

***A Strategy for  
England's wildlife  
and ecosystem services***

**Biodiversity 2020 Indicators:**

**2012 Assessment Summary**

**A strategy for England's wildlife and  
ecosystem services**

**Biodiversity 2020 Indicators:  
2012 Assessment**

**Summary Document**

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**Himalayan Balsam** *Impatiens glandulifera* an invasive species of wetlands (c) Natural England/Peter Roworth

**Volunteers on Lower Derwent Valley NNR**, Volunteers play an important role on our NNRs (c) Natural England/Peter Roworth

**Tourist boat views shags on Outer Farne Islands** NNR, Northumberland (c) Natural England/ Paul Glendell

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## Introduction

Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants, and the natural systems that support them. Biodiversity matters because it supports the vital benefits we get from the natural environment. It contributes to our economy, our health and wellbeing, and it enriches our lives.

In 2011, the Government published *Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services*. This new, ambitious biodiversity strategy for England builds on the Natural Environment White Paper and provides a comprehensive picture of how we are implementing our international and EU commitments. It sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade on land (including rivers and lakes) and at sea. It builds on the successful work that has gone before, but also seeks to deliver a real step change.

*Biodiversity 2020* also includes plans to develop and publish a compact set of indicators to assess progress with delivery of the strategy. They are to be outcome-focused with an emphasis on indicators showing the status of components of biodiversity and with additional response and pressure indicators to show progress with the priority actions set out in the strategy.

The Government published a set of 26 biodiversity indicators for the previous biodiversity strategy in January 2011. The indicator set has subsequently been reviewed, ensuring that it continues to be based on the most robust and reliable available data; and remains relevant to the new Strategy and to the new international framework of 'Aichi' targets<sup>1</sup> agreed under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The review identified a small number of gaps where there are no indicators for particular outcomes or actions in the Strategy, or where the existing indicators are only indirectly linked to outcomes. A number of additional refinements to existing indicators were also identified to improve their relevance, make them easier to understand, or address concerns over data quality or availability. As a result, the set of 26 indicators has been slightly reduced to comprise the 24 *Biodiversity 2020* indicators presented in this document. Where possible each of the indicators has been revised or updated with the most recent data, but in some cases work to fill gaps or improve indicators is ongoing and the work planned over the next two to three years is described briefly.

The *Biodiversity 2020* indicators are dependent on a wide variety of data, provided by Government, research bodies, and the voluntary sector. As Official Statistics, the presentation and assessment of the indicators has been verified by the data providers, and the production and editing of the indicators has been overseen by Government statisticians in Defra.

The indicators may be subject to further review, particularly as the reporting requirements for the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive are clarified.

For details on Biodiversity 2020 outcomes and international goals and targets please see the annexes in the main document.

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Government is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and is committed to the new biodiversity goals and targets 'the Aichi targets' agreed in 2010 and set out in the [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020](#).

## Assessing Indicators

Each indicator is composed of one or more measures which will show trends over time. Many indicators have a single measure, but where data cannot be combined logically, the indicator will have more than one measure. Each measure is summarised or assessed separately using a set of 'traffic lights'. The traffic lights show 'change over time'. They do not show whether the measure has reached any published or implied targets, or indeed whether the status is 'good' or 'bad', although where targets have been set, these are identified in the indicator text.

The traffic lights are determined by identifying the period over which the change is to be assessed and comparing the value of the measure in the base or start year with the value in the end year.

 Improving

 Little or no overall change

 Deteriorating

 Insufficient or no comparable data

Where possible the assessment has been made by evaluating trends using statistical analysis techniques. The assessment may be made by Defra statisticians in collaboration with the data providers, or undertaken by the data providers themselves. A green or red traffic light is only applied when there is sufficient confidence that the change is statistically significant and not simply a product of random fluctuations.

For some indicators, it is not possible to formally determine statistical significance and in such cases the assessment has been made by comparing the difference between the value of the measure in the base or start year and the value in the end year against a 'rule of thumb' threshold. The standard threshold used is three per cent, unless noted otherwise. Where the data allow it, a three year average is used to calculate the base year, to reduce the likelihood of any unusual year(s) unduly influencing the assessment. Where an indicator value has changed by less than the threshold of three per cent, the traffic light has been set at amber. The choice of three per cent as the threshold is arbitrary but is commonly used across other Government indicators, and use of this approach is kept under review.

The traffic lights only reflect the overall change in the measure from the base to latest year and do not reflect fluctuations during the intervening years.

Where data are available, two assessment periods have been used:

1. Long-term – an assessment of change since the earliest date for which data are available, although if data do not precede 1996 a long-term assessment is not made.
2. Short-term – an assessment of change since 2000 (or the closest date for which data are available).

The UK Biodiversity Indicator Steering Group, which reports to senior civil servants in the four countries, is considering adopting a ten year rolling period for the short-term

change assessment, which will mean that when 2020 is reached, the assessment will be over the period of the [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020](#).

The individual indicators also have a third marker showing the direction of change in the last year. This period is too short for a meaningful assessment. However, when it exceeds a one per cent threshold, the direction of change is given simply as an acknowledgement of very recent trends and as a possible early warning of emerging trends.

## Overview of assessment of change for all indicators

Strategy theme and relevant indicators		Long term change <sup>2</sup>	Change since 2000 <sup>3</sup>
<b>A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea</b>			
1. Extent and condition of protected areas and local sites	Extent of protected areas on land	⊙⊙⊙	✓
	Extent of protected areas at sea	⊙⊙⊙	✓
	Sites of Special Scientific Interest in favourable condition	⊙⊙⊙	✗
	Local sites under positive management	⊙⊙⊙	✓
2. Extent and condition of priority habitats	Number of priority habitats that are stable or increasing	⊙⊙⊙	✓ 2002
	Area of land under restoration management	Not assessed	Not assessed
3. Habitat connectivity in the wider countryside	Broadleaved mixed and yew woodland	⊙⊙⊙	⊙⊙⊙
	Neutral grassland	⊙⊙⊙	⊙⊙⊙
4. Status of priority species	Number of priority species that are stable or increasing	⊙⊙⊙	✓ 2002
5. Species in the wider countryside: farmland	Breeding farmland birds	✗ 1970-2010	✗
	Butterflies of the wider countryside on farmland	✗ 1990 -2010	✗
	Widespread bats	✗ 1978-1992	✓
	Plant diversity – enclosed farmland	✓ 1990-2007	✓ 1998
	Plant diversity – neutral grassland and boundary habitats	✗ 1990-2007	✗ 1998
6. Species in the wider countryside: woodland	Woodland birds	✗ 1970-2010	⊙
	Butterflies of the wider countryside in woodland	✗ 1990-2010	⊙
	Plant diversity – woodlands and hedgerows	⊙ 1990-2007	⊙ 1998
7. Species in the wider countryside: wetlands	Breeding water and wetland birds	⊙ 1975-2010	⊙
	Populations of wintering water and wetland birds	✓ 1975-6 to 2009-10	✗
8. Species in the wider marine environment	Breeding seabirds	⊙ 1986-2010	⊙
9. Biodiversity and ecosystem services: terrestrial habitats	To be developed	Not assessed	Not assessed

<sup>2</sup> The earliest available year is used as the baseline for assessment of long-term change. The base year used for each measure is shown in the table. Where data are unavailable or do not precede 1996, a long-term assessment is not given.

<sup>3</sup> Year as shown if no data available in 2000.

Strategy theme and relevant indicators		Long term change <sup>2</sup>	Change since 2000 <sup>3</sup>
10. Biodiversity and ecosystem services: species	To be developed	Not assessed	Not assessed
11. Biodiversity and ecosystem services: marine	Marine ecosystem integrity (size of fish in North Sea)	 1982-2011	
12. Genetic resources for food and agriculture	Native sheep breeds		 2001
	Native cattle breeds		 2001
<b>Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy</b>			
13. Public enjoyment of the natural environment	Proportion of population visiting the natural environment several times a week		 2009
14. Taking action for the natural environment	Conservation volunteering		
	Proportion of households undertaking wildlife gardening		
15. Funding for biodiversity in England	Expenditure on biodiversity in England		
16. Integrating biodiversity considerations into local decision making	To be decided (see indicator 1 for local sites in positive management)	Not assessed	Not assessed
17. Global impacts of UK consumption	To be developed	Not assessed	Not assessed
<b>Reducing environmental pressures</b>			
18. Climate change impacts and adaptation	Timing of biological events – Spring Index	Not assessed	Not assessed
19. Trends in pressures on biodiversity: Pollution	Area affected by Sulphur (acidity)	 1990-2011	
	Area affected by Nitrogen	 1990-2011	
	Marine pollution: combined input of hazardous substances	 1990-2011	
20. Trends in pressures on biodiversity: invasive species	Terrestrial species	 1990-2008	
	Freshwater species	 1990-2008	
	Marine species	 1990-2008	
21. Trends in pressures on biodiversity: Water quality	Percentage of rivers with high phosphorus levels	 1990-2009	
	Percentage of rivers with high nitrate levels	 1990-2009	
22. Agricultural and forest area under	Targeted agri-environment schemes	 1987-2011	

Strategy theme and relevant indicators		Long term change <sup>2</sup>	Change since 2000 <sup>3</sup>
environmental management schemes	Entry-level agri-environment schemes	☹	✅ 2005
	Percentage of woodland certified as sustainably managed	☹	😐 2001
23. Sustainable fisheries	Fish stocks harvested within safe limits	✅ 1990-2010	✅
<b>Improving knowledge</b>			
24. Biodiversity data and information for decision making	To be developed	Not assessed	Not assessed

✅ = improving

😐 = little or no overall change

❌ = deteriorating

☹ = insufficient or no comparable data

### Assessment of change: all measures

There are 45 individually assessed measures making up the indicators. For change since 2000, 17 measures (38 per cent) show an improvement; 10 measures (22 per cent) show little or no overall change; 8 (18 per cent) show a deterioration; 3 (6 per cent) there are insufficient data and 7 (15 per cent) are not assessed. Those showing a deterioration since 2000 are:

- Proportion of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in favourable condition
- Breeding farmland birds
- Butterflies of the wider countryside on farmland
- Plant diversity in neutral grassland and boundary habitats
- Wintering water and wetland birds
- Pressure on biodiversity from invasive species in freshwater environments
- Pressure on biodiversity from invasive species in terrestrial environments
- Pressure on biodiversity from invasive species in marine environments

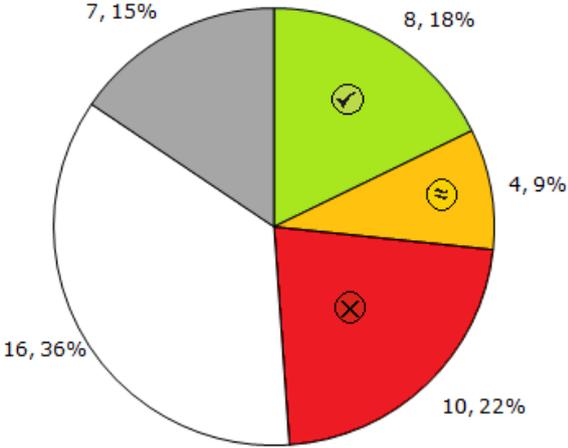
Of those indicators for which it is possible to make a long-term assessment of change, the following 10 measures show a long-term deterioration:

- Breeding farmland birds
- Butterflies of the wider countryside on farmland
- Plant diversity in neutral grassland and boundary habitats
- Widespread bats
- Breeding woodland birds
- Butterflies of the wider countryside in woodland
- Marine ecosystem integrity (size of fish in the North Sea)
- Pressure on biodiversity from invasive species in freshwater environments
- Pressure on biodiversity from invasive species in terrestrial environments
- Pressure on biodiversity from invasive species in marine environments

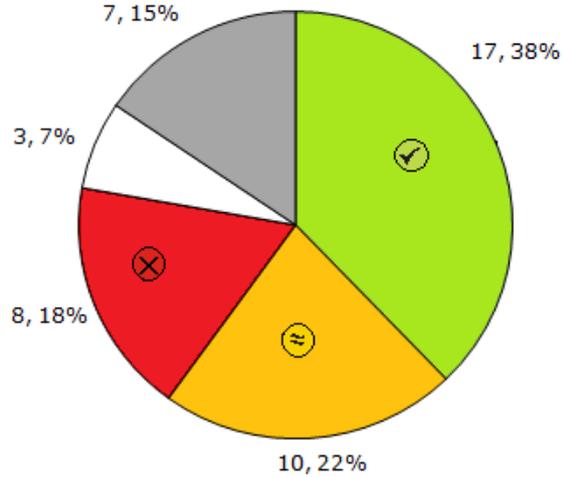
The pie charts below shows the accumulative traffic lights for all 45 measures and for the different themes.

