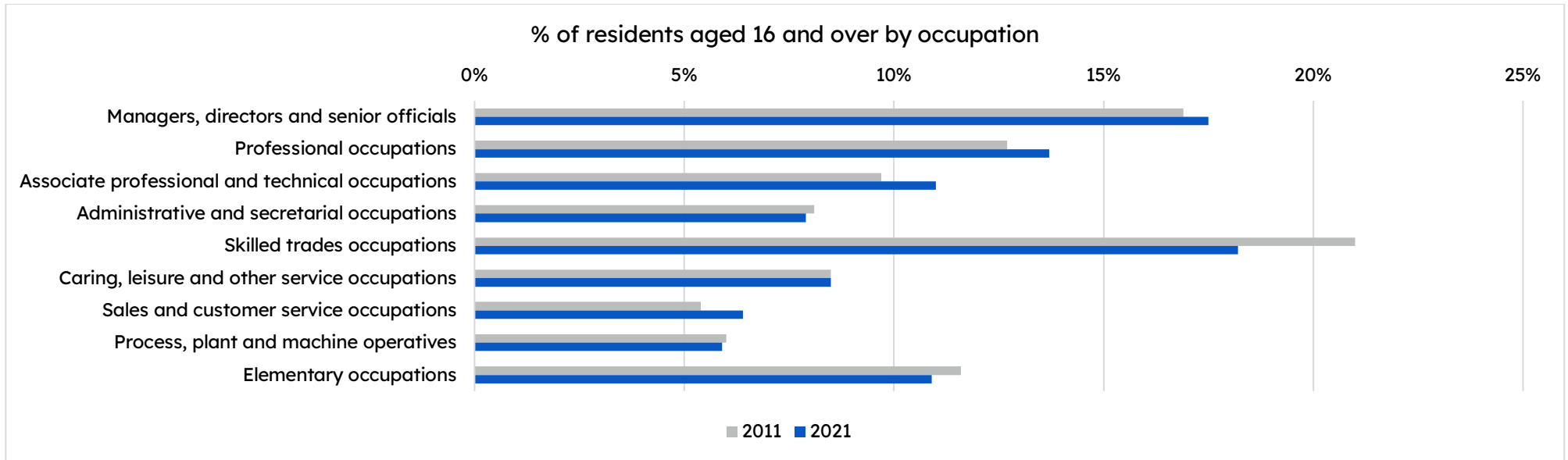
Between 2011 & 2021: there has been a 11% increase in those residents not seeking work (73% of those not seeking work were retired in 2021, up from 66% in 2011). There has been an increase of 3% in professional occupations and a 3.5% decrease in skilled trades and manual labour. Health, construction and agricultural roles have increased. There has been a decrease in accommodation & food services (down 2.2%), transport and manufacturing employment.

### Employment status

	2011	2021
Employed	62.8%	53.2%
Seeking work	2.6%	1.9%
Full-time student	2%	1.1%
Not seeking work*	32.6%	43.8%

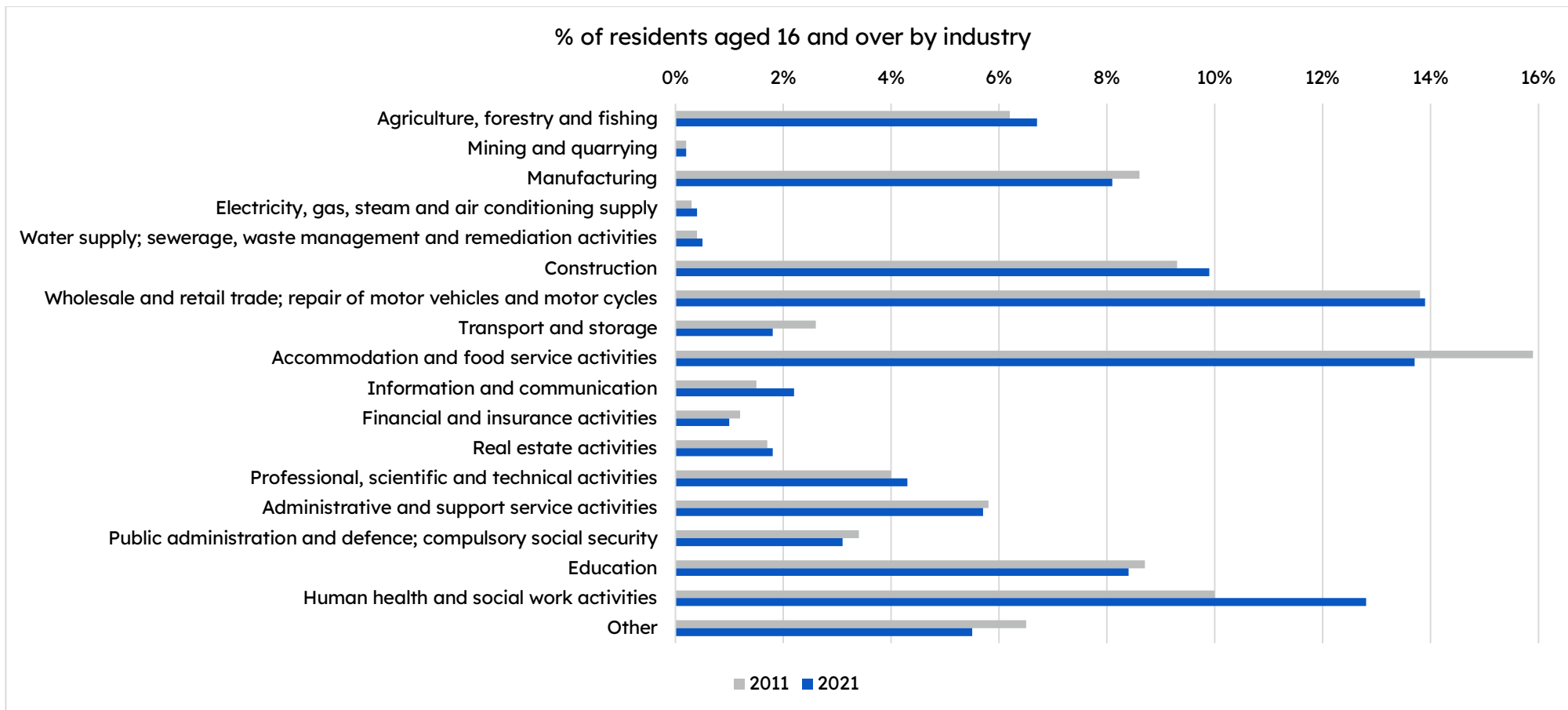
\*Includes 21.3% (2011) / 31.7% (2021) retirees





There has been:

- An increase in associate professional (+1.3%), professional occupations (+1%) and managerial and customer service roles (+0.6%)
- A decrease in skilled trades (-2.8%), and elementary occupations (-0.7%)



