

The background image is a soft-focus, atmospheric photograph of a natural landscape. It features a calm body of water in the foreground, with a dense forest of trees in the background. The scene is shrouded in a light mist or fog, creating a serene and somewhat ethereal mood. The colors are muted, with greens, browns, and greys dominating the palette.

Habitat management

Access & Vandalism

Introduction

- Growth in outdoor recreation; wildlife conservation
- ↑ visitors to reserves and countryside
- Access issues important
- Disturbance levels
- Careful planning

Overview

- Access:
 - Zoning
 - Car parks/footpaths
 - Facilities
 - Signage
- Vandalism:
 - Prevention
 - Examples



Access: a closer look

- **To allow or not**
- **Extent**
- **Physical damage**
- **Disturbance**
- **Complete restriction – unusual**
- **Careful planning and site layout**

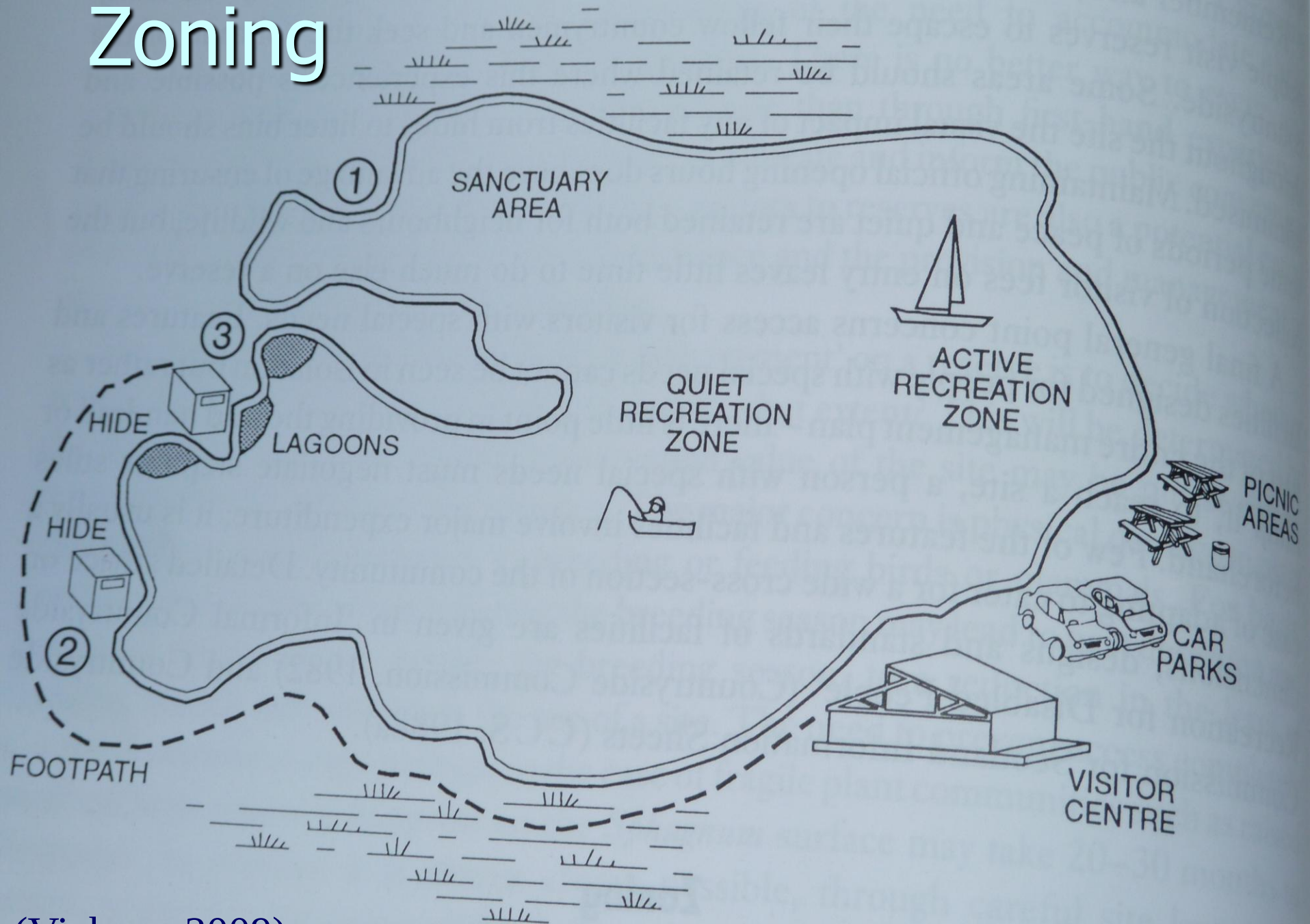
Extent of Access

- 
- **Resources available**
 - **Nature of the site**
 - **Development of facilities**
 - **Insurance policy/public liability cover**
 - **Maintenance of quiet times/places**
 - **Major expenditure in some cases**
 - **Cross-section of needs**

