



eastofenglandbiodiversityforum

## East of England Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2008-2015

*What do you see?*

## Regional biodiversity network map

This map represents the East of England Biodiversity Forum's vision for biodiversity activity across this region. It identifies where there are opportunities for biodiversity enhancement within the region:

○ Key centres for Development and Change (Policy SS3)

■ Core Biodiversity Area

### Biodiversity Enhancement Areas –

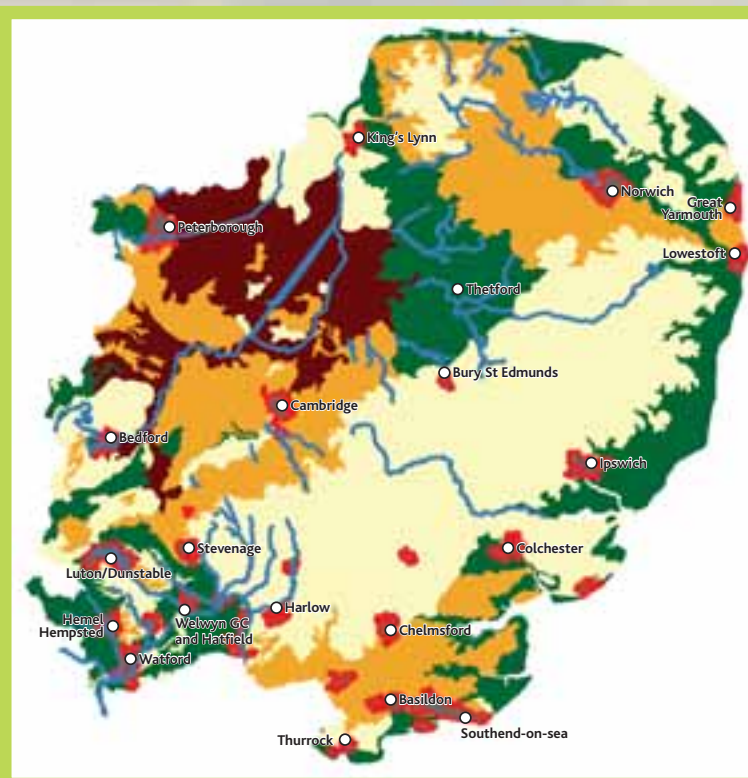
■ Buffer fragmented habitats

■ Extend and link fragmented habitats

■ Large-scale habitat re-creation and restoration

■ Urban biodiversity deprivation area

■ Strategic river corridors



Map published in the *East of England Plan*, GO-East (2008), page 56.

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# Foreword

In the East of England we are fortunate to live in one of the most biodiversity rich areas in England. While the region is internationally important for certain species and habitats, it used to be even more special. We have lost vast swathes of our wetlands, heathlands, grasslands and woodlands and we mourn the loss of many plant and animal species.

In our busy lives it is too easy to forget that we are part of the natural world, and to lose our understanding of the contribution biodiversity makes on our behalf. It is biodiversity that pollinates our crops; biodegrades our waste; cleans our water and produces the oxygen that we breathe. It is also biodiversity which has inspired many great poets and writers, and created awe and wonder in the minds of children and adults alike.

Whilst striving for greater prosperity and an improved quality of life, we must also recognise that the majority of the diverse wildlife in our region is also trying to survive, and must be taken into account. Ignoring this fact and our links to the natural world, will mean that neither wildlife nor our diverse human communities will prosper.

This East of England Biodiversity Forum's Delivery Plan is designed to encourage us all to creatively manage our land resource and conserve wildlife. It should also serve to inspire and engage people with the places they visit and in which they live.

**Michael Allen**

Chair EERA Environment and Resources Panel

# A call to action

**As a region the East of England is amongst the fastest growing and most intensively farmed, but also one of the most vulnerable. Being low-lying and relatively dry it is at risk from rising sea levels and drier summers.**

This is the first Biodiversity Delivery Plan for the East of England. It is linked to the England Biodiversity Strategy and will help to take forward the actions within this document, at a regional level. In effect it is a call to action to everyone in the region to address the challenges facing its natural environment. Tackling these challenges will both help increase prosperity and improve the wellbeing of all who work, live and visit the region.

This plan will be of interest to policy makers, health professionals, landowners and managers, planners, developers, the recreation and tourism sectors, educationalists, economists and, of course, environmentalists.

## Challenges

We face some fundamental spatial planning questions in this region, how do we:

- accommodate high levels of growth?
- adapt to climate change?
- maintain food production?
- increase production of energy from renewable sources?
- protect ecosystems?