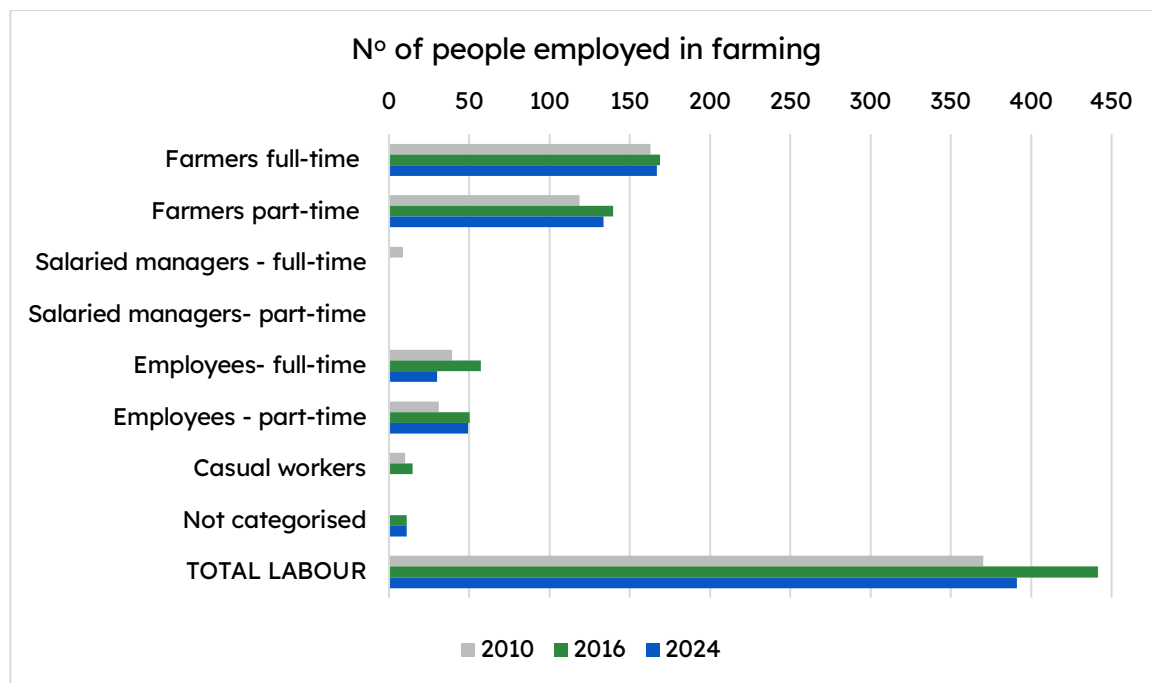
There has been:

- An increase in health and social work (+2.8%), construction (+0.6%), and agriculture & fisheries (+0.5%)
- A decrease in accommodation & food (-2.2%), other (-1%), transport (-0.8%) and manufacturing (-0.5%)

Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 13 October 2025] Tables 2011: KS605EW to KS607EW and KS608EW to KS610EW: 2021: TS060A & TS063, PP009 & PP011

## Employment in farming

Employment in farming has increased by 5.7% during the last 10 years. In 2024, 391 people were employed in farming (3% of the resident population). (Click [Agricultural land-use](#) to see more about agriculture)



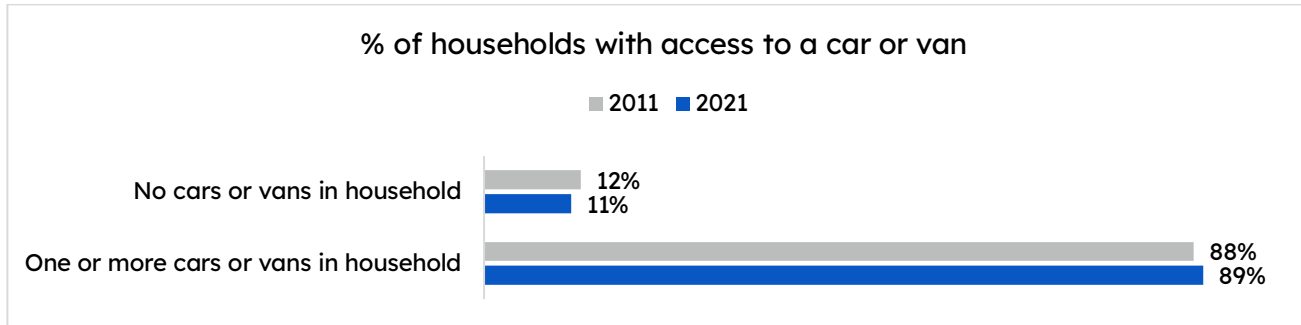
The number of full-time farmers in 2024 was 167, allowing for statistical error, this has been stable since 2010. There was an increase of 15 part-time farmers during the same period (+12.6%).

There has been a small fall in the number of full-time employees, a decrease of 9 people (-23%) between 2010 and 2024. The number of part-time employees increased by 18 (+58%) during the same period.

Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-june>

## Access to car or van

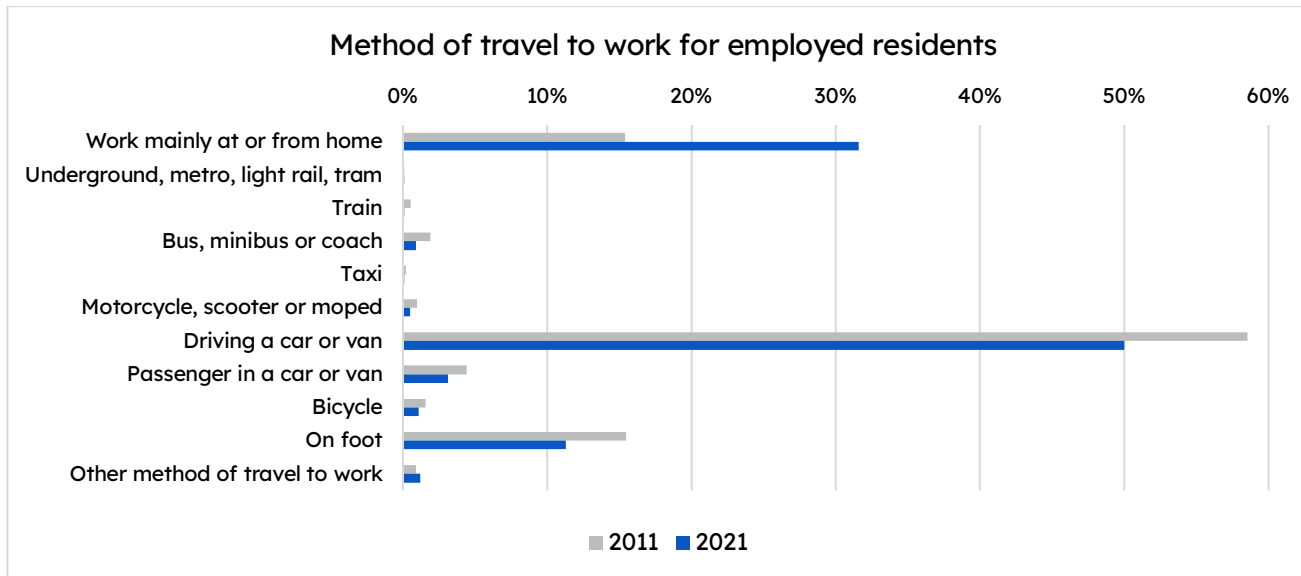
In 2021, 89% of the resident population had access to at least one car or van, up from 88% in 2011.



Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 13 October 2025] 2011: Table KS404EW; 2021: Table TS045

## Travel to work

In 2021, 32% of employed residents worked from home, up from 15% in 2011. In 2011, 60% of employed residents drove a car to work; this reduced to 50% in 2021.



