



Landscapes

Manifesto. CPRE launched a manifesto for the countryside. Emma Marrington for CPRE said: "Our Manifesto sets out eight things that the Government needs to do for our countryside, from the most majestic mountain-tops to the green spaces next-door to where most of us live." CPRE is calling for the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales national parks to be extended and for new AONBs in the Forest of Dean, Yorkshire Wolds and the Herefordshire Marches **L**.

Green infrastructure. CPRE London has produced a guide to green infrastructure and its importance to London. *Living London* includes case studies, a summary of legislation and planning guidance, and links to resources **PRE**. The Landscape Institute has published a position statement that declares: "it has never been more necessary to invest in green infrastructure" **LI**.

Green space. Allotments in Watford that have been tilled for than 100 years will disappear after Eric Pickles agreed plans for houses and a hospital. The council will provide alternative allotments **L O**. Research published in the journal *Psychological Science* has found that people living in urban areas with more green space report greater wellbeing than city dwellers that don't have parks, gardens, or other green space nearby **O**. Radley Lakes, which was saved by the local community and CPRE Oxfordshire after a long campaign, is raising funds for a £750,000 wetlands centre **L BBC**. Almost a quarter of Yorkshire's peatlands have been restored **L**.

Light pollution. CPRE and the Campaign for Dark Skies published the results of the annual Star Count held in February. Of the 1,364 respondents, 54% could see 10 stars or fewer within Orion, a figure that is largely unchanged since the survey began in 2007. The number that could see more than 31 stars rose from 2% to 5% **CPRE**. Sir Andrew Motion said: "We rightly lament the disappearance of the cuckoo and the silencing of its wandering voice in too many of our fields and meandering lanes... But we have allowed the majesty, mystery and wonder of the starry night sky to slip away" **CPRE**. The dark skies campaign *Globe at Night* has launched *Loss of the Night*, an Android mobile phone app for measuring light pollution **O O**. CPRE welcomed a new LED streetlamp design that cuts light spill to just 2% **BBC**. The South Downs National Park is considering bidding to become an international dark sky reserve **BBC L L**. Manufacturing areas in the city of Birmingham, which represent only a small percentage of the city's land area are contributing disproportionately to urban light pollution **O**.

Air pollution. The Supreme Court ruled that Britain has breached European Union air quality law, but delayed any remedy by asking the European Court of Justice for guidance on what action needs to be taken **R O O O**. Defra claimed that almost all of Britain has clean air, ignoring that quality is worst where there are most people **O**.

South Downs National Park. The park authority is to spend £3m on refurbishing Grade II-listed Capron House in Midhurst **L**. Visitors spend an estimated £464.4m each year in the national park supporting 8,200 jobs, according to the South Downs Visitor and Tourism Economic Impact Study **BBC O O**. A Downs farmer said ploughing farmland is good for wildlife **L**. Nitrates in water are twice the legal level in the South Downs **L**.

Town greens. Appeal court judges have backed a decision to declare West Beach in Newhaven in East Sussex a town green. The owners of Newhaven Port will try to get the decision overturned in the supreme court **PP O**. Residents of Blackbirds Leys, Oxford have abandoned their attempt to get a green space declared a town green **BBC OMI**.

Woodland. The Woodland Trust said that 22,770 acres of woodland, an area almost the size of Coventry, is threatened by development and High Speed 2 **CPRE**. The Forestry Commission ordered poultry producer Bernard Matthews to replant more than 300 trees illegally felled at a site where it wishes to erect a wind turbine **L**. Work is underway to move ancient hedgerows in the way of Bicester's 5,000-home eco town **L**. The 1,200 year old Pontfadog Oak at Chirk, near Wrexham was felled by high winds **CPRE**. Up to 200 acres of the Forest of Dean is to be transferred or sold by the Forestry Commission to Forest of Dean District Council for industrial and residential development **O**. The Forestry Commission issued guidance for planners which summarises the appropriate standards for woodland management or creation under planning conditions or Section 106 agreements **CPRE**.

Ash dieback. Defra's ash management plan admits that the disease will never be eradicated. Landowners in England will be paid to remove young ash trees and replace them with other species to help slow the spread of ash dieback. The government is also planting 250,000 ash saplings in the east and south east so Defra scientists, the Forestry Commission and landowners can monitor the trees for signs of Chalara, and look for any signs of resistance **g BBC O**. The Forestry Commission has released a video on identifying dieback **CPRE**. The Kent Men of the Trees are protesting that the South East is a low priority in tackling dieback because the disease is so widespread **BBC**.

