

# BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

FOR HAMPSHIRE

VOLUME ONE



HAMPSHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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Compiled by Jacklyn Johnston on behalf of the  
Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership

# Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership was initiated in July 1997 and consists of a range of organisations that have an influence on the conservation of biodiversity. The Partnership aims to establish a detailed program of action and engage everyone with an interest in biodiversity. Our goal is to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Hampshire for all who live in or visit the county. We would like to integrate additional organisations into the Partnership to progress the action set out in this Plan. Current membership includes:

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	<b>Hampshire County Council</b>
<b>Country Landowners Association</b>	<b>Hampshire Wildlife Trust*</b>
Countryside Commission	Hart District Council
<b>East Hampshire District Council</b>	Havant Borough Council
<b>Eastleigh Borough Council</b>	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
<b>English Nature</b>	Ministry of Defence
<b>Environment Agency</b>	<b>National Farmers Union</b>
<b>Fareham Borough Council</b>	<b>New Forest District Council</b>
Farming and Rural Conservation Agency	Portsmouth City Council
Forest Enterprise	<b>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds</b>
Forestry Authority	Rushmoor Borough Council
The Game Conservancy Trust	Southampton City Council
Gosport Borough Council	Test Valley Borough Council
Government Office for the South East	Winchester City Council
Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils	

\* Some of the work undertaken by the Hampshire Wildlife Trust has been supported by the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Organisations in bold type are members of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership Steering Group.

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The following organisations have contributed to the costs of producing this plan:

Hampshire County Council, English Nature, Environment Agency, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Eastleigh Borough Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Rushmoor Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council, New Forest District Council, Havant District Council, National Farmers Union.

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## Foreword



When 150 heads of government signed the Convention on Biological Diversity at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, they were responding to a world-wide conviction that we must all contribute to an initiative to limit the loss of animal and plant species. Gilbert White, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, had no concept that man's development could threaten the very life systems of the earth, or that mankind could cause major extinctions. *Homo sapiens* now appropriate between 20% and 40% of the solar energy captured in organic material by land plants. The Earth Summit of 1992 marked the moment when this crisis was recognised.

We are now committed to pursuing a policy of sustainable development and the monitoring of biodiversity is an essential element. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan of 1994 proposed national targets which could be used to measure the impact of development and highlight cases where policies are unsustainable. However since then at the national and international level there has been only moderate progress in adopting sustainable policies. Much more progress has been made at the local level.

The **Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire** is an impressive example of how national objectives can be translated into effective action at the county level. Without the knowledge and commitment of the organisations within the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership, there would be little prospect of effective action. There is a great need for a comprehensive statement on objectives and the means of implementation. This Plan provides a framework from which individual agencies and organisations can develop their own actions, partnership projects can be established, and progress can be monitored.

In May 1993 I chaired a seminar organised jointly by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Department of the Environment, at which key issues were identified for the successful production of biodiversity action plans. We recognised then that the key to success would be the active support and participation of as many people and organisations as possible.

Conserving biodiversity is not just about conserving the rare and endangered species, but also about securing biodiversity in our everyday environment. We need to increase awareness of the biodiversity around us and we need to recognise that everyone can play a part. Those of us who are fortunate enough to live in Hampshire now have the opportunity to put into action the proposals in the **Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire**.

Lord Selborne

# Summary

The **Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire** is produced in response to a growing concern for biodiversity in the UK and throughout the world. This has become a particularly important issue since the signing of the Convention on Biological Diversity at the Earth Summit in 1992. As a nation, we pledged to develop a strategy to halt the decline of biodiversity. Part of that strategy is the production of local biodiversity action plans to address the variety of actions required at the local level across the UK.

Local biodiversity action plans differ from previous approaches to nature conservation in two important ways: they are prepared by a wide partnership of individuals and organisations, and they follow a very disciplined approach to auditing and target setting. The plans aim to ensure that national targets are translated into effective action at the local level, and that important local features are also fully included in strategies for action.

The **Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership** has been formed to advance the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Hampshire, and preparation of the Biodiversity Action Plan is the first main task. The Plan will provide a strategy for action in two volumes: Volume 1, the strategic framework and main courses of action, and Volume 2, the detailed action required for priority habitats and species in the county.

The Biodiversity Action Plan provides the platform from which the Partnership will take action. Each partner organisation can review their own programmes and approaches to biodiversity against the objectives and targets outlined in the Plan. The Partnership will play a vital role in stimulating and co-ordinating action, monitoring progress and reviewing priorities.