In order to contribute to the debate on these questions and to achieve our biodiversity objectives the East of England Biodiversity Forum has identified six broad challenges facing biodiversity:

- 'Networking nature'
- Realising biodiversity's true value
- Ensuring there is water
- Responding to a changing coastline
- Safeguarding the seas
- Enhancing the evidence base

This Delivery Plan has been structured to reflect these challenges and outline the actions required to tackle them. The Plan's character is deliberately thematic rather than spatial. The means of meeting these challenges, when combined, in effect constitutes our plan for the East of England and it is a long-term agenda.

An important function of this Plan is to influence the single Integrated Regional Strategy as it is developed and affect still other relevant plans as they are produced or renewed.

This will ensure that the benefits of conserving and enhancing biodiversity are fully recognised in the delivery of these plans' strategic objectives.

## The tipping point

The region is currently at a tipping point for the natural environment. Agriculture is encompassing stewardship of the countryside, while planning policy is starting to support creative conservation, and climate change is demanding sustainable water management solutions. There is also a realisation that green surroundings improve our economy, health and wellbeing.

The East of England Biodiversity Forum's Delivery Plan embraces and promotes all of these changes and seeks to use them as a springboard for future action.





### History of the delivery plan

The preparation of this Delivery Plan has been funded and undertaken by the East of England Biodiversity Forum, which is comprised of voluntary and statutory nature conservation bodies, and regional government agencies, together with other organisations having significant influence on biodiversity.

The need for such a plan was identified at the 'Wild Ideas' conference organised by the Forum in November 2006. This event brought together key policy and decision-makers to discuss a vision for biodiversity conservation in the region and the multiple social, economic and environmental benefits that can be

achieved through a joined-up and holistic approach to delivery. The conference's subsequent report, and other key pieces of work undertaken by the Forum, have formed the basis of the plan.

The draft was subject to a 6-week stakeholder consultation, which elicited about 30 responses from a wide spectrum of interests. The text, and the accompanying action plans, have both been heavily influenced by the views expressed by stakeholders.

*"I see... a population  
reconnected to the environment"*

# 'Networking nature'

## Traditional conservation methods insufficient?

The traditional approach to nature conservation has been to protect significant sites in law and then manage them for particular species or habitats. This policy has achieved much to date, but is unlikely to sustain our wildlife over the long-term as many of the sites are neither ecologically or economically viable and face ever-increasing external pressures. Frequently, they are compromised by their small size, isolation and/or are subject to decreasing ecological quality.

If our wildlife is to be sustained over the long-term, we need to think about the way we manage and use land in a much broader way and on a far larger scale.

## Landscape-scale vision

Alongside conservation at the local level, it is now appreciated that we need to function at the regional level. This involves conservation at a landscape-scale, focusing on protecting and enhancing the existing important areas, increasing their size to make them more resilient, creating and maintaining habitat and ecosystem linkages across the landscape, plus improving the environmental quality of the intervening countryside and urban areas. By taking this more ambitious approach we will create living landscapes which allow species to move more freely between suitable habitats, improve the future quality of life for everyone and create a lasting legacy for future generations.

At the regional level the Forum has produced a map to indicate the different approaches and opportunities to create new habitats (see map on inside cover).

This map was incorporated into the Regional Spatial Strategy and there is reason to assume it will be a component of the new Integrated Strategy as well. Similar opportunity maps are being developed in each county by the biodiversity partnerships. Now these are starting to be integrated within the Local Development Frameworks and other key locality planning documents.

To achieve these connected living landscapes, 'Networking nature', we must advance our understanding of the competing pressures on urban and rural land in the region. We also need to acquire a better knowledge of the ecology, wildlife, water and soils that make up the landscape. Additionally we should appreciate that local economic, cultural and social needs will create a platform to bring about change and action.



"I see... that traditional conservation approaches are no longer enough"

## OBJECTIVE 1

	Build 'Networking nature' into the planning system	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Integrated mapping</b> Develop the regional biodiversity network map and more detailed local level maps and integrate within key frameworks, plans and policies	EEBF, LBAPs, EEDA, EERA, LAs, LRCs, LSPs, NE, NGOs	2010
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Develop opportunity mapping</b> Make opportunity maps a key mechanism for ensuring that development enhances biodiversity and ecosystem services and does not threaten the integrity of future landscape-scale conservation schemes	EERA, LAs, CPRE, EA, EEDA, FC, LBAPs, LSPs, NE, NGOs	2010
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Ensure positive management</b> Ensure regional and local planning policy and minerals plans prioritise the delivery of positive management, restoration and creation of habitats, and the linkages between them	EERA, LAs, NE, EA, EEDA, GO-East, LBAPs, NGOs, LSPs	2010
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Secure green infrastructure</b> Support the delivery of high quality green infrastructure in and around the region's towns and cities, and engage communities and key stakeholders in planning this infrastructure	FC, Green Infrastructure Partnerships, LAs, LDVs, Community Forests, CPRE, LSPs, EA, EEDA, EERA, NE, NGOs	2010 – 2015