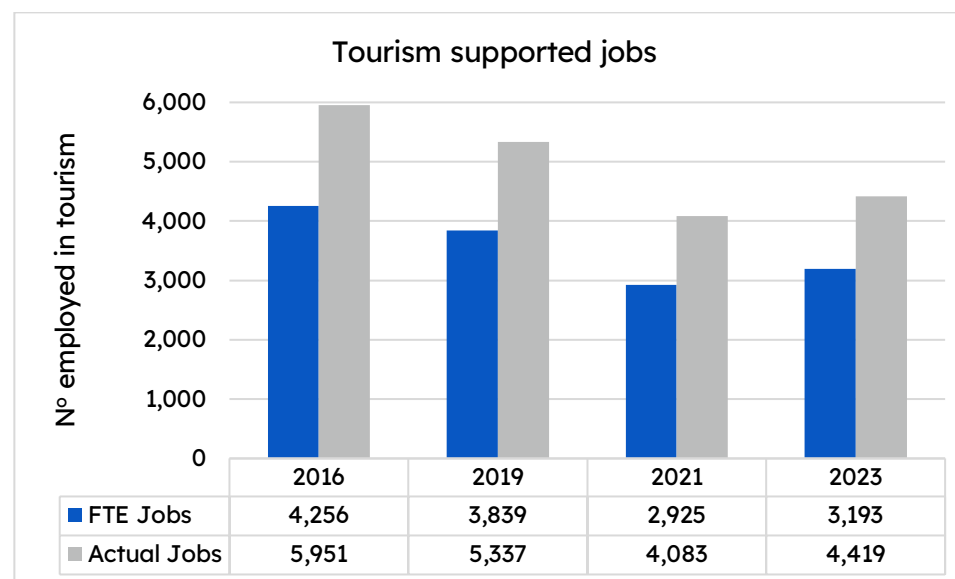
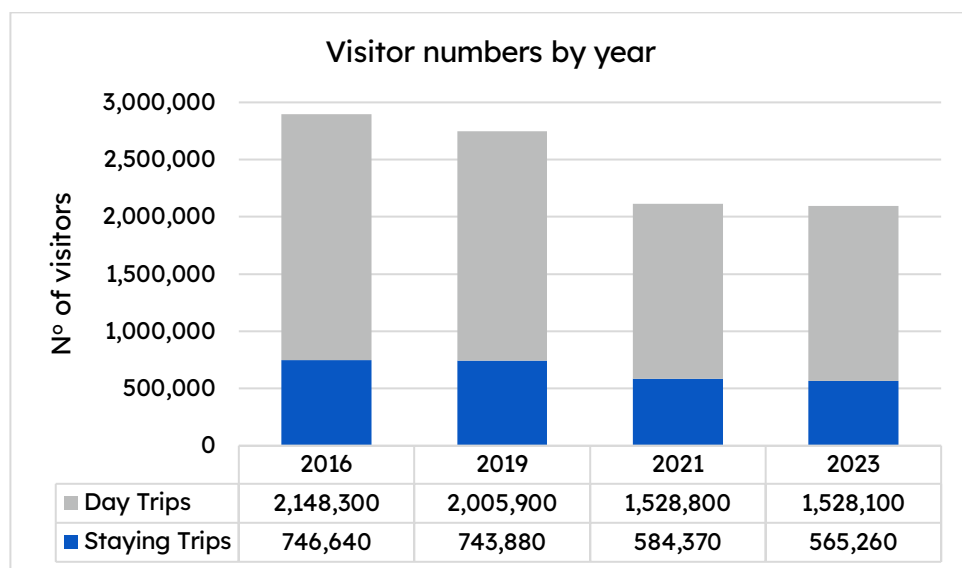
The most striking change between 2011 and 2021 is the significant increase in the number of people working mainly at or from their home.

Consequently, the use of all forms of transport has fallen.

Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 13 October 2025] 2011: Table QS701EW; 2021: TS061

## Tourism Trends

In 2023, there were approximately 2 million visitors, down from 3 million in 2016 (-28%). Visitor spend has remained at £247m pa since 2016. Employment supported by the sector in 2023 was 3,193 FTE posts, a fall from 4,256 in 2016 (-25%).



Commissioned research on 9 coastal parishes within and serving the National Landscape (including Ilfracombe, Braunton and Northam) provides indicative figures on the tourism sector using the Cambridge Model. This shows a significant change with total visitor numbers in decline from nearly 3 million visitors pre-Covid to just over 2 million in 2023. This is a 28% reduction in visitor numbers since 2016, a flatlining of visitor spend since 2016 and a consequent reduction in employment supported by the sector by 25%.

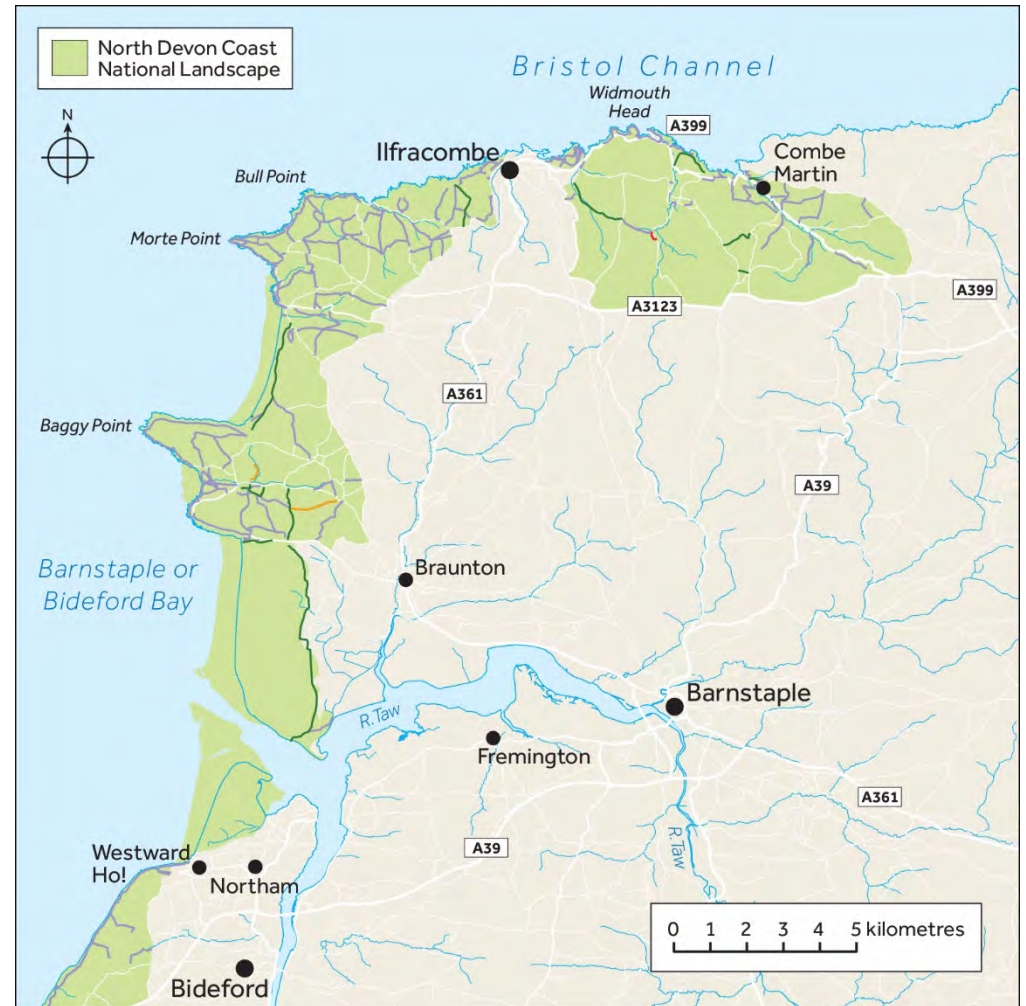
This has significant consequences for the economy and landscape of the National Landscape demonstrated in changes in visitor accommodation types and services, decline in the number of tourism related businesses, diversification pressures and lack of affordable housing both owned and rented.

A 2022 study showed 7% of dwellings in these nine coastal parishes were second homes, ranging from 4% in Braunton to 30% in Morteheo. Airdna listings indicate nearly 3,000 entries on Airbnb or VRBO with an average 50% occupancy rate in these parishes.

