

Wild Penwith

The Wild Penwith project started in 2009 and is led by Cornwall Wildlife Trust, the project aims to create a coast to coast 'Living Landscape', with healthy, well connected wildlife habitats. Granite moors dominate the centre, and to the north a series of short, relatively steep river valleys pass through medieval field systems to the coast. The landscape to the south comprises a large number of gently sloping river-valley systems, supporting nationally significant wetland and heathland habitats. Penwith has an exceptionally rich historical landscape, with many field systems of Bronze Age origin and a large concentration of prehistoric ritual monuments.

The Wild Penwith project will achieve its goals by:

- Assessing the condition of BAP habitats, including heathland and wetland habitats, and providing advice to landowners for their positive management, restoration and reconnection.
- Securing long term management of BAP habitats through working with Natural England and FWAG to encourage uptake of agri-environment schemes. The majority of Environmentally Sensitive Area schemes are due to expire in 2012. The need to ensure the good work undertaken during the ESA scheme is continued and built upon is one of the key drivers for this project.
- Creating a system of healthy wetlands and watercourses for wildlife and people. The project area includes Drift Reservoir which is known to be affected by diffuse agricultural pollution. Cornwall Wildlife Trust is working with the Environment Agency and South West Water to monitor water quality, and with FWAG to advise farmers on soil and nutrient management. The project is also working with partners to deliver training workshops, on issues such as soil and water management, to enhance water quality throughout the catchment.

- Programme of community events and a weekly volunteer group which carries out practical conservation tasks on both farmland and nature reserves.
- Helping deliver recommendations for water quality and habitat management through a small capital grant scheme.
- Working with conservation partners to deliver these goals with a coordinated approach, avoiding any duplication of effort.

Lead organisations in this project are Cornwall Wildlife Trust, FWAG, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Wild Penwith project is currently ongoing and is supported through grant funding from the Tubney Charitable Trust, Countdown 2010 and South West Water.

BAP habitats:

- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Heathland
- Rivers
- Lowland Fen

Key BAP species:

- European nightjar
- Linnet
- Reed bunting
- Otter
- Brown/sea trout
- Purple rampion
- Three-lobed water crowfoot
- Noctule bat
- Soprano pipistrelle bat
- Brown long-eared bat
- Greater horseshoe bat



Wild Penwith. Photo by Liz Cox