**The Ceredigion Nature Recovery Action Plan**

**[First Draft]**

**This a text-only version of the Nature Recovery Action Plan. The final version will include formatting, tables, and photos to increase accessibility, readability, and appeal.**

**Notes for Reviewers:**

1. This is only the first draft of the NRAP. Before publishing, there will be another period of editing based on feedback, another round of feedback based on a second draft, another period of editing, followed by final publication in early March 2024.
2. As a result of timelines, a small number of sections may be incomplete. Please add thoughts about these sections which will be added.
3. This is currently an “expanded” version of the NRAP. For the final version, it is likely that each section will be shortened with more information added to the supplementary section of the document i.e. not in the plan itself. The supplementary section has been added for anyone who is interested.
4. For the final version, a short 1-page summary will be prepared and added to the start of the document.
5. A glossary will also be created and added.
6. Please make note of the explainer of what this NRAP is and isn’t.

**Foreword**

Ceredigion is a special place. Wales’ fourth largest county by land area, Ceredigion is home to many fascinating ecosystems - from the seabed of Cardigan Bay to the peak of Pumlumon Fawr, from the mighty Teifi to the bogs of Cors Fochno and Cors Caron, from the large reserves of the Dyfi Estuary to the smallest urban garden in Aberystwyth. A mosaic of woodland, wetlands, rivers, and farmland, Ceredigion is a highly managed landscape but with pockets of semi-natural ecosystems.

This Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) represents the first attempt to create a comprehensive yet accessible strategy for helping nature recovery in the county.

Whilst previous documents and plans have been published, this NRAP seeks to represent a new vision for nature recovery, one that is open to all those in the county who wish to participate. It is only through a truly cross-society, collaborative approach that this NRAP can be implemented, and nature recovery achieved. All those interested in achieving this vision are invited to join the Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership.

In a rural county like Ceredigion, community and communication are vital. We have seen how quickly divisions can be made, how quickly walls can be built, even when we may all have aligned goals and objectives. It is time for all of us interested in nature recovery to come together and have difficult conversations with those we might not have worked with before. Because it is there, in those new conversations and sharing of different forms of knowledge, that we will find the key to helping our wonderful local nature recover and thrive.

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This Nature Recovery Action Plan is:

* **an overarching vision for nature recovery in the county.**
* **A collaborative effort by many stakeholders, based on ongoing public consultations, focus groups, and online feedback.**
* **A living document.** As more information becomes available, legislation is introduced, and biodiversity itself changes, this plan will need to be reviewed and updated. The downfall of many plans is that they are not kept updated which means they quickly become outdated and less impactful. The Local Nature Partnership must identify a sustainable mechanism for this review and updating.

It is not:

* **a list of all activities currently taking place within the county.** Examples and case studies have been mentioned throughout but these have been used to highlight potential models and/or work to collaborate on.
* **a detailed plan for each species and habitat within Ceredigion.**
* **legally-binding.** This NRAP sets out a vision of collaboration for nature recovery within the county but is not legally-binding upon organisations or individuals to follow.
* The only plan relevant to nature recovery within Ceredigion, though it does attempt to synthesise these.

**The Nature of Ceredigion**

For the purposes of this NRAP, a brief overview of each key ecosystem type will be given to showcase the breadth of wildlife in the county. In time, a plan for each ecosystem type and location will be developed to complement and expand on the work of this county-wide overview. The information below was taken from the Ceredigion Local Biodiversity Action Plan, published in 2002, and it represents the last publicly available overview of the county.

***Mountain and Moor***

Forming the eastern spine of Ceredigion, the Cambrian Mountains are areas of upland plateau dominated by Pumlumon (2468ft / 752 metres). A remote area, this part of Ceredigion is a mosaic of woodlands (natural and plantation), small urban settlements, and moor grassland with semi-natural rough sheep grazing.

***Rivers and Lakes***

Owing to its location and geology, Ceredigion is home to many rivers and lakes. Significant rivers include the Teifi, Aeron, Ystwyth, and Rheidol, as well as the southern shore of the Dyfi Estuary. Each river has its own wildlife of interest. The impacts of water pollution from agriculture, development, and the legacy of mining in the upper catchments have had significant impacts on these riverine ecosystems.

