

REWILDING AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE: WILDFIRES

Reducing wildfire risk in a heating climate

**REWILDING
BRITAIN**



CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Executive summary	4
1. Wildfire in Britain: a changing risk	7
2. What actually causes a wildfire?	8
3. Land use in Britain	11
4. Creating wildfire-resilient landscapes	19
5. Conclusions and recommendations: A wilder landscape is a safer landscape	30
Appendix 1: Spatial analysis methodology	33
Appendix 2: Case studies	34
Appendix 3: References	38

ABOUT US

Rewilding Britain is inspiring a movement of rewilders across Britain's land and seas – a groundswell of hope, so that together we can ensure a wilder, nature-rich future that benefits us all.

www.rewildingbritain.org.uk

Front cover image:

Broadleaf woodland that formed a natural firebreak to a wildfire in July 2025, Scotland



FOREWORD

The record-breaking wildfires of recent years are a stark reminder that hotter, drier and more extreme conditions are no longer a future threat, but are a present danger. They are already accelerating the risks facing our landscapes, communities and wildlife.

Preventing fires from starting and responding effectively when they do will always be essential. But, as wildfire risk grows, we must also ask a longer-term question: how can we make our landscapes themselves more resilient to fire?

Many of Britain's landscapes have been profoundly altered over centuries. Peatlands have been drained, wetlands lost, rivers disconnected from their floodplains and habitats simplified. As our climate becomes hotter and more unpredictable, restoring the natural processes that help landscapes hold water, maintain healthy soils and create diverse habitats will become increasingly important.

Rewilding offers an opportunity to rebuild some of that resilience. Restoring natural hydrology, healthy soils, natural grazing and more diverse habitat mosaics can help create landscapes that are better able to withstand and recover from wildfire.

As we adapt to a hotter climate, the challenge is not simply how we fight more wildfires. It is how we create landscapes which are more resilient to wildfires in the first place.

**THE ANSWER IS NOT ONLY
FIREFIGHTING BUT CREATING
CLIMATE-RESILIENT
LANDSCAPES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Britain's wildfire risk is changing. Climate change is increasing the frequency of hotter, drier conditions in which vegetation and soils can become more flammable and fires can spread rapidly.

In 2025, wildfires in Britain burnt through a record 47,000 hectares of land – an area larger than Glasgow and Birmingham combined. 2026 is on course to be worse still. As these fires become larger, more frequent and more intense, it's not hyperbole to believe our future national resilience is at stake.

Britain must adapt to a new reality: without a change in approach, extreme weather events such as wildfires will become increasingly devastating. In the short term, the risk of ignition must be lowered. In the long term, the resilience of our landscapes must be improved so they are better able to withstand wildfire, slow its spread, and recover from it.

This research paper provides an overview of the current evidence around wildfires in Britain and their relationship with rewilding. It presents evidence of the impact of current land uses, including the management of our uplands – much

of which comprises moorland, peatlands and commercial forestry. Many of these practices, such as controlled burning and intensive grazing, have resulted in a reduction in vegetation fuel loads in the short term. However, over the medium and long term these practices can alter water storage and hydrology, reducing the resilience of these habitats to wildfire and other extreme weather events. Intensively managed forests, where they are planted as single-species, single-age blocks, are also susceptible to wildfire.

Historically, wildfire management has focused primarily on preventing fires from starting and responding effectively when they occur. With 77% of UK wildfires caused by human activity, public education and awareness are vital when backed by well-resourced emergency services. But as the climate changes, Britain must also address a longer-term question: how can we make landscapes themselves more resilient to wildfire?

As part of this report, Rewilding Britain analysed European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) burned-area data alongside UK land-cover data to better understand the habitats affected by wildfire across Britain.



**HIGH FIRE-RISK
DAYS COULD
DOUBLE
BY 2050**

The findings revealed a pattern: drained and simplified open habitats bore the brunt of fire activity, with acid grassland accounting for 27% of total burned area, heather grassland 25%, heather 18%, and bog 16%, while calcareous grassland made up just 3% and deciduous woodland a mere 0.5%. Landscape structure also showed notable differences, as monocultures accounted for 64% of all fires and nearly half (49%) of the total burned area, whereas complex habitat mosaics experienced only 8% of fires and 11% of burned area.

During the severe fire season from March to August 2026, an examination of 285 Rewilding Network projects revealed that only a single site was directly affected by wildfire. This is a result consistent with wider evidence that restoring natural hydrology, structural variation, and habitat diversity can influence wildfire behaviour.

Restoring natural ecological processes through rewilding offers an opportunity to rebuild the resilience lost from Britain's countryside. Rewetting peatlands, restoring wetlands, improving soil health, enabling natural grazing, and establishing habitat mosaics increase landscape moisture, break up continuous fuel loads, and disrupt fire pathways. Rather than relying on single interventions, rewilding restores dynamic, functioning ecosystems capable of adapting to

change. While it is not a substitute for wildfire prevention or emergency response, the evidence reviewed in this report suggests that it can make an important contribution to creating more wildfire-resilient landscapes.

It should be recognised that temporary risks do exist during early transition phases where vegetation pulses can increase local fuel loads before natural grazing and hydrology are fully established. However, these risks can be reduced through applying adaptive management – such as mown firebreaks, access routes, and grazing buffers – to safely bridge the gap until dynamic, water-rich habitats take hold.

Building this resilience at scale demands a strategic national approach, enabling policies, and long-term funding that directly supports land managers for the vital role they play. While this transition requires investment, the cost of inaction is potentially far higher and only likely to rise. Some estimate that UK wildfire damage cost up to £460 million in 2025 alone¹. An additional advantage of rewilding is that rewetting our landscapes will support the delivery of our 30x30 nature commitments and build resilience to other climate shocks such as flooding.



**RESTORING NATURAL ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES THROUGH
REWILDING OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REBUILD THE
RESILIENCE LOST FROM BRITAIN'S COUNTRYSIDE**

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

To enable a fair, well-evidenced, cost-effective and rapid transition towards wildfire-resilient landscapes, we are therefore calling on the UK Government and devolved governments to establish National Wildfire Strategies which include the following five actions:



REDUCE IGNITION RISKS

Reduce accidental and deliberate fires through education and engagement. Expand national education initiatives, targeted public awareness campaigns, and community engagement regarding responsible access, the Countryside Code, and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to minimise human-caused ignitions.



IMPROVE WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Improve locally led wildfire planning and risk mapping. Ensure that a well-funded, well-coordinated emergency response can be deployed when wildfires take hold. This should include cross-border collaboration between land managers, fire and rescue services, communities and governments to coordinate responses and share lessons and best practice.



SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MORE WILDFIRE-RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

Create more wildfire-resilient landscapes by encouraging a wetter and more structurally dynamic mosaic of habitats as part of our 30% by 2030 nature commitments. This should include:

- Rewetting and restoring peatlands, wetlands, ponds, marshes and streams to re-establish natural hydrology and retain water for longer.

- Reintroducing beavers into at-risk landscapes to create wetlands that hold water in the landscape.
- Restoring mosaics of broadleaved and wet woodland, scrub, open glades and species-rich grasslands to provide structural variation. This can make landscapes less prone to fire and help to interrupt its spread.
- Supporting natural grazing and the introduction of large herbivores, where appropriate. Through wilder grazing patterns, they can promote habitat mosaics and help reduce fuel continuity.



ALIGN PRACTICAL, FINANCIAL AND POLICY SUPPORT

Reform policy and public funding schemes across all devolved nations to offer secure commitments lasting at least 20 years. This would give land managers the financial stability needed to deliver a healthy mix of woodland, scrub, grassland, wetlands and open habitats to lower wildfire risk and aid recovery.

Provide more support to practitioners looking to transition towards rewilding approaches.



IMPROVE THE EVIDENCE BASE

Improve wildfire monitoring and research. Develop consistent UK-wide monitoring of wildfire ignition, cause, extent, severity, habitat and land-management condition. This should be accompanied by long-term comparative research into wildfire behaviour across different land uses and stages of ecological restoration.

1. WILDFIRE IN BRITAIN: A CHANGING RISK

Over centuries, we have drained and dried much of Britain's landscape. Peatlands have been damaged. Wetlands have been lost. Rivers have been straightened and disconnected from their floodplains. Soils have been degraded through intensive management practices and vegetation structure simplified. Water is moved off the land as quickly as possible. The climate that we had when much of this work was initially undertaken is not the climate that we are now living with, or will continue to live with in future. We find ourselves dealing with floods when there is too much water, and drought, water shortages and worsening wildfires when there is too little.

In 2025, wildfires in Britain burnt through a record 47,000 hectares of land – an area larger than Glasgow and Birmingham combined². 2026 is on course to be worse still. By mid-summer, fire services had already attended more wildfires than in the three previous years put together³. As these fires become larger, more frequent and more intense, it's not hyperbole to believe our future national resilience is at stake.

Modelling indicates that fire danger is increasing across all of Britain as our summers become drier⁴. The 2022 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment and 2023 National Adaptation Programme identified wildfire as an increasing climate change risk, and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) says severe wildfires are becoming more frequent⁵. The risk is not confined to rural landscapes; larger wildfires increasingly threaten homes, urban communities and critical infrastructure.

By 2050, Britain's climate is on course to become fundamentally different from the climate we experience today. Average summers will be hotter and receive less rainfall, while the number of days with a high risk of fire is anticipated to double compared with the late 20th-century average⁶.

Wildfires can release vast quantities of carbon and other emissions, with serious implications for the UK's carbon reduction efforts. This is particularly concerning when carbon-rich peatland burns: UK peatland fires emitted 800,000 tonnes

of carbon between 2001 and 2021 – equivalent to around 2.9 million tonnes of CO₂⁷. To put this into perspective, that is comparable to the annual emissions of more than two million cars. For people and communities, wildfire can also directly threaten homes, businesses and livelihoods, as well as damaging infrastructure, and affecting air quality and physical health. Some estimates place the total cost of wildfires in the UK in 2025 as high as £460 million when you factor in emergency response, habitat and carbon loss, health impacts, infrastructure repairs, as well as lost farming, tourism and water quality⁸.

Britain must adapt to a new reality: without a change in approach, extreme weather events such as wildfires, drought and floods will become increasingly devastating. In the short term, the risk of ignition must be lowered. In the long term, the resilience of our landscapes must be improved so they are better able to withstand wildfire, slow its spread, and recover from it. When fires do occur, our fire service and communities must be well resourced and supported to respond.



