

Priority Delivery Areas for Landscape Scale Conservation in the South West (2011-15)

Together, this set of Biodiversity Delivery Areas (BDAs) represents an ambitious vision to establish a network of strategic areas for protecting wildlife across the South west of England. In each county Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs) are helping new collaborations and projects form in the BDAs. If you are interested in finding out more about the work going on in one of BDAs get in touch with your [Local Biodiversity partnership](#) to see how you can become involved.

These web pages:

- Outline the wider context for why it is so important to protect and enhance our natural environment at the local level;
- Identify over 50 locations where the best opportunities exist to conserve, enhance and create wildlife rich habitats over the next five years;
- Encourages all those with an interest in wildlife to work better together collaboratively in these 50 locations;
- Provide information about nature conservation priorities so that decision makers, local communities, and individuals can contribute to, and benefit from, this work;
- Encourage organisations, communities and individuals to step forward and align themselves to this new approach to help deliver this vision.

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Introduction

The identified 50 key locations across the region have been termed 'Biodiversity Delivery Areas' (BDAs). Public, private and 3rd sector organisations will work in these areas to secure and restore, habitats, landscapes, and nationally/locally important species that make the South West so special. This is not an exhaustive list meant to capture all the important conservation work happening in the region, but rather it's a spatial representation of where local biodiversity partnerships believe landscape scale conservation and ecosystem recovery efforts should be directed over the next five years.

The process for identifying these important areas has involved many local, county and regional organisations plus representatives of national bodies. This work has brought people together building better relationships between groups, organisations and individuals.

What do we mean by a landscape scale approach?

A landscape approach looks beyond single sites or habitats to wider areas of multiple habitats and species generally over 10,000ha. These areas will also be generally defined by a range of different land uses and have the potential to deliver a range of public benefits such as flood alleviation, carbon capture or food production. A landscape scale approach will involve a wide range of partners and local communities working together to identify what needs to happen in the area and find solutions together to help achieve this.

What do we mean by Delivery in this plan?

When we talk about delivery of biodiversity projects within the BDAs we mean this to cover any activity which brings benefits to wildlife or habitats or enhances understanding of *these contributing to the objectives for the area as set out and agreed by the partnership working in the area*. This includes (this list is by no means exhaustive):

- Practical work on the ground for habitats or species such as scrub clearance or ditch management to create, restore habitat;
- Surveys or other monitoring work;
- Information giving - either directly through signage etc or walks and events; Educational/awareness raising work;
- Project planning and implementation;
- Gains through planning;
- Gains through Agri-environment schemes.

The BDAs represent the new 'landscape scale' approach for conserving wildlife. A review of [England's wildlife sites and ecological networks \(pdf\)](#) has also been published which makes recommendations for the future management of our wildlife, including a need to think about how our sites fit together into a landscape scale approach.

What makes the SW natural environment so special?

The South West is an exceptionally wildlife rich area, which is reflected in the number of designated sites across the region. It supports the largest amount of semi-natural habitat of any English region. There are 978 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) nationally important for their habitat and species interest. However, it is not just the diversity of habitats and species found in the SW that make it special but also the mosaic of inter-connected wildlife areas and landscapes across the region.

- 978 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- 2 National Parks
- 12 AONBs
- England's only statutory Marine Nature Reserve around the Island of Lundy.
- 69 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), including eight marine SACs
- 15 Special Protection Areas
- 20% of England's remaining ancient woodland spread across the region.

The national importance of the natural environment in the South West means that we have a particular responsibility to care for and extend our priority habitats and species, those identified in the national [Biodiversity Action Plan](#). There are [42 priority BAP habitats](#) and [838 BAP species](#) identified in the South West. The following table highlights just how many of the priority habitats found in the SW form a significant proportion of the total national resource.

Rank	SW Priority BAP habitats	% of national habitat found in SW
1	Maritime cliff and slope	71%
2	Lowland calcareous grassland	57%
3	Saline lagoons	38%
4	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	35%
5	Lowland meadows	27%
6	Coastal sand dunes	26%
7	Purple moor grass and rush pasture	25%
8	Native Woodland	24%
9	Intertidal mud flats	22%
10	Fen	20%
11	lowland heathland	19%
12	Wood Pasture and Parkland	15%
13	Coastal vegetated shingle	14%

14	Upland heath	12%
15	Reedbeds	11%
16	Blanket bog	9%
17	Standing Open Water and Canals (Inc. Ponds, Mesotrophic Lakes and Eutrophic Standing Water, Oligotrophic and Dystrophic Lakes)	9%
18	Lowland dry acid grassland	6%
19	Lowland raised bog	4%
<p>Note 1: For 23 (i.e. more than half of) SW priority habitats have either no up to date national inventory data for the habitat is held or it is incomplete.</p> <p>Note 2: Marine data has not formed part of this analysis as relatively little data is available and it is currently subject to a parallel process. This information will be incorporated when available.</p> <p>Note 3: This data is subject to change as habitat inventories are often incomplete. Please note that these figures are therefore for guidance only.</p>		

Why is it so important to protect and increase?

