

# Wales Biodiversity Framework

## Foreword


The Welsh Assembly Government's first Environment Strategy for Wales, published in May 2006, paid tribute to the intrinsic value of biodiversity – 'the variety of life on earth'. The Strategy acknowledged the role biodiversity plays, not only in many natural processes, but also in the direct and indirect economic, social, aesthetic, cultural and spiritual benefits that we derive from it.

The Strategy also acknowledged that pressures brought about by our own actions and by other factors, such as climate change, has resulted in damage to the biodiversity of Wales. A more integrated, dynamic and flexible approach to managing biodiversity was promised in order to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and thereafter to bring about recovery from the losses that have already occurred.

The Welsh Assembly Government is therefore taking the opportunity over the coming year fundamentally to refresh our approach to Biodiversity and Nature Conservation by reviewing the ways in which we are currently tackling these aims and objectives.

The Biodiversity Framework for Wales is part of this new approach. It explains the roles, remits and processes essential to biodiversity conservation and enhancement in Wales. Its value lies in that it provides a common point of reference on biodiversity for all organisations and individuals in Wales, whether Government department or local nature enthusiast.

I am grateful to the Wales Biodiversity Partnership for developing the Framework and promoting biodiversity action throughout Wales. The contribution and co-operation of organisations and individuals across Wales is vital to achieving biodiversity targets. I hope that you will find the Wales Biodiversity Framework an informative and useful building block in the battle against biodiversity loss.



**Jane Davidson AM**

**Minister for Sustainability and Rural Development**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Function and Purpose of this Document

This document has been created by the Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP) as a first-step guide to:

- Identifying the key practical, policy and legislative drivers for protecting, restoring and enhancing biodiversity in Wales;
- Outlining the mechanisms for promoting positive action;
- Explaining the roles & remit of those responsible for undertaking biodiversity action and;
- Providing links to the tools and information to help maintain and improve biodiversity in Wales (Annex A).

This document should be read in combination with the Wales Environment Strategy. In particular, the Environment Strategy chapter, *Distinctive biodiversity, landscapes and seascapes* describes the areas covered by this framework and the outcomes that need to be achieved<sup>1</sup>.

As a ‘living document’ this framework is continually updated in response to feedback provided to the Wales Biodiversity Partnership (the custodians of this document) and the Welsh Assembly Government. The framework contributes directly to Making the Connections outcomes, particularly “joining up and simplifying the service”<sup>2</sup>.

## 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF BIODIVERSITY

### 1.1 What is Biodiversity?

‘The variability among living organisms from all sources, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems’ (CBD (1992) Article 2).

### 1.2 Why is Biodiversity Important?

Biodiversity is fundamental to sustaining human life on earth. Biological activity interacting with the environment provides the essential requirements for life: air, food, fresh water and shelter. It drives water, element and nutrient cycles, underpins functioning agricultural systems, influences climate and provides protection from extremes of heat and cold, flood and drought. It is, at a very basic level, the core requirement for human survival.

In Wales the biodiversity resource has value for agriculture, fisheries and timber production, provides the basis of many tourism and recreational activities, provides practical and artistic inspiration, is at the core of Welsh cultural and social heritage and contributes to well-being.

## 2. BIODIVERSITY IN WALES

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<sup>1</sup>[Welsh Assembly Government | Environment strategy for Wales](#)

<sup>2</sup>[Welsh Assembly Government | Strategy and policy](#)

## **2.1 What is Special about Biodiversity in Wales?**

Situated on the western side of an island off the Atlantic coast of continental Europe, Wales has a distinct and special contribution to make to biodiversity conservation. Wales has a rich array of habitats from the seabed to the summit of Snowdon. For example, 75% of the Welsh coastal waters are of European importance and Wales has 40% of the “rhos” pasture resource in the United Kingdom.

Within Europe there are few comparably sized areas that have the diversity of habitats, species and geology. Combine this with a single political structure, able to encourage the management of this resource as a coherent unit and the potential and opportunities for co-ordinated action for biological conservation in Wales are numerous; so are the potential benefits to social, cultural and economic development from a healthy biodiversity resource. Wales has a key role to play in biodiversity conservation at a European level.

## **2.2 Current Situation**

The United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Report (2005) states that world-wide, 12 per cent of birds, 25 per cent of mammals and 32 per cent of amphibians are threatened with extinction over the next century.

Even with the biodiversity related legislation and policies currently available in Wales the 2008 BAP reporting results show that of the original BAP priority habitats and species (pre 2006 review) only 39 percent of the those UK BAP habitats in Wales are considered to be stable or increasing or probably stable or increasing, 53 per cent are in decline or probably declining. There is no clear trend for 8 per cent of these habitats. For the original UK BAP species within Wales, only 30 percent are considered to be stable or increasing, although a further 19 percent are considered to fluctuating, probably stable or increasing. A clear message from the 2008 UK BAP report is that information is often inadequate and so it is difficult to assess progress towards targets for many species and habitats. An example is the lack of knowledge of the extent and condition of coastal and inter-tidal habitats where there is considerable pressure from a variety of sources and significant areas continue to be lost.

The survival of every species depends on the specific life-requirements (nutrients, temperature, moisture etc), it is adapted to exploit. Vast areas of natural habitats have been lost, to provide space for human activities, such as intensive agricultural production driven by government policy to supply food for an expanding population; land for housing, industrial, commercial, retail and transport developments to service this increasing population. Remaining habitats are now fragmented, preventing the movement of species and genetic material and further weaken the remaining biodiversity resource. Species population recovery and maintenance are essential if populations are to be robust enough to adapt or migrate to new habitats in the face of climate change.

The Welsh marine and coastal environment supports a rich variety of habitats and species. However, there is evidence that our seas have been, and continue to be, negatively affected by human activity. Examples include the disturbance and sometimes destruction of seabed habitats through development, fisheries and extraction of natural resources, changes in food-webs resulting from over fishing and loss of coastal habitat through development. Pollution is still significant but water quality is improving in many areas. Climate change will become a major challenge in the marine environment and have a wide range of impacts, including the loss of intertidal habitat from sea level rise and ocean acidification, which will change the chemical balance of our seas. Effective collaboration and action are essential to reduce further impacts on vulnerable habitats and species; the health of the wider marine environment is necessary to provide a healthy and resilient marine ecosystem.

### **3. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DRIVERS**

#### **3.1 European and UK legislative framework**

Biodiversity related legislation includes EU Directives:

- EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC), transposed into UK legislation by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/439/EEC), transposed by The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, SI 1994/2716-The 'Habitat Regulations' (most recently amended Aug 2007)
- EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), transposed by The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003, SI 2003/3242
- EU SEA and EIA Directives

**Legislation relevant to Wales includes:**

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)
- The Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009)

In England and Wales the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires all public bodies including national and local government to 'have regard' for biodiversity in everything that they do. In order to be fully compliant with this legislation all strategies, policies, plans and projects affecting Wales need to recognise the importance of biodiversity and show the contribution they will make to its improvement.

The Welsh Assembly Government has identified species and habitats that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in Wales under section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/habitats-34.aspx](http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/habitats-34.aspx) and [www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/species-35.aspx](http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/species-35.aspx)

Compliance with this Act requires the Welsh Assembly Government to 'further the conservation' of species and habitats on this list.

**Annex B** lays out the legislation under Sections 40 and 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC), which re-enforces each of these pieces of legislation and extends the legal basis for biodiversity action in Wales to all public bodies and local authorities.

For further information on relevant legislation visit the following website:  
[www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1359](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1359)

As local planning authorities National Parks (but not local authorities) have a duty to conserve and enhance landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage under the 1949.

### **3.2 Welsh Assembly Government Commitments**

Clearly we need to halt biodiversity loss to protect resources and processes essential to life but we are required to halt biodiversity loss to be compliant with national and international legislation.

The Wales Environment Strategy and the second Environment Strategy Action Plan (2008 -2011) sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to halting biodiversity loss and to seeing a definite recovery from the losses that have already occurred. The Environment Strategy Target is to meet the 'international commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2010. Recovery to be underway by 2026. Wales is one of the few countries to have put in place a biodiversity target that reaches further than 2010, in the form of the Environment Strategy target for 2026. This aims to have all Welsh sites (international, national and local) in favourable condition, with the loss of biodiversity having been halted so we can see a definite recovery in the number, range and genetic diversity of species, including those species that need very specific conditions to survive by 2026.

The Wales Environment Strategy commitment underpins the Welsh Assembly Government's UK and international commitments to reversing biodiversity loss.