In addition to rivers, there are some sixty lakes and reservoirs within Ceredigion, including some nationally significant ‘mesotrophic lake’, such as Llyn Fanod near Penuwch, whose fine balance of nutrients makes them sensitive to environmental change.

***Fields and Hedgerows***

Although a place of natural beauty, Ceredigion is undoubtedly a managed landscape with much of the area being moulded by changing agricultural practices over many generations. With recent advancements in farming technology and ever-changing payment systems, farming in Ceredigion has undergone relatively rapid changes.

Hedgerows perform a dual purpose: demarcating boundaries and vital biodiversity habitats. Hedgerows themselves are important habitats for species but they also serve as corridors connecting larger sites. This second role is essential for ensuring genetic diversity within species, a form of diversity that was overlooked until recently.

***Woodlands***

Woodlands cover a relatively small but still significant proportion of the county. A mix of ancient semi-natural woodland and conifer plantations, these woodlands provide habitat for many species including red squirrels, wrens, and Wales’ national bird, the Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*). The ancient woodlands are also home to several important plant and fungi species, including notable populations of certain lichens that are bioindicators of relatively unpolluted air quality.

Tree planting, particularly large-scale conifer plantations, has been a source of considerable debate in the past and this has escalated in recent years with growing conversations around “carbon offsetting” and its impacts on biodiversity and communities here in Ceredigion.

***Cors and Rhos***

We have two areas of Cors (bog) of international importance; Cors Fochno, Borth and Cors Caron, near Tregaron. Both are characterised by complex biological systems supporting a web of plant and animal life.

Rhos (marsh) is a species rich marshy grassland, traditional managed by low level cattle grazing.[[1]](#footnote-2) Each area of rhos supports an abundant and varied insect life. A few of these sites serve as refugia for rare species, such as the marsh fritillary.

***Coastal Ceredigion and Cardigan Bay***

It is important to remember that Ceredigion is not all land. The coastal and marine areas of Ceredigion are vitally important for biodiversity. The cliffs, sandy bays, storm beaches, dune systems, and estuaries of Ceredigion coast all have their distinctive wildlife.

The coastline and Cardigan Bay are also home to a range of marine mammals such as Atlantic Grey seals, bottlenose dolphins, and harbour porpoises. This is particularly true of the southern Ceredigion coastline with its more rugged nature and secluded cliffs and bays.

Southern Cardigan Bay has been designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), due in part to the mammals mentioned above, but also for fish (lamprey) and geology (sea caves).

**Biodiversity Loss**

Biodiversity, the diversity of life, is disappearing at an alarming rate at all scales. In its global assessment of biodiversity, the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES) showed that biodiversity loss is occurring globally and currently shows no signs of slowing, letting alone stopping. [[2]](#footnote-3)

Closer to home, the recent State of Nature Report showed that nearly 1 in 6 species are at risk of becoming extinct in Wales.[[3]](#footnote-4)

When discussing biodiversity, it is important to remember that this term encompasses a range of different types of diversity, including:

* Number of species
* Genetic diversity within species

Key pressures on biodiversity in Wales

As outlined in the 2023 State of Nature Report and the State of our Natural Resources Report[[4]](#footnote-751), the key pressures driving the declines in biodiversity in Wales include:

* Climate change: an ever-growing threat to biodiversity in Wales as nature must adapt to long-term changes in climatic conditions as well as short-term climate-related events such as storms and drought. Climate change will likely result in habitat changes, increase invasives, increased risk of extinction in specialist species, changes to migration and breeding patterns (both in space and time).
* Invasive species: Invasive non-native species (INNS) are those that have been introduced to areas of the world where they would not normally be found. Due to a range of biotic and human-related factors, populations of invasive species can grow rapidly, outcompeting and leading to the decline of native species. Examples include rhododendron and Japanese Knotweed.
* Development: inappropriate development results in habitat destruction, fragmentation, and alterations.
* Intensive Agriculture: a move towards intensive land management (chemicals, monocultures etc.) to increase productivity results in a number of threats to habitats and species.
* Pollution: Pollutants, including plastic waste, chemicals, light and noise pollution, and nutrient enrichment, continue to have significant impacts of wildlife in Wales, despite efforts to reduce.

