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The Forest of Bowland AONB

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally protected landscape and is internationally recognised for its special habitats and wildlife. The AONB is managed by a partnership of landowners, farmers, voluntary organisations, wildlife groups, recreation groups, local councils and government agencies, who work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of this special area.

Much of the Access Land in the Forest of Bowland AONB is within a Special Protection Area (SPA). This European designation recognises the importance of the area's upland heather moorland and blanket bog as habitat for upland birds. Bowland's moors are home to many threatened species, including merlin, golden plover, curlew, ring ouzel and the rare hen harrier, symbol of the AONB.

Many people depend on the Access Land for their livelihoods, including upland farming and game management. These rural industries have shaped the landscape we see today and play an important role in the conservation of the AONB.

In Britain we have 75% of the world's upland heather moorland and 15% of the global resource of blanket bog. Accidental fires and erosion through tramping can easily damage these habitats irreversibly. Extra care must be taken during dry weather and on wet, boggy areas. You can help by keeping to tracks and waymarked routes wherever possible.



What is Access Land?

Open access only applies to areas of open country and registered common land and is shown on Ordnance Survey maps (post September 2004) as yellow areas. It is your right to walk freely across Access Land but with that right comes responsibilities and walkers must be mindful that much of Bowland's Access Land is privately owned, grazed by sheep and cattle and is of international importance for its wildlife. Even in areas where open access does apply, local restrictions may restrict access. Plan ahead – for the most up to date information and what local restrictions may be in place, visit www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk or call the open access helpline on 0845 100 3298.

Access Land may be closed during exceptional weather or ground conditions to prevent fires or to avoid danger to the public. Access Land is identified by the Access Land Symbol at access points. Some access points will have signage and interpretation to guide you. Never climb over walls or fences.



- indicates Access Land that may be open to the public for access on foot.



- indicates no public access rights beyond the point where this symbol is displayed.

Access Land does not include right to access:

- Lower lying farmland and buildings
- Livestock pens
- Areas within 20m of a dwelling or building or within the curtilage of a building, i.e. a garden.
- Access Land only applies to recreation on foot, such as walking, bird watching, picnicking, running and climbing.

You must observe general and local restrictions. You must not cause any damage, leave litter, disrupt work on the land, feed livestock or deliberately disturb livestock, wildlife or habitats. You will be classed as a trespasser if you fail to comply with Access Land restrictions or damage any walls, gates or stiles.

The accommodation featured in this leaflet offers a range of accommodation types. All are family run, owner managed businesses who are sympathetic to bird watching. Some are landowners who work actively with the RSPB on wildlife conservation; some have dedicated facilities. All are conveniently located for a short birding break in the Forest of Bowland.

Trampers



Several of these locations can make arrangements for the use of a Trampler all-terrain electric wheelchair. This can be used on public bridleways and footpaths, particularly in the southwestern corner of the Forest of Bowland. Contact the **Bowland Visitor Centre** at **Beacon Fell Country Park** on 01772 534709 or the **Priory Inn** on 01524 791255.

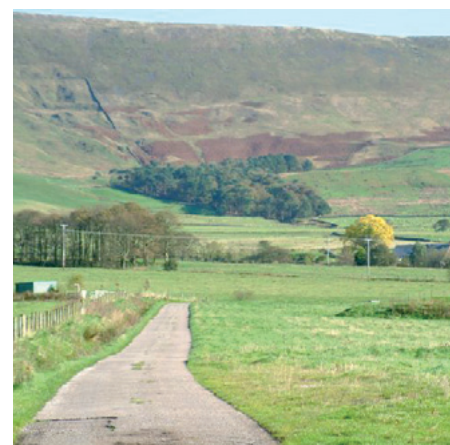
This icon denotes that Trampler all-terrain electric wheelchairs are available.

1 Bleasdale Cottages

Spacious 4 star (Green Tourism Gold Award) Self-catering cottages sleeping 2 - 8 (14 persons max). Set in open countryside with stunning views over 200 acres of farmland and woodland managed for wildlife. Excellent bird watching, bird hide (with disabled access) and walking on site.

