



Species management

Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 Sites Theme Workshop Note

Introduction

Many European protected species for which Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) have been designated in England require dedicated long term habitat management where they occur. A technical workshop was held in Birmingham on 23 September 2013 on the topic of habitat management for Annex II species in Natura 2000.

The workshop aimed to discuss the delivery mechanisms available (e.g. agri-environment agreements, woodland grant schemes, etc) to ensure the right management is applied, consider gaps in these mechanisms, and potential ways to address these, including funding options. The workshop took account of work underway in relation to the development of a New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS).

The workshop focused on those species that need active habitat management (e.g. southern damselfly, marsh fritillary, early gentian; excluding marine mammals or migratory fish).

The Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 Sites (IPENS) has hosted a series of workshops with key stakeholders in order to gather views and ideas on how to resolve some of the issues affecting Natura 2000 sites. The views in this note are those of the workshop participants and do not necessarily represent those of Natural England or the Environment Agency.



Key messages from the workshop

- Habitat management of Annex II species can potentially be catered for through the proposed NELMS options via the mosaic approach or the bespoke approach. There is no mechanism gap identified here as such, but there are some limitations to the mechanisms and barriers / risks to adequate delivery. These include:
 - Limitations of existing knowledge of some species' distribution, habitat requirements or fine-tuning management techniques.
 - The need to make the existing (dispersed) knowledge on management requirements available to scheme advisers, in time for the rollout of NELMS agreements. Success of species management depends on knowledge and skills of local advisers.
 - The degree to which potential agreement holders can be persuaded to take up the best NELMS options for species. NELMS is a voluntary scheme with wider objectives than Natura 2000 species.
 - The short term nature of the new agreements (5-10 years), hence the proposal for inclusion of an 'exit strategy'.
 - Dependency of SAC species on habitats outside the protected area (for mobile or wide ranging species, or through ecological relationships such as pollinators of plants); lack of knowledge on what and where these dependencies exist for sites.
- NELMS focuses on a wider range of species (Section 41 list) and SAC species need to be adequately targeted and prioritised within this. This requires 'hard wiring' them into the work programs.
- Some species still need very intensive care, so effort needs to be aimed at 'getting them out the Intensive Care ward' into a better configured landscape.
- There is a lack of a programmed approach within Natural England to monitoring of Annex II species to adequately support 6 yearly Article 17 reporting and inform management / evaluate success.
- Key knowledge gaps include: defining Favourable Conservation Status for species, impact of climate change and potential mitigation measures for coastal species.

Envisaged next steps

- Identify which NELMS packages are essential for Annex II species most at risk, indicate which agreements should be put in place where and make knowledge available to site advisers.
- Develop a programmed approach to the monitoring of Annex II species.
- Develop a Theme Plan on Annex II species management based on the above and input from the workshop.

Workshop participants

The following organisations and Natural England staff participated in the workshop:

Senior Specialist, Vascular plants
Senior Specialist, Invertebrates
Senior Adviser, Species Recovery Programme
Senior Specialist, Mammal Ecology
Specialist, Reptiles and Amphibians
Senior Adviser, External Funding
Senior Adviser, IPENS
Senior Adviser, IPENS

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British Dragonfly Society
Wildlife Trusts

Image: Hare's-tail cotton grass on Hatfield Moor SAC/Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA
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