**Nature Recovery Action Plan**

**Wales NRAP**

In response to continuing loss of biodiversity, the Welsh Government published the National Recovery Action Plan for Wales. This plan covers the whole of Wales and Part 1: Our Strategy for Nature[[5]](#footnote-5), published in 2015, sets several key objectives to address biodiversity loss across the nation:

* Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.
* Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management.
* Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation.
* Tackle key pressures on species and habitats.
* Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring.
* Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.

Following a review of the initial NRAP, an updated version was published in 2020[[6]](#footnote-6). This updated version grouped NRAP actions into five themes which together address one or more of the NRAP objectives above. The five themes are:

1. Maintaining and Enhancing Resilient Ecological Networks
2. Increasing Knowledge and Knowledge Transfer
3. Realising new Investment and funding
4. Upskilling and capacity for delivery
5. Mainstreaming, Governance, and Reporting our Progress.

**The Ceredigion Nature Recovery Action Plan**

As mentioned above, Ceredigion is home to an array of ecosystems and biodiversity. The purpose of this Ceredigion Nature Recovery Action Plan (CNRAP) is to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, in line or exceeding the targets set out in Global Biodiversity Framework and other agreements and legislation (see Legislative Context in Supplementary Information for more).

The CNRAP takes the objectives from the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales and sets them in the context of local priorities, inviting partners to work together to meet these objectives to achieve our vision of a biodiverse Ceredigion that works for people and nature.

The CNRAP has been produced by and on behalf of the Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership which brings together public bodies, private companies, non-profits, community groups, and individuals with an interest in the conservation and restoration of ecosystems across the county. The guidance and vision of the CRNAP can be used by all in the county, regardless of their membership of the CLNP.

Links to the Ceredigion Local Biodiversity Action Plan

This Nature Recovery Action Plan builds on previous work done under the Ceredigion Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)[[7]](#footnote-7), published in 2002.

**Vision**

In line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, and other relevant legislation and agreement, the vision of this nature recovery action plan is to **halt and reverse biodiversity loss, working towards a biodiverse future where people and nature live in harmony.**

**Delivering the Ceredigion Nature Recovery Action Plan**

The creation of the Nature Recovery Action Plan represents the first step in a very long journey towards halting and reversing biodiversity loss in Ceredigion.

Of course, this NRAP does not sit alone and is influenced by decisions made at local and national level. This is covered in greater detail in “Mainstreaming, Governance, and Reporting Our Progress”.

Although created mainly by and on behalf of the Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership, successful implementation of this NRAP will require a whole county approach. Mobilising public, private, and philanthropic funds and capacity to deliver this NRAP, as outlined under the themes of the Wales NRAP (see Realising New Investment and Funding).

It is also important to include, engage, and empower other groups and coalitions within the county, such as discussions with the Public Services Board.

**Views on Nature Recovery in Ceredigion**

As part of the creation of this NRAP, a series of public consultations were held across the county and online. These consultations were open to all. To increase accessibility, sessions were bilingual with opportunity for participants to contribute in English or Welsh.

Each consultation followed the same basic structure:

1. The Positives: What is going well in Ceredigion? What does good look like?
2. The Barriers: What are the issues?
3. The Solutions: What can be done?
4. Who is not in the room?

Below is a summary of views from all consultations grouped by the questions asked.

It is hoped that these public consultations will be complemented by a series of targeted focus groups to discuss nature recovery with stakeholders underrepresented or not represented in the consultations.

Note for Reviewers: This first draft is based on initial report from the consultations. This will be updated following the full report. A full methodology will also be shared with this report.

**The Positives**

“What’s going well in Ceredigion?” “What does good look like?”

