

The East of England Regional Habitat Biodiversity Targets

This leaflet details the Regional Habitat Biodiversity Targets for the East of England. It is aimed at decision-makers in regional and local government, at environmental organisations, and at land owners and managers and provides information for all those with an interest in delivering biodiversity in the region. The targets will influence policy and delivery, focussing the priorities and funding for the region.

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the variety of life forms we see around us. It encompasses the whole range of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects and other invertebrates, plants, fungi, and micro-organisms which together form their natural habitats. Biodiversity is a key indicator of sustainable development.



What are biodiversity targets?

In June 1992 the Convention of Biological Diversity was signed by 159 governments at the Rio de Janeiro "Earth Summit". It was the first treaty to provide a legal framework for biodiversity conservation. It called for the creation and enforcement of national strategies and action plans to conserve, protect and enhance biological diversity.

In response, the UK government launched *Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan* in 1994. The UK Biodiversity Steering Group has published 436 Biodiversity Action Plans: 391 Species Action Plans and 45 Habitat Action Plans.

The Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) contain measurable UK targets to maintain, restore or create habitat, usually by 2010. A series of Local Biodiversity



Action Plans, usually at a county level, also exist. Local BAPs are a proven mechanism for focusing resources by means of local partnerships to conserve and enhance national and local biodiversity. These too have targets associated with them.

Many organisations now have these targets at the heart of their activity and the status of the targets has grown in importance.

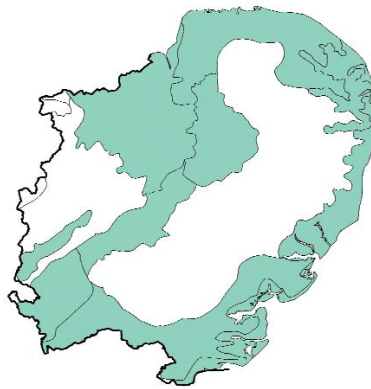




Lowland grass and Heath

UK HAPs included: lowland calcareous grassland, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland meadows, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, and lowland heath

- Maintain:** 100% of existing resource
- Restore:** 100% in sympathetic management by 2010
- Create:** 2385 ha by 2010



Hedges

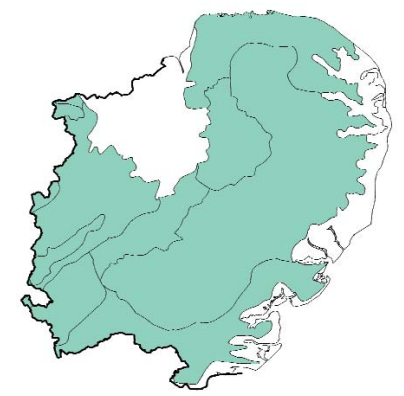
UK HAPs included: ancient and/or species rich hedgerows

- Maintain:** No loss of existing overall resource
- Restore:** 100% in sympathetic management by 2010
- Create:** 200km by 2010

Freshwater

UK HAPs included: aquifer-fed naturally fluctuating water bodies, chalk rivers, eutrophic standing waters (generally high in nutrients), mesotrophic lakes (usually low in nutrients)

- Maintain:** 100% of existing resource
- Restore:** Initiate restoration of water quality, flow and level by 2010
- Create:** N/A



The East of England priority



Semi-natural woodland

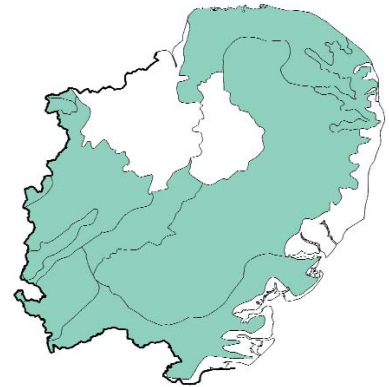
UK HAPs included: lowland wood-pasture and parkland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland (most ancient woodland) and wet woodland¹.

Maintain: 100% of existing resource

Restore: 1700 ha by 2010

Create: 1400 ha by 2010

¹ Note that this target does not include lowland beech and yew woodland. Climate change evidence for the East of England indicates that beech will be 'unsuitable' across much of the region.



Coastal

UK HAPs included: coastal saltmarsh, coastal sand dunes, coastal vegetated shingle, maritime cliffs and slopes, mudflats, saline lagoons, and sublittoral sands and gravels

Maintain: 100% of existing resource but allowing dynamic natural processes

Restore: 100% in sympathetic management

Create: 2300 ha by 2010



Note on priority habitats and Natural Areas

The habitats detailed on these pages are those considered to be priorities for the region to help achieve UK BAP targets. The Natural Areas highlighted are representative of the resource, but do not indicate where all of the resource is. This does not devalue local biodiversity priorities; **we need to improve biodiversity everywhere.** Many of the Natural Areas extend beyond the region and the majority of a particular habitat may be contained within other regions.

Target definitions

Maintain habitat.

Ensure that there is no further loss in current habitat resource and quality, and that the physical processes required to maintain the habitat are operating.

Restore habitat.

Restore those areas of habitat which are degraded in quality to good condition, through positive management or the cessation of damaging practices.

Create habitat.