## OBJECTIVE 2

	Invest in 'Networking nature'	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Maximise funding</b> Maximise the funding for networking nature schemes through Planning Gain Supplement, developer contributions and green infrastructure strategies; and support innovative approaches to funding for habitat restoration schemes	LAs, Highways Agency, Landfill Communities Fund, National Rail, LSPs	Ongoing
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Promote targeted incentives</b> Target and promote the use of agri-environment and woodland incentives to restore habitats and species, protect ecosystems and support low-intensity farming systems	FC, NE, Community Forests, FWAG, Froglife, LAs, LSPs, NT, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, WT	2015
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Determine indicators</b> Promote the adoption of NI197 in all Local Area Agreements as a designated indicator, and local indicators to target landscape-scale restoration, green infrastructure and 'Networking nature'	GO-East, LSPs, LAs, LSPs, NGOs	2012
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Ensure LWS systems in place</b> All local authorities should have a fully functioning Local Wildlife Sites system and properly resourced ecological expertise	LAs, Local Wildlife Site Partnerships, LSPs	2010

## OBJECTIVE 3

	Integrate policies and practice	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Integrate via the public estate</b> Ensure the public estate is managed to enhance biodiversity. Parks, housing, hospitals and schools can contribute to landscape-scale conservation, and also enhance human health and wellbeing	BTCV, Crown Estate, Defence Estates, FC, LAs, LSPs, NE, NHS, Sustainability East	2015
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Integrate via food/energy policies</b> Ensure that policies on food production and energy generation at regional and local levels integrate landscape-scale restoration and enhancement	NFU, Renewables East, EA, EEDA, GO-East, LSPs, NE, Sustainability East, water companies	2010
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Integrate via growth</b> Ensure growth areas, growth points and the London Olympics 2012 make a significant positive contribution to conserving and enhancing biodiversity and delivering living landscapes	EEDA, EERA, LAs, EA, LSPs, NE, NGOs, Sport England, Sustainability East	2015
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Integrate via social policy</b> Promote the benefits of landscape-scale conservation through social policy such as; tourism, schools, outdoor learning provision, preventative healthcare, volunteering schemes and youth work	BTCV, Community Forests, East of England Tourism Council, LAs, LSPs, NE, NGOs, NHS, Preventative Health Care in Norfolk, Sustainability East	2015

# Realising biodiversity's true value

Amongst the general public the concept of biodiversity is often neither well known or fully understood. Further, today's lifestyles ensure many are denied the chance to come into contact with biodiversity, for example through restrictions on childrens' ability to play freely outdoors or walk to school. Yet biodiversity offers considerable potential benefits.

## Contributing to economic prosperity

Biodiversity contributes positively to the region's economy. It attracts thousands of visitors from overseas and within the UK for a range of activities based around the region's biodiversity, such as walking, boating, sailing and bird watching. It also secures investment and retains skills by supporting high-quality places to work and do business.

## Making a social contribution

Access to greenspace means biodiversity can deliver a social value too. There is a health bonus as greenspace has proven crucial for mental and physical wellbeing. This includes both direct access, on foot or by sustainable transport, as well as intellectual access, such as information and interpretation of habitats and species. There is growing evidence that physical and mental health is improved largely through such contact with the natural environment.<sup>1</sup>



Increasing knowledge of the term biodiversity alone won't change people's behaviour and lead to positive action. Increased knowledge needs to be accompanied by incentives and opportunities to experience biodiversity. This should be done at a local level, where people can engage, make a difference, and influence others. Biodiversity can be found in many forms close to where people live, as managed green spaces like parks or allotments and domestic gardens. Such variety means everybody can have contact with the natural environment. Furthermore, local communities are well placed to manage their local biodiversity areas, but securing this dividend relies on there being training, advice and funding support for them.

## Ecological functions

With plans to build at least 377,500 new homes and their associated infrastructure in the region by 2021, the East of England is scheduled to become a major growth area. This will not only mean more people to engage in biodiversity, but has the potential to pose a bigger threat to many of the region's valued species and habitats as well.<sup>2</sup> Access to popular, high-value wildlife sites could become even more problematic, for when they are over-used their ecological features come under pressure. Careful consideration of how yet more people will access and use sites for recreation, and which sites should be there purely for biodiversity, is also required.

It is essential that we increase our understanding of the social and economic impact of biodiversity to ensure that this value is fully recognised in the decision and policy-making process.