2. WHAT ACTUALLY CAUSES A WILDFIRE

In Britain, a wildfire is commonly defined as any uncontrolled vegetation fire which requires suppression⁹. Fire requires three elements: a heat source, fuel, and oxygen. When all three elements are in place, ignition occurs.

In British landscapes, only a small amount of receptive fuel may be needed for an initial ignition. However, ignition alone does not determine whether a fire develops into a significant wildfire. For that to happen, there must be sufficient fuel to sustain and spread the fire, a landscape that facilitates the spread of fire, and weather conditions that do not suppress its ignition or development¹⁰.

Once a wildfire is established, these factors influence how hot it will burn, the speed at which it will spread, how large it will ultimately become, and how difficult it will be to control. This section breaks down the causes of British wildfires, from human and natural ignition sources to the landscape and climatic factors that sustain them. By understanding what drives both the initial spark and subsequent fire behaviour, land managers and policymakers can better design multi-layered prevention strategies.

IGNITION

Natural causes of wildfire ignition, such as lightning strikes, are relatively rare in Britain. Research suggests that around 77% of wildfire ignitions are attributable to human activity, whether accidental or deliberate¹¹. Further studies suggest that deliberate ignition alone may account for around 40% of wildfires¹².

Arson (deliberate ignition) has been found to be more frequent in lowland areas and around the rural-urban fringe, while the proportion of incidents attributed to accidental fires is higher in upland and more rural areas¹³. Sources of accidental ignition can include campfires and barbecues, machinery and vehicles, and controlled burns that escape during land management activities¹⁴.

However, significant gaps remain in UK ignition data¹⁵. Available data often records causes only broadly as accidental or deliberate, while the relative importance of different ignition sources can vary between landscapes and locations¹⁶.

FUEL

Once ignition has taken place, fuel helps determine whether a fire will die out or continue to burn. Fuel also has a major influence on how a wildfire will behave. In large part, the availability and characteristics of this fuel are influenced by the ecology of the landscape, which is in turn significantly affected by how the land is managed¹⁷.

Wildfire fuels can broadly be divided into three categories: ground, surface and crown fuels¹⁸. Ground fuels include peat and other combustible organic material in or beneath the soil. In Britain, surface fuels include grasses, heather, gorse, bracken, leaf litter and other dead vegetation. Crown fuels comprise the branches and foliage within the tree canopy.

77%
**OF WILDFIRES
CAUSED BY
HUMAN
ACTIVITIES**

The amount, type, moisture content and arrangement of fuel all influence fire behaviour. Of these factors, fuel moisture is particularly important¹⁹. Recent UK research, drawing on more than 8,000 samples from 58 sites, found that it plays a key role in how readily fuel ignites and, once a fire is established, how it behaves and how severe it becomes²⁰.

Different types of vegetation can therefore present very different fire risks depending on their condition. Living vegetation generally contains more moisture, while dead vegetation can dry out and become more readily combustible²¹. This means that the condition and ecological functioning of a landscape can be as important as the amount of vegetation it contains²².

Peat presents a particular risk²³. Healthy, intact peatlands are normally wet. However, drought, managed burning and drainage can lower their moisture content sufficiently for peat to burn. Unlike above-ground vegetation fires, which burn predominantly with flames, peat fires can smoulder slowly and persist for long periods²⁴. Forest Research notes that smouldering peat fires can be difficult to extinguish and can repeatedly re-kindle²⁵.

Government wildfire guidance, for example, also warns that degraded and exposed peat can burn and carry fire underground. It highlights the value of features that retain water and create wetter areas within the landscape, alongside the management of vegetation fuels²⁶.

CLIMATE AND PREVAILING WEATHER CONDITIONS

Historically, Britain's humid, relatively mild climate and regular rainfall have limited the role of wildfire within our ecosystems. Unlike some parts of the world where fire is a major natural ecological process, naturally occurring wildfires have played a more limited role in Britain²⁷.

Weather conditions can, however, create periods of elevated wildfire risk and the UK is emerging as an increasingly fire-prone country²⁸. Extended periods of hot, dry weather reduce moisture in vegetation, making fuels more receptive to ignition and allowing fires to spread more readily. Strong winds can accelerate the spread of an established fire, while rainfall and higher fuel moisture can inhibit ignition and fire development²⁹.

Weather refers to short-term atmospheric conditions, while climate refers to longer-term patterns that influence how frequently conditions conducive to wildfire occur³⁰. As the climate changes, the number of days with such conditions is expected to increase significantly, and the wildfire season could lengthen³¹.



PEAT FIRES CAN SMOULDER FOR MONTHS BENEATH THE SURFACE



WILDFIRE PREVENTION

Understanding what causes a wildfire requires us to look at both how fires start and what happens after ignition. An ignition may remain a small, isolated fire, or it may spread and develop into a much larger and more damaging wildfire, depending on the interaction between the available fuel, the condition of the landscape, the topography and the prevailing weather³².

Wildfire prevention therefore has two important dimensions: preventing fires from starting in the first place, and reducing the likelihood that those that do start develop into severe wildfires. Because most wildfires in Britain are caused by people³³, preventing ignition requires measures to reduce both accidental and deliberate fires. These include encouraging responsible behaviour and carefully managing activities that could start fires.

Natural England case studies, for example, identify visitor management, restrictions on campfires and disposable barbecues, and fire wardens among measures for reducing ignition risk³⁴.

Consideration should also be given to what happens when a wildfire starts. The condition and distribution of vegetation and other fuels, together with wetter, more intact and more fire-resistant areas within a landscape can influence a wildfire's intensity, its spread, and how easily it can be brought under control. UK Government guidance explicitly tells land managers to consider resilient wet areas, blocked gullies and wet zones, lower-risk habitats, and the protection and restoration of peat³⁵. Nature recovery, rewilding and the restoration of natural processes can make an important contribution to creating more wildfire-resilient landscapes³⁶.

64%
OF FIRES OCCURRED IN
MONOCULTURE-
DOMINATED
LANDSCAPES



UK Government guidance tells land managers to consider resilient wet areas, including the protection and restoration of peat

3. LAND USE IN BRITAIN

Britain's landscapes face many competing demands including food and timber production, clean water, flood mitigation, nature recovery, housing, infrastructure, climate resilience, energy provision, as well as sporting activities such as driven grouse shooting and deer stalking. In response, the UK Government recently published England's first Land Use Framework which sets out how these demands can be balanced³⁷ (see [Rewilding Britain's consultation response](#)³⁸). This sits alongside similar strategies for Scotland³⁹ and Wales⁴⁰ which, together, recognise the need for landscapes in Britain to adapt to the challenges of the 21st century including becoming more resilient to climate impacts.

Agriculture is the dominant land use in Britain, accounting for 70% of its land area. This includes land used for arable crops, livestock grazing and horticulture. Across the devolved nations, agriculture accounts for 63.1% of land in England⁴¹, 66% in Scotland⁴², and 90% in Wales⁴³. Forestry, open land and water make up the second-largest share of land in England at 20.1%, with Scotland showing a comparable pattern. Around 13% of Britain's land cover is woodland, of which half is coniferous trees.

In contrast, nature recovery and land under rewilding, where restoring natural processes and functions for climate resilience is prioritised, comprise a much smaller area. Approximately 1% of Britain's land area is currently in Rewilding Britain's Rewilding Network⁴⁴. Meanwhile, less than 6% of Britain is effectively protected and managed for nature⁴⁵.

How we use and manage our land directly shapes how resilient we are to climate shocks such as intense rainfall and wildfire⁴⁶. For example, vegetation type and structure – as well as the timing of leaf emergence and rates of growth⁴⁷ (phenology) – can affect how a fire burns and spreads⁴⁸. Soils and below-ground structures can also influence ignition, fuel loads, plant moisture content and flammability⁴⁹. We know that habitats dominated by heather, gorse, and degraded peat are particularly vulnerable to wildfire⁵⁰. Widespread management practices across Britain such as intensive grazing, intensive grouse moor management and peatland drainage can maintain these exact high-risk conditions, as can dense softwood plantations. By examining these land uses alongside rewilding systems, this section establishes the evidence base for the practical interventions, policy transitions, and landscape-scale strategies explored in the remainder of this report.



MANAGEMENT OF UPLANDS AND PEATLANDS

Much of Britain's upland landscape is managed for livestock production (sheep and cattle) and commercial sporting estates (driven grouse shooting and deer stalking). Most recent estimates suggest that 1.8 million hectares of land are managed for deer in Scotland, often at very high stocking densities⁵¹. Furthermore, in England, driven grouse estates cover 423,000 hectares, or 3% of England's land area⁵². Across England, 41% of the country's total peatland habitat is used for grouse shoots⁵³. In Scotland, there are an estimated 120 estates that host grouse shoots, covering about 15% of the country's land area⁵⁴.

To maintain artificially high grouse populations and support agricultural grazing, these landscapes are managed through continuous prescribed rotational burning and extensive artificial drainage. As a result, Britain's uplands typically comprise a combination of moorland habitat, acid grassland and peatlands, of which up to 80% are degraded in some form⁵⁵. Today, these largely open habitats tend to be dominated by common heather, also known as ling heather, and bell heather.

They are regularly burned to remove less palatable, older heather and encourage new shoots – a preferred food source for red grouse chicks⁵⁶. One byproduct of these intensive management approaches is the provision of habitat suitable for a relatively small number of species such as curlew and lapwing.

Peatlands in healthy condition are naturally waterlogged and form peat through the slow decay of plant material⁵⁷. Covering 12% of the UK land area, peatlands supply over a quarter of the country's drinking water and they store vast amounts of carbon⁵⁸. Drainage prevents peatlands from maintaining the waterlogged conditions that are integral to the peat forming process, leading to ongoing peat degradation and landscape decline. Draining this naturally wet system exposes the peat to air and causes it to dry out and lose its capacity to hold water like a sponge. Once ignited, degraded peat soils can burn slowly, creating smouldering fires underground⁵⁹. Because it lacks the moisture and dense structure of healthy wetlands, dry and damaged peat allows oxygen to penetrate deep into the carbon-rich soil, enabling flameless, low-temperature combustion that can persist for months beneath the surface. In the UK uplands, practising rotational burning under these conditions increases the risk of controlled burns escaping and developing into wildfires⁶⁰.



