



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Nature Recovery and the 25 Year Environment Plan

Mark Stevenson MCIEEM,
Head of Nature Strategy
Team



Forestry Commission
England



Environment
Agency

OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION



1. Introduction:

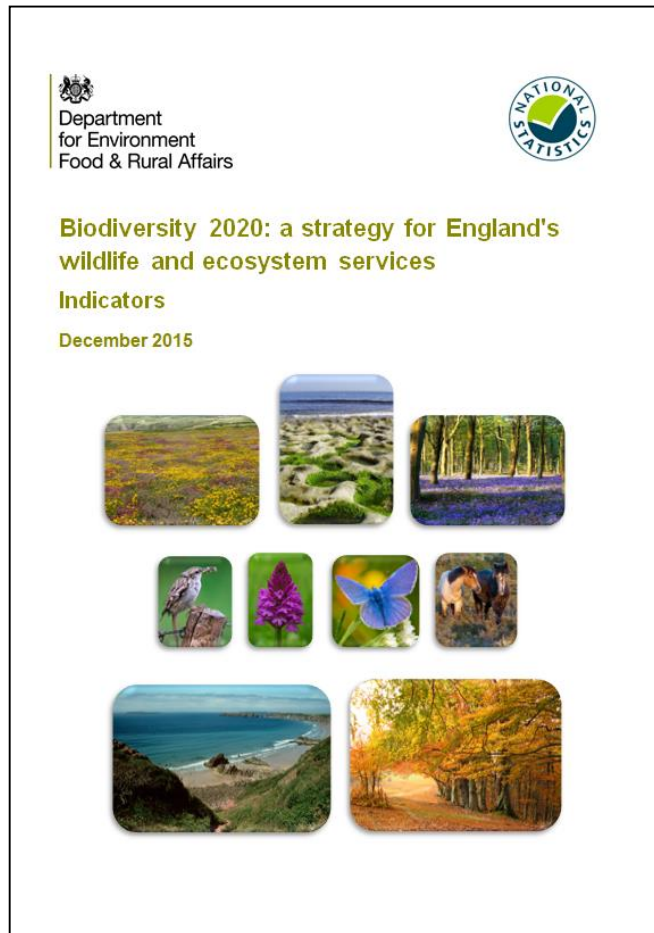
- Where are we now (the case for action)

