



Wiltshire Council

The Natural Environment and LNRS

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State of Nature

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in Europe.

Declining trends for many birds and mammals

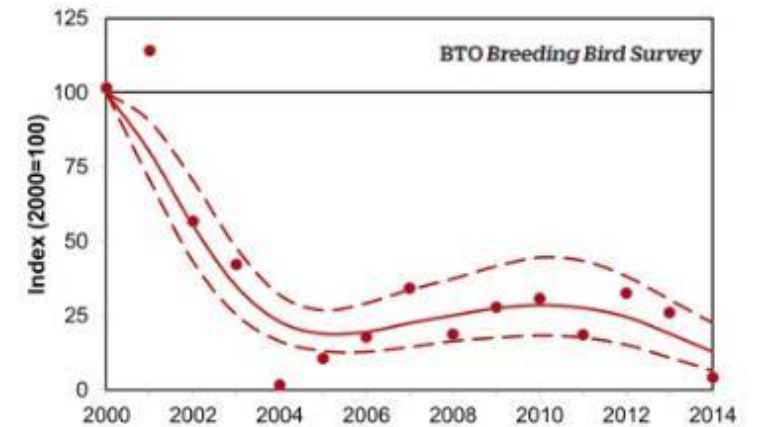
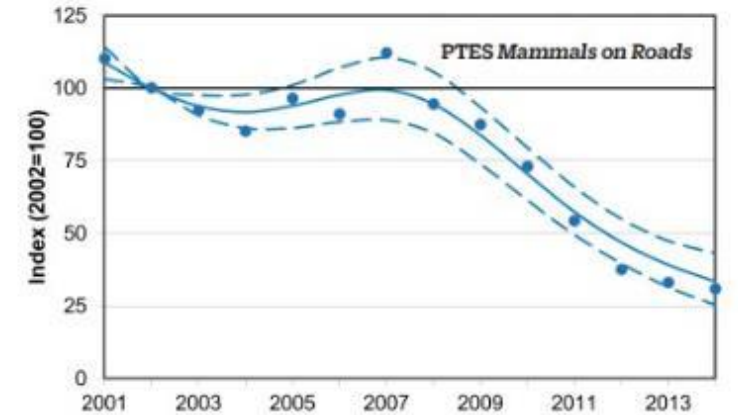
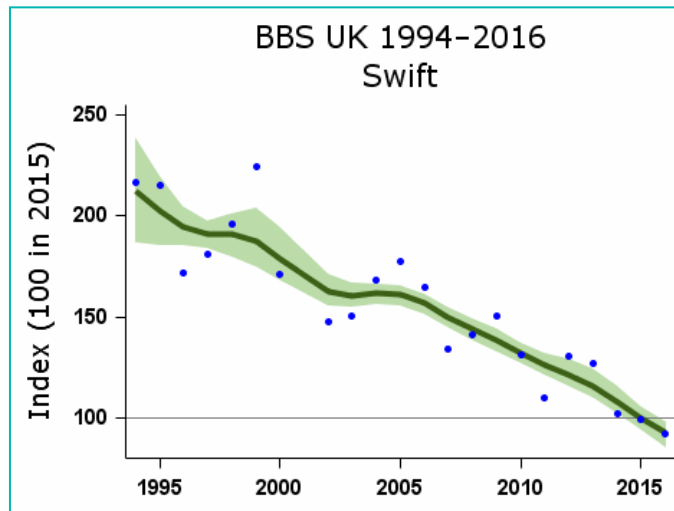
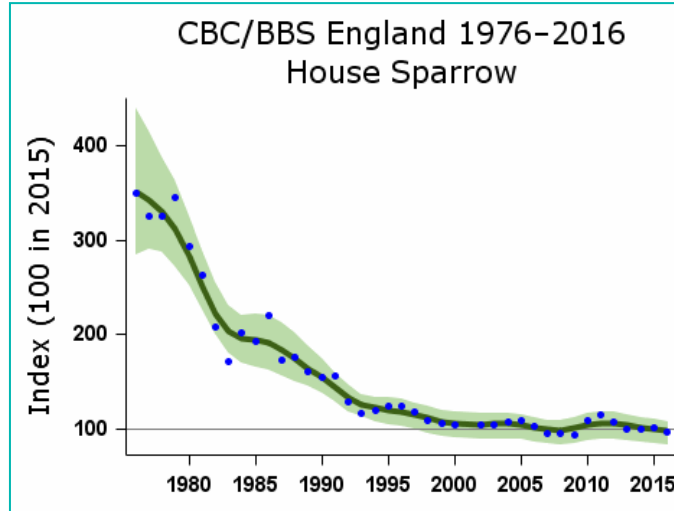


Figure 1 Surveys recording hedgehogs in rural areas: solid lines show smoothed trends; dashed lines show 95% confidence limits. Estimates for each year (circles) are calculated as an index relative to the 'base year', either 2002 (*Mammals on Roads*) or 2000 (*Breeding Bird Survey*).