Robert and Anne Gardner
Bleasdale Cottages, Lower Fairsnape Farm,
Bleasdale PR3 1UY

web: www.bleasdalecottages.co.uk
tel: 01995 61343
email: info@bleasdalecottages.co.uk



2 Broadgate Farm

Broadgate Farm is set in open countryside with panoramic views of Beacon Fell and the surrounding area. Farmhouse B & B accommodation offers 2 upstairs en-suite bedrooms. The Caravan Club 5 van certified location site has electric hook-ups and hard standings. A dog walk and Trampler route give access to a bird hide overlooking scrapes for lapwings, curlews etc, which nest in the area. It also links onto the local public footpath network.

Brian and Anne Clark
Broadgate Farm, Bleasdale PR3 1UY

web: www.broadgatefarm.co.uk
tel: 01995 602402
email: anneclark71@hotmail.com

3 Calderbank Country Lodge

The hamlet of Oakendough is in an area that can boast a variety of birds depending on the season. These include the hen harrier, kestrel, sparrowhawk, buzzard, lapwing, curlew, oystercatcher, whimbrel, chaffinch, nuthatch, mistle thrush and goldfinch. Calderbank is an ideal staging post for those wishing to view birds in the area.

Rowland Hayward
Calderbank Country Lodge,
Oakendough, Garstang PR3 1UL

web: www.calderbankcountrylodge.co.uk
tel: 01995 604384
email: enquiries@calderbankcountrylodge.co.uk



7 Mansergh Cottages

These lovely cottages converted from traditional barns are situated in the tranquil village of Borwick, nestling between two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – upland Forest of Bowland and coastal Arnsdale and Silverdale – on the edge of the picturesque Lune Valley. The cottages provide warmth and comfort and are a 10-minute drive from Leighton Moss RSPB reserve.

Linda Rigby
Mansergh Farmhouse Cottages,
Borwick, Nr Lancaster LA6 1JS

web: www.manserghcottages.co.uk
tel: 01524 720129
email: linda@manserghcottages.co.uk



8 Red Pump Inn

Chill out, eat well, sleep well and take advantage of the natural beauty of the Bowland area where this 250-year-old traditional country inn happily nestles. Sumptuous guest rooms. Quirky and comforting menu with local meat, game and fish dishes of real flavour. Three miles from Clitheroe. A million miles from hectic.

Jonathan and Martina Myerscough
The Red Pump Inn, Bashall Eaves,
Clitheroe BB7 3DA

web: www.theredpumpinn.co.uk
tel: 01254 826227
email: info@theredpumpinn.co.uk

9 The Gibbon Bridge Hotel

Situated in the beautiful Forest of Bowland, this four-star privately owned hotel, offers superior accommodation, elegant surroundings, delicious food and award-winning beautiful gardens. Couple this with a warm welcome, personal service and value for money and you have an ideal hotel for a perfect break.

Janet Simpson
The Gibbon Bridge Hotel, Chipping,
Preston, Lancashire PR3 2TQ

web: www.gibbon-bridge.co.uk
tel: 01995 61456 fax: 01995 61277
email: reception@gibbon-bridge.co.uk



10 The Old Post House Hotel

Family-run hotel set in the centre of this historic market town. Some 200 yards from the train and bus interchange, ideally positioned for walking and cycling in the beautiful Ribblesdale Valley. The Penny Black restaurant is open from 7am offering traditional and home cooked food.

Roger Jowett
The Old Post House Hotel,
King Street, Clitheroe BB7 2EU

web: www.posthousehotel.co.uk
tel: 01200 422025 fax: 01200 423059
email: rooms@posthousehotel.co.uk



11 The Priory Inn

The Priory provides en suite accommodation, a restaurant and bar in a unique position at the centre of the village of Scorton at the western edge of the Forest of Bowland. The Priory is an ideal base for exploring Bowland, the Wyre and Lune valleys and the Fylde coast. Drying and storage facilities are available for boots and bikes. The restaurant serves a full and varied menu from breakfast until 9pm and Stout's Bar is fully licensed from 11am until 11pm.

