

A BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN FOR HAMPSHIRE

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership is co-ordinating action for biodiversity in Hampshire and has formulated a comprehensive strategy. The Biodiversity Action Plan will stimulate a growing web of conservation action and each partner will have a particular role to play.

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership has been established to advance biodiversity conservation and enhancement in Hampshire. One of the first functions of the Partnership has been to prepare this Biodiversity Action Plan. The Plan will provide a focus for everyone involved and guide action on conservation for the coming years. This will mark the beginning of a process of implementation which will continue well into the next Millennium.

The Partnership embraces a wide range of organisations - local authorities, statutory conservation agencies, voluntary bodies, representatives of landowners and others - all working together with the common goal of conserving Hampshire's biodiversity. The Partnership will undoubtedly expand as the process of conserving biodiversity progresses. Additional partners from many sectors of society will be particularly valuable as each can bring their own skills to formulating and implementing the Plan.

The Biodiversity Action Plan

The Plan consists of two parts. Volume 1 sets out the overall strategy for biodiversity action and the key objectives. Volume 1 also:

- explains the audit of habitats and species undertaken in Hampshire
- outlines how the Partnership has selected habitats and species of priority concern
- reviews geographical variation in biodiversity
- identifies data needs
- summarises the main issues influencing biodiversity
- examines the raising of awareness and involvement in biodiversity conservation

Detailed action plans will be prepared for habitats and species of priority concern.

Volume 2 will contain action plans for priority habitats and will identify the action plans that have been, or will be, prepared for priority species. Some species action plans will be included at the outset, others will be added as they become available. Together, the overall strategy of action in

chapter 2



5. Otter

Volume 1 plus the detailed action plans for habitats and species, will provide a programme for biodiversity conservation in Hampshire. This will be reviewed and updated every five years.

The Process

The Biodiversity Action Plan provides the platform from which the Partnership will take action. It will also enable each organisation to develop their own ideas and approaches to biodiversity, or come together collectively to implement joint projects and address strategic issues. There will also be opportunities to implement action for biodiversity by building on existing initiatives.

Action stemming from the Plan will be very varied. Within the habitat and species plans, recommended action will cover aspects such as site protection, habitat management and restoration, data needs and policy matters. From the strategic action points set out in this document, detailed programmes of action will be developed, for example to deal with data needs or the raising of awareness and involvement in biodiversity conservation. Within each subject there will be a variety of mechanisms at many levels for delivering objectives. To assist implementation of the plan, lead agencies will be identified to co-ordinate action.

Roles and Contributions

Implementation of the action will include a wide range of functions such as land-use planning, provision of grant-aid and land management. Each partner will have a particular role to play: for example, planning is the remit of local authorities; giving grants and incentives is one of the functions of the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; land management is a primary responsibility of farmers; and community action can be fostered by bodies such as the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and parish councils.



6. Barn owl



7. Cowslip

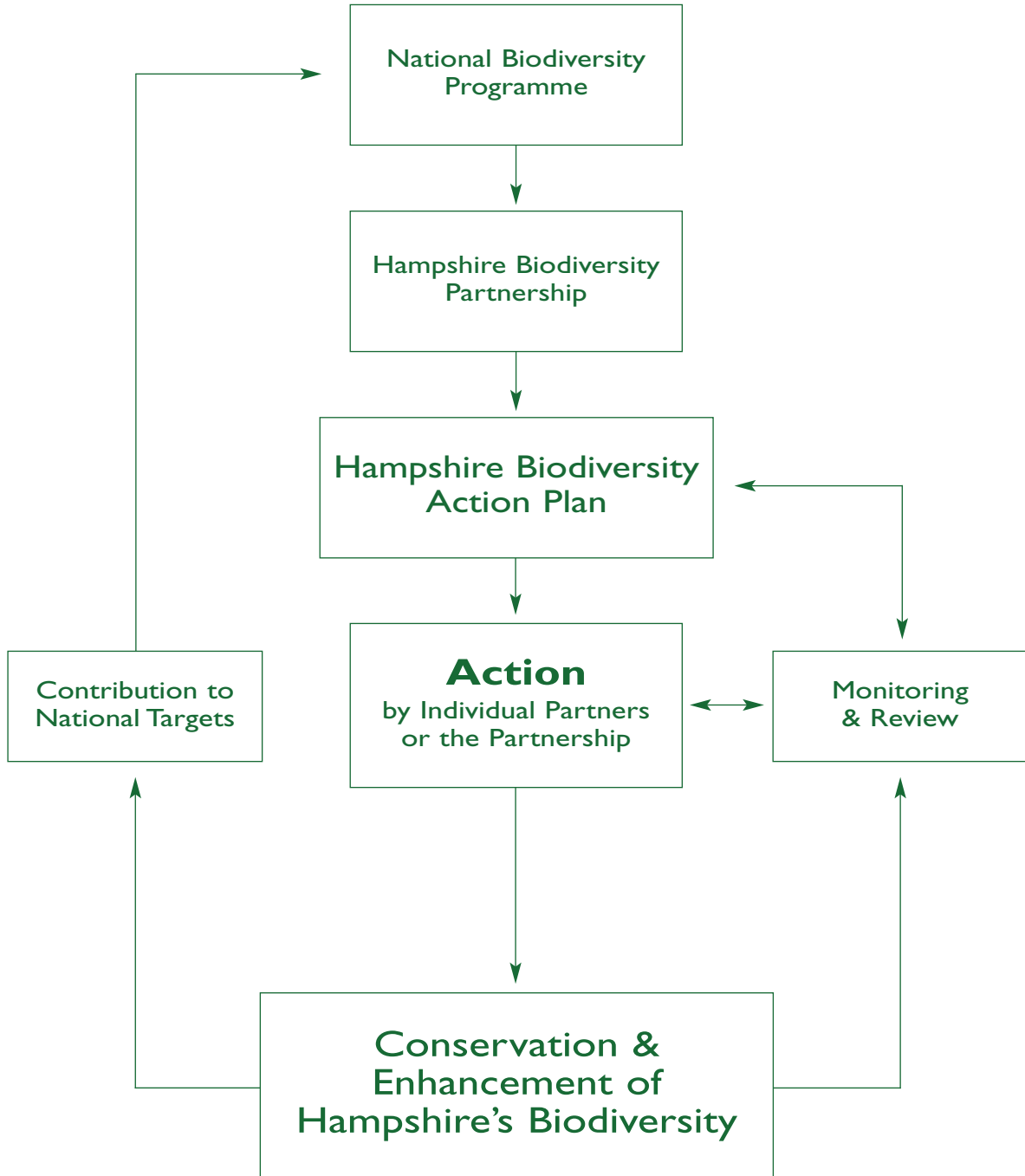
The Plan will stimulate a growing web of action. Success will largely rest on the commitment and enthusiasm of individual partners. However, the Partnership will play a vital role in stimulating and co-ordinating action. Through effective networking and information exchange, the Partnership will help to minimize duplication and instead build co-operation so that best use is made of the expertise and resources available. The Partnership will also undertake the fundamental role of monitoring progress and reviewing priorities.

