



# Local Nature Recovery Strategy

for Hampshire

2025

## At a Glance



Hampshire  
County Council

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# Acknowledgements

Hampshire County Council would like to thank the following partners for working with us to help shape the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Hampshire:



**Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust**



**FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL**



Basingstoke and Deane



Hampshire County Council would also like to thank the many additional individuals and organisations who contributed significant time, energy and enthusiasm to the preparation of the LNRS through the sharing of their expertise, data, and more.



**The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Hampshire has been prepared in partnership with a wide range of experts, stakeholders, agencies, organisations and communities across Hampshire and adjacent areas, who are all interested in helping to deliver nature recovery.**

The responsible authority for the LNRS, Hampshire County Council, and the supporting authorities worked together with the steering group and other key stakeholders to develop the priorities for nature recovery, which are set out in the Strategy.

### **Supporting authorities:**

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, East Hampshire District Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council, Hart District Council, Havant Borough Council, Natural England, New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park Authority, Portsmouth City Council,

Rushmoor Borough Council, South Downs National Park Authority, Southampton City Council, Test Valley Borough Council, and Winchester City Council.

### **Steering group members:**

Country Land and Business Association, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, National Farmers Union, New Forest National Park Authority, Portsmouth City Council, South Downs National Park Authority, Southampton City Council, and supporting authorities group representative.

# Introduction

**Hampshire has a beautiful and varied landscape with an impressive diversity of unique and important habitats. These include ancient woodlands, wildflower meadows, iconic chalk streams, species-rich downland, important heathland mosaics, and coastal and marine habitats. The variety of habitat types within Hampshire is reflected in its rich flora and fauna. The description of the area's natural environment, set out in the LNRS for Hampshire, confirms the importance and value of Hampshire for biodiversity and nature conservation.**



Like the rest of the UK, the natural environment and biodiversity across the area has declined significantly over the last 50 years and is under continued threat. There has been a decline in the quality, variety, and quantity of natural areas in Hampshire due to multiple pressures from a growing human population. These threats include increased development, agricultural and land use changes, invasive species, pollution, recreational pressure, and climate change.

LNRSs, introduced by the Environment Act 2021, are a new system of plans for nature recovery. Their role is to provide a nationwide,

practical solution for recovering nature. A total of 48 LNRSs have been developed mostly at the county level, which join seamlessly to cover the whole of England. They are a key mechanism for planning and delivering the National Nature Recovery Network. As well as having a role in the planning system and directing public funding for nature recovery, the Strategies will also support the delivery of 'nature-based solutions' for outcomes such as: flood management, carbon sequestration and storage, climate change resilience, improvements in water quality, and public health and wellbeing.



# What the LNRS for Hampshire will achieve

## The Strategy will:

- Guide how nature recovery will take place in Hampshire and will have a particularly important role in guiding how Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is delivered across the Strategy area.
- Set out the priorities for achieving the best outcomes for nature recovery, while providing options and opportunities which will support the wider strategies of the County Council and partner authorities.

## The Strategy will not:

- Dictate how land is used or limit the choices land managers have for their land. The maps will provide a range of options to help people and organisations make evidence-based decisions.
- Make commitments for delivery. The delivery of the Strategy will involve a range of organisations and therefore cannot be delivered by the County Council alone.



Credit: VisitHampshire

## For landowners and farmers, the LNRS:

- Identifies the highest priority areas for habitat restoration, creation and connectivity.
- Aids in pinpointing habitat opportunities across farmland, offering initial guidance on the most suitable habitat types for those areas.
- Provides guidance on actions to take forward on farmland and woodland to achieve nature recovery and to transition towards more sustainable farming practices.
- Could provide a focus for Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes such as the Landscape Recovery scheme and Countryside Stewardship.

## For community groups and individuals, the LNRS:

- Assists in pinpointing areas within the local community to prioritise for nature recovery efforts.
- Provides guidance for focusing on habitat creation and enhancement initiatives.
- Aids in aligning neighbourhood plans with their objectives.
- Can support funding applications for nature recovery projects.
- Aids in the establishment of new local community groups dedicated to nature recovery efforts.
- Provides health benefits and nature connection for wellbeing.



## **For local authorities, the LNRS:**

- Helps in determining locations of on-site and off-site potential for BNG, nutrient mitigation, and mitigation for important wader and brent geese sites that support the Solent Special Protection Areas (SPAs).
- Assists in aligning local plan green and blue infrastructure delivery with LNRS goals, contributing to a Hampshire-wide, collaborative plan between local authorities.
- Aids in planning and site allocation decisions through data-driven site identification for nature recovery.
- Helps in identifying sites for green and blue space delivery, assisting in meeting local targets.

