



Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services

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Outline of my talk

- Why the natural world matters
- What we've done about it – past and current conservation approaches
- What we need to do differently in future
- The role of local partnerships



Why biodiversity matters

- Intrinsic value of other species
- It matters to people – most of us love nature and much of our literature, art and science is inspired by it
- Biodiverse systems are more resilient to change
- We fundamentally depend upon genetic, species, and ecological diversity





UK 'natural values'

Value of pollinators to UK agriculture estimated at least £430 million per annum.

Net carbon sequestration by UK forests valued at £680 million pa

Wetlands in the UK – estimated value of services delivered of £4.7 billion per annum (flood control, water quality improvements, amenity)

Recreation - 2.86 billion outdoor recreational visits in England each year with a direct expenditure of over £20 billion per annum

Health – having a view of green space from one's house increased emotional well-being by 5% and general health by 2% (and people value these views at £450 p.p.p.a)

What we've done about it so far – the evolution of conservation action



Evolution of conservation action

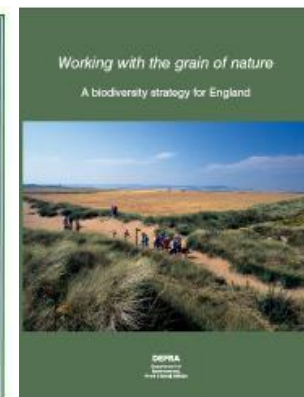
1. Protect what's left (sites and species)



Evolution of conservation action



1. Restore particular ('priority') habitats and species
2. UK BAP (1994), England Biodiversity Strategy (2003)
 - 436 species and habitat action plans (original BAP)
 - revised priority list (2007): 1150 species, 65 habitats



This approach has seen a number of successes:



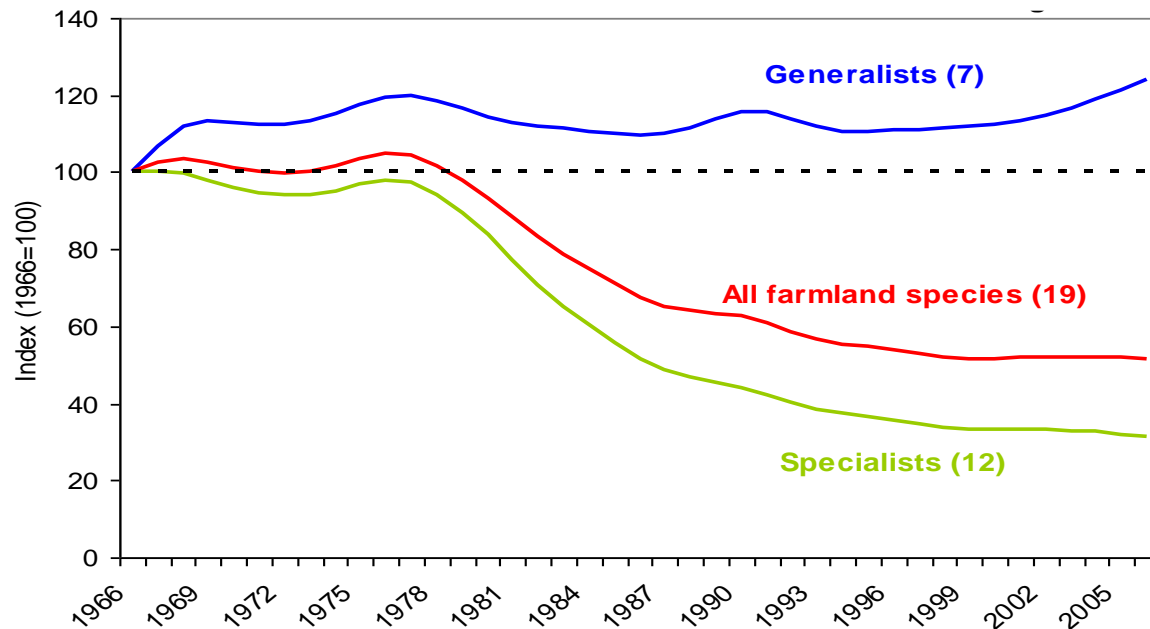
- Management of SSSIs (>96% in favourable /recovering condition)
- Farmland bird decline slowing
- Recovery of some species – particularly ones that had become rare (e.g. lady's slipper orchid)
- Reintroductions of some species lost from England (e.g. pool frog)
- Rivers are cleaner (otters and salmon returning)