The natural environment of the South West, including its wildlife, is a key regional economic asset vital for those who live, work and visits the region. Looking after our environment makes good sense not only for its own sake but also for the breadth of public goods- or ecosystem services that it provides. These benefits

Ecosystem Services are defined by the UK National Ecosystem Assessment as:

‘Ecosystem services are the benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living. Examples of ecosystem services include products such as food and water, regulation of floods, soil erosion and disease outbreaks, and non-material benefits such as recreational and spiritual benefits in natural areas. The term ‘services’ is usually used to encompass the tangible and intangible benefits that humans obtain from ecosystems, which are sometimes separated into ‘goods’ and ‘services’.’

More about Ecosystem Services can be found via the following links:

[UK National Ecosystem Services Assessment](#)
[Millennium Ecosystem Services Assessment](#)
[Natural England Ecosystem Services Pilots](#)

include: clean air, clean and plentiful water, productive soils, supplies of raw materials - food, fuel, construction materials, productive land, rivers and seas, climate regulation, flood protection, high quality landscapes and heritage (Source: [SWEN Environmental Priorities 2010 \(pdf\)](#)). Securing a sustainable, healthy and prosperous future for the South West must therefore include provision to restore and enhance our landscapes and ecosystems

Building Better Places for Wildlife and People

This plan is a response to the need to take a radically different approach to conserving wildlife and habitats. We are setting out better ways of doing things in order to 'halt the loss of biodiversity and restore ecosystem functioning' in line with the [European 2020 target for biodiversity](#).

The recent Lawton report (2010) supports this approach. The report recommends enhancing England's ecological networks, which it states 'have become widely recognised as an effective response to conserve wildlife in environments that have become fragmented by human activities (source: [Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network \(pdf\)](#)). The report also makes recommendations about how an improvement in this network can be achieved and its philosophy underpins the work outlined in this Delivery Plan.

An ecological network comprises a suite of high quality sites which collectively contain the diversity and area of habitat that are needed to support species and which have ecological connections between that enable species, or at least their genes to move. Source: Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network

With this Plan we are embracing a fresh approach to delivery of nature conservation - one which brings real benefits to both people and wildlife, now and into the future. This approach is still at an early stage but there are developing examples of good practice to learn from and build on; for example [The Wildlife Trusts Living Landscapes](#), and the [RSPB's Futurescapes](#), and [The Neroche Project](#).

Our long term vision

This delivery plan is underpinned by [Nature Map](#) (published by BioSW in 2006) which shows the best areas to maintain and expand terrestrial wildlife habitats at a landscape scale. Nature Map mapped a large number of areas which need enhancement over the next 50 years, this plan is the first step in making this long term vision a reality by setting out the priority areas where we should be working together over the next five years. This will help meet [our targets](#).

Biodiversity Delivery Areas

BioSW worked closely with its [Local BAP partnerships](#) (LBPs) and other delivery organisations, local authorities and public bodies to identify Biodiversity Delivery Areas (BDAs). The process was run at a county level, benefiting from local expertise and reflecting local priorities and opportunities. The BDAs were developed to meet the following three key underlying criteria to guide future delivery in these areas:

- Will the project deliver a priority BAP habitat that the SW is best placed to deliver nationally (i.e. is it a SW responsibility)?
- How does the proposed initiative contribute to / fit in with delivery of other social and economic 'public goods' in the landscape?

- How does the proposed initiative address and put into practice climate change adaptation