The Sustainable Development Scheme (2009) One Wales on Planet - Crucially for Wales, Sustainable Development has been agreed by Cabinet as the central organising principle of all our work. Biodiversity enhancement and protection will need to be a key element of this approach if it is to be successful in providing long term gains (environmental, social and economic) for Wales.

### **3.3 The Biodiversity Action Plan**

Published in 1994, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) set out the UK's legal commitment to Article 6A of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The UK BAP brought together existing work and expertise on biodiversity to set out a partnership approach. Although the focus for



delivery was on agreed actions and targets for priority species and habitats, the UK BAP went much further by setting out how the conservation community should engage with other sectors and bring in new partners in order to meet the objectives of the CBD. An important component of the UK BAP was the establishment of a network of Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnerships to deliver action and to engage with communities, raise awareness and support education initiatives.

Devolution in 1997 and the resulting development of country strategies for delivery of biodiversity led the UK Government and the UK Biodiversity Partnership to revisit the UK BAP in 2007. This led to the publication of *Conserving Biodiversity – the UK Approach* which reaffirmed the general approach set out in the UK BAP but suggested that structures and processes for delivery should be organised at a country level. A country approach would be able to build on the success of the UK BAP, while addressing some of the weaknesses such as: poor communication between those working at a UK and a local level; a lack of policy integration; and little integration with existing delivery mechanisms such as protected sites, organisation work programmes and agri-environment schemes.

Building on the success of the existing structure in Wales, the new approach to BAP delivery introduces a new layer of Welsh groups that pool expertise and close the gap between those who deliver action in Wales and those who are able to provide strategic advice, guidance and support. The new groups are nine Ecosystem Groups, a Species Expert Group and a Wales Biodiversity Policy Group. The elements that were maintained and developed are the Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP) and Support Team, the WBP Permanent and Task and Finish Groups (as WBP Support Groups), the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Partnerships and Local Record Centres (LRCs). All these groups form the WBP wider network.

The new UK Strategic Biodiversity Framework<sup>4</sup> sets out a shared vision and approach to conserving biodiversity within our devolved structure. The emphasis for UK-level work is: achieving effective communication; providing guidance; standard setting; research; and reporting at the UK level. Work to embed biodiversity into policies and programmes, set targets, plan and prioritise action, and implement delivery mechanisms for priority species and habitats is now carried out at the country, regional and local levels. For marine biodiversity, elements of this work are being undertaken jointly with other countries and at the UK level.

## **4. RESPONDING TO CHANGE**

### **4.1 Climate Change**

We cannot tackle climate change without tackling biodiversity loss – refer to TEEB report and European Environment Agency statement

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<sup>4</sup> UK Biodiversity Partnership Standing Committee (2007). *Conserving Biodiversity – The UK Approach*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Complex models inform our understanding and provide us with scenarios of how our climate will change. Despite the high level of uncertainty there are a number of predictions we can prepare for and adapt to. It is estimated that summers will be warmer and drier whilst winters become warmer and wetter with an increase in severe weather episodes.

It is likely there will be changes to the landscape and in the range and abundance of native species and habitats. For example there may be a decline in upland oak woodland along with those plant, mammal and invertebrate species unable to migrate or adapt. Continental species will expand their range northwards in Wales such as the newly arrived long-winged cone-head (*Conocephalus discolor*), and Dartford warbler (*Sylvia undata*).

Whatever the changes, biodiversity and ecosystems will be put under stress as they attempt to cope with changing environmental conditions and the appearance/loss of species. It is almost inevitable that some habitats and species will be lost due to climate change.

The Environment Strategy Outcome 19 (see point 6.1) recognises that "those species that need very specific conditions to survive" are also those most likely to be affected by climate change. The impact of increased storms, for example, may be particularly severe on coastal and marine habitats.

Other changes such as a longer growing season with enhanced yields of agricultural crops and woodland productivity will depend on the scale and rate of climate change. Climate change could reduce the growing season and disable agricultural production by limiting water supplies during key growing stages or bring new pests and diseases.

Adjustments to land management practices will be required to cope with potential impacts of climate change on soil sustainability, water quality and quantity and use of pesticides and herbicides. All will have a subsequent impact on biodiversity.

Increased use of wood fuel and wood products could substitute for fossil fuel use and reduce emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. Well maintained healthy habitats such as blanket bog, wetlands, forests and stable unploughed grasslands can help by acting as carbon sinks. Bio-fuel crops have the potential for commercial exploitation and could provide biodiversity benefits and a renewable source of energy.

A healthy biodiversity resource plays a critical role in coping with climate change. Effects of climate change will have higher impact in areas where biodiversity is already under stress. Healthy eco-systems<sup>5</sup> have more potential to adapt to climate change and ensure continued provision of critical ecosystems services such as crop pollination. Biodiversity will need help to adapt to climate change impacts. Crucially, it is also a significant weapon in the battle to limit the effects of climate change.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Condition.aspx> click on *Conceptual Framework* link

## 4.2 Other Biodiversity Pressures

Whilst the attention given to climate change is important, we need to manage and respond to a wider range of environmental and human changes. The European Commission Communication: *Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond*<sup>6</sup> (May 2006) identifies the principal pressures on biodiversity as “land use change arising from conversion, intensification of production systems, abandonment of traditional (often biodiversity-friendly) practices, construction and catastrophic events, exploitation, invasion of alien species.” Similar pressures are listed for Wales in the Environment Strategy and include:

- Construction and development – housing, roads, commercial, industry, flood defences and energy infrastructure;
- Increasing energy use, transport and travel activities;
- Inappropriate land management including under-grazing and over-grazing;
- Atmospheric, soil and water pollution;
- Increased demand on water supply;
- Inappropriate forestry operations;
- Invasive species;
- Over fishing and unsustainable bait collection;
- Recreational pressure such as use of off-road vehicles.

Biodiversity protection has an economic value<sup>7</sup>. We must ensure that economic growth does not result in environmental damage. The challenge is to secure an improvement in Wales’ biodiversity resources, preferably through partnership but, where necessary, through enforcement measures.

Historically biodiversity protection and enhancement effort has been focussed on the terrestrial environment. The balance between the focus on terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity issues needs to be redressed. The draft *Marine and Coastal Access Bill* and the related development of Marine Spatial Planning and Marine Conservation Zones are steps towards this goal.

To succeed, decision makers at national and local levels must have regard for the importance of biodiversity. This will be achieved by continuing to support and build on our current partnership approach and by encouraging all sectors of society to take positive action.

## 4.3 Key Challenges

To achieve the WES 2026 target for improving biodiversity in Wales the key challenges are:

- Safeguarding and ensuring favourable condition of priority habitats & species as defined in UKBAP.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/index_en.htm)

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/index_en.htm)

- Conserving & restoring terrestrial and marine biodiversity.
- Providing adequate species and habitat protection through legislation.
- Making new & existing development and other activities more biodiversity-friendly.
- Using biodiversity actions to help alleviate and slow the effects of climate change.
- Integrating biodiversity protection and enhancement into productive and commercially viable farming systems.
- Promoting good forest management and sustainable timber production.
- Supporting the development of new opportunities such as biodiversity-friendly biomass fuels.
- Reducing negative impacts from non-native species.
- Influencing all policy areas to reduce/eliminate the negative effects on biodiversity created by previous policies and processes.
- Integrating biodiversity into all strategy and policy-making activities at a national, regional and local level.
- Taking biodiversity into account at the early stages of developing plans and projects.
- Maximising opportunity to support biodiversity through funding streams in all sectors.
- Making the wider environment more favourable for biodiversity through managing the countryside for wildlife and reducing habitat fragmentation.
- Raising awareness and understanding and converting this into action in all sectors.
- Developing and enforcing better legislation particularly for the Marine Environment.
- Ensuring that adequate survey and monitoring takes place in order to identify biodiversity change and make this available to decision makers.
- Influence private/business sectors to contribute more towards biodiversity enhancement/protection.
- Harnessing the opportunities of the Wales Spatial Plan to create landscape scale restoration and creation projects.
- Ensure all partners share information on actions taken and targets met using the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS).

Biodiversity is something that everyone can harm as well as help. To halt biodiversity loss, we all need to understand the importance of biodiversity, how to take action to safeguard and enhance it and provide opportunities for its enjoyment.

## **5 The Ecosystem Approach (WBP Ecosystem Statement currently being developed will be included here)**

The Ecosystem Approach is identified as a key underlying principle for the conservation of biodiversity at a UK level using the Convention on Biological Diversity definition “*a strategy for the integrated management of land, air,*

*water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way, and which recognises that people with their cultural and varied social needs are an integral part of ecosystems*". The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA), published in 2005, highlighted the link between ecosystems and human well-being, with biodiversity being the foundation of ecosystems and therefore fundamentally important for well-being. One of the key messages from the MEA is that *"Biodiversity benefits people through more than just its contribution to material welfare and livelihoods. Biodiversity contributes to security, resilience, social relations, health, and freedom of choices and actions."*<sup>8</sup> Annex C is a copy of the MEA diagram demonstrating the link between ecosystems and human well being.