Sources: The South West Research Company (2025): Tourism Trends in the North Devon Coast National Landscape 2016-2023; Housing stock in North Devon and Torridge Districts 2022; Airdna listings (Airbnb and VRBO), Devon County Council 2022.

# Rights of Way

There are 213.5 kilometres of rights of way recorded in the National Landscape. There is no report on the condition of these routes.



## Legend

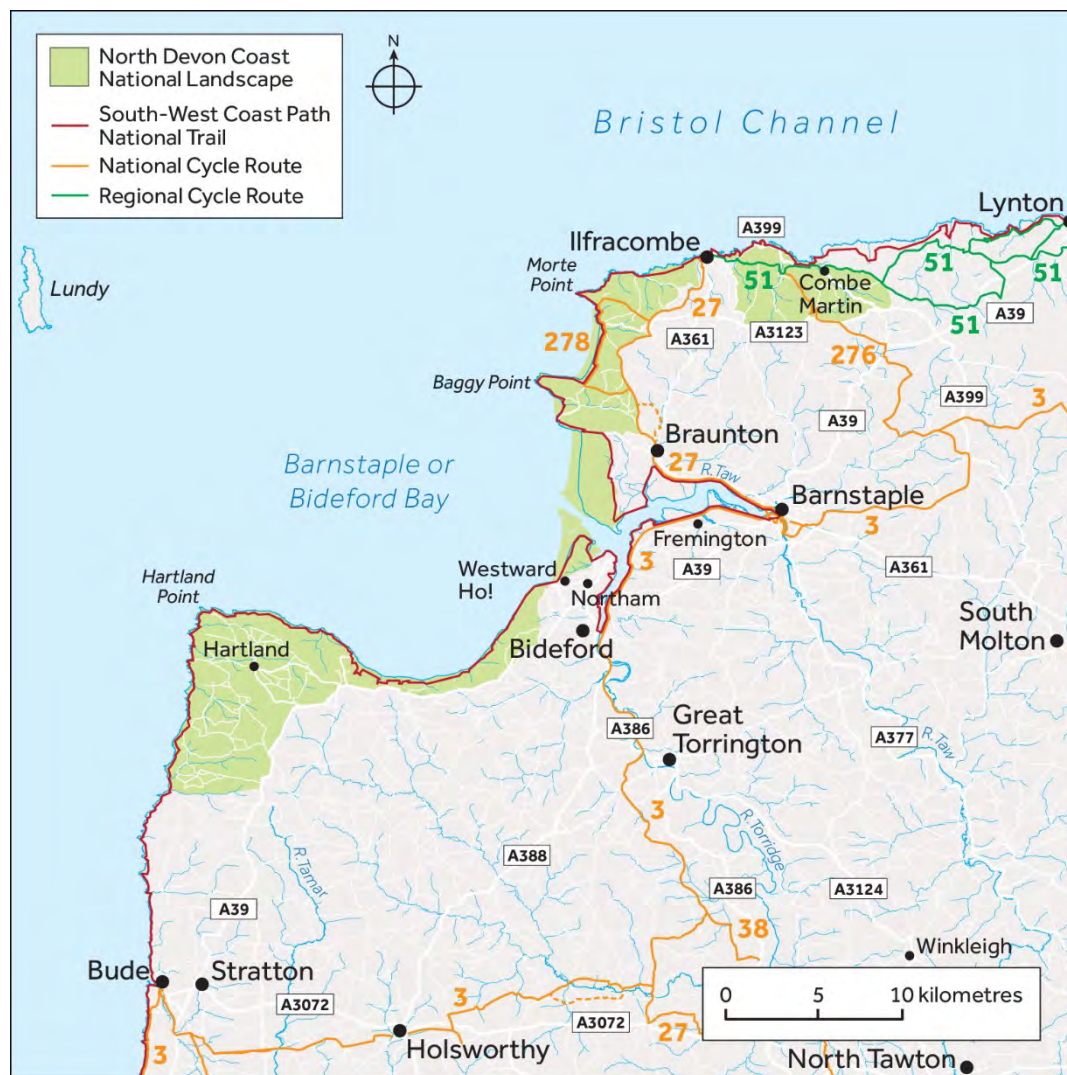
- Bridleway
- Byway open to all traffic
- Restricted byway
- Footpath

Type	Length (km)
Footpaths	179.4
Bridleways	30.7
Byway (BOAT byway open to all traffic)	3.1
Restricted byway (RUPP)	0.3
<b>Total rights of way in the National Landscape</b>	<b>213.5</b>

Source: Personal communication Devon County Council December 2025, Devon County Council Environment Viewer 2025  
<https://www.devon.gov.uk/prow/prow-maps/interactive-map/> with links provided through <https://www.rowmaps.com> and Magic Map  
<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

## Recreational routes

There is a part of one National Trail and one national cycling route within in the National Landscape.



National Trail – the South West Coastal Path runs for 630 miles, from Minehead on the edge of Exmoor to the shores of Poole Harbour; 89.7 km passes through the NL. With 19th century origins as a coastguard patrol route to restrict smuggling, it is England’s longest National Trail. It does not pass through the National Landscape but the other recreational routes link to it.

National Cycle Route 278 is a beautiful 7-mile loop off Route 27. It passes through Georgeham village, Putsborough and then along the coast to Woolacombe. At Morteheo the route turns east and continues back to meet Route 27.

Regional Cycle Route 51 is a 39-mile waymarked route from Ilfracombe to Minehead via Combe Martin and Lynton. From Lynton, the route continues along the East Lyn River and around Porlock Bay. The final section finishes at the Minehead train station.

Lying close to the National Landscape boundary:

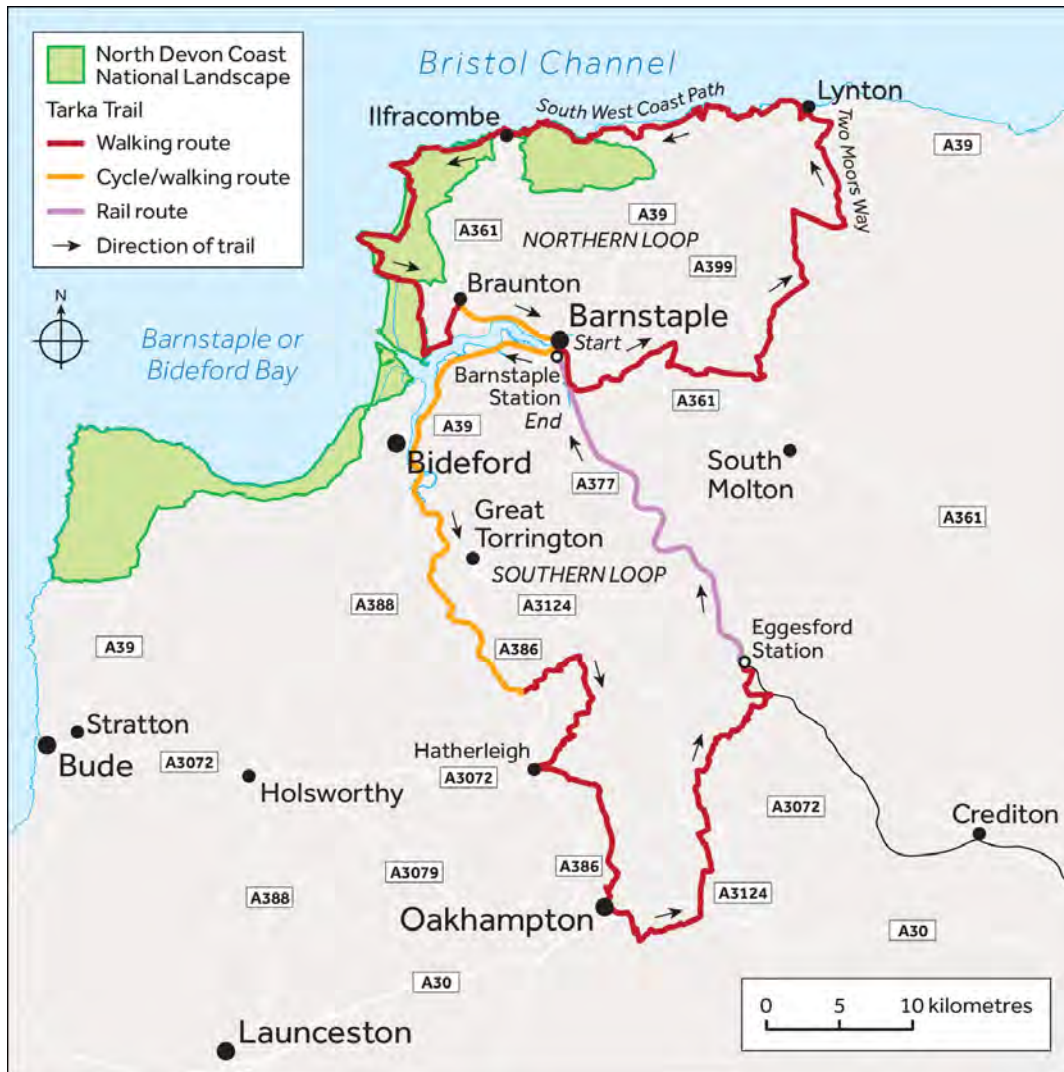
- National Cycle Route 27 is a 99-mile route connecting Plymouth to Ilfracombe. It combines the beaches and estuaries of North Devon with the lush green valleys of West Country rivers. Many sections are traffic-free and flat, making them ideal for families or less experienced cyclists.
- National Cycle Route 3 is a 328-mile cycling route connecting Land’s End in Cornwall to Bristol via the beautiful, verdant countryside of Devon, Cornwall and Somerset.