2. The 25 Year Environment Plan

- Nature recovery goals
- A Nature Recovery Network

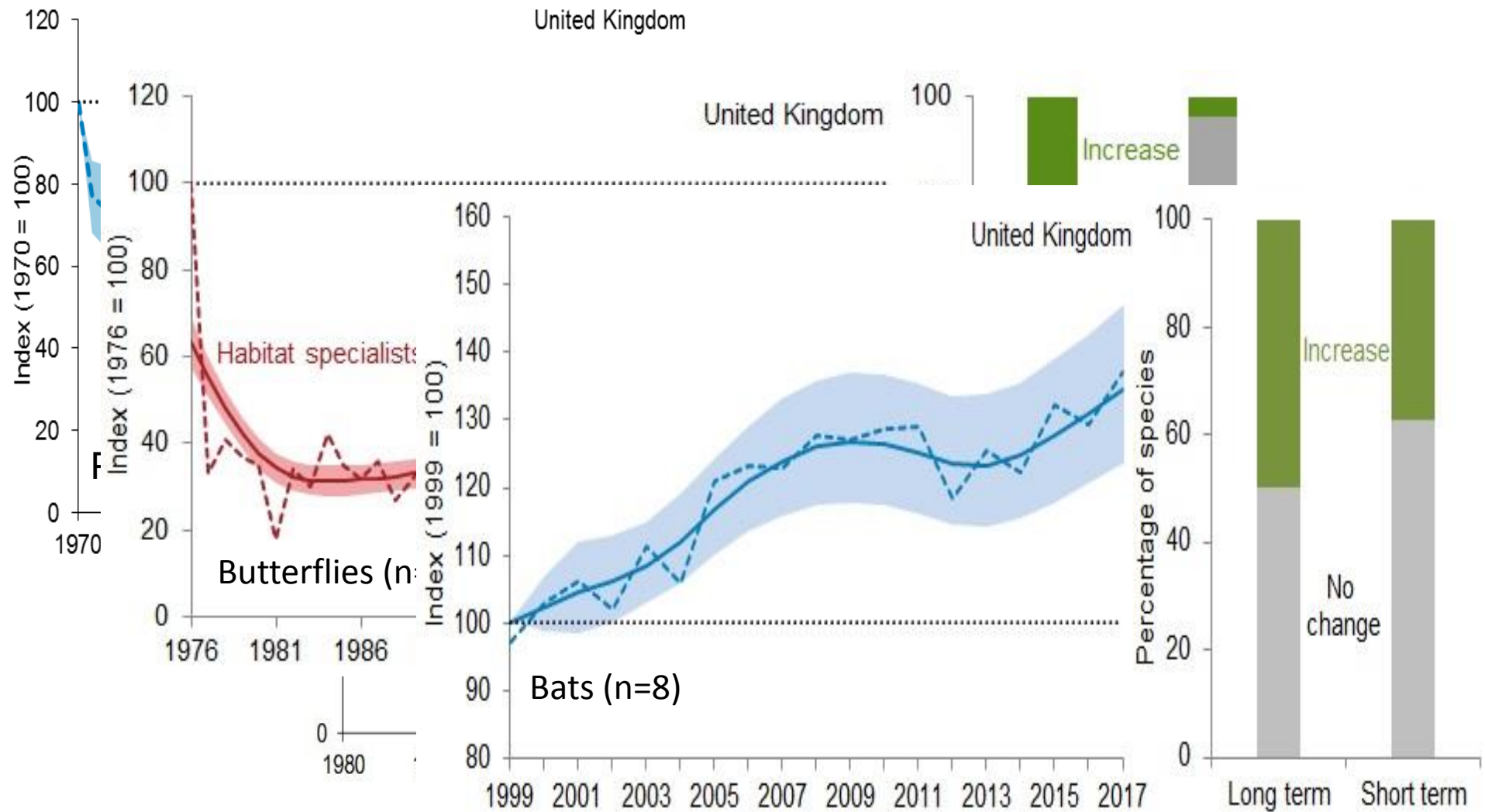
3. The potential role for farmer clusters

WHERE ARE WE NOW?



1. International commitments on 'biodiversity' with a complex set of global targets
2. Annual indicator assessments
3. Qualitative assessments of outcome and progress (e.g. CBD National Report, UK National Ecosystem Assessment)

Where are we now: Species



PROGRESS TO DATE: SUMMARY AND CASE FOR ACTION



- Significant historical losses of habitats and species
- Parallel declines in the benefits we gain from nature (UK NEA):
 - Protection from flooding
 - Pollination service
 - Soil quality
- Ongoing losses, particularly of species
- A number of significant national and local success stories
- New funding coming on-stream (e.g. Peatland, Environmental Land Management)

25 Year Environment Plan



It is this Government's ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we found it.

The Plan will deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.

GOALS (NATURE ON LAND)



On land and in freshwaters:

- 1. SITES.** Restoring our protected sites
- 2. HABITATS.** Expanding and connecting habitats (creating or restoring half a million hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network).
- 3. SPECIES.** Taking action to recover threatened, iconic or economically important species of animals, plants and fungi.
- 4. WOODLAND.** Increasing woodland in England: planting 180,000 hectares by 2042.

Our commitments in the 25 YEP:

Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes

We will:

- Publish a **post-2020 strategy for nature**
- Develop a **nature recovery network**
- Code of practice on **reintroduction of native species**
- Explore how to give individuals the chance to deliver **lasting conservation**
- **Improve biosecurity** to protect and conserve nature
- (...but there are others that are equally significant in other chapters: a new environmental land management scheme, a review of National Parks and AONBs, net gain, natural capital impact fund, natural flood management, peatland strategies as well as new indicators, international and OTs)

Nature Recovery Network: What?