The Wales approach recognises the value of functioning ecosystems and the need to protect and enhance combinations of habitats that can deliver ecosystem goods and services that will benefit biodiversity. This approach is a combination of:

- protecting the best wildlife sites and surrounding areas;
- halting biodiversity loss and promoting the recovery of priority species and habitats;
- embedding biodiversity in relevant sectors of policy and decision-making;
- enthusing people;
- developing the evidence base.

## **6 The Delivery of UK Biodiversity Priority Habitats and Species Actions in Wales**

### **6.1 Why we need an improved delivery mechanism**

As stated earlier devolution is an important driver behind the development of this new delivery mechanism to support biodiversity delivery in Wales. Most policies, legislative changes and major funding streams are now at country level and so it is appropriate for a shift in coordination and prioritisation to reflect this. WAG now undertake the consenting of certain developments and activities in the marine environment which would previously have been consented by DEFRA.

Devolution is not, however, the most important factor. As mentioned above Climate change presents us with new and urgent challenges that require us to make a step- change in our approach to biodiversity conservation. **Alongside protected sites and species actions, we need to address ecosystem functioning to ensure continued provision of services.** Halting (and ultimately reversing) biodiversity loss requires us to adopt integrated landscape and larger sea- scale approaches that restore whole ecosystems. This is an exciting and challenging process, requiring strong partnerships if we are to succeed. .

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<sup>8</sup> *Millenium Ecosystem Assessment (2005)*

## 6.2 Introduction

In Wales we have built on the strengths of the UK BAP process and addressed some of its weaknesses, in particular by improving the integration of habitat and species-based work, strengthening support for national and local levels of delivery and developing the ecosystem approach. This approach encompasses the needs of all species and habitats listed for Section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, addressing their conservation through ecosystem approach principles.

WBP are the lead body for the implementation of the Biodiversity elements of the Wales Environment Strategy in line with the priorities, principle roles and responsibilities set out in this Biodiversity Framework. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and WBP Steering Group now have overall responsibility for ensuring that Wales delivers BAP and will hold partner organisations accountable for their agreed contributions and, where appropriate, their biodiversity obligations defined by statute or policy. The aim is, however for this delivery mechanism to be owned by a broad partnership, with all members equally committed to its success. WAG and WBP will keep the delivery mechanism under review, so that it can evolve to take account of experience and respond to obstacles to delivery and new opportunities.

The Wales approach recognises the need to plan strategically and to bring in new partners in order to respond to pressures such as climate change and non-native species. To achieve this WBP continues to provide support, advice and guidance, and encourage other sectors to develop practices that embrace biodiversity protection and enhancement. **This approach fully incorporates the role of the ecosystem approach and integrated landscape and larger sea-scale projects in contributing to biodiversity targets.** Partnership working will drive success not just between members of the individual groups but also between groups working at a Wales level and those operating at different geographical levels, especially the LBAP partnerships. The Wales groups are responsible for setting targets and identifying actions at a Wales level, and from this support the development of targets and actions at the most appropriate geographic scale – in most cases at the local level. LBAP partnerships are critical if we are to deliver on the ambitious target of halting and eventually reversing biodiversity loss in Wales.

It is vital to monitor and report on the success of this approach if we are to achieve long term benefits for biodiversity. Using the UK Biodiversity Action Reporting system (BARS) provides this vital information, enabling communication on actions partners are taking and reporting the contribution they are making. Groups are expected to report regularly to WBP to ensure that progress is being made and identified barriers are addressed. The whole approach will be reviewed following the next UK reporting round.

## 6.3 Aims of the delivery mechanism

***Aim: To halt and ultimately reverse the loss of biodiversity in Wales***

In order to achieve this we will:

- (i) Secure the adoption of an integrated ecosystem approach
- (ii) Embed climate change adaptation principles in conservation action and ensure that the mitigation impacts of conservation management are considered.<sup>9</sup>
- (iii) Achieve biodiversity enhancements across whole landscapes and larger sea-scale.
- (iv) Achieve priority habitat and species targets through greater collective emphasis on restoration of relict habitats and expansion, in addition to protecting the remaining resource. Priority habitats and species covered by Annex I and Annex II of the Habitats Directive targets should be linked with Favourable Conservation Status (Annex D)
- (v) Enhance the recovery of priority species by better integrating their needs into habitat-based work where possible, and through targeted species recovery work where
- (vi) Support conservation to achieve condition of designated sites, including by enhancing the necessary wider environment in which they sit.
- (vii) Support the conservation of marine ecosystems, within and beyond designated sites.
- (viii) Establish and implement a delivery programme, with agreed accountabilities, for priority species and habitats in Wales.
- (ix) Improve the integration of UK, national and local levels of delivery.
- (x) Secure links between relevant policy-makers and biodiversity practitioners to ensure biodiversity issues are fully considered at the earliest stage of decision-making.
- (xi) Strengthen biodiversity partnerships by clarifying roles at Wales and local levels.
- (xii) Increase levels of public understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity through increased opportunities for getting involved in conservation.
- (xiii) Improve data-sharing partnerships that enable comprehensive and robust biological data and action/target information to be accessed as vital evidence to support decision-making processes, and future biodiversity action planning (e.g. utilising BARS, LRCs, the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) and the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN)).

#### **6.4. Overview and Structure of the Delivery Mechanism**

In addition to a greater co-ordination of effort in Wales, the biggest change is greater emphasis on identifying and carrying out the actions that are most urgent and have the greatest benefit for biodiversity. Consequently there is much less emphasis on producing long habitat or species-specific action plans. The original 436 UK HAPs and SAPs contained over 6,300 published actions, and more than 38,000 additional actions are published in LBAPs across the UK. What this process did not do was to identify which of these actions matter most for biodiversity conservation and ensure that they are

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<sup>9</sup> UK Biodiversity Partnership (2007). *Conserving Biodiversity in a changing climate: guidance on building capacity to adapt*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

carried out. **This delivery mechanism is action- and outcome-focussed**, therefore enabling the development of clear delivery and policy priorities, at different geographical scales, and with assigned accountabilities (Annex E).

### **The Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP)**

WBP will oversee, enable and monitor the implementation of the BAP process in Wales. It is able to explore and develop new opportunities for biodiversity action, identify and review barriers, and work to remove obstacles to secure biodiversity gain, including coordinating and facilitating the ecosystem approach in Wales. WBP works strategically to ensure that the new structure and the relevant groups within are fully engaged in shaping the necessary mechanisms to deliver biodiversity conservation, and continues to champion biodiversity within the Welsh Assembly. WBP works with partner organisations and groups to find new ways of working and new flows of funding required to deliver BAP and Environment Strategy Wales objectives as well as focusing existing resources on ensuring that this new structure delivers agreed biodiversity targets.

Responsibility for delivery of BAP lies with the WBP, and ultimately the Welsh Assembly Government. To ensure that the right processes and mechanisms are in place for biodiversity protection and enhancement, this Wales Biodiversity Framework will be reviewed periodically in line with UK reporting and, if required, following annual reports from the Wales Ecosystem Groups and the Species Expert Group to the WBP. WBP will identify and address weaknesses and barriers to delivery. The WBP already works closely with the Wales Biodiversity Policy Group to ensure that new opportunities for supporting biodiversity through integrated policy development and for influencing and securing major funding streams are identified and acted on. WBP also provides the main link between Wales and the other UK Country Groups, the UK Standing Committee and associated advisory groups. (The original Terms of Reference for WBP can be seen in Annex F.)

There are six main components of the WBP in addition to the Steering Group, as described below.

#### **(I) Wales Biodiversity Policy Group**

This group brings together all the policy actions from the Wales Ecosystem Groups and the Wales Species Expert Group. The Wales Biodiversity Policy Group is composed of representatives from the policy sector in Wales from both within and outside the biodiversity field. Focussing all the policy effort through one group helps to overcome one of the main constraints to achieving biodiversity action that was identified in previous BAP reporting rounds. Policy actions from species and habitats are now be channelled into common themes, for more efficient implementation and solutions than if dealt with by each habitat or species group individually.

