# A SPECIAL PLACE FOR WILDLIFE

The Forest of Bowland is a special place for wildlife. The moors in particular are an important breeding ground for upland birds. There are also notable wildflower meadows, woodlands and geological features.

Bowland is in fact an internationally important area for conservation, as nearly one fifth of the AONB is designated as a Special Protection Area under the European Birds Directive. The Forest of Bowland also contains several Special Areas of Conservation and 13% of the land area is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) under UK legislation. These designated sites represent nationally important areas for wildlife that are worthy of protection.

This valuable habitat is a big attraction for visitors to the area – many keen birdwatchers visit Bowland in the hope of catching a glimpse of the hen harrier, our iconic bird of prey, which breeds in very few other places in the country. Lucky visitors may see the male performing his spectacular ‘skydance’ in March and April. Birdwatchers also come to see the wading birds that arrive in spring to nest and rear their young on the open farmland and moors of Bowland – for example, the lapwing, snipe, curlew and redshank. Many landowners are using appropriate farming practices to actively attract these birds to their land. Stocks Reservoir is amongst the best wildfowl sites in north west England and up to 30 species, ranging from tufted duck to red throated diver, can visit during the winter.