



## Helping nature to recover by...

### Restoring heathland at Mose Farm on the Dudmaston Estate

#### Mose Farm & Sandscapes

Sandscapes is a nature recovery project, led by the National Trust, which aims to restore and reconnect areas of sandy habitats across the three counties of Shropshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire.

Mose Farm is part of the National Trust's Dudmaston Estate. It's an 830 acre arable farm, managed by tenant farmer, Martyn Bebb.

The sandy soils at Mose Farm provide an ideal habitat for lots of wildlife, including many ground nesting birds, bees, butterflies and other insects.

Supported by the National Trust, Martyn has put 300 acres of Mose Farm into a 10-year Higher Tier Stewardship Scheme. The area chosen was difficult to farm with very sandy/acidic soil.

Through the scheme the farm business receives payments to restore 300 acres to '**priority habitat**' - **heathland, traditional hay meadows** and **wood pasture**.

#### Why is it important to preserve or restore heathland:

- Heathlands are made up of an incredible mosaic of habitats and the result is a landscape rich in wildlife.
- They are a haven for over half of the UK's dragonfly species and all six of our native reptiles.
- Many invertebrates including solitary bees and wasps thrive in sandy soils and butterflies such as the silver studded blue love young gorse and heather flowers.
- Heathland plants are in decline, including heather and the rarer yellow Bartsia.
- Heathland provides essential cover for ground nesting birds such as the nightjar.

#### It's early days, but the results so far...

Spending less money on fertiliser and time to grow and harvest crops on 'difficult' farmland.

Restoring nature back to the farm:

**"We are looking to see the return of fantastic bird species such as Nightjar, Woodlark and Tree Pipit and insects such as the Black Oil Beetle and Glow Worm. Small Copper butterfly are benefiting (from increased Sheep's Sorrel - one of their host plants). Also skylark and yellowhammer appear to be increasing."**

James Lawrence, Sandscapes Project Manager



Example of lowland heath priority habitat that is being created at Mose Farm | © National Trust James Lawrence





## Nature Recovery Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin



Photographs to show the future impact of heathland restoration at Mose Farm c National Trust/ FDA Design/Worker Drones UK



**"Trying something new and learning about the value of lowland heath has been a really positive experience. I'm pleased that I'm able to transform the area that was difficult to farm into valued heath habitat. So much so, I'm looking to expand the heath area on the farm."** Martyn Bebb

### Changes being made on the farm

- Fertilizer is no longer added to the sandy soils to grow crops.
- The land is grazed and is sown with an acid grassland base mix which is being cut and collected to help remove nutrients remaining from when it was in arable.
- Large bare earth scrapes have been created which are good for solitary bees and wasps. These have been sown with heather seed and brash to encourage succession into heather rich pockets within the former arable fields.
- Hedgerow are being left to thicken and scrub habitat is being left to develop in some areas.
- Sulphur plots are being trialled as the acidifying nature of sulphur reduces soil pH and helps establish heathland flora faster.

The activity at Mose Farm and the wider Sandscapes Project is helping to build nature recovery networks across three counties.

The wildlife that rely on this sandy habitat, including many insects, reptiles and ground nesting birds, are endangered or under threat of extinction.

[Read more about Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy.](#)

### Monitoring & Grazing

The changes at Mose Farm are being recorded by the National Trust and partners including Harper Adams University.



A herd of Highland Cows are helping to manage the emerging heathland habitat on Mose Farm. By roaming around and grazing the vegetation, the herd naturally creates a mosaic of different habitats which supports a range of wildlife.

**For more information  
(click these links)**

- [Sandscapes Project](#)
- [High Tier Stewardship Scheme](#)