#### **(II) Wales Ecosystem Groups**

This comprises of nine groups: Woodland; Lowland Grassland and Heathland; Wetland; Urban and Brownfield; Freshwater; Upland; Coastal; Farmland; and Marine Ecosystem Groups, and is largely be made up of experts from relevant statutory organisations, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and LBAP



partnerships. These groups are charged with driving the delivery of priority habitat targets (including those associated with relevant species), utilising ecosystem principles and appropriate geographic scales. However, the execution of tasks is likely to be at a local level through LBAPs or be within the statutory remit or capacity of group members, members of another Ecosystem Group or the Wales Biodiversity Policy Group (Annex H shows habitats within ecosystem groups).

### **(III) The Species Expert Group**

This group has been formed in order to prevent the limited number of species experts in Wales and the UK from receiving multiple queries from each habitat group regarding species action. The group consists of one or two experts from each broad taxonomic group. They provide advice in response to queries from habitats groups in relation to habitat management requirements for particular groups or individual species. They are often able to provide a reference to relevant documentation, help resolve conflicting requirements and develop or commission guidance where it is missing. The group is seen as a source of information and a link to relevant UK groups and experts. For further information on action responsibility see Annex G. The Marine Ecosystem Group encompasses expertise for all marine species (both habitat related and non-habitat related), in addition to habitat expertise.

### **(IV) Species Lead Partners**

There is a continuing need for Species Lead Partners to report status and trend information against targets. In addition, there are some important species actions that cannot be carried out through habitat-based work or policy mechanisms. These require targeted species recovery work.

The species actions are coordinated by Lead Partners and may be delivered through: single species groups; those based on single taxonomic groups e.g. widespread herptiles; or with mixed taxonomic interests, but common actions e.g. farmland birds and arable plants. They carry out a range of activities including prioritising actions, setting targets at the LBAP level, co-ordinating funding and research bids and identifying and carrying out priority projects for delivery. They also work closely with LBAP Partnerships to agree the most important areas for landscape-scale delivery for species actions. The Marine Ecosystem Group addresses the needs (targets, action and reporting etc) for all marine species (both habitat related and non-habitat related),

### **(V) Local Delivery**

Halting biodiversity loss and meeting the challenge of climate change requires landscape and larger sea-scale approaches that improve habitat connectivity and ecosystem functions, and deliver appropriate networks to meet the present and future needs of species. This requires coordinated delivery at a local level. The Wales Ecosystem Groups and species Lead Partners need to work closely with LBAP partnerships. Some LBAP partnerships may come together to deliver particular actions at a larger local scale, for example on habitat sites that straddle political borders. LBAP partnerships also have a key role in increasing and promoting the understanding of biodiversity and encouraging others to take action, through education and awareness-raising activities, and integrating biodiversity into local decision making processes.

LRCs play an important role in supporting the local collection, collation and provision of information on biodiversity, raising awareness and engaging with biological recorders.

## **(VI) WBP Support Groups**

There are a number of support groups in Wales which were operational before the development of this structure for BAP delivery in Wales. These groups have a key support role for the delivery of biodiversity targets.

### **(a) Wales Environmental Information Forum and Steering Group**

The Wales Environmental Information Forum (WEIF) is a regular event which brings together the broad community of environmental data providers and users. It seeks to address their concerns, tackle specific issues that constrain data sharing, update them on developments in Wales and beyond, and agree the steps we need to take in Wales to help improve access to environmental data and information. The first Forum was held in March 2007 and led to the formation of the WEI Steering Group (WEISG). The Steering Group is charged with owning the actions and issues raised at the WEIF and developing a strategy and action plan to resolve and deliver them. The Group's vision is the *"Sharing of Welsh environmental information to benefit the environment and people of Wales, the UK and globally"*. The group aims to include representatives from all sectors whilst remaining small enough to focus on developing and delivering a strategy and action plan. It aims to find solutions for Wales that work within a UK and global context, and has links to the work of the UK Association of Local Environmental Record Centres, the UK National Biodiversity Network and Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the UK Marine Environmental Data and Information Network, and the Association of Local Government Ecologists. [Link to Terms of Reference on WBP website](#)

### **(b) Wales Invasive Non-native Species Group**

The Wales Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) working group began in March 2008 and is tightly tied to the INNS Framework Strategy for Great Britain and its implementation in Wales. The overarching aim of this group is to minimise the risk posed and reduce the negative impacts caused by invasive non-native species. For more information see the WBP website.

### **(c) WBP Task and Finish Groups**

Made up of members of the WBP Steering Group and Wider Partnership, these groups address specific issues relating to biodiversity delivery.

Examples of current Task and Finish Groups are

- Outcome 21 Group established to facilitate the delivery of the Wales Environment Strategy Outcome 21 on achieving favourable condition on protected sites in Wales,
- Business and Biodiversity Group which aims to create stronger links between business and biodiversity conservation. [Link to Terms of Reference on WBP website](#)
- Connect 4 Cymru Group formed following a successful personal development initiative run by Public Service Management Wales (PSMW). The group is made up of public and non government organisation staff from across Wales involved in the delivery and management of biodiversity action. The group has taken on an advisory role using their shared expertise to advise on policy and

political interventions for biodiversity benefit. Last year the group provided a detailed response to the consultation on the Sustainable Development Scheme 'One Wales, One Planet'.

For more information on the Task and Finish Groups see the WBP website.

## **6.6 Existing UK HAP and SAP Groups**

For some habitats and species, UK expert groups will continue to provide an important technical, championing and advisory role beyond 2009. The UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (BRIG) is currently defining what will need to happen at the UK level in the future to meet the requirements set out in the UK strategic biodiversity framework.

## **6.7 Further Information**

If you have questions about this framework, or want to find out how you can get involved, please contact: Julia Korn [j.korn@ccw.gov.uk](mailto:j.korn@ccw.gov.uk) (general enquiries), Jan Sherry (for terrestrial and freshwater enquiries) [j.sherry@ccw.gov.uk](mailto:j.sherry@ccw.gov.uk) or Aethne Cooke (for marine enquiries) [a.cooke@ccw.gov.uk](mailto:a.cooke@ccw.gov.uk)

## **7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Roles and Responsibilities of the different components within the Wales Biodiversity Partnership Mechanism (Annex I for detail on key organisations)

### **7.1 WBP Steering Group**

This group is chaired by the Welsh Assembly Government and supported by a partnership Secretariat consisting of Support Team members hosted by the Wildlife Trusts, CCW and the Assembly.

#### **The WBP Steering Group is expected to:**

- lead implementation of the delivery mechanism and ensure organisations are committed to achieving targets and held accountable for their agreed contributions;
- work to integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into the projects, programmes and policies of other sectors;
- develop a framework for delivering the ecosystem approach through the new Wales BAP based on the UK National Approach. Coordinate and facilitate the delivery of this approach across Wales using the new BAP structure;
- ensure that work of WBP is considered in the context of the potential impacts of climate change, with expertise provided through linkage with the Climate Change Commission for Wales and other experts in the field;
- champion the Biodiversity Policy group and ensure that BAP is delivered through emerging policy, programme, funding and other mechanisms as advised by the Biodiversity Policy group;

- provide the link between Environment Strategy Wales and with the UK BAP to:
  - identify synergies and/or interdependencies that exist with the work of other groups, and work with them to highlight/resolve obstacles;
  - identify where Environment Strategy Wales actions could deliver BAP targets to better align Environment Strategy action and BAP reporting;
  - work to align future reviews of the Environment Strategy Action plan with the UK BAP reporting results and Wales Biodiversity Framework review;
  - through the UK Biodiversity Research Advisory Group (BRAG), identify, promote and facilitate Wales's research priorities, contribute to biodiversity research networking in the UK and support knowledge transfer activities in Wales. BRAG website: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3900>
- formalise and coordinate links with UK, European and International Groups and Committees where appropriate representation is not provided at a UK level, to ensure effective communication and joint working;
- support the work of the LBAP partnerships;
- act as a conduit for the work of PAW Cymru with a Police Force representative promoting the issue of wildlife crime within the steering group;
- facilitate communication on, and involvement in, biodiversity through the development of a communication plan. To include mechanisms such as developing and maintaining the WBP website, continued support for and use of *Natur Cymru – Nature of Wales*, organising and running conferences and workshops, sharing best practice and coordinating Wales wide awareness initiatives;
- secure funds to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the new BAP Structure and actively support partners to secure resources for delivery of BAP targets;
- identify training needs and gaps in expertise and secure commitment to meet this demand through existing and new initiatives;
- monitoring and reporting:
  - receive reports from the Group Chairs every November and produce and publicise an annual report on progress towards delivering biodiversity targets in Wales in *Natur Cymru*;
- support the continued development and maintenance of BARS while promoting its use widely and providing practical support to others to ensure they report action locally;

- evaluate progress towards biodiversity delivery in Wales following each UK BAP reporting round, having consideration for the quality of information used to inform reporting. Where satisfactory progress is not being made, either towards biodiversity targets or through failings in the delivery mechanism, the WBP is to take appropriate action;
- develop indicators to evaluate the performance of the Wales BAP delivery mechanism including indicators which will monitor the impact on biodiversity of any policy changes / policy development initiated by the Biodiversity Policy Group.