**All Indicators**

**Long term change**



**Change since 2000**

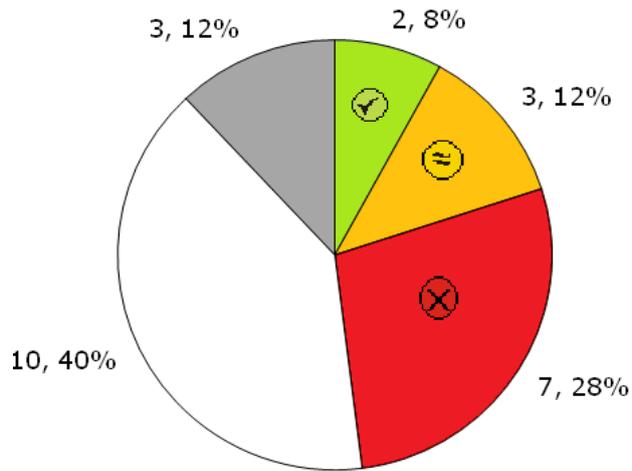


- Improving
- Little or no overall change
- Deteriorating
- Insufficient data
- Not assessed

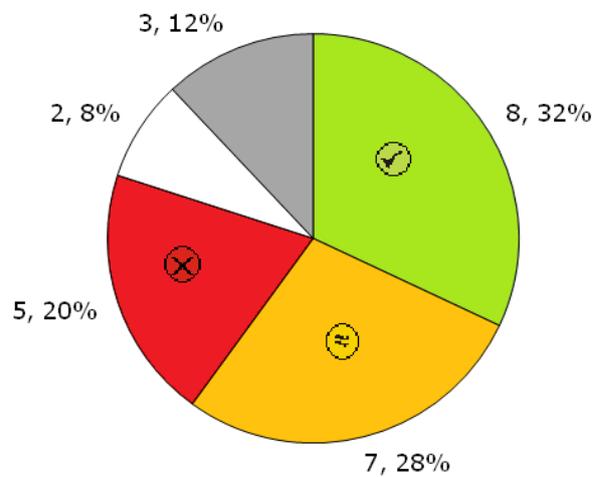
**Note :** Based on 45 measures, which make up 24 indicators (6 indicators and one further measure are not assessed).

**Theme 1 – A more integrated, large scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**Long term change**



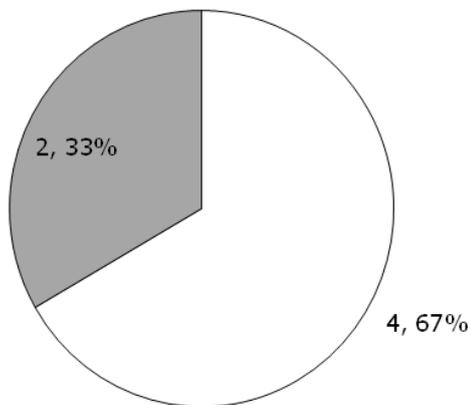
**Change since 2000**



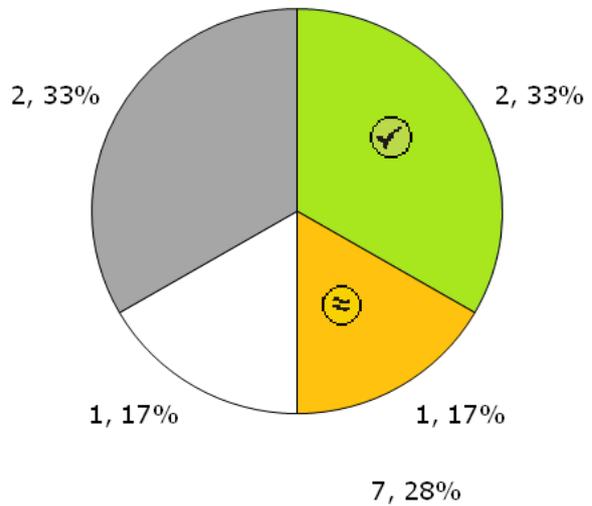
**Note:** Based on 25 measures, which make up 12 indicators (2 indicators and one further measure are not assessed).

**Theme 2 – Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy**

**Long term change**



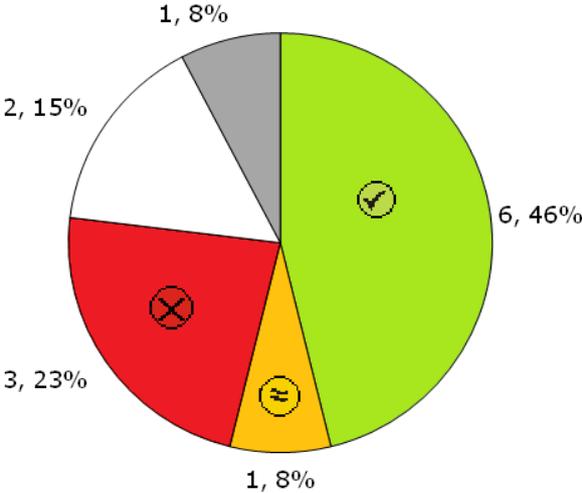
**Change since 2000**



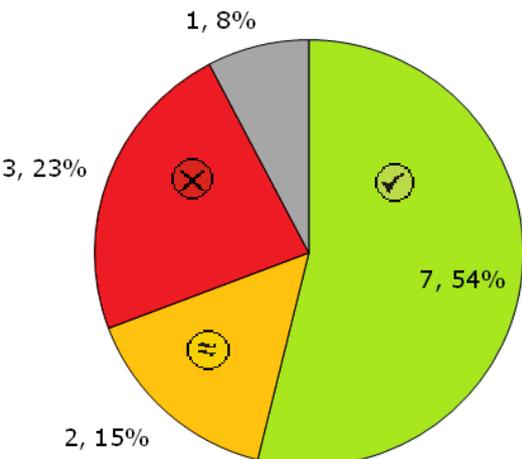
**Note:** Based on 6 measures which make up 5 indicators (2 indicators are not assessed).

**Theme 3 – Reducing environmental pressures**

**Long term change**



**Change since 2000**



**Note:** 1. Based on 13 measures which make up 6 indicators (1 indicator is not assessed).

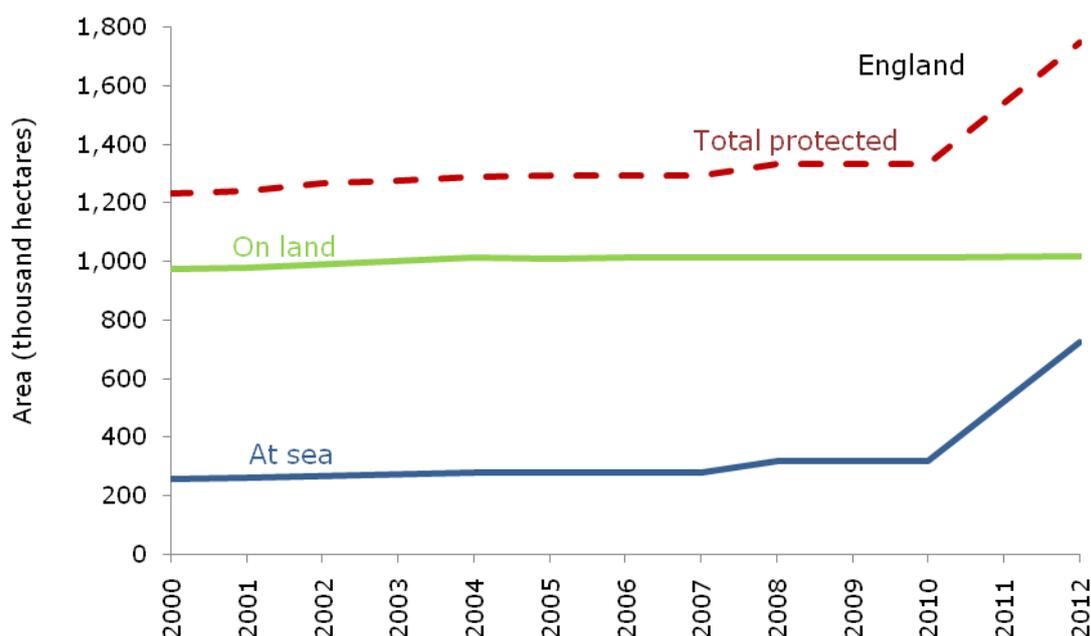
**Theme 4 – Improving knowledge**

Theme 4 has only one indicator, which has not been assessed and so no chart is shown.

## Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea

### 1. Extent and condition of protected areas and local sites

#### 1a. Extent of national and European protected areas on land and at sea, March 2000 to March 2012



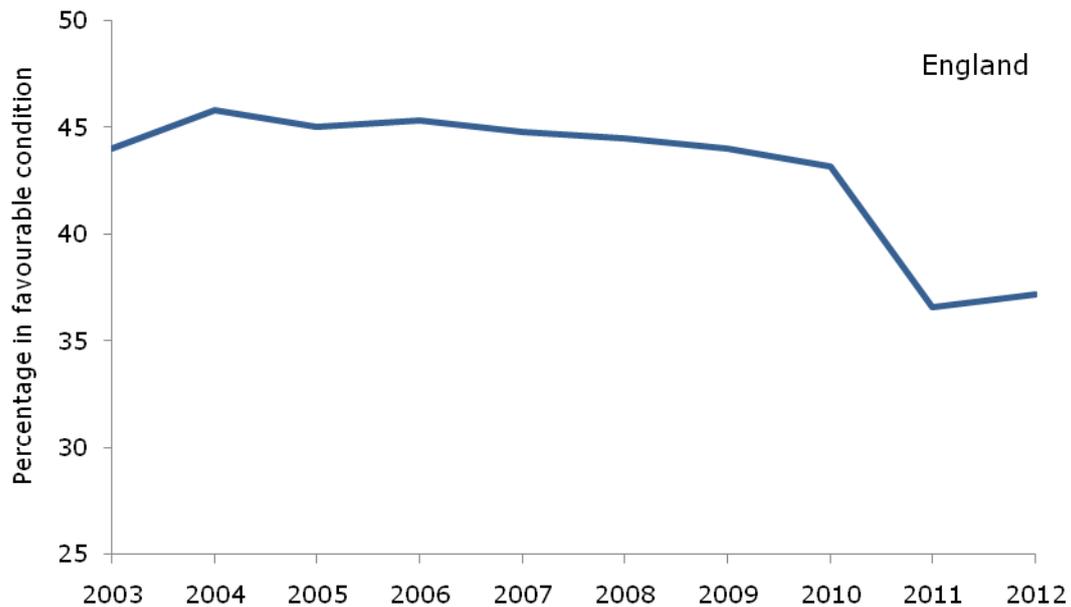
**Notes:** 1. Extent of protected sites is the cumulative area assessed in March of year shown. 2. Total extent includes Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites. 3. For sites that span English borders, only the area within England is included. 4. Marine sites between mean low water and the 12 mile limit are included in the 'at sea' measure; sites beyond 12 miles, in UK waters, are excluded. These are covered by the UK indicator on protected sites (see web links).

**Source:** Natural England.

- Designation and management of protected sites is a key mechanism for conserving wildlife and geological features on land and at sea.
- The total extent of land and sea protected in England increased from 1.23 million to 1.74 million hectares between 2000 and 2012; an increase of 42 per cent.
- Over 1 million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater areas have been designated, representing about 8 per cent of the land area of England. A further 725 thousand hectares of coastal seas around England have also been designated.

Assessment of change in extent and condition of protected areas and local sites			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Extent of protected areas on land	☹	✔	No change (2010-11)
Extent of protected areas at sea	☹	✔	Increase (2010-11)

**1b. Proportion of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in favourable condition, 2003 to 2012**



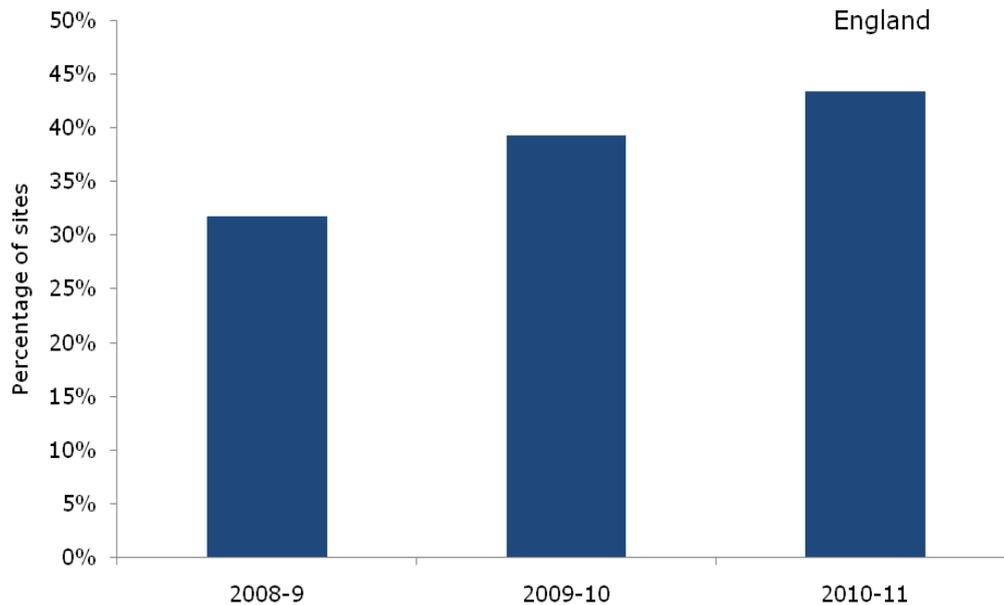
**Note:** Site condition is cumulative area assessed in March of year shown.

