



Woods for Nature - next steps

Environment



Our biodiversity programme until 2014

What Forestry Commission Scotland aims to do in the second phase of its biodiversity programme.



In 2008 Forestry Commission Scotland published Woods for Nature - Our Biodiversity Programme, setting out our contribution to meeting Scotland's biodiversity aims under the Scottish Forestry and Biodiversity Strategies. It included our priorities and a programme of activities for the first three years of the programme up to 2011.

We have reported annually on achievement of the programme and the latest report for 2010-11 can be seen on our website at www.forestry.gov.uk/woodsfornature

Overall achievement has been good in most areas. Much has been achieved, including improvements in the condition of many designated sites and extensive work to expand and improve native woods, but of course there is also much more to be done.

The programme has established a clear framework for prioritising our work and this approach is starting to show results; for example species work is now focussed more strongly on a few key species instead of being too thinly spread.

We believe the objectives and key actions published in 2008 are still broadly the right ones. We have updated our list of activities to achieve these priorities for the period up to 31 March 2014: these are set out in the table. These activities are closely aligned to those in the Scottish Forestry Strategy implementation plan (www.forestry.gov.uk/sfs) to make sure that we are helping to deliver it.

During this period we expect there will be a refreshed Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and associated targets, and so we will keep our Biodiversity Programme open to review as these develop. We will also continue to report annually on our progress in delivering the programme.

Our biodiversity programme until 2014

Aims*	Key actions*	Focus until 2014
1. Help to halt the loss of biodiversity and reverse previous losses through targeted action for species and habitats	Help safeguard designated nature sites (p) **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working with SNH to help land managers improve the condition of designated woodlands on private land. • Maintain recent good progress towards achieving or maintaining good condition for designated sites on the national forest estate. • Work with SNH and land managers to support action to prevent or reverse damage caused by woodland to areas designated for non-woodland features.
	Help meet targets for priority habitats (under the UKBAP), especially native woodland habitats and open habitats associated with woodlands (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the delivery of targets for expansion, improvement and restoration of Scotland's native and ancient woodland habitats, using the information from the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland to prioritise and promote action. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promote more action for the less common priority woodland habitat types - increase the restoration of PAWS on private land - seek more use of natural regeneration in and around semi-natural woods - develop habitat networks around core areas of high conservation value, including ancient woods. • Publish and implement plans to manage and restore areas of priority open habitats on the national forest estate.
	Help meet targets for priority species associated with woodlands (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update by 2012 our programmes of action and monitoring for 6 key species of Scottish woodlands (black grouse, capercaillie, red squirrel, pearl-bordered fritillary, chequered skipper, juniper). • Promote web-based guidance and tools for managing woodland habitats for priority and protected species and use this to influence support measures in SRDP 2. • Implement the national programme for red squirrel strongholds. • Review and enhance grant measures to help woodland species in SRDP2.
	Promote good practice to safeguard protected species (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update our guidance for forest managers, including protection of red squirrels, golden eagles and other birds..
	Provide advice to planning authorities to help ensure suitable protection of high biodiversity value woods in development policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help planning authorities to identify and conserve woods of high biodiversity value, using results from the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland.

* The aims and key actions in Woods for Nature, which are aligned to those of the current Scottish Biodiversity and Forestry Strategies.

** (P) = Priority actions as defined in the Scottish Forestry Strategy

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2. Broader action for biodiversity at a landscape or ecosystem scale	Reduce the impacts of deer on woodland biodiversity (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SNH and other stakeholders to use the new Code of Practice for Deer Management to help protect woodlands and their biodiversity. • Continue targeted deer management effort on the national forest estate to reduce negative impacts on woodland biodiversity.
	Plan woodlands to contribute to habitat networks (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update our maps and guidance for developing native woodland networks using new woodland map data, and feed this into integrated habitat network planning. • Strengthen core network areas and key linkages, mainly by expanding or restoring native and ancient woodlands. • Encourage new floodplain, riparian and other wetland woods that will contribute to biodiversity and wider ecosystem services.
	Diversify planted woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote increased use of native species for wood products such as woodfuel and quality broadleaves. • Carry out further work to evaluate alternative tree species in response to risks from pests and diseases and climate change, including assessing potential biodiversity values. • Work with partners to establish more treeline and montane woods.
	Tackle invasive non-native species (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish guidance and develop protocols to tackle invasive non-native species. • Work with SNH and others to develop a national strategy to control rhododendron, including a long term eradication plan on the national forest estate.
	Lead the development of large-scale forest landscape restoration projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead a Scottish landscape-scale ecological restoration initiative to promote best practice and stimulate future projects.
	Promote supply and use of suitable genotypes for native tree and shrub planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance efforts with nurseries and collectors to increase the supply of Scottish-sourced planting stock.

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3. Increase awareness and public enjoyment of woodland biodiversity	Help people to enjoy woodland environments and engage more people in woodland conservation (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote public use of diverse woodlands, especially through the Woods in and around Towns and Central Scotland Green Network programmes. • Work with partners to encourage volunteers to record wildlife in woodlands and enhance our facilities for wildlife watching on the national forest estate. • Provide conservation tasks for volunteers on the national forest estate. • Publish web-based guidance on woodland biodiversity for use by Local Biodiversity Action Plans.
	Encourage the education sector to make more use of woodlands (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver more woodland awareness days for teachers and others.
4. Improve knowledge of biodiversity and ensure it is integrated into decision-making	Integrate biodiversity into decision-making, best practice guidance and forestry support measures. (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote awareness of revised UK Forests and Biodiversity guidelines and related good practice guidance. • Develop additional good practice guidance where necessary to complement the UKFS and guidelines. • Publish advice on the predicted effects of climate change on native woodland ecosystems in Scotland and implications for policy and management. • Help design measures and guidance for biodiversity outcomes for a new Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) from 2014.
	Implement the Native Woodlands Survey of Scotland and the National Forest Inventory to establish a baseline on the extent and composition of woodlands (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2013, complete the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland and publish national and regional reports and guidance. • Ensure that the analyses and reports of data from the National Forest Inventory will meet Scotland's needs for biodiversity related information.
	Improve the evidence base to secure biodiversity benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Forestry Commission and others to influence collaborative research projects on biodiversity and ecosystem services. • Publish guidance on converting plantations to native woodland.
	Enhance systems and guidance for monitoring and recording woodland biodiversity (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and publish baseline indicators of High Nature Value Farmland and Forestry. • Work with Scottish Government to develop systems for recording biodiversity-related spatial information for SRDP schemes in woodlands. • Work with partners to improve information on status and trends for priority and protected species.

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Forestry Commission Scotland serves as the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government and is responsible to Scottish Ministers.

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