

# Nature recovery actions to help Combe Martin & Ilfracombe

Finding  
Nature's  
Footprints



North Devon  
Coast  
National  
Landscape

## Why nature recovery matters?

Combe Martin's cliffs, coves, woodlands, and streams support a wide range of rare and valuable wildlife. By working together, we can protect these habitats for future generations and ensure wildlife continues to thrive.

## Actions

1. Reduce pollution by tackling litter, pesticides and garden invasives plants entering streams.
2. Improve habitats for native birds and invertebrates through hedgerow management and invasives removal.
3. Encourage allotments and community growing spaces to increase native planting and reduce pesticides.



Scan the QR code to learn how you can get involved in helping restore habitats, support local wildlife, and shape the future of nature recovery across Combe Martin.



## Get involved

### Actions you can take at home

- Avoid using harmful chemicals in your garden
- Plant native flowers and trees to support pollinators
- Dispose of waste responsibly
- Support habitat connectivity – add in a hedgehog highway to your fence!

### Actions in the community

- Join invasive species removal days
- Take part in a beach or stream clean
- Get involved with local groups
- Join Coastwise on one of their shore surveys at Hele Bay, a friendly local group that explores and monitors North Devon's coast, helping to record marine life and support conservation through hands-on citizen science

## Want to help nature in Combe Martin?

### The Friends of Hillsborough

The Friends of Hillsborough is a volunteer group set up recently to work alongside the North Devon Councils Parks department to manage the Hillsborough nature reserve.

### Ilfracombe U3A

The Ilfracombe Coast U3A Natural World Group explores North Devon's rich wildlife, landscapes, and geology through talks, indoor sessions, and regular field trips. It's a friendly way to learn about local flora, fauna, rivers, coastlines.

Get involved in species recording using the iNaturalist app.



## Threats



**Disturbance:** High visitor numbers in Ilfracombe and Combe Martin during summer can put significant pressure on wildlife and sensitive habitats. Clear signage, education, and monitoring of visitor behaviour are essential to protect these areas.



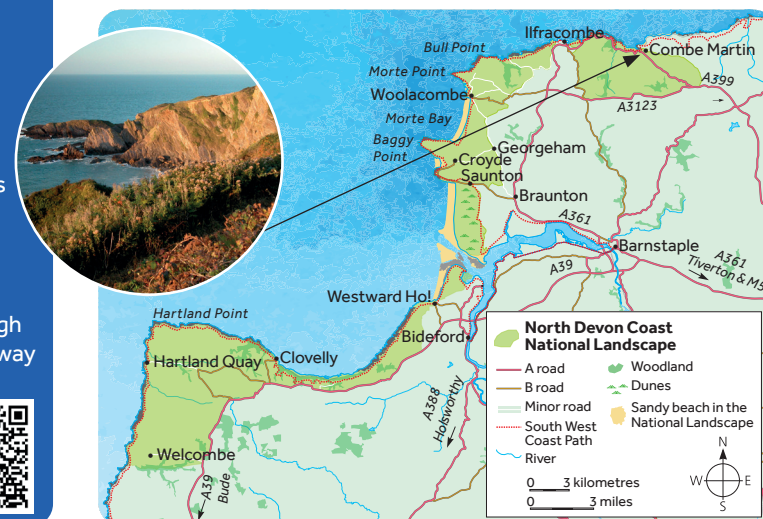
**Pollution:** Sewage overflows, plastic waste, and chemical garden treatments pollute local streams and coastal waters, harming freshwater and marine ecosystems.



**Invasive species:** Himalayan Balsam spreads rapidly along streams and damp woodland, out-competing native species and contributing to erosion when it dies back in winter.



**Disconnected habitats:** Fragmented habitats make it difficult for species such as frogs, newts, hedgehogs, and birds to move safely between feeding, nesting, and breeding sites. Gardens, pavements, and roadside verges can either act as barriers or be turned into wildlife corridors.