Zoning

- Concentration of recreational activity in certain areas
- Economical
- Mapping sensitive areas – first step
- Graded use – noise and activity levels.
- Positioning paths or hides dependent on zoning

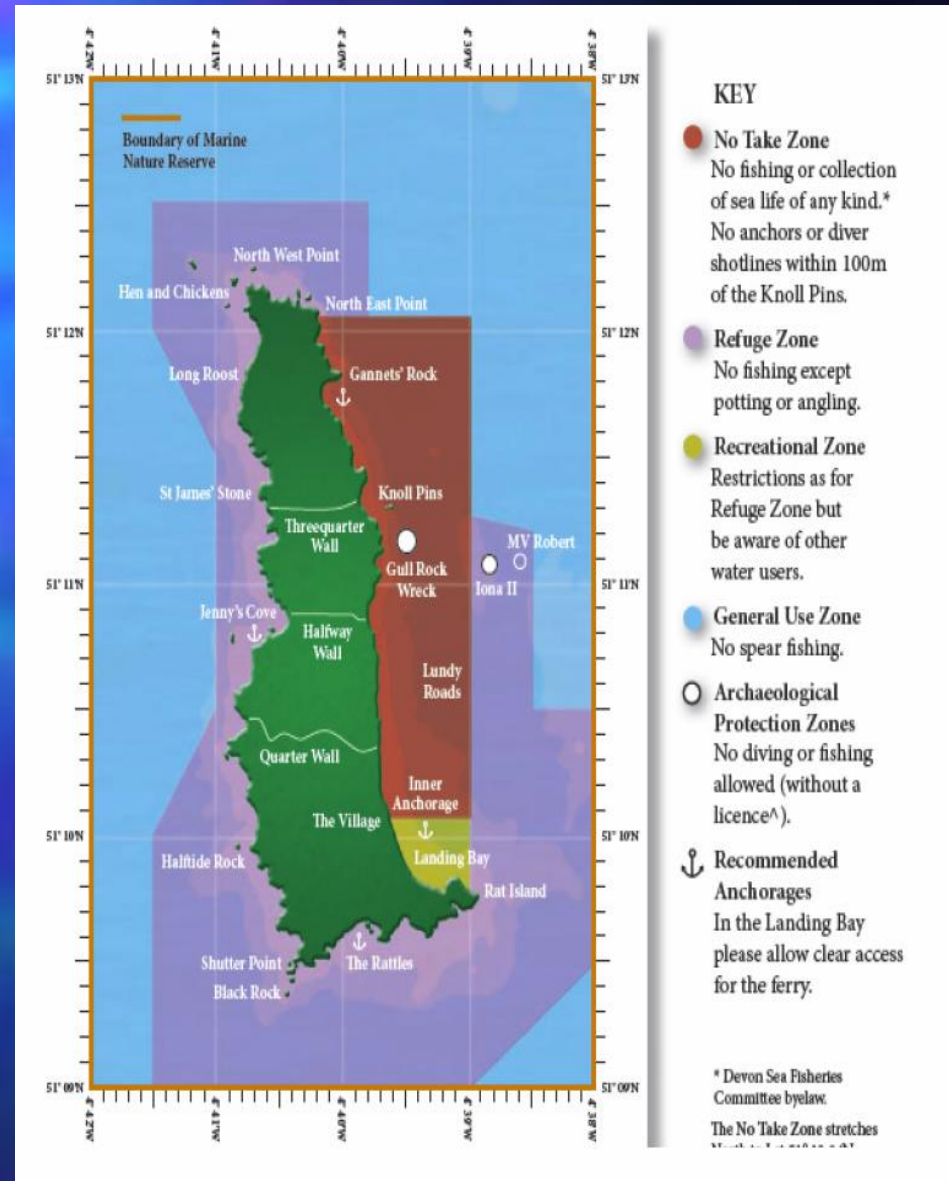
Zoning



(Vickery, 2009)

Zoning

- Seasonal/permanent
- Useful on waterbodies and offshore areas
- Effective at dune sites
- Waymarked trails