**UP TO
80%
OF BRITAIN'S
UPLANDS ARE
DEGRADED**

**PATCHWORK PATTERN
SHOWING WHERE MOOR
HAS BEEN BURNT ON ROTATION
FOR MAXIMISING HABITAT FOR
DRIVEN GROUSE SHOOTING**



The habitats these land uses create and their relationship with wildfire

The combination of dense, flammable vegetation and dried peat soils leaves open upland landscapes bearing the brunt of UK wildfire activity. Research across England and Wales suggests that wildfire regimes are significantly influenced by specific vegetation types in open landscapes. It found that landscapes dominated by *Molinia* (purple moor grass) experience the largest fires by area, which also tend to occur earlier in the year, during spring. Areas with higher proportions of heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) are associated with greater burn severity, while landscapes containing a mixture of heather and *Molinia* experience fires that are both large and severe. Conversely, heathlands with greater coverage of bracken, gorse, or small trees tend to burn in the warmer months, resulting in fires that are smaller but still severe⁶¹.

While prescribed (rotational) burning can temporarily reduce above-ground vegetation, evidence shows that repeated burning in heather-dominated landscapes encourages the growth of shrubs such as heather, one of the more flammable upland plant species⁶². This can encourage more combustible vegetation to become dominant (eg, heather, gorse and grassland).

Proponents of this management technique argue that rotational burning reduces the accumulation of vegetation that could otherwise provide fuel for wildfires in landscapes managed primarily to promote heather growth or support livestock grazing. However, there is little robust analysis in peatland contexts to show that controlled burning provides effective, long-term wildfire control⁶³. This gap is critical, given that the ecological conditions that result may themselves increase wildfire risk.

While controlled burning and intensive grazing of our uplands may reduce vegetation fuel loads in the short term, over the medium and long term these practices can alter water storage and hydrology, reducing the resilience of these habitats to wildfire and other extreme weather events.

Spotlight: Elan Valley, Wales

In April 2026 a wildfire burnt 8,000 hectares of upland grassland within the Elan Valley in Wales. A restored and rewetted area of peatland, however, acted as a natural firebreak and remained unaffected because of the higher water levels within the soil⁶⁴.

COMMERCIAL FORESTRY

Commercial forestry is essential to the UK's timber supply, and covers increasingly large areas of our uplands. In the UK, around 3.29 million hectares of land are covered by woodland. Conifer species, most of which are non-native (eg, Sitka), account for approximately half of the UK's 13% woodland cover, totalling 1.6 million hectares in the UK⁶⁵. These softwood plantations provide important supplies of timber for use in Britain and beyond.

The main objective of commercial forestry plantations has been to produce straight, fast-growing trees for use in construction and to meet demand for uniform softwood⁶⁶. This management approach creates large monocultures comprising trees of a single species and age, with a uniform structure. The trees are planted close together, reducing the amount of sunlight reaching the ground and thereby limiting the establishment of ground vegetation. Historically, government incentives and subsidies actively encouraged the drainage and planting of non-native conifer plantations on areas of deep peat⁶⁷. This led to the conversion of vast tracts of peatland habitat into commercial plantations⁶⁸.

These management practices dry the peat below ground level, create large monocultures above the ground and contribute to carbon emissions as degraded peatlands shift from carbon sequesters to carbon emitters. While forestry sector practices and incentives have since shifted significantly towards more mixed plantations, continuous cover forestry and woodland restoration, many historic single-species commercial plantations are still in use.

The habitat this land use creates and its relationship with wildfire

Intensively managed forests are more vulnerable and less resilient to the impacts of climate change⁶⁹. Where they are planted as single-species, single-age blocks, they are more susceptible to wildfire. For example, uniform pine timber plantations are twice as likely to burn as other forests managed through approaches such as continuous cover forestry⁷⁰. Species such as pine are also more likely to burn because they contain large amounts of resin and flammable oils⁷¹. In contrast, native broadleaved woodlands can serve as natural firebreaks, with fireline intensity up to five times lower than in monoculture tree plantations⁷².

Improvements in post-war technology led to the rapid expansion of forestry into areas of deep peat in Britain. Drainage was required in these areas, as peatlands were generally too wet to support commercial conifer species. Alongside the initial drainage, trees planted in these areas continue to remove moisture from the soil through evapotranspiration. As their canopies develop and close, they also intercept water that would otherwise reach the bog surface. This can reduce the amount of water reaching the bog surface by up to 40%⁷³. As stated above, dry and drained peatland soils have a much reduced ability to resist fire. This, combined with the increased risk of non-native conifer species burning, further increases the risk of wildfire in these areas.

Forestry practice, however, is beginning to change. The Forestry Commission states that changing the mix of trees planted and using a greater variety of species could increase the resilience of the UK's timber resource to extreme weather, pests and diseases⁷⁴. This could, in turn, create opportunities to develop landscapes that are more resilient to wildfire.

Spotlight: near Cannich, Scottish Highlands

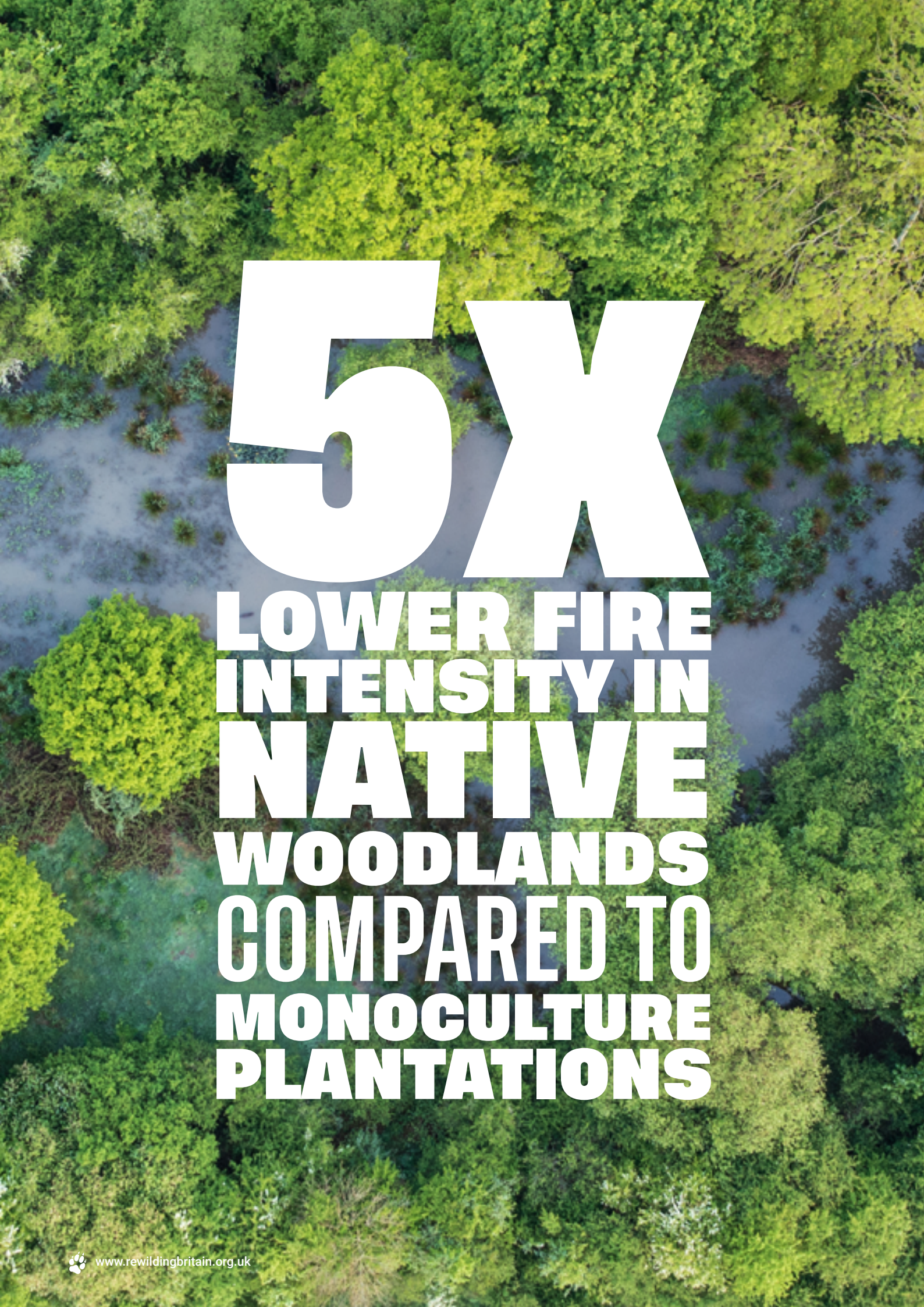
In 2025, a large wildfire near Cannich in the Scottish Highlands burnt around 1,500 to 1,800 hectares of moorland and commercial forestry⁷⁵. This resulted in significant timber losses, with trees having to be felled around 20 years ahead of schedule. Monitoring for flare-ups continued for well over a year after the initial event.

Spotlight: Rumster Forest, Caithness

In 2018, a wildfire began in Rumster Forest, Caithness. The peatland had been recently restored, with drains blocked to raise the water table, the ground smoothed and conifer trees removed. The higher water table meant that the restored area successfully resisted the fire⁷⁶.



Pine monocultures are twice as likely to burn as continuous cover forests

An aerial photograph of a dense, green woodland. A small stream or streamlet flows through the center of the forest, surrounded by lush vegetation. The trees are vibrant green, and the water is a dark, reflective blue-grey. The overall scene is a healthy, natural ecosystem.

5X
LOWER FIRE
INTENSITY IN
NATIVE
WOODLANDS
COMPARED TO
MONOCULTURE
PLANTATIONS



REWILDING

Rewilding is the large-scale restoration of ecosystems to the point where nature is allowed to take care of itself. Rewilding seeks to reinstate natural processes and, where appropriate, missing species, allowing them to shape the landscape and the habitats within. It encourages a balance between people and nature so that we thrive together, and can provide opportunities for communities to diversify and create nature-based economies.

Rewilding represents a fundamental shift in how land is managed. Unlike traditional systems that manage land for a single outcome – such as maximum timber yield, high red grouse numbers, agricultural livestock density or the conservation of specific species – rewilding focuses on restoring natural processes at scale. It allows ecosystems to become more dynamic, complex, and adaptable to climate shocks. Supported by Rewilding Britain through the Rewilding Network, this approach currently connects over 309 projects of 40 hectares or more across more than 200,000 hectares, representing roughly 1% of Britain's land area⁷⁷. The Rewilding Network helps those farmers, communities, charities, and public or private estate owners who are rewilding to share their experiences, ideas, and expertise.