## **For environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the LNRS:**

- Prioritises areas for nature recovery.
- Aids in advancing the delivery of their projects.

- Fosters collaborative efforts across the county, generating greater ambition for nature recovery.
- Supports funded schemes such as ELM schemes, enabling large-scale positive changes for nature.
- Furthers the promotion of their efforts and long-term goals for nature recovery.

## **For developers, the LNRS:**

- Provides guidance on biodiversity priorities and measures to be incorporated into development projects.
- Provides support with delivering BNG, by highlighting key land for nature recovery delivery, which could also be suitable for off-site BNG.
- Provides a series of potential measures for embedding nature into urban infrastructure. These can have multiple benefits for new developments, including stormwater management, climate resilience, urban cooling, and overall enhancing the quality and sustainability of built environments.

# How is the LNRS for Hampshire structured?

The LNRS is divided into five documents, as follows:

- Part 1: Introduction and description of the strategy area.
- Part 2: Priorities and measures.
- Part 3: Species recovery.
- Part 4: Technical appendices.
- Glossary

Within these documents, the Strategy comprises two main components, as required by law:

- Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.
- Local Habitat Map.

## Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

This includes:

- A description of Hampshire and its biodiversity, and opportunities for recovering and enhancing biodiversity across the Strategy area (set out in Part 1).
- Priorities for biodiversity recovery or enhancement, together with



contributions to wider environmental benefits, and potential measures to deliver these priorities (set out in Parts 2 and 3).

The description of Hampshire and its biodiversity in Part 1 includes both habitat and workshop-focused area/theme-based descriptions, as follows:

- Rivers and wetlands
- Coastal and marine
- Woodland, wood pasture and forestry
- Heathlands
- Grasslands
- Farmland
- Open mosaic habitat on previously developed (brownfield land)



- Species
- Thames Basin Heaths and Lowlands, and Wealden Heaths
- Central Chalk Belt
- North Hampshire
- New Forest and Eastern Dorset Heaths
- South Hampshire Lowlands and South Coast Plain
- Greenspace, health and access to nature

The priorities and potential measures in Part 2 of the Strategy are grouped under the following themes, as follows:

- Chalk streams, other water courses, headwaters and groundwater source protection zones
- Wetlands, ponds and ditches
- Species-rich grasslands
- Heathland and acid grassland mosaics
- Woodlands
- Wood pasture, wooded commons and historic parklands

- Coastal
- Farming and nature
- Hedgerows
- Greenspace, access and transport related
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
- Improving knowledge of priority species and priority habitats

The LNRS for Hampshire species priority list is set out in Part 3: Species recovery. 419 species are included in the species priority list, with brief accompanying information for each. The priority list includes:

- 69 individual species requiring more targeted and bespoke action.
- 350 species grouped into species assemblages which share habitat requirements and are likely to benefit from the same recovery measures.

## Local Habitat Map

The Local Habitat Map, which is set out in static map format in Section 2 of Part 2 of the Strategy, consists of three main maps, as follows:

- **Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)**, which shows Hampshire's international, national and locally designates sites, and irreplaceable habitats.
- **Potential Measures**, which shows suggested areas where nature recovery action could be delivered (for example by creating new habitat).



- **Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACB)**, which shows where action for nature recovery can take place, outside of existing designated areas.

The Local Habitat Map is also available in a more detailed interactive format on the LNRS for Hampshire webpages<sup>1</sup>.

# Delivering the LNRS for Hampshire



The Strategy will be in place for between three and 10 years before it is updated, the exact period to be determined by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. During that time, the responsible authority is expected to have an important role in delivering

the Strategy's priorities. This role includes:

- Leading and convening a partnership focussed on delivering the Strategy, building on existing governance and partnerships.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/nature-recovery-hampshire/hampshire-strategy>

- Promoting the use of the Strategy in other policy development and decision making.
- Identifying, developing and publicising projects that will contribute to the delivery of the Strategy.
- Tracking activities or projects that are delivering the Strategy's priorities and are being funded outside of central government funding schemes, and sharing this information with Natural England.

Further legislation and guidance is expected in relation to the role of the responsible authority in the delivery of the LNRS, and what funding will be made available to support this.