Increase the area of the habitat beyond its current extent. This includes the creation of lost habitat in areas where it formerly occurred. Wherever possible, habitat expansion should aim to link or extend existing areas of that particular habitat type.

habitat biodiversity targets



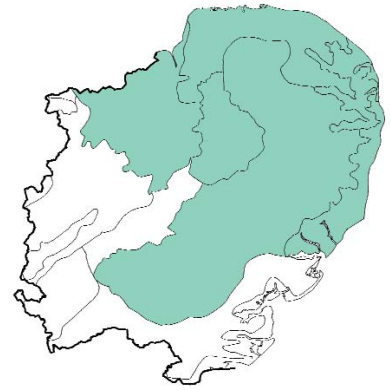
Reed beds and Fens

UK HAPs included: fens, reedbeds and lowland raised bogs

Maintain: 100% of existing resource but allowing dynamic natural processes

Restore: Identify key potential sites, from LBAPS

Create: 2000 ha by 2010



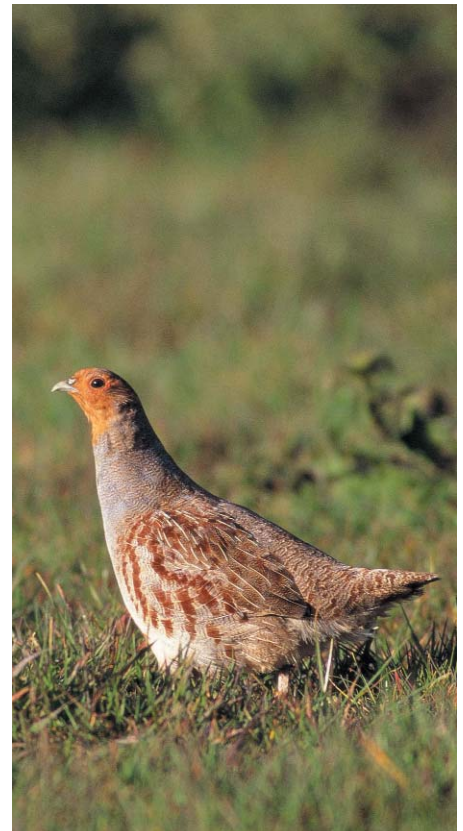
Arable, Cereal Margins

UK HAPs included: cereal field margins

Maintain: No loss of overall resource

Restore: -

Create: 3500 ha by 2010



Why do we need regional biodiversity targets?

A great deal of work has taken place across the country since 1994 to meet both national and local targets. However, until recently the UK targets were not sub-divided and Local Plan targets inevitably reflect **local** priorities. We need to join the national to the local.

As 2010 looms, organisations need more information on how to meet Biodiversity Targets and where to concentrate effort. Local BAPs remain the primary mechanism for achieving the UK BAP Targets, and the regional targets are not intended to replace local targets, but they do form a transparent and comparable link to the UK targets.

Regional Biodiversity Targets form an important component of the Sustainable Development Framework and the Regional Environment Strategy key action to "Implement Biodiversity Action Plans to enhance the region's biodiversity."

How will the regional targets be used?

Regional habitat biodiversity targets should be used by:

- Regional decision makers by influencing policy delivered via regional strategies, such as the Regional Spatial Strategy (Regional Planning Guidance 14), the



Regional Economic Strategy, the Regional Environmental Strategy and the Regional Woodland Strategy. These strategies all sit within the East of England Sustainable Development Framework and will increasingly be brought together within the Regional Assembly's Integrated Regional Strategy.

- Local Authorities, who have a duty under the Local Government Act 2000 to promote the environmental, social and economic well-being of their areas. Local authority planning for biodiversity should be firmly linked into Community Strategies to provide a

framework to ensure biodiversity is embedded into all activities.

- Environmental organisations and land owners and managers, to assess their contribution to biodiversity to help make the East of England a place in which wildlife can thrive, thus helping to improve the quality of life for those who live in, work in or visit the region.

The targets will be subjected to review by the Regional Biodiversity Forum, in association with the East of England Environment Forum, to ensure continued contribution to the overall UK targets.



How have the regional targets been assembled?

English Nature have identified the contribution of each "Natural Area" to the national targets. Natural Areas are sub-divisions of England, each with a characteristic association of wildlife and natural features. They provide a way of interpreting the ecological variations of the country in terms of natural features, illustrating the distinctions between one area and another. However, Natural Areas do not correspond to regional or county boundaries. The boundaries on the maps in the centre pages are the Natural Areas for the region.

The East of England Biodiversity Forum has carried out an audit of Local

Biodiversity Action Plans and has compiled all the various targets. Each county has tended to create its own unique set of Plans and Targets, which do not always relate to the same features or units, so some judgement has been employed.

Reviewing the "top down" national targets and the "bottom up" local targets, the East of England Biodiversity Forum has agreed a set of priority Regional Habitat Biodiversity Targets. This has required the input of a number of experts and has needed to take on board local understanding as well as high level aspirations. Because of the number and variety of local plans, it has been necessary to group habitats into broad descriptions.

Who has published this leaflet?

The regional targets have been agreed by the East of England Biodiversity Forum, a group of organisations "working together to promote the conservation and enhancement of the wealth of wildlife within the East of England."

The East of England Biodiversity Forum has four central aims:

- 1 To provide a regional forum of expertise on biodiversity issues.
- 2 To ensure that biodiversity issues are integrated within regional structures and initiatives.
- 3 To provide a regional network for biodiversity issues and initiatives.
- 4 To act as a regional focus for national and local biodiversity issues.

East of England Biodiversity Forum

The **East of England Biodiversity Forum** comprises the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk Local Biodiversity Partnerships; Anglian Water; Countryside Agency; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; East of England Biological Record Centre Forum; East of England Environment Forum, East of England Regional Assembly; English Nature; Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group; Forestry Commission; Government Office for the East of England; National Farmers Union; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and the Wildlife Trusts.



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