Bees. As MPs called for a ban on neonicotinoids under the precautionary principle, Defra said that its research suggests the pesticide is not harmful to bees under 'normal field' conditions. Other research suggests that neonicotinoids damage bees' brains **O BBC O**. Beekeepers marched on parliament to demand an end to neonicotinoid use **O**. The European Commission says it will introduce temporary ban on neonicotinoids on 1 December **BG**.

Heritage. The Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies has launched *Heritage Help*, a website packed with advice for heritage owners and campaigners. It includes a campaigning guide **O**. Friends of Kenley Airfield have teamed up with the City of London Corporation to raise funds to restore the blast pens at the Battle of Britain airfield near Caterham **L**.

Marine. The Commons Science and Technology Committee said the government is letting marine conservation zones flounder while sensitive environments are further degraded **BBC**. The Lymington River Association lost its judicial review to halt Wightlink's new cross-Solent ferries **L L**.

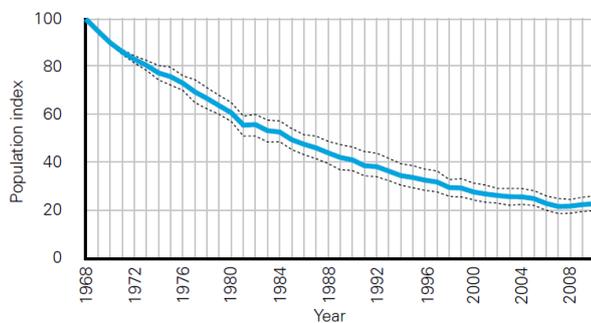
Litter. Conservative Peer Lord Marlesford has introduced a private member's bill to close the loophole that allows people who litter from cars to dodge fines **CPRE**.

The State of Nature Report

The report. Twenty-five of the UK's nature organisations joined forces to issue The State of Nature, a detailed stocktake of native wildlife  .

Headlines. Recent environmental changes are having a dramatic impact on nature in the UK and half of the species have shown strong changes in their numbers or range. Species with specific habitat requirements are faring worse than generalist species. Across the UK, 60% of 3,148 species monitored have declined over the last 50 years; 31% have declined strongly. A new Watchlist Indicator that measures how conservation priority species are faring, shows that their overall numbers have declined by 77% in the last 40 years, with little sign of recovery (chart below). The report concludes: "We should act to save nature both for its intrinsic value and for the benefits it brings to us that are essential to our wellbeing and prosperity." The authors believe that biodiversity can recover with targeted conservation efforts and identify brownfield sites as of growing importance in conserving biodiversity

The Watchlist Indicator

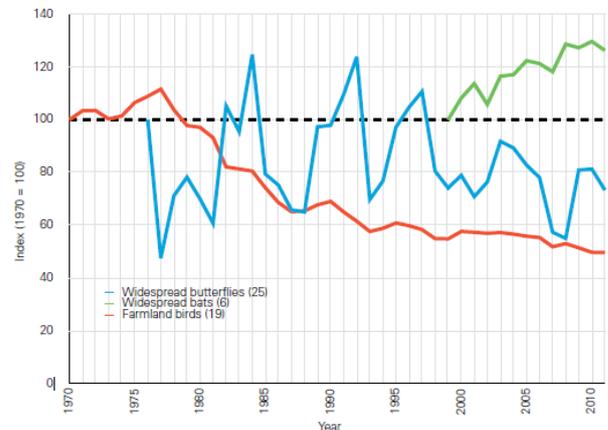


Watchlist Indicator showing the average population trend for 77 moths, 19 butterflies, 8 mammals and 51 birds listed as UK BAP priorities

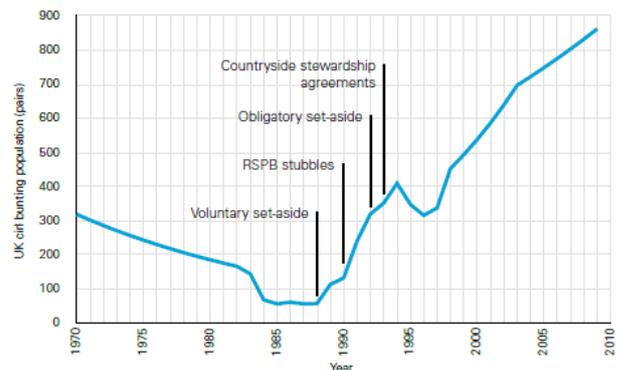
Reaction. "We've got this extraordinary expertise in destroying things, poisoning things and knocking down things," Sir David Attenborough told BBC Radio 4 Today. "It's not surprising, they're getting on for a third more people living in this country over the last 50 years"  Tony Juniper: "An absence of positive political debate about the natural world is even more troubling than the decline in UK wildlife revealed by State of Nature report"  Chris Corrigan of the RSPB said: "The south east's wildlife... has consistently shown the greatest declines in both the farmland and woodland bird indicator lists and there is nothing to suggest that these declines are slowing"  More than half of Surrey's wildlife is in decline  London's heathland, grassland, woodland and a variety of species are under threat as are the capital's gardens and other informal spaces  Other coverage:   .