Note: NCR 3 and 27 form a part of the Tarka Trail, see below.

Source: © Natural England 2024, reproduced with the permission of Natural England, [www.gov.uk/natural-England](http://www.gov.uk/natural-England). © Crown Copyright and database right 2024. Ordnance Survey licence number AC0000851168. Each of the local authorities, with links provided through <https://www.rowmaps.com> and Magic Map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

## Tarka Trail

A 180-mile figure-eight loop trail.



Source: © 2025 The Tarka Trail North Devon <https://tarkatrail.org.uk/>

### Tarka Trail - 180-mile figure-eight loop trail

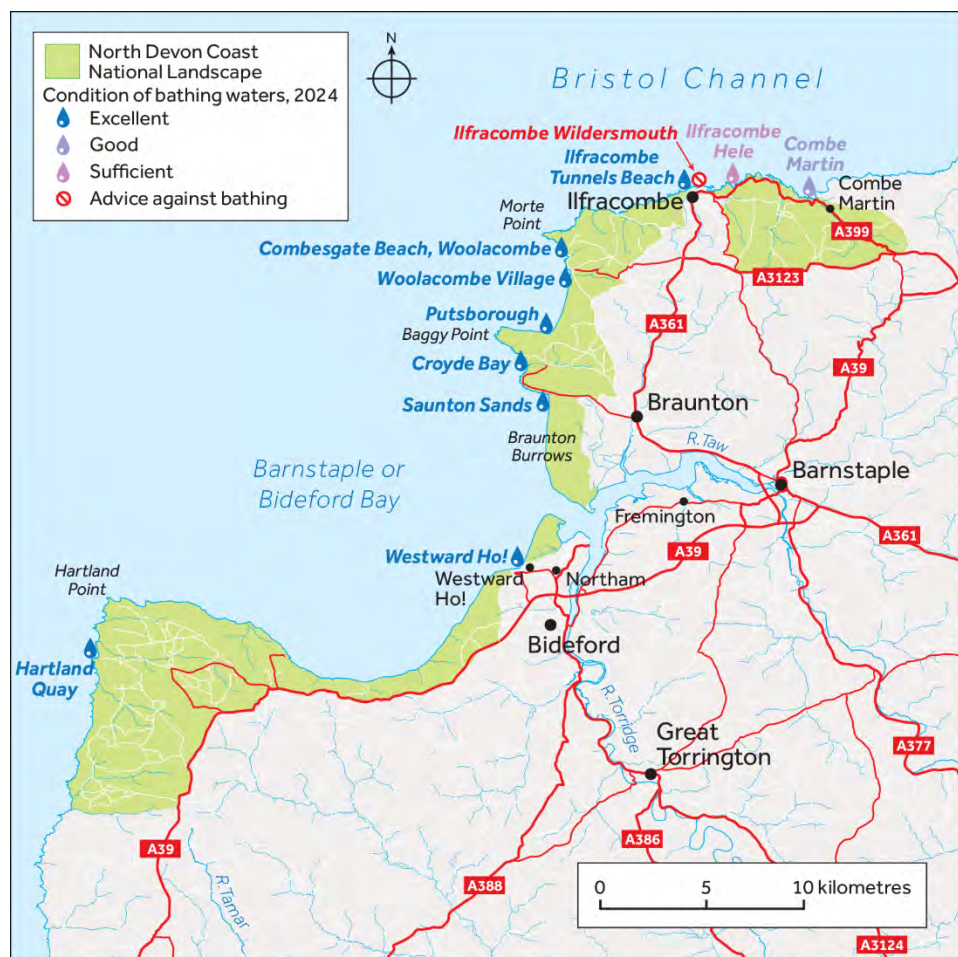
The Tarka Trail makes use of existing public footpaths and bridleways incorporating the South West Coast Path, The Two Moors Way and Routes 3 and 27 of the National Cycle Network.

It is a figure-eight loop centred in the historic market town of Barnstaple. Each loop would take several days to complete, but there are shorter sections or circular walks available all along the trail for day trips.

- 30 miles of shared-use, walking and cycling section on a former railway line
- 18 miles of the Tarka Line train service between Exeter and Barnstaple
- 55 miles shared with the South West Coast Path

## Location and condition of designated bathing waters

There are 10 designated bathing waters within the NL. In 2024, 8 were rated ‘excellent’, Combe Martin was rated ‘good’, and Ilfracombe Hele was rated ‘sufficient’.



### Sites designated under the 2013 Bathing Water Regulations:

Name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Combe Martin	poor	sufficient	good	good	good
Ilfracombe Hele	good	good	good	good	sufficient
Ilfracombe Tunnels	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent
Combesgate Beach	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent
Woolacombe Village	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent
Putsborough	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent
Croyde Bay	good	good	excellent	excellent	excellent
Saunton Sands	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent
Westward Ho!	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent
Hartland Quay	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent

### Classification key:

Parameter	“Excellent”	“Good”	“Sufficient”	“Poor”
Intestinal enterococci	100 cfu/100 ml*	200 cfu/100 ml	185 cfu/100ml	Sufficient standard not met
Escherichia coli1	250 cfu/100 ml	500 cfu/100 ml	500 cfu/100 ml	

\*cfu/100 ml = Colony forming units per 100 millilitres

Just outside the NL, Ilfracombe Wildersmouth was rated poor with advice against swimming. This does not mean bathing is banned or that a beach is closed, beaches remain open for people to enjoy.

Note: Water quality at designated bathing water sites in England is assessed by the Environment Agency. From May to September, regular assessments measure current water quality, and at many sites daily pollution risk forecasts are issued. Annual ratings classify each site as excellent, good, sufficient or poor based on measurements taken over a four-year period.