Wildlife decline



Since WWII, the UK has lost

- 40% of lowland heathland
- 50% of ancient broadleaved woodland
- 67% of hedgerows
- 80% of chalk grassland
- 97% of lowland flower rich grassland

Much of the existing habitat in Wiltshire is too fragmented and vulnerable

Rivers are in a heavily degraded state from centuries of being re-shaped for different purposes.



The Environment Act 2021

Drive forward nature recovery and reverse nature's decline.

Part 1 – Environmental Governance

Improving the natural environment

- Environmental Targets
- Environmental Improvement Plans
- Environmental Monitoring
- Environmental Principles
- The Office for Environmental Protection

Part 2 – Wider Measures

- Waste management & resource efficiency
- Air quality
- Water – including storm outflow reduction
- **Nature and biodiversity**
 - Revised NERC duty
 - Biodiversity net gain
 - Local Nature Recovery Strategies
 - Protected sites and species strategies
 - Tree felling & planting
- Conservation Covenants

Biodiversity Net Gain Opportunities

Biodiversity net gain will drive investment in nature from the development sector

For Nature



- More and better habitats that are better connected
- Contribute towards local & national nature recovery

For People & Places



- Doorstep nature benefitting health and well-being
- More attractive places to live and work

For the Economy



- De-risks development consenting process
- Increases financial + natural capital asset values

BNG and LNRS

The [biodiversity metric](#) – which calculates biodiversity value (in units) before and after development – includes a 15% uplift in units generated in locations proposed by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to encourage developers to focus on these places where the benefit will be greatest.

Each Local Nature Recovery Strategy will map specific opportunities for taking priority action for nature recovery and the use of “nature-based solutions” to wider environmental problems like flooding, climate change mitigation and adaptation or poor water quality.

LNRS – What and why

- Government's overall ambition is that LNRS will be a powerful new tool that will help the public, private and voluntary sectors work more effectively together for nature's recovery, and enable collective effort to be focussed where it will have most benefit.
- England-wide system of spatial strategies that establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits
- Key will be creating genuine local collaboration with a partnership of organisations and individuals working closely with each "responsible authority".

LNRS - Responsibility

Responsible Authority


- Wiltshire Council is the Provisional Responsible Authority that will be responsible for producing a LNRS that covers both Wiltshire and Swindon
- Formal appointment has been delayed and will come from the Defra SoS.

Regulations and statutory guidance

- These will play a key role in establishing how LNRSs must be prepared and what they should contain.
- Defra is waiting to lay regulations and publish statutory guidance. Precise timings are still being worked through and will need to be agreed with Ministers.

Funding

- Defra have committed to covering new burdens arising on local authorities from the Environment Act – including LNRSs.
- Defra has acknowledged concerns over the implications of delays on local authority ability to resource and prepare an LNRS. Defra intends to publish regulations and guidance ahead of making formal appointments and distributing further funding.
- There is an acceptance that the continued delays will mean that LNRS will not be in place for the majority of LA area by Nov 2023 when BNG is mandated at a minimum 10%



Provisional responsible authorities (RA) are not expected to begin preparing their LNRS until they are formally appointed, and regulations and guidance have been published.

Preparations should include:

- Identifying key stakeholders and partners
- Working with local partners to check if they are ready to support with LNRS preparation;
- Engaging other local authorities and national park authorities;
- Work with your local Natural England senior advisor;
- Identify key local datasets, and engaging with the Local Environmental Records Centre;
- Review local existing initiatives for supporting nature's recovery and how these may relate to preparing the LNRS.