# Combe Martin Nature Recovery Map










## Finding Nature's Footprints



North Devon Coast National Landscape

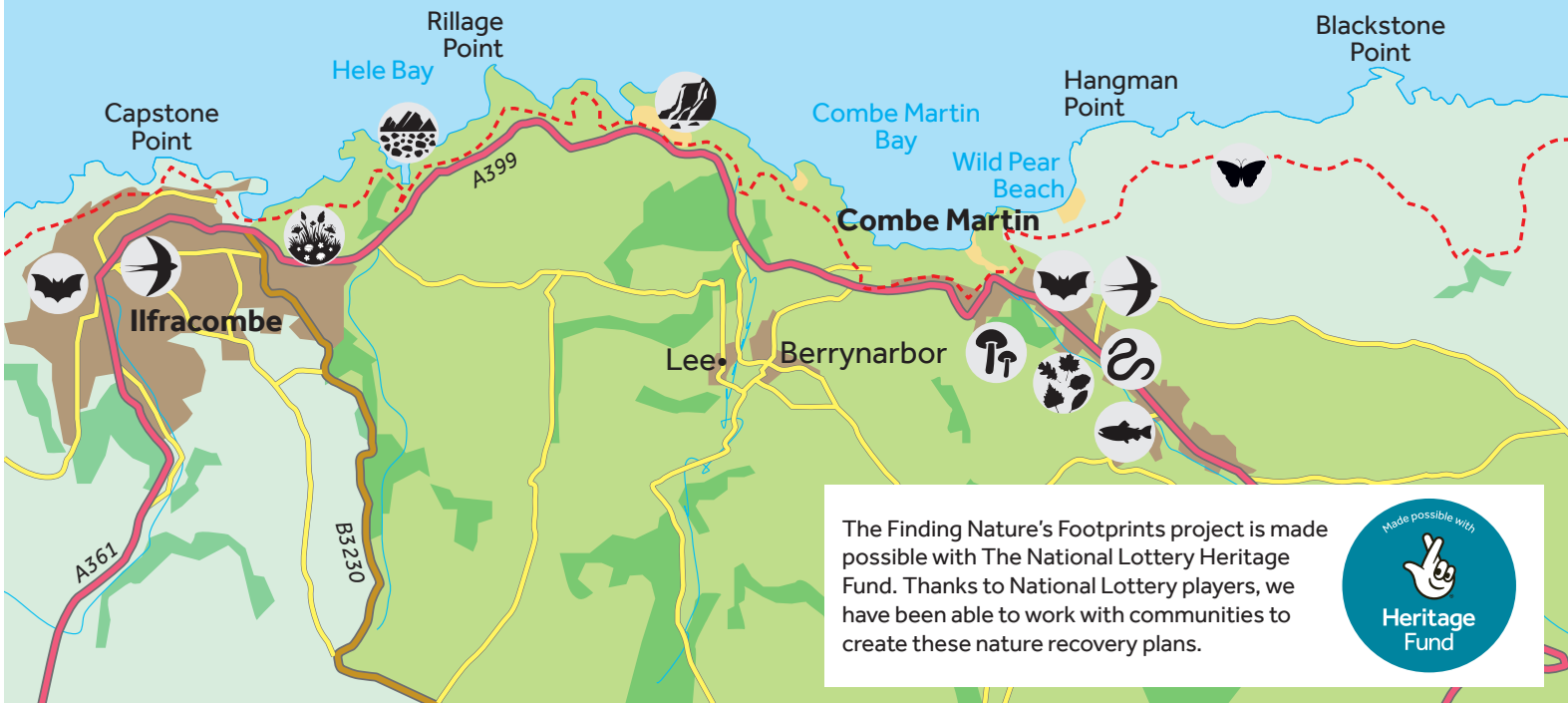
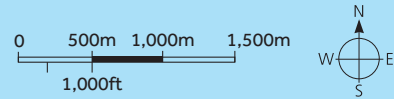
### What's special in Combe Martin?

#### Combe Martin Species:

-  **Bats** – Ilfracombe and Combe Martin lie within a crucial connectivity zone for Grey Long-Eared and Greater Horseshoe bats, where protecting dark flight corridors is essential for linking their roosting and feeding habitats.
-  **Swifts & Swallows** – Swifts and swallows return to Combe Martin each summer, using the Church of St Peter ad Vincula as an important nesting and feeding site during their stay.
-  **Reptiles** – Gardens with sunny spots, log piles, and undisturbed corners provide essential refuge for reptiles, giving species like slow-worms and common lizards safe places to bask, feed, and shelter.
-  **Pollinators (Butterflies)** – The High Brown Fritillary, one of the UK's rarest butterflies, relies on violet-rich habitats around Holstone Down, making Combe Martin's lowland heathland on little hangman an important link for its recovery.
-  **Fungi** – Combe Martin's woodland, such as Adderstable woods support rich fungal diversity, making low-disturbance management essential for ecosystem health.
-  **Freshwater fish** – Freshwater species in Combe Martin face increasing pressure from pollution, fast-flowing rivers, and the loss of ponds and wetlands, making habitat protection essential for their survival along the River UMBER.
-  **Combe Martin Habitats:**  
**Maritime cliff & slope** – Maritime cliffs at Hele Bay form dramatic, weather-shaped coastal slopes that provide vital nesting and feeding habitats for hardy wildlife and seabirds.
-  **Rocky shore** – Hele Bay's rocky shore creates a dynamic coastal habitat where tide-shaped rock pools support resilient marine wildlife adapted to changing conditions.
-  **Deciduous woodland** – Combe Martin's lowland mixed deciduous woodland, at Adderstable Woods, provides rich, varied habitat on diverse soils and forms an important part of the area's low-altitude landscape.

**North Devon Coast National Landscape**

-  A road
-  B road
-  Minor road
-  South West Coast Path
-  Woodland
-  River/stream
-  Sandy beach in the National Landscape



The Finding Nature's Footprints project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to work with communities to create these nature recovery plans.