An expanding and increasingly connected network of wildlife-rich habitat. It will be designed to support recovery of wildlife and to provide other economic and social benefits, such as water quality improvement or flood attenuation. It is not designated as a 'network' – it is a bottom-up approach

Three components (proposed):

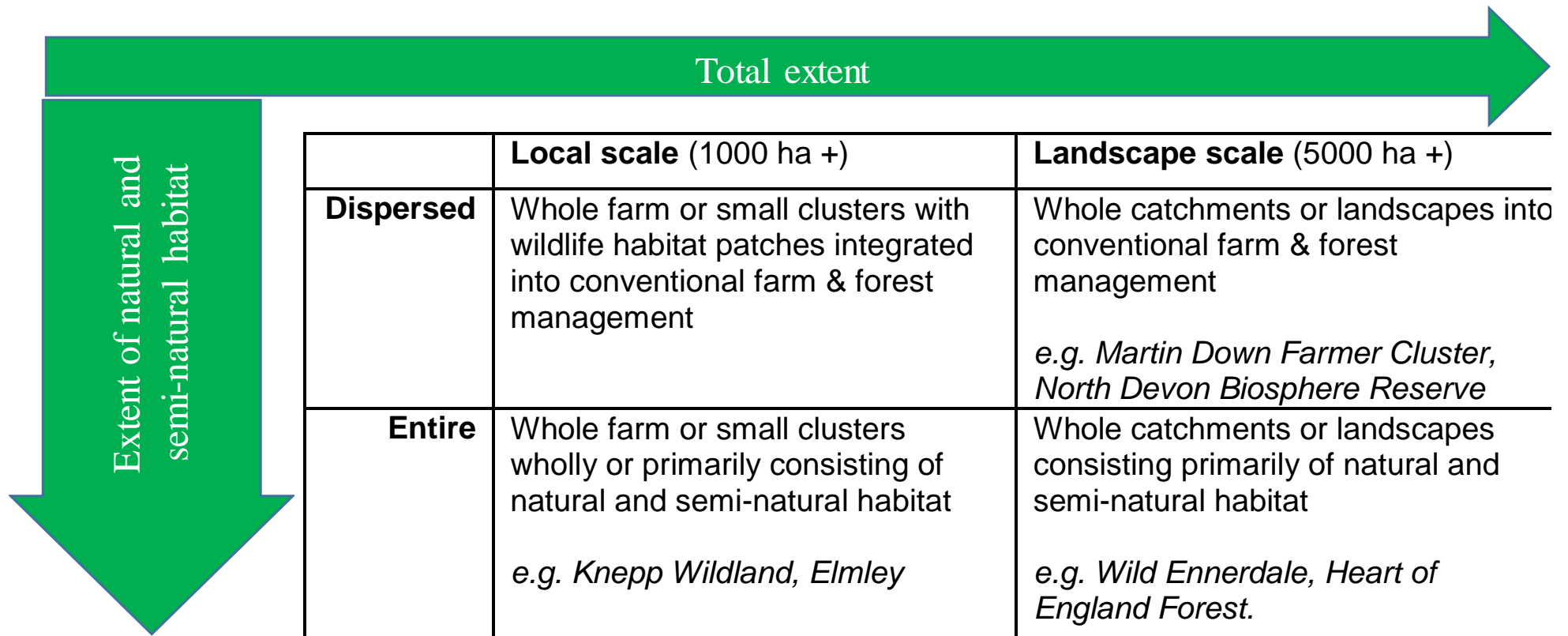
- Our existing protected site series (and other natural and semi-natural habitat)
- A series of **area based projects** that are restoring existing habitats, expanding and connecting those habitats and recovering wildlife
 - Local scale
 - Landscape scale
- Targeted action outside these components to connect them

Two outcomes: Delivering nature goals; aligned with other environmental objectives

