

SURREY
wildlife
TRUST



RESTORING SURREY'S
Nature

5 year strategic plan 2018-23

Securing the future of Surrey's wildlife

Surrey Wildlife Trust exists to protect Surrey's nature for the benefit of people and wildlife



The state of nature

For nature to thrive we need to create a living landscape across Surrey. A healthy landscape with nature at its heart

At Surrey Wildlife Trust we manage land for nature. These areas, which either belong to the Trust or are managed on behalf of other land managers, cover some 5% of Surrey and represent some of the most important areas in the county for wildlife.

We all depend on nature. A third of all our food relies on pollination by bees and other insects, the air we breathe is replenished by plants and our mental wellbeing is improved by experiencing the natural world.

However, in Surrey and across the country, nature is being increasingly confined to small fragmented areas with little or no connectivity. As a result, wildlife is declining.

This was highlighted by Surrey Nature Partnership's report on the State of Surrey's Nature, which shows that a third of Surrey's biodiversity is either extinct or heading that way.

At the heart of this habitat fragmentation are poor land management and development decisions that must be addressed.



Working in partnership

The reserves we look after are safe havens for wildlife. But the 5% of Surrey's land that these represent is not enough if we are to recover Surrey's nature. We clearly need to do more to change the outcome across the other 95%.

The answer isn't simply to increase the scale of the land we manage, although we will continue to deliver our mission on the land we are responsible for.

The solution is to expand our work with other land managers, sharing our knowledge and skills to create a more joined up landscape.

This means restoring more habitats and creating green corridors between nature reserves. It also means working with local people and inspiring them to protect nature. This is what Professor Sir John Lawton has called a 'living landscape'.

Over the last five years, we have already built significant expertise in creating and supporting partnerships through our work hosting Surrey's two river Catchment Partnerships. Through these, multiple land managers have helped to restore large sections of the Wey and Mole rivers.

In order to achieve our fifty year vision of a living landscape in Surrey, over the next five years we must deliver measured, sustainable change by focussing our efforts on key areas of the county.