* Individual conservation and monitoring projects for different species and habitats within Ceredigion. A few examples include:
	+ Cardigan Bay Marine Wildlife Centre (Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales) and its dolphin recording project, including both local volunteers and seasonal placements for early-career conservationists.
	+ Meadow project at Denmark Farm.
	+ Reintroduction on pine martens and “Martens on the Move” Project by Vincent Wildlife Trust.
	+ Peatland restoration projects in Cors Fochno and Cors Caron.
* Growing awareness of the importance of nature and uptake of nature-friendly campaigns such as “No Mow May”.
* A push for improving accessibility to nature whilst managing the impacts of human activity, including improved footpaths, signage for walks, and engagement with other groups.

**The Barriers**

* The lack of transparency, clarity, and accountability from public bodies, particularly Ceredigion County Council and Natural Resources Wales, was mentioned frequently during each of the public consultations. Criticism focused on confusion between departments within these public bodies.
	+ A particular focus was on the CCC Planning Department and its lack of consistency on planning decisions, impacting the ability of some participants to act in nature’s best interests. With the delay in publishing the revised Loval Development Plan, it is strongly encouraged that the LDP include the NRAP within its considerations.
	+ The poor performance of senior management in mainstreaming nature recovery within all decisions was another issue highlighted.
* “Short-term/knee-jerk/quick-fix” thinking.
* The lack of consistent and accessibly funding for nature recovery projects. Funding is often restrictive when a better approach would be for organisations and projects to decide where to use the funding. Accessibility of grants was also discussed several times, including the language used and the time taken to complete an application.
* Engagement with non-conservation communities remains poor. Education and outreach must be improved to ensure all are engaged with nature recovery in Ceredigion.
* Access to nature, particularly for groups who rely on public transport or with mobility issues.
* External partners and funders not understanding the cultural and social context of Ceredigion and its strong links to the land and sea.
* Mention of more-specific issues, including dog poo, plastic, footpath erosion, honeypot sites, tree felling in areas of Ceredigion, construction of renewable energy sources in unsuitable locations.

**The Solutions**

* Increased community involvement was mentioned frequently in all public consultations. Methods of engagement included education programmes, citizen science monitoring, collaborations between conservation groups and other community groups (sports teams, faith groups, WI, youth groups etc.)
	+ “Building bridges” was a common theme throughout with participants interested in working with other sectors and stakeholders to accelerate nature recovery.
* Creating a “platform for nature in Ceredigion” to find out about events, plans, consultations, and groups working in the area.
* Better and more coordinated recording and mapping of species and habitats in Ceredigion, potentially leading to a “State of Nature”-type report for the county.
* Better communication from public bodies, particularly Ceredigion County Council and Natural Resources Wales.
* “Joined up thinking”.

**Stakeholders**

“Who needs to be in the room?” “Which stakeholders have been left out?”

It is important to reiterate that a nature recovery action plan does not belong to any one organisation. It is collective vision for nature recovery in our area and therefore it is vital that all stakeholders within the county are engaged and empowered to act. A full list of can be found here: (link to be added when published). A summary of those mentioned include:

* Children and young people (schools, youth groups, students’ unions, individuals)
* Public Bodies, both individually and collectively as the Public Services Board. Senior Management should be actively engaged.
* Welsh Language individuals and groups.
* Communities for whom their first language is neither Welsh nor English.
* Local business community.
* Farmers and Agricultural Community.
* “The Arts”
* Research Institutions.
* Health groups (physical and mental wellbeing)
* Tourists and tourism industry.
* Heritage organisations.
* Justice and probation services.
* Funders.

**The Plan**

**NRAP Recommendations and Next Steps**

Whilst each objective and theme will have their own list of next steps and priorities (see following section), the list below consists of next steps identified as crucial to the implementation of this nature recovery action plan.