Julie and Jonty Collinson
The Priory, Scorton, Lancashire PR3 1AU
web: www.theprioryscorton.co.uk
tel: 01524 791255 fax: 01524 793563
email: collinsonjulie@aol.com



12 Wyreside Lakes

This beautiful award-winning haven of lakes and nature trails is situated in over 120 acres of farmland. Walkers and birdwatchers will find a variety of wildlife flora and fauna amid the stunning scenery. A 4 star rated campsite is available.

Sally Hughes
Wyreside Lakes Fishery
Sunnyside Farmhouse, Bay Horse,
Nr. Lancaster LA2 9DG

web: www.wyresidelakes.co.uk
tel: 01524 792093
email: wyreside2003@yahoo.co.uk



6 Halsteads Barn

No matter what the season, there is always an abundance of birds and wildlife on the moor upon which the house nestles.

To add to your enjoyment and relaxation, fine food, extensive wine list and hot tub await you, allowing you to make the most of your stay with us.

Jon and Janet Brook
Halsteads Barn, Mewith,
High Bentham LA2 7AR

web: www.halsteadsbarn.co.uk
tel: 01524 262641
email: info@halsteadsbarn.co.uk



Places to see birds and places to stay

BIRDING IN BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

For more information on open access: visit www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk or ring 0845 1003298

For more information about the Forest of Bowland AONB Visit www.forestofbowland.com, or the RSPB website, www.rspb.org/ourwork/conservation/projects/bowland/index.asp

For local Countryside/Ranger Services call:
Lancashire on 01772 534709
Wyre on 01995 606654
United Utilities on 01200 454400

For accommodation, places to visit and things to see and do, contact Tourist Information

Bowland Visitor Centre, Beacon Fell Country Park, 01995 640557
Barnoldswick TIC, Fernlea Avenue, 01282 666704
Bentham TIC, Town Hall, Station Road, Bentham, 01524 262549
Clitheroe TIC, 12-14 Market Place, 01200 442226
Garstang TIC, High Street, 01995 602125
Kirkby Lonsdale TIC, 24 Main Street, 015242 71437
Lancaster TIC, 29 Castle Hill, 01524 32878
Pendle Heritage Centre, Barrowford, 01282 661701
Preston TIC, The Guild Hall, 01772 253731
Settle TIC, Town Hall, 01729 825192
Lancashire Brochure Line, 01257 226600, www.visitlancashire.com
Yorkshire Tourist Board, 01904 707961



Ordnance Survey Map Explorer OL41, Forest of Bowland & Ribblesdale covers this area.

Leaflet available in large text format on request. Due to OS legislation the map is not available in larger format.

Front cover photograph - hen harrier © Andy Hays, rspb-images.com

FOREST OF BOWLAND

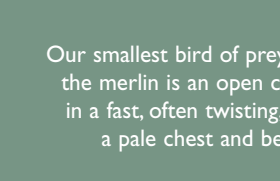
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The birds



Hen harrier

Probably the most important bird species to regularly breed in the Forest of Bowland, this bird of prey is most often seen flying slowly over the ground, as it hunts for small birds and mammals. Males are pale grey in colour with black wing tips, whilst the female is mainly brown with a distinctive white rump.



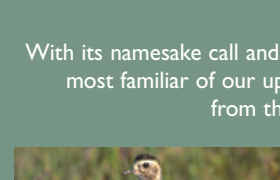
Merlin

Our smallest bird of prey, and not much bigger than a mistle thrush, the merlin is an open country specialist, where it hunts small birds in a fast, often twisting, flight. Males are a bluish colour above with a pale chest and belly, often tinged with pink, whilst the female is brown in colour.



Peregrine falcon

Our largest breeding falcon, and fastest bird, is most likely to be seen circling high above, as it watches for prey to appear. With pointed wing tips and short tail it creates a characteristic silhouette.



Curlew

With its namesake call and long curving beak, the curlew is one of the most familiar of our upland birds. From early April it can be found from the highest tops down to the valley bottoms.



Golden plover

In its spangled black and gold breeding plumage, this shy wading bird is more often heard than seen - a plaintive whistle often the only sign of its presence. A relatively rare bird in the Forest of Bowland, this moorland specialist is most common on the northern fells.