BUT biodiversity losses continue



- Ongoing habitat losses, e.g. 91% of unimproved grasslands remaining in Derbyshire in 1983 were lost by 1999)
- Ongoing declines of once common species (e.g. hedgehogs, sparrows)
- 'Specialist' species being lost fastest – nature is being simplified
- Many losses are irreversible in human time-frames



2010
targets
missed

COUNTDOWN
2010

Halt the loss of biodiversity

After 60 years of designated sites and 15 years of BAPs, why is biodiversity loss still happening? Prof Sir John Lawton's answer:



- Too many of our sites are too small
 - 77% of SSSIs and 98% of local sites smaller than 100 ha
- Previous losses mean that for many species the area of habitat remaining is insufficient to avoid further loss
 - we carry an extinction debt: e.g. one species of flower lost per county every two years
- Many wildlife sites and habitats (especially outside SSSIs) are poorly managed and inadequately protected
- Natural connections (ponds, hedgerows, diverse rivers) have been lost and the 'matrix' has become increasingly hostile

What we need to do differently in future



Business as usual is not an option



- Need to address the underpinning causes of loss and improve the effectiveness of conservation effort
- Government's (and agencies) role:
 - Getting the strategy right
 - Deploying effective incentives and regulating where necessary
 - Providing the right policy environment to enable others to deliver

Two actions to save England's natural environment



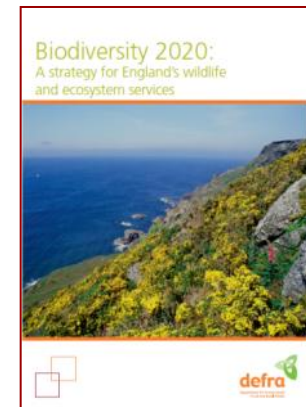
1. Take proper account of the value of our natural environment in decisions and policies across all sectors

- The Natural Environment White Paper



2. Establish coherent, resilient ecological networks on land and in our seas

- The new England Biodiversity Strategy: *Biodiversity 2020*



Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)



- First comprehensive statement of government policy on the environment for over 20 years. Four main ambitions:
- ***Protect and enhance our natural assets:*** to create an ecologically coherent and resilient natural network
- ***Create a thriving green economy which supports growth:*** recognising that our prosperity and security rely fundamentally on the health of our environment.
- ***Connect people and nature:*** Supporting greater environmental citizenship and local action
- ***Global leadership:*** at the EU and international scale to protect and enhance the natural environment.
- As part of NEWP Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) are being formed to create a shared vision for their area and deliver better, more integrated, environmental outcomes.

Biodiversity 2020 – The England Biodiversity Strategy



- Sets out a detailed suite of actions to realise the aspirations set out in the NEWP. It provides a road map to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020
- Rolling 3-year Delivery Plan will be published in early 2012 and will cover all elements of delivery - terrestrial, marine, policy and people centred aspects. Will involve Government, Arms Length Bodies (such as ourselves, the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission), NGOs, local government, business and local communities.



Headline Outcomes for 2020 include:



- 90% of priority wildlife habitats in recovering or favourable condition (*hardest to achieve but greatest effect*)
- No net loss of priority habitat and an increase of at least 200,000 ha
- At least 50% SSSIs in favourable, while maintaining at least 95% in favourable/ recovering condition
- At least 15% of degraded ecosystems restored, as contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Species – overall improvement in status and no further human-induced extinctions of known threatened species

Role of Local Partnerships

- Local action is key to delivering the outcomes of NEWP and Biodiversity 2020

Roles for local partnerships include:

- Establishing better ecological networks locally
- Identifying and improving the local economic and social benefits of a healthy natural environment, working with Local Enterprise Partnerships and others.
- Establishing or supporting a Local Nature Partnership.
- Supporting neighbourhoods and communities to take action and improve nature on the doorstep.