What's New?

Much is already being done for biodiversity conservation in Hampshire. There is a great range of existing projects and initiatives and a variety of mechanisms. Nevertheless, the Biodiversity Action Plan process brings a new discipline to this work. It provides the opportunity to review current activities, identify priorities and set specific targets. It also provides a clear framework for reviewing and monitoring progress. Each organisation can analyse its own programme of work against the agreed priorities of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership, and the national targets laid down in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Although organisations with an interest in biodiversity conservation have worked together before, the scale of the Hampshire Partnership is unique. Partners from a diverse spectrum of organisations and agencies have agreed to joint responsibility. This is the first time that there has been such a co-ordinated approach to biodiversity both nationally and in the county. This should translate into an unprecedented degree and range of action for biodiversity.

PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN



Links with Other Plans

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan sets the priorities for all other biodiversity plans in Britain. In some areas, regional plans are being formulated to fit into the hierarchy between national and local programmes. The South-east Regional Biodiversity Audit, essentially an audit of the habitats and species of conservation concern within the region, will assist counties in matching their priorities with each other, and with those in the national guidance. In turn, the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire will guide any further plans in the county, for example at district level or within organisations.

A range of other plans and processes will help to deliver biodiversity objectives. Objectives and targets should be included in Local Agenda 21 programmes, structure and local development plans, transport plans and many others. There are many plans and strategies in existence or in preparation which address biodiversity issues: for example Local Environment Agency Plans, coastal management plans and management plans for specific areas such as the New Forest Special Area of Concern.

Each of these have a distinct role and are contributing to biodiversity conservation within Hampshire. The biodiversity programme relies on a network of such plans. In turn, the Biodiversity Action Plan will help to identify the need for further plans, help guide them, and support the review of existing plans.

The habitat and species action plans will identify relevant current action and existing plans and put these in the context of the overall action required. Individual organisations and agencies such as the Environment Agency, district councils, Ministry of Defence and Forestry Authority will be encouraged and supported in the preparation of biodiversity action plans to cover their own areas of activity. In many cases, individuals responsible for the management of land may find it useful to prepare a plan which relates specifically to their own landholding, and which forms part of their overall business plan.



8. Sword-leaved helleborine

STRATEGY FOR ACTION ON BIODIVERSITY

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership has identified the following broad objectives:

- to audit the nature conservation resource of Hampshire (chapter 3)
- to identify from the audit habitats and species of priority nature conservation concern, including those which are locally distinct (chapter 3)
- to prepare action plans for habitats and species of priority conservation concern and follow through with programmes of implementation and monitoring (chapter 4)
- to ensure that data on habitats and species in Hampshire is sufficient to enable effective implementation and monitoring of biodiversity objectives (chapter 5)
- to review general issues affecting biodiversity, such as agriculture and development, and chart a course of appropriate action (chapter 6)
- to raise awareness and involvement in biodiversity conservation across all sectors (chapter 7)
- 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 (chapter 8)
- to maintain an ongoing partnership which will co-ordinate, develop and support action for biodiversity (chapter 8)
- to monitor and review progress towards meeting the above objectives and the targets set out in the habitat and species action plans (chapter 8)
- to periodically update the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire and its component habitat and species action plans to take account of changing circumstances (chapter 8)