Semi-natural grasslands are meadows and pasture under traditional management, including chalk downland and sand heathland. Habitat loss has slowed considerably since the late 1990s and is beginning to reverse in some heathland and grassland types, but new areas do not yet match the wildlife value of centuries-old habitat. Recent declines in the majority of species are a result of other factors, including inadequate or inappropriate land management, atmospheric pollution, habitat fragmentation and, to a lesser extent, human disturbance and the spread of invasive species. Much semi-natural grassland is now designated as protected areas, including 70% of lowland calcareous grassland and 74% of lowland heathland, and there are signs of recovery following conservation efforts.

Farmland. There has been no recovery for farmland birds since 2000. Arable plants are the fastest-declining group of plants in the UK – a quarter are threatened and others, such as downy hemp-nettle, have already been lost from the UK. Common farmland mammals such as brown hares and hedgehogs have also declined, although badgers have increased. Agri-environment schemes have helped to increase the population of rare species and local populations of more widespread species, but there has been insufficient funding and take-up of schemes.



UK indicators for farmland birds, bats and butterflies



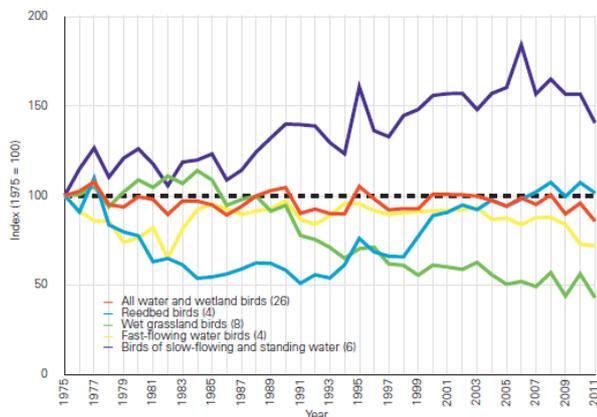
Recovery of the UK cirl bunting population

Uplands. A combination of historic impacts and current including agricultural intensification, abandonment, afforestation and intensive grouse moor management, have played a part in the decline of upland species. Of 877 species monitored, 65% have declined and 35% have declined strongly. 65% of upland butterflies have declined, largely because their habitat is being destroyed, changed and fragmented.

Woodland. The area of UK woodland has increased to 12% since 1945, mainly due to conifer planting, but woodland birds have been declining since the 1970s and woodland butterflies since the 1990s. Of the 1,256 woodland species studied, 60% have decreased and 34% have decreased strongly. The declines of most woodland species are linked to changes in the structure of woodlands, as a result of increased grazing pressure by deer, changes to management practices and woodland ageing.

Coasts. Developments, the creation of coastal defences and changing land use have had a huge impact on wildlife. Coastal habitats cover just 0.6% of the UK's land area. The development or loss of relatively small areas of habitat can have a disproportionately large impact. The southern coastline and other areas with high human populations or industrial activity have fared particularly badly. Of 682 coastal species tracked, 60% have declined and 29% have declined strongly; 13% of coastal flowering plant species are regarded as threatened with extinction in the UK.

Freshwater and wetlands occupy 3% of the UK surface and support 10% of species. While some river birds, such as dippers and kingfishers, show declines, 74% of freshwater and wetland birds are increasing. Overall, 57% of freshwater and wetland species for which there is sufficient data have declined; 29% have declined strongly.



The UK indicator for freshwater and wetland birds

Urban. An estimated 10,000 playing fields were sold for development from 1979 to 1997, and the area covered by allotments, which provide a haven for wildlife, has dropped to just 10% of its post-war peak. Of the 658 urban species with data, 59% have declined and 35% have declined strongly. Invertebrates are doing particularly poorly in urban environments with 42% showing strong declines.

Brownfield. As the countryside becomes steadily more degraded for wildlife, due to agricultural improvement and development, brownfield sites are becoming increasingly important. Around 15% of nationally rare and scarce invertebrates have been found on brownfield sites, but they lack statutory protection. “Despite the fact that brownfield sites provide important refuges for a diverse range of wildlife, including many rare and threatened invertebrates, they are often viewed as ripe for development and receive little protection.”