Trails

- Distances relatively short
- Figure of eight
- Mapping or information



Seasonal zoning

- Peatlands – restrict access in summer and/or winter
- Coastal areas – breeding seabirds/seals/wintering waders
- Gannets *Sula bassana* on Grassholm



Car Park Provision

- Control of access
- Sets maximum numbers
- Free draining soils
- Minimal visual impact
- Screening
- Orderly layout



Car Park Provision

- Appearance – in keeping with surroundings
- Small enclosed bays – vulnerable to theft or vandalism
- 5% special needs
- Wide spaces & level access



Footpaths

- Unobtrusive
- Easily maintained
- Minimum liability to erosion
- Follow natural boundaries
- Topographic shelter
- Avoid direct ascents & straight line paths



Footpaths

- Encouraging walkers to keep to paths:
 - Fences/barriers
 - Screens of shrubs and hedges
 - Boulders
 - Well-positioned logs
 - Woodchip paths
 - Mown central strips



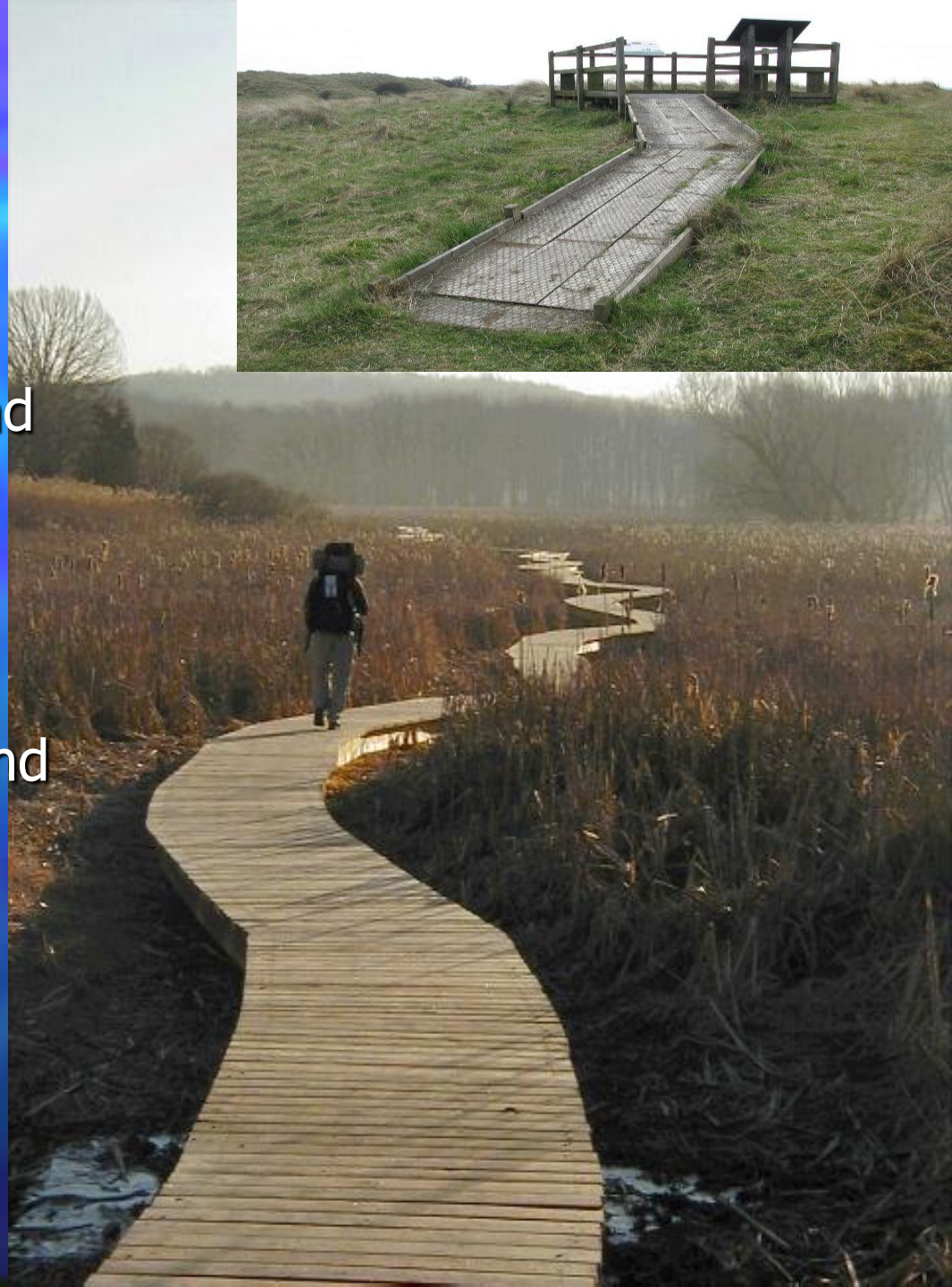
Footpaths

- Siting:
 - Topography & slope - drainage
 - Soil type & vegetation
 - 7° gradient optimal
 - Ditches for run-off
 - Zig zags
- Ascent steep slopes & descent gentle ones
- Steps