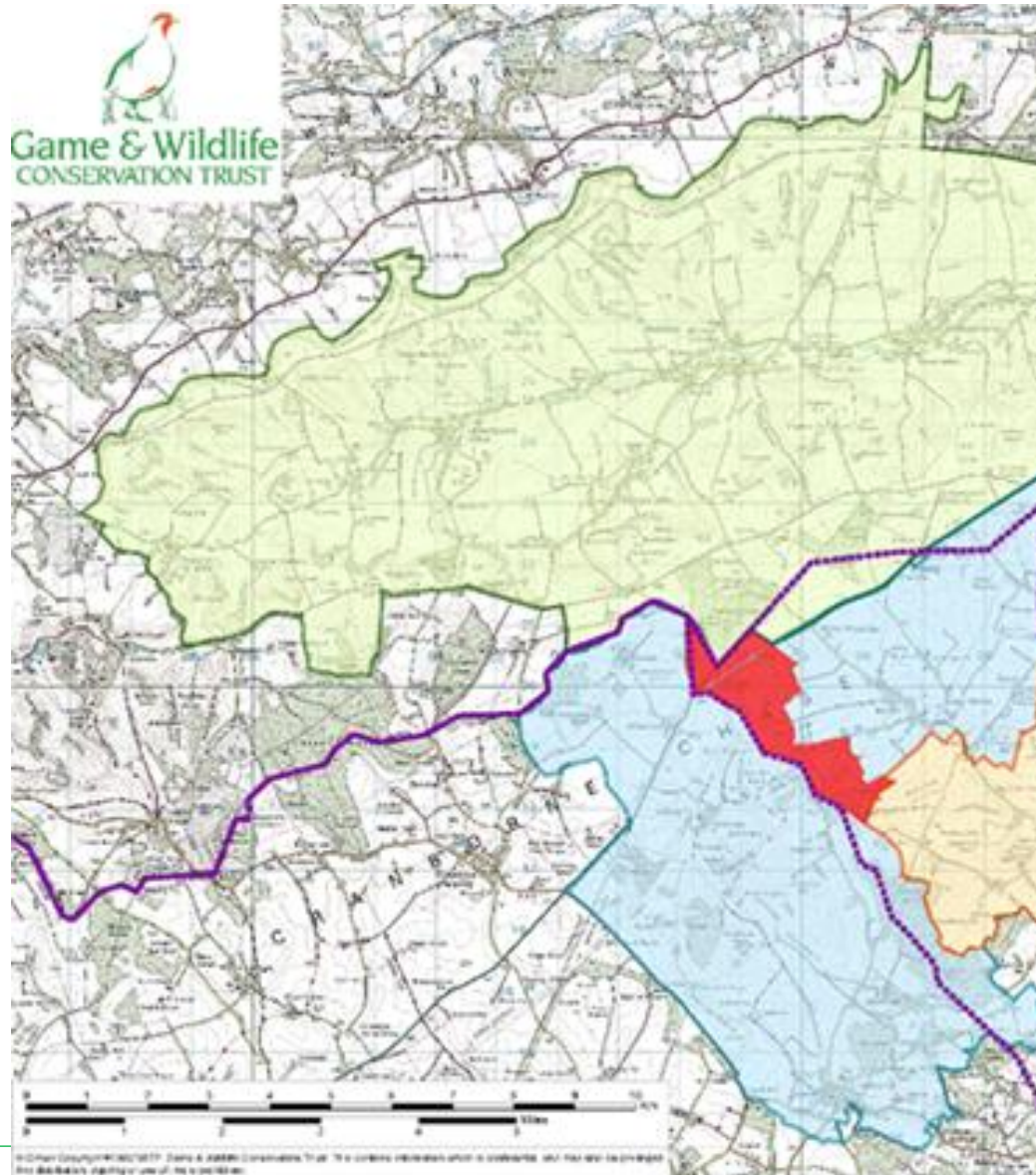


Why area-based projects and how might we describe them?

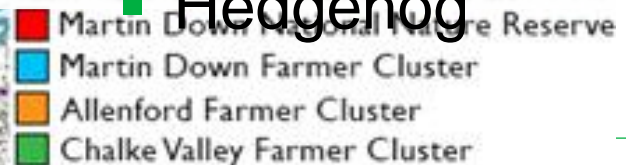
Figure 1. Characteristics of Area based projects