To advance biodiversity conservation in Hampshire, the Partnership has identified the following **objectives**:

- to audit the nature conservation resource of Hampshire
- to identify from the audit habitats and species of priority nature conservation concern, including those which are locally distinct
- to prepare action plans for habitats and species of priority concern and follow through with programmes of implementation and monitoring
- to ensure that data on habitats and species is sufficient to enable effective implementation and monitoring of biodiversity objectives
- to review general issues affecting biodiversity, such as agriculture and development, and chart a course of appropriate action
- to raise awareness and involvement in biodiversity conservation across all sectors
- to encourage individuals and organisations to review their role in biodiversity conservation and the resources required, and develop their own action in response to the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire
- to maintain an ongoing partnership which will co-ordinate, develop and support action for biodiversity
- to monitor and review progress towards meeting the above objectives and the targets set out in the habitat and species action plans
- to periodically update the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire and its component habitat and species action plans to take account of changing circumstances

## The Biodiversity of Hampshire

Hampshire is one of the richest areas for wildlife in England. Nevertheless the county has suffered immense losses during the past 200 years. Many habitats have been lost to built development, or become degraded through changes in agricultural practice and afforestation. There is a pressing need to conserve those areas that remain and enhance or restore other areas of valuable wildlife habitat. The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership has undertaken an audit of habitats and species to determine their extent and distribution as well as past trends and losses. The audit is an essential component of the Biodiversity Action Plan and enables the identification of priority habitats and species: these will be addressed in detailed action plans for individual habitats and species.

### Habitats

Of the UK's 37 broad habitat types, 23 are found in Hampshire. Within the broad habitat types, 'key' habitats of priority importance have been identified. In Hampshire, 18 key habitats of UK conservation concern are present, and there are an additional 3 habitats of local concern. Detailed habitat action plans will be written for these 21 priority habitats to fully review their current status and set objectives and targets for action.

### Species

The richness of habitats in Hampshire is reflected in the wide range of species found. The UK Biodiversity Programme has identified 1288 species of national conservation concern, and of these, 489 priority species require urgent conservation action. Of the 489 national priority species, 196 are found in Hampshire, and the audit has identified an additional 248 priority species which are particularly important in the local context. Action for most of the priority species in Hampshire will be covered by relevant habitat action plans. Where national species action plans exist, these will be translated into specific action in Hampshire. For those species not covered by national plans or which can not be easily accommodated by a habitat action plan, a specific species action plan will be prepared.

### Geographical Variation

The distribution and location of habitats and species of conservation concern needs to be understood so that action can be targeted appropriately. Variation in the landscape and ecological character of Hampshire has been described in three map-based classifications: Hampshire County Council's Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Types; the Countryside Commission's Character Areas; and English Nature's Natural Areas. Each of these classifications can help to identify biodiversity issues, such as hedgerow loss, which require targeted action across a wide geographical area.

Urban areas have a particular biodiversity character of their own and it is therefore particularly important for the Biodiversity Action Plan to address urban issues. An action plan for urban areas will be prepared along with those for the other key habitats of conservation concern.

## Habitat and Species Action Plans

Detailed habitat action plans for 21 key habitats are in preparation. For the 443 priority species brief statements will be prepared. These will make the link with the relevant action plan (national species action plan, Hampshire habitat plan, or Hampshire species action plan).

Volume 2 of the Biodiversity Action Plan will include all of the Hampshire habitat action plans. It will also identify the relevant action plan that has been, or will be, prepared for each priority species, and include some species action plans. More will be added as they become available.

Habitat and species action plans will have several goals:

- to provide information
- to identify conservation issues
- to establish comprehensive targets for action
- to direct conservation action
- to raise awareness
- to provide a monitoring framework

Each plan will follow a standard format. Some plans will be prepared by working groups and others by a lead partner. Each will undergo wide consultation to ensure that plans are comprehensive, accurate, forward thinking and widely supported. A lead agency will be encouraged to oversee the implementation of plans most relevant to their own area of work.

#### **ACTION**

- *prepare action plans for 21 habitats*
- *prepare detailed action plans for individual priority species where these are not catered for by a national species action plan or Hampshire habitat action plan*
- *establish working groups or lead partners to prepare and promote the implementation of the plans*
- *identify a lead agency to adopt each habitat and species action plan and take the lead in monitoring, co-ordinating and encouraging action*
- *involve existing fora and projects in delivering action, for example the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Hampshire Woodland Forum and Hampshire Heathland Project*
- *establish partnership projects and initiatives to help implement action*
- *encourage individual partners to identify objectives and action relevant to their own activities and integrate these, with specific targeting and action, into their work programmes*

#### **Information and Data**

The collection of data on habitats and species is fundamental to the development and implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan and indeed to the whole biodiversity programme. A large amount of data on the biodiversity of Hampshire is already held on the Hampshire Biological Record at Hampshire County Council. However, there is still a lot of information to be obtained and a need to co-ordinate current data.