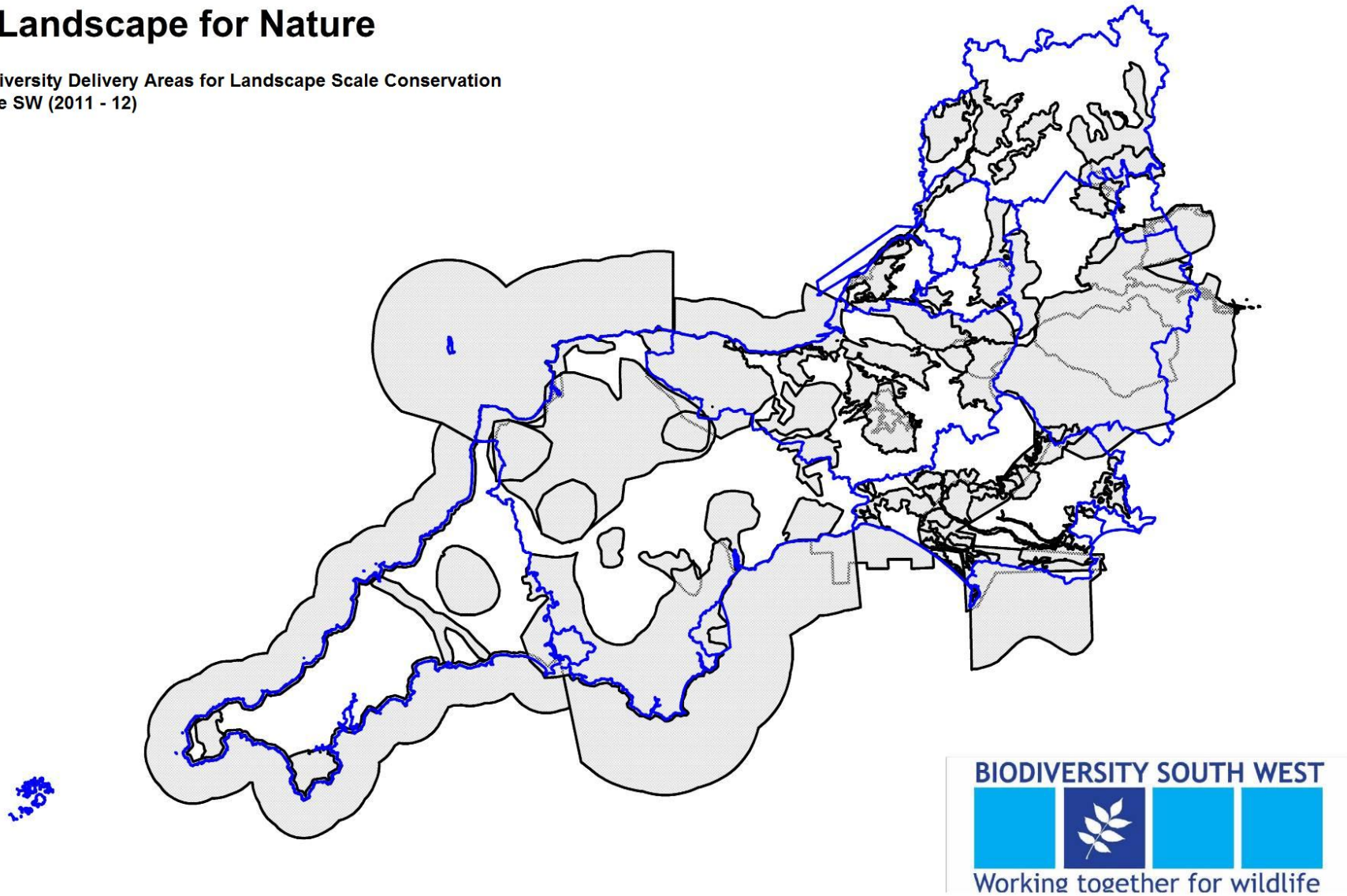
There are 50 Biodiversity Delivery Areas (BDA) identified in this plan, and an additional 5 cross cutting projects.

The Biodiversity Delivery Areas are presented in two parts:

- A map which spatially identifies each Biodiversity Delivery Area that will be the focus of delivery effort over the next five years;
- Detailed information about each Biodiversity Delivery Area including its wildlife interest, the partners already involved in projects and future potential for wildlife and delivery of public benefits. This section will be continuously updated by partners as projects develop.

A Landscape for Nature

Biodiversity Delivery Areas for Landscape Scale Conservation
in the SW (2011 - 12)



Piloting landscape scale delivery

There are many examples of landscape scale delivery across the country (as well as in the SW - see comments box). To build on this experience the [England Biodiversity Group](#) are undertaking a national initiative to pilot integrated landscape scale delivery and different ways of working to achieve project aims. BioSW have worked closely with national and local partners to select one of our Biodiversity Delivery Areas to form part of this national pilot suite of eight [Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Areas](#) (IBDAs). The Tamar to Exe IBDA has been selected on the basis that it offers a good opportunity for demonstrating the landscape scale conservation approach and for testing different ways of working to achieve a collaborative integrated landscape scale delivery project. It has been selected on the basis that:

Landscape Scale Working in the South West

There are numerous examples of landscape scale working in the SW and much more of the learning from this work will be captured on this website to help other projects develop successfully. Examples include:

[Living Landscapes](#)

[Futurescapes](#)

River catchment projects

[Upstream Thinking](#)

[Ancient woodland priority areas](#)

It incorporates two parts -

- A social and GI element incorporating Plymouth and Torbay
- Interlinking South Devon area incorporating rural/urban, coastal/marine, agriculture/nutrient management;

The emphasis will be on learning from what happens in this area and passing this experience on to help ensure successful delivery in all of the BDAs. Work is already underway in the Tamar to Exe IBDA which is beginning to identify the measures and practices needed to be successful. Lessons learnt here will be captured on this website alongside experiences from other landscape scale delivery running in the SW.