*Note: Work on a number of these steps has started but is in the very early stages.*

1. **A State of Nature Report for Ceredigion**

The lack of an overall understanding of the state of nature in Ceredigion is a major barrier to recovery action across the county. It is difficult to create and implement a plan, as well as monitor its successes and failures, without knowing the status of ALL ecosystems within Ceredigion. It is recommended that this SoN Report be coordinated by Ceredigion County Council, working with members of the local nature partnership and West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre.

Several counties across Wales have undertaken similar projects. Thus, Ceredigion should seek to learn the lessons from these counties.

In keeping with other recommendations for this recovery plan, it is important that this State of Nature report be accessible to all within Ceredigion, both its creation and storage.

1. **Greater transparency, clarity, and accountabilty from public bodies working within the county.**

Public bodies such as Ceredigion County Council and Natural Resources Wales have an extremely large impact on nature recovery in the county, not only through their own conservation work but their impact on others through planning and licensing. This was one of the recurring themes and barriers discussed during the public consultations. This lack of transparency and clarity applies to both individual decisions and to wider strategy.

1. **Engagement with non-conservation communities and individuals including business sector, landowners, unions, and schools.**

Nature recovery is not just an issue for conservationists. It is an issue that affects all and therefore all stakeholders must be engaged in conversation and invited to participate. Targeted engagement with non-conservation communities must be a priority moving forward for nature recovery in Ceredigion.

The idea of “build it and they will come” is still prevalent within Ceredigion. But previous projects have shown that targeted outreach and communication is needed to engage with stakeholders not already in the loop.

1. **Streamlining and mapping of all plans, frameworks, boards, and strategies currently or soon-to-be operating within Ceredigion.**

This Nature Recovery Action Plan does not exist in isolation. There are numerous plans, frameworks, and strategies that have been published that will impact the implementation of this plan. An attempt has been made to synthesise these in the supplementary information but the complicated relationships between these plans is a major barrier to achieving nature recovery within the county.

1. **Greater collaboration with bordering counties including Powys, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, and Gwynedd.**

Many administrative boundaries are lines on the map, not recognised by nature. To achieve true nature recovery, the Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership and its members must engage with neighbouring partnerships and their members. It is recommended that there been an open forum for discussion between local nature partnerships and invites extended to Ceredigion LNP meetings.

1. **Improved communication**

Through the engagement consultations and wider discussions, poor communication was frequently identified as one of the largest barriers to engagement and nature recovery. Again, this applies to individual decisions but also on a more general basis. Work has started on improving the internal and external communications of the local nature partnership, but this must be expanded and accelerated. A social media strategy must be included in this as many consultation participants identified social media as their main source of information for events and meetings.

1. **More accessible and transparent grants and other financial support.**

Another barrier raised repeatedly during consultations is funding, particularly its (a) inaccessibility to community and/or informal groups, (b) complicated and time-consuming applications, (c) the restrictive nature of grants, and (d) its short-term nature.

Engagement between funders and grantees is crucial to identify the best use of funds to facilitate nature recovery.

1. **Greater awareness, recognition, and resource allocation for marine and coastal ecosystems in Ceredigion.**

Currently, groups and individuals working on marine issues are severely underrepresented in the Local Nature Partnership, leaving large gaps in the network of conservation action in the county. Given the large area covered by Cardigan Bay and as a proud coastal county, it is vital that this be addressed as a matter of urgency. The large area of Cardigan Bay also means that no one organisation can successfully monitor, report, and conserve it alone. There must be collaboration between all sectors.

In keeping with the general message of this plan, many of these recommendations will require cross-organisation and cross-sectoral collaboration. It is recommended that for most a host or coordinating organisation be identified.

**The Plan: Expanded**

Under the themes of the Wales’ Nature Recovery Action Plan, the following outlines potential next steps to take to implement and deliver effective conservation and restoration in Ceredigion.

1. Maintaining and Enhancing Resilient Ecological Networks

Guidance from the Wales NRAP states that this theme should encompass “targeted place-based spatial action to deliver benefits for biodiversity, species and habitats, reduce negative impacts and maximise our well-being”.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Effective place-based action and management must be informed by accurate and up-to-date data.Since most of the ecological information is based on the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and other smaller data gathering projects, an important first step towards maintaining and enhancing resilient ecological networks will be creating and/or updating the data on our current status of protection in Ceredigion. In essence, creating a “State of Nature” report for the county.