**Source:** Natural England.

- Nationally important SSSIs are designated with the aim of conserving specific biological or geological features. The condition of these features is assessed on a rolling programme against agreed standards.
- There has been a net decrease in the area of SSSIs in favourable condition; down from 44 per cent in September 2003 to 37.2 per cent in March 2012. This has occurred, in part, because of the application of consistent monitoring standards which has meant that some adverse features have only been identified in more recent surveys.
- Previous indicator publications have shown the proportion of SSSIs in favourable or in recovering condition. In March 2012, the figure stood at 96.6 per cent.

Assessment of change in extent and condition of protected areas and local sites			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
SSSIs in favourable condition	☹	☹ 2003	No change (2010-11)

**1c. Proportion of local sites under positive conservation management, 2008-9 to 2010-11**



**Source:** Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

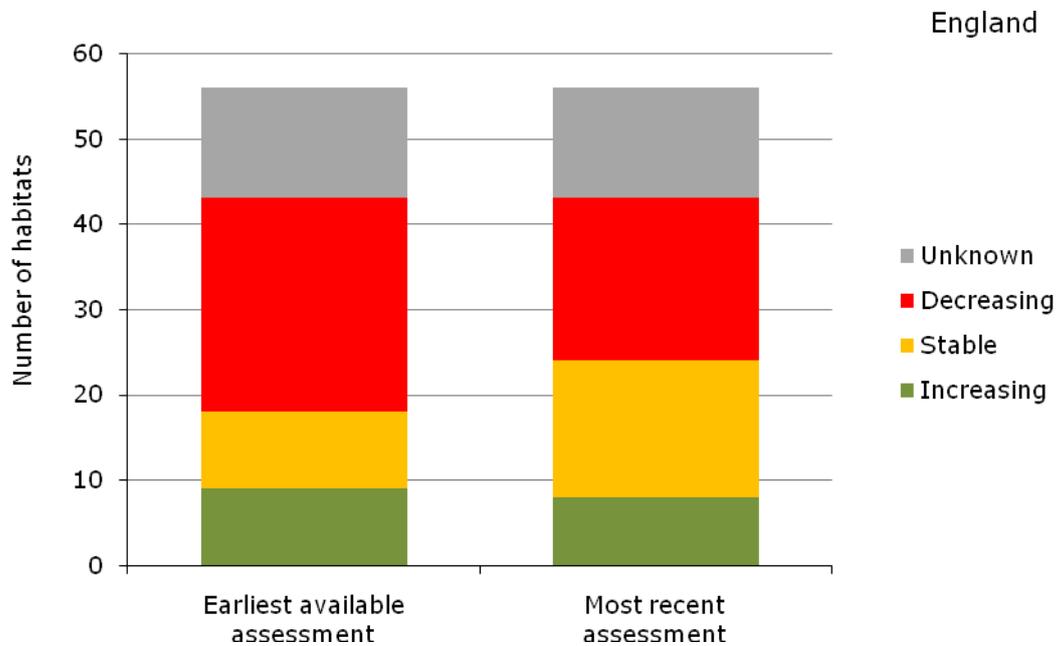
- Local Sites are non-statutory areas identified and selected for their significant nature conservation value (local wildlife sites) or their significant geological value (local geological sites).
- In 2010-11, 43 per cent of Local Sites in England were assessed as being under positive conservation management. Over the three year period there has been a 12 per cent increase in the number of sites under positive management.

<b>Assessment of change in extent and condition of protected areas and Local Sites</b>			
	<b>Long term</b>	<b>Since 2000</b>	<b>Latest year</b>
Local sites under positive management	☹	✅ 2008-9	Increase (2010-11)

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**2. Extent and condition of priority habitats**

**Change in the status of priority habitats, 2002 to 2010**



**Notes:** Twenty-seven of the known earliest available assessments were made in 2002, five in 2005, five in 2008 and six in 2010. Twenty-seven of the known most recent assessments were made in 2010, 15 in 2008 and one in 2005. Of the 13 unknown, two were assessed and status determined as unknown while 11 have not been assessed.

**Source:** UK Biodiversity Partnership, Natural England, Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

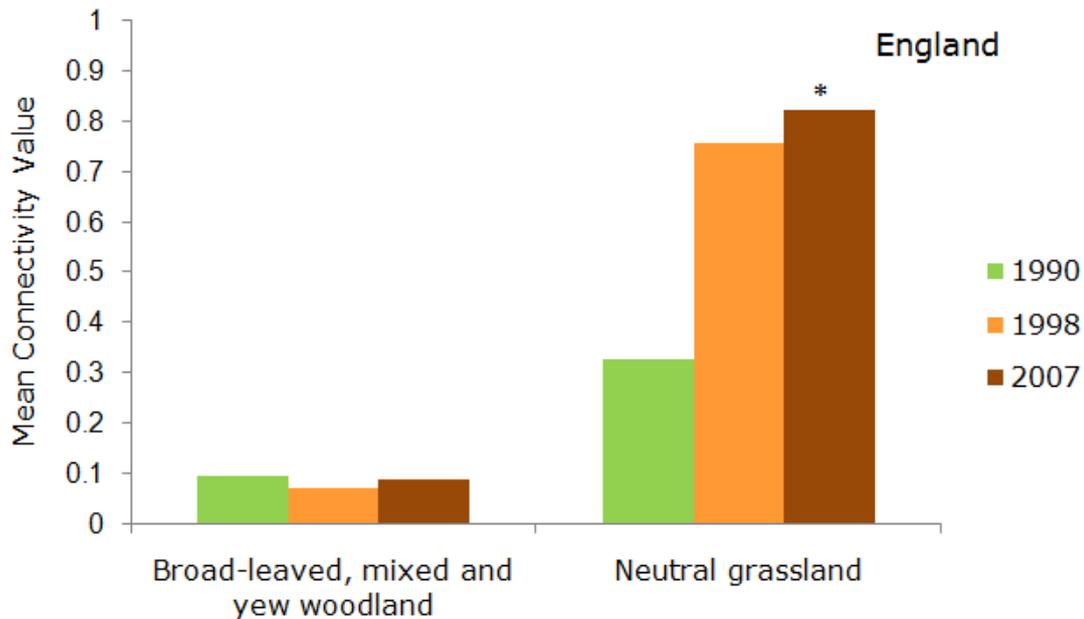
- Priority habitats are a focus for conservation action in England. There are 56 habitats recognised as of ‘principal importance’ for the conservation of biological diversity in England under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- Status information for 43 of the 56 priority habitats was available in at least one of the recording years between 2002 and 2010. Of the 56 priority habitats, 24 were recorded as stable or increasing in the most recent assessment, compared with 18 in their earliest assessment. Despite this improvement, in 2010, 19 priority habitats were assessed as still declining in extent.

Assessment of change in status of priority habitats			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Number of priority habitats that are stable or increasing	☹	☑ 2002	Not assessed

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**3. Habitat connectivity in the wider countryside**

**Change in habitat connectivity for selected broad habitats in the wider countryside, 1990 to 2007**



**Notes:** 1. The mean connectivity value is a measure of the relative connectivity of habitats on a scale of 0 (not connected) to 100 (contiguous habitat). Typical values are between zero and one. 2. Changes shown by an asterisk (\*) indicate a significant change between 1990 and 2007.

**Source:** Forest Research, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

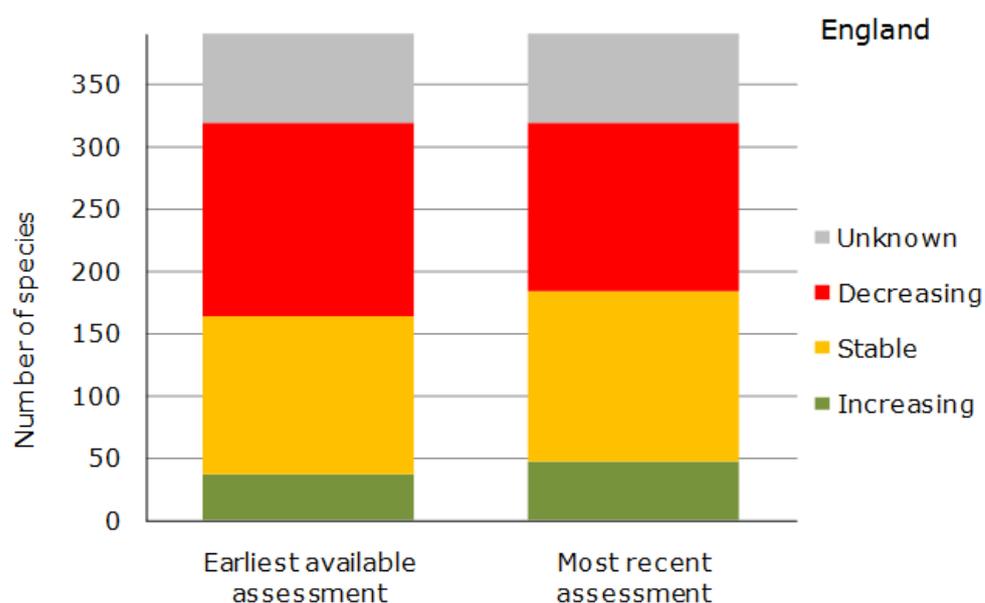
- Connectivity is a measure of the size and distribution of patches of habitat in the landscape. Improved connectivity is important to allow wildlife to move in response to climate change in a fragmented landscape.
- The indicator shows little or no overall change since 1990 in connectivity for *broad-leaved, mixed and yew woodland* and an increase in connectivity for *neutral grassland* between 1990 and 2007.
- Further analysis is required to better explain the causes of the changes in connectivity (which may be due to changes in the extent of the habitat or changes around the habitat blocks). Until this analysis has been undertaken, the data are considered insufficient for an assessment of change.

<b>Assessment of change for habitat connectivity in the wider countryside</b>			
	<b>Long term</b>	<b>Since 2000</b>	<b>Latest year</b>
Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland	⊙	⊙	Not assessed
Neutral grassland	⊙	⊙	Not assessed

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**4. Status of priority species**

**Change in the status of priority species, 2002 to 2008**



**Notes:** 1. 'Decreasing' includes species assessed either as declining or lost. 2. Based on 390 priority species or grouped priority species.

**Source:** UK Biodiversity Partnership, Natural England, Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

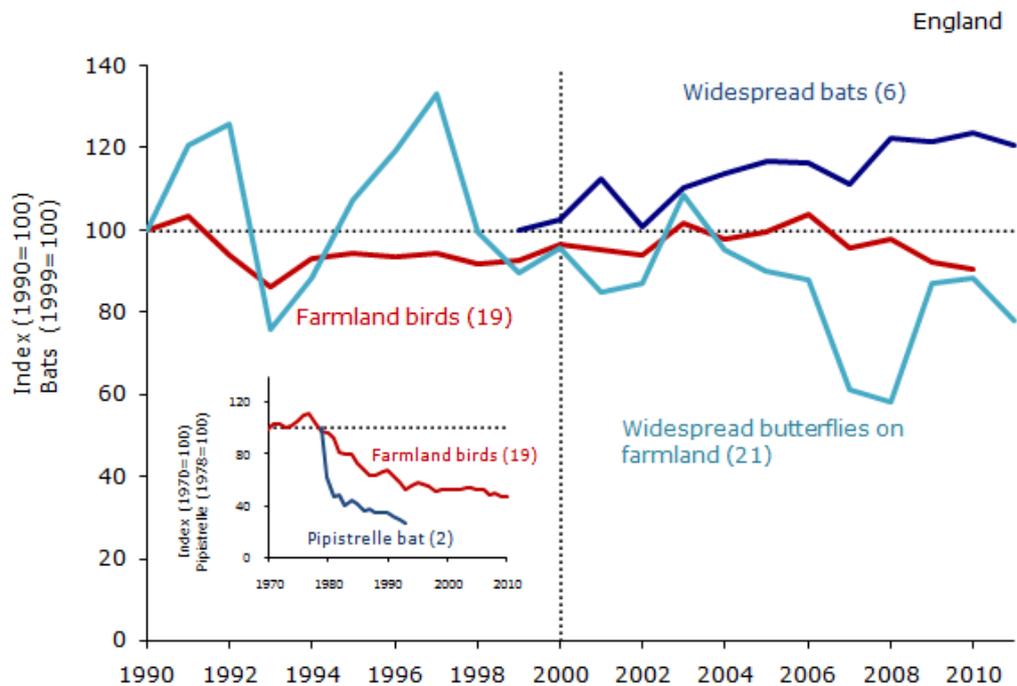
- Priority species are a focus for conservation action in England. There are 943 'priority' species of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This list is based on priority species formerly listed in the in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP).
- The indicator assessment is based on the change in the status of 318 (out of a total of 390 species) for which a status assessment is available in at least one of the recording years between 2002 and 2008.
- Of the 318 species, 183 were recorded as stable or increasing in the most recent assessments, compared with 163 in their earliest assessment, a 12 per cent increase.