of **4,242**
species reviewed

12%
Extinct

21%
Under threat

15%
Stable

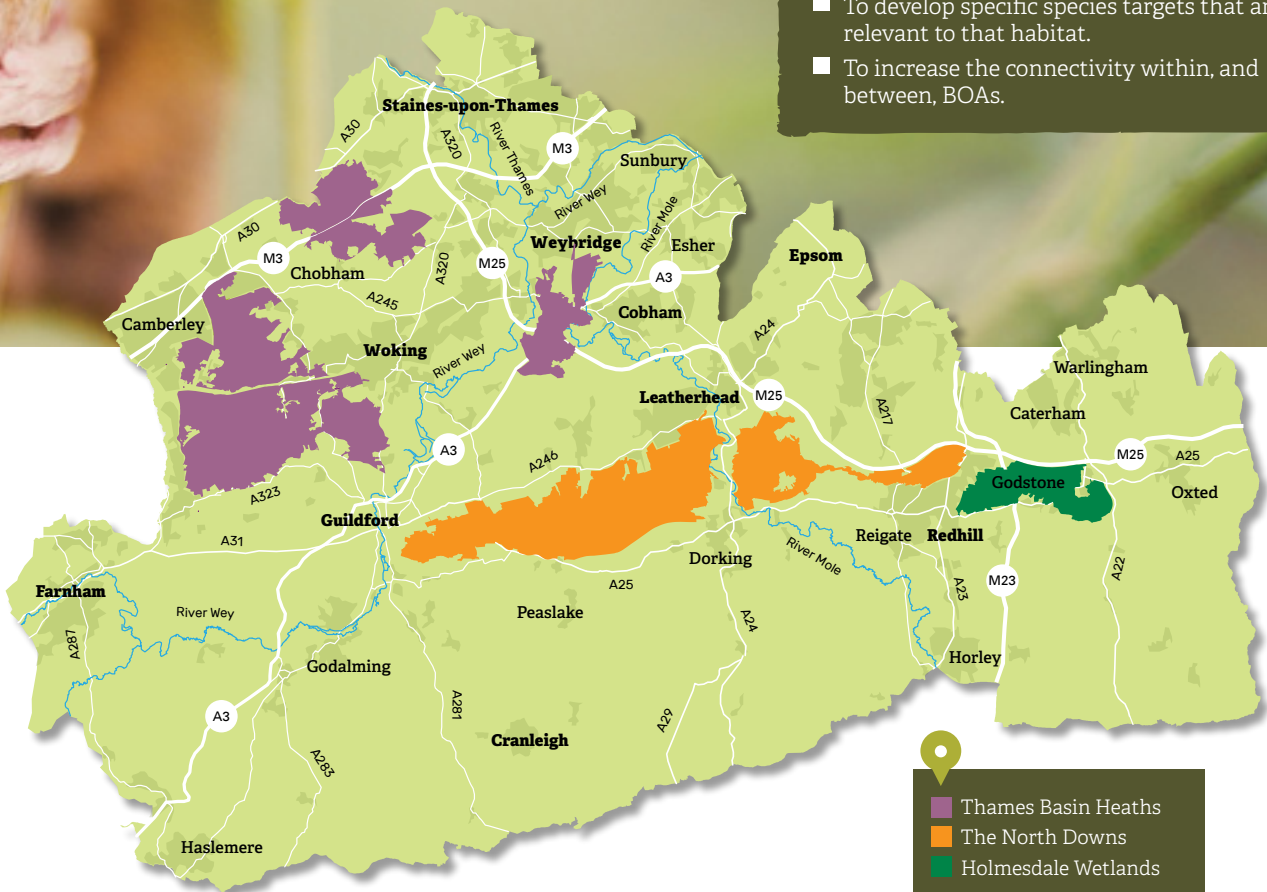
3%
Increasing

49%
Not in trouble



BOA Goals:

- To improve the status of SSSIs with a further 50% reaching favourable condition.
- To have 50% of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance or local wildlife sites enter into positive management.
- To deliver specific habitat creation or restoration targets relevant to that BOA.
- To develop specific species targets that are relevant to that habitat.
- To increase the connectivity within, and between, BOAs.



■ Thames Basin Heaths
■ The North Downs
■ Holmesdale Wetlands

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

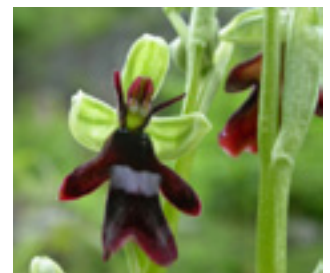
The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out the need for Nature Recovery Networks. To implement this at a county level we will focus our work through the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) produced by the Surrey Nature Partnership. These prioritise the most important areas to take action for biodiversity.

Although all BOAs are equally important, our analysis has shown that the Trust should focus its finite resources on three key BOA areas over the next five years. In each area, our aim is to create a group of land managers who work together to achieve the space that nature so desperately needs.

The BOAs that we will be working in for the next five years will be the Thames Basin Heaths, The North Downs and Holmesdale (within Wealden Greensands).

As ever, our work on the ground will be backed by serious research and monitoring activity, to make sure that we can measure its impact.

The aspiration is that by 2023, we will be able to move onto another set of BOAs, safe in the knowledge that those that we have been working in will have committed land managers who are acting for wildlife.



Key Habitat targets

Thames Basin Heaths

Lowland Heath is one of the rarest habitats in the UK. Less than 200 years ago, much of the west of Surrey would have been heathland. This habitat is now highly fragmented by development and it is vital that we protect what is left and restore as much as we can.

Given the constraints imposed by development, these targets will not be easy to achieve. The key opportunity to achieve the heathland creation target is in the Wisley and Ockham heaths.

The North Downs

The iconic North Downs between Guildford and Reigate form our second set of BOAs and are part of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We will work to support and develop the existing partnership between land managers in this area that will deliver our targets. This includes local farmers, the National Trust and the Surrey Hills AONB.




Holmesdale

Holmesdale presents an opportunity to work with the aggregate industry and other partners to restore threatened areas of wetland.





Our approach will start by focusing on restoring the ecological integrity of our Bay Pond reserve, much of which is a SSSI. This will require us to work with land managers and communities upstream to reduce sediment and nutrients flowing into the pond.

Priority species targets in all areas will be developed in partnership with our species experts across the county.






Thames Basin Heath targets

-  Create a further 60ha of heathland / acid grassland
-  Create a further 4ha of wet woodland
-  Create a further 7ha of fen

North Downs targets

-  Create or restoring 24ha of chalk grassland
-  Restore 4ha of beech and yew woodland
-  35% more of mixed woodland being actively managed
-  Create or rejuvenate 4.75km of hedgerows

Holmesdale targets

-  Create or restore 6.75ha of floodplain grazing marsh
-  Create 1.75ha of standing open water
-  Create or restore 2.75ha of reedbeds
-  Create or restore 9ha of heathland / acid grassland
-  Create or rejuvenate 2km of hedgerow

Research and Monitoring

As a conservation organisation, science has to be at the heart of our decision making. We will work with the University of Surrey and other research partners to find the long term solutions that nature so badly needs in our county.

There are five strands to this work:

- Understanding the pressures on biodiversity and how people benefit from the natural environment
- Discovering better ways to manage the environment to improve biodiversity and improve public understanding and individual wellbeing
- Create partnerships which develop knowledge for both practical application and scientific advancement
- To better demonstrate our ecological and social impact
- Grow our citizen science programme

Looking to the future

As we enter our 60th year in 2019, we will start the task of restoring Surrey's nature. It will drive a shift in the way in which we achieve our goals with much greater emphasis on working with our partners and supporting the ability of others to deliver lasting improvements.



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