Some Principles for Delivery in BDAs

Each BDA will adopt a variety of different approaches to planning, engagement and delivery. Sharing best practice and successes, alongside the lessons learnt, will be crucial to make best use of resources and achieve the kind of progress required if we are to secure and rebuild biodiversity in the SW initially. We have identified a number of areas that need improvement or offer opportunities for us to become more effective at delivery:

1. Collaborative

Working

Too often the effectiveness of biodiversity delivery is hampered by projects developed in isolation or through ineffective partnership working. Collaborative working is essential, with potential partners coming together prior to project inception to pool resources and objectives to help achieve better outcomes. These collaborations need to be broad and include all of

those with an interest in the BDA and especially those who can work together to deliver environmental, social and economic outcomes. Each of these collaborations will need to develop a sense of trust and openness to be effective and to develop mutually beneficial outcomes. Collaborations should include all of those with an interest - the local community, landowners, Local Authorities working with Local Biodiversity Partnerships, charities and public bodies who can help facilitate delivery. Working in this way will also help access essential resources and foster collaborations that enrich local communities, boost local economies and their linkages to their neighbors and their environment, both at land and at sea.

2. Finding the time and money for successful delivery

Lack of money and staff/people is a well recognised constraint in wildlife projects. A co-ordinated approach amongst different partners to agree priorities and a funding/resources implementation plan will help overcome this. This should identify the skills and funds needed to achieve project objectives, and then resources and organisational aims should be pooled to identify the best solutions to overcome these constraints; be that joint funding bids, sharing of skilled, or staff. New ways of working together will have to be forged to secure better resources for all. It is also essential that we become better at using the resources and tools available.

3. Wider Public Benefits from the natural environment

The restoration/delivery of 'ecosystem services' will be a central element of the Biodiversity Delivery Areas identified in this plan. We will help develop ways of measuring objectively and demonstrating the benefits that improvements to nature conservation can provide to ecosystem services - for example, positive impacts on diffuse pollution, soil conservation, flood alleviation, public access, and recreation.

4. Sustainability

We want to ensure that benefits delivered in these areas are sustainable into the future, and are beneficial to biodiversity, local people and the economy. We want projects which work across the board to identify common solutions with local communities, landowners and businesses that create dynamic collaborations and projects which respond to local needs to create sustainable solutions. For example long term grazing is needed to manage grassland habitats, and to ensure this a market value needs to be secured for the products of the grazing animals needed to do this. Local woodfuel markets are another example of where economic drivers and biodiversity aims can come together; it must be central to delivery to help build these mechanisms into early project development. Financial stability is also a factor in securing long term change, for example Agri-environment schemes provide a mechanism to pay for conservation measures. We need to work together to identify mechanisms to retain these benefits.

5. Collaboration with Local landowners, managers and tenants

Landowners, land managers and tenants are core to the success of this plan, and to the positive management of the environment of the SW. It is essential that the landowning community is an early partner in any landscape scale delivery project. We must have a more proactive approach to delivery, and to

do this we see landowners as integral to the development of projects and shaping successful delivery on the ground. We want projects that help deliver economic outcomes for landowners helping businesses to respond to new opportunities whilst delivering positive wildlife benefits.

Collaboration:

- The act of working with another or others on a joint project;
- Something created by working jointly with another or others.

6. Biodiversity doesn't stop at urban boundaries

Towns, cities and villages are as important to wildlife as rural areas, and for many species have become a refuge. Green Infrastructure (GI) planning provides a useful tool in shaping how biodiversity can be enhanced in urban areas alongside other infrastructures. GI is the network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lies within and between the South West's cities, towns and villages which provides multiple social, economic and environmental benefits and values. GI offers a strategic approach to planning and lends itself well to delivery at a landscape scale. (Source: Green Infrastructure Web Portal <http://www.ginsw.org.uk>). The delivery of BDAs and GI are mutually beneficial and will help bridge the perceived gap between urban and rural delivery and should form part of the debate and tools available for delivering BDAs.

How will we know we have achieved what we want?

Reporting and monitoring progress is essential to be able to gauge where we are with any activity and to ensure we are meeting our desired outcomes. We will be working with national and local partners to test different monitoring methods and tools in the pilot IBDAs before rolling out to the BDAs. Tools such as [BARS](#) will be essential in reporting back on progress. Local Record Centers and local recorders will be essential to helping us to provide baseline information on our BDAs to provide a picture of where we are starting from and help to develop monitoring to track progress. As this area of work develops this page will be updated to reflect lessons learnt and needs for each BDA.

Timeline and next steps

Work starts now on the BDAs and in each county the LBPs are bringing partners together to help new collaborations and projects form in the BDAs. If you are interested in finding out more about the work going on in BDAs [get in touch with your Local Biodiversity partnership](#) to see how you can become involved.