



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# Biodiversity deep dive: recommendations

Outcome of the biodiversity deep dive focussing on protecting at least 30% of the land and 30% of the sea by 2030.

**First published:** 3 October 2022

**Last updated:** 3 October 2022

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# Objective

To develop a set of collective actions we can take immediately to support meaningful delivery of the CBD '30 by 30' goal, recognising the capabilities we have in Wales and reflecting our duties and approach under the Wellbeing of Future Generations and Environment (Wales) Acts.

## 1. Transform the protected sites series so that it is better, bigger, and more effectively connected

We will take immediate action to ensure the protected sites is effectively and equitably managed by 2030 by:

- o Expanding and scaling up the Nature Networks Programme to improve the condition, connectivity and resilience of protected sites. In addition to supporting action to improve protected sites, the programme also focuses on the active involvement of local communities, creating networks of people in addition to resilient ecological networks.
- o A Nature Networks Map outlining key focus areas will be produced. A Protected Sites Portal will be developed and rolled out to allow partners access to NRW protected site data.
- o Increase the delivery capacity of the National Peatland Action Programme through a phased approach so that by 2030 the programme will be delivering at a scale capable of reaching the net zero 2050 target of 45,000 ha of peatland restored.
- o Providing funding for Local Nature Partnerships to support collaborative partnership action for nature recovery at the local level.

- o Tackling the financial and funding barriers to delivery that impede progress towards restoration and/or maintenance of sites on land, freshwater and seas to favourable condition by:
  - Exploring the opportunity to use Section 16 Land Management Agreements as match funding to enable additional sources of funding to be secured supporting more ambitious actions for nature recovery.
  - Reviewing the level of planning fees paid for conservation work which can add a significant cost to delivery.
- o Completing the Marine Protected Area network to ensure the shortfalls in the protection of habitats and species of conservation interest are addressed, species and habitats are well-represented and the network is connected and ecologically coherent. This will start with pre-consultation engagement with stakeholders in the next three months.
- o Finalising the structured evaluation of potential fishing gear interactions with features of Marine Protected Areas and consult on the necessary management measures needed. Preventing damage to MPA features will help improve the condition and resilience of the network.
- o Establish a targeted scheme to support restoration of seagrass and saltmarsh habitats along our coastline
- o Create opportunities for marine and freshwater fishers to support nature recovery, and where appropriate undertaking management actions for biodiversity and habitat enhancement.
- o Identifying ways to maximise the role of Local Nature Reserves and other habitats not under statutory designation, such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, to deliver for the 30 by 30.
- o Ensure protected sites (management, monitoring, designation), land and

sea, are a priority for NRW through corporate and future strategies and provide adequate funding.

- o Review the SSSI series to inform an accelerated notification programme aligning it with the Nature Network Programme.

In the longer term we will:

- o Improve the effectiveness of protection from the damaging impacts of development and other threats / pressures by increasing capacity and capability in relevant public bodies to take effective enforcement action where needed.
- o Embark on an ambitious programme of protected site designations with an accelerated notification process to align with and strengthen the nature networks, prioritising those areas where need has already been identified.

## **2. Create a framework to recognise Nature Recovery Exemplar Areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) that deliver biodiversity outcomes**

In addition to improving the existing protected areas, we also recognise the importance of identifying additional areas that can deliver our nature recovery ambition and alternative solutions to managing these. On the management side we want to establish a series of Nature Recovery Exemplar Areas - existing or new landscape scale collaborations of public, private, voluntary and community actors that come together to manage and restore nature in protected areas and the wider landscape. In addition, we also want to explore the role of a new IUCN defined status of OECM's in recognising areas outside protected sites that can

contribute to 30 by 30.

We will take immediate action to:

- o Establish an expert working group (and links to the IUCN Protected Area Working Group) to recommend processes and criteria for recognising, monitoring and reporting on existing and candidate OECMs and Nature Recovery Exemplar Areas in Wales. The working group will report recommendations on identification of candidate sites and mechanisms to fund these within six months.
- o Links between land and water represent an active area for integrated OECMs, and Dŵr Cymru (November 2022) will host a series of workshops at their annual WaterSource conference to explore the enablers and barriers to delivering freshwater catchment scale action. The outputs of the workshops will be shared after the conference in the WaterSource22 Report.

### **3. Unlock the potential of designated landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30**

Our Designated Landscapes, both National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have a vital role to play in supporting nature's recovery. In the immediate term we will:

- o Support the National Parks and AONBS to develop a prioritised action plans for nature restoration embedding these in strategic planning.

In the longer term we will:

- o Realign Designated Landscapes priorities to enhance and accelerate nature

recovery delivery, supported by updated policy, resources and guidance to build capacity and expertise and to target activity.

- o Develop the evidence and mapping tools to enable designated landscapes to baseline, target and monitor areas of high nature value that could be secured as their contribution to 30 by 30
- o Ensure Designated Landscapes bodies are funded adequately, sustainably and flexibly to deliver nature recovery at a transformational landscape scale.
- o Ensure that the potential designation of a new National Park in northeast Wales affords opportunities for climate change mitigation and nature recovery as key delivery priorities for the new Park.
- o Consider the need for legislation in the next Senedd to reform the statutory purposes, duties and governance arrangements for designated landscape bodies to equip them better to drive nature's recovery.

