

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

Telephone 020 7238 1133
Fax 020 7238 5529
Out of hours telephone 020 7270 8960
Out of hours fax 020 7270 8125
Website www.defra.gov.uk



Information Bulletin

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UK BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS

An updated overview of biodiversity in the UK has been published today, which provides an insight into the health of our natural environment.

Biodiversity is the variety of individual species, the genetic diversity within species and the range of ecosystems that support them.

These eighteen indicators were agreed in 2007 by the UK Biodiversity Partnership (the Government, the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and Non-Governmental Organisations) to summarise some of the key priorities for biodiversity in the UK.

The indicators include the population status of key species; plant diversity; the status of priority species, habitats and ecosystems; genetic diversity of rare breeds of sheep and cattle; protected sites; management of woodland agricultural land and fisheries; impacts of air pollution and invasive species; expenditure on biodiversity; and the amount of time given by volunteers to nature conservation activities.

Of the 34 component measures within the indicators, over the long-term 10 have shown deterioration, 9 have shown improvement, 2 have shown little or no overall change, 12 had insufficient data for an assessment, and 1 is provided for contextual information and is therefore not assessed.

In assessing change since 2000, 7 measures have shown deterioration, 15 have shown improvement, 9 have shown little or no overall change, 2 had insufficient data for an assessment, and 1 is provided for contextual information and is therefore not assessed.

Overview of assessment of change for all indicators

The table below summarises traffic light assessments since 2000 and over the longer term, for the 18 indicators and their 34 component measures.

Focal area, indicator number, title and individual measures (where applicable)		Long term change ¹	Change since 2000
Focal area 1. Status and trends of the components of biological diversity			
1a. Populations of selected species (birds)	Breeding farmland birds	1970-2008	
	Breeding woodland birds	1970-2008	
	Breeding water and wetland birds	1975-2008	
	Breeding seabirds	1970-2008	
	Wintering waterbirds	1975/6–2007/8	
1b. Populations of selected species (butterflies)	Semi-natural habitat specialists	1976–2009	
	Generalist butterflies	1976–2009	
1c. Populations of selected species (bats)		1978-1992	
2. Plant diversity	Arable and horticultural land	1990-2007	
	Woodland and grassland	1990-2007	
	Boundary habitats	1990-2007	
3. UK priority species			
4. UK priority habitats			
5. Genetic diversity	Native sheep breeds		
	Native cattle breeds		
6. Protected areas	Total extent of protected areas	1996-2009	
	Condition of A/SSSIs		
Focal area 2. Sustainable use			
7. Woodland management			
8. Agri-environment land	Higher level, targeted schemes	1992-2009	
	Entry type schemes		
9. Sustainable fisheries		1990-2008	
Focal area 3. Threats to biodiversity			
10. Impact of air pollution	Acidity	1996-2005	
	Nitrogen	1996-2005	
11. Invasive species	Freshwater species	1960-2008	
	Marine species	1960-2008	
	Terrestrial species	1960-2008	

12. Spring Index		Not assessed	Not assessed
Focal area 4. Ecosystem integrity and ecosystem goods and services			
13. Marine ecosystem integrity		1982-2008	
14. Habitat connectivity	Broad-leaved, mixed and yew woodland		
	Neutral grassland		
15. Biological river quality		1990-2008	
Focal area 5. Status of resource transfers and use			
16. UK biodiversity expenditure			
17. UK global biodiversity expenditure			
Focal area 6. Public awareness and participation			
18. Conservation volunteering			



= improving



= little or no overall change



= deteriorating



= insufficient or no comparable data

The full presentation of all the indicators, with charts, assessments, commentary and supporting material is published today on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's website at www.jncc.gov.uk/biyp.

A summary printed publication, UK *Biodiversity Indicators in Your Pocket 2010* is published today by Defra on behalf of the UK Biodiversity Partnership.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The indicators are presented in full on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's (JNCC) website at www.jncc.gov.uk/biyp. The presentation includes charts, assessments, commentary, data tables, data sources, and technical and other supporting information. The indicators have been compiled by Government Statisticians within Defra in collaboration with scientific and other experts within Government and non-Governmental organisations.
2. The indicators were agreed in 2007 by the UK Biodiversity Partnership (consisting of Defra, JNCC, Natural England, Devolved Administrations, and non-Governmental organisations), and were first published in printed form in the National Statistics

publication *Biodiversity Indicators in Your Pocket 2007* and subsequently updated in 2008 (internet only), and 2009.

3. Defra will also be publishing a printed version of *Biodiversity Indicators in Your Pocket 2010* on May 20th 2010. Copies will be available to order, free of charge, from Defra publications Admail 6000, London, SW1A 2XX (tel: 08459 556000, e-mail: defra@cambertown.com).
4. Details of Defra-funded research are available on <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/>.
5. Other pocket-sized publications in the series are *Sustainable Development Indicators in Your Pocket 2009* [quote product codes PB13265 (A6 size) or PB13265a (A4 size)] and *Environment in Your Pocket 2009* [quote product codes PB13319 (A6 size) and PB13319a (A4 size)].

A National Statistics publication

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

The indicators are dependent on a wide range of data from Governmental and non-Governmental organisations. The compilation of the indicators has been undertaken by statisticians in Defra in consultation with the appropriate experts within the organisations providing the data. Every effort has been made to ensure that the indicators are reliable and are based on the best available scientific knowledge. However, it is not practicable to review in detail and validate the data collection procedures. Not all of the indicators are therefore individually National Statistics, but it is considered that collectively they provide the best available overview of biodiversity in the UK that it is currently practicable to compile.

Press enquiries **020 7238 5334**; Public enquiries **08459 335577**;

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