Ecosystems Markets Task Force

The Task Force. The 2011 Natural Environment White Paper pledged to set up a Ecosystems Markets Task Force: “to review the opportunities for UK business from expanding green goods, services, products, investment vehicles and markets which value and protect nature’s services.” Its final report gives five priority recommendations . The government will issue its response later this year, but Defra Secretary Owen Paterson has already spoken out in favour of adopting offsetting .

Biodiversity offsetting. The most controversial recommendation is a new “biodiversity offset system” to let developers to build on a nature reserve or protected area, if they build a ‘replacement’ somewhere else. The Task Force pleaded that offsetting is not a “license to trash nature.” It claims the measure will “revolutionise conservation in England by delivering restoration, creation and long-term management of in excess of 300,000 hectares of habitat over 20 years” and “incentivise location of development at sites of lower nature value”. The move will stimulate the competitive growth of businesses, especially rural SMEs, in delivering and restoring natural habitats; and also of various intermediary services, estimated to be worth at least £500 million a year. The Task Force calls for a full impact assessment before offsetting is rolled out countrywide.

Anaerobic digestion and bioenergy on farms. An expansion of government support for AD will close the loop by using farm and food waste to create energy.

Local woodfuel supply chains. More unmanaged woodlands should be brought into active, sustainable management for woodfuel. “This is not about intensive harvesting of UK woodland for use in large scale power stations; it is about ensuring that organisations that wish to pursue renewable heat can confidently do so using sustainable, local resources.”

Nature-based certification and labelling. Expansion of product certification and labelling schemes will “connect consumers with nature” and “enhance ecosystem management, reduce ecosystem impacts, foster new affinities with landscape, and in turn can give participating firms greater market access, consumer loyalty and reputational benefits.”

Water cycle catchment management. The Task Force calls for greater incentives for water catchment management, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and soft flood defences.

Other recommendations. Peatlands should be restored to act as carbon sinks, increase biodiversity and water quality. The Task Force supports environmental bonds to finance green projects and says the government should press for a greater allocation of Pillar 2 (environmental) funds under the Common Agricultural Policy. Food waste should be reduced. Water pipes should be transferred from households to water companies to reduce leakage and compulsory water metering should be rolled out.

Reaction. Neil Sinden of CPRE commented: “You can’t wipe out wildlife habitats and expect to be able to create on that can achieve the richness and diversity of wildlife sites that have evolved over decades and centuries. There is a big danger that it will be abused by developers to justify entirely unacceptable developments and will damage the rich, diverse and most valuable wildlife sites” .

Governing the Environment

Mergers. The government released a summary of responses to the Triennial Review of Natural England and the Environment Agency. Stakeholders expressed concern that any merger of bodies would disrupt environmental protection and lead to a loss of an independent voice for nature . The Woodland Trust and the Ramblers Association and others urged ministers not to merge the Forestry Commission with Natural England or the Environment Agency . Martin Harper of the RSPB said a merger with the Environment Agency would inevitably subordinate the vital focus of Natural England on the needs of wildlife to the needs of the economy . Natural Resources Wales began work on 1 April, bringing together the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales, as well as some functions of Welsh Government. It aims to consider social, environmental and economic benefits in the way it manages natural resources and improves the environment .

Regulations. Environment Secretary Owen Paterson called for businesses to identify ‘unnecessary’ red tape: “This is not about reducing the quality of environmental regulations. The same protection levels will stay” . Defra has set up the Major Infrastructure and Environment Unit to help developers meet the needs of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives .

The Natural Capital Committee. The NCC has published its first State of Natural Capital report . It says an economic value should be put on nature, recreation space and ecosystems. It is calling for a risk register that identifies the implications of further depletion or lack of restoration for natural capital assets. Declaring that stewardship of natural capital is good for growth, the NCC backs biodiversity offsetting “after a clear set of principles and a policy framework have been developed.” The committee also wants the government to lobby the EU to move common agricultural funds from direct payments under Pillar 1 to rewarding rural development and environmental improvement under Pillar 2.

Town Centres and Retail

Supermarkets. The Groceries Code Adjudicator Bill was given Royal Assent, creating the UK’s first independent Groceries Code Adjudicator, who will ensure that large supermarkets abide by the Groceries Supply Code of Practice, and treat their suppliers fairly and lawfully . Food campaigners in Suffolk and Essex dismissed a report by Tesco that suggests edge-of-town supermarkets act as a magnet for shoppers and boost independent retailers through linked shopping trips to town centres .