## OBJECTIVE 1

	Increase knowledge and positive attitudes towards biodiversity	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Define knowledge baseline</b> Define East of England baseline of public knowledge and attitudes to biodiversity and monitor progress	EEBF, National Trails	2010, 2015 for follow up survey
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Gather evidence of biodiversity benefit</b> Develop an evidence base, including case studies, which demonstrates social, economic and environmental benefits of inland and coastal biodiversity in the East of England	EEBF, Coastal Initiative, EA, EEDA, NE, NGOs	2010 initially, ongoing until 2015
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Communicate benefits</b> Use landscape-scale projects to communicate biodiversity and its benefits to people	AONB Partnerships, Buglife, Community Forests, EA, FC, Froglife, Great Fen Project, LAs, LSPs, NE, NHS, NT, National Trails, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, WT	Ongoing
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Monitor health &amp; wellbeing benefits</b> Building on evidence about health, biodiversity, wellbeing and green spaces	University of Essex, NE	2011

## OBJECTIVE 2

	Make biodiversity physically and intellectually accessible for people	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Adopt the ANGST standard</b> Assess compliance with Access to Natural Greenspace standards (ANGSt) and push for their implementation. This includes getting a baseline of how ANGSt standards are met across the East of England and assessing the compliance with Rights of Way Improvement Plans	NE, EEBF, Green Infrastructure Partnerships, LSPs Local Access Authorities, Local Access Fora	2012
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Evaluate site sensitivity</b> Through the planning process, evaluate sensitivity of designated biodiversity sites to the impacts of public access and recreation and identify which sites are suitable and unsuitable for public use	LAs, LBAPs, NE	2012
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Exchange best practice</b> Facilitate best practice exchange and learning regarding biodiversity between those involved with green infrastructure strategies to ensure a biodiversity rich green infrastructure	EEBF, BTCV, EELF, Green Infrastructure Partnerships, GSE, NHS	2009 initially
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Consistent local &amp; regional policy</b> Ensure the Regional Spatial Strategy, and every Community Strategy and LDF, has a policy on green infrastructure and biodiversity	LAs, EERA, EEBF, GO-East, Green Infrastructure Partnerships, LBAPs, LSPs, Local Access Fora, Greenspace East, NE, Wildlife Trusts	2010
<b>ACTION 5</b>	<b>Communicating knowledge</b> Identify and support coordinated, high quality interpretation and 3 public campaigns that deliver clear messages about biodiversity issues	EEBF, LRCs, LSPs, NGOs	2010, 2013, 2015

## OBJECTIVE 3

	Encourage people's involvement with local biodiversity projects	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Support 'Breathing Places'</b> Support activities and events in the East of England associated with the 'Breathing Places' campaign	LBAPS, BBC, BTCV, LSPs, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts	2009
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Volunteers and training</b> Promote opportunities for individuals and community groups in biodiversity monitoring, surveying and practical conservation work	BTCV, Buglife, Froglife, LRCs, LSPs, National Trails, NT, Plantlife, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, WT	Ongoing
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Secure funding</b> Influence distributors of Landfill Communities Fund and other funding schemes, to support biodiversity action at a local level	EEBF, Landfill Communities Fund distributors, LSPs, NE, SITA Trust	Ongoing
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Develop NHS involvement</b> Develop NHS estates and Primary Care Trust sites as oases of biodiversity	NHS, PCTs, LBAPs	Ongoing

"I note... thriving biodiversity is vital as it makes economic, health and social contributions"

# Ensuring there is water

Water is a vital element for the region's most important wildlife habitats, such as rivers and streams, fens, coastal and floodplain grazing marshes, estuaries, ponds, reedbeds, wet woodland, lakes and reservoirs – both natural and man-made.

## Twin problems – climate change and population growth

In the East of England water is already a scarce resource. Long dry summers in which there is a net loss of water from the environment are a normal feature of the region and more prolonged periods of 'drought' can last for several years, as was the case with the 2005-6 drought.

### The eastern region rainfall problem:



Of an estimated regional rainfall average of 600mm, 150mm is the estimated effective rainfall that replenishes ground water and provides runoff to rivers

At present it is predicted that the main impacts of global warming in the East of England will be:

- higher temperatures and thus greater warming in the summer than winter
- changes to rainfall patterns, with a decrease in summer rainfall and an increase during the winter
- rising sea levels

We clearly need to understand how climate change will affect the quantity and quality of water available for both existing and new wetland habitats.

This climatic problem will be exacerbated by the East of England's predicted population growth. At least 131,600 new homes will be built by 2021 in its growth areas. This will create additional major demands on water resources within the region. So it is vital we support new and existing partnerships in the region that aim to reduce the amount of water used by homes and businesses, as well as increase efficiency of water use and improve its quality.

Sustainable water supplies are required not only to support the needs of local business and agriculture, but the environment too. The threat to existing and new wetland habitats will be substantial as it is essential they receive sufficient high-quality water to retain and enhance their biodiversity value.

## Water Framework Directive

The European Water Framework Directive was transposed into UK law in 2003. It will be a major driver to protect and enhance wetland habitats in the region and alleviate the twin problems facing our environment.

## Wetland vision

To ensure that new wetlands are created at a landscape-scale it will be essential to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive to enable wetland biodiversity to adapt to the inevitable effects of climate change.