## **7.2 Wales Biodiversity Policy Group**

Chaired by the Welsh Assembly Government with the Secretariat provided by the WBP Support Team.

WBP convened this group to take forward all policy-based actions (including relevant non-devolved policy) identified by the Wales Ecosystem Groups and the Wales Species Expert Group. Many of these are similar in both form and scope and in terms of potential delivery e.g. planning policy, legislation changes, agri-environment changes etc, and are thus most efficiently managed by a central group of policy bodies.

### **The Biodiversity Policy Group is expected to:**

- assemble and integrate all relevant policy actions for Welsh priority species, habitats and ecosystem functioning
- determine priority policy action
- advise on the integration of biodiversity into the relevant policies of all public authorities and statutory undertakers in Wales and the UK
- with the Welsh Assembly, provide clear direction and communication to all public authorities and statutory undertakers on compliance with the NERC Act Biodiversity Duty and other legislation across their functions
- assign responsibilities for taking identified actions forward, monitor progress using BARS, and ensure accountability
- liaise with relevant Ecosystem Groups and Species Lead Partners to ensure any policy changes would result in the required biodiversity outcomes, secure access to necessary data and monitor the impact of policy changes
- develop a common understanding of key concepts and terms and develop core messages for use in policy integration

- use existing research to identify the costs/benefits of delivering policies that better benefit biodiversity and produce best practice, and identify future research needs in this area
- act as a focal point for policy information and provide intelligence to identify and influence key drivers.

### 7.3 Ecosystem Groups

These groups need to be innovative and dynamic in their approach to delivery, and need to consider the impacts of climate change as part of the decision-making process. They each have a core membership that represents relevant habitat and species interests. When necessary, they set up time-limited sub-groups to carry out defined tasks and bring in additional expertise. WBP has agreed the Chairs, and relevant species interest groups are represented. Also, all groups will have an LBAP representative to facilitate links to LBAP Partnerships.

In addition to marine habitats, the Marine Ecosystem Group is to encompass all marine benthic and mobile species, and supporting structures and function of the marine environment.

Group Chairs (Annex H) are expected to be the lead in Wales for those habitats covered by each group and take responsibility for developing and maintaining a work programme or action plan. The group agree some exceptions where the expertise and resource for driving and coordinating an aspect of habitat-based delivery lies in another agency or multiple agencies, but overall responsibility for coordinating, implementing and reporting for the group rests with the Chair. The Chair is supported by the Group Secretariat; who may be from the same or a different organisation. The Secretariat is responsible for organising meetings and administering the group, and other tasks as agreed with the Chair.

#### **The Ecosystem Groups is expected to:**

1. Drive the delivery of habitat and species targets:
  2. set objectives/targets using the standard BAP target types for the habitats, and work with species experts to set targets for relevant species at the Wales and LBAP level. Targets should link to Favourable Conservation Status for Annex I habitats and Annex II, IV and V species (**Appendix 6**);
  3. the marine group will review existing targets, and set targets at the most appropriate geographic level
  4. prioritise the most urgent and important actions to meet the collective needs of the habitats and species within the overall group and provide coordinated guidance on these to LBAP Partnerships and others;
- take into account the impacts of climate change and take advice from WBP who will be working with experts in the field;

- consult with LBAP Partnerships and others to agree targets and the most appropriate delivery mechanism;
  - ensure monitoring to determine reporting on progress towards habitat and species targets;
  - identify resource requirements and coordinate bids for research or implementation;
  - identify priority areas for delivering biodiversity enhancements and improving connectivity at a landscape and larger sea-scale;
  - develop and implement the ecosystem approach as set out in the WBP Framework, taking into account ecosystem services and carrying capacity;
  - engage appropriately with local partnerships to align delivery;
  - provide advice on habitat management for land managers;
  - maintain communication with other country groups and provide representation on UK groups where appropriate;
5. Identify policy blockages and, through representation to the Biodiversity Policy Group, help drive policy development and monitor outcomes.
  6. Liaise with other relevant Ecosystem Groups where joint approaches could be beneficial, either for biodiversity-related action or securing of funding.
  7. Identify knowledge gaps, and either address these directly or recommend to the WBP how they could be filled.
  8. Coordinate reporting on status and trends for habitats and associated species.
  9. identify a member of the group to lead on reporting
  10. use BARS to report against actions and targets and share information with partners including LBAP Partnerships
  11. liaise with Lead Partners for UK species reporting.
  12. Provide representation to any over-arching UK habitat group established by the UK Biodiversity Standing Committee.

#### **7.4 The Species Expert Group**

This group acts as a single point of contact for any species and/or species habitat queries from the Ecosystem Groups and the Biodiversity Policy Group.

It is made up of representatives from each of the main taxonomic groups (mammals, birds, herptiles, fish, invertebrates, vascular plants, lower plants and fungi), including Agency and NGO specialists.

**This group has two primary roles:**

1. Identify habitat/site priorities and integrate species actions across taxa, and maintain a list of priority actions for implementation by Ecosystem Groups, the Biodiversity Policy Group and other delivery bodies.
2. Provide, either directly or via seeking information elsewhere, relevant habitat management advice for particular species or groups of species. This will reduce the burden particularly on small NGO organisations that may have to deal with multiple enquiries from all Ecosystem Groups. Much of the documented information which can be provided by this group can be collated on the WBP website, but it may still need interpretation or more specific advice.

**The Species Expert Group takes responsibility for:**

- integrating and maintaining a list of actions (to be updated annually with species lead partners) for species where urgent action is required. This will represent a rolling programme of actions based on assessment of priority and will be provided to relevant Ecosystem Groups and/or appropriate delivery bodies for implementation;
- identifying knowledge and skills gaps, and either addressing these directly or recommending to the WBP how they could be filled;
- identifying policy constraints and, through representation to the Biodiversity Policy Group, help to drive policy development and monitor outcomes;
- maintaining links, where appropriate and effective, with current UK species groups and providing representation to any overarching UK species group established by the UK Biodiversity Standing Committee;
- providing guidance to Ecosystem Groups and the Biodiversity Policy Group on the integration of species habitat management needs. Providing recommendations for the resolution of any incompatible management requirements on both a general and case-by-case basis;
- providing support to species Lead Partners with information required for reporting processes.
- Working with experts on climate change to take into account the potential impacts on species and their habitats.

## **7.5 Species Lead Partners**

WBP identify species Lead Partners from organisations within Wales with the appropriate skills and remit. These may be based on individual species, grouped species, or grouped taxa. There is an existing Lead Partner (or partners) identified and/or working at the UK level integrated into this mechanism for BAP delivery in Wales.



The Lead Partners work with and are supported by a range of partners willing to contribute towards actions for a species (or group of species). They take responsibility for leading the work required to plan, monitor and review progress with delivery of BAP targets and Environment Strategy Wales (ESW) objectives that relate to species conservation.

**Lead partners have three primary roles:**

1. Identify, prioritise, drive action for, and monitor progress towards, the achievement of species targets (aligning delivery across appropriate levels including local and regional partnerships);
2. Maintain standards for monitoring and reporting progress against those targets and review the status of priority species.
3. Coordinate information exchange, collaborative action and maintain consistency between local, country and UK-level BAP delivery for species.

**The Lead Partners will take responsibility for:**

1. agreeing specific Wales-level targets and, where possible, disaggregate these to the LBAP level with other stakeholders
2. advising the Ecosystem Groups on those habitat actions required to meet the needs of specific species
3. providing the Species Expert Group with a list of actions allowing them, where relevant, to be integrated across species and taxa for multi-species delivery
4. providing advice to WBP on research and monitoring/surveillance needs
5. providing advice to land managers and LBAP partnerships on biodiversity delivery
6. identifying policy constraints and, through representation to the Biodiversity Policy Group, helping to drive policy development and monitor outcomes
7. coordinating reporting for species through appropriate mechanisms including the BARS and liaising with Species Expert and Ecosystem Groups for UK species reporting
8. identifying the required resources in partnership with others, including ensuring the expertise of individuals and/or organisations active in species conservation is fully engaged in the process of planning and delivering action
9. maintaining communication with Lead Partners in the other countries and providing representation on UK species groups where appropriate
10. liaising with other relevant species Lead Partners where joint approaches could be beneficial, and identifying priority areas for delivering biodiversity.