In the future, the Hampshire and the Solent Mayoral Combined County Authority (HatS MCCA) will take on the role of responsible authority for the LNRS for Hampshire. This means that both the Hampshire and Isle of Wight LNRSs will be updated by the HatS MCCA, when instructed by the Secretary of State to do so.

The LNRS for Hampshire cannot be delivered by one organisation. It requires the collaboration of many stakeholders – including landowners, developers, community groups and local planning authorities.

The LNRS for Hampshire is a key planning tool. Local planning authorities must consider it when preparing plans and making decisions, determining how the mapped areas and proposed measures are best reflected in local plans and safeguarded for delivery. The LNRS does not designate land or restrict development but identifies opportunities to enhance biodiversity, supporting informed decisions that balance environmental and development needs. It also guides BNG, giving strategic significance to mapped areas for offsite gains. Local Planning authorities play a vital role in using the LNRS to identify suitable sites for biodiversity improvements.



# Meeting national environmental targets

The areas and measures covered on the Measures Map, if delivered over the period of the LNRS, could contribute to the delivery of national targets (as set out in Part 4, Appendix 1), as follows:

National Objective	How the LNRS can contribute	Area
<b>Biodiversity on land</b> - Restore or create in excess of 500,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitat outside protected sites by 2042, compared to 2022 levels.	Creation of new native woodland that connects to existing ancient semi-natural woodland.	4,534 ha
	Ancient woodland SINCs managed for priority woodland species.	10,850 ha
	Restoration of planted coniferous ancient woodland (PAWs) situated adjacent or within ancient semi-natural woodland.	4,506 ha
	Lowland calcareous grassland restored or created.	8,572 ha
	Other grasslands restored or created including floodplain grazing marsh.	22,215 ha
	Restoring or creating lowland heath and lowland acid grassland.	9,495 ha
	Restoring historic parkland and wood pasture.	15,307 ha
	Saltmarsh restored/created.	916 ha
	Riparian buffers created (10m wide).	7,450 ha
	Total - a contribution of up to 17% towards the national target.	84,000 ha

<p>Protect 30% of land and of sea in the UK for nature's recovery by 2030.</p>	<p>Total area covered by ACB map and APIB map – 36.8%.</p> <p>Area of SINCs covered by measures – 88% of all SINCs which equals 8.2% of Hampshire out of total SINC coverage of 9.2%.</p> <p>SSSIs cover 13% of Hampshire.</p>	<p>141,576 ha</p> <p>31,597 ha</p> <p>50,107 ha</p>
<p><b>Woodland cover</b> - Increase total tree and woodland cover from 14.5% of land area now to 16.5% by 2050.</p>	<p>Creation of new native woodland (repeated from above). Takes woodland cover in Hampshire to over 19.5%.</p>	<p>4,534 ha</p>
<p><b>Manage our woodlands for biodiversity, climate and sustainable forestry.</b></p>	<p>Ancient woodland SINCs actively managed for priority woodland species (repeated from above).</p>	<p>10,850 ha</p>
<p><b>Biodiversity on land</b> – Halt the decline of species abundance by 2030. Ensure that species abundance in 2042 is greater than in 2022, and at least 10% greater than 2030.</p> <p><b>Reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042</b>, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022.</p>	<p>419 species have been selected for actions proposed in the LNRS, most are rare and declining species, with some on the edge of extinction. The majority fall into habitat assemblages and will benefit from the targeted habitat restoration and creation measures listed above.</p> <p>Ancient woodland SINCs actively managed for priority woodland species (repeated from above).</p>	<p>10,850 ha</p>

<p><b>Improve water quality and availability –</b></p> <p>Reduce nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and sediment pollution from agriculture into the water environment by at least 40% by 2038, compared to a 2018 baseline.</p> <p><b>Restore 75% of our water bodies to good ecological status.</b></p>	<p>10m buffers mapped along all water courses (excluding SSSIs) to create new habitat.</p> <p>Floodplain grazing marsh mapped for restoration with measures.</p> <p>All in-channel main rivers mapped for measures to improve physical habitat and water quality.</p>	<p>7,450 ha</p> <p>c20,000ha</p>
<p><b>Reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of invasive non-native species by at least 50%, by 2030.</b></p>	<p>Measures mapped for control and eradication of INNS along all water courses.</p> <p>Measures mapped for control and eradication of woodland INNS such as rhododendron where it is known to cause a problem in SINC woodland.</p>	