Developed in a partnership with English Heritage, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts, the 'Wetland Vision for England' provides a detailed freshwater vision for the creation and restoration of wetlands over the next 50 years. This will contribute to alleviating these twin environmental problems too.

"I understand... already there isn't enough water for everyone in the region - climate change and planned population growth will make matters worse"

## OBJECTIVE 1

	Ensure sufficient water is available to sustain the region's wetlands.	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Reduce water usage and wastage</b> Establish a coordinated programme to reduce water usage and wastage in homes and businesses in the region	EA, Cranfield University, FWAG, NFU, Regional Water Partnership, Resource Efficiency East, water companies, Waterwise East	2010
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Encourage water efficiency</b> Work with the agricultural sector to encourage better use of water on farms, including efficient use of spray irrigation and high-flow storage reservoirs	EA, NFU, NE, water companies	Ongoing
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Reduce over-abstraction</b> Complete the Review of Consents and work with Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies and Environment Flow Indicators to reduce the number of wetlands and rivers suffering ecological damage as a result of over abstraction and increase the number of rivers in good ecological status	EA, FWAG, NE	2015

## OBJECTIVE 2

	Continue improvements in water quality	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Adopt best practice measures</b> Raise awareness amongst landowners and managers about best practice for soil husbandry, nutrient and pesticide management	CLA, EA, FWAG, NE, NFU, RSPB	2015
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Seek to match supply to needs</b> Through PR09 (Periodic Review 2009 – the process by which Ofwat will set the prices that water companies can charge their customers from 2010 to 2015) ensure water company plans for water supply take proper account of environmental requirements	Regional Water Partnership, EA, Consumer Council, OFWAT, water companies	2015
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Plan for water quality</b> Develop draft River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) and publish in December 2008. From December 2009 onwards publish the final RBMP to drive forward improvements to water quality and achieve good status in all our water bodies	EA	2009

## OBJECTIVE 3

	Ensure regional and local policies promote wetland biodiversity, and floodplains as a key component of sustainable flood risk management	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Promote the 'Wetland Vision'</b> Promote and develop the 'Wetland Vision' for the region, looking at restoring floodplain function, washlands and wetlands on a landscape-scale	EA, EEBF, EH, NE, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts	2013
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Ensure LDFs include SUDS strategies</b> Ensure all Local Development Frameworks have a policy on the use of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS) to both conserve water, reduce flood risk and to facilitate restoration of fragmented habitats and landscapes as part of new developments	LAs, EA, EERA, LSPs, water companies	2010
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Sustainable flood risk management</b> Demonstrate and develop sustainable flood risk management via landscape-scale projects	Community Forests, EA, FC, LSPs, NE, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, WT	2015



# Responding to a changing coastline

The East of England coastline is a dynamic and constantly changing environment that is of international significance for its wildlife and habitats. If given time and space, many habitats and species can adapt to coastal change. However, in this region they are under threat due to the increased scale and rate of predicted climate change.

Relative sea level rise is greater in southeast England than elsewhere in the UK. For the East of England, with its long and low-lying coastline, the impact of this rise is likely to include increased flooding, erosion and coastal squeeze.\* This is especially true along those sections of the coast where existing sea defences may not be able to cope with rising sea levels and when there is the potential for increased frequency of storm events.

\* Coastal squeeze describes a situation when valuable salt marsh and mudflat habitats, with their associated species, are squeezed between rising sea levels and man-made defence, resulting in the gradual loss of these habitats, as they are unable to migrate landward in response to the changing sea levels.

## Aiming for long-term sustainability

To ensure the long-term survival of wildlife we must make space for nature on the coast in advance of predicted habitat loss and help to create similar habitats as close to existing sites as possible. Habitats that are particularly threatened include coastal grazing marshes and reedbeds, so it is vital that we create more of these freshwater habitats inland. Saltmarsh and mudflats are also being lost at a staggering rate as a result of coastal squeeze, but there are extensive opportunities for their creation along the region's many estuaries. Additionally, the creation of new saltmarsh and mudflat habitats can also provide a sustainable solution to flood risk management.

All of these actions to conserve coastal wildlife must be considered in their wider environmental and social context. Integrated and informed long-term planning is needed to provide sustainable solutions for wildlife and people along our coastline, estuaries and river catchments.