**7.6 Local/Regional Delivery**

**Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnerships**

*(Annex K sets out the key role of local authorities and national parks in the delivery biodiversity across their areas)*

The 24 LBAP partnerships in Wales are coordinated by Biodiversity Officers who are hosted by Local and National Park Authorities. These partnerships are a critical component of the structure as they facilitate the delivery and reporting of local action by managing the LBAP on BARS and linking to local action delivered by others. The coordination of LBAP contributions supported where appropriate by the regional partnerships and including actions delivered through other mechanisms enable delivery at landscape scale and larger sea-scale. The Local Biodiversity Action Plans hold the local targets on BARS.

**In this regard, this component of the proposed structure:**

1. agrees and confirms local targets for delivering Wales' priority habitats and species informed by local expertise and the advice provided by the Ecosystem Groups and species Lead Partners, where appropriate;
2. agrees action and targets for locally identified priorities to ensure local distinctiveness and encourage full community participation;
3. ensures targets are fully reflected in appropriate policy instruments and strategies at local levels, including Local Development Plans, Community Strategy, National Park Management Plans and Spatial Plans etc. In some cases, this requires cooperation between local areas or regions. It also requires liaison with the Biodiversity Policy Group;
4. agrees delivery priorities, taking account of any existing 'vision' maps (spatial plans etc) and aims to enhance biodiversity at a landscape and larger sea-scale and increase the resilience of habitats, sites and ecosystems to fragmentation and climate change;
5. promotes awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity and the action the public, community groups, business, public authorities and statutory undertakers can take to protect and enhance this resource;
6. identifies and secures funding for delivering local and all Wales priority action including community participation, awareness and education activities;
7. monitors local delivery using local groups, volunteers and others involved with the LBAP partnership;
8. reports on actions and targets using BARS, and contributes to national reporting rounds as required;
9. through the partnership, provides representation on the Wales Ecosystem Groups.

**7.7 Regional Biodiversity groups and forums**

In Wales an informal network of regional groups exists who facilitate partnership on a regional and bring local partnerships together to prioritise,

plan, support, advise on and deliver practical action on the ground. In South Wales two regional groups operate; the Glamorgan Biodiversity Advisory Group (Glam BAG) established in 1999 and the Greater Gwent Biodiversity Advisory group (GG BAG) established in 2000. Both groups meet on a regular basis to facilitate biodiversity action in the Gwent and Glamorgan area. In North Wales there are biodiversity species groups that bring together expertise to plan and deliver collaborative action across the region. Regional groups continue to have an important role including

- Prioritising and planning action at a landscape or seascape scale and advising on best location for local action if required.
- Supporting the delivery of local action through strategic support and advice for partners and across sectors
- Bringing together expertise and helping organisations, groups and individuals to identify action required and report back on progress made.
- Information sharing and development of guidance as required

### **7.8 Other Local Delivery Mechanisms**

This includes the work of all those involved in delivering biodiversity action in Wales and the various tools and mechanisms they use. This action is undertaken by a huge number of dedicated individuals and groups as well as statutory and voluntary organisations representing different sectors across Wales. Capturing this expertise, knowledge and activity will help inform future action and focus limited resources where the greatest benefit to biodiversity can be achieved. The new approach to BAP in Wales expects conservation organisations and groups to work more closely with LBAP partnerships to enhance biodiversity using all available delivery mechanisms. All those involved are encouraged to share information on their contribution to the local targets on BARS even if they are not directly working with the LBAP partnership. The WBP Support Team and LBAP Partnerships will work with other sectors and with smaller groups and individuals, to support them to share information and link into the BAP process wherever possible.

## **8. COMMUNICATION (see flowchart in Annex E)**

### **8.1 WBP Support Team**

The WBP Support Team consists of three employees, two based in the Wildlife trusts and 1 based in the Countryside Council for Wales. All three members of staff have LBAP Partnership support responsibilities and also an all Wales remit. The current Support team and the LBAP partnerships they cover is shown on the map below. The all Wales roles are divided into three broad areas

1. **Technical support** which primarily focuses on supporting and advising on the roll out and use of BARS (technical development and operational support, In addition this role includes organising the tri annual WBP Steering Group meetings.
2. **Communication** which included managing and developing the WBP website, coordinating Wales Biodiversity Week, organising and running the annual conference and managing the web and ensuring Wales is able to

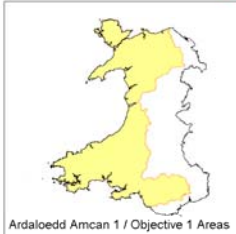
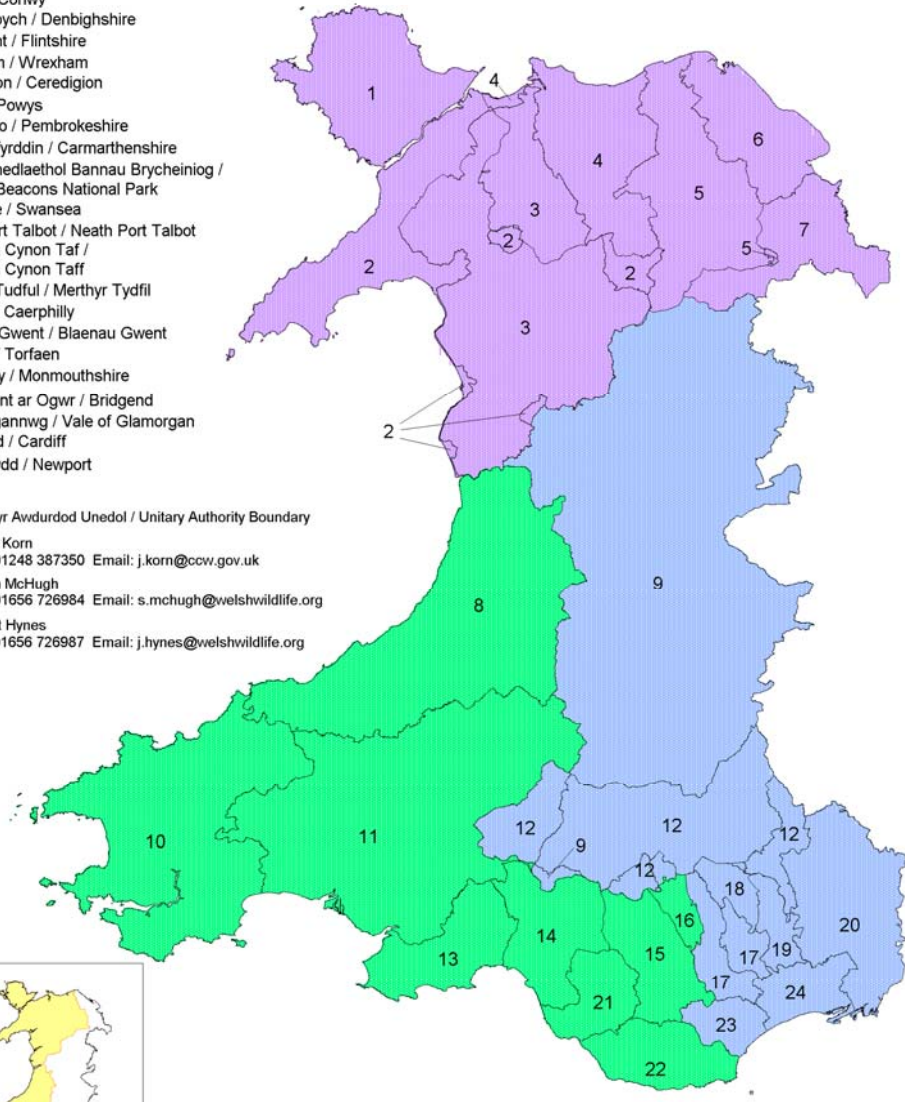
capitalise on other awareness opportunities e.g. International Year of Biodiversity and the BBC Spring Watch series.

3. **Advisory** which includes developing procedures and protocols, informing and issuing strategic advice and training that supports action on the ground, and securing links with other sectors.

The work of the Support Team is managed and supported by the WBP Partnership and by the Welsh Assembly Government Nature and Biodiversity Team within the Department of Environment, Sustainability and Housing. Further information on how the Support Team operates is set out in the WBP protocols below.