Supermarket planning. Residents have been granted a judicial review against a Tesco on the Margate seafront . An inspector rejected an appeal by Tesco against a refusal by Basingstoke and Deane council for a store south west of the centre. Under the NPPF the scheme is not sequentially preferable and would have a damaging impact on the existing town centre . Tesco has scrapped plans to develop more than 100 sites. A spokesman said: “Where we have decided against progressing proposals we continue to work with local authorities to find alternative uses for these sites” . Research by consultancy Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners shows that the proportion of retail appeals allowed was 47% in the 15 months before the NPPF was published and 46 % in the 11 months afterwards. The success rate for foodstores has dropped from 50% to 45%, but the success for the large out of centre foodstores is up from 22% to 33% .

Town teams and Portas. Bishop’s Waltham, Denmead and Wickham are to appoint a joint Market Towns Development Officer . Town teams are having success in promoting their patches, including through Twitter . Mary Portas has accused former Tesco boss Sir Terry Leahy of “talking crap” for claiming that the disappearance of family butchers from the high streets is a sign of progress . Only a year ago, Portas was being hailed as the saviour of the high street. Now critics are accusing her of staging rows, “fabricating storylines” including in Margate, and choosing pilot towns to gain TV ratings. Portas disputes the claims . Portas said that she wished she had been better advised . The government has delayed its first-year report on the Portas Pilots until later in the year .

High streets. Ed Miliband said that a Labour government would bring in planning powers to stop high streets from being swamped with payday lenders and betting shops . Channel 4 reported on the “death of the high street” where one in six shops now stands empty . The Telegraph suggested that ministers are considering rules to prevent parking wardens issuing penalties to people who briefly stop on high streets to visit their local shops . A row has broken out after a developer in Southwold, Suffolk claimed that people opposing his plans for chain stores are “mainly old, rich, white people” .

Pubs. Communities minister Brandon Lewis launched an advice line, run by the Plunkett Foundation, which will give advice to communities wanted to form cooperatives to take over their ailing local pub . The British Beer and Pub Association’s judicial review of Cambridge City Council pubs protection policy was rejected by the high court .

Rural Communities and Food

Rural populations. In 2011, the population of England was 53.1 million, of which 33.3 million (63%) lived in predominantly urban areas and 12.7 million (24%) lived in predominantly rural areas. In Rural-80 areas, where 80% of people live in rural settlements or market towns, 50% of the population were aged 45 and above, compared with 36% in major urban areas .

Renaissance. Peter Hetherington lamented the scrapping of the Commission for Rural Communities wondering “who will lead the renaissance for rural communities” . CPRE and the Countryside Alliance reacted angrily to Hetherington’s accusation in their organisations are: “seemingly against any development, presumably preferring soulless villages, set in aspic and largely devoid of life” .

Broadband. The average UK broadband speed has increased to 12Mbps but rural areas are still “digital ghettos” .

Food. Defra has published its Food Statistics Pocketbook 2012 . Brighton and Hove’s 2011 Food Growing and Development Planning Advice Note has been shortlisted for the TCPA planning awards . BBC Newsnight took a look at EU proposals to increase Pillar 2 funding in the Common Agricultural Policy, funding that pays for environmental gains, to 30% .

Campaigning

Campaigning. Patricia Almond, litter picking co-ordinator for CPRE Isle of Wight, was selected for the *Independent on Sunday* Happy List . Barbara Beck, the chairman of CPRE Woking branch died at the age of 66 . CPRE Hampshire has appointed Chris James as chairman and Michael Rescorle as director . CPRE Staffordshire has moved offices . The 2013 eCampaigning Forum brought together digital activists from the UK and world, including 38degrees and No Dash for Gas .

Accessing subscription services. News on the Internet is gradually disappearing behind paywalls. Links above via brown buttons require either registration or payment. Some offer a number of articles free for registration or an introductory offer. Blue buttons are generally free, though the Telegraph now requires payment after 20 articles, good value at £1.99 a month. The Times costs £2 a week. The excellent Business Green is putting most articles behind a paywall that costs an eye watering £1 a day, and that is an introductory offer! Planning, Building, Building Design and so many others require significant subscriptions. Local newspapers fortunately remain free, as do community and environmental groups behind the green buttons.

The CPRE eBulletins

CPRE South East eBulletin is independently written and edited by Andy Boddington: cprenews@andyboddington.co.uk. Views expressed in the eBulletin and its editorial approach are those of its editor and not any part of CPRE.

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