While traditional management relies on continuous, human intervention such as rotational burning, artificial drainage, and clear-felling, rewilding uses targeted initial restoration to kick start natural processes. Practitioners achieve this by blocking artificial drainage ditches to rewet degraded peat, removing hard infrastructure (eg, weirs), and reintroducing ecosystem engineers, such as beavers, to create permanent wetland complexes.

Restoring low-density natural grazing with native herbivores and enabling the natural regeneration of broadleaved trees and scrub are other ways of restoring these natural processes. What's more,

missing species, such as lynx, may be introduced to restore natural predator-prey relationships and wider trophic interactions.

By restoring natural hydrology, more structurally diverse habitat mosaics and natural grazing processes, rewilding may create multiple layers of resilience to wildfire. Rewetted peatlands, restored bogs, and beaver-created wetlands maintain high soil and fuel moisture even during extended summer droughts, creating long lasting wet buffers that may stop or significantly slow surface fires. Replacing continuous stretches of heather or grass with mosaics of species-rich grassland, peat bogs, wetlands, scrub, and broadleaf woodland breaks up fuel continuity across the landscape, helping interrupt fires from spreading. Furthermore, encouraging mosaics of native broadleaved species like oak, birch, and willow over single-species plantations of resinous conifers significantly lowers canopy flammability⁷⁸. Restoring high water tables may also substantially reduce the risk of deep, persistent peat fires.

The habitat this land use creates and its relationship with wildfire

An analysis carried out by Rewilding Britain of European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) data⁷⁹ during the severe fire season of March to August 2026 revealed that out of 285 projects greater than 40 hectares in the Rewilding Network, it is estimated that only one project was directly affected by wildfire (Appendix 1).

Furthermore, spatial analysis of burned areas between 2016 and 2026 shows that acid grassland accounted for 27% of the total area burnt, heather grassland for 25%, heather for 18%, and bog for a further 16%. In comparison, calcareous grassland accounted for just 3% of the area burnt and deciduous woodland for just 0.5%. Acid grasslands occur across many of Britain's heavily-grazed upland landscapes, while heather-dominated landscapes are often a consequence of grouse moor management. This supports the National Emergencies Trust's view that areas with heather, gorse and peat are particularly vulnerable to wildfire⁸⁰.

Our analysis is consistent with wider evidence that open upland habitats account for a substantial proportion of Britain's wildfire activity⁸¹.

Semi-natural habitats like acid grassland, heather, and bogs are especially susceptible, with bogs made vulnerable when drainage and burning dry out peat-forming *Sphagnum* mosses. Monocultures bear the heaviest impact, making up 64% of fires and 49% of the total burned area analysed. In contrast, habitat-dominated areas accounted for 26% of fires (40% of area), while mixed habitat mosaics experienced just 8% of fires and 11% of the total area burned (Appendix 1).

Initial evidence suggests that moving some of our land from simplified monocultures toward restored, water-rich landscapes could help create a more effective natural buffer against wildfire. In the next section, we will explore how scaling up these nature recovery processes could support a wilder, safer, and more climate-resilient Britain.



ONLY 1 REWILDING PROJECT AFFECTED BY WILDFIRE

Data reflects 1 of 285 Rewilding Network member projects



4. CREATING WILDFIRE RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

Recent wildfires have brought into sharp focus the need for more wildfire-resilient landscapes based on a better understanding of the evidence and how to mitigate the growing risk of future wildfires. This risk is determined by a number of factors in addition to the amount of vegetation present. It is also influenced by how wet the landscape is, the condition of the soil, and the type of vegetation. The diversity and health of the habitat mosaic, the location of potential fuel sources, and the objectives guiding land management all play a part too.

Wildfires are highly damaging and distressing to those impacted by them, so it is understandable that there is a rush to assign blame. Climate change is the primary cause of the increase in severity of wildfires in Britain. The question, therefore, is how can we make Britain's landscapes more resilient to wildfire in a rapidly changing climate? Landowners and land managers are encouraged by Defra⁸² and other statutory bodies to adopt robust wildfire management plans and use sustainable land management practices that reduce fuel loads.

Together, six integrated approaches provide a comprehensive framework to rebuild natural wildfire resilience across Britain's landscapes:

1. Re-establishing natural hydrology
2. Creating habitat mosaics and variation within our landscapes
3. Using natural grazing to create firebreaks
4. Restoring soil health
5. Improving education and encouraging behaviour change
6. Transitioning from reactive firefighting to systemic fire resilience



RE-ESTABLISHING NATURAL HYDROLOGY

In the previous section, we explored the dominant land uses and the associated management activities that have reduced the capacity of our degraded upland ecosystems to retain water, leaving landscapes less resilient to drought and wildfire. Changing how water moves through the landscape is fundamental to enabling ecosystems to buffer effectively against extreme events such as severe droughts, intense periods of rainfall and wildfires.

It's hard to light a soaked sponge. Where natural hydrology has been altered, rewetting is an effective way to restore it and retain water in the landscape for longer. This is often the first intervention undertaken by a rewilding project, and can include breaking up land drains, re-wiggling rivers and, where appropriate, reintroducing beavers. Rewetting peatlands at scale restores natural peat-forming processes, raises the water table and retains surface water⁸³. The damp or wet conditions create natural firebreaks during periods of high wildfire risk and help recharge groundwater during drought conditions.

Beavers are a native species in Britain and play a critical role in water management across our catchments. Reintroducing beavers into river catchments creates ponds that hold water for longer during drought conditions. By digging a network of channels and creating ponds, beavers slow the flow of water and create natural firebreaks. In California, wildfires were shown to be less likely to spread through areas where beavers were active, showing that beaver-driven rewetting can have a measurable impact on fire control and mitigation⁸⁴.



VEGETATION AROUND BEAVER DAMS EXPERIENCED THREE TIMES LESS BURNING THAN VEGETATION IN AREAS WITHOUT BEAVER ACTIVITY



**IT'S HARD
TO LIGHT
A SOAKED
SPONGE**

Spotlight: Tywi Forest, Wales

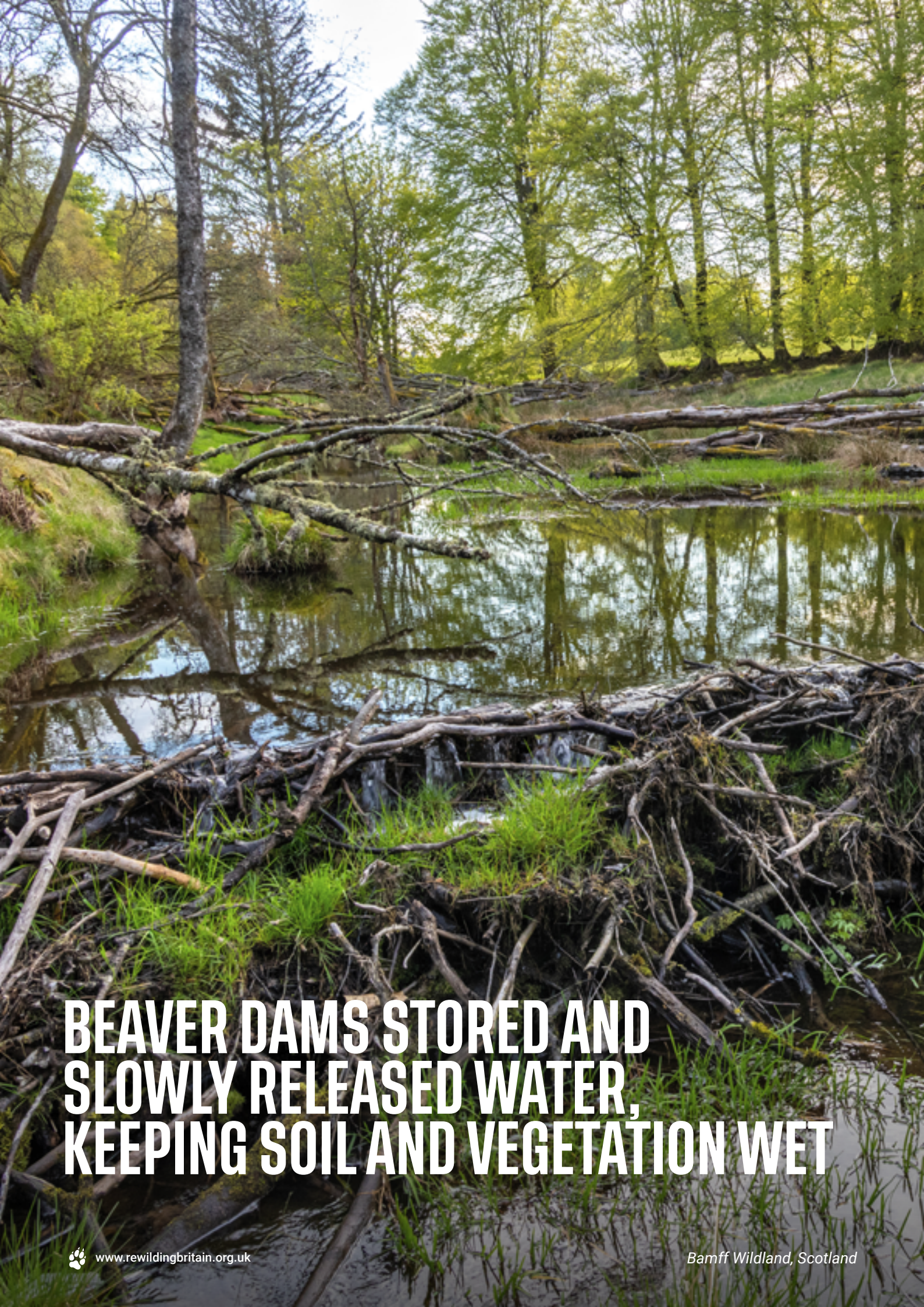
A programme in Tywi Forest in Wales demonstrated that rewetted and restored peat is more resilient to fire⁸⁵. This practical example is further supported by Baird et al (2019)⁸⁶ who discuss the effectiveness of rewetting in mitigating wildfire risk. Rewilding our uplands will mean reducing the extent of heathland and replacing uniform expanses with wetter habitat mosaics.