- 1 Ynys Môn / Isle of Anglesey
- 2 Gwynedd / Gwynedd
- 3 Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri / Snowdonia National Park
- 4 Conwy / Conwy
- 5 Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire
- 6 Sir y Fflint / Flintshire
- 7 Wrecsam / Wrexham
- 8 Ceredigion / Ceredigion
- 9 Powys / Powys
- 10 Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire
- 11 Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire
- 12 Parc Cenedlaethol Bannau Brycheiniog / Brecon Beacons National Park
- 13 Abertawe / Swansea
- 14 Nedd Port Talbot / Neath Port Talbot
- 15 Rhondda Cynon Taf / Rhondda Cynon Taff
- 16 Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil
- 17 Caerffili / Caerphilly
- 18 Blaenau Gwent / Blaenau Gwent
- 19 Torfaen / Torfaen
- 20 Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire
- 21 Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend
- 22 Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan
- 23 Caerdydd / Cardiff
- 24 Casnewydd / Newport

- Ffin yr Awdurdod Unedol / Unitary Authority Boundary
- Julia Korn  
Tel: 01248 387350 Email: j.korn@ccw.gov.uk
  - Sean McHugh  
Tel: 01656 726984 Email: s.mchugh@welshwildlife.org
  - Juliet Hynes  
Tel: 01656 726987 Email: j.hynes@welshwildlife.org



Graddfa / Scale 1:1,250,000

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## **8.2 The Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)**

Through the UK/Wales BAP process, action plan targets for species and habitats are owned by Lead Partners and LBAP Partnerships. Progress towards these targets was reported in 1999, 2002, 2005 and 2008, on the last 2 occasions using the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS).

BARS is the main information collection and communication tool for biodiversity action across the UK. It is a web-based system created for the entire UK Partnership to meet the planning, monitoring and reporting requirements of all those delivering biodiversity action and contributing to UK targets. The use of BARS encourages the revision of LBAP documents, focusing on finite actions and targets and providing quantitative data<sup>10</sup>.

The expectation is that Government and Country Agencies will provide a lead by populating BARS with all appropriate information and linking to Wales and LBAP actions. They will develop a strategic steer within their organisations/ departments to ensure that staff know what to do. Others in the biodiversity community are strongly encouraged to do the same, to realise the full value of a single biodiversity reporting system.

Wales has been identified as a pilot area for increasing and improving the use of BARS as the only tool for reporting on biodiversity action and progress towards targets. To achieve this government and the statutory authorities need to lead by example and develop how their own, and their grant funded biodiversity action is captured on BARS. Progress has been made and it is important to build on this work.

## **8.3 The Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE)**

The role of the county ecologist is vital in achieving biodiversity outcomes by the local authority. The Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE)<sup>11</sup> represents professional ecologists and LBAP co-ordinators working in local government in the UK and provides information and support.

## **8.4 Protocols for Working within the Biodiversity Partnership**

The protocols applying to the groups that form the Wales Biodiversity Partnership as follows:

- Species Expert Group and Species Lead Partners
- Ecosystem Groups
- WBP Steering Group and Support Groups
- WBP Support Team
- WBP Policy group
- LBAP Partnerships, regional groups and other local delivery groups.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.alge.org.uk/>

**These protocols cover:**

- Working within Groups
- Working between Groups.

**Basic Principles**

- Be honest, open and accessible at all times
- Give and receive positive feedback
- Seek to understand the reality of the barriers being faced by stakeholders
- Endeavour to overcome these in the most effective, sustainable way possible
- Be prepared to roll up your sleeves and help
- LBAP Partnerships, regional groups and other local delivery groups.

**Protocols for individuals**

Good communication is key to delivery for biodiversity on the ground. It is expected that LBAP Partnerships, and the Species Expert group will provide representation on all the Ecosystem groups. Other groups within the network may need to provide representation on another group within or linked to Wales Biodiversity Partnership.

The WBP have produced checklists to support specific sectors and staff to support implementation of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Biodiversity Duty and these are published on the WBP website. All members should follow the guidelines in the checklist for project officers and/or the ecologists, Link:

[http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/legislation\\_guidance-20.aspx](http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/legislation_guidance-20.aspx)

All representatives of groups and partnerships sitting on other groups should:

1. Remember that they represent the group or partnership as well as their own organisation
2. Share meeting agendas with your group and seek views on agenda items
3. Feedback directly to your group
  - A verbal update at your group meeting with opportunity for discussion of matters arising
  - By email, keeping feedback brief (no more than 3 bullet points) and to the point and direct to web links etc for further information
4. If updating by email keep feedback brief (no more than 3 bullet points) and to the point and direct to web links etc for further information
5. Keep members of you group informed of progress on action you take and any other relevant action
6. Make time to discuss issues with individuals on your group should the need arise.
7. Issues outside the remit of any particular group should be resolved in partnership with the appropriate group. If an issue still cannot be resolved it should be raised at a WBP Steering Group meeting.

8. Individual members of groups are to communicate the work areas of the group(s) they sit on within their organisations, and to promote mechanisms/opportunities for furthering these work areas across different sectors within their organisation.

9. Travel and subsistence can be paid for unpaid staff who attend Wales's level group meetings. Contact Sean McHugh for details

[s.mchugh@welshwildlife.org](mailto:s.mchugh@welshwildlife.org)

### **Protocols for groups**

10. All LBAP partnerships to keep their information on the WBP website up to date.

11. All Wales level groups to publish agendas, minutes and other relevant information on the WBP website:

✓ Agendas should be published on the website no less than 1 week before the meeting with an invitation for others to provide comments.

✓ Draft minutes and/or action points should be published on the website within a month of the meeting, and bilingual final minutes/action points within a month of them being confirmed.

✓ Title of minutes/action points arising from meetings should be consistent to assist tracking. E.g. WBP SEG Meeting 3 Minutes 231209; WBP Marine EG Meeting 2 Actions 011109; WBP Policy Group Meeting 4 Agenda 120709

12. All involved in biodiversity delivery to use BARS and LRCs

13. All e-mails sent out to Wales level groups should have a heading starting with the name of the group involved e.g. *Biodiversity Policy group – Agenda*.

14. Members of Wales's level and LBAP Partnerships are encouraged to attend the annual WBP Conference.

15. The Chairs of the new Wales BAP groups will meet twice a year to facilitate non technical communication between groups.

### **Specific Protocols**

#### **Species Lead Partners and Species Experts**

- Provide information on species actions through habitat management and share with ecosystem groups through the species expert group.
- Lead partners will identify species specific action and communicate with appropriate delivery bodies including LBAP Partnerships to secure agreement to deliver.
- The Species Expert Group will work to resolve conflicts arising between species needs and appropriate habitat management. If not resolved the issue should be raised at a Steering Group meeting
- The SEG should provide representation on each Ecosystem Group
- For actions required outside of habitat actions, Species Lead partners will oversee the publication of action plans on BARS within an agreed timescale. Once an organisation has agreed to lead on an action it is responsible for setting that action up on BARS and reporting against it.

#### **Ecosystem Groups**

Each Group to:



- identify an LBAP representative who will feed back to identified LBAP contacts in each LBAP Partnership in Wales.
- identify a reporting officer to oversee reporting and facilitate reporting at a local, Wales and UK level e.g. access to BARS training, ensure others report on BARS within agreed timescales etc.
- identify representatives who will be responsible for communicating with other relevant Ecosystem Groups to ensure a joined up approach to habitat action.
- publish action plans on BARS within an agreed timescale. Once an organisation has agreed to lead on an action it is responsible for setting that action up on BARS and reporting against it.
- The Chair to ensure contact with SEG and Species Lead Partners

### **WBP Steering Group and Support Groups**

- Will provide advice and information on key issues and opportunities regarding biodiversity and ensure that this is shared with member organisations and groups and that appropriate action is taken
- Advise on action required in response to progress reports submitted by Wales level groups and if necessary hold others accountable for their commitments.
- Provide representation on UK, EU and international groups and forums where required and those representatives will feed back to the Steering Group.
- Provide membership recommendations for new task and finish groups.
- Support Groups will feed back to WBP Steering group as required.

### **WBP Support Team**

- Will continue to provide LBAP Partnership Support across Wales
- Will provide key messages to LBAP Partnerships following WBP Support Team Meetings
- Will facilitate communication with Biodiversity Champions and others able to strategically support biodiversity action
- Will provide the Secretariat for Task and Finish groups and some of the Wales level groups where capacity exists
- Will circulate consultations to relevant groups with the expectation that these groups will coordinate responses to such consultations
- Will organise and run Wales's level and regional conferences and workshops as agreed by WBP SG.
- Will coordinate Wales's level awareness activities as agreed by WBP SG and continue to manage the WBP website.
- Will provide coordination for the roll out of BARS in Wales including arranging training as required and according to resource limitations
- Will provide coordination for the Chairs of the new Wales level groups and seek ways to improve communication between all those involved in biodiversity action.