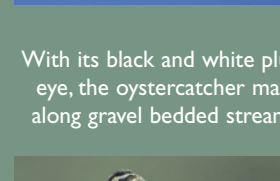
Red grouse

One of the few bird species to be found all year round on the fells, the red grouse is a popular game bird, with much of the moorland management targeted at benefiting this species. Most easily recognised by its "go back, go back" alarm call.



Short-eared owl

One of the few owl species that can be seen during daylight hours, the short-eared owl is a specialist hunter of voles, with numbers fluctuating dramatically from year to year in relation to vole numbers.



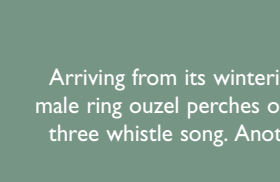
Oystercatcher

With its black and white plumage, orange beak and legs, and blood red eye, the oystercatcher makes a striking picture. Its favourite habitat is along gravel bedded streams, but it can also be found feeding in fields.



Snipe

A highly secretive bird, the snipe is most often seen when it is flushed from tall, wet vegetation, zig-zagging away into the distance. However, it can be seen and heard in the early morning as it displays over its territory, 'drumming' with its tail feathers and diving towards the ground.



Ring ouzel

Arriving from its wintering ground in north Africa in late March, the male ring ouzel perches on top of a tree or rock and gives his simple three whistle song. Another rare bird in the Forest of Bowland, it is most common around the southern fells.

Birding locations to visit...

- A** - Roeburndale Woods in the north of Bowland offer good opportunities for seeing oak woodland specialities such as redstart and pied flycatcher.
- B** - The circular walk around Stocks Reservoir to the northeast offers a range of woodland and upland birds. The reservoir itself attracts wildfowl and waders and many passage migrants including the occasional osprey.
- C** - Abbystead in the west is one of the best areas for breeding waders on the upland pastures. Lapwing, curlew, redshank, snipe and oystercatcher are all numerous here and golden plover flocks can often be seen.
- D** - Pendle Hill in the southeast is the place to see migrant dotterel in early May. The open stony ground by the trig point on the eastern summit is the best place to look for these delightful waders on their way to nest in the mountains of Scotland.
- E** - In the southwest, Barnacre Reservoir (which is not open to the public) is an important staging post for hundreds of migrant whimbrel. The public footpaths on the south side offer opportunities for seeing these birds as they fly in to roost in late April and early May evenings giving their loud piping calls.

Visit the Forest of Bowland website to download route maps of walks in these areas www.forestofbowland.com/wrc/wrc_walk_intro.asp

For the latest news on bird watching in Bowland, including web cam pictures from a hen harrier's nesting site in the springtime, visit www.forestofbowland.com/wild_birds.asp

Disturbance is a major problem for ground-nesting birds

The breeding season, between 1st March and 31st July, is a particularly vulnerable time for ground-nesting birds. Disturbed birds may be prevented from settling, or if already nesting they will fly away from their nests, neglecting their eggs or chicks. Disturbance may result in:

- birds failing to nest
- eggs failing to hatch
- chicks dying from cold or lack of food
- nests becoming vulnerable to predators

It is a criminal offence to disturb rare breeding birds, including hen harriers, peregrines and merlins, intentionally or not. Fines of up to £20,000 and imprisonment are possible.

Nesting areas are being monitored by Natural England, RSPB and Lancashire Countryside Service.

How to recognise a distressed or disturbed bird

- They will make a loud repeated alarm call - they don't sound very happy and they're not.
- They will approach people much closer than would normally be the case - some birds may even dive bomb you. This is a clear message that the bird feels threatened by your presence and that you should retreat.
- They will feign injury in an attempt to distract you from the nest.
- Subtle behaviour such as circling high above.