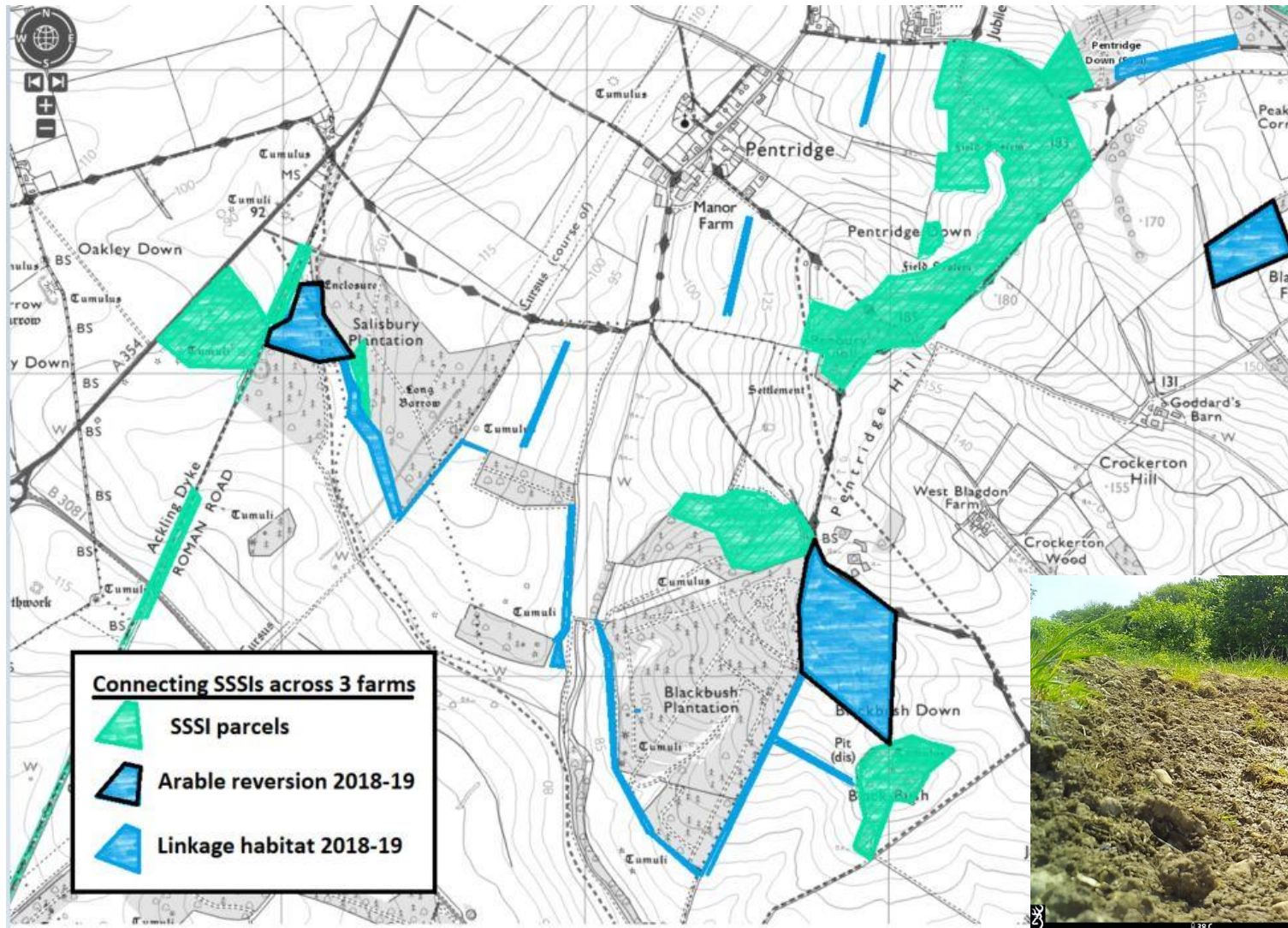
An Example: Martin Down Farmer Cluster



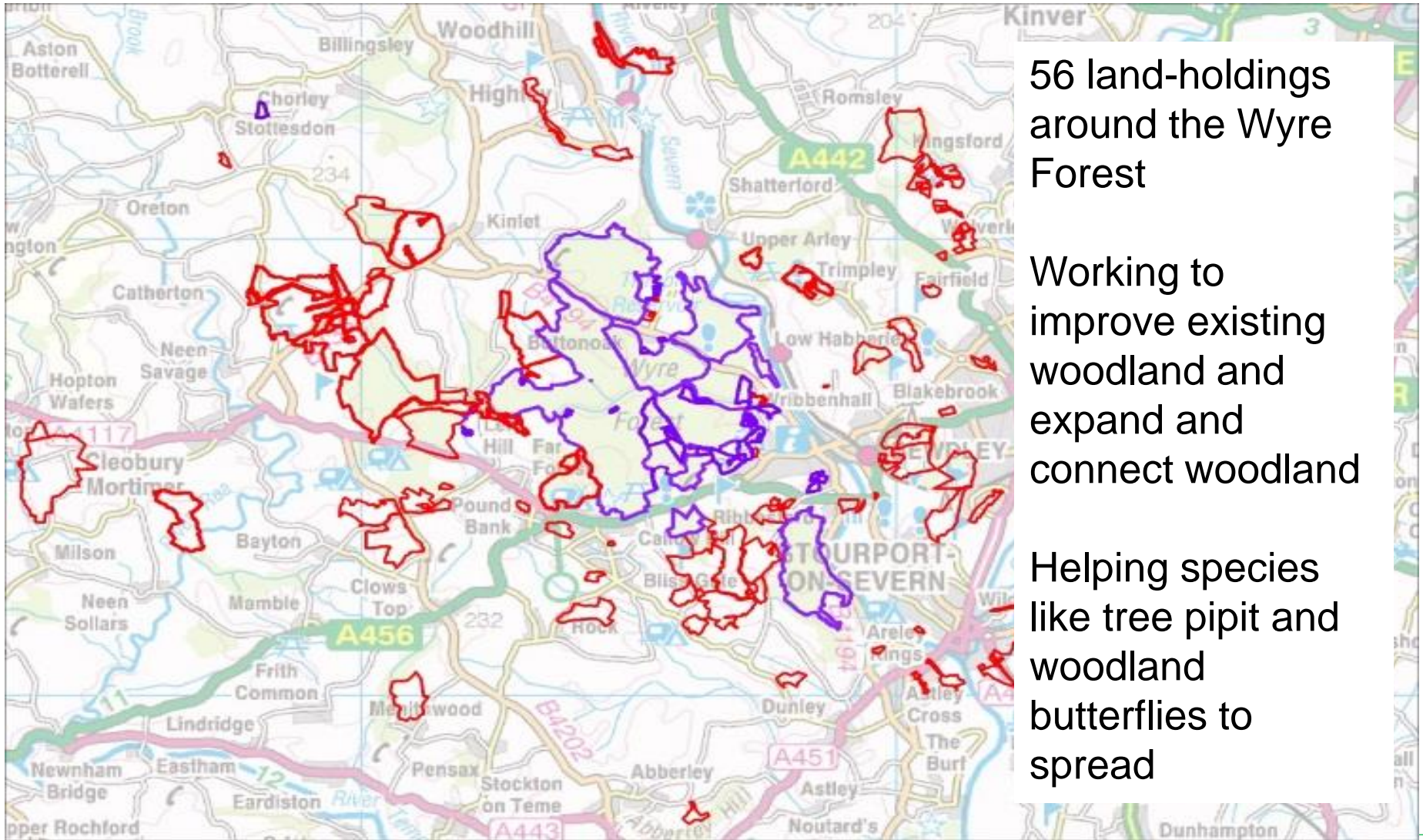
- 43 farmers working together across 238 square km around Martin Down National Nature Reserve (in red)
- Protected site improvements
- Habitat expansion and connectivity (especially for pollinators)
- Species recovery:
 - Turtle doves, grey partridge
 - Hedgehog



Martin Down Cluster – connecting chalk grassland habitat (and turtle dove)