Source: Environment Agency 2025, Open Government Licence v3.0, Crown Copyright and Database Right. <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/>

# Location of North Devon World Surfing Reserve

There are 4 World Surfing Reserve destinations within the NL.



Established in 2023, the North Devon World Surfing Reserve covers an approximately 30 km of coastline. It contains a high density of outstanding surfing destinations, including iconic breaks such as Croyde, Saunton, Woolacombe and Lynmouth, among others.

There is a Local Stewardship Plan that aims to protect and enhance the local surf breaks and their related ecosystems. A surf ecosystem is the geophysical components, the plants and animals, and the human interactions, that make a place special.

Destination sites within the National Landscape:

- Woolacombe Village
- Putsborough
- Croyde Bay
- Saunton Sands

Attributes:

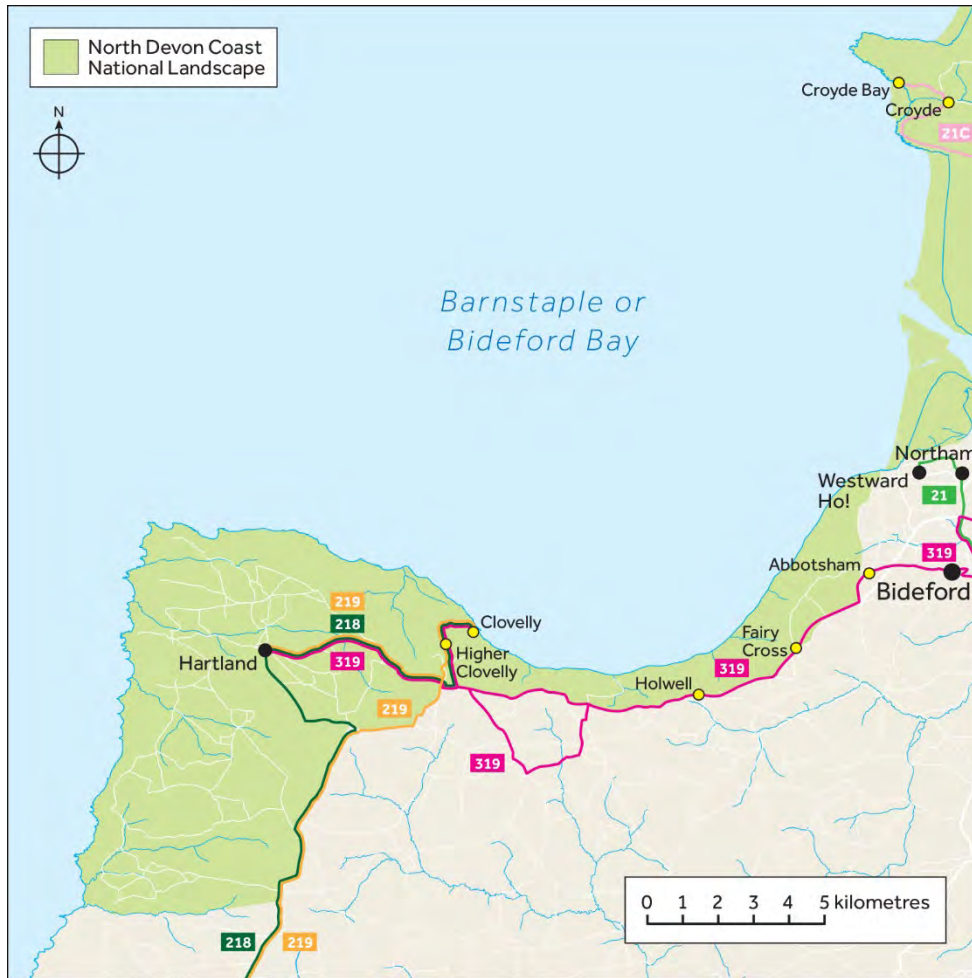
- Water quality and constancy
- Environmental characteristics
- Surf culture and history



Source: Save the Waves at <https://www.surfingengland.org/2022/04/04/north-devon-announced-as-12th-world-surfing-reserve/> and North Devon Surf Reserve at <https://www.northdevonsurfreserve.org>

## Access to public transport

No Sunday services in the National Landscape but weekdays generally good; some limited single journeys on market days.



Routes shown on map:

Seven days a week

21	Barnstaple Bus Station - Westward Ho! Swanswood Gardens (Stagecoach South West) - 26 return trips (5:15 am to midnight)
21B	Iffracombe St James' Place Gardens - Upcott Avenue (Stagecoach South West) - 30 return trips (5:30 am to midnight)

Six days a week

21C	Georgeham David's Hill - Sticklepath High Wall (Stagecoach South West) - 11 return trips
31	Iffracombe - Mullacott Cross - Woolacombe - Mullacott Cross - Iffracombe (Taw & Torridge) - 10 circuits
218	Hartland - Bude (Go Cornwall Bus) - 1 return trip
219	Hartland - Bude (Go Cornwall Bus) - 8 return trips
301	Combe Martin - Iffracombe - Barnstaple (Stagecoach South West) - 11 return trips
303	Barnstaple - Woolacombe (Stagecoach South West) - 5 return trips
319	Barnstaple - Hartland (Stagecoach South West) - 6 return trips