**OBJECTIVE 1**

	Identify and establish condition of habitats and species in the coastal zone	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Consolidate data</b> Establish and consolidate existing information on habitats and species	SBRC, BRIE, EA, NBRC, NE, NT, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts	2009
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Provide annual reviews</b> Consolidate information into regular annual reports	SBRC, BRIE, NBRC	Ongoing
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Fill data gaps</b> Identify missing data; ways of capturing that data; and appropriate condition indicators	SBRC, BRIE, EA, NBRC, NE, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts	2010

**OBJECTIVE 2**

	Identify threats to existing habitats and species	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Determine threats</b> Form a task force of relevant organisations to identify the source and location of threats and scale of impact	EA, NE, LAs, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts	2010
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Prioritise action</b> Task force to formulate, and prioritise, actions to mitigate for threats	EA, NE, LAs, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts	2010
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Undertake mitigation</b> Undertake prioritised mitigation actions in specified locations	EA, NE, LAs, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts	2011

**OBJECTIVE 3**

	To work in partnership to integrate biodiversity conservation into wider coastal policy and practice	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Coordinate policy</b> Ensure that Shoreline Management Plans, Estuary Strategies, the East of England Coastal Initiative, AONB Partnerships, European Site Management Schemes, and coastal LDFs have coordinated policies on biodiversity	AONB Partnerships, Coastal Initiative, EA, ERPHO, Estuary Partnerships, LAs, LSPs, NE, NGOs, Sustainability East	2015
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Integrate coastal management</b> Encourage the development of integrated coastal zone management	EA, LSAS, NE, ERPHO	2015
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Share data &amp; collaborate</b> Facilitate collaboration and data-sharing between organisations and site managers	AONB Partnerships, EA, ERPHO, Estuary Partnerships, NE, NGOs	Ongoing

**OBJECTIVE 4**

	To promote understanding and enjoyment of wildlife on the coast	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Improve awareness</b> Raise awareness and promote understanding of climate change and sea level rise, and the particular issues around the coast of the East of England	Coastal Initiative, EA, LAs, LSPs, MFA, NGOs, NHS	Ongoing
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Engage with coastal communities</b> Engage coastal communities in informed discussion and decision-making on coastal management and long-term planning	EA, LAs, LSPs, MFA, NHS	Ongoing

"I see... an integrated approach that recognises the importance of the environment, the economy and the people on the coast"

# Safeguarding the seas

The marine environment off the East of England coast is important for a number of priority BAP habitats and species,\* whilst also serving as regionally important sea and shellfisheries.

\* Species include horse mussel reefs, harbour porpoise, marine birds, the native oyster, the lagoon sand shrimp, and two species of seagrass.

## A vital environment under threat

The increasing use of the marine environment is impacting on its quality. The region's marine environment is in significant decline due to damaging human interventions such as aggregate extraction, activity associated with the fishing and natural gas industries, waste disposal, submarine cables and offshore windfarms. These have led to destruction of seafloor habitat, removal of irreplaceable features and associated decreases in the diversity and abundance of marine species. It is further threatened by climate change as marine habitats and species must also successfully adapt to rising sea water temperatures.

These threats present a clear challenge to our current way of regulating and managing marine activities. We need more strategic partnerships, plus a planned innovative approach that finds room for both human activities and wildlife.

## Marine Bill

The introduction of the Marine Bill should ensure a more sustainable approach to the management of our seas including:

- the introduction of a new system of marine planning
- a streamlined, transparent and consistent system for licensing marine developments
- a flexible mechanism for delivering nature conservation, including a new mechanism to establish marine conservation zones<sup>3</sup> for nationally important features
- the establishment a new independent Marine Management Organisation to regulate development and activity at sea and enforce environmental protection laws

We must be ready to do all we can to ensure the Bill's aims are achieved.



## OBJECTIVE 1

	Identify and establish condition of habitats and species in the marine environment	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Gather information</b> Determine extent of marine ecosystem relating to East of England strategies; establish and consolidate existing information on marine habitats and species	CEFAS, Coastline LSPs, EA, harbour authorities, NE	2010
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Produce BAPs</b> Identify and produce Action Plans for BAP habitats and species which occur in the seas off the East of England	LBAP Partnerships, Coastline LSPs, EEBF, MSC	2010
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Address missing data</b> Identify missing data; ways of capturing that data; and appropriate condition indicators	CEFAS, EA, Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, NE	2015
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Commence ongoing survey</b> Establish an ongoing survey and condition monitoring programme	CEFAS, EA, NE	2015

## OBJECTIVE 2

	Identify threats to existing marine habitats and species	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Determine threats</b> Develop task force of relevant organisations to identify source and location of threats, and scale of impact	CEFAS, Coastline LSPs, Defra, EA, Eastern Sea Fisheries, JNCC, NE	2010
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Prioritise action</b> Task force to formulate and prioritise actions to mitigate for threats	CEFAS, Coastline LSPs, Defra, EA, JNCC, NE	2012
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Undertake mitigation</b> Undertake prioritised mitigation actions in specified locations	CEFAS, Coastline LSPs, Defra, EA, JNCC, NE	2015