Assessment of change in status of priority species			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Number of priority species that are stable or increasing	☹️	✅ 2002	Not assessed

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**5. Species in the wider countryside: farmland**

**5a. Populations of widespread breeding birds, butterflies and bats on farmland, 1990 to 2011**



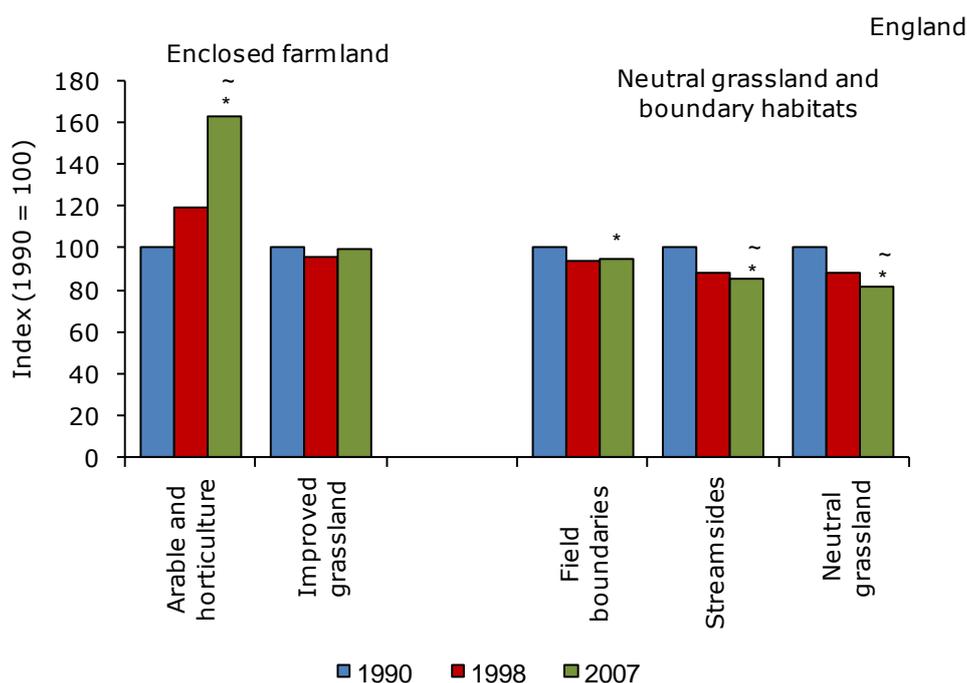
**Notes:** 1. Figures in brackets give number of species. 2. Main bat indicator is a composite of six species; Daubenton's bat, noctule, serotine, lesser horseshoe bat, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle.

**Source:** Bat Conservation Trust, British Trust for Ornithology, Butterfly Conservation, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

- The indicator shows changes in abundance of species on farmland (19 birds and 21 butterflies). It also shows changes in the combined population size of six widespread bat species which use a variety of habitats including farmland.
- Between 1970 and 2010, farmland bird numbers fell by 52 per cent. Most of the decline occurred between the late 1970s and early 1990s, but there has also been a decline of nine per cent overall since 2000.
- Butterfly numbers on farmland fell to their historical low point in 2008. There has been some recovery, but the overall change since 2000 is 'deteriorating'.
- Since 2000, widespread bat populations in England have increased by 18 per cent. A significant increase in the lesser horseshoe bat population underpins this positive trend and has been attributed to conservation measures and a series of mild winters that have enhanced winter survival.

Assessment of change in abundance and diversity of species in the wider countryside (farmland)			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Breeding farmland birds	✗ 1970-2010	✗	Decreased (2010)
Butterflies of the wider countryside on farmland	✗ 1990-2011	✗	Decreased (2011)
Widespread bats	✗ 1978-1992	✓	Decreased (2011)

### 5b. Plant species richness in the wider countryside 1990 to 2007: enclosed farmland, neutral grassland and boundary habitats



**Notes:** 1. \* A statistically significant change between 1990 and 2007. 2. ~ A statistically significant change between 1998 and 2007.

**Source:** Countryside Survey, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology.

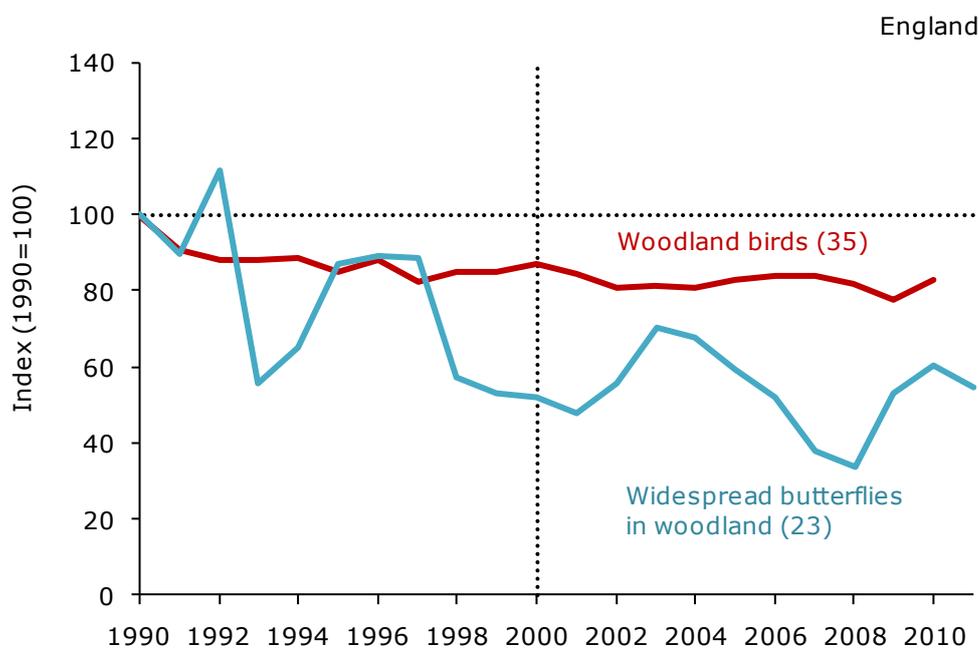
- The indicator shows the number of plant species found in fixed survey plots across the English countryside.
- Within enclosed farmland, there was a significant increase in plant species richness in *arable and horticultural land* in both the longer term and since 1998.
- There was little or no overall change in species richness in *improved grassland* between 1990 and 2007. Similarly the species richness in ground flora *hedgerow* plots has shown little or no overall change between 1990 and 2007.

Assessment of change in abundance and diversity of species in the wider countryside (farmland)			
Plant diversity in enclosed farmland	✓ 1990-2007	✓ 1998	Not assessed
Plant diversity in neutral grassland & boundary habitats	✗ 1990-2007	✗ 1998	Not assessed

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**6. Species in the wider countryside: woodland**

**6a. Populations of widespread breeding birds and butterflies in woodland, 1990 to 2011**



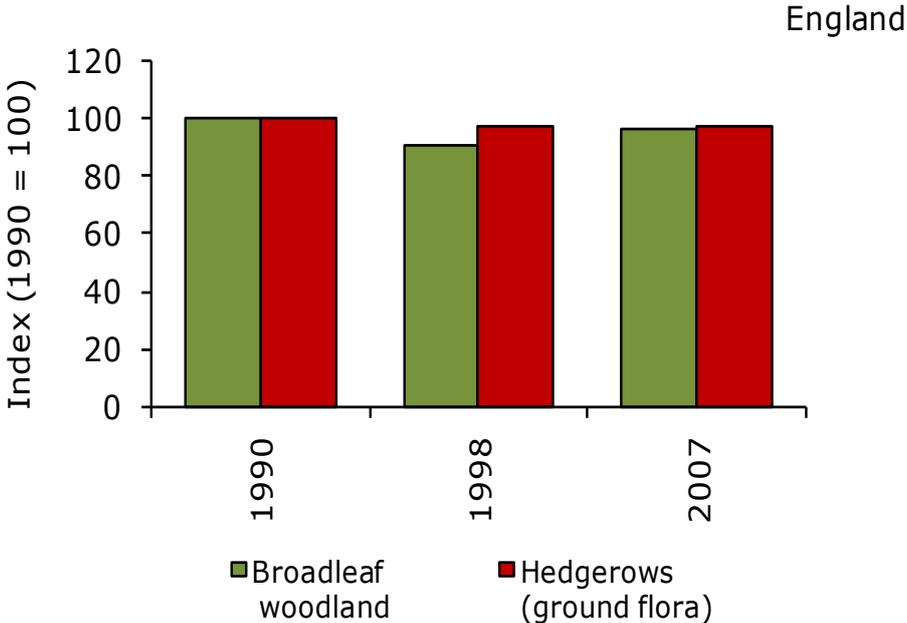
**Note:** Figures in brackets indicate the number of species in each measure.

**Source:** British Trust for Ornithology, Butterfly Conservation, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

- The indicator shows changes in abundance of species in woodland (35 breeding birds and 23 widespread butterflies).
- In 2010, breeding woodland birds populations were about 20 per cent lower than their 1970 level (not shown). The greatest decline in woodland birds occurred from the late eighties until the mid nineties and the index has been relatively stable since 2000.
- Butterfly numbers on woodland fell to their historical low point in 2008. Since then there has been a modest increase, although numbers fell again in 2011.

Assessment of change in abundance and diversity of species in the wider countryside (woodland)			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Woodland birds	⊗ 1970-2010	≈	Increased (2010)
Butterflies of the wider countryside in woodland	⊗ 1990-2010	≈	Decreased (2011)

**6b. Plant species richness in the wider countryside 1990 to 2007: woodland**



**Source:** Countryside Survey, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology.

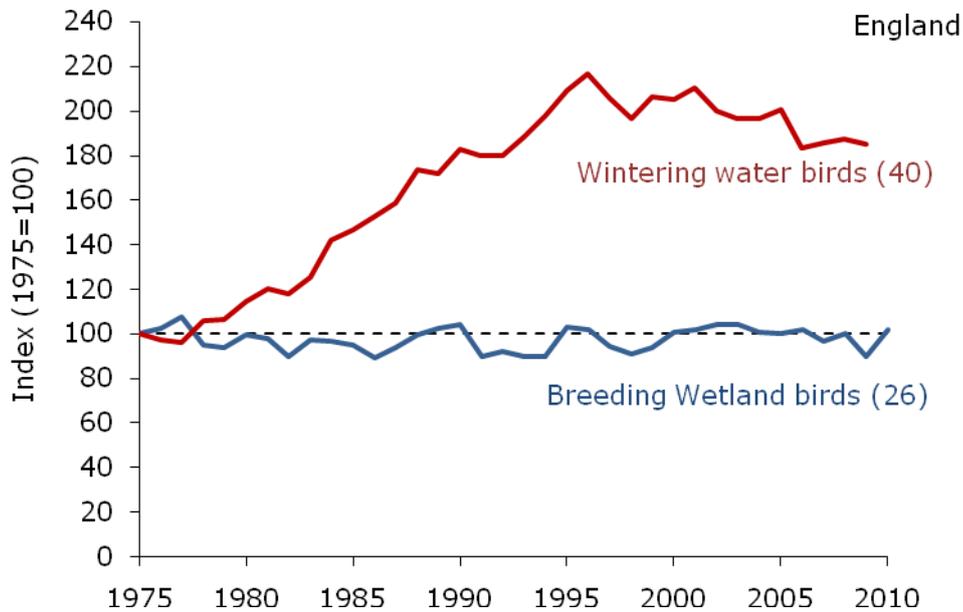
- The indicator shows the number of plant species found in fixed survey plots across the English countryside.
- Within *broadleaf woodlands* and *hedgerow ground flora* there has been no change in plant species richness over the period 1990 to 2007.

Assessment of change in abundance and diversity of species in the wider countryside (woodland)			
Plant diversity – woodlands and hedgerows	≈ 1990-2007	≈ 1998	Not assessed

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**7. Species in the wider countryside: wetlands**

**Trends in populations of breeding wetland birds in England, 1975 to 2010**



**Notes:** 1. Figures in brackets show the number of species in each measure. 2. Wintering water birds and waders are recorded over winter and have been assigned to the year at the start of the wintering period, for example 2009-10 data have been allocated to 2009.