A discussion will need to be had by the Local Nature Partnership, based on definitions from IUCN, UNCBD, and Welsh Government on the identity and classification of “Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures” (OECMs).

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| *A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio–economic, and other locally relevant values.  (CBD Decision 14/8)* |

In addition to spatial mapping of designated sites i.e., “quantity”, it is equally important to assess their quality.

Current Protection Status in Ceredigion

A recent report by the West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre (WWBIC) (internal report, reference to be updated when published), calculated that a total of 19,501 ha of Ceredigion is under some form of statutory protection, covering 10.8% of the county. This compares to a statutory designated coverage of 12.4% for Wales as a whole. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas for Conservation (SACs), Ramsar Sites, National Nature Reserves (NNRs), and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).

A total of 32,824 ha of land in Ceredigion is under some form of non-statutory designation, covering 18.2% of the county. This includes 17,524 ha that falls outside of the area already under statutory designation, contributing an additional 9.7% to the total designated area of Ceredigion. This compares to a non-statutory designated coverage of 12.7% for Wales as a whole.

**NB** This calculation does not include marine ecosystems.

*Candidate SINC Sites (to be added)*

Next Steps

* Improved monitoring of sites. According to the “Protected sites baseline assessment 2020” report published by Natural Resources Wales in 2023[[9]](#footnote-9), across Wales, only around 20% of protected sites are currently known to be in favourable condition, with around 30% known to be in unfavourable or ‘undesirable’ condition, with the condition of the remaining 50% unknown.
1. Increasing knowledge and knowledge transfer

There is extensive knowledge on nature and ecosystems in Ceredigion. From academic research at world leading institutions to invaluable experiences of working and living on the land and sea, the true depth and breadth of knowledge in Ceredigion is yet to be properly harnessed or shared.

Moving forward, the Local Nature Partnership must coordinate a better framework for increasing knowledge and knowledge transfer, particularly with stakeholders not already engaged within the partnership.

1. Realising new investment and funding

Funding for nature recovery is limited, to put it lightly. For this NRAP to be implemented and for the general recovery of nature, we must diversify investment and funding sources.

* Greater engagement between small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and conservation projects. To date, there is some reluctance within the conservation community to engage with businesses. Some concerns are well-founded, based on fears of greenwashing, but small and medium, local-led businesses should not be tarred with the same brush as multinational companies. Recommendation 6 of the Biodiversity Deep Dive “Unlocking public and private finance” recognises the role that private investment will play in growing the scale and pace of nature recovery. Active engagement with the local business community with facilitate meaningful partnerships and address many of the concerns.
* Greater collaboration between projects. Many funding bodies are now encouraging collaborative applications between neighbouring and/or complementary projects. The role of the Local Nature Partnership in facilitating these collaborations is vital.
1. Upskilling and capacity for delivery (to be completed)
2. Mainstreaming, Governance, and Reporting our Progress.

Until nature recovery factor into all decisions within the county

**Supplementary Information**

**Legislative and Policy Context**

In recent years, there has been a raft of new biodiversity-related agreements, legislation, and policies. Ranging from community councils to the United Nations, these are often linked by the common vision of halting and reversing biodiversity loss. To streamline work and maximise the chance of success, it is useful to map the similarities and differences between these and their relevance to work here in Ceredigion.

*Note: This is a first attempt to synthesise these. If you know of any more of relevance that should be added, please contact biodiversity@ceredigion.gov.uk.*

**International**

***Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework***

In December, a new global biodiversity framework[[10]](#footnote-10) was agreed at the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (“UNCBD COP15” or simply “COP15”). Hailed as a “Paris moment for Nature”, this framework sets out twenty-three targets to guide biodiversity policy globally and guide implementation towards achieving the 2050 vision of a world living in harmony with nature.