## OBJECTIVE 3

	Work in partnership to establish effective integrated planning mechanisms that deliver marine conservation benefits	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Share information</b> Facilitate information sharing and coordination of regional information on species, habitats, mapping and other data	Coastline LSPs, EA, EERA, Local Planning Authorities, MMO, NE	Ongoing
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Spatial planning framework</b> Produce Marine Spatial Plans which are consistent with land-based spatial planning frameworks	MMO, Coastline LSPs, EERA	2015
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Regulate offshore developments</b> Ensure the offshore renewable energy sector implements best practice and the recommendations of environmental assessments (SEAs and EIAs) and that developments are subject to pre- and post-development monitoring	BERR, Coastline LSPs, Crown Estates, EA, energy companies (British Renewable Wind Energy Association), LAs, NE, Renewables East	Ongoing
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Regulate aggregate activity</b> Ensure the aggregate extraction industry implements best practice and the recommendations of the environmental assessments (SEAs and EIAs)	British Marine Aggregate Producers Association, Crown Estates, NE	Ongoing

"We couldn't see... the problems were long overlooked as was the damage we're doing, now it's vital we better manage the competing pressures on our sea"

# Enhancing the evidence base

The capacity of regional plans and policies to deliver positive action for biodiversity is reliant upon the existence of appropriate indicators, good quality baseline data and on-going monitoring information of UK BAP priority habitats and species.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the demand for good quality, consistent biodiversity data in the region has increased over the past few years and this demand is expected to continue growing.

## Closing the gap between data demand and delivery

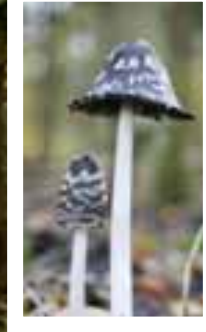
However, there is a gap between this demand for data and the ability of Local Records Centres and others to deliver it.<sup>4</sup> Despite the wealth of biological recording undertaken, information varies considerably between individual counties and local areas, species and habitats – including both the data itself and the way in which it is managed and stored. Traditional biological recording, despite providing our only existing evidence base for biodiversity and changes to it, has not yet evolved to deliver the answers that are now being sought.

The region needs to ensure its evidence base and monitoring is fit for purpose. Priorities for biodiversity data should be identified and existing data sets, which can deliver common and consistent information both locally and regionally, should be defined.

Where possible, this process of improvement, coordinated with existing biological recording activities, will influence surveys and data management. It may be that new recording initiatives are required as well. While the involvement of the voluntary recording community will continue to be respected and encouraged, further resources are needed to undertake professional surveys.

## Partnership working

We need to work in partnership to deliver this in the most efficient and cost effective way. Without action the gap between available data and data needs will never be closed, and our understanding of progress towards achieving biodiversity conservation will be stifled. The East of England Biodiversity Forum has worked with national HAP groups, LBAP partnerships and Forum members to produce the regional HAP targets,<sup>5</sup> that are now within the Regional Spatial Strategy, and will need good quality data to be able to report on progress.



*"I see... without a combination of local and regional scale data, it will continue to prove difficult to know what is happening to biodiversity and to target our resources effectively"*

## OBJECTIVE 1

	Achieve common standards	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Adopt a consistent approach</b> Ensure that there is an agreed and consistent approach by local authorities to monitoring BAP habitat and species, to standards agreed within the 'Regional Biodiversity Data Needs Report'	Biodiversity Information Group, LAs, LSPs, LRCs	2010
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Compile local indicators</b> Aggregate consistent local indicators at a regional level to monitor the performance of the Regional Spatial Strategy or proposed Integrated Strategy	Biodiversity Information Group, LAs, LRCs	2012
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Standardise methodologies</b> Develop standard methodologies for data collection, management and analysis across the six Local Records Centres	LRCs	2010



## OBJECTIVE 2

	To monitor progress towards the achievement of the East of England Regional Habitat and Species Targets	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Establish regional BAP priorities</b> Establish the extent of UK BAP priority habitats and species within the East of England to inform and monitor biodiversity implementation and revision of regional targets	EEBF, BC, BTO, LRCs, NE	2011
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Assess climatic effects</b> Investigate the effects of climate change on the region's biodiversity and assess current and future measures to safeguard a 'no-net loss' scenario including the management of invasive species in the region	EEBF, Sustainability East	2009

## OBJECTIVE 3

	Increase regional capacity – Local Records Centres need to develop their capacity to act collectively at a regional level	Lead & partner organisation(s)	Time frame
<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>Invest in LRC infrastructure</b> Invest in and support the establishment and operation of a fully functioning, and permanently staffed, Local Records Centre in each county/local authority area	LAs, LBAPs, NE, Wildlife Trusts	2009
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>Investment in sampling modelling</b> Establish the contribution that sampling and modelling can make to species monitoring at a regional level and implement the findings	Biodiversity Information Group, LRCs	2012
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>Progress to predictive modelling</b> Develop statistical expertise for sampling programmes and modelling expertise to predict probable occurrences of species and habitats where there have not been records	Biodiversity Information Group, BC, BTO, EEBF, LRCs	2012
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>Form a Regional Data Unit</b> Establish a Regional Data Unit (either a member of staff or consultancy support attached to one of the Local Records Centres)	Biodiversity Information Group	2012

# Implementation, monitoring and reporting

## Ensuring biodiversity is at the heart of policy making

This Biodiversity Delivery Plan is establishing an approach that will ensure the protection and enhancement of the region's natural assets are at the heart of policy and decision-making.