**Source:** British Trust for Ornithology, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

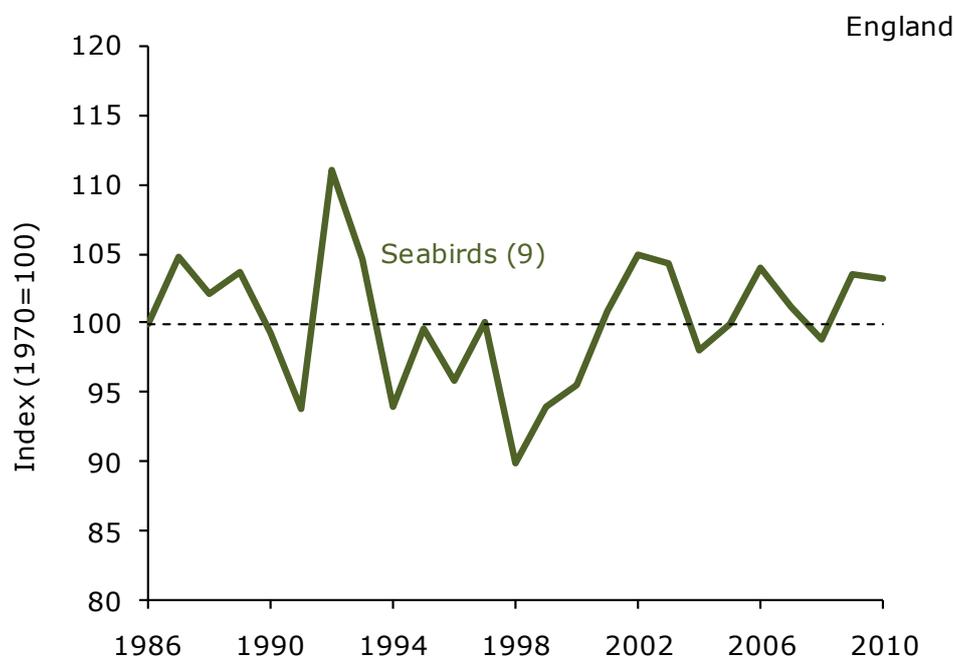
- The indicator shows changes in abundance of 26 breeding wetland birds and 40 wintering water birds (including wildfowl and waders).
- Between 1975 and 2010, populations of breeding wetland birds fluctuated from year to year but have remained broadly stable, increasing by just 1.8 per cent over the period.
- In the winter of 2009-10, populations of wintering water birds were 85 per cent higher than their 1975-6 level although have decreased by 9.8 per cent since 2000.

Assessment of change in abundance and diversity of species in the wider countryside (wetland)			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Breeding wetland birds	⚡ 1975-2010	⚡	Increased (2010)
Wintering water birds	⚡ 1975-6 to 2009-10	⊗	Decreased(2009-10)

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**8. Species in the wider marine environment**

**Population trend of seabirds, 1986 to 2010**



**Notes:** Figures in brackets show the number included in the measure.

**Source:** British Trust for Ornithology, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

- The indicator shows changes in the abundance of nine breeding seabirds around England’s coast.
- There was little or no overall change in the size of populations of seabirds birds between 1986 and 2010. In 2010, populations of seabirds were three per cent higher than the level in 1986 although because of the high degree of variation from year to year, this change is not considered significant.

Assessment of change in abundance and diversity of species in the wider marine environment			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Breeding seabirds	≈ 1986-2010	≈	No change (2010)

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**9. Biodiversity and ecosystem services: terrestrial habitats**

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This indicator is under development and no assessment has been made.

In the review of the indicators for *Biodiversity 2020*, a small number of gaps were identified where there were no current indicators for particular outcomes. Three indicators have been proposed to report on habitats and species providing ecosystem services including terrestrial habitats (under development); marine (fish size classes – see indicator 11) and species (under development – see indicator 10).

Further work is underway to develop indicators 9 and 10.

**10. Biodiversity and ecosystem services: species**

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This indicator is under development and no assessment has been made.

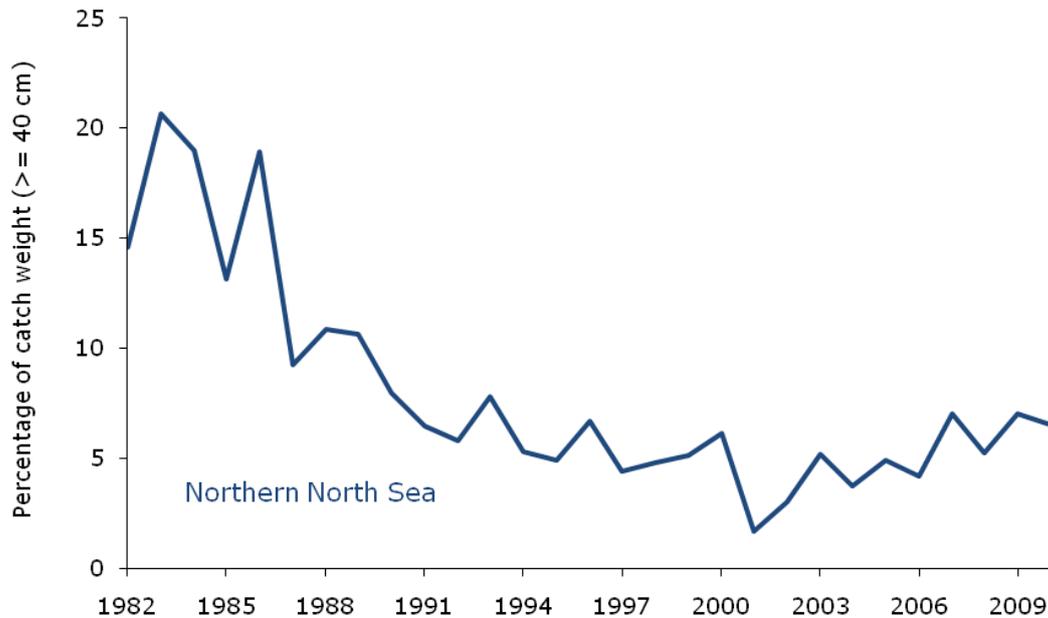
In the review of the indicators for *Biodiversity 2020*, a small number of gaps were identified where there were no current indicators for particular outcomes. Three indicators have been proposed to report on habitats and species providing ecosystem services including terrestrial habitats (under development); marine (fish size classes – see indicator 11) and species (under development – see indicator 10).

Further work is underway to develop indicators 9 and 10.

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**11. Biodiversity and ecosystem services: marine (fish size in the North Sea)**

**Proportion of large fish (equal to or larger than 40cm), by weight, in the Northern North Sea, 1982 to 2010**



**Source:** Marine Scotland, Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science.

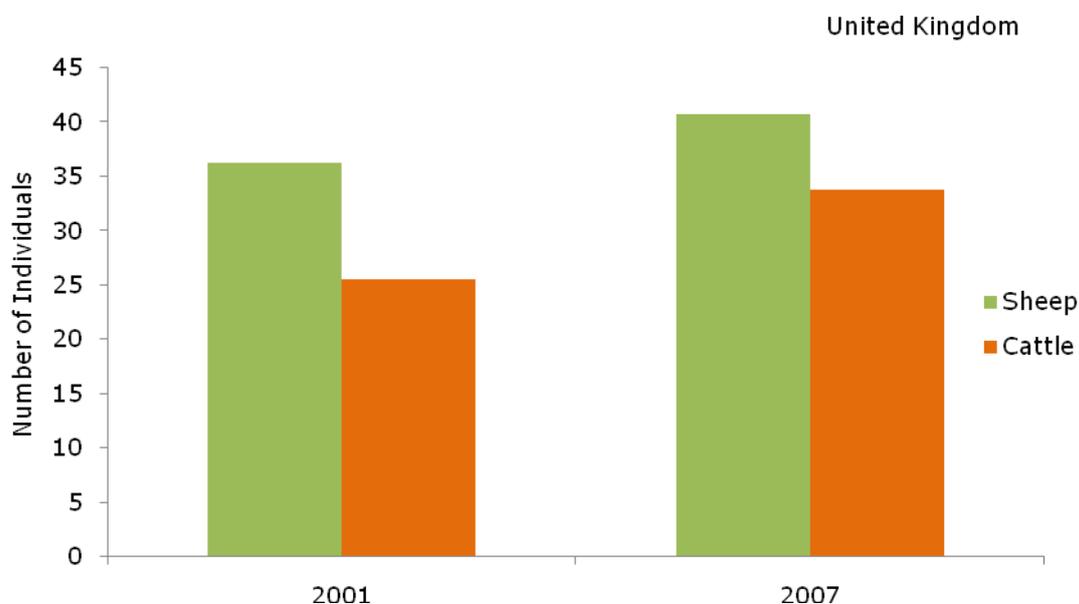
- The indicator shows changes in the proportion, by weight, of large individuals equal to or over 40cm in length in fish populations in the northern part of the North Sea, from the Humber Estuary to the Shetland Islands. Changes in the size structure of fish populations reflect changes in the health of the fish community.
- The proportion of large fish declined most rapidly from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. There is a strong suggestion that the proportion has increased since 2000, but this change is not significant (and is therefore assessed as showing little or no overall change since 2000).

<b>Assessment of change in the proportion of large fish, by weight in the northern North Sea</b>			
	<b>Long term</b>	<b>Since 2000</b>	<b>Latest year</b>
Marine ecosystem integrity (fish size class)	✘ 1982-2010	⚖️	Declined (2010)

**Theme: A more integrated, large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea**

**12. Genetic resources for food and agriculture**

**Change in effective population size for native breeds of sheep and cattle at greatest risk of loss of genetic diversity, 2001 to 2007**



**Note:** The 2001 values are based on assessments for 27 sheep and 18 cattle breeds. The 2007 values are based on assessments for 26 sheep and 20 cattle breeds. Breeds at greatest risk have the lowest effective population size and are a sub-set of the breeds assessed in each year.

**Source:** Scottish Agricultural College, Roslin Institute, Grassroots Systems Ltd.

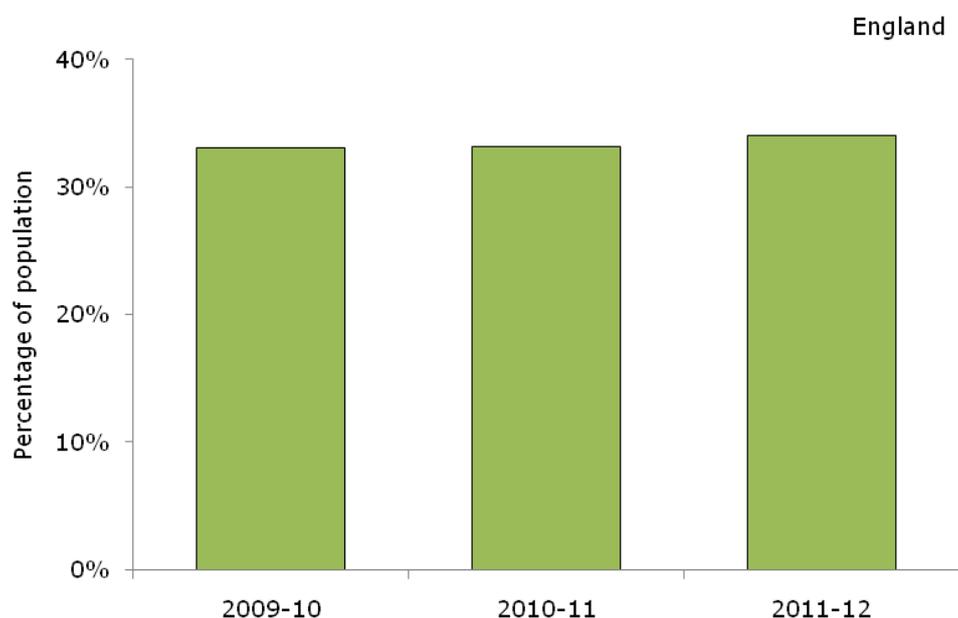
- The indicator shows the change in the average effective population size for the breeds most at risk of loss of genetic diversity in the UK. Breeds with the lowest effective population size have a greater likelihood of in-breeding and risk of loss of genetic diversity.
- From 2001 to 2007, the mean effective population size for breeds most at risk of loss of genetic diversity rose by 4.5 individuals for sheep breeds (12 per cent) and by 8.3 individuals for cattle (32 per cent). This increase for sheep breeds is not significant, and so is reported as showing little or no overall change. There has been no reported UK extinction of any breed of sheep or cattle since 2001.

Assessment of change in effective population size			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Native sheep breeds	☹️	🟡 2001	Not assessed
Native cattle breeds	☹️	✅ 2001	Not assessed

**Theme: Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy**

**13. Public enjoyment of the natural environment**

**Proportion of the population visiting the outdoors several times or more a week in the last 12 months, 2009 to 2012**



**Note:** Frequency of visits to the natural environment (percentage reporting ‘several times or more a week’ to Q17: *Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home?* Based on all respondents (2009-10 N=11,107; 2010-11 N=10,630; 2011-12 N=10,587).

**Source:** Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE), Natural England 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12.

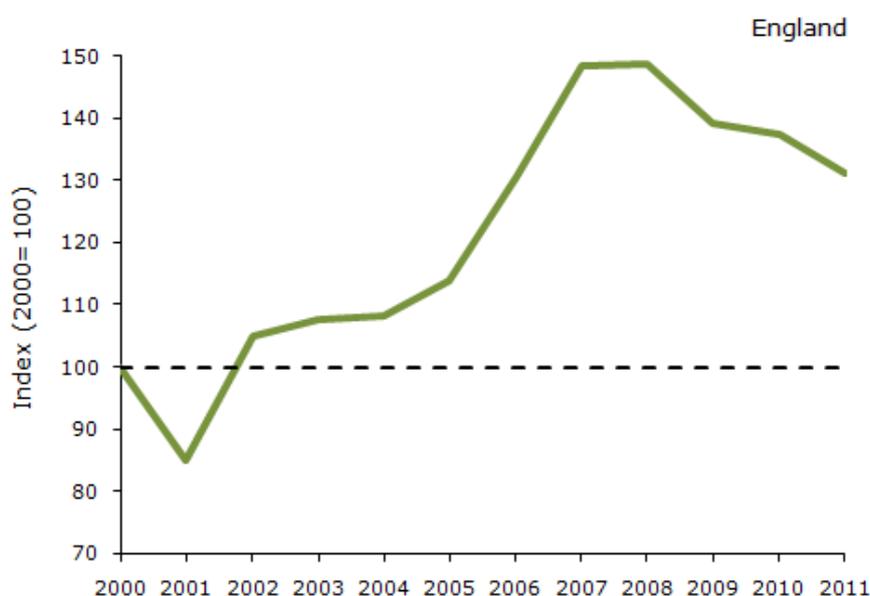
- The indicator provides an estimate of the frequency of visits and access to the natural environment by the adult population in England.
- Between March 2011 and February 2012 just over a third (34 per cent) of the adult population stated that on average, they had visited the natural environment several times a week or more over the previous year. Twenty-one per cent stated they normally visited once a week, eight per cent only visited once or twice, while eight per cent claimed not to have visited at all over the previous year. There has been no overall change in the frequency of visits to the outdoors over the three year period. The small increase in 2011-12 is not statistically significant.