Spotlight: Bamff Wildland, Scotland

At Bamff Wildland in Scotland, researchers monitored two headwater catchments for 25 months: one containing 28 beaver dams and one without any⁸⁷. During dry weather, the beaver dams stored water across more than 12 hectares of floodplain and released it slowly. This helped keep floodplain soils and vegetation wet, rather than allowing them to become dry fuel beds during hot, dry spells. By recharging groundwater and maintaining moisture in the vegetation, beaver wetlands could therefore reduce the conditions that allow wildfires to ignite and spread.

Spotlight: Holnicote Estate, Somerset

The National Trust's Holnicote Estate in Somerset completed the UK's first large-scale restoration of a main river using the 'Stage Zero' technique⁸⁸. The project reset the River Aller by fully reconnecting it with the surrounding floodplain. A 1.2-kilometre section of straightened river was filled in, transforming the surrounding area and creating seven hectares of waterscape and wetland. Groundwater levels rose across the site – by more than a metre in some places. The twists and turns of the river now capture sediment and provide a range of habitats for fish and other aquatic species.



BEAVER DAMS STORED AND SLOWLY RELEASED WATER, KEEPING SOIL AND VEGETATION WET



2

CREATING HABITAT
MOSAICS AND VARIATION
WITHIN OUR LANDSCAPES

Large, continuous expanses of simplified vegetation such as heather moorlands and commercial forestry create uniform monocultures that heighten wildfire risk across Britain. Research in the Scottish Highlands showed that moorland habitat poses a much greater fire risk than woodland, and that more wildfires occur on moorland than in native woodland⁸⁹. Furthermore, the report suggested that shrubland and grassland accounted for 90% of large wildfires in the Highland region, while woodland accounted for only 7%. Research carried out in Portugal found that replacing highly flammable monocultures with broadleaved forests can reduce fireline intensity by up to five times⁹⁰.

Instead of forming continuous expanses of a single habitat, such as extensive grasslands and heathlands, habitat mosaics comprise irregular, patchy habitats that blend into each other, breaking up fuel continuity. The resulting mixture of wetland features (ponds, marshes and streams) alongside areas of native broadleaved woodland (which are less prone to fire), scrub habitats, open glades and wildflower meadows provides a structural variation that can help to interrupt the spread of fire.

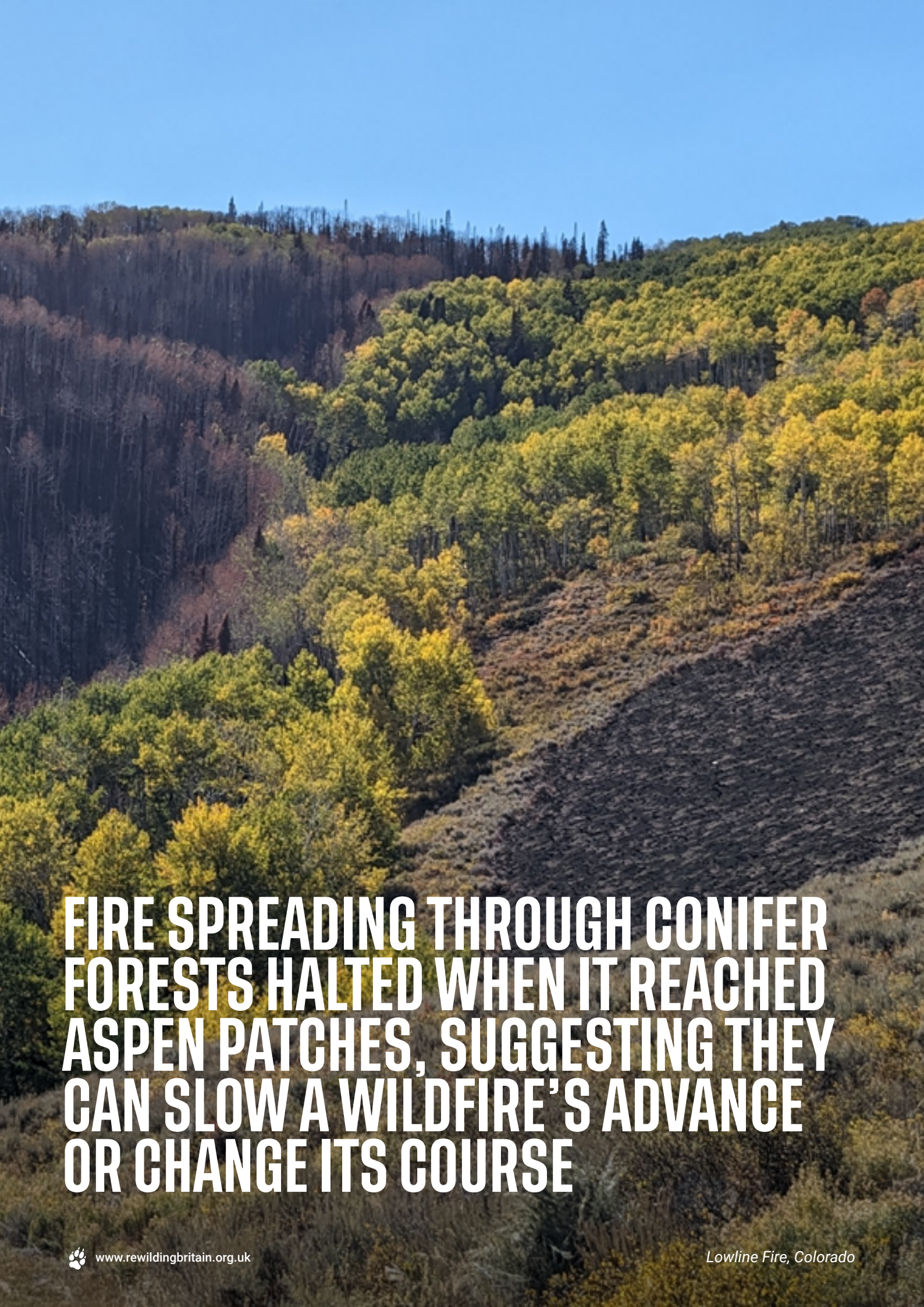
However, during early stages of transition, fuel loads may increase in some areas as vegetation surges, creating temporary elevated wildfire risks that require active, adaptive management. Land managers may need to implement targeted, interim measures such as installing mown firebreaks, maintaining clear access routes, or applying temporary grazing buffers to safely manage fuel levels while natural processes take hold.

Spotlight: Lowline Fire, Colorado

In 2023, the Lowline Fire near Gunnison, Colorado, spread through conifer forests but came to a halt when it reached patches of aspen⁹¹. This reflects research from Colorado showing that stands of aspen trees can slow a wildfire's advance or change its course. Wildfires spread through areas of vegetation comprising at least 25% aspen at about one third the rate of those with less than 10% aspen. Aspen stands are more resistant to burning because their foliage and understorey have a higher moisture content. This suggests that aspen-rich woodland can act as a natural green firebreak.

Spotlight: Lower Sharpham Farm, South Devon

A study at Lower Sharpham Farm in South Devon assessed the transition from an organic farm towards a rewilding approach. This involved reducing grazing numbers, planting native trees and retaining deadwood in the landscape. The University of Exeter used AI modelling to assess potential fire behaviour at the site. The resulting scenarios indicated that the early stages of transition could increase fire intensity, flame length and severity in a lowland system, highlighting the importance of interim measures to mitigate this risk⁹². However, the modelling also highlighted that future nature-recovery actions, particularly rewetting, could reduce fire hazards across the landscape in the longer term.



**FIRE SPREADING THROUGH CONIFER
FORESTS HALTED WHEN IT REACHED
ASPEN PATCHES, SUGGESTING THEY
CAN SLOW A WILDFIRE'S ADVANCE
OR CHANGE ITS COURSE**



3 USING NATURAL GRAZING TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISKS

Beyond the restoration of complex habitat mosaics and restoring hydrology, native herbivores have a huge impact. The full guild of herbivores native to Britain, including bison, elk, red deer, roe deer, cattle and ponies, all have important roles in natural processes. Cattle are widely used in rewilding projects and can act as proxies for the extinct aurochs. Where they are allowed to browse and graze naturally at low densities they can diversify the distribution and structure of vegetation, helping to create mosaics in the landscape⁹³.

The GrazeLIFE project, co-financed by the European Commission and co-ordinated by Rewilding Europe, studied the relationship between native wild herbivores and wildfire. It investigated links between vegetation structure, fire risk, fire frequency and fire damage. The study showed that wild and semi-wild herbivores such as horses, cattle and bison can reduce wildfire risk through their grazing patterns, encouraging diverse ground cover and creating natural firebreaks that can prevent a fire from spreading following ignition, limiting the area that is burnt⁹⁴.

Growing evidence suggests that restoring native herbivores at low densities (native cattle, ponies, bison and elk) alongside sustainable populations of deer could create natural firebreaks and more varied vegetation, while trampled paths could help disrupt the spread of fire⁹⁵.

However, land managers and landowners require secure funding to make this transition. Some schemes, such as the Environmental Land Management Scheme in England, provide a native breeds supplement which can support a transition towards natural grazing⁹⁶. Equivalent funding is not present in Scotland and Wales. Current government policy also restricts opportunities to reintroduce large herbivores such as elk and bison for natural grazing across our landscapes.

Spotlight: Ukraine

In Ukraine, research showed that areas grazed by wild herbivores had the healthiest soils, with higher moisture levels, a balanced pH and the most carbon stored⁹⁷. In contrast, those areas that had been repeatedly burned were found to have the poorest soils.

Spotlight: Madrid, Spain

In July 2026, plots grazed by horses, cattle and bison in a valley in the Madrid region of Spain remained largely intact during a fire that burnt 240 hectares of the surrounding area⁹⁸.

Spotlight: Australia

Reintroductions of large herbivores in Australia have been shown to reduce the risk of fire, and their introduction there and on other continents has been suggested as a way to reduce fire risk⁹⁹.



Horses, cattle and bison create natural firebreaks

A photograph of two wild horses in a natural landscape. The horse on the left is a dark brown color, standing and looking towards the camera. The horse on the right is a lighter brown with white markings on its face and neck, and is grazing. The background features green shrubs and trees under a clear blue sky.