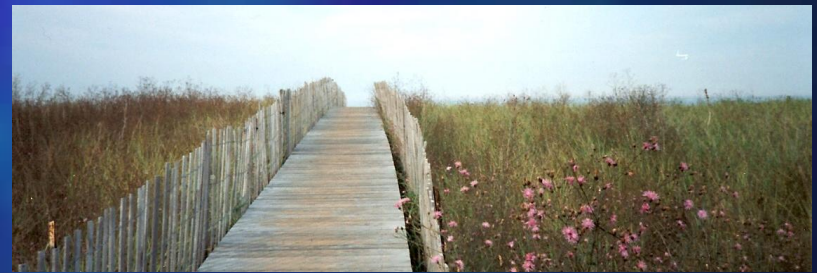
Footpaths

- Resistance to wear and tear-soil type
- Drainage
- Waterlogging – soil appearance
- Boardwalks – width and line
- 1.0m; 1.2m; 1.7m
- Viewing platforms
- Passing places



Footpaths

- Peat areas – type of timber
- Beech *Fagus sylvatica*
- Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa*
- Fixed dunes
- Natural materials

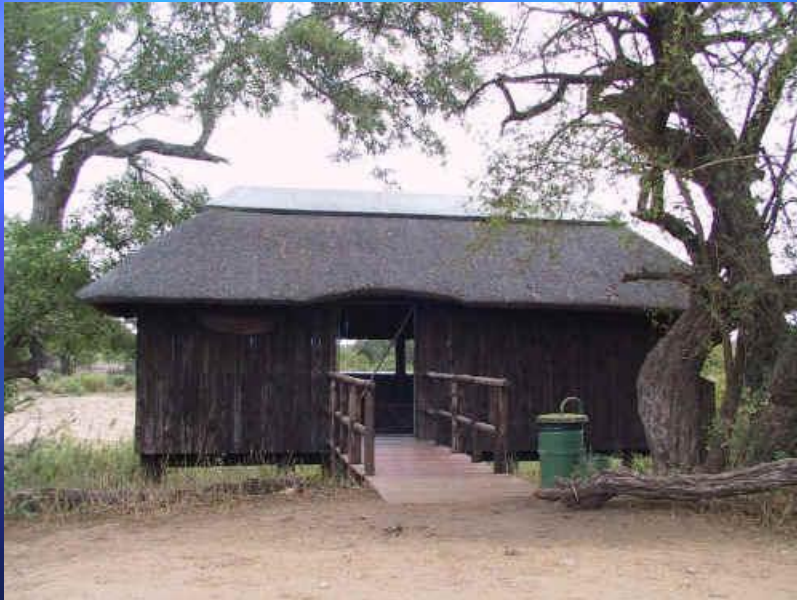


Hides



- Not essential
- Natural viewpoints
- Screens
- Location – bird oases, feeding area
- Unobtrusive
- Into banks or against background vegetation

Hides



- North facing
- Or east facing at roost sites
- Natural materials
- Mimic barns
- Vandalism
- Bolt-ons