Assessment of change in public use and enjoyment of the natural environment			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Proportion of population visiting the natural environment several times a week or more	⊖	≈ 2009	No change (2010-11)

## Theme: Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy

### 14. Taking action for the natural environment

#### 14a. Index of volunteer time spent on the natural environment for selected organisations in England, 2000 to 2011



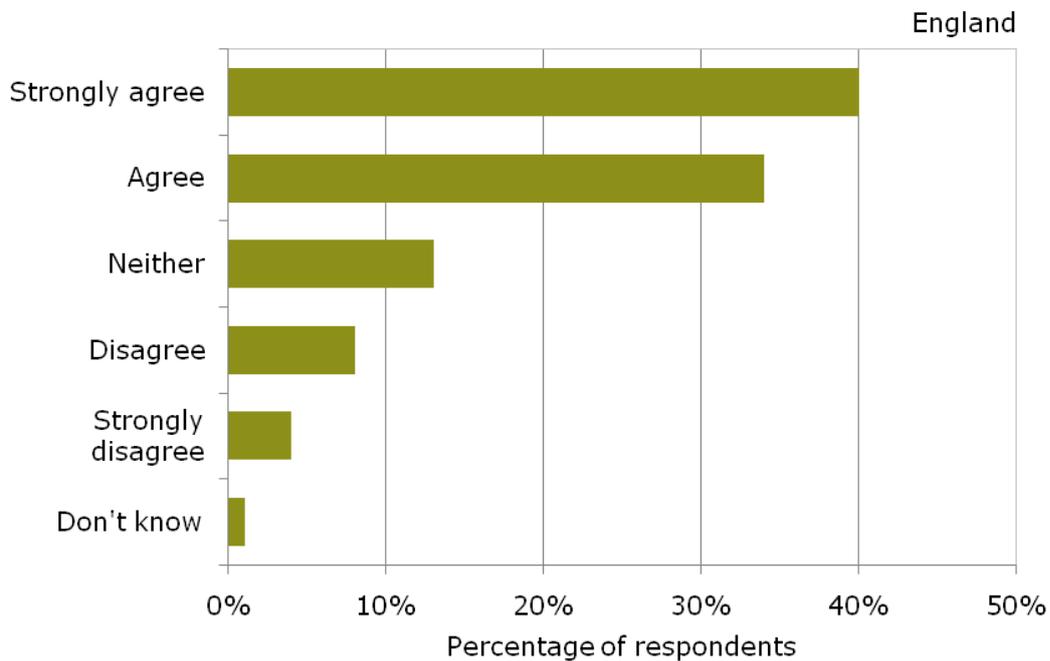
**Notes:** 1. The index is calculated using a non-weighted aggregation across organisations. 2. Data were not available for all organisations in all years. To make best use of available data and to allow a combined index to be compiled, data interpolation has been used to fill gaps (based on assumption that trends reported by other organisations can be applied to others).

**Source:** Bat Conservation Trust, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, British Waterways, Exmoor National Park Authority, Lake District National Park Authority, Northumberland National Park Authority, Natural England, North York Moors National Park Authority, Peak District National Park Authority, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, South Downs National Park Authority, The Wildlife Trusts.

- The indicator shows the amount of volunteer time spent undertaking conservation activities for 12 organisations across the environmental sector in England. The work undertaken includes assisting with countryside management, carrying out surveys and inputting data, assisting with administrative tasks, and fundraising.
- The amount of time has generally risen since 2010 but has been falling since 2008 and fell a further 7 per cent between 2010 and 2011. This reflects changes in one or two large organisations such as the Conservation Volunteers (BTCV).

Assessment of change in taking action for the natural environment			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Conservation volunteering	⋯	✔	Decreased (2011)

**14b. Households undertaking wildlife gardening in England (responses amongst households to the question 'I actively encourage wildlife in my garden'), 2011**



**Notes:** Part of an omnibus survey on a sample of 1,769 individuals in their homes. The survey was conducted in March 2011, using face-to-face interviews of adults (16+) in England.

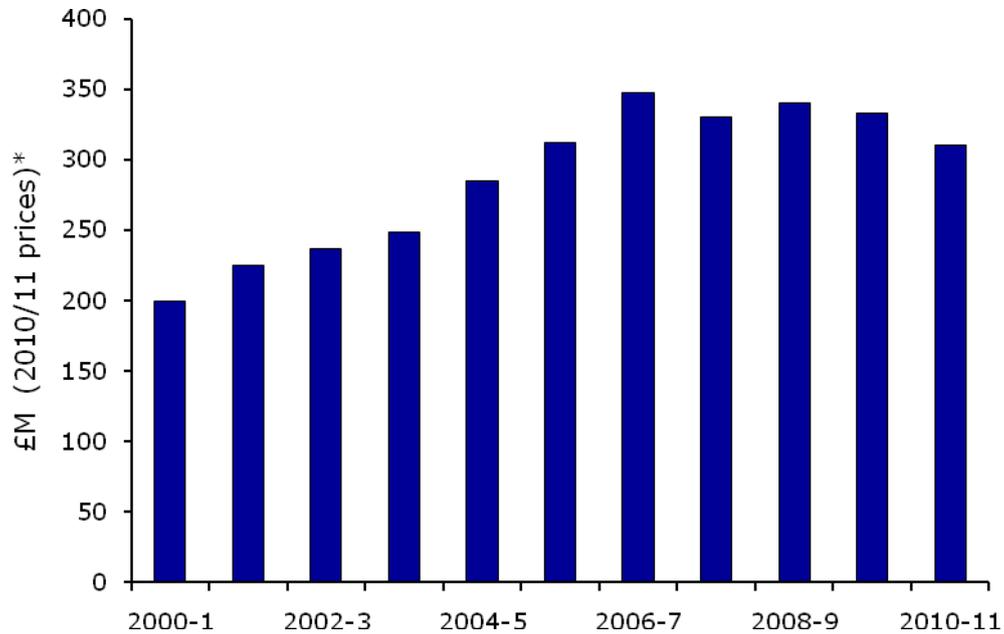
**Source:** Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Public Attitudes Survey 2011.

- This indicator provides estimates of the extent and range of wildlife gardening activity by households in England, principally taken from the Public Attitudes Survey in 2011.
- Eighty six per cent of respondents to the Defra Public Attitude Survey 2011 said they owned a garden or shared a garden with others. Seventy-four per cent of respondents who had a garden agreed 'they actively encouraged wildlife in their gardens' (e.g. through feeding areas or planting).
- Four surveys on 'Public Attitudes and Behaviours towards the Environment' have been carried out in 2001, 2007, 2009 and 2011. The questions and response options of these surveys differ and are not directly comparable; therefore no assessment of change is available.

Assessment of change in taking action for the natural environment			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Wildlife gardening	⋯	⋯ 2001	Not assessed

15. Funding for biodiversity

Public sector expenditure on biodiversity in England



**Note:** \* Deflated using UK GDP deflator.

**Source:** Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

- The indicator shows the level of spending by the public sector on biodiversity in England for the period 2000-1 to 2010-11.
- In 2010-11, £310 million of public sector funding was spent on biodiversity in England. This compares with £199 million (at 2010-11 prices) in 2000-1.
- Public sector expenditure on biodiversity fell by 7 per cent between 2009-10 and 2010-11 in England. Despite the fall, the expenditure on biodiversity rose in real terms between 2000-1 and 2010-11 by 56 per cent. Over the same period GDP in the UK rose by 17 per cent.

Assessment of change in public sector expenditure on biodiversity			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Public sector expenditure on biodiversity	☹	✔	Decreased (2010-11)

## Theme: Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy

### 16. Integrating biodiversity considerations into local decision making

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This indicator is under development and no assessment has been made.

In the review of the indicators for *Biodiversity 2020*, a small number of gaps were identified where there were no current indicators for particular outcomes. An indicator for reporting on local decision making was identified as a gap and work is now underway to review data availability and to develop options for a new indicator.

Further consultation with partners will be carried out review the existing indicator on 'local sites under positive management' (indicator 2) and to identify options for an indicator on 'integrating biodiversity considerations into local decision making' without placing extra burdens on Local Authorities.

### 17. Global biodiversity impacts of UK consumption

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This indicator is under development and no assessment has been made.

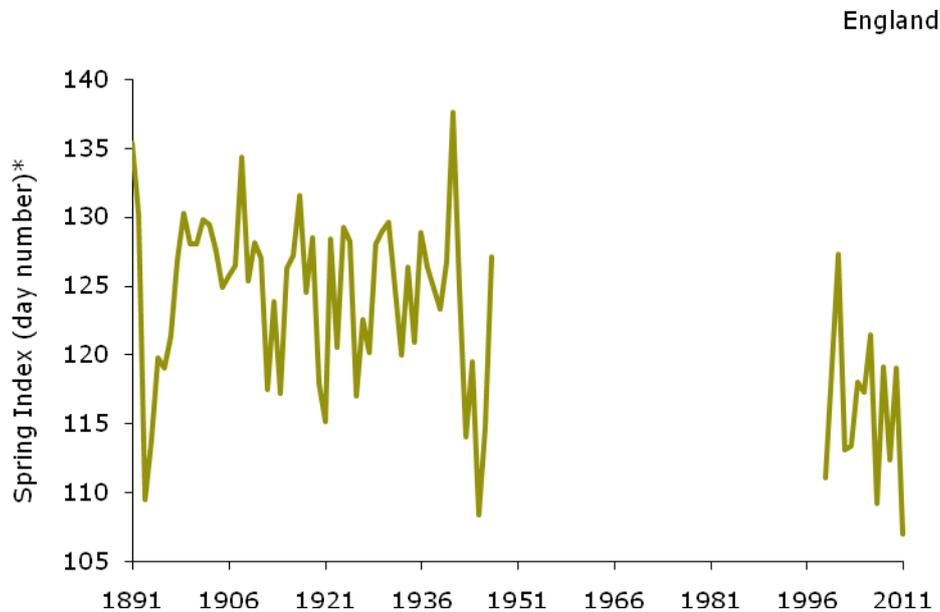
In the review of the indicators for *Biodiversity 2020*, a small number of gaps were identified where there were no current indicators for particular outcomes. Indicators for reporting on sustainable consumption and production were identified as a gap and work is now underway to review data availability and to develop options for a new indicator on global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity.

A UK-level indicator is being developed and work is underway to assess how patterns of consumption impact on biodiversity overseas and identify options for mitigating our impact.

## Theme: Reducing environmental pressures

### 18. Climate change impacts and adaptation

#### Timing of biological events in England 1891 to 1947 and 1999 to 2011



**Notes:** \* Number of days after December 31<sup>st</sup> (e.g. day 121 = May 1<sup>st</sup>).

**Source:** 1891 to 1947 Royal Meteorological Society, 1999 to 2011 UK Phenology Network.

- This indicator shows the impact of temperature change on the timing of biological events such as bud-burst or migration in spring. The Spring Index is a measure of changes in the timing of spring events over the last century, using comparable data sources from the periods of 1891 to 1947 and 1999 to 2011.
- The Index is calculated from the dates of four different annual biological events: the first recorded flowering of hawthorn and horse chestnut, and the first recorded sighting of the swallow (a migratory bird) and of the orange tip butterfly.
- Since 1999, the average annual index dates have been around 8 days in advance of the average dates in the first part of the 20th Century.
- The indicator is provided for context only and is not assessed, as the impact of these changes on the conservation status of the species is not known.