## **4. Continue to reform land and marine management and planning (including spatial) to deliver more for both protected sites and wider land / seascapes**

How we use our land, freshwater and marine habitats both now and in the future can have a significant impact on the condition of sites and the species that are part of them. We will take immediate action to:

- o Develop strengthened guidance for Policy 9 of Future Wales via the Gwent Levels pilot project for mainstreaming biodiversity, ecosystem resilience and green infrastructure into planning policies within National Natural Resource

## Management Areas in Wales.

- o Strengthen the policy protection afforded to SSSIs as outlined in Planning Policy Wales 11.
- o Explore the possibility of an all-Wales contract to be set up with the Local Record Centres to screen all planning applications.
- o Implement a spatial approach to marine planning identifying the ecological constraints and opportunities for different marine activities including renewables. To include publishing spatial guidance and using the review of the WNMP to consider introducing spatial planning policies to assist planners, developers and decision makers.
- o Investing in skilled advisors to engage farmers with the new scheme and maximise the potential benefits for nature
- o Investing in sustainable land management pilots to build knowledge and experience in delivery for species and habitats

In the longer term we will:

- o Design the Sustainable Farming Scheme to ensure farmers are rewarded both for providing appropriate management of protected sites and for actions that improve the prospects of nature in the wider landscape and freshwater habitats.
- o Develop and enforce minimum standards to prevent further harm, protect the key habitats and ecosystems and facilitate rectification of damage should this occur.

## 5. Build a strong foundation for future delivery

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## **through capacity building, behaviour change, awareness raising and skills development**

We recognise that nature recovery will require a society wide approach, and that action to tackle the nature emergency will not be successful if it is not done hand in hand with action to tackle climate change. We will take immediate action to support effective delivery both now and in the future by:

- o Integrating the skills and expertise needed for nature recovery (e.g. ecologists, marine planners and biologists etc) into the Net Zero Skills Strategy.
- o Include actions to tackle the nature emergency into the overall climate change behaviour change programme.
- o Expanding and enhancing capacity and capability building schemes to support the public, third and private sectors to accelerate delivery for nature recovery. This will include a focus on financial resilience and investment readiness.

In the longer term we will:

- o Improve education and awareness of the nature and climate emergency and actions individuals and organisations can take
- o Building on the Natur a Ni programme, (and the People's Plan for Nature) increase citizen involvement and participation in actions to address the nature and climate emergencies.

## **6. Unlock public and private finance to deliver for nature at far greater scale and pace**

We recognise that taking effective action to tackle the nature emergency by 2030 will require adequate funding. We will take immediate action to identify appropriate funding sources and the government interventions that may be needed to ensure these deliver for the benefit of Wales by:

- o Develop a clear policy position on private investment in nature recovery, identifying the potential opportunities and anticipating the risks, including where these could be mitigated by appropriate government interventions and principles for responsible investment.
- o Explore sustainable funding mechanisms and opportunities to support work delivering the marine component of 30 by 30 such as identifying funding mechanisms from emerging and developing industries, exploring levies and the role of Marine Net Benefit.

In the longer term we will:

- o Increase public investment in nature's recover by ensuring the response to the nature emergency is integrated across government departments.

## **7. Develop and adapt monitoring and evidence frameworks to measure progress towards the 30x30 target and guide prioritisation of action**

Effective and affordable monitoring and evidence frameworks are vital if we are to track our progress towards both the 30 by 30 goal and the longer-term nature

positive ambition. These frameworks need to be informed by an appraisal of data needs, building on existing good practice and data sets, and identifying what is needed in future. In the immediate term we will:

- o Establish a monitoring and evidence task group to continue the work needed to establish robust and appropriate monitoring and evidence frameworks for 30 by 30 and wider nature recovery targets, building on those that are already in place.

## **8. Embed Nature Recovery in policy and strategy in public bodies in Wales**

We will reaffirm our commitment to take corrective action to protect and restore biodiversity and ensuring public bodies across Wales support delivery of this commitment. We will take immediate action to:

- o Revise the Natural Resources Policy and our National Biodiversity Strategy (currently the Nature Recovery Action Plan) to reflect deep dive recommendations and post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- o Strengthening delivery of the NRP and Section 6 of the Environment Wales Act to support the mainstreaming of delivery for nature across all Government portfolios and public bodies. This will include:
  - Actions to reduce pressures impacting biodiversity and driving restoration and recovery.
  - Bringing together key Welsh Government policy that affects land use management and setting out how they fit together on the ground integrating with Future Wales and the Wales National Marine Plan.
- o Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to lead by example

through demonstration and exploring further opportunity to ensure that delivering for nature is one of the priority objectives for the Welsh Government Woodland Estate, changing practices where needed that are detrimental to nature.

In the longer term we will:

- o Develop primary legislation to set overarching nature recovery targets and establish an environmental governance body to be laid as early as possible in this Senedd term, and a suite of more detailed statutory nature recovery targets focussed on achieving environmental outcomes and delivering Wales's contribution to the post 2020 global biodiversity framework.

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