Two days a week

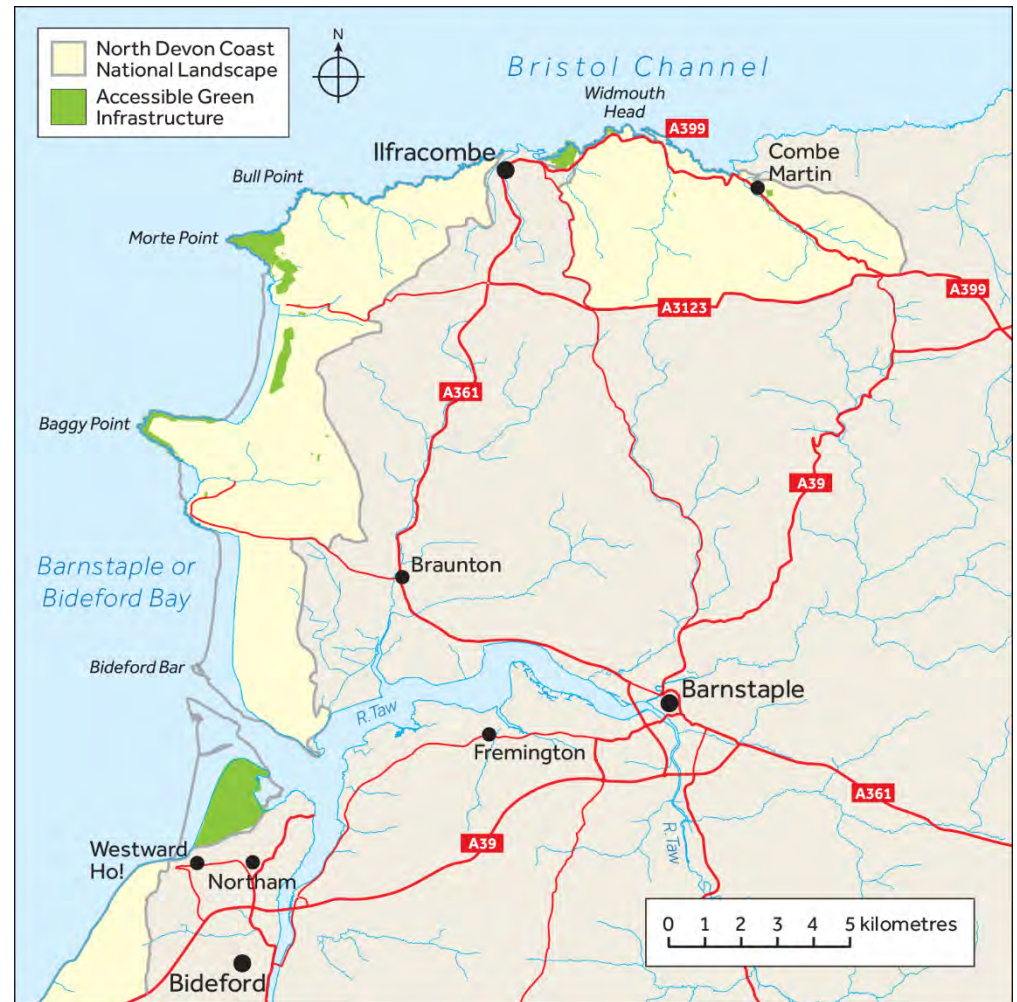
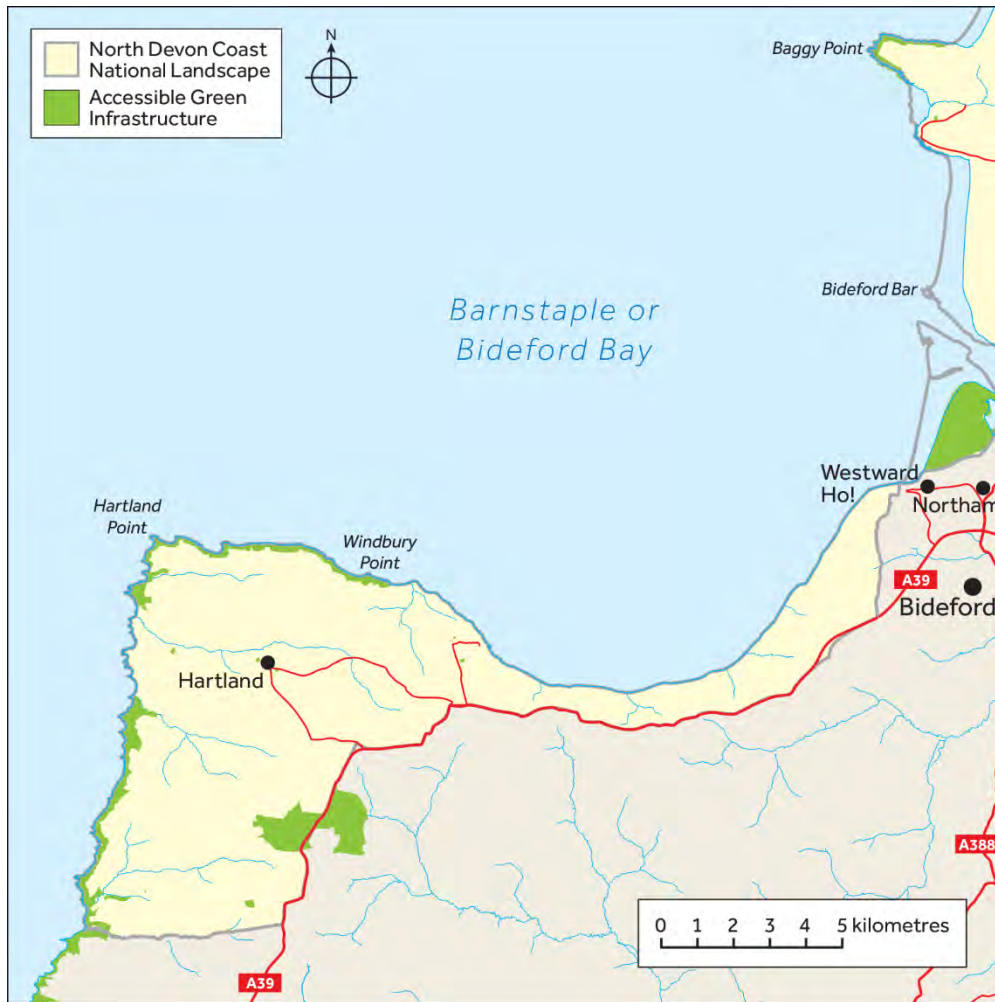
33	Iffracombe - Crofts Lea Park - Berrynarbor (Independent Coach Company) - 2 return trips
35	Iffracombe - Slade - Lee Bay (Independent Coach Company) - 3 return trips

In 2018, there were nine public transport routes within the NL, with just four providing hourly daytime services. This was a reduction from thirteen routes and five providing hourly daytime services in 2008. Five routes only operated on two days a week, with only a couple of journeys in each direction.

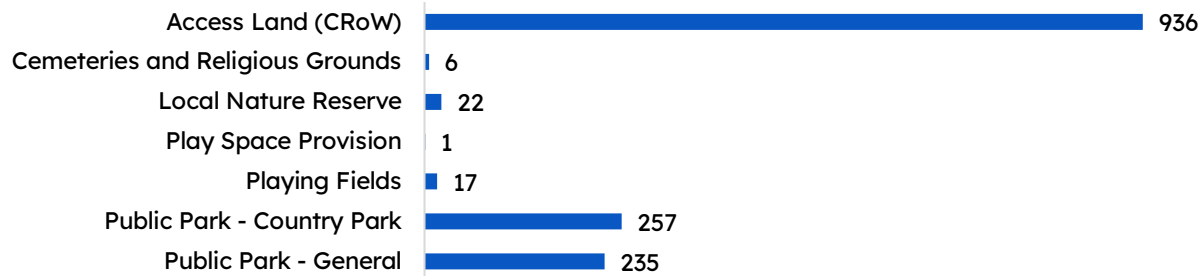
Source <http://www.busatlas.uk/> checked against the latest timetables October 2025 <https://bustimes.org/> and North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: State of the AONB Report 2014-2018

## Open Access Land and Accessible Green Infrastructure

The map shows the location of 'Accessible Green Infrastructure', as defined by Natural England, covering 1,473.4 ha (8.6%) of the National Landscape (2013 - 1,328 ha at 7.7% of NL).



### Are (ha) of Accessible Green Infrastructure by type (2021)



There are many more accessible sites within the National Landscape, and a future project could assess accessibility for a range of visitor attributes.

Source: Data extracted from the England Green Infrastructure Mapping Database GIS data. © Natural England 2021. Contains, or is derived from, information supplied by Ordnance Survey. © Crown copyright and database rights 2021. Ordnance Survey 100022021. The typology includes double counting of areas in the data. Some land will lie in more than one category. <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/UserGuide/Section01.aspx>

# Glossary

## Access land

Any land that is shown as open country on a map issued by Natural England for the purposes of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; is shown on such a map as registered common land; is registered common land in any area outside Inner London for which no such map relating to registered common land has been issued; is situated more than 600 metres above sea level in any area for which no such map relating to open country has been issued; or is dedicated as access land under the Act.

## Accessible Natural Environment

Natural England define it as all Green Infrastructure (GI) (see below) assets identified as accessible green spaces for the development of the England GI Mapping database. It includes places that are available for the public to use free of charge and without time restrictions and includes:

- a) Play space provision
- b) Millennium or Doorstep Green
- c) Cemeteries and religious grounds
- d) Playing fields
- e) Local Nature Reserve
- f) Public park – general
- g) Country Park
- h) Access Land

## Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

(Also known as a National Landscape) An area of landscape that is of such outstanding natural beauty that it merits designation under the

National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. Together, AONBs represent 18% of the finest countryside in England and Wales. The designation helps to protect their special character, for example, through enhanced planning regulations.