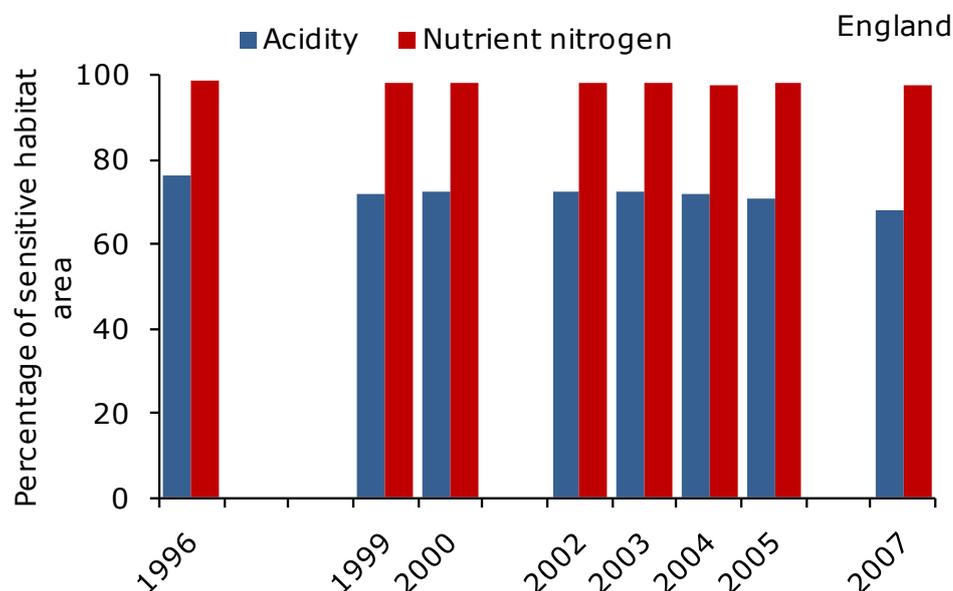
#### Assessment of change in the timing of spring events

No assessment – indicator provided for context only

## Theme: Reducing environmental pressures

### 19. Trends in pressures on biodiversity - pollution

#### 19a. Air pollution: area of sensitive habitats in England where critical loads for nutrient nitrogen and acidity are exceeded, 1996 to 2007



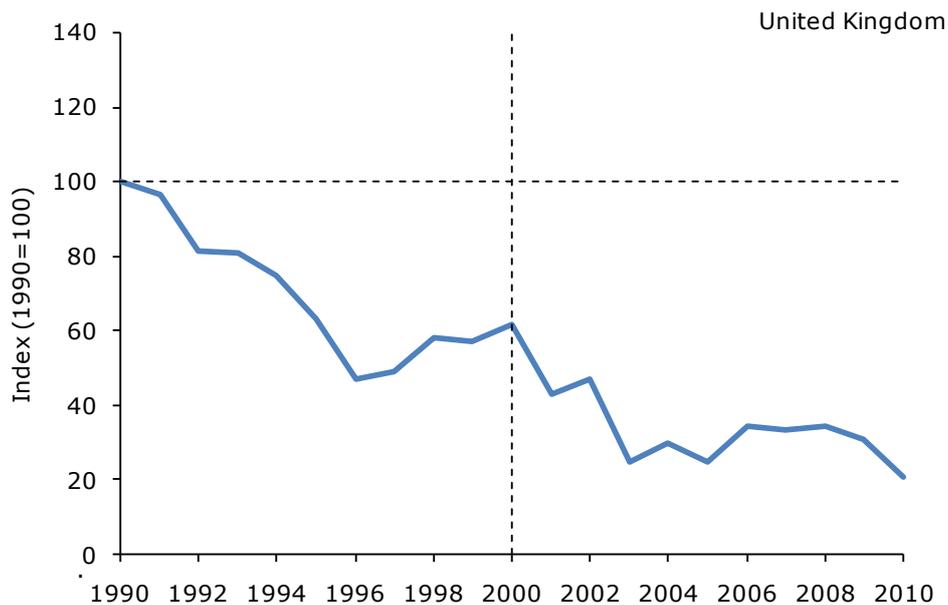
**Notes:** Since 2000 nitric acid has been included in the estimates of nitrogen deposition and since 2003, aerosol disposition of sulphate, nitrate and ammonium have also been included. This additional deposition led to some increases in critical load exceedance compared with earlier periods. Each bar represents a three-year average of deposition data to reduce year-to-year variability.

**Source:** Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

- The indicator shows changes in the area where critical loads for nutrient nitrogen and acidity are exceeded. Critical loads are air pollution thresholds above which significant harmful effects occur on sensitive habitats in England. Approximately 18,600km<sup>2</sup> of terrestrial habitat areas are sensitive to acid deposition and about 19,500 km<sup>2</sup> are sensitive to nutrient nitrogen; many areas are sensitive to both.
- The percentage area of sensitive habitat area exceeding critical loads for acid pollution fell from 76 per cent in 1996 to 68 per cent in 2007. During the same period the percentage area of sensitive habitats where nutrient nitrogen pollution exceeded critical loads showed little or no change (from 98 per cent in 1996, to 97 per cent in 2007).

Assessment of change in area exceeding air pollution critical loads			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Area affected by sulphur (acidity)	✓ 1996-2007	✓	Not assessed
Area affected by nitrogen	≈ 1996-2007	≈	Not assessed

**19b. Combined input of hazardous substances to the UK marine environment, as an index of estimated weight of substance per year, 1990 to 2010**



**Source:** Defra Marine Strategy and Evidence Division, using data provided by: Environment Agency, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

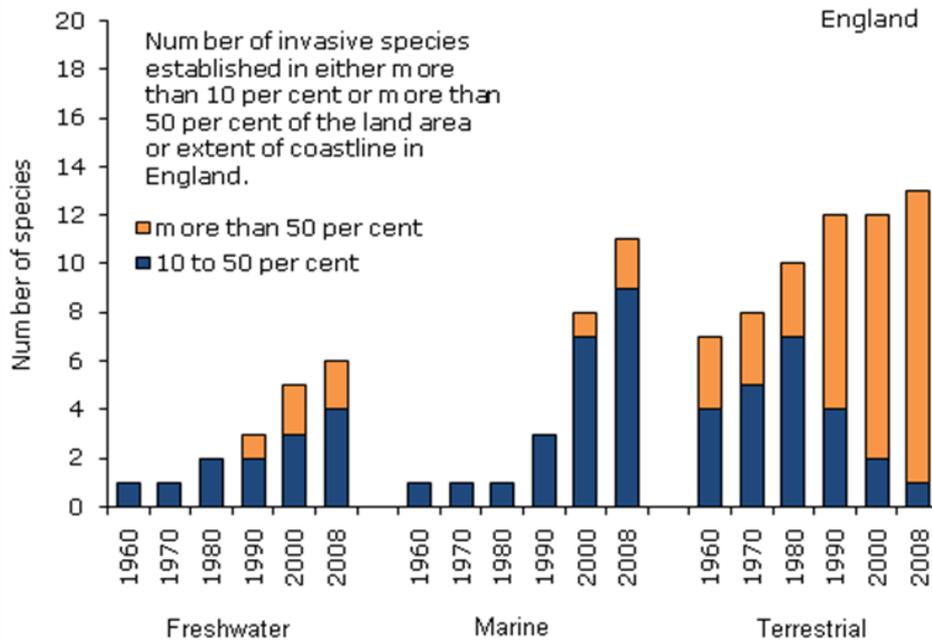
- The indicator shows the relative input into the marine environment of six hazardous substances (cadmium, mercury, copper, lead, zinc and lindane) from waterborne pollution in the UK (separate England figures are not currently available).
- The combined input has declined over the period 1990 to 2010 and at the end of this period was 66 per cent lower than the 1990 baseline.

Assessment of change in the input of hazardous substances to the UK marine environment			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Combined input of hazardous substances	✔ 1990-2010	✔	Decreased (2010)

## Theme: Reducing environmental pressures

### 20. Trends in pressures on biodiversity – invasive species

#### Changes in extent of widely established invasive non-native species in freshwater, marine and terrestrial environments, 1960 to 2008



**Source:** Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, British Trust for Ornithology, Marine Biological Association and the National Biodiversity Network Gateway.

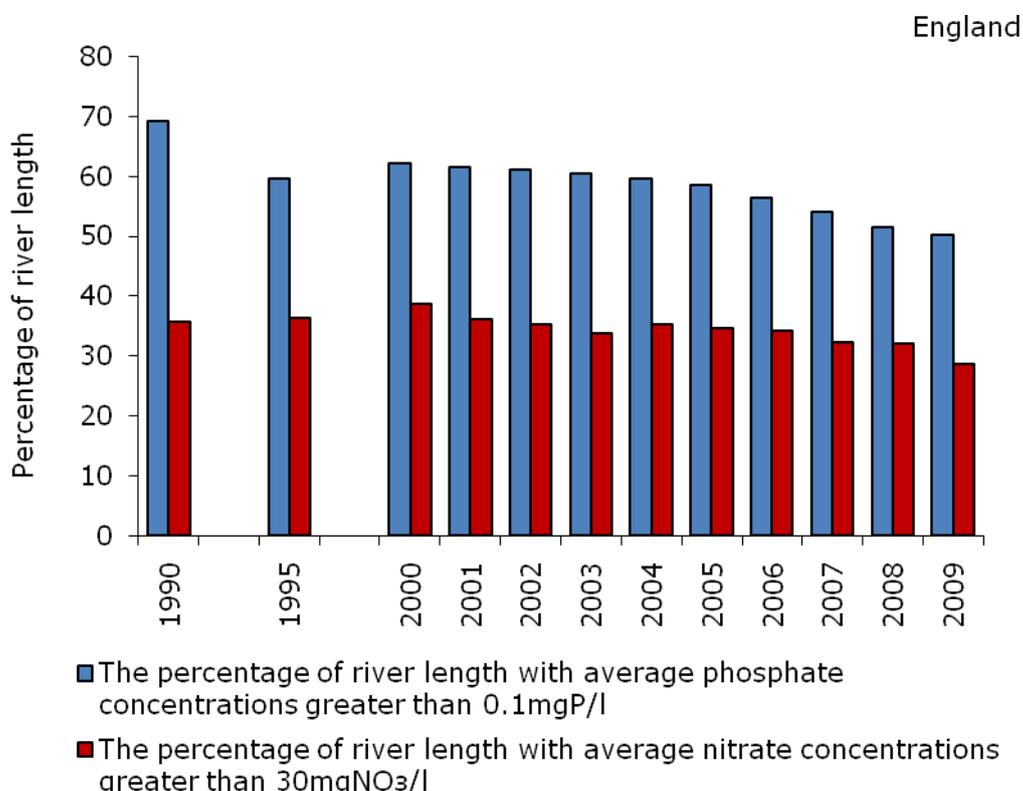
- The indicator shows the change in the extent of the most invasive species in England. Of more than 3,000 non-native species the 49 with the greatest potential impact on native wildlife have been independently identified.
- The indicator shows how many of these 49 species are established across more than 10 per cent of the land area or extent of coastline in England. This has increased in both the long term and short-term in the freshwater, marine and terrestrial environments.

Assessment of change in the impact of invasive species			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Terrestrial species	⊗ 1990-2008	⊗	Not assessed
Freshwater species	⊗ 1990-2008	⊗	Not assessed
Marine species	⊗ 1990-2008	⊗	Not assessed

## Theme: Reducing environmental pressures

### 21. Trends in pressures on biodiversity – water quality

#### Percentage of river length with high phosphate and nitrate levels, 1990 to 2009



**Source:** Environment Agency.

- The indicator shows changes in the percentage of river length in England exceeding previous guideline values for concentrations of nitrate and phosphate. This indicator will be refined in future publications reflects new reporting commitments under the EU Water Framework Directive.
- The percentage of river lengths with high phosphate levels decreased between 1990 and 1995 from 69 per cent to 60 per cent, but rose again in 2000. However, since 2000 the percentage had fallen from 62 per cent to 50 per cent in 2009.
- The percentage of river lengths with high nitrate levels also decreased, between 2000 and 2009 - dropping from 39 to 29 per cent. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage increased from 36 to 39 per cent, but had gradually fallen despite the small increase in 2004, and was at its lowest level in 2009.