Effective implementation is crucial and the actions within this Plan can only be achieved through positive partnerships between all interested parties, including regional and local government, voluntary sector operations, private organisations and individuals.

Implementation will require:

- a positive approach, to ensure that the actions in this plan are actively taken up by implementation agencies
- partnership working, to share expertise, deliver strategic objectives and secure funding
- monitoring, to ensure that progress is assessed and celebrated and the momentum is maintained

Dozens of organisations and hundreds of individuals are already involved in the delivery of actions to benefit biodiversity. Not surprisingly therefore it will be a mammoth task to monitor the actions and achievements of even a limited number of these partners. But, as initiatives are pursued, without this feedback it will not be possible to determine their relative success.

## Review process

Delivery Plan review process:

1. It is intended that the Regional Biodiversity Forum Policy Group will monitor progress on an annual basis. This group will note all significant developments and ensure that stakeholders are kept abreast of progress via the Forum website.
2. The Plan has a 7-year life span. In 2010, the Forum will report on progress against actions, and then use this update as part of the process of reviewing the document towards the end of the plan period.

The benefits to be realised from conserving and enhancing biodiversity in the region are potentially enormous. But they will only be secured if there is sufficient action on the ground. That is why the East of England Biodiversity Forum wants to encourage as many people as possible to contribute to the wide range of actions proposed in this plan.



*"I see... sustainable biodiversity success will only come by urban and rural communities, farming interests, conservation organisations and government agencies working in partnership"*

## References

1. *Health, place and nature, how outdoor environments influence health and wellbeing, a knowledge base*, Sustainable Development Commission (2008) [www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/Outdoor\\_environments\\_and\\_health.pdf](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/Outdoor_environments_and_health.pdf)
2. *East of England Plan*, GO-East (2008), page 28. [www.gos.gov.uk/goeast/planning/regional\\_planning/](http://www.gos.gov.uk/goeast/planning/regional_planning/)
3. Marine Protected Areas is the umbrella term for marine Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Marine Conservation Zones (which are sites of national importance).
4. *East of England Biodiversity Data Needs Report*, East of England Biodiversity Forum (2007). [www.eoebiodiversity.org](http://www.eoebiodiversity.org)
5. The latest HAP Targets can be found at [www.eoebiodiversity.org](http://www.eoebiodiversity.org)

## Glossary

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	NGOs	Non-governmental organisations, including Buglife, Froglife, Plantlife, The Wildlife Trusts, NT, RSPB, WT
ANGSt	Access to Natural Greenspace Standards	ERPHO	Eastern Region Public Health Observatory	NHS	National Health Service
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan	FC	Forestry Commission	NI 197	National Indicator on Local Wildlife Sites
BERR	Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	NBRC	Norfolk Biological Records Centre
BC	Butterfly Conservation	GO-East	Government Office for the East of England	NT	National Trust
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	GSE	Green Space East	Ofwat	Office of Water Services
BRIE	Biological Records in Essex	HAP	Habitat Action Plan	PCT	Primary Care Trust
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	HLS	Higher Level Stewardship	PR09	Periodic Review 2009
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology	JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee	RBMP	River Basin Management Plans
BWEA	British Wind Energy Association	Las	Local Authorities	ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
CAMS	Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies	LBAPs	Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnerships	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
CEFAS	Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science	LDF	Local Development Framework	SAP	Species Action Plan
CLA	Country Land and Business Association	LDVs	Local Delivery Vehicles	SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	LRCs	Local Records Centres	SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes
EA	Environment Agency	LSPs	Local Strategic Partnerships	UK	United Kingdom
EEBF	East of England Biodiversity Forum	MCS	Marine Conservation Society	WT	Woodland Trust
EEDA	East of England Development Agency	MFA	Marine and Fisheries Agency		
EELF	East of England Landscape Forum	MMO	Marine Management Organisation		
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly	MPA	Marine Protected Areas		
EH	English Heritage	NE	Natural England		
		NFU	National Farmers Union		



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Anglian Water, Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Partnership,  
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers,  
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership,  
East of England Development Agency, East of England Regional Assembly,  
Environment Agency, Essex Biodiversity Project,  
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Forestry Commission,  
Hertfordshire Biodiversity Partnership, Natural England, National Trust,  
Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, RSPB, Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership,  
Wildlife Trusts, Woodland Trust, plus representatives from  
East of England Biological Records and Landscape Fora

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