Other facilities



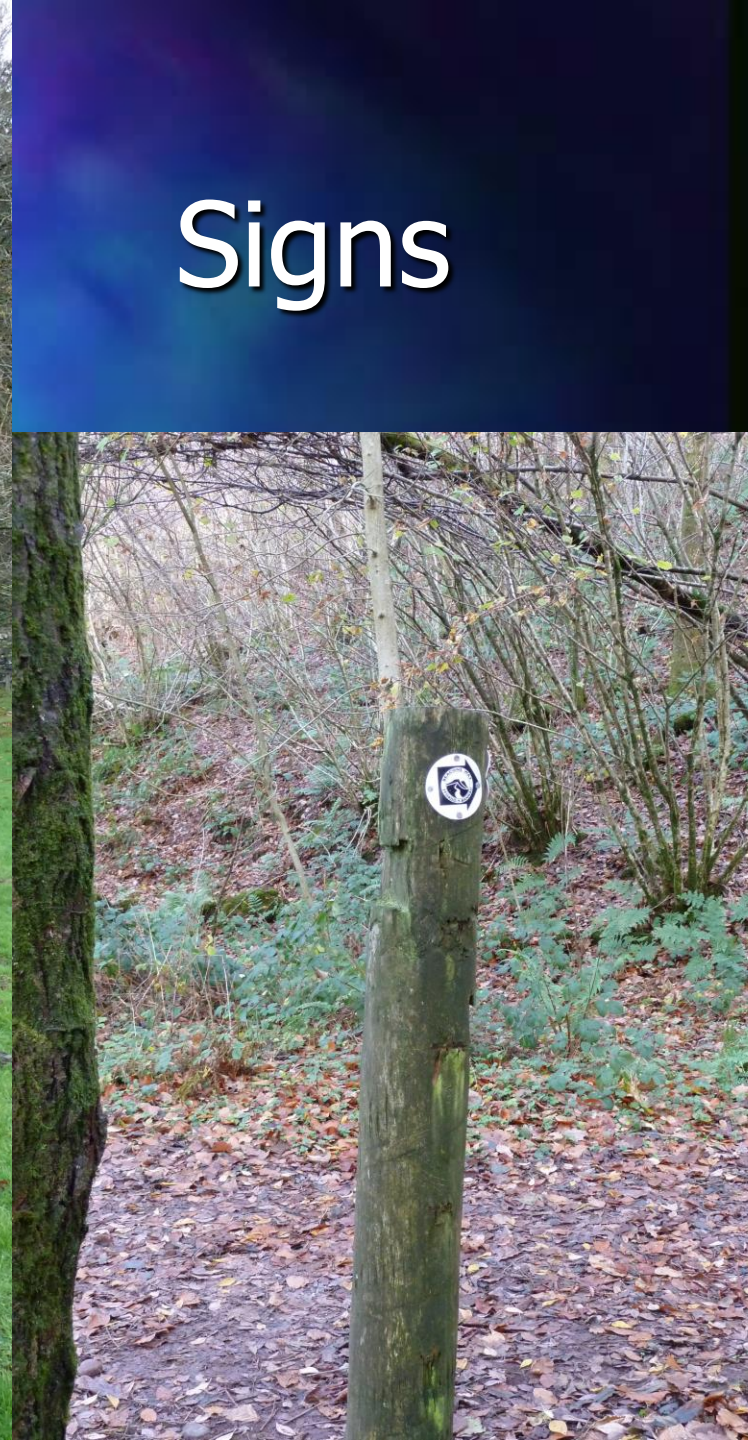
- Bins, toilets, benches, picnic tables
- Minimum visual impact
- A 'necessary evil'
- Invest in good quality products

Signage



- Welcoming and unobtrusive
- Visitor centre
- Convey uniqueness
- Species information
- Warnings – adders
- Positioning
- Fingerpost signs

Signs



Signs



- Natural materials
- Fibreglass – maps – durability
- Steel – if vandalism is an issue

What does term **VANDALISM** mean?

- Vandalism *n. the deliberate destruction caused by vandal or an instance of such destruction.*

(Collins Concise Dictionary, 1989)

- So **deliberate** damage



Vandalism

- Frequent proximal to urban areas
- Man-made artefacts to a minimum
- Swift action
- Locals – 'make no enemies' (Vickery, 2008:42)



Habitat management and vandalism

- How can deliberate damage to habitat occur?
 - Setting fires (arsonists)
 - Stealing animals or plants for sale or trophies eg stealing bird eggs or killing tigers for their skins or rustling animals for sale or cruelty
 - Stealing items protecting habitat eg fencing, gates
 - Stealing items explaining habitat eg maps, notices, interpretation panels



Habitat management and vandalism

- How can *deliberate* damage to habitat occur?
 - Damaging environment so no longer supports species that make it special eg farmers ploughing up land, stopping badger setts
 - Spreading disease eg myxomatosis rabbits
 - Ignoring rules
 - Driving vehicles over sensitive habitats eg scooters, motor bikes, bikes, 4 wheel drives
 - Litter
 - Ignoring country code



Habitat management and vandalism

- How can deliberate damage to habitat occur?
 - Pollution
 - Noise
 - Disturbance