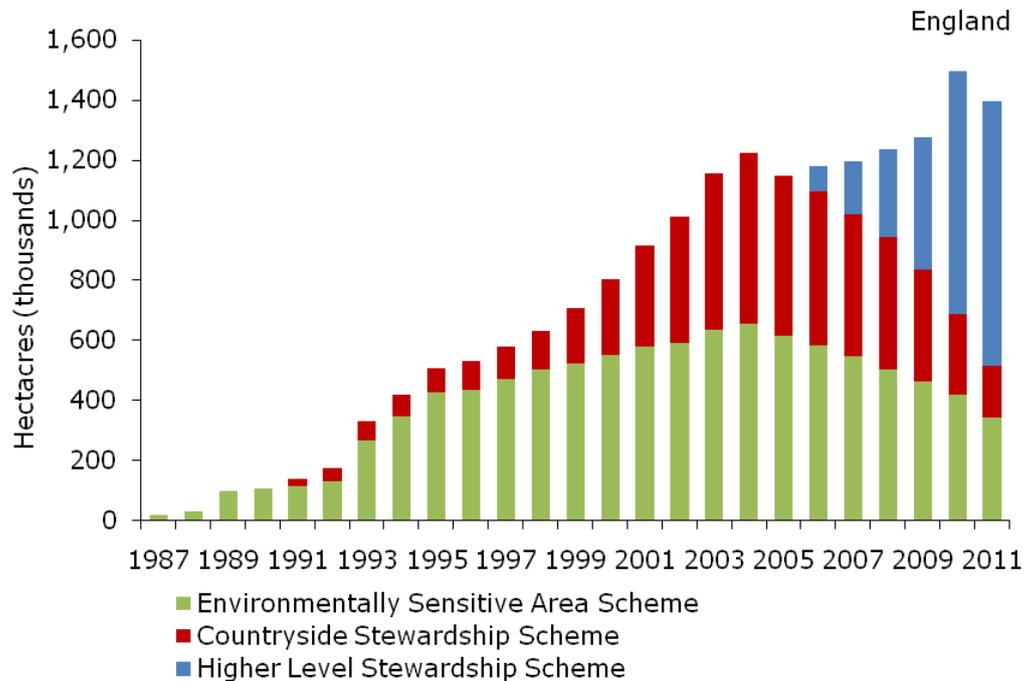
Assessment of change in river lengths of high nutrient levels			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Percentage of rivers with high phosphorus levels	✓ 1990-2009	✓	Decreased (2009)
Percentage of rivers with high nitrate levels	✓ 1990-2009	✓	Decreased (2009)

## Theme: Reducing environmental pressures

### 22. Agricultural and forest area in environmental management schemes

#### 22a. Area of land in agri-environment schemes

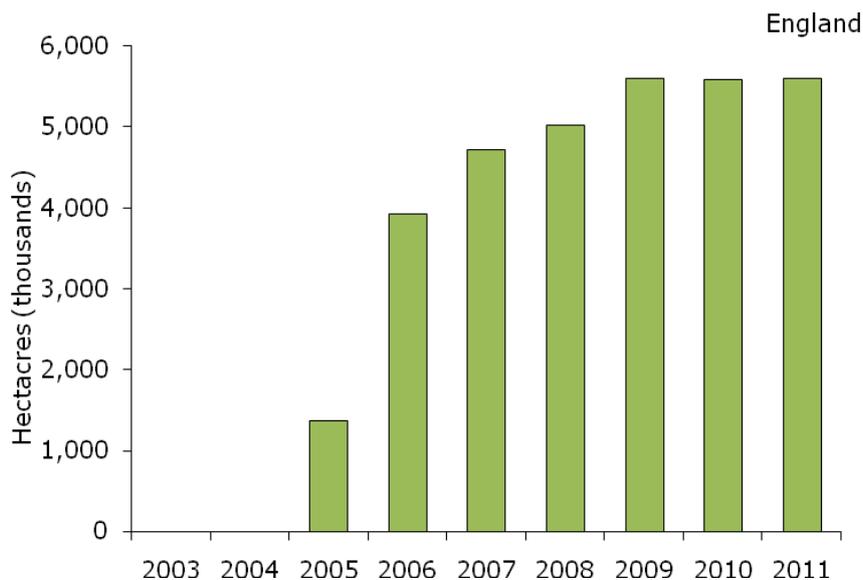
##### Area of land under targeted agri-environment scheme agreements, 1987 to 2011



**Note:** Systematic data collection started in 1992; areas from 1987-91 are estimated.

**Source:** Natural England, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

##### Area of land under the Entry Level Stewardship Scheme, 2003 to 2011

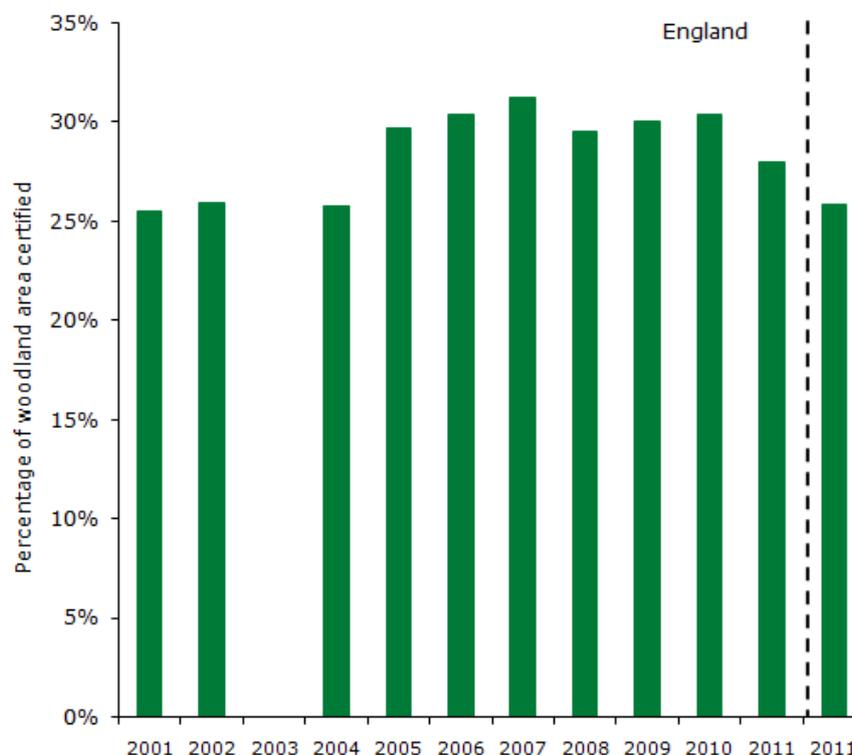


**Source:** Natural England, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

- There are two broad categories of agri-environment scheme in England: higher-level, targeted schemes that focus on parts of the farm or landscape that are of high environmental value or potential and the Entry-Level Scheme, which is a whole farm schemes with a simple set of prescriptions providing basic environmental protection and enhancement.
- In 2011, the area under targeted agri-environment schemes was just less than 1.4 million hectares.
- The area of land in Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) shows significant uptake since the pilot schemes were introduced in 2003-4, reaching over 5.6 million hectares in 2011 (over 60 per cent of available farmland). From 2010 the ELS data includes data for Upland Entry Level Schemes.

Assessment of change of agricultural land sustainably managed			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Targeted agri-environment schemes	✓ 1987-2011	✓	Decreased (2010)
Entry-level agri-environment schemes	⊕	✓ 2005	No change (2010)

## 22b. Percentage of woodland in England certified as sustainably managed, 2001 to 2011



**Notes:** 1. Figures relate to certificates that were valid up to the 31st March 2011. 2. The dotted discontinuity line shows a change in the data set in 2011 to include revised woodland area data from the National Forest Inventory together with geographical data for Forestry Commission land.

**Source:** Forestry Commission.

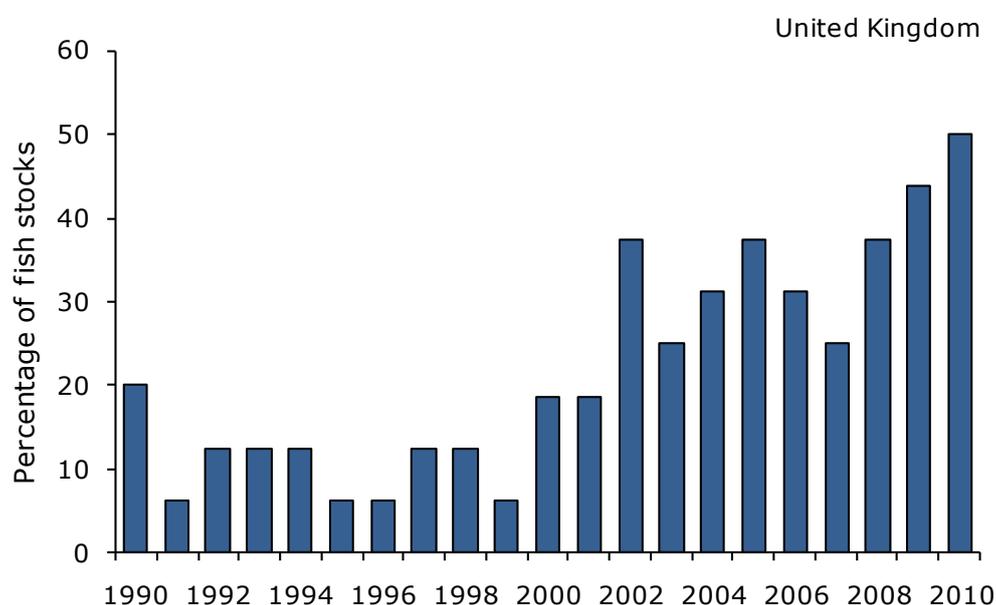
- The second part of this indicator shows the percentage of woodland area in England that is certified against agreed environmental standards. Woodland certification assesses management practices and requires that wood products are harvested sustainably and that important wildlife habitats are not negatively impacted by management.
- Across England, the proportion of woodland certified as sustainably managed rose from 26 per cent in 2001 to 30 per cent in 2010 to 28 per cent in 2011.
- In 2011, the Forestry Commission introduced a more accurate geographic simulation of uptake of certification. A revised estimate using the new methodology (26 per cent) is shown in the chart although the figure derived from the previous method has been used in the assessment.

<b>Assessment of change of woodland sustainably managed</b>			
	<b>Long term</b>	<b>Since 2000</b>	<b>Latest year</b>
Percentage of woodland certified as sustainably managed		 2001	Decreased (2010)

## Theme: Reducing environmental pressures

### 23. Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits

#### Percentage of fish stocks harvested sustainably and at full reproductive capacity, 1990 to 2010



**Notes:** Based on 16 stocks for which accurate time series are available derived from stock assessment reports.

**Source:** International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture and Science.

- The indicator shows the percentage of fish stocks in seas around the UK that are harvested sustainably and are at full reproductive capacity.
- The proportion of assessed fish stocks harvested sustainably and at full reproductive capacity varied between 6 and 13 per cent in the period 1991 to 1999, before increasing to 20 per cent in 2000 and 50 per cent in 2010. The highest proportions were in 2009 and 2010.
- Despite this improvement over time, the majority of UK fish stocks have either been below full reproductive capacity or have been harvested unsustainably each year between 2001 and 2008.

Assessment of change in percentage of fish stocks harvested within safe limits			
	Long term	Since 2000	Latest year
Sustainable fisheries	✓ 1990-2010	✓	Increased (2010)

## Theme: Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy

### 24. Biodiversity data and information for decision making

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This indicator is under development and no assessment has been made.

In the review of the indicators for *Biodiversity 2020*, a small number of gaps were identified where there were no current indicators for particular outcomes. Indicators for reporting on decision making were identified as a gap and work is now underway to review data availability and to develop options for a new indicator on 'availability and use of biodiversity data in decision making'.

Work is underway to identify datasets that may be suitable for developing this indicator.

## Further information

### Enquiries about indicators or this publication

This publication has been produced by Natural Environment Science, Environment Statistics Service and Biodiversity Science Teams (Defra), working with Natural England.

### Editorial/Project team

Defra: Mark Stevenson, Stephen Hall, Clare Winton, Rik Van Kerckhove and Pat Thomas, Prina Desai. Natural England: Gavin Measures and Keith Porter.

We would welcome feedback on this publication. If you have any comments or questions about the published biodiversity indicators please contact:

- E-mail: [enviro.statistics@Defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enviro.statistics@Defra.gsi.gov.uk)
- Address: Environment Statistics Service, Defra, 6F Ergon House, c/o Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR.

Information on other environmental statistics is also available on Defra's webpages at <http://www.Defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/biodiversity/>.

For enquiries about wider aspects of biodiversity conservation please refer to the Natural England's website below, or contact Defra's Biodiversity Programme:

- E-mail: [Biodiversity@Defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Biodiversity@Defra.gsi.gov.uk)
- Address: Biodiversity Programme, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Zone 1/10b, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EB.

For enquiries about the future development of the indicators, please contact: Mark Stevenson at [mark.stevenson@Defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mark.stevenson@Defra.gsi.gov.uk) or Gavin Measures [gavin.measures@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:gavin.measures@naturalengland.org.uk)

### National Statistics

Some key Governmental statistical outputs are designated as National Statistics. The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the Statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the Code of Practice. The Code is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example whilst the Code requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Previously referred to as England Biodiversity Strategy Indicators, this publication is not currently designated as Defra National Statistics. However it was included in the UK Statistics Authority's *Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics of Statistics on Sustainability and the Environment in England and the UK* ([www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/.../report-173---statistics-on-sustainability-and-the-environment-in-england-and-the-uk.pdf](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/.../report-173---statistics-on-sustainability-and-the-environment-in-england-and-the-uk.pdf)).

The UK Statistics Authority concluded that subject to Defra meeting requirements set out in the Assessment report, this indicator publication should be designated as National Statistics. At the time of publication the assessment process has not been completed, meaning National Statistics designation for this statistical output is pending.

Designation does not mean that all the individual statistics presented are National Statistics in their own right. Rather it means that the compilation and publication has been undertaken in compliance with the Code of Practice.

The following statistics presented in the publication are National Statistics in their own right:

5. Species in the wider countryside: farmland (bird statistics only)
6. Species in the wider countryside: woodland (bird statistics only)
7. Species in the wider countryside: wetlands (bird statistics only)
21. Trends in pressures on biodiversity – water quality
- 22b. Area of forestry land under certified sustainable management schemes

Although all other statistics in this compendium are not designated as National Statistics individually this is not to suggest that they should be regarded as being less reliable, as all are subject to rigorous quality assurance by the data owners and general quality assurance by Defra and the Natural England. The presentation of the statistics, the commentary, and the traffic light assessments have been overseen and quality assured by Defra Statisticians.