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| “By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.” |

Most, if not all, targets have some relevance to Ceredigion and the Nature Recovery Action Plan. In time, a strategy for each will be incorporated into future iterations of the Ceredigion NRAP, though many will require decisions and input at Welsh Government-level prior to this.

For this first edition, a number of targets have been highlighted for consideration most relevant.

Area-based Targets (1-3)

1. Ensure that all areas are under participatory integrated biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land and sea use change.
2. Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration.
3. Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

Target 7: Pollution

Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources, by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering cumulative effects, including: reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use; reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and also preventing, reducing, and working towards eliminating plastic pollution.

TARGET 10

Ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches [contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature’s contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services].

TARGET 11

Restore, maintain and enhance nature’s contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, such as regulation of air, water, and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters, through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature.

TARGET 22

Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.

***Right to a Healthy Environment***

In July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly declared access to a clean and healthy environment a universal human right.[[11]](#footnote-11) The resolution urges states, organisations, and businesses to accelerate the implementation of their environment obligations.

***World Economic Forum Global Risks Report 2023***

In January 2023, the World Economic Forum (WEF) published its latest Global Risks Report[[12]](#footnote-12), an annual publication based on the opinions of leading risk experts from around the world.

Whilst in the short term, the top risks are a mixture of environmental, social, and geopolitical, by the end of the decade experts predict that the greatest risks to human society will be environmental in nature. Of most relevance to this Nature Recovery Action Plan is the predicted increase in the risk posed by biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, climbing from 18th in the short term to 4th by the end of the decade.

This emphasises the importance of this Nature Recovery Action Plan to halt and reversing current trends of biodiversity loss.

**National**

As well as those international agreements and reports discussed above, there are several key pieces of legislation to consider when creating and implementing this nature recovery action plan.

***Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act***

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (WFG) Act is considered a landmark piece of legislation, putting into law the rights of future generations to a healthy and sustainable planet.

Resilient Wales

One of the seven goals of the WFG Act is a “Resilient Wales”. As set out by the Office of Future Generations, a resilient Wales means:

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| *A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).* |

Many of the subsequent policies either mention or are responsible for implementing part of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act. As such, this Act forms a cornerstone of nature recovery within Ceredigion and Wales.

**Environment (Wales) Act 2016**

Passed by the then National Assembly of Wales, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 seeks to “promote the sustainable management of resources, provide targets for reducing emission of greenhouse gases; […] make provision about several and regulated fisheries for shellfish; to make provision for marine licenses…”.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Section 6 of the Act requires public authorities to “maintain and enhance biodiversity, […] and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems”.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Section 7 requires Welsh Ministers to “publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitats in Wales, which they consider are of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity in relation to Wales”[[15]](#footnote-15). Full lists of priority species and habitats can be found here: [Wales Biodiversity Partnership - Section 7 (biodiversitywales.org.uk)](https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Section-7)

**Biodiversity Deep Dive**

In 2022, Minister for Climate Change Julie James MS coordinated a group of key experts and practitioners to research and develop a set of collective actions to support nature’s recovery across Wales. This was known as the Biodiversity Deep Dive.[[16]](#footnote-16) [[17]](#footnote-17) This report focused on the then-undecided 30x30 goal (now Target 3) of the Global Biodiversity Framework (see above).

Below are the headline recommendations from the Deep Dive:

1. Transform the protected sites series so that it is better, bigger, and more effectively connected.
2. Create a framework to recognise Nature Recovery Exemplar Areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) that deliver biodiversity outcomes.
3. Unlock the potential of designated landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to deliver more for nature and 30 by 30.
4. Continue to reform land and marine management and planning (including spatial) to deliver more for both protected sites and wider land / seascapes.
5. Build a strong foundation for future delivery through capacity building, behaviour change, awareness raising and skills development.
6. Unlock public and private finance to deliver for nature at far greater scale and pace.
7. Develop and adapt monitoring and evidence frameworks to measure progress towards the 30x30 target and guide prioritisation of action.

**Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023**

Recently passed by the Senedd, the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023 established “sustainable land management” and its objectives as the framework for agricultural policy in Wales.[[18]](#footnote-18)

In short, the objectives of sustainable land management are as follows:

1. Produce food and other goods in a sustainable manner.
2. Mitigate and adapt to climate change.
3. Maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide.
4. Conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources and promote public access to and engagement with them, and to sustain the Welsh language.

In theory, the objectives of sustainable land management support the vision of this nature recovery action plan. The primary mechanisms for supporting farmers, the “Sustainable Farming Scheme”[[19]](#footnote-19), is currently being developed with an expected launch in 2025.

As a key stakeholder in achieving nature recovery in Ceredigion, extensive consultations and collaborations between the farming and conservation communities will be essential.

**Planning Policy Wales**

Planning Policy Wales[[20]](#footnote-20)

Net Benefits for Biodiversity

At time of writing, the Welsh Government was consulting on proposed changes to Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales primarily on net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Net benefits for biodiversity are defined as ‘the concept that development should leave biodiversity and ecosystems in a better state than before, through securing long term, measurable and demonstrable benefit, primarily on site.’[[21]](#footnote-21)

 DECCA Framework[[22]](#footnote-22)

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (to be added)

**Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (to be added)**

**Regional**

Mid Wales Area Statement

In 2020, Natural Resources Wales published a series of seven “area statements”: documents outlining challenges, opportunities, and better management practices for regions of Wales.

**Marine Area Statement**

**Local**

Local Development Plan

At time of writing, Ceredigion is yet to publish an updated Local Development Plan for the county. The Local Nature Partnership strongly encourage both Natural Resources Wales and Ceredigion County Council to address this delay in review and publications.

1. [Rhos Pasture Restoration Project | Radnorshire Wildlife Trust (rwtwales.org)](https://www.rwtwales.org/rhospasture) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services | IPBES secretariat](https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [TP26053-SoN-Wales-summary-report-v10.pdf (stateofnature.org.uk)](https://stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP26053-SoN-Wales-summary-report-v10.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [Natural Resources Wales / State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) for Wales 2020](https://naturalresources.wales/sonarr2020?lang=en) [↑](#footnote-ref-751)
5. [The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales - Part 1: Our Strategy for Nature (gov.wales)](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/nature-recovery-action-plan-2015.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2020 to 2021 (gov.wales)](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/nature-recovery-action-plan-wales-2020-2021.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/media/1237/local-biodiversity-plan-english.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2020 to 2021 (gov.wales)](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/nature-recovery-action-plan-wales-2020-2021.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [Natural Resources Wales / Protected sites baseline assessment 2020](https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/protected-sites-baseline-assessment-2020/?lang=en) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e6d3/cd1d/daf663719a03902a9b116c34/cop-15-l-25-en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [UN General Assembly declares access to clean and healthy environment a universal human right | UN News](https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1123482) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [WEF\_Global\_Risks\_Report\_2023.pdf (weforum.org)](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risks_Report_2023.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. [Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/introduction) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. [Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/introduction) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. [Wales Biodiversity Partnership - Environment (Wales) Act (biodiversitywales.org.uk)](https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Environment-Wales-Act) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. [Written Statement: Biodiversity Deep Dive (3 October 2022) | GOV.WALES](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-biodiversity-deep-dive) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [Biodiversity deep dive: recommendations [HTML] | GOV.WALES](https://www.gov.wales/biodiversity-deep-dive-recommendations-html) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. [Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023 - Explanatory Notes (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2023/4/notes/division/2) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. [Sustainable Farming Scheme (gov.wales)](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-07/sustainable-farming-scheme-outline-proposals-for-2025.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. [Planning Policy Wales - Edition 11 (gov.wales)](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11_0.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. [Targeted policy changes to Planning Policy Wales on Net benefit for Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience (incorporating changes to strengthen policy on Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Trees and Woodlands and Green Infrastructure) [HTML] | GOV.WALES](https://www.gov.wales/targeted-policy-changes-planning-policy-wales-net-benefit-biodiversity-and-ecosystems-resilience#118774) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. <https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol26/iss4/art31> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)