**RESEARCH FOUND WILD
HORSES CONSUME FINE,
HIGHLY FLAMMABLE GRASSES,
SUGGESTING THEY CAN HELP
REDUCE FLAMMABLE VEGETATION
AND MAINTAIN HABITAT MOSAICS**

4 RESTORING SOIL HEALTH

Dry conditions and degraded soils can exacerbate wildfires, as degraded, compacted soils absorb less water than healthy soils. This means that water simply runs off the surface instead of being absorbed and stored. In damaged peatlands, the peat itself can become fuel during a fire, burning alongside the above-ground vegetation and potentially smouldering long after the flames have been suppressed.

Healthy, functioning soils are more resilient to extreme weather and store more water, reducing the risk of deep subsurface smouldering fires that are difficult to suppress. At the Knepp Estate in England, a study of the soil by Cranfield University in 2018 showed a doubling of soil organic carbon, a doubling of soil microbial biomass, a recovery in the fungal-to-bacterial ratio and an increase in

fungal biomarkers compared with an arable control site¹⁰⁰. These are important indicators of both soil health recovery and carbon sequestration. In addition, establishing native woodland and vegetation improves soil structure and organic matter, increasing infiltration and moisture retention while creating seasonal soil water storage capacity¹⁰¹.

Healthier soils hold more water, reducing the likelihood of deep fires continuing to burn and spread or reigniting surface vegetation.



Healthy, functioning soils are more resilient to extreme weather and store more water

5

**IMPROVING EDUCATION
AND ENCOURAGING
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE**

Around 77% of wildfire ignitions in Britain have been attributed to human activity, whether accidental or deliberate¹⁰². As a result of this, public education, targeted awareness campaigns and responsible land management practices aimed at preventing wildfires are critical. These measures should be combined with a greater emphasis in school curricula on how to access and enjoy our countryside, as well as greater awareness of the Countryside Code and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

However, this does not mean restricting public access to our countryside. Access to nature is essential for our physical and mental health, as well as for helping us establish a connection with the natural world¹⁰³. Being able to explore and enjoy our countryside encourages us to care for it and protect it from harm. Ensuring people have access to nature should be at the forefront of our strategy to improve engagement with the natural world.

A resilient landscape is one that has people at its heart and demonstrates how people and nature can thrive together. It can provide opportunities for communities to diversify and create nature-based economies. It can also enable living systems to provide the ecological functions on which we all depend. In doing so, it can help people to reconnect with nature.



6

**TRANSITIONING FROM
REACTIVE FIREFIGHTING
TO SYSTEMIC FIRE
RESILIENCE**

Britain's historic approach to domestic fire safety provides a clear precedent. From the late 1980s onwards, national policy shifted away from relying principally on responding to fires towards preventing them and reducing their consequences¹⁰⁴. Public information campaigns and smoke alarms became widespread, while home safety checks were established alongside, rather than instead of, effective emergency services. Wildfire policy requires a similar strategic pivot built around three complementary lines of defence:

■ First: prevent ignition

Reduce accidental and deliberate fires through education, targeted prevention, better information and appropriate management of activities that create ignition risk.

■ Second: build landscape resilience

Restore hydrology, peatlands, soils and natural processes, while creating more diverse and structurally varied landscapes that can slow fire spread and recover more effectively after wildfire.

■ Third: prepare and respond

Maintain strong Fire and Rescue Service capacity, improve wildfire planning (at national and local level) and risk mapping, ensure appropriate access and water availability, and coordinate emergency responses across landownership boundaries.



5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

A WILDER LANDSCAPE IS A SAFER LANDSCAPE

Britain's wildfire risk is changing. Our traditionally cooler, humid maritime conditions are giving way to prolonged periods of hotter, drier weather in which fires can start, spread and become difficult to control. The majority of wildfire ignitions in Britain are caused by people, so preventing these ignitions through public education as well as investing in wildfire planning and emergency response must be the first line of defence. However, what this report has demonstrated is that rewilding can make an important contribution towards making our landscapes more wildfire resilient. Wildfire behaviour is driven by complex interactions between weather conditions, vegetation structure, and moisture both above and below ground. The landscapes Britain has inherited – landscapes shaped by centuries of artificial drainage, rotational burning, and single-species monocultures – are fundamentally ill-equipped for this emerging climate reality. Degraded peatlands and simplified vegetation lack the ecological functioning required to retain moisture and dampen both the ignition and spread of wildfires.

Continuing with business-as-usual land management will not reduce this vulnerability. While short-term management techniques like prescribed burning reduce surface fuel temporarily, they fail to address the underlying degradation of soils and hydrology, with dry, drained peat itself becoming a persistent, subterranean fuel during extreme droughts. Conversely, the evidence indicates that rewilding can make an important contribution to reducing wildfire risk and severity over the long term. Currently occupying roughly 1% of Britain's land area, rewilding represents a vital shift towards long-term resilience.

By integrating the range of restoration approaches at a landscape scale, including natural hydrology, rewetting degraded peat, enabling natural broadleaf regeneration, and reintroducing native large herbivores, rewilding replaces continuous, highly flammable vegetation with habitat mosaics to rebuild natural resilience across Britain's landscape.

Transitioning heavily managed habitats into wildfire-resilient landscapes is an active ecological process rather than an abandonment of human oversight. During early transition phases, reduced intensive management can trigger short-term vegetation surges and elevated fuel loads before natural grazing and hydrology are fully established. Managing these temporary risks requires land managers to play a crucial ongoing role in monitoring, adaptation, and safety. They should employ targeted interim controls such as mown firebreaks, clear access routes, and temporary grazing buffers to safely bridge the gap until dynamic, water-rich habitats take hold and deliver long-term climate resilience.

There are no completely fireproof landscapes, but there are management choices that make countryside systems substantially more resilient. A wetter, structurally varied and ecologically diverse Britain is likely to be more resilient to wildfire than one characterised by degraded hydrology and extensive areas of simplified vegetation.

Building landscape-scale wildfire resilience is an active, ongoing journey rather than an overnight transformation. It requires a strategic approach, enabling policies and sustained funding, and it must put farmers and land managers at the heart of the solution with fair, long-term support. Delivering this transition is directly aligned with Britain's commitment to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030 (30x30). Restoring natural hydrology and dynamic habitat mosaics will ensure our 30x30 targets deliver landscapes that are not only rich in wildlife, but also resilient to climate shocks.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

To enable a fair, well-evidenced, cost-effective, and rapid transition towards wildfire-resilient landscapes, we call on the UK Government and devolved governments to establish National Wildfire Strategies that include the following five actions:

1. REDUCE IGNITION RISKS

Reduce accidental and deliberate fires through education and engagement.

Expand national education initiatives, targeted public awareness campaigns, and community engagement regarding responsible access, the Countryside Code, and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to minimise human-caused ignitions.

2. IMPROVE WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Improve locally led wildfire planning and risk mapping.

Ensure that a well-funded, well-coordinated emergency response can be deployed when wildfires take hold. This should include cross-border collaboration between land managers, fire and rescue services, communities and governments to coordinate responses and share lessons and best practice.

3. SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MORE WILDFIRE-RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

Create more wildfire-resilient landscapes by encouraging a wetter and more structurally dynamic mosaic of habitats as part of our 30% by 2030 nature commitments.

This should include:

- Rewetting and restoring peatlands, wetlands, ponds, marshes and streams to re-establish natural hydrology and retain water for longer.

- Reintroducing beavers into at-risk landscapes to create wetlands that hold water in the landscape.

- Restoring mosaics of broadleaved and wet woodland, scrub, open glades and species-rich grasslands to provide structural variation. This can make landscapes less prone to fire and help to interrupt its spread.

- Supporting natural grazing and the introduction of large herbivores, where appropriate. Through wilder grazing patterns, they can promote habitat mosaics and help reduce fuel continuity.

4. ALIGN PRACTICAL, FINANCIAL AND POLICY SUPPORT

Reform policy and public funding schemes across all devolved nations to offer secure commitments lasting at least 20 years.

This would give land managers the financial stability needed to deliver a healthy mix of woodland, scrub, grassland, wetlands and open habitats to lower wildfire risk and aid recovery.

Provide more support to practitioners looking to transition towards rewilding approaches.

5. IMPROVE THE EVIDENCE BASE

Improve wildfire monitoring and research.

Develop consistent UK-wide monitoring of wildfire ignition, cause, extent, severity, habitat and land-management condition. This should be accompanied by long-term comparative research into wildfire behaviour across different land uses and stages of ecological restoration.



**THERE ARE NO
COMPLETELY
FIREPROOF LANDSCAPES,
BUT THERE ARE MANAGEMENT
CHOICES THAT MAKE
COUNTRYSIDE SYSTEMS
SUBSTANTIALLY MORE RESILIENT**



APPENDIX 1: SPATIAL ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

DATA SOURCES

To assess the habitat composition of fire burn areas across Great Britain, vector burn perimeters were obtained from the the [European Forest Fire Information System \(EFFIS\)](#)¹⁰⁵. These were integrated with high-resolution land cover data from the [UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology \(UK CEH\) Land Cover Map 2023](#), which uses 10m classified pixels. Spatial zonal histogram were extracted using QGIS, returning pixel counts for each 10m resolution UK CEH habitat class within every individual EFFIS fire perimeter.

Sites located within Northern Ireland were excluded from the analytical dataset prior to processing due to Rewilding Britain's focus on Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales).

To resolve scale discrepancies between the EFFIS vector perimeters and the 10m raster grid (10m x 10m = 100m² = 0.01 ha), the total fire burn areas were calculated by summing the area of underlying raster pixels (1 pixel = 0.01 ha).

Analytical workflow

The statistical evaluation was structured across three primary analytical scales using R:

■ Individual fire composition

Each burn perimeter was shaped into long-format habitat records. The area of each habitat class within a given fire scar was calculated in hectares (pixel count x 0.01). Habitat composition percentages were then calculated in relation to the fire's total raster-derived area.

■ National land cover contribution:

To determine the national-scale impact of wildfires on specific habitat types, pixel areas were aggregated by habitat class across all Great Britain fire events. The total burned area (ha) and the count of unique fire incidents were summarised for each land cover type. The overall percentage contribution of each habitat was calculated relative to the cumulative burned area recorded across Britain.

■ Dominant habitat structural classification:

Each burn area polygon was categorised by its primary land cover type using the single habitat class occupying the largest burned area. Fire scars were further classified into three structural landscape categories based on land cover dominance:

Monoculture-dominated:

The primary habitat accounts for greater than or equal to 75% of the burn scar.

