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## **Work to improve dunes to begin**

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A project to help wildlife behind one of Anglesey's most popular beaches will begin shortly after the Welsh Government concluded that the scientific basis behind the proposals is sound.

Natural Resources Wales will now remove trees from a small part of the forest in Newborough to help rare plants and animals in the area.

Work this autumn will clear about six hectares (15 acres) of the 700 hectare (more than 1,700 acres) forest. This is equivalent to about ten football pitches in an area roughly the size of 1,000 football pitches - less than 1 per cent of the forest area.

Many of the trees to be felled are already dead or stunted and provide little or no benefit to local wildlife – including the forest's population of red squirrels.

Over recent decades the Corsican Pine plantation, which was mainly planted between the 1940s and mid 1960s, has stabilised the sand dunes. As a result many of the rare plants and animals that live on the dunes have declined.

Removing the trees from this small part of the forest will help some of the dunes near the shore become more mobile again and provide better conditions for wildlife to recover.

The area is so important to wildlife that it's been designated as both a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Natural Resources Wales, which has recently invested around £1 million to improve facilities in the area, also emphasises its belief that the site will continue to provide local people with a great area for recreation and benefit the tourist economy in the area.

Tim Jones from Natural Resources Wales said: "This whole area is a great place for people and wildlife, and it's important for the local economy. We want to make sure that it continues to be so.

"We have made major changes to our earlier plans after lengthy consultations with local people and specialists.

"Helping the landscape take on a more natural appearance will not only help wildlife but it will also enhance the beauty of an area which is hugely valued by local people and the more than 170,000 visitors it attracts each year.

"Local people can continue to enjoy walks in the forest, the local economy can potentially benefit from tourism while wildlife in the forest and dunes is improved."

Some species have already disappeared from the area including the beetles *Anthicus bimaculatus* and *Asaphidion pallipes* which were last seen in the area in 1980 and 1981 respectively, the crane fly *Nephrotoma quadristriata*, which was last recorded here in 1987, and the snail-killing fly *Pherbellia grisescens* which hasn't been seen since 1966.

Other affected include the big ground beetle, *Broscus cephalotes*, which is now confined to fore-dunes having previously been found throughout the dune system. Some rare plants should also benefit including the prickly saltwort, early sand-grass, smooth cat's-ear, blue fleabane, sticky stork's-bill and dune fescue.

The work complies with the European Union's Habitats Directive. The Forest Plan will also improve the forest itself by measures such as planting more native broadleaf trees.