Resources / Stakeholder Engagement

New opportunities

- Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund
- Community and Stakeholder Facilitator



Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund

Joint bid with Swindon BC to DEFRA /Forestry Commission

Awarded £294,800 over 2 year to:

- Recruit Woodland Officers to facilitate local small and large scale tree /woodland planting
- Develop a Woodland and Tree Strategy for Wiltshire
- Recruit volunteer community 'Tree Wardens' to champion trees and identify local opportunities
- Help with grant funding applications
- Link communities with partners and landowners
- Support the development of local provenance tree nursery(s)

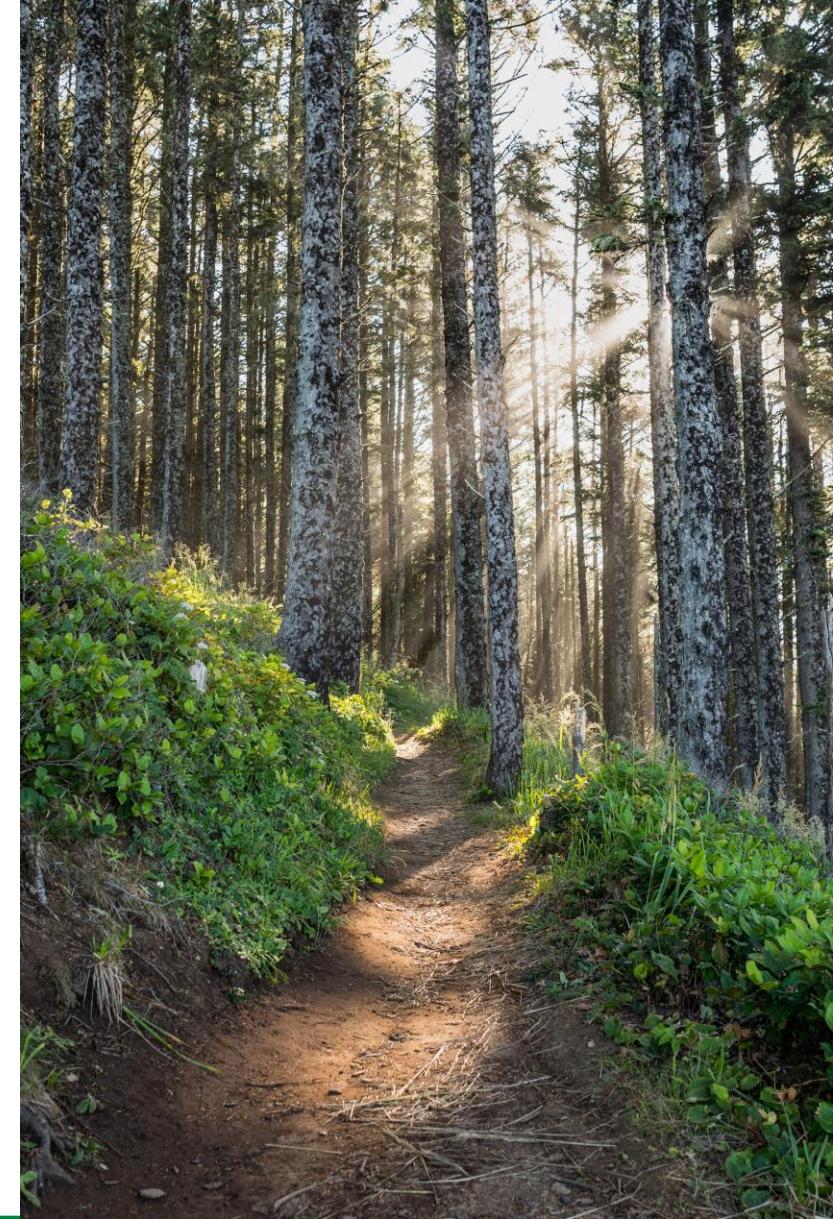
Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund

Targets in the bid to help communities, partners and landowners plant woodland/trees. For Wiltshire these are:

111Ha	2023-24
222Ha	2024-25

Once Woodland Officers have been recruited we will engage with:

Town & Parish Councils (Community Area Boards)
Farmers and landowners (Farm clusters, NP, AONB)



Community Environmental Facilitator

- Natural England funding circa £20K up to March 23
- Pilot project work with communities on local nature recovery using the Community Environmental Toolkit
- Based on the successful DEFRA farm cluster facilitators project
- Aims to repeat this by facilitating clusters of community groups, charities, Parish and Town Councils at the settlement level
- Will help with bids for funding, building project partnerships, and bringing local expertise together



Local Nature Recovery Strategies are an important part of an ambitious package of measures introduced in the Environment Act to reverse nature's decline.

Questions