

# Purbeck Natural History Forum

**PURBECK  
HEATHS**

*National Nature Reserve*



Dorset  
National  
Landscape



Dorset  
Wildlife Trust



Forestry England

amphibian and reptile  
conservation



REMPSTONE  
ESTATE

**David Brown**  
**Jasper Iepema**

National Trust  
Freelance ecologist



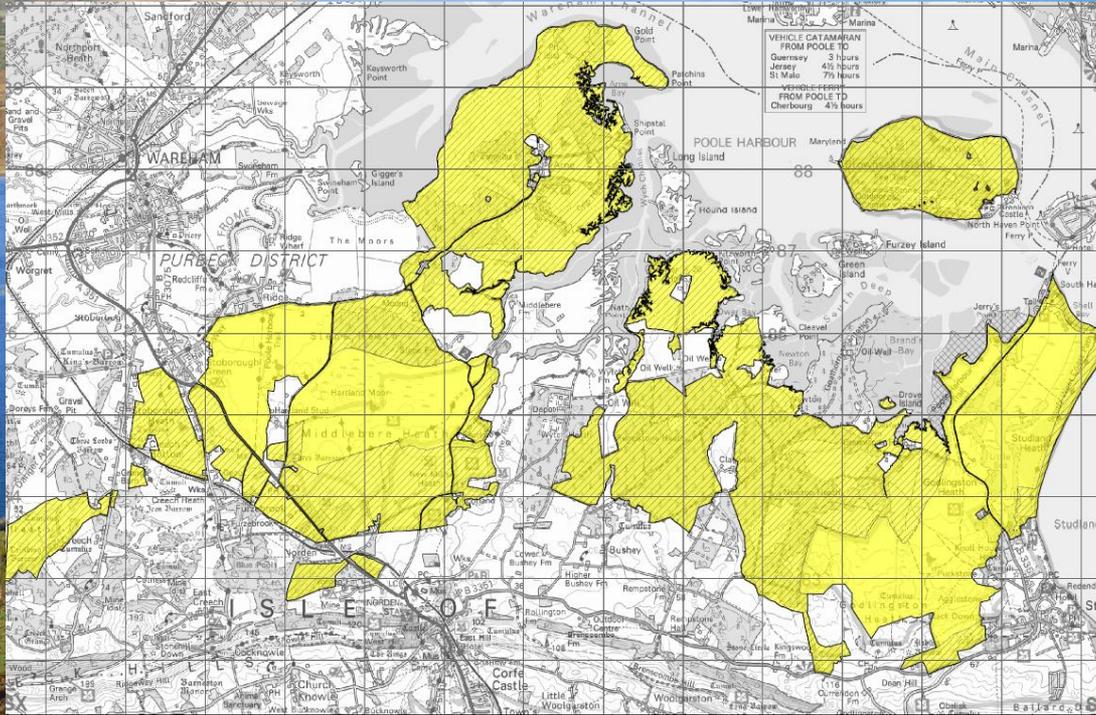
National  
Trust

**It all started with Cyril Diver.....**



# Purbeck Heaths NNR

Restoring a larger, better connected and more dynamic landscape



The UK's first 'super-NNR': 3400 ha heathlands and associated habitats, all functioning as one landscape.

Focus on restoring natural processes that maintain a dynamic, diverse and resilient landscape.

## Monitoring a more dynamic landscape

In a more dynamic, ecologically restored landscape, nature moves around.

Need to understand when change is OK, and when we still need to intervene with management

This requires us to monitor species across the whole landscape



## **PNHF was created with two main purposes:**

- To help deliver the monitoring plan for the NNR and beyond – thinking and working across boundaries
- To encourage and support natural history recording in general – creating a network, sharing skills and facilitating access to sites



## **PNHF works with interest groups:**

- Members can join groups if they are interested in a particular species group or type of survey
- Currently 15 interest groups and number is still increasing



# PNHF Survey Approaches

## Group Surveys

- Shared learning
- Cover larger areas
- Social & collaborative

## Independent Surveys

- Flexible & self-paced
- Suited to sensitive species/habitats



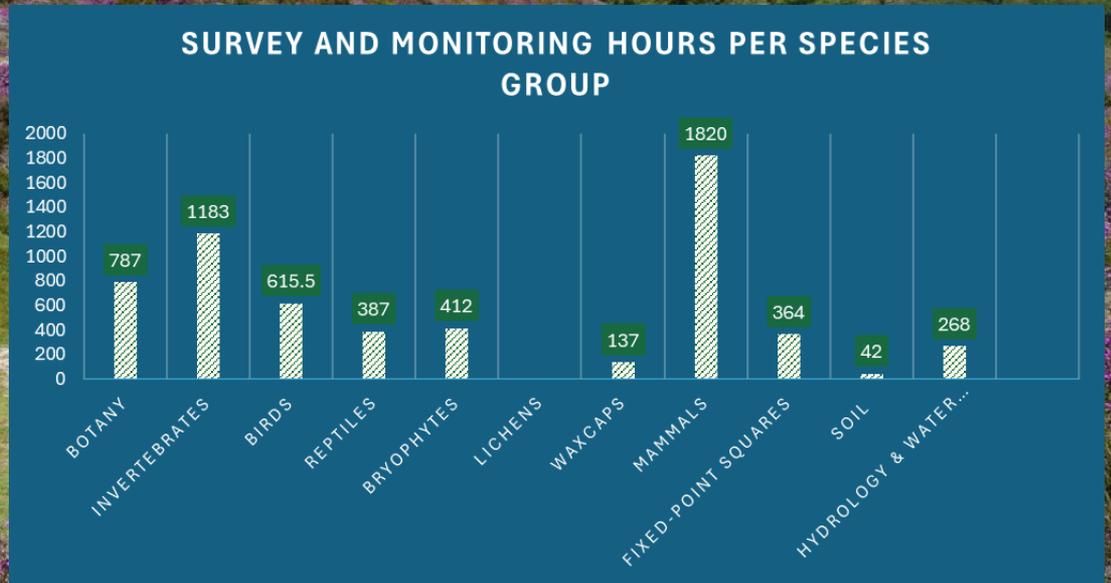
**PNHF uses a list of priority species for targeted surveys:**

- Ca. 250 species of a wide variety of taxa
- Cat. 1 species – full population census
- Cat. 2 species – Population sampling



In 2026, PNHF volunteers contributed over 7,000 hours to surveying, training and engagement in the Purbecks.

Following a three-year data review, the Purbeck Heaths NNR monitoring group made recommendations to guide future monitoring and targeted management.



A photograph of a dense forest with a stream. The trees have gnarled, moss-covered trunks and branches, some of which are fallen into the water. The foliage is a mix of green and yellow, suggesting an autumn setting. The stream flows through the center of the frame, reflecting the surrounding trees and sky.

## Lessons learned

It works when organisations buy into it

It is voluntary – but it still needs resourcing

Good comms is essential

The right task for the right volunteer – don't ask beginners to ID lichens!