Habitat-dominated:

The primary habitat accounts for 50 to 74.9% of the burn scar.

Mixed habitat mosaic:

No single habitat holds a majority less than 50%.

Rewilding location analysis

Rewilding locations (point data) used in the analysis for projects equal to or greater than 40 hectares in the Rewilding Network where data are available (285), including confidential site locations. This data does not include all known locations where rewilding is being undertaken if they are not part of the Network.

Point data was used based on location and a point count within polygons was initially conducted to look for overlap between rewilding sites and burn areas during the time period. A three-mile buffer was applied to each point to account for area. EFFIS data were requested for the period 1st March 2026 to the time of analysis (19th August 2026).

APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDIES

By harnessing nature's ability to resist ignition, hold back wildfire spread and recover from burning, projects in Britain and beyond are finding ways to manage land in a way that builds long-term resilience. From restoring drained peatland to bringing back lost grazing patterns, these case studies shine a light on the actions we can take now.

HOW PEATLAND RESTORATION CAN HOLD BACK WILDFIRE

Troedrhiwdrain, Elan Valley

In April 2026, wildfires took hold in mid-Wales. At Troedrhiwdrain Farm in the Elan Valley, peatland rewetting had taken place 18 months earlier. The areas where peatland had been restored stayed damp despite the fire^[1].

Golticlay, Caithness

In 2018, a wildfire began in Rumster Forest, Caithness. The peatland had been recently restored, with drains blocked to raise the water table, ground smoothing undertaken and conifer trees removed. The higher water table meant that the restored area successfully resisted the fire^[2].

HOW WETLANDS CAN MITIGATE WILDFIRE SPREAD AND IMPACT

The Sharps Fire, Idaho, USA

In 2018, the Sharps Fire burnt through more than 26,000 hectares of land in Idaho, USA. Researchers studying the site found a beaver wetland that had resisted the flames. This prompted them to examine major wildfires across five states, remotely surveying vegetation along creeks before and after each fire. They found that vegetation around beaver dams experienced three times less burning than vegetation in areas without beaver activity^[3].

Bamff Wildland, Scotland

At Bamff Wildland in Scotland, researchers monitored two headwater catchments for 25 months: one containing 28 beaver dams and one without any. During dry weather, the beaver dams stored water across more than 12 hectares of floodplain and released it slowly. This helped keep floodplain soils and vegetation wet, rather than allowing them to become dry fuel beds during hot, dry spells^[4]. By recharging groundwater and maintaining moisture in the vegetation, beaver wetlands could therefore reduce the conditions that allow wildfires to ignite and spread.



The Clinton Devon Estate, England

The Clinton Devon Estate manages more than 10,000 hectares across East and North Devon, around 70% of which is farmland managed by more than 30 tenants. The River Otter runs through the estate. Beavers were first discovered breeding along the river in 2013, followed by a Natural England beaver trial from 2015 to 2020. Their activity has reduced flood risk to 52 homes downstream, while the wetlands they have created have remained wet and green during droughts.

Completed in 2024, the Lower Otter Restoration Project reconnected the River Otter with its estuary and floodplain, creating around 55 hectares of new wetland to bolster the beavers' efforts. Together, these measures demonstrate how restoring natural hydrology can help landscapes retain water and become more resilient to floods, drought and wildfire.

Holnicote Estate, Somerset, England

The National Trust's Holnicote Estate in Somerset completed the UK's first large-scale restoration of a main river using the 'Stage Zero' technique. The project reset the River Aller by fully reconnecting it with the surrounding floodplain. A 1.2-kilometre section of straightened river was filled in, transforming the surrounding area and creating seven hectares of waterscape and wetland.

Groundwater levels rose across the site – by more than a metre in some places. The twists and turns of the river now capture sediment and provide a range of habitats for fish and other aquatic species^[5].

Almost immediately after the project was completed, England experienced its wettest 18-month period on record. The reset River Aller helped slow the flow of water after heavy rainfall, protecting the local communities downstream. The project demonstrates how reconnecting rivers with their floodplains can help landscapes manage extreme rainfall and reduce flood risk.

HOW DIVERSE GRAZING PATTERNS MAINTAIN FIRE-RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

Garraf National Park, Spain

Garraf National Park is a landscape of limestone hills, caves, sinkholes and Mediterranean flora located south-west of Barcelona, Spain. Pottoka horses, an ancient breed native to the Basque Country, roam freely and graze the park at low densities. Researchers who analysed the horses' diet found that they initially consumed fine, highly flammable grasses, before moving on to woody plants as the grasses became depleted.



This suggests that wild horses can help reduce flammable vegetation and maintain habitat mosaics^[6].

Faia Brava Reserve, Côa Valley, Portugal

Since 2006, around 45 Garrano horses and a number of Tauros cattle have been released into the Faia Brava Reserve, a 1,000-hectare reserve that straddles the Côa Valley in Portugal. Grazing animals consume vegetation, helping to create habitat mosaics and open spaces that act as natural firebreaks. The GrazeLIFE project reports that, despite severe wildfires in 2017, the reserve and surrounding area escaped damage as a result of continuous vigilance and natural grazing patterns^[7].

HOW NATIVE WOODLAND CAN CREATE GREEN FIREBREAKS

Sanming City, Fujian Province, China

The Sanming area of Fujian Province in eastern China is prone to forest fires. To reduce this risk, green firebreaks extending for more than 3,500 kilometres have been planted using fire-resistant species such as *Schima superba*, a flowering evergreen plant in the tea family. These strips of less flammable vegetation are intended to limit

the spread and damage caused by wildfires, complementing more traditional fire-suppression methods. The initiative forms part of a wider programme through which China has planted hundreds of thousands of kilometres of green firebreaks^[8].

Gunnison, Colorado, USA

In 2023, the Lowline Fire near Gunnison, Colorado, spread through conifer forests but came to a halt when it reached patches of aspen. This reflects research from Colorado showing that stands of aspen trees can slow a wildfire's advance or change its course. Wildfires spread through areas of vegetation comprising at least 25% aspen spread at about one third the rate observed in areas containing less than 10% aspen. Aspen stands are more resistant to burning because their foliage and understorey have a higher moisture content.

The high branches and chemical composition also reduce their flammability. This suggests that aspen-rich woodland can act as a natural green firebreak^[9].



Case study references

- [1] How nature-friendly farming can save farmland from wildfires (2026): <https://www.nffn.org.uk/resources/how-nature-friendly-farming-can-save-farmland-from-wildfires>
- [2] Peatland ACTION case study: What's the connection between peat and wildfire? (2024): <https://www.nature.scot/doc/peatland-action-case-study-whats-connection-between-peat-and-wildfire>
- [3] Smokey the Beaver: beaver-dammed riparian corridors stay green during wildfire throughout the western United States (2020): <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eap.2225>
- [4] The hydrological effects of the Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*) in a UK headwater catchment (2023): https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10192241/1/van%20Biervliet_thesis.pdf
- [5] Rewilded land remains green amid drought-stricken English countryside, images show (2026): <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/aug/21/somerset-rewilding-holnicote-estate-wetlands-rivers-resilience>
- [6] Dietary strategies of feral and domestic horses under varying grazing pressures: insights for Mediterranean forest management (2025): <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10457-025-01291-9>
- [7] Grazing to minimise wildfire risk (2021): <https://grazelife.com/blog/grazing-to-minimise-wildfire-risk/>
- [8] Spatial layout of biological fuelbreaks in Jiangle County, Fujian Province of eastern China (2020): <https://j.bjfu.edu.cn/en/article/doi/10.12171/j.1000-1522.20190365>
- [9] Aspen impedes wildfire spread in southwestern United States landscapes (2025): <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eap.70061>

APPENDIX 3: REFERENCES

1. Cost of UK Wildfires per Hectare: Methods and Estimates, Moorland Association
2. Global Wildfire Information System (2026): <https://gwis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>
3. Fire chiefs warn of growing wildfire pressure (2026): <https://www.thefpa.co.uk/fire-and-risk-management-journal/news/fire-chiefs-warn-of-growing-wildfire-pressure->
4. The effect of climate change on indicators of fire danger in the UK (2021): <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/abd9f2>
5. Why severe wildfires are becoming more frequent in the UK and how to cope with the health risks (2026): <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2026/07/14/why-severe-wildfires-are-becoming-more-frequent-in-the-uk-and-how-to-cope-with-the-health-risks/>
6. A Well-Adapted UK (2026): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/a-well-adapted-uk/>
7. Spikes in UK wildfire emissions driven by peatland fires in dry years (2025): <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/adafc6>
8. Cost of UK Wildfires per Hectare: Methods and Estimates, Moorland Association
9. UK Wildfires and their Climate Challenges (2021): https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Iain-Brown-8/publication/352569211_UK_Wildfires_and_their_Climate_Challenges/links/60e315dd92851ca944aa8655/UK-Wildfires-and-their-Climate-Challenges.pdf
10. Scottish Government Fire and Rescue Service Wildfire Operational Guidance (2013) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-rescue-service-wildfire-operational-guidance/pages/14/>
11. The causes and prevention of wildfire on heathlands and peatlands in England (NEER014) (2020): <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4741162353295360>
12. Wildfire risks to UK landscapes (2024): <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0717/POST-PN-0717.pdf>
13. The causes and prevention of wildfire on heathlands and peatlands in England (NEER014) (2020): <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4741162353295360>
14. Wildfire safety advice (2026): <https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/safety/outdoors/wildfires?>
15. Fire and Rescue Services: Question for Home Office (2023): <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/2969?>
16. UK Health Security Agency (2026) <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2026/07/14/why-severe-wildfires-are-becoming-more-frequent-in-the-uk-and-how-to-cope-with-the-health-risks/>
17. Landscape controls on fuel moisture variability in fire-prone heathland and peatland landscapes (2024) <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s42408-024-00248-0>
18. United Kingdom Vegetation Fire Standard (2009): https://cdn.forestresearch.gov.uk/2022/02/ukvfs_august_2009.pdf
19. United Kingdom Vegetation Fire Standard (2009): https://cdn.forestresearch.gov.uk/2022/02/ukvfs_august_2009.pdf
20. A national-scale sampled temperate fuel moisture database (2024): <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41597-024-03832-w>
21. UK and Global Fire Weather (2021): <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/climate-impacts/uk-and-global-fire-weather>
22. The causes and prevention of wildfire on heathlands and peatlands in England (NEER014) (2020): <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4741162353295360>
23. NatureScot Peatland Actino Case Study (2024) <https://www.nature.scot/doc/peatland-action-case-study-whats-connection-between-peat-and-wildfire>
24. Health Effects of Climate Change (HECC) in the UK: Chapter 10. Wildfires and health (2023): <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65705b7a7391350013b03bbc/HECC-report-2023-chapter-10-wildfires.pdf>
25. Wildfire (2021): <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/climate-change/risks/wildfire/>
26. Supporting information for completing your plan (2025): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wildfire-management-plan/supporting-information-for-completing-your-plan>
27. Evidence of wildfire in the British Isles during the Last Glacial-Interglacial Transition: Revealing spatiotemporal patterns and controls (2020): <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0016787820300389>
28. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12004099/>
29. UK and Global Fire Weather (2021): <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/climate-impacts/uk-and-global-fire-weather>
30. National Geographic (2026) <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/weather-or-climate-whats-difference/8th-grade/>
31. A Well-Adapted UK (2026): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/a-well-adapted-uk/>
32. The effect of fuel structure and wind speed on ignition behaviour and fire spread of wildland fuels under firebrand exposure (2026) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0379711226000603>