Habitat management and vandalism

- How can deliberate damage be prevented?
 - Law eg CROW Act
 - Introduction non-natives
 - Damage to SSSIs
 - Crime Prevention
 - Wild Life officers in police, reserve wardens, reserve watch systems, CCTV over rare nests
 - Public education/awareness



Habitat management and vandalism

- Design of reserves; reduction of access to sensitive areas, keeping parking away from important areas
- Secrecy; not revealing where rare animals, plants located so can't be stolen /collected



Habitat management and vandalism examples of practise



- Blocking and locking of entrances to Rheola forest
- Use of moats around sensitive heathland areas in NPT stopping access of non-authorized vehicles

Paper from WAG and Welsh Biodiversity Partnership (nd)



Habitat Regulations and Biodiversity Duty Enforcement: Support and intervention regime (2007)

- Damage to dormice habitat – Bridgend £100 fine + £200 cost
- Bat roost damage by developer, Pendine- £1000 fine + £500 cost
- Destruction of house martin nest in private house, Cardigan £400 fine + £800 cost

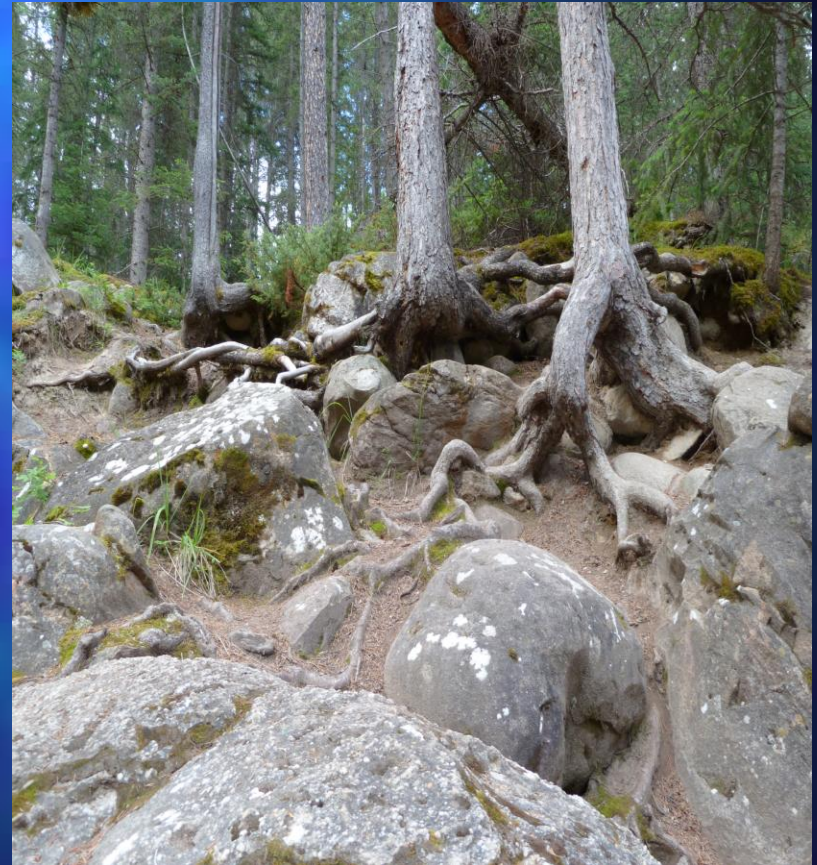
Paper from WAG and Welsh Biodiversity Partnership

- Illegal possession of wild bird, buzzard near Pontypridd, on going case
- Damage to SSSI by unsanctioned cutting of gorse, Aberystwyth ongoing
- Damage to marsh fritillary habitat by cutting grassland - Ystradgynlais, case dropped
- Fines sufficient a deterrent?



Fieldwork Visit: Craig Y Nos

- Phase 1 Survey:
 - Identifies habitats & key plant species for each of these habitats
 - Rare plants and animals
 - Special features – hedgerows
 - Any time of year, although easier if done in spring and summer



Fieldwork Visit: Craig Y Nos



- Phase 2 Survey:
 - Detailed surveys – expert guidance
 - Right time of year
 - Several days; good weather; right time of day
 - We don't have that luxury!

Fieldwork Visit: Craig Y Nos

■ National Vegetation Classification:

- A tool to describe vegetation
- Based on identification of plants and their ground cover (grassland a 2mx2m quadrat)
- Comparison with standard sets at a national level.
- For eg. 13 types of neutral grassland; 14 calcareous communities; 21 acid



Site Visit

- Come prepared!
- Suitable clothing
- Pen and notepad
- Cameras

