

Dear Sir,

I am responding to the Restoring & expanding open habitats from woods and forests in England consultation and have the following comments to make:

- 1) Restoration should be targeted to the areas that will ensure the best outcomes for wildlife and sustainable management. Nature needs space and creating larger areas of heathland near existing habitats will help ease the vulnerability of the dependent wildlife to threats, such as disturbance, scrub encroachment and climate change.
- 2) This policy must set ambitious targets for the restoration of heathland and other threatened open habitats lost to plantation forestry. Short-term targets in line with the UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets should be set, but there needs to be a long-term plan to unlock the majority of heathland restoration potential, before the remnant heathland conditions are lost.
- 3) An ambitious programme of restoration will be essential if we are to help the fantastic range of threatened and unique wildlife adapt in the fact of climate change. Restoring lost habitats near existing areas will help species move in response to both local and national climate change and also buffer wildlife from other related threats.
- 4) Restored areas of open habitat provide valued areas for relaxation and the enjoyment of nature. Heathlands are often found close to towns and provide fantastic areas for local people to enjoy these wild landscapes and appreciate its unique wildlife. Restoring areas of heathland will also provide places to appreciate our long cultural history with this landscape. People have occupied the heathland landscape for thousands of years, and much of the evidence of this rural history survives as archaeological features.
- 5) I am told that Wimbledon Common has more acres of heathland than the whole of Essex, which shows how necessary it is to protect and expand what we still have.

Yours faithfully

Miss D G Carr