Wyre Forest Facilitation Group



56 land-holdings
around the Wyre
Forest

Working to
improve existing
woodland and
expand and
connect woodland

Helping species
like tree pipit and
woodland
butterflies to
spread

The Mendip Hills Facilitation Fund

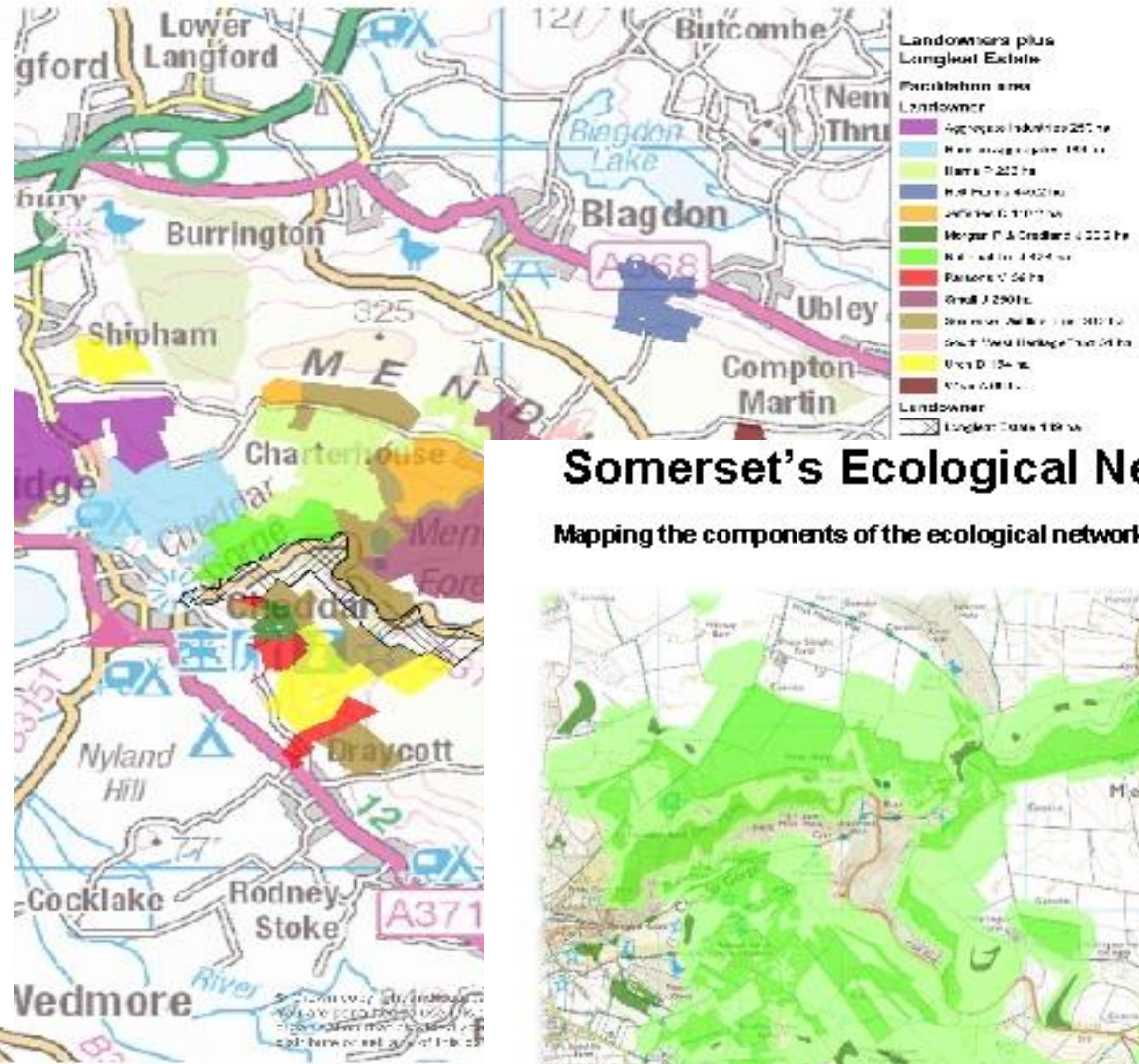
Almost 3000ha and
14 land holdings

Restoration of grassland and woodland protected sites

Connecting habitats – using clover rich leys

Working to protect bats and butterflies

Regular monitoring



Somerset's Ecological Network

Mapping the components of the ecological network in Somerset

Initiatives on landscape scale delivery/ area based conservation

- Farmer and landowner led initiatives: e.g. Farm Clusters and Wildlife Estates
- Philanthropic enterprise (Endangered Landscapes Programme)
- Partnership initiatives (Back from the Brink, National Nature Reserve Strategy, B-lines, Buzz along the coast, Urban buzz)

A range of approaches at a range of scales.....

What do they have in common?

1. Significant size, collaborative endeavour
2. Improving protected sites
3. Expanding and connecting habitat
4. Recovering species
5. Planning, monitoring and feedback



Next steps (for Defra Group)

- We are exploring a range of current and potential funding sources:
 - Countryside Stewardship
 - Environmental Land Management (Trials and Testing)
 - Managing the Government Estate: National Nature Reserve Strategy
 - Aligning other government funding streams for peatland, flood management and water quality
 - Forming partnerships involving charitable funding and voluntary sector action (HLF, Clusters)
 - Working with private sector funding mechanisms, including net gain or payment for ecosystem services
 - Identifying the role for Local Natural Capital Plans
 - Reviewing the role for National Parks and AONBs

Conclusion

- The Nature Recovery Network should be inclusive and flexible, but focussed on outcomes
- We are working with partners to develop the network together
- We expect that farm clusters will play an important part in the Network
- Internally, we are looking to broaden the funding base and build the Network into key policies such as Environmental Land Management
- We are compiling evidence on existing approaches (esp. farm clusters)