### **WBP Policy group**

- Will facilitate opportunities for the Ecosystem Groups and Species Expert Group to influence appropriate policy mechanisms. If barriers exist these should be reported to the Welsh Assembly Government.

- Is responsible for communicating new opportunities as they arise through the Biodiversity Partnership.
- Policy group members will take responsibility for influencing policy, legislation etc on behalf of the Ecosystem Groups/Species Expert Group and reporting back as required.

### **Local and Regional Partnerships, Groups and Organisations**

- Local targets will be held on BARS within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Target will be agreed by LBAP Partnership in discussion with Wales level groups and Lead Partners
- Groups and organisations delivering on priority habitats and species identified by the LBAP will be expected to report progress on BARS against the target and link their action /action goals to the LBAP.
- Regional action should be reported on BARS against relevant local targets; if this is not possible then it should be reported against Wales's level targets.
- The biodiversity coordinator will be responsible for managing/coordinating the LBAP on BARS and reporting on action developed through the LBAP Partnership and others as required.
- Members of LBAP Partnerships may volunteer to represent the partnership on Wales's level groups.
- Each LBAP Partnership will identify one person to be in regular contact with the LBAP representative on each Ecosystem group

## 9. KEY OUTCOMES

### 9.1 Wales Environment Strategy Outcomes for Biodiversity

This Framework is designed to facilitate and underpin achievement of the following Wales Environment Strategy Outcomes:

- **Outcome 8:** Wales has improved resilience to the impacts of climate change. A clear flexible programme of measures is in place to enable Wales to respond and adapt to climate change.
- **Outcome 16:** Soil is managed to safeguard its ability to support plants and animals, store carbon and provide other important ecosystem services.
- **Outcome 19:** The loss of biodiversity has been halted and we can see a definite recovery in the number, range and genetic diversity of species, including those species that need very specific conditions to survive.
- **Outcome 20:** The wider environment is more favourable to biodiversity through appropriate management, reduced habitat fragmentation and increased extent and interconnectivity of habitats.
- **Outcome 21:** Sites of international, Welsh and local importance are in favourable condition to support the species and habitats for which they have been identified.
- **Outcome 22:** Our seas are clean and support healthy ecosystems that are biologically diverse, productive and managed sustainably.
- **Outcome 23:** The quality and diversity of the natural and historic character of our landscape and seascape is maintained and enhanced.
- **Outcome 27:** There is easy, equitable access to ample high quality green space.

### 9.2 Wales Biodiversity Framework Outcomes

The Framework will directly deliver the following outcomes:

- A more co-ordinated, effective and integrated approach to biodiversity conservation and enhancement across Wales.
- Actions for biodiversity as set out in the Environment Strategy will be implemented.
- Clear leadership and key biodiversity drivers for Wales identified.
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities and clear mechanisms for reporting and monitoring progress.
- Increased opportunities for a wider range of individuals/stakeholders to become involved.
- Increased and more widespread awareness of biodiversity and how everyone can play their part in protecting and enhancing it.
- Improved access to biodiversity information and more effective communication between everyone involved in biodiversity conservation and enhancement.
- An increase in collaborative working for example on landscape scale projects.
- More efficient and creative use of existing and of untapped resources.
- Smaller ecological footprint for WBP.

## **10 Monitoring and Reporting**

### **10.1 Wales Biodiversity Groups**

A selection of the new Wales BAP groups have been asked to provide brief updates to WBP Steering Group meetings on a cyclical basis. The updates are presented as papers to note. All groups report fully at the February WBP Steering Group meeting starting in February 2011. This annual report enables a more strategic and comprehensive assessment of how the biodiversity approach is working in Wales and develop actions to address key issues preventing targets from being met. The WBP Support Team produce the annual paper for the WBP Steering Group in liaison with the group Chairs.

The Wales Biodiversity Framework are reviewed periodically in line with advice from the WBP Steering Group

### **10.2 Biodiversity actions, targets and indicators**

WBP expects the biodiversity actions of all organisations in Wales to be reported through BARS<sup>12</sup>.

BARS will be used to monitor achievement towards Wales-level species and habitat targets. Where possible, actions will be broken down to LBAP area and fed into local disaggregated targets held by the LBAP. Progress towards these local targets will then add up automatically to enable assessment of progress towards the Wales targets held by the Wales Ecosystem Groups and Species Expert Group. Regular updating of action progress (action goal progress) and LBAP target progress (target goal progress) on BARS will enable Wales to continually assess how it is achieving its targets and measure its contribution towards UK targets and beyond. This allows us to focus effort where it is most needed.

Through the Environment Strategy, additional targets and headline indicators have been developed to track progress. The Environment Strategy includes the target to halt the loss of biodiversity and see a definite recovery of biodiversity by 2026.

The Environment Strategy Reference Group will monitor the strategy and related indicators. The *State of the Environment Report* will bring together data from a range of primary sources across Wales.

The data collected and published will be provided to WBP to allow them to determine what actions are needed to ensure the targets are achieved.

### **10.3 Welsh Local Record Centres**

In 2002, the National Assembly for Wales Environment, Planning and Transport committee undertook a review of the Welsh LBAP process. Its recommendations included a call to develop a national network of Local Record Centres (LRCs), to promote recording and improve access to accurate

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/>

biodiversity information across Wales. All four of the LRCs in Wales are now fully operational: SEWBRc (South East Wales), BIS (Powys and BBNP), Cofnod (North) and WWBIC (West)<sup>13</sup>.

WBP Partners should ensure that they continue to assist LRCs and make the best use of their data holdings and services. They can also enter into Service Level Agreements with them.

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) provides ways of sharing wildlife information across the UK, and builds tools to make this information accessible in a digitised, exchangeable form. LRCs act as nodes of the NBN and the NBN offers shared standards to LRCs<sup>14</sup>.

#### **10.4 Habitats and Species Data**

LRCs are providing quality data at a local level, using NBN standards and linking to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) to make it easier for national WBP members to share their data.

WBP expects its members, LBAP Partnerships and others, including the private sector to provide biodiversity data that they collect to their Local Record Centre.

WBP expects its members, LBAP partnerships and others (e.g. private sector) to utilise the data available in LRCs, to aid their activities and help make better decisions to benefit biodiversity. Raw data is available as are customised reports.

### **11. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION / NEXT STEPS**

11.1 WBP is directly involved in the implementation and monitoring of the following Wales Environment Strategy (WES) outcomes<sup>15</sup>:

- **Outcome 19:** The loss of biodiversity has been halted and we can see a definite recovery in the number, range and genetic diversity of species, including those species that need very specific conditions to survive.
- **Outcome 20:** The wider environment is more favourable to biodiversity through appropriate management, reduced habitat fragmentation and increased extent and interconnectivity of habitats.
- **Outcome 21:** Sites of international, Welsh and local importance are in favourable condition to support the species and habitats for which they have been identified.

**This is achieved by:**

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.lrcwales.org.uk/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.searchnbn.net/>

<sup>15</sup> [Welsh Assembly Government | Environment strategy for Wales](#)

- Maintaining a full Secretariat Team, providing increased support to, and communication between, Government and decision makers across sectors, Wales Level Groups and Partners, land owners and managers, the voluntary sector, LBAP and Regional Biodiversity Partnerships, LRC managers and volunteers.
- Developing an all-Wales approach to delivering habitat and species targets, including the new Wales lists (Section 42 list) and reviewing and refreshing the LBAP process, establish effective links between Wales level priorities and activities, relevant experts, specialist groups and LBAP partnerships in order to minimise administration and maximise biodiversity outcomes.
- Enabling use of BARS by all sectors, with a focus on improving links between national and local actions, disaggregating SMART Targets<sup>16</sup> to local level and advising on actions to support those targets, and reporting in ways that maximise progress.
- Building on LRC development in Wales including the development of a data sharing charter to create a central Biodiversity Register/GIS layer/map showing the important priority habitats and species locations in order to ensure that national data sets are up-to-date and available for use, improve information sharing to enable appropriate action by landowners, spatial planners, government bodies and others.
- Developing a coherent communication plan for the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including the business sector, in order to convert awareness into action, maximise biodiversity outcomes, reduce loss of key skills and enable efficient monitoring and surveillance.

**Your views are sought on the appropriateness of these areas of activity and can be submitted alongside your application to join the Wales Biodiversity Partnership (see Annex J) or separately to the same address.**

***Version as at 17/02/10***

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/GenPageText.aspx?id=98> (scroll down)