The UK Biodiversity Steering Group recommends the development of local biological record centres to serve local needs and contribute information at the national level. The existing Hampshire Biological Record could be developed into a Hampshire Biological Record Centre as part of the National Biodiversity Network. This would capitalise on data and information systems already available and ensure the full complement of services required to support the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership and the biodiversity programme.

### **ACTION**

- *continue to undertake detailed habitat survey of Hampshire in support of biodiversity conservation, using the Hampshire Habitat Survey Project*
- *encourage, support and co-ordinate a voluntary network of recorders to assist in providing data on biodiversity*
- *encourage the centralisation of data on habitats and species into the Hampshire Biological Record and use this database for monitoring progress in biodiversity action*
- *progress the development of a Hampshire Biological Record Centre to service the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership and individual partners, and contribute to the National Biodiversity Network*
- *establish a programme to monitor land-use and habitat change using the digitised habitat and land-use mapping of the county as a baseline.*

### **General Issues Affecting Biodiversity**

The conservation of biodiversity is not only dependent on direct action for habitats and species. There are many wider issues that have a great influence on the welfare of wild plants and animals. Two of the key issues in Hampshire are agriculture and development: farming plays a pivotal role in determining the biodiversity of the countryside, and development has caused extensive loss of wildlife habitat during the past 50 years.

Other issues affecting biodiversity include forestry, coastal management, recreation and tourism, water management, energy, transport, air quality and climate change. For these topics there are many different levels of action required and many different vehicles for pursuing action. The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership will support existing initiatives and encourage and support individual organisations in the formulation of their action for biodiversity. Where appropriate, the Partnership will establish topic groups to address certain issues.

### **ACTION**

- *encourage organisations and individuals with a particular responsibility for land-use and land management activities such as agriculture, development, forestry and water resources, to establish their own specific objectives and action for biodiversity, taking particular account of targets and action outlined in habitat and species action plans*
- *establish groups where appropriate to review issues influencing biodiversity and prepare plans of action*
- *develop action for biodiversity through appropriate land-use fora such as SERPLAN and the Solent Forum*
- *take full account of biodiversity objectives within land-use plans and strategies such as the Hampshire County Structure Plan, local plans and Local Environment Agency Plans*
- *influence local and regional policy and national guidance, policy and legislation to support biodiversity objectives in Hampshire*

## Awareness and Involvement

One of the central aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan is to increase understanding and support for biodiversity throughout the county. This will involve many sectors of society and people in all walks of life. Messages on biodiversity need to reach everyone and focus on the benefit of biodiversity conservation to us all.

Communication and action will have to be relevant to individual sectors. Their involvement, the support provided to them, and the action requested of them needs to be sensitive to their particular concerns. An action plan will be prepared to specifically address awareness and involvement. A working group from the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership will formulate a marketing strategy to get the key messages of biodiversity across. Successful implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan will depend on widespread understanding.

### **ACTION**

- *establish a working group to prepare an action plan to address awareness and involvement in biodiversity conservation*
- *ensure that information on biodiversity and how to get involved in conserving biodiversity is readily available to the public. Local authorities and voluntary conservation organisations in particular can promote awareness and provide opportunities for involvement through mechanisms such as grant-aid for community projects and the management of nature reserves*
- *promote the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire and publicise the main objectives and programme of action*
- *develop a strategy for marketing biodiversity which targets key sectors such as farmers, business and industry, all levels of government, the public, land managers and education*
- *encourage and support organisations in developing their corporate awareness and commitment to biodiversity, for example within all departments of local government*
- *ensure that biodiversity is a central component of Local Agenda 21 programmes and that Agenda 21 is a vehicle for promoting awareness and involvement*
- *support the integration of biodiversity conservation into formal education*

## The Way Forward

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership has a long-term vision for the biodiversity programme which stretches well into the next Millennium. The Biodiversity Action Plan marks the beginning of a co-ordinated programme of projects, initiatives, and other courses of action: some can be progressed immediately, others will evolve over time. Each individual and organisation concerned with the conservation of Hampshire's biodiversity has a fundamental role in ensuring the success of the objectives of the Plan.

### **ACTION**

- *develop and maintain a long-term Partnership to progress the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Hampshire through developing initiatives, exchanging information, encouraging action and monitoring and reviewing progress. This work will be assisted by the Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group.*
- *encourage individual partners to review their own action, to help meet the objectives and targets set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan and associated habitat and species action plans*
- *monitor the development of the UK Biodiversity Programme and other policies and initiatives at the national and international level, for integration into the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire*
- *review and update the Biodiversity Action Plan, including the habitat and species action plans, every five years*