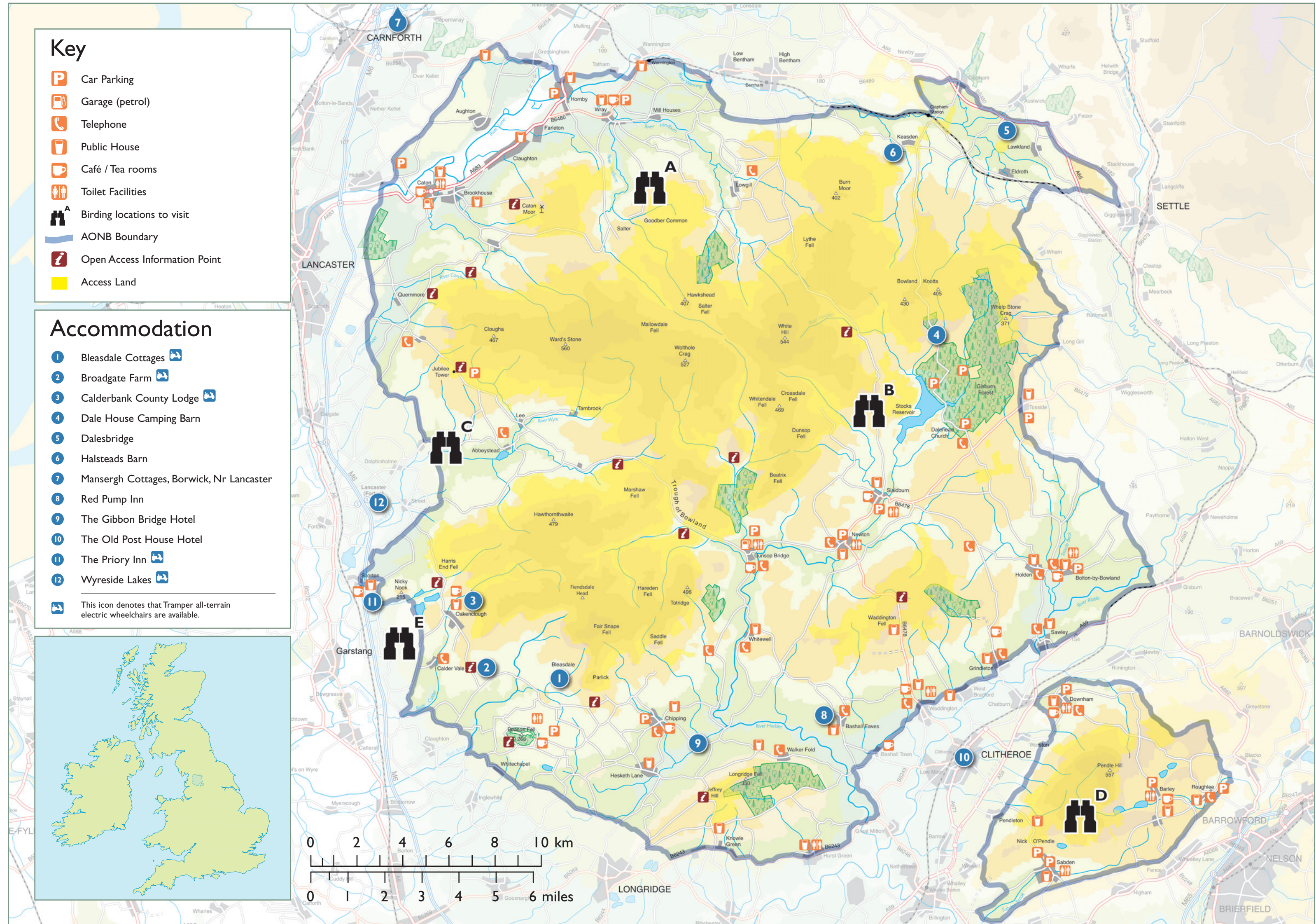
What you can do to help

- Wherever possible stick to tracks or paths, particularly when going through dense heather.
- Keep dogs and birds apart. Birds see dogs as a threat.
- Give a wide berth to young birds and to adults that appear distressed. Move away quickly and quietly - this may mean going back the way you have come.
- Do not stop for prolonged periods away from paths. Move on if a bird shows signs of disturbance or distress.
- Avoid steep narrow valleys (known as "cloughs").

- As part of monitoring work by Natural England and RSPB many hen harriers are tagged. You can help by reporting sightings and tag codes to RSPB Bowland Officer on 01200 446425 or Natural England on 07973 911594.
- Follow the Birdwatchers Code of Conduct - visit www.rspb.org.uk for further details.
- Follow any instructions or advice given by rangers or wardens.

The Moorland Visitor's Code

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Prevent uncontrolled moorland fires
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



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