33. UK Health Security Agency <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2026/07/14/why-severe-wildfires-are-becoming-more-frequent-in-the-uk-and-how-to-cope-with-the-health-risks/>
34. Edition 1 Three Wildfires in England (NECR484) (2023): <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5264022325428224?>
35. Supporting information for completing your plan (2025): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wildfire-management-plan/supporting-information-for-completing-your-plan>
36. Wildfires: Nature's role in resisting the spark (2025): <https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2025/09/29/wildfires-natures-role-in-resisting-the-spark/>
37. Land Use Framework (2026): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/land-use-framework>
38. A wilder land use framework (2026): <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/about-us/what-we-say/policy/land-use-consultation>
39. Scotland's Fourth Land Use Strategy: 2026-2031 (2026): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-fourth-land-use-strategy-2026-2031/>
40. Sustainable Land Management: indicator and target statement (2025): <https://www.gov.wales/sustainable-land-management-indicator-and-target-statement-2025>
41. Land use statistics: England (2022): <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/land-use-in-england-2022/land-use-statistics-england-2022>
42. Scotland's fourth land use strategy: consultation (2025): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-fourth-land-use-strategy-consultation/pages/2/>
43. Survey of agriculture and horticulture (2025): <https://www.gov.wales/survey-agriculture-and-horticulture-june-2025.html>
44. The Rewilding Network (2026): <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/rewilding-network>
45. 30by30 2025 UK Progress Report (2025): https://www.wcl.org.uk/assets/uploads/0/WCL_04_30x30Report2025_DIGITAL.pdf
46. Ecological resilience of restored peatlands to climate change (2022): <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-022-00547-x>
47. Remotely sensed vegetation phenology drives large fire spread in northwestern Europe (2025): <https://connectsci.au/wf/article/34/6/WF24079/200439/Remotely-sensed-vegetation-phenology-drives-large>
48. Vegetation phenology as a key driver for fire occurrence in the UK and comparable humid temperate regions (2024): <https://connectsci.au/wf/article/33/10/WF23205/22160/Vegetation-phenology-as-a-key-driver-for-fire>
49. Fire and Rescue Service Wildfire Operational Guidance (2013): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-rescue-service-wildfire-operational-guidance/pages/14/>
50. Wildfires in the UK: Understanding the Growing Risk: <https://nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk/wildfires-growing-risk/>
51. PACEC 2016 <https://www.deer-management.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Final-25FEB.pdf>
52. Moorland Association <https://www.moorlandassociation.org/post/sustaining-ecosystems-how-grouse-moor-management-benefits-our-english-uplands>
53. The Guardian (2021) <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/15/just-124-people-own-most-of-england-deep-peat-its-largest-carbon-store-aoe>
54. Scottish Government (2019) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/grouse-moor-management-group-report-scottish-government/pages/3/>
55. Threats to peatlands: <https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/about-peatlands/peatland-damage>
56. Your essential guide to grouse shooting and moorland management (2016): <https://www.gwct.org.uk/media/675639/Driven-grouse-shooting-fact-sheet.pdf>
57. About Peatlands: <https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/about-peatlands>
58. UK natural capital: peatlands (2019): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/uknaturalcapitalforpeatlands/naturalcapitalaccounts>
59. Widespread peat carbon losses driven by the 2025 Scottish megafire (2026) <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-026-01994-3>
60. An evidence review update on the effects of managed burning on upland peatland biodiversity, carbon and water (NEER155) (2025): <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4548741850464256>
61. Wildfire size, severity and timing vary with dominant vegetation in open landscapes in England and Wales (2026): <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/2688-8319.70254>
62. Little et al 2025 <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/rstb/article/380/1924/20240001/234873/Priority-research-directions-for-wildfire-science>
63. Burning: <https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/burning>
64. <https://www.iqair.com/gb/newsroom/wildfire-map-spotlight-elan-valley-fire-wales>
65. Forestry Facts & Figures 2022, Forest Research <https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/publications/forestry-statistics/forestry-statistics-2022/>
66. <https://forestrycommission.blog.gov.uk/2025/07/01/the-role-of-timber-in-sustainable-woodland-management/>
67. Forest Research <https://cdn.forestryresearch.gov.uk/2022/02/fcgn1.pdf>
68. Forestry: <https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/forestry>
69. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332225000211>
70. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-025-59272-6>
71. <https://smokedsystem.com/how-different-tree-species-affect-fire-intensity/>

72. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212420923002686>
73. <https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/Briefing%204%20Ecological%20impacts%20of%20forestry%20on%20peatlands.pdf>
74. Forestry Commission (2021) <https://www.forestryengland.uk/nature-wildlife/forests-for-the-future>
75. <https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4116870/wildfire-burns-hectares-moorland>
76. <https://www.nature.scot/doc/peatland-action-case-study-whats-connection-between-peat-and-wildfire>
77. The Rewilding Network (2026): <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/rewilding-network>
78. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-025-59272-6>
79. <https://forest-fire.emergency.copernicus.eu/applications/data-and-services>
80. Wildfires in the UK: Understanding the Growing Risk: <https://nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk/wildfires-growing-risk/>
81. Lees et al 2026: <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/2688-8319.70254>
82. <https://www.gov.uk/find-funding-for-land-or-farms/cup18-manage-features-for-wildfire-management-fire-and-fuel-breaks-supplement>
83. <https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/peatland-restoration>
84. Smokey the Beaver: beaver-dammed riparian corridors stay green during wildfire throughout the western United States (2020): <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eap.2225>
85. <https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/news-and-blogs/news/2025-news-releases/indicators-that-rewetted-peatland-stalled-wildfire-spread/?lang=en>
86. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-019-0477-5>
87. https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10192241/1/van%20Biervliet_thesis.pdf
88. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/aug/21/somerset-rewilding-holnicote-estate-wetlands-rivers-resilience>
89. The Role of Rewilding in Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation (2023): <https://treesforlife.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Rewilding-And-Wildfire-Briefing-2023.pdf>
90. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212420923002686>
91. <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eap.70061>
92. Rewilding Sparks Change: Modelling Fire Behaviour (2025): <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b3afda586d884c78807f07433f1307c4>
93. <https://www.publish.csiro.au/WF/WF15055>
94. <https://grazelife.com/>
95. Johnson et al 2018 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6231065/>
96. Environmental Land Management (ELM) update: how government will pay for land-based environment and climate goods and services (2023): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-land-management-update-how-government-will-pay-for-land-based-environment-and-climate-goods-and-services/environmental-land-management-elm-update-how-government-will-pay-for-land-based-environment-and-climate-goods-and-services>
97. <https://rewildingeurope.com/news/rewilding-efforts-boosts-carbon-storage-and-soil-fertility-on-the-tarutino-steppe/>
98. <https://madridsecreto.co/en/the-bison-that-stopped-the-fire-in-madrid-the-natural-firebreak-that-saved-a-reserve-and-dozens-of-animals/>
99. <https://zslpublications.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/acv.12269>
100. <https://knepp.co.uk/rewilding/ecosystem-services/soil-restoration/>
101. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/51120/wood-wise-spring-issue-2022-trees-for-water.pdf>
102. Wildfires: Reducing the risks and mitigating the effects (2025) <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/wildfires-reducing-the-risks-and-mitigating-the-effects/>
103. <https://www.who.int/europe/activities/improving-health-and-well-being-through-nature>
104. <https://www.firesafetyevent.com/news/history-fire-prevention-measures>
105. Data and services: <https://forest-fire.emergency.copernicus.eu/applications/data-and-services>

FIND OUT MORE

rewildingbritain.org.uk/rewilding-and-climate-resilience-wildfires

**REWILDING
BRITAIN**



Image credits:

Front cover © Mark Hamblin/scotlandbigpicture.com, pg3 © Mark Hamblin/scotlandbigpicture.com, pg4 © Whitcomberd/Adobe Stock, pg5 © Sam Rose/whatifyoujustleaveit.info, pg7 © Nick Upton/naturepl.com, pg9 © Drew/Adobe Stock, pg10 © Bob McCraight/iStock, pg11 © James Shooter/scotlandbigpicture.com, pg12 © Erni/Adobe Stock, pg13 © David Tipling/Naturepl.com, pg15 © Ben Porter, pg16 © Knepp Wildland, pg18 © James Shooter/scotlandbigpicture.com, pg20 © Dr. Joe M. Wheaton, Utah State University, pg21 © Laird and Good company/Finn Beales, pg22 © Peter Cairns/scotlandbigpicture.com, pg24 © Dr Jonathan Coop, Western Colorado University, pg25 © Staffan Widstrand/Nature Picture Library, pg26 © monferlor/shutterstock, pg27 © Alex Hyde, pg28 © Michael Bannister/The Chapel Farm Group, p29 © Mark Hamblin/Scotlandbigpicture.com, pg32 © Alex Hyde, p34 © James Shooter/scotlandbigpicture.com, pg35 © Alan Puttock, University of Exeter, pg 36 © Fundació Miranda

October 2026 © Rewilding Britain

Rewilding Britain is a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England & Wales (no. 1159373), and Scotland (no. SC045685).
Registered office: The Courtyard, Shoreham Road, Upper Beeding, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3TN