## Agri-environment schemes

Provided by Natural England, these schemes offer payment to farmers who give an undertaking, or enter into an agreement, to manage their land for biodiversity, landscape, the historic environment, public access or amenity objectives.

## Biodiversity

The term given to the variety of life and the natural processes of which living things are a part. The term includes living organisms, the genetic differences between them and the communities in which they occur.

## Built heritage

A collective term for heritage assets of local, regional or international significance because of their heritage value(s).

## Climate change

Change in global climate patterns apparent from the mid- to late 20th century onwards, attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced using fossil fuels.

## Common land

Areas where people who do not own the land have rights to use it for livestock grazing or other purposes. See also registered common land.

## Conservation Area

Designated by the local planning authority as an area which they consider has special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which they consider is desirable to preserve or enhance.

## Context

Any relationship between an asset and its setting, including other places and its past, relevant to the values of that asset.

### Cultural heritage

Inherited assets that people identify and value as a reflection and expression of their evolving knowledge, beliefs and traditions, and of their understanding of the beliefs and traditions of others

### DBRC

Devon Biodiversity Records Centre is the Local Environmental Records Centre for Devon

### Earth heritage

The rocks, soils and landforms that reveal our geological history, determine the diverse habitats in which wildlife can thrive and create the rich landscapes that we all enjoy.

### Earth heritage site

See Sites of Special Scientific Interest

### Ecosystem

Natural unit consisting of all plants, animals and micro-organisms (biotic factors) in an area functioning together with all the non-living physical (abiotic) factors of the environment.

### Ecosystem services

Ecosystem services (sometimes called environmental services) are the essential services and benefits that are derived from a fully functioning natural environment, including the management of basic resources such as water, and the sequestration of carbon.

### Environmental services

See ecosystem services.

### Geodiversity

The term geodiversity incorporates the variety of rocks, minerals and landforms, and the processes that have formed them through geological time. The breadth of geodiversity gives insight to past climates, earlier environments and life on earth.

### Green infrastructure

Strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high-quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multi-functional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality-of-life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability.

### Heritage

All inherited resources that people value for reasons beyond mere utility.

### Heritage Asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having cultural significance. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

### Historic environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and deliberately planted or managed flora.

### Invasive species

Plants, animals and microbes not native to a region which, when introduced either accidentally or intentionally, are harmful to the environment by out-competing native species for available resources, reproducing prolifically or dominating regions and ecosystems.

### Landscape

An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

### Listed building

Listed buildings are structures considered to be of high architectural or historic interest that are placed on a statutory list to help protect their important features. The list is compiled by the secretary of state for Culture, Media and Sport on advice from Historic England.

### List of locally important features

Each local authority produces an informal list of locally important features, recommended by the draft Heritage Protection Bill. These represent assets of local special interest as defined by councils.

### Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)

Since 2004, LDFs are part of the new two-tier structure of the planning system (the higher tier is the regional spatial strategy – see below). The LDF replaces the structure Plan and the Local Plan. It consists of several Local Development Documents (LDDs) including a Core strategy, site-specific Allocations of Land, and a Proposals Map. It may also contain additional optional development documents such as Area Action Plans. Production of the LDF must be accompanied by a statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

### Local Geological Sites

Previously known as Regionally Important Geological Sites, sites that are selected by voluntary geo-conservation groups, according to nationally agreed criteria.

### Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)

LNPs are partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people who aim to help bring about improvements in their local natural environment. They work strategically to help their local area manage the natural environment.

### Local Sites

Local Sites are non-statutory areas of local importance for conservation that complement nationally and internationally designated geological and wildlife sites.

### Local Wildlife Sites

There are several different terms in use to describe Local Wildlife Sites, including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and County Wildlife Sites. National advice is to use the term, Local Wildlife Sites. Local Wildlife Sites are usually selected within a local authority area through Local Nature Partnerships. They support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife, and many sites will contain English priority habitats and species.

### Monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes (MEOPL)

A national framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in National Parks and National Landscapes. Natural England leads in this work, in close partnership with Defra, the English National Park Authorities Association, Historic England and the National Landscapes Association.

### National Heritage List

The National Heritage List for England is the only official and up to date database of all nationally designated heritage assets including: Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, World Heritage Sites, applications for Certificates of Immunity, current Building Preservation Notices.

### National Landscapes

The new name for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

### National Cycle Network (NCN)

The National Cycle Network is a UK-wide network of signed paths and routes for walking, wheeling, cycling and exploring outdoors. Ideally, the route will be traffic-free. If it is not, it should either be on a quiet-way section of road or be fully separated from the adjacent carriageway.

### Natural beauty

A combination of distinctive characteristics and key features. The National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949 states that natural beauty includes 'flora, fauna, and geological and physiographical features. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 confirms that land can be of natural beauty because of human intervention.

### Nature recovery

Local Nature Recovery is the successor to the Countryside Stewardship scheme in England. It will pay for locally-targeted actions to make space for nature in the farmed landscape and the wider countryside, alongside food production.

### Nature Recovery Network (NRN)

A national network of wildlife-rich places intended to expand, improve and connect these places across our cities, towns, countryside and coast.

### Protected landscape area

Defined by the IUCN as a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

### Public

Of or concerning the people.

### Renewable energy

Natural energy that can be used repeatedly and will not run out. Sources of renewable energy include wind, water and solar power.

### Scheduled Monument

A Scheduled Monument is defined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the National Heritage Act 1983 as a protected archaeological site or historic building of national importance. Nationally, they range from prehistoric standing stones and burial mounds to more recent structures such as collieries and wartime pill-boxes. The scheduling of a monument means that permission is required for works affecting that monument.

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

SSSIs are the best examples of our natural heritage of wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms. An SSSI is an area that has been notified as being of special interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

### Special Qualities

The combination of distinctive characteristics and key features that make an area important and valued (see Distinctive Characteristics and Key Features).

### Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs)

SNAs are areas of Devon's countryside that contain higher than average concentrations of existing wildlife habitats such as native woodlands, flower-rich grasslands, bogs and heathland (many of these habitats will have an international, national or local designation).

### Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is tourism that attempts to make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment and the conservation of local ecosystem services. It is responsible tourism that is both ecologically and culturally sensitive.

## Appendix 1: Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework 2024

### Target indicators

<b>TI 1</b>	Extent of wildlife rich habitat created or restored within Protected Landscapes, outside of protected sites
<b>TI 2</b>	Percentage of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes in favourable condition
<b>TI 3</b>	Percentage of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition
<b>TI 4</b>	Extent of priority habitat within Protected Landscapes, outside of protected sites, in favourable management through agri-environment schemes
<b>TI 5</b>	Percentage of land managers adopting nature friendly farming on a percentage of their land
<b>TI 6</b>	Level of greenhouse gas emissions within Protected Landscapes
<b>TI 7</b>	Extent of peat under restoration in Protected Landscapes
<b>TI 8</b>	Extent of tree canopy and woodland cover in Protected Landscapes
<b>TI 9</b>	Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme:
<b>TI 9a</b>	Metres of accessible path as a % of total path
<b>TI 9b</b>	Number of accessible toilets and rest stops
<b>TI 9c</b>	Number of disability accessible parking spaces
<b>TI 9d</b>	Number of accessible gates and gaps
<b>TI 9f</b>	Number of visits and volunteer days facilitated by new equipment
<b>TI 9g</b>	Number of schools engaged (primary and secondary) both inside and outside the Protected Landscape boundary
<b>TI 9h</b>	Number of volunteer days
<b>TI 9i</b>	Number of accessible or easy access routes for which wayfinding has been created or improved
<b>TI 10</b>	Number and percentage of nationally designated heritage assets in Protected Landscapes to be deemed at risk

## State of the National Landscape Report 2025

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