

Biodiversity Action Plan

2016-2017

It's part of our
Blueprint for Yorkshire



YorkshireWater

Our Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) outlines what we set out to achieve between 2015 and 2020, and highlights how we are doing so far. It will be updated and published on an annual basis.

Management of protected sites:

1. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

SSSI's are nationally designated conservation sites that are protected through a number of laws. As a large regional landowner, Yorkshire Water owns a number of these sites and has a resulting duty to manage them appropriately.

Performance Commitment Measure – Agreed and audited within our business plan

Target for March 2020:

Maintain and manage our 11,339 Ha of SSSI land to ensure that at least 95% meets target condition (recovering or favourable status) and to work towards increasing the amount that is in favourable condition.

Progress 2016-2017:

We have undertaken a programme of grip blocking and sphagnum planting on Thurlstone and Snailsden Moors. We are undertaking trials focused on the diversification of mollinia in partnership with the National Trust and Moors for the Future. 99.97% of our SSSI's are now in Unfavourable Recovering condition or better (above our target of 98.5%).

Land and wildlife management:

2. Biodiversity improvements on our tenanted land

Yorkshire Water owns large areas of land in the watersheds of our reservoirs. This land is often leased to tenant farmers.

Target for March 2020:

We set out to maintain 98.5% of our tenanted land within an agri-environment scheme and to encourage tenants to introduce practices which benefit biodiversity.

Progress 2016-2017:

The target of 98.5% has been maintained

3. Invasive Non-native Species Management

INNS pose a very real risk to Yorkshire's environment and wildlife. They can also impact on our ability to provide safe drinking water and return waste water safely to the environment. Yorkshire Water is working to manage species already established within the region (both on our assets and at a wider catchment scale) and introduce biosecurity to our sites to prevent further spread.

Performance Commitment Measure – Agreed and audited within our business plan

Target for March 2020:

To undertake treatment of INNS on 50 ha of our land.

Progress 2016-2017:

We recognise that the overall 50 ha figure is limited in scope, only dealing with management of established species. Whilst we have been working towards this figure (putting in place a management plan for 40 ha of our land) we have been working with other stakeholders to treat INNS at a catchment scale and help manage species in a systematic manner along river corridors.

4. Habitats and species conservation

Under the Water Industry Act (1991), Yorkshire Water have a requirement to further the conservation and enhancement of flora and fauna as part of our operations.

Performance Commitment Measure – Agreed and audited within our business plan

Target for March 2020:

To conserve or enhance 25 ha of habitat

Progress 2016-2017:

We have been working with the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust and other partners to deliver wetland and river habitat enhancement schemes in Upper Wharfedale, with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust creating willow tit habitat along the Dearne valley, with The Conservation Volunteers managing riparian habitats along the River Hull, and with the Wild Trout Trust to run river restoration training sessions for local angling groups. In consultation with our regulators, a Biodiversity Enhancement Fund has been created to accept enhancement project submissions that fulfil certain criteria aligned with the government Biodiversity 2020 strategy. An initial call for proposals has led to 12 projects being selected for delivery in 2017-2019.

Woodland management

5. Forestry management

Target for March 2020:

We set out to retain certification for our 3,997 acres of forested land under the highly-acclaimed Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) accreditation criteria.

Progress 2015-2016:

We've successfully maintained Forestry Stewardship Council accreditation for all 3,997 acres of our forested land. This means the trees we grow and the timber we provide meets sustainability criteria which creates major benefits for woodland habitats, species, water and people.

6. Restoring ancient woodlands

Ancient woodlands are a very important habitat and support a huge range of wildlife, including more threatened species than any other UK habitat. Since 2010 we have been undertaking significant habitat restoration replacing conifer and other low biodiversity plantations with more diverse collections of native trees.

Performance Commitment Measure – Agreed and audited within our business plan**Target for March 2020:**

Working closely with the Forestry Commission, Natural England and Local Wildlife Groups we aim to restore, conserve and enhance ancient woodland habitat on 150 hectares of our land.

Progress 2016-2017:

Investigations have developed bespoke management plans for each site. 75 Ha of restoration projects have already been delivered between 2010 and 2015. We are now starting other restoration projects and have planted thousands of native species including oak, hazel and birch saplings to replace conifer plantations, and the ground flora is returning to its natural state with English bluebells and anemones now populating.

7. Veteran Trees

Yorkshire Water recognises that across our estate, we are custodians of several ancient or special trees whose value to nature is not often recognised. Using the Woodlands Trust Ancient Tree Hunt criteria, we are seeking to identify and safeguard these trees.

Target for March 2020:

To record and map the special (ancient, veteran, notable, other heritage and champion) trees on Yorkshire Water non-operational land following the principles developed through the Ancient Tree Hunt from the Woodland Trust. For actions to be undertaken to protect any trees identified as being vulnerable.

Progress 2016-2017:

The pilot site has been surveyed and plans are now being rolled out for the next prioritised sites.

River management

8. River restorations

Performance Commitment Measure – Agreed and audited within our business plan

Target for March 2020:

The company has no formal targets, but is researching and testing innovative solutions to mitigate for the impacts of our assets on downstream waterbodies. As such, we have been working with the Environment Agency to trial the use of different river restoration techniques to help improve local biodiversity.

Progress 2016-2017:

Post construction ecological monitoring is now taking place at our trial sites at Cudworth Dike, Esholt Hall, Ingbirchworth Reservoir and Swinsty reservoir.

9. Fish passes

As a company, Yorkshire Water owns a number of structures which can become a barrier preventing migrating fish moving upstream. Examples include weirs, reservoirs and water intakes. We have been working with the Environment Agency and a number of Rivers Trusts, to identify these barriers and provide solutions to enable fish passage.

Performance Commitment Measure – Agreed and audited within our business plan

Target for March 2020:

To enable fish passage across 14 weirs identified by the Environment Agency as being barriers to fish movements.

Progress 2016-2017:

Barriers were removed at two weir sites (upstream of Broomhead and Strines reservoirs). Design work has been completed on a number of other sites, with construction at two large weirs Jordan's Dam on the Don and Langsett weir on the Little